



Foster Youth to Independence Briefing Paper

Family Unification Program – The Family Unification Program (FUP) is a competitively awarded special purpose voucher program administered by 280 PHAs in partnership with public child welfare agencies (PCWAs). Together, they administer approximately 23,000 FUP vouchers. The program provides vouchers to address housing instability for the preservation or reunification of families, and time-limited housing assistance for former foster youth at-risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Tenant Protection Vouchers to Serve Youth –The new initiative uses Tenant Protection Voucher (TPV) funds in alignment with FUP, that are targeted to youth. These vouchers would be referred to as Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) TPVs. The primary goals of the program are as follows:

1. **Address gaps in the availability of FUP for youth** in communities that do not administer FUP. Youth not in a community with a FUP allocation are unable to access this resource.
2. **Prioritizes this resource to youth.** In communities that administer FUP, youth experience a number of barriers to accessing the program. Most critically, the prioritization of families by the child welfare system. As a result, youth make up only 5 percent of FUP participants.
3. **Contribute to the goal of ending youth homelessness** as outlined in *Home, Together: The Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*. Former foster youth are at high risk of experiencing homelessness.

FYI TPV Notice – Through PIH notice, The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) explains the eligibility and application requirements for TPV funding to assist eligible youth. This notice:

1. **Limits FYI TPVs to PHAs that do not have an allocation of FUP vouchers.** This allows HUD to assist youth in a greater number of communities and addresses potential program administration conflicts.
2. **Allows PHAs to request funding on a rolling basis.** To the extent FY 2019 TPV funding remains available or future TPV appropriations continue to authorize FUP as an eligible category for TPVs, the notice remains in effect and communities may continue to apply for assistance. This allows PHAs to request assistance as eligible youth are identified.
3. **Requires the PCWA to make eligibility determinations and referrals.** Following the statutory requirements of FUP, the partnering child welfare agency conducts eligibility determinations and makes the referral to the PHA.
4. **Leverages supportive services to assist youth and reach self-sufficiency.** Mirroring the requirements of FUP, the PCWA or another party are required to provide a set of supportive services to the youth for a period of at least 36 months to assist the young person achieve self-sufficiency.
5. **Assistance is time-limited and the TPV may not be reissued upon turnover.** Following the statutory requirements of FUP, youth are limited to 36 months of assistance with this voucher. Unlike regular FUP vouchers, FYI FUP vouchers may not be reissued when the youth leaves the program and the voucher “sunset” at that time. As a result, HUD does not have a long-term assistance obligation and avoids situations where the FUP voucher would be unused because of a lack of immediate demand in that particular jurisdiction.
6. **Streamlined application process.** Upon receipt of a referral from the child welfare agency, the PHA may apply to HUD HQ for assistance under the notice via email. The email is required to include only a limited amount of information, and the inclusion of form HUD-52514.



Child Welfare and Youth Homelessness

1. **The [Voice of Youth Count](#)**, a national survey of unaccompanied youth ages 13 to 25 who have experienced homelessness, found that nearly one third of the youth had some level of involvement with the child welfare system in their lives.
2. **The stark reality is that youth all over the country**, in both rural and urban areas, who spent time in the child welfare system are struggling to find safe, affordable housing, leading to experiences of homelessness and housing instability.
3. **Unstable housing and education and employment.** Older youth in foster care often face obstacles in securing stable foster care placements, causing them to move homes often, changing schools, and falling behind.
 - a. This can put youth aging out of care at disadvantage to obtaining higher education or job training opportunities.
 - b. FYI offers the housing stability needed to reach their goals all from a safe and stable home.
4. **Child welfare system and lack of family support.** Many young people, 18-24, in our country receive supports from their families to help them secure safe housing, obtain higher education, or secure employment opportunities.
 - a. Young people who have experienced the child welfare system are often disconnected from their families or their families are unable to provide assistance.
 - b. These young deserve those same supports as their peers and FYI can offer them a pathway to some of those much needed supports, while securing safe and stable housing to launch their potential.
5. **Partnering and the role of Public Child Welfare Agencies.** Local public child welfare agencies work hard day in and day out to ensure young people find safety, permanency, and well-being, but the reality is that finding safe affordable housing option for young people in foster care turning 18 is difficult in tight rental markets with limited job opportunities for youth.
 - a. FYI gives public child welfare agencies, public housing authorities, and Continuum of Care (CoC) the vehicle to partner, leverage their resources, and create stable and supported housing opportunities for young people to prevent and end their experiences with homelessness.