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TO: Runaway and Homeless Youth Grant Recipients, including Basic Center, Transitional Living, Maternity Group Home, and Street Outreach Programs; State, Tribal, and Territorial agencies administering and supervising the administration of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act

SUBJECT: Leveraging The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Program for Eligible Youth Experiencing or At-Risk of Experiencing Homelessness

PURPOSE: The purpose of this information memorandum (IM) is to provide guidance to Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) grant recipients regarding the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Program and provide information to ensure eligible young adults experiencing or at-risk of experiencing homelessness, who have previously been in foster care or are aging out of foster care, gain access to these resources. The IM also provides guidance to RHY grant recipients regarding what RHY resources may be used to support young adults as they access the FYI Program.

LEGAL REFERENCES: Section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act; The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (the Act) (Title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, 34 U.S.C. § 11201 et seq.), as amended by the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-378), The RHY Final Rule (45 C.F.R Part 1351); Section 8(x) of the U.S. Housing Act (42 U.S.C § 1437f(x)).

BACKGROUND: Preventing homelessness among young adults, including those who have been involved in the child welfare system, remains an urgent issue for the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) and the Children's Bureau (CB). Housing stability is essential for achieving self-sufficiency and promotes health and well-being, particularly during the transition to adulthood. A combination of disadvantages places young adults who have experienced foster care, especially those aging out of care, at a higher risk of homelessness compared with their peers.

The 2022 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) Part 1 to Congress reported that more than 30,000 people under the age of 25 experienced homelessness on their own as an "unaccompanied youth," and 4 in 10 unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness were unsheltered**.** A disproportionate number of youth who experience homelessness or housing instability have prior foster care experience. Youth who have aged out of the foster care system are at particularly high risk of becoming homeless. A recent study found that nearly one-third of youth experiencing homelessness had experiences with foster care. Another study of youth in foster care found that 22 percent had experienced homelessness at least one night within the first year after they left the foster care system, and five percent had experienced homelessness for the first time within a week after leaving.

FYSB's Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) program serves youth and young adults who have run away from home, are experiencing or are at risk of experiencing homelessness, and often serves youth and young adults who have prior foster care experience. Youth who have been in foster care experiencing such high rates of homelessness signals an opportunity for RHY programs and other youth and young adult-serving organizations to better connect them to the services and supports needed as they transition from foster care.

In response to the disproportionate numbers of young adults with former foster care experience who later experience homelessness, HUD took the recommendations of young people with lived experience and formally established the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Program in 2019. The FYI Program is a dedicated resource that provides rental assistance and supportive services to young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 who have left foster care or are transitioning out of foster care and who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Following the rollout of the FYI Program in 2019, Congress appropriated funding for FYI in each of the subsequent years, totaling $90 million as of 2023. Congress also codified a mechanism for providing FYI assistance on a rolling basis for eligible youth as they are identified. This program provides an exciting opportunity for communities across the country to build upon efforts to prevent and end homelessness among youth and young adults with a current or prior history of child welfare involvement.

To access the FYI program, a young adult must be referred by the public child welfare agency (PCWA) to the local public housing authority (PHA). RHY grant recipients are uniquely positioned to partner with their local PCWA to identify and connect with young adults who may be eligible for resources but are not currently utilizing them. RHY grant recipients implement voluntary youth and young adult-centered, trauma-informed programs and comprehensive services that focus on relationships, trust building, and achieving stability. RHY grant recipients have a tremendous reach in communities across the country and can develop the types of relationships with young adults that enable meaningful connections to care.

This IM will provide RHY grant recipients with information about the FYI Program and ways RHY grant recipients can partner with PCWAs to support young adults who may be receiving RHY services and are also eligible for the FYI Program.

Program Descriptions: The Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Program

*Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Program***:** FYSB provides funding to local community-based organizations to address the needs of youth and young adults by providing shelter, programming, and comprehensive, individualized supports to improve outcomes for youth and young adults in four core

outcome areas: (1) Safe and stable housing (2) Education and employment (3) Social and emotional well-being, and (4) Permanent connections. The four primary RHY grant programs include:

- *Basic Center Programs (BCP)*: meets the immediate needs of youth under age 18 through temporary shelter for up to 21 days, including individual counseling, family reunification/connection, crisis intervention, and aftercare services.
- *Street Outreach Programs (SOP):* provide street-based services to youth under age 21 who have run away or are experiencing homelessness and may be living on the street.
- *Transitional Living Programs (TLP):* provide safe, stable, and appropriate housing for youth 16 to under 22 years of age who have run away or are experiencing homelessness.
- *Maternity Group Home Programs (MGH):* TLPs specifically designed to meet the needs of pregnant and/or parenting youth and young adults.

In FY 2022, the most recent RHY data available shows that RHY grant recipients provided shelter and outreach services to 48,664 youth. In FY 2024, the RHY Program awarded 673 grants including 301 Basic Center Programs, 135 Street Outreach Programs, 162 Transitional Living Programs, 64 Maternity Group Homes, and 11 Runaway and Homeless Youth – Prevention Demonstration Programs.

Program Description: The Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Program

The Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Program: The FYI Program is a dedicated resource meant to meet the needs of transition-aged youth and help avoid the disparate outcomes of youth and young adults who have been in foster care. The FYI Program is a special type of Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program that is administered by PHAs in partnership with Title IV-B/IV-E PCWAs. As with the regular HCV program, participants in the FYI Program use their vouchers to rent housing that meets their needs and complies with HCV program requirements. In general, participants in the FYI Program pay 30 percent of their monthly adjusted income towards rent and the voucher pays the remaining portion of the rent.

Under the FYI Program, PHAs provide HCV assistance on behalf of young adults who:

- Are at least 18 years old and not more than 24 years of age (have not reached their 25th birthday);
- Left foster care, or will leave foster care within 90 days, in accordance with a transition plan described in section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act; and
- Are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless at age 16 or older.

The FYI Program provides 36 months of rental assistance (which may be extended for up to an additional 24 months, if certain requirements are met) and the PCWA secures supportive services to assist the young person on their path to self-sufficiency. Young adults can choose whether to access and use these supportive services.

HUD makes FYI vouchers available to PHAs in two ways:

1. Non-Competitive: HUD issues a notice detailing the process through which PHAs may request FYI vouchers on a rolling basis, or "on-demand" when a young adult in their community is identified as eligible for FYI. Through the FYI non-competitive process, PHAs may request an FYI voucher directly from HUD for a specific youth, and HUD processes the requests in the order that they are

received. The most recent FYI Non-Competitive Notice is Notice PIH 2023-04 (Notice). See the Notice for an explanation of eligibility and application requirements.

2. Competitive: HUD issues Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) to invite applications from PHAs for FYI vouchers. Through the FYI competitive process, PHAs apply to receive an allocation of FYI vouchers that, if received, would allow them to issue FYI vouchers to eligible youth without having to make an individual request to HUD. This is helpful to larger communities who can identify an ongoing need for FYI vouchers.

Note: As of August 2023, there were 4,737 FYI vouchers being administered by 284 PHAs.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs):

Connecting and Referring Young Adults to the Foster Youth to Independence Program

1. What role can RHY grant recipients play in connecting young adults to the FYI Program?

RHY grant recipients have a tremendous reach in communities across the country and may be connected to young adults who either are not aware of the FYI Program or are disconnected from the PCWA. If an RHY grant recipient is connected to a young adult who may be eligible for the FYI Program and the young adult is interested in learning more about the resource, the RHY grant recipient may refer the young adult to the PCWA to determine whether the young adult is eligible to receive these services based on prior qualifying foster care involvement. The PCWA may then refer the young adult to the PHA, to determine HCV eligibility.

RHY grant recipients are well-positioned to support young adults in both preparing for the referral process and addressing overall well-being through the process. RHY grant recipients offer services designed to stabilize young adults, including assisting young adults in acquiring identification cards or completing applications and referrals for additional support services they may need when living in an apartment. More specifically, supporting young adults in navigating the FYI Program may also include, but is not limited to:

- Assisting in the navigation of the application process by helping to ensure they have the correct documentation, interpreting paperwork and program requirements, and assisting with finding transportation to appointments.
- Helping to secure legal documents, credit history, and other information needed to enter into a lease.
- Connecting young adults to health care and behavioral health services.
- Helping to build supportive relationships and community connections.
- Connecting youth to benefits like SNAP and other economic supports.
- Assisting in the connection to legal support if needed.
- Assisting in housing navigation by joining in the search for housing and assisting with landlord engagement.
- Connecting young adults to resources that can assist with moving expenses and moving support.

2. Does every state or jurisdiction administer FYI? How do I know whether my jurisdiction administers the program?

The FYI program is a voluntary program for PHAs and PCWAs. Therefore, not every state or jurisdiction administers the FYI program. As of August 2023, there were 284 PHAs in 49 states and territories that administer FYI. A list of PHAs that administer FYI is available on HUD's FYI webpage (FYI | HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)). HUD updates this list periodically.

3. What if the PCWA does not have a partnership with the PHA or if the local PHA does not administer FYI?

If the local PCWA does not have a partnership agreement with a PHA to make referrals and utilize the FYI program, the RHY grantee is encouraged to reach out to the PCWA to determine whether there is an opportunity to work together to encourage the PHA to establish an FYI program. A PHA may start an FYI program at any time by entering into a partnership agreement with a local PCWA, which would allow the PHA to request FYI vouchers through the FYI Non-Competitive process described above. RHY grantees may want to consult with the local PCWA to determine how they can help support the PCWA in working with the PHA to establish an FYI program. There are many important considerations like funding supportive services, new referral processes, and new administrative requirements that PCWAs and PHAs take into account when establishing an FYI Program. RHY grant recipients can be important partners in helping to address concerns and overcome barriers.

If the local PHA does not administer the FYI program, RHY grantees may reach out to their local PHA to determine if there are other resources available for youth. A list of PHAs is available on HUD's website at https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/pha/contacts.

For example, youth who are eligible for FYI are also eligible for HCV assistance under HUD's Family Unification Program (FUP). If a local PHA does not currently administer the FYI program, it may administer FUP. More information on FUP as well as a list of PHAs that administer FUP is available on HUD's FUP webpage:
(https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/family).

If the PHA does not administer FYI or FUP, it is strongly recommended that RHY grantees work with the PCWA to establish a partnership with the PHA to establish an FYI program.

4. How can RHY SOPs, BCPs, TLPs, and MGHs support the utilization of the FYI Program?

RHY SOPs, BCPs, TLPs, and MGHs are encouraged to develop new partnerships and strengthen existing partnerships with their local PCWA to determine whether the PCWA currently has a partnership agreement with a PHA to make referrals and utilize the FYI Program. If the PCWA is utilizing and making referrals to the FYI Program, the RHY programs can connect with the PCWA to determine the agency's process for referring young adults to the FYI Program, including points of contact, referral protocol, the application process, and required documentation, so that the RHY grantee can make a successful referral.

Once a young adult is determined to be eligible for the FYI Program, and the PCWA has made a determination to refer the youth, RHY programs are encouraged to maintain the young adult's placement in the RHY program until they have identified a housing unit and have moved in, so long as the

maximum length of stay in the RHY program has not been reached. The length of stay in an RHY-funded BCP is up to 21 days for youth under the age of 18 (or higher if allowed by a state or local law or regulation that applies to licensure requirements for child or youth-serving facilities). Youth and young adults between the age of 16 to under 22 years of age residing in a TLP or MGH program have a length of stay of up to 18 months. A young person's stay in the TLP or MGH may be extended up to 21 months in extenuating circumstances. RHY grant recipients may support the young person in their housing search and are encouraged to do so in coordination with the PCWA and PHA, as part of allowable activities under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) and RHY Final Rule, and the Title IV-E case review system. Assisting with the housing search may include supporting the young adult in navigating apartment viewings and landlord engagement, which can be particularly difficult for young adults. You can find tips and tools for landlord engagement from HUD by visiting, https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/housingsearchtool/?housingsearchtoolaction=public:main.landlord-outreach-and-recruitment

The SOP funds street-based outreach and education for youth who have run away or left home without permission, youth experiencing homelessness, and youth living on the street. SOP grants are awarded for, "the purpose of providing street-based services to runaway and homeless, and street youth, who have been subjected to, or are at risk of being subjected to, sexual abuse, prostitution, sexual exploitation, severe forms of trafficking" (34 U.S.C. § 11261(a)). SOPs provide services and supports designed to assist youth and young adults in leaving the streets and making healthy choices through providing education, resources, referrals, and coordinating access to emergency shelter or other safe and stable housing. If an SOP grant recipient is working with an unsheltered youth or young adult who has run away, is experiencing homelessness, and has been subjected to, or is at risk of being subjected to, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, and severe forms of trafficking, the RHY program is encouraged to screen for prior foster care involvement to determine the eligibility of resources through the FYI Program. The SOP grant recipient can support the referral of the young adult to the PCWA to determine eligibility.

5. In what ways can RHY grant recipients help youth prepare to utilize their FYI voucher and navigate the PHA's processes and requirements?

Once the PCWA determines that a young adult meets FYI eligibility requirements, identifies they can secure and/or provide the supportive services, and makes the determination to refer them to the PHA, the PHA will begin the process of determining HCV eligibility. To determine eligibility for the HCV program, the young person will be required to provide evidence of their social security number, date of birth, and income. The young person will also need to provide evidence of disability or eligible immigration status if claimed. Following the issuance of an FYI voucher, the PHA will provide the young person with an oral briefing on how the FYI program works, tenant and landlord obligations, and where the young person may lease a unit. The young person then searches for a unit that meets their needs and HCV program requirements.

RHY providers are well-positioned to assist young adults throughout the HCV process, including completing application forms, acquiring the necessary documentation, helping with appointments and deadlines, and assisting with the housing search.

6. How can RHY grant recipients help young adults prepare to apply and utilize FYI vouchers?

As previously discussed in question 1, navigating applications and eligibility determination processes can be overwhelming and isolating for young adults seeking housing. RHY grant recipients are well-

positioned to support young adults in both preparing for the referral process and addressing overall well-being through the process. RHY grant recipients offer services designed to stabilize young adults, including assisting young adults in acquiring identification cards or completing applications and referrals for additional support services they may need when living in an apartment. More specifically, supporting young adults in navigating the FYI Program may also include, but is not limited to:

- Assisting in the navigation of the application process by helping to ensure they have the correct documentation, interpreting paperwork and program requirements, and assisting with finding transportation to appointments.
- Helping to secure legal documents, credit history, and other information needed to enter into a lease.
- Connecting young adults to health care and behavioral health services.
- Helping to build supportive relationships and community connections.
- Connecting youth to benefits like SNAP and other economic supports.
- Assisting in the connection to legal support if needed.
- Assisting in housing navigation by joining in the search for housing and assisting with landlord engagement.
- Connecting young adults to resources that can assist with moving expenses and moving support.

7. How can RHY grant recipients and PCWAs partner to support young adults who are seeking an FYI Voucher?

RHY grant recipients and PCWAs are encouraged to establish and maintain strong relationships to coordinate services and resources for youth who have previously been in foster care or are aging out of foster care. PCWAs are encouraged to identify a point person who oversees the FYI Program implementation. RHY grant recipients are encouraged to work with the PCWA, and the PCWA point person, if one exists, to fully understand and utilize the local referral processes and protocols for the FYI Program.

PCWA are encouraged to seek out and develop relationships with local RHY grantees to ensure youth exiting foster care are connected to the full range of available resources. PCWAs can find their local RHY programs by visiting: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/map/grantees-family-and-youth-services-bureau.

Learn more about effective partnerships and the importance of collaboration by visiting: https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/developing/collaboration/.

Eligibility

8. Are young adults currently in an RHY program eligible for the FYI Program?

Yes, if a young adult in the RHY program meets all the eligibility requirements of the FYI Program (see question 10) and the HCV program (see question 11), they would qualify or otherwise be eligible for an FYI voucher.

While some RHY programs serve youth below the age of 18, please note that a young adult must be at least 18 years of age before they can receive an FYI voucher. However, a young adult may be referred for

FYI assistance prior to their 18th birthday to start the FYI application process, but the effective date of the FYI voucher may be no sooner than their 18th birthday.

In addition to meeting the age and foster care eligibility requirements, a young person must also be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to be eligible for FYI. HUD's definition of "at risk of becoming homeless" includes youth who qualify as "homeless" under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (34 U.S.C. § 11279(3)). Therefore, young adults currently in an RHY program would meet this eligibility criterion.

If the RHY program is unclear whether a young adult in their program meets the eligibility requirements outlined below but has information that the young adult may be eligible, the RHY program can refer the young adult to the PCWA to determine eligibility.

9. How is FYI eligibility determined?

FYI eligibility requires a dual-agency determination. First, PCWAs verify that the young adult meets FYI eligibility requirements (see question 10) and secures the provision of supportive services. Once a young adult's FYI eligibility is confirmed, the PCWA refers the young adult to the PHA for determination of eligibility for an HCV (see question 11). In other words, once the young adult is certified by the PCWA, the young adult must also meet the PHA's eligibility requirements for voucher assistance.

10. What are the FYI Program eligibility criteria certified by PCWAs for young adults seeking a voucher?

A young adult must meet ALL the following requirements in order to be eligible to receive an FYI voucher:

1. Has attained at least 18 years and not more than 24 years of age;
2. Left foster care, or will leave foster care within 90 days, in accordance with a transition plan described in section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act; and
3. Is homeless or is at risk of becoming homeless at age 16 or older.

Age eligibility (i.e., determining that a youth is between the ages of 18-24) is only required at the time of admission. Additional eligibility information and Questions and Answers can be found on the HUD FYI Program website at FYI | HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) .

To refer a youth to the PHA, the PCWA must have a plan for the provision of supportive services for the youth, available during the first 36 months of the voucher.

11. What are the HCV Program eligibility criteria verified by PHAs for young adults seeking a voucher?

Once the PCWA determines that the young adult meets the FYI eligibility requirements and refers the young adult to the PHA, the PHA then determines whether the young adult meets the HCV eligibility requirements.

To be eligible for HCV assistance, the young adult must be a U.S. citizen or have eligible immigration status and meet income eligibility requirements. In general, the family's income (i.e., the income of the

young adult and any family members that will reside in the unit) may not exceed 50 percent of the median income for the county or metropolitan area in which the family chooses to live. Median income levels are published by HUD and vary by location.

In addition, the PHA will screen the young adult for certain types of criminal convictions. In most cases, PHAs have discretion to decide whether to deny admission to an applicant with certain types of criminal history. HUD regulations outline the limited instances where denial of admission is required. In deciding whether to exercise their discretion to admit an individual or household that has engaged in criminal activity, PHAs may consider all the relevant circumstances, including the seriousness of the offending action. Additionally, when specifically considering whether to deny admission for illegal drug use by a household member who is no longer engaged in such activity, a PHA may consider whether the household member is participating in or has successfully completed a drug rehabilitation program or has otherwise been rehabilitated successfully.

Although PCWAs are not required to provide information regarding an applicant's criminal history to the PHA, PCWA, and RHY grant recipients could, in partnership with the youth, offer information like the completion of a supervised drug or alcohol rehabilitation program, that might be helpful to the PHA in determining an applicant's eligibility and may result in the applicant being determined eligible under PHA policy. In addition, PHAs have local policies concerning when the PHA will deny HCV assistance for certain reasons set forth in HUD regulations. These reasons are generally related to whether the young adult or any family member that will reside in the unit has previous program violations or terminations from the HCV program; has been evicted from federally assisted housing in the past five years; has committed fraud, bribery, or any other corrupt or criminal act related to another federal housing program; owes debts to the PHA or another PHA; or, has engaged in threatened abusive or violent behavior toward PHA personnel.

Finally, there are additional eligibility requirements if a young adult is a student at an institution of higher education who will not reside with their parents. In general, students who are participants in an RHY program and meet FYI eligibility requirements will meet these eligibility requirements because they meet at least one of the criteria below:

- The individual was an orphan, in foster care or a ward of the court at any time when the individual was 13 years of age or older; or
- The individual meets HUD's definition of *Vulnerable Youth*, which means that the individual has been verified during the school year in which the application is submitted as unaccompanied youth (as defined in Section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act), who are at risk of homelessness and self-supporting, by the director of a program funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act or designee of the director.

12. Are young adults who are pregnant or parenting eligible for FYI?

Being a pregnant and/or parenting young adult does not preclude participation in the FYI Program assuming all the following eligibility requirements are met, and the young adult meets the HCV eligibility requirements;

- Has attained at least 18 years and not more than 24 years of age;
- Left foster care, or will leave foster care within 90 days, in accordance with a transition plan described in section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act; and

- Is homeless or is at risk of becoming homeless at age 16 or older.

And as discussed in question 3, pregnant and/or parenting young adults may also benefit from HUD's FUP Program. More information can be found by visiting, https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/family.

13. What if the young adult is seeking an FYI voucher in a different state from where they were in foster care or aged out of foster care?

A young adult seeking an FYI voucher in a different state from where they were in foster care or aged out of foster care is not precluded from participation in the FYI Program. The young adult must meet the FYI eligibility requirements listed above, including qualifying foster care involvement in any state. The PCWA in the state where the young adult is seeking an FYI voucher should be able to verify the young adult's foster care eligibility. RHY grantees can assist young adults in connecting to the local PCWA by contacting their local PCWA. Once the PCWA confirms FYI eligibility and makes the determination to refer the young adult, the PCWA can then complete the referral to the PHA to determine HCV eligibility.

14. Does the FYI Program eligibility and application differ by state?

FYI Program eligibility requirements do not differ by state. However, the HCV program permits PHAs to adopt certain discretionary policies (such as the criminal screening policies discussed in question 11) so there may be differences among PHAs regarding certain HCV eligibility requirements. Further, the PCWA's referral processes may be different by state or jurisdiction. Therefore, contacting the local PCWA is a good first step for connecting young adults to the FYI Program.

HUD maintains a spreadsheet of PHAs that administer the FYI program on HUD's FYI webpage: FYI | HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Also, to find your local PHA visit:
https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/pha/contacts

15. What if the young adult does not have contact with their child welfare system any longer?

The partnering PCWA in the jurisdiction where the young adult is seeking an FYI voucher should be able to verify that the young adult meets all FYI eligibility requirements. The young adult does not need to be currently involved in the child welfare system to be eligible for the FYI Program. While referral processes may be different by state or jurisdiction, contacting the local PCWA is a good first step for connecting young adults to the FYI Program.

- To find your local PCWA visit: State Child Welfare Agency Websites - Child Welfare Information Gateway
- To find your local PHA visit: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/pha/contacts
- To find your local RHY program visit: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/map/grantees-family-and-youth-services-bureau

Role of PCWA

16. What is the role of the PCWA in the FYI Program?

In accordance with Notice PIH 2023-04, to participate in the FYI program, the PCWA must meet the following requirements:

1. Identify Eligible Young Adults - The PCWA must have a system for identifying eligible young adults within the agency's caseload and for reviewing referrals from the PHA or a third party, including RHY programs, state agencies, local partners (including schools), philanthropic, faith-based organizations, Continuum of Care (CoC), or a CoC recipient it designates.
2. System of Prioritization - Given the limited nature of this resource, the PCWA must have a system of prioritization for eligible young adults.
3. Written Certification - The PCWA must provide written certification to the PHA that a young adult meets FYI eligibility requirements.
4. Supportive Services - The PCWA must provide or secure a commitment for the provision of required supportive services for the first 36 months of the voucher use.

These responsibilities are uniform for PCWAs and do not differ from state to state. Once the PCWA verifies that the young adult meets FYI eligibility requirements, the young adult is referred to the PHA to determine if they meet HCV eligibility requirements.

The FYI Program is designed to offer young adults a minimum set of supportive services for 36 months. A participant is encouraged but cannot be required to participate in these services as a condition of receipt of the voucher. The PCWA must, however, provide or secure a commitment for the provision of supportive services to a participating young adult to assist the young adult in achieving self-sufficiency. The PHA or another partnering entity may provide some or all of the supportive services if it has the resources to do so.

The following is a list of supportive services that must be offered:

1. Basic life skills information, counseling on money management, use of credit, housekeeping, proper nutrition and meal preparation; and access to health care (e.g., insurance, doctors, medication, and mental and behavioral health services).
2. Counseling on compliance with rental lease requirements and with HCV program participant requirements, including referrals for assistance on security deposits, utility hook-up fees, and utility deposits.
3. Providing such assurances to owners of rental property as are reasonable and necessary to assist eligible young adults to rent a unit with a voucher.
4. Job preparation and attainment counseling (where to look/how to apply, dress, grooming, and relationships with supervisory personnel, etc.).
5. Educational and career advancement counseling regarding attainment of a general equivalency diploma (GED); attendance and financing of education at a technical school, trade school, or college; including successful work ethic and attitude models.

17. Once referred, what is the process to request an FYI voucher?

1. Before requesting FYI vouchers from HUD, a PHA, and a PCWA must enter into a partnership agreement. An example MOU has been provided by HUD: FYI Voucher Sample Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
2. Once the agreement is in place, the PCWA must send a referral to the PHA with a written certification that a young person meets FYI eligibility requirements.
3. The PHA must verify the young adult's eligibility for an HCV and compare the name with the young adults already on the PHA's HCV waiting list. Any young adult on the PHA's HCV waiting list that matches the PCWA's referral must be assisted in order of their position on the waiting list in accordance with PHA admission policies.
4. If the PHA has available FYI vouchers, it can immediately issue one to any eligible youth.

If the PHA does not have any available FYI vouchers, it can apply for FYI non-competitively following instructions in Notice PIH 2023-04. Please note that the process for review and award of these vouchers can take up to 60 days. More information can be found in Notice PIH 2023-04. If the PHA has a FUP program, it can issue a FUP voucher to an eligible youth.

Aftercare and Transitions

18. Can RHY BCPs, TLPs, and MGHs provide aftercare to young adults in the FYI Program?

Yes, RHY BCPs, TLPs, and MGHs must offer aftercare to young adults, including youth who access the FYI Program. Regardless of how a youth or young adult is supported once they leave shelter care, the RHY program must ensure that youth or young adults have safe and appropriate exits when leaving the program. Programs must develop and implement an aftercare strategy, covering at least 3 months post exit from an RHY shelter, to stay in contact with clients who leave the program and ensure their ongoing safety, stability, and access to services (45 C.F.R. §§ 1351.25, 1351.26).

An aftercare strategy must be completed, in collaboration with the youth or young adult at or prior to exit counseling. This strategy must outline what services were provided, including appropriate referrals needed for health care services, and referrals and counseling on insurance coverage through family health care insurance plans or to agencies that assist in enrolling persons in Medicaid, or other publicly available insurance plans. The aftercare strategy must track the young adult's housing status, educational services, and the rate of participation and completion of the services in the plan beyond three months if services are still provided.

19. What other services can RHY grant recipients connect young adults to as they transition into the FYI Program?

The current expectation as identified in the RHY Rule is that aftercare services for BCP, TLP, and MGHs offer a minimum of three months of aftercare support. RHY grant recipients should plan and implement aftercare activities that will give youth opportunities to make informed decisions about the support and services they need to receive, develop a plan for permanency, and identify and achieve their personal goals. Aftercare services may include developing a written transitional living strategy that meets their level of need for a safe and stable living environment after program exit, and participation in the FYI Program. This strategy must ensure the young adult has access to important documents and paperwork (e.g., birth certificate, social security card, driver's license or state identification card, medical records,

and credit reports). The transition strategy must also include supporting young adults with connecting to their schools or obtaining appropriate educational services, training, or employment services as well as employment and housing assistance and support with personal matters through referrals to medical and mental health counseling services.

The PCWA and the PHA can be a great resource for planning and providing aftercare services. Please refer to HUD's *Partnership Development and Maintenance* webinar located HERE and learn more about the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program.

20. Who should I contact if I have a question or would like more information?

- To reach **HUD** with questions about FYI, email FYI@hud.gov.
- To reach the **Children's Bureau** with questions, contact your Regional Program Manager.
- To reach **Family and Youth Services Bureau** with questions, email Christopher Holloway at Christopher.Holloway@acf.hhs.gov.

Rebecca Jones Gaston
Commissioner
Administration on Children, Youth and Families

Aysha E. Schomburg
Associate Commissioner
Children's Bureau

Kimberly A. Waller
Associate Commissioner
Family and Youth Services Bureau

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Administration for Children and Families:** **John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood | The Administration for Children and Families (hhs.gov)**
- **Administration for Children and Families:** **Runaway and Homeless Youth | The Administration for Children and Families (hhs.gov)**
- **Administration for Children and Families Youth.gov:** **Transition & Aging Out | Youth.gov**
- **Child Information Gateway:** **Services for Youth: Homeless and Runaway - Child Welfare Information Gateway**
- **Child Information Gateway:** **State Child Welfare Agency Websites - Child Welfare Information Gateway**
- **Foster Youth to Independence Vouchers:** **FYI | HUD.gov / U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**
- The **Foster Youth to Independence Topic Guides** are available to complement the **Foster Youth to Independence Initiative Webinar Series** by providing additional information and guidance on starting and administering an FYI voucher program.
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration:** **Grants for the Benefit of Homeless Individuals (GBHI) | SAMHSA**
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration:** **Homelessness Programs and Resources | SAMHSA**
- **U.S. Department of Labor Youth Programs:** **Youth Programs and Services | U.S. Department of Labor (dol.gov)**