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for Children
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Administration on Children, Youth and Families

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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

TO: State, Tribal and Territorial Agencies Administering or Supervising the Administration of Title IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act, the State Office, Agency or Organization Designated by the Governor to Apply for a Child Abuse and Neglect State Grant, and Court Improvement Programs.

SUBJECT: Efforts by child welfare agencies, local communities, and federal agencies to end family and youth homelessness.

LEGAL AND RELATED REFERENCES: Title IV-B and title IV-E of the Social Security Act (the Act); and the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Information Memorandum (IM) is to share information on Federal efforts and resources to enhance child welfare's response to family and youth homelessness.

INFORMATION:

The connection between homelessness and child welfare involvement is documented by administrative and research data and the individual stories of families and youth entering the child welfare system each year. In 2015, approximately 265,000 children entered foster care across the country. For over 10 percent of these children (approximately 27,000 children), inadequate housing was reported as a reason associated with the child's removal, and this percentage is even higher among older youth (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [HHS], 2016). Inadequate housing includes homelessness as well as substandard, overcrowded, unsafe or otherwise inadequate housing facilities determined to be inappropriate for parents and their children to reside together.

I. Background

Nationally, families and youth make up a substantial proportion of the homeless population. The 2016 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) [Point-in-Time count](#) estimated that there were 61,265 family households experiencing homelessness on a single night in January, representing 35 percent of the homeless population. Over one-fifth (22%) of all people experiencing homelessness were children and nine percent were young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 (HUD, 2015). These numbers provide a snapshot of the scope of family and

youth homelessness among those who are living in shelters or on the street. However, many families and youth experiencing homelessness are living doubled up with friends or family and many more are housing insecure.

Family and youth homelessness is a key issue for child welfare systems. Inadequate housing and homelessness increase the risk of entry into foster care and cause delays in the reunification of children in foster care with their families. Being proactive in addressing housing needs can prevent the unnecessary removal of children from their families and substantially improve the short- and long-term well-being of children, young adults and their families.

The Children's Bureau in the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families is committed to better addressing homelessness among families who are in or at-risk of involvement in the child welfare system and youth who are emancipating from foster care. The purpose of this IM is to highlight work at the federal level and provide guidance to strengthen state and local efforts. The IM focuses on the interrelated populations of families and youth served by the child welfare system.

Families

Families with children make up an estimated one-third of the homeless population. Nationally, child welfare systems are challenged in adequately responding to the needs of families experiencing homelessness. Among families experiencing homelessness, recurrent shelter entries and longer stays in the shelter system increase the likelihood of involvement in child welfare (Courtney, McMurtry, Zinn, 2004; Park, Metraux, Broadbar, & Culhane, 2004). Many families and children experiencing homelessness have complex needs. While families may be facing homelessness for the first time, many are caught in a cycle of poverty, mental illness, trauma, domestic violence, or substance use. Compared to other poor but housed children, homeless children are more likely to demonstrate higher anxiety, depression, and behavior problems; have poorer school attendance and achievement; and have poorer health and more developmental delays (Cowal, Shin, Weitzman, Stojanovic & Labay, 2002; Rog, McCombs-Thornton, Brito, & Holupka, 1995).

Young families with newborns and infants are among the most likely population to need and seek shelter due to housing instability or homelessness. The first year of life is when children are most likely to enter shelter and transitional housing programs, followed by ages one to five (Gubits, Shinn, Wood, Dstrup & Solari, 2015). Almost half of children in shelters are under the age of six (HUD, 2016). Homelessness and housing instability are traumatic experiences and might be particularly traumatic for young children. Research indicates that experiencing homelessness during pregnancy and in the early years may be harmful to children's development (Narayan, Kalstabakken, Labella, Nerenberg, Monn, & Masten, 2016; Richards, Merrill, Baksh, & McGarry, 2011).

Youth

The developmental stage of young people in their late teens and early twenties is often characterized as transitional in nature. Multiple transitions can occur in interpersonal and

intimate relationships, jobs and education, and even housing. Particularly when it comes to housing situations, many youth in the U.S. have a gradual transition to independent adulthood, often living with a parent into their early 20's or cycling in and out of the parental home, and across multiple independent living settings. For youth with current or prior experiences in foster care, the risk of becoming homeless, at some point during the transition to independent adulthood is alarming. Few young people are prepared to assume total responsibility for securing and maintaining housing at age 18 or 21, yet for young people who reach the maximum age in their state's foster care system, that is the expectation.

In a recently released Family and Youth Services Bureau study on the [Street Outreach Program](#), the intersection of homelessness, childhood abuse, and foster care was clearly articulated by the interviewed youth. Half of the youth reported physical abuse at the hands of a caretaker and one-third reported sexual abuse. Overall, half of the youth living on the street reported having been in foster care at some point and were more likely to report longer episodes of homelessness compared to youth who did not report being in foster care.

In addition to numerous studies that have documented the intersection between homelessness and experiences with the foster care system, states are now collecting and reporting information on homelessness for youth as they transition from foster care. On October 1, 2010, states began collecting and reporting data on the outcomes of youth in foster care through the [National Youth in Transition Database](#) (NYTD). States are required to report on the independent living services provided to youth and on outcomes for youth, as reported through survey data at ages 17, 19, and 21. The first collection of survey data for the first cohort of youth was completed September 30, 2015, and the first data [brief](#) was recently released. At age 17, 16% of youth reported being homeless at some point in their lifetime. At age 19, 20% of surveyed youth reported being homeless in the last two years; at age 21, the number rises to 26%. Across all waves of data in the cohort, 43% of youth reported ever being homeless in their lifetime. It should be noted that the definition NYTD uses for homeless does not include "couch-surfing" or "staying with friends."¹ Not surprisingly, youth who experienced other risk factors, such as referral to substance abuse treatment or incarceration, were more likely to report experiences with homelessness. Conversely, youth who reported a positive connection to an adult were less likely to report homelessness.

II. Federal Partnerships and Initiatives to Address Child Welfare's Response to Family and Youth Homelessness

Effective and meaningful cross-agency collaboration to end family and youth homelessness must involve the child welfare system. Families and youth who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness are often served by multiple systems, including child welfare. The Administration for Children and Families is working across its offices, including the Children's Bureau, the Family and Youth Services Bureau, the Office of Family Assistance, the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, the Office on Trafficking in Persons, the Office of Child Support Enforcement, the Administration for Native Americans, and the Office

¹ Homeless definition in NYTD: A youth is considered to have experienced homelessness if the youth had no regular or adequate place to live. This definition includes situations where the youth is living in a car or on the street, or staying in a homeless or other temporary shelter.

of Regional Operations to support state and local responses to family and youth homelessness. Detailed information on some of this work is included in Appendix A.

Over the last five years, the Children’s Bureau has invested in demonstration projects in 23 communities to improve the outcomes of families and youth through the provision of safe, stable, and affordable housing. These discretionary grants focused on the development of interventions for a target population of the most at-risk families and youth. The evaluations of the demonstrations are still underway, but there are some early lessons learned from the implementation of the interventions. More information on these promising practices is included in Appendix B.

We encourage states, localities and tribes to review this information to see how they can strengthen their own efforts to communicate and collaborate across systems at the state and local level.

III. The Role of Child Welfare Agencies in Housing

As child welfare agencies take a greater role in securing stable and affordable housing for youth and families, there are several strategies child welfare agencies can employ in their state and communities:

1. Actively consider and prioritize the role of safe, stable, and affordable housing in child welfare outcomes.

It is important for child welfare leaders to articulate a clear vision of the relationship between safe and stable housing and achieving positive child, youth, and family well-being outcomes across the child welfare system. Far too often, the child welfare agency does not play an active role in securing housing for families and youth; instead child welfare agencies often rely on more generic referral to services or providers.

At the state and local level, child welfare agencies may designate an individual to be the point person on housing resources for families and youth, and attend community meetings on housing and community development to make the housing needs of children and youth involved in the child welfare system a priority.

2. Use and link child welfare administrative data with other available data to understand and document the housing needs of families and youth.

Administrative data systems should be used to understand the scope of housing issues among families and youth involved in the child welfare system as well as to drive targeting decisions for available housing services and interventions. More importantly, documenting the needs of families and youth can be used to advocate for additional housing resources and supports. Under the updated Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) regulations, which were published on December 14, 2016 in the Federal Register, State child welfare agencies must document whether “inadequate housing” and “homelessness” were circumstances contributing to the child’s removal and placement. (The regulations had previously only required states to report

“inadequate housing” but not “homelessness” as a circumstance of removal.) [More information here.](#)

The Children’s Bureau encourages the use of administrative data to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of work within child welfare agencies as well as data sharing between systems to foster coordination and maximize resources across systems that are available for families and youth involved in the child welfare system. State and counties have utilized other federal administrative data sources including Unemployment Insurance, National Student Clearinghouse, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), and their child welfare data to understand how their families and youth are faring after service provision.

3. Attend and participate in Continuum of Care (CoCs) meetings.

A CoC is a network of people and organizations in a locally-defined geographic area responsible for coordinating the local response to homelessness. The CoC process developed by HUD (see Appendix A for more information) is used to allocate housing resources in communities and involves a diverse set of members. A portion of families and youth involved with child welfare will need access to short- and long-term housing supports. Child welfare agencies may often assist with one-time payments for housing or utilities, but longer term assistance may not be within the resources or responsibility of the child welfare agency.

Involvement with the CoC can give child welfare agencies the opportunity to partner with many different homelessness and crisis response providers that may not be part of the traditional array of child welfare service providers. Furthermore, CoCs have the ability to prioritize housing and services based on the needs of the community, including child welfare involved families and youth. By being a part of the CoC, the child welfare agency can assure that the needs of some of the most vulnerable and at-risk families and youth are represented.

4. Meet the Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) in the community.

Developing a relationship with PHAs is a key strategy in understanding how the housing resources are being allocated at the local level. PHAs, with HUD’s approval, may create priorities for vouchers and other resources. For example, some PHAs have institutionalized preferences for youth and families who are child welfare involved. Additionally, the Family Unification Program (FUP) promotes family unification by providing Housing Choice Vouchers to families for whom the lack of adequate housing is the primary factor in separation, or threat of imminent separation, of children from their families and to youths 18 to 21 who left foster care at age 16 or older and lack adequate housing. [More information about FUP is available here.](#)

Having a clear understanding of what resources, programs, and services are available creates the framework for partnership. It is also important for the PHA to understand the role of the child welfare agency in supporting the needs of homeless families and at-risk youth in HUD-assisted housing.

5. Partner with housing providers, including landlords.

It is important to know the service providers addressing both housing and homelessness in the community. Housing providers are experts in securing housing, negotiating leases, resolving evictions, and other aspects of getting families and youth into housing. In addition, at the child welfare agency leadership level, it is important to develop relationships with landlords and understand the needs of landlords. Homelessness service providers and housing providers are experts in landlord engagement. Child welfare agencies can help these experts understand the needs of their families and youth, and housing experts can help child welfare agencies with landlord engagement strategies. Often the families and youth involved with child welfare have specific needs in terms of location and size of housing. Conversely, private and nonprofit housing developers may also have requirements around offering housing for low-income individuals and families. Determining how to well-position youth and families to meet the needs of private and nonprofit landlords is an effective strategy for child welfare to increase the number of housed families and youth.

6. Use case management as a method to leverage housing resources and support services.

The provision of case management is an important support for families and youth that can be used to leverage housing resources. Case management services provided by child welfare can be a major incentive to housing and service providers serving child welfare youth and families. Child welfare agencies should not underestimate how the provision of case management to youth and families involved with child welfare can serve as an asset that helps landlords and housing programs to see them as desirable clients and tenants. Furthermore, when case workers are involved with families that are housed they should take an active role in ensuring that housing is safe and affordable and work collaboratively with housing providers.

7. Ensure a range of safe and appropriate housing options through transition planning and extend foster care for young adults.

Child welfare agencies are required to plan for a youth's transition from foster care prior to aging out at age 18 or older (section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act). The transition plan is required to address the housing needs of the youth. Due to their high-risk of homelessness, youth/ young adults should be well connected to a range of housing options, programs, and providers in the community to ensure all youth have a long-term sustainable plan for housing. It is also important to consider how friends and families are a natural support network for housing and how the child welfare agency can support those people close to the youth. Finally, it is important to develop a response system to *create immediate access to housing and services* when youth are in crisis or homeless.

Since October 1, 2010, title IV-E agencies have also had the option to amend their title IV-E plans to extend eligibility for the federal title IV-E foster care program to youth ages 18-21 years old. Title IV-E agencies have an additional flexibility to allow these young adults ages 18 or older to live in "supervised independent living settings" that,

unlike placements for younger children, may not need to meet state licensing requirements. Title IV-E agencies have discretion to develop a range of supervised independent living settings. For example, a title IV-E agency may determine that host homes, college dormitories, shared housing, semi-supervised apartments, supervised apartments or another housing arrangement meets the supervised independent living arrangement requirement, when paired with a supervising agency or supervising worker. Allowing additional time for youth to complete their education in a range of safe and appropriate housing options through a more normative and gradual transition to adulthood can be an important step to preventing homelessness.

8. Create conversations outside of the immediate community.

In urban areas with competitive housing markets, as well as rural areas with limited housing options, families and youth may need to consider relocating to find viable long-term housing options. Planning a state or regional approach to both service delivery and housing supports from the outset will help to ensure a more robust system to address the long-term needs of families and youth. Partnering with housing and service providers both inside and outside the traditional boundaries of states, communities, and child welfare services areas may be the most beneficial for families and youth.

IV. Conclusion

There is a critical need for child welfare systems to address the prevalence of housing instability and homelessness among the families and youth who come to their attention. The Children's Bureau and federal partners are working at the federal level to promote promising practices and model partnerships between child welfare and key stakeholders. Child welfare has an investment in this work because of the intersection between housing instability and child welfare involvement. It has been long recognized that child welfare systems have unique expertise in engaging and meeting the service needs of particularly vulnerable families and youth. Further, child welfare agencies can use their expertise in family engagement to help unaccompanied homeless youth under the age of 18 re-engage with safe and appropriate family members. It is essential that child welfare agencies play an active role in their community's plan to ensure no child experiences homelessness. Meaningful partnerships with targeted homelessness and mainstream housing resources are needed to better serve our families, children, and youth.

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/s/
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Attachments:

- A - Federal Partnerships in Addressing Family and Youth Homelessness
- B - Promising Practices
- C - CB Regional Office Program Managers

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Appendix A

Key Federal Partners in Addressing Family and Youth Homelessness

The Administration for Children and Families

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) oversees more than 60 programs in 19 offices with a budget of more than \$53 billion. ACF has responsibility for a broad array of programs supporting low-income children, families, and communities, including but not limited to Head Start, Child Care, child welfare, child support, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, refugee assistance, domestic violence, runaway and homeless youth, trafficking unaccompanied children, and others. One major cross-cutting priority of ACF has been to support efforts to end family and youth homelessness. ACF works closely with Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Education, and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, and other federal partners towards this goal. An overview of ACF's work to address family homelessness and help families quickly access services and safe and stable housing can be found [here](#).

Family and Youth Services Bureau

The [Family and Youth Services Bureau](#) (FYSB) is the sister office to the Children's Bureau in the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families. A primary focus of FYSB is the funding of community-based programs directed towards runaway and homeless youth. Programs include: street outreach programs; basic center programs for youth under the age of 18; and transitional living programs, including maternity group homes. The Children's Bureau works closely with this office to support a meaningful collaboration between the two programs that can support youth in foster care and youth who have runaway. A critical part of this work is the information sharing on best practices in the provision of housing for transition-aged youth. FYSB also operates the [Family Violence Prevention and Services Program](#). The link between domestic violence, child welfare, and homelessness is well documented. Domestic violence providers are an important community partner in child welfare and homelessness. The Children's Bureau urges child welfare agencies to be informed about the programs, services and supports funded by FYSB programs.

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) - Office of Regional Operations

ACF, an operating division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, promotes the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals and communities with funding, strategic partnerships, guidance, training and technical assistance. ACF is comprised of 19 offices, including program offices such as the Children's Bureau and FYSB, and also the [Office of Regional Operations](#), which represents 10 regional offices around the country. ACF's regional offices include Regional Program Managers and staff working on specific ACF programs (such as the Children's Bureau's Child Welfare Regional Program Managers) and also a Regional Administrator and staff who focus on cross-cutting and special initiatives with the states, territories, tribes and grantees in their region. The Office of Regional Operations has made a commitment to further the goals of ending family and youth homelessness by working across programs within the ACF Region to further information sharing and highlight promising practices. The Children's Bureau urges child welfare agencies to learn about and engage in the

efforts of the Office of Regional Operations to link services relating to homelessness across programs.

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) – Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development

ACF's Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development is the focal point within HHS for early childhood health and development at the Federal level. The Office provides oversight to two of the largest federal programs – Head Start and Child Care including the new Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships. The Office also co-administers the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) with Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) including important Tribal efforts. Ensuring the well-being of our youngest children is essential to the work of ACF and is especially urgent when considering the vulnerability of young children experiencing homelessness. Several federal policies and programs are in place to strengthen the ability of early care and education (ECE) providers to serve young children experiencing homelessness. A resource for collaboration among housing early childhood and child welfare is the newly released [Joint Policy Statement on Meeting the Needs of Families with Young Children Experiencing and At Risk of Homelessness](#).

Administration for Children and Families (ACF) – Office of Family Assistance

The [Office of Family Assistance](#) (OFA) administers federal grant programs that foster family economic security and stability, including the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and the Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Tribal TANF) program, Native Employment Works, Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood grants, Health Profession Opportunity Grants, and Tribal TANF-Child Welfare Coordination grants. OFA's work on family homelessness is focused primarily on the TANF block grant program to states, territories, and tribes. OFA encourages TANF jurisdictions to consider the implementation of interventions that connect families to permanent housing with coordinated supportive services, and released an [Information Memorandum](#) in 2013 to provide guidance on allowable uses of TANF funds to address and prevent family homelessness. OFA also released [Enhancing Family Stability: A Guide for Assessing Housing Status and Coordinating with Local Homelessness Programs for TANF Agencies](#) in 2016 to help state TANF agencies recognize the important role they have in identifying and serving families experiencing homelessness and families at risk of homelessness, and to help them better assess for homelessness and housing instability and formulate cohesive strategies with homelessness providers and systems.

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness

The [U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness](#) (USICH) is the Federal agency tasked with coordinating and leading the federal response to homelessness. [Opening Doors](#), the current federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, was issued in 2010 and guides the work of USICH and its 19 Council member agencies. The plan currently sets ambitious goals to prevent and end homelessness among all populations including families, youth and children. Since the development of the plan, the Children's Bureau has worked to implement strategies in child welfare to reduce homelessness among families and youth, including the funding of child welfare-specific grants to develop supportive housing strategies and efforts to end homelessness among families with child welfare system involvement and also to prevent homelessness for youth aging out of foster care. The work lead by USICH provides a comprehensive and

coordinated view across all Federal agencies, including resources and funding streams on services and supports for families and youth experiencing homelessness. Information on the USICH Regional Coordinator assigned to your state as well as information on your state interagency council on homelessness is available [here](#). Multiple technical resources are available online to support the work of ending youth and family homelessness at the state and local level.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD is the Federal agency responsible for administering the federal funding for housing and other housing-related services. Consistent with the goals of *Opening Doors*, ending homelessness is a key agency-wide priority.

HUD Local Offices

HUD is organized in [10 Regions](#). Each Region is managed by a Regional Administrator, who also oversees the Regional Office. Each Field Office within a Region is managed by a Field Office Director, who reports to the Regional Administrator. Contact information on the local HUD office for each community is available [here](#).

Public Housing Authorities (PHAs)

Public Housing Authorities are the agencies responsible for the management and operation of local and regional public housing programs. They are independent local agencies that are funded by HUD. They may also operate other types of housing programs that are not usually considered public housing. The local public housing authority will be able to provide information on public housing assistance or specific information about public housing programs such as housing choice vouchers in your area. A list of the local PHAs is available [here](#).

Homeless Assistance Programs (ESG and CoCs)

HUD operates two programs specific to homelessness, the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program and the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program. The CoC program is designed to create local Continuums of Care (also called CoCs) to promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness, provide funding for efforts to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families, and promote access to “mainstream” programs (i.e., those not specifically targeted to homeless populations). Every community across the country is part of a local CoC that acts as a planning body to coordinate services and local funding related to homeless youth, families and individuals. For more information, contact your local CoC. A list of local CoCs is available [here](#). The ESG program is a formula grant to communities for homelessness assistance and homelessness prevention activities. The ESG program is designed to help communities fund activities like providing emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, and street outreach. A list of local ESG grantees is available [here](#).

The work between the HHS and HUD continues to be a critical link in understanding the resources, supports, and opportunities to collaborate at the Federal level which in turn facilitate local and state collaborations.

Appendix B

Promising Practices

Over the last five years, the Children's Bureau in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has invested in 23 communities to improve the outcomes of families and youth involved in child welfare through discretionary grants focused on addressing housing needs and the prevention of homelessness.

Partnerships to Demonstrate the Effectiveness of Supportive Housing for Families in the Child Welfare System (SHF) Grants

In 2012, the Children's Bureau funded five communities to develop and implement local supportive housing service programs for families who come to the attention of the child welfare system due to severe housing issues and high service needs. Each supportive housing program integrates community services for housing search and assistance, customized case management, and evidence-based services for parents and their children. These are five-year grants.

Youth At-Risk of Homelessness (YARH) Grants

In 2013, the Children's Bureau funded 18 communities to engage in planning and data analysis for youth with child welfare involvement or history who are at-risk for homelessness (Phase I). During the two-year planning grant, the 18 communities analyzed data to identify the population most at-risk of homelessness, developed partnerships, and created strategic plans to end youth homelessness among youth with foster care histories. In 2015, the Children's Bureau selected 6 of the 18 grantees to enter into an initial implementation phase to test and refine their interventions for the target population (Phase II). Phase II grants are for three years.

The following are examples of promising practices from these two clusters of grantees.

- Data sharing and data analysis to prevent and end homelessness.

A critical component of the YARH grants was to look at the data to determine which youth are most at-risk for homelessness. While involvement with the child welfare system is a clear risk factor for homelessness, not all youth involved in the child welfare system are at the same risk of future homelessness. Using that lens, the grantees utilized existing data agreements and developed new partnerships to share data across systems. Many of the risk factors identified by the grantees already had been noted in the research literature, but across all of the communities, the process helped to clarify the changes that are needed to impact youth homelessness.

Grantees also learned that significant time is needed to develop strong relationships for data sharing. While protecting privacy is a critical part of all data sharing, strong Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and procedural safeguards are possible for data sharing and analysis.

Many recent competitive funding announcements looking at reducing youth/ family homelessness require letters of commitment from partner agencies and/or MOUs. MOUs clearly outline the responsibilities of all parties. Having established MOUs in place can be a critical asset in applying for and being awarded competitive grants in your community.

While some data simply cannot be shared, there may be additional alternatives to learn about populations of interest. For example, one YARH grantee designed a case review system to determine how their system was serving homeless youth and youth at-risk of homelessness. Based on those reviews, the agency made significant changes to their ability to detect risk and protective factors with an orientation towards future youth homelessness.

All state child welfare agencies have access to data from the National Youth in Transition Database where youth are asked about their experiences with homelessness at ages 17, 19, and 21. While not every youth is surveyed, it is a useful starting point to see which youth have already experienced homelessness by age 17 and how supports may prevent additional experiences with homelessness as youth reach ages 19 and 21.

Data analysis and exchange is a core component of understanding the risk and protective factors of youth homelessness. However, it is only one part of understanding how to target services to prevent youth and family homelessness. It is also important to review case files of families and youth and compare that data against integrated data sources. More critically, it is important to conduct focus groups and ask families, youth, providers, and others about their experiences around housing and use that information to support a community response and system improvement.

- Use of administrative data for targeting and screening for housing needs.

Administrative data was used in the SHF demonstration for targeting and screening for housing needs among families involved in the child welfare system. Two examples from the demonstration grants are highlighted below.

San Francisco Human Service Agency's (HSA) Families Moving Forward (FMF): San Francisco HSA improved cross-system coordination to meet the housing and service needs of families at risk of child removal. Key aspects of the program design included accelerated triage to identify homeless families who are at high risk of having children removed, rapid referral to housing assistance, and multi-disciplinary teams to help families maintain housing and improve wellbeing. HSA used child welfare administrative data for targeting to determine the kind of families likely to benefit from the FMF intervention and develop eligibility criteria. They also used administrative data to conduct ongoing homelessness screening to identify families experiencing homelessness quickly and accurately, as they entered the child welfare system.

FMF identified child welfare-involved families in need of housing by linking administrative databases that exist within the public child welfare agency. The Structured Decision Making (SDM) risk assessment tool, administered during a child welfare investigation, includes an item about homelessness. FMF linked local risk assessment data to California's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) database for all children investigated for maltreatment in San Francisco during a prior period. The purpose was to estimate the incidence of homeless families entering the child welfare system, the likelihood of out-of-home placement among them, and the frequency of co-occurring risk factors. Based

on the analysis of administrative data, FMF determined characteristics of families that would most likely benefit from the intervention.

San Francisco HSA continues to use the SDM risk assessment tool as a housing screen for families who come to the attention of the child welfare system. The SDM is a validated, proprietary tool and cannot be altered; however, because there is an item about homelessness, it can be used as a housing screen. In San Francisco, HSA trained staff on the definition of homelessness to ensure that child welfare staff are operating with a standard definition of homelessness that is in line with the county's definition of homelessness. Further, all investigative case workers receive a laminated printout of the definition and the homeless definition criteria are summarized on the revised investigation narrative form.

Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) Intensive Supportive Housing for Families (ISHF): The ISHF program provides supportive housing with intensive case management, vocational supports, and access to evidence-based interventions. The project was first implemented in one region of the state (Middletown, Norwich, and Willimantic; mostly rural and small cities, covering the entire eastern half of the state) and expanded to another region (including Hartford; mixed and more urban, covering the central part of the state).

Through the grant, DCF is implementing the [QRAFT Screening Tool](#). The aim of the screening tool is to ensure that every family has housing needs reviewed early in its child welfare involvement, enabling prompt referral of families with housing problems. To aid DCF workers in assessing housing concerns, the Quick RAFT -- a short version of the Risk Assessment for Family Triage (RAFT) tool -- was created. The QRAFT asks workers to rate families on three housing domains: Current Housing, Housing Condition, and Housing History. Items are scored on a 5-point scale, from 0 (an asset/not a barrier) to 4 (severe barrier). Clients with a score of 3 or 4 on any item (i.e., significant or severe barriers) are referred for further evaluation. Assessment of housing issues, even for diverted (Family Assessment Response, FAR) or unsubstantiated cases, helps DCF understand and document family housing needs.

In addition to the work being conducted by the SHF grantees, the YARH grants are in the process of developing screening tools for risks related to homelessness. While still in early development, these tools will provide a method of looking at risk and protective factors for youth/ young adults involved with the child welfare system.

Screening for the appropriate level of housing needs is occurring across all sectors to end homelessness. In an environment of limited housing resources, it is critical to allocate them to the appropriate families and youth. Partnering with agencies around screening and assessment is an important strategy.

- Housing Vouchers and other housing programs.

It is important to understand the resources and supports available in the community to support homeless families and at-risk youth. In at least one YARH grantee site, an open

conversation with the state housing authority led to the allocation of vouchers for youth at-risk of homelessness. While this may not be a common example, the opening of the dialogue around the resources available in the community through U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development was an important step to making sure that resources are allocated to families and youth involved in the child welfare system. In addition to housing vouchers, local communities may have other supportive programs available to those already housed.

The Family Unification Program Vouchers (FUP) is perhaps the best known example of a housing program for young adults aging out of foster care (or who were in foster care after the age of 16) as well as for families involved in child welfare. Over the last two years, Congress has expanded the timeframe and supports for FUP vouchers for youth. In order to receive vouchers, the local Public Housing Authority (PHA) must partner through a formal MOU with the child welfare agency to document that services will be provided to the young adult while in the subsidized housing. Families do not need to have services paired with the housing voucher and their vouchers are not time-limited.

It is critical to understand how housing programs and services are funded in the state and in local communities to determine how to best utilize these resources.

- Public and private partnerships to leverage resources and supports.

Partnerships are at the center of both the SHF and YARH demonstration work. The Children's Bureau views partnerships, including public/private partnerships, as critical in order to end family and youth homelessness. Partnerships develop and leverage the resources and supports needed to address the needs of families and youth in the child welfare system experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. At the systems level, SHF grantees are required to partner with the local public child welfare agency, local PHAs or other housing agency, and at least one community family homeless or domestic violence shelter provider. Each of these partnerships is formalized through MOUs. Additional partnerships include the public and/or private housing agencies; local philanthropic partners; employment and education programs; substance abuse treatment, health, mental health, and child-serving agencies; family court and criminal justice system.

During the planning phase of YARH, the grantees also worked to develop partnerships at the state, local, and community level. Due to the numerous misconceptions about youth homelessness, many of the grantees created open meetings to educate the public about youth homelessness in their community. Creating newsletters and awareness campaigns about the needs of youth allowed different partners to come to the table.

Another example of a public/ private partnership was the 2016 New England Ending Youth Homelessness Summit. The Summit was coordinated by ACF with the states in Region 1 (New England). The overarching goal was to help all New England states develop a coordinated community response to end youth homelessness. The Summit aimed to increase state and local leaders' knowledge of federal policy, model practices and resources targeted towards ending youth homelessness; and increase their capacity to identify resources and

foster effective partnerships among state, federal agencies and local agencies on the frontline of ending youth homelessness in New England.

The New England Federal Regional Interagency Council on Homelessness (FRICH) Workgroup on Youth Homelessness co-sponsored the event with philanthropic partners Liberty Mutual Foundation and the Melville Charitable Trust.

CB Regional Office Program Managers

Attachment B

<p>1</p>	<p>Region 1 – Boston Bob Cavanaugh bob.cavanaugh@acf.hhs.gov JFK Federal Building, Rm. 2000 15 Sudbury Street Boston, MA 02203 (617) 565-1020 States: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>Region 6 – Dallas Janis Brown janis.brown@acf.hhs.gov 1301 Young Street, Suite 945 Dallas, TX 75202-5433 (214) 767-8466 States: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Region 2 - New York City Alfonso Nicholas alfonso.nicholas@acf.hhs.gov 26 Federal Plaza, Rm. 4114 New York, NY 10278 (212) 264-2890, x 145 States and Territories: New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>Region 7 - Kansas City Deborah Smith deborah.smith@acf.hhs.gov Federal Office Building, Rm. 349 601 E 12th Street Kansas City, MO 64106 (816) 426-2262 States: Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Region 3 – Philadelphia Lisa Pearson lisa.pearson@acf.hhs.gov 150 S. Independence Mall West - Suite 864 Philadelphia, PA 19106-3499 (215) 861-4030 States: Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>Region 8 – Denver Marilyn Kennerson marilyn.kennerson@acf.hhs.gov 1961 Stout Street, 8th Floor Byron Rogers Federal Building Denver, CO 80294-3538 (303) 844-1163 States: Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Region 4 – Atlanta Shalonda Cawthon shalonda.cawthon@acf.hhs.gov 61 Forsyth Street SW, Ste. 4M60 Atlanta, GA 30303-8909 (404) 562-2242 States: Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>Region 9 - San Francisco Debra Samples debra.samples@acf.hhs.gov 90 7th Street - Ste 9-300 San Francisco, CA 94103 (415) 437-8626 States and Territories: Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Outer Pacific—American Samoa Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Pohnpei, Yap) Guam, Marshall Islands, Palau</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Region 5 – Chicago Kendall Darling kendall.darling@acf.hhs.gov 233 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 400 Chicago, IL 60601 (312) 353-9672 States: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>Region 10 – Seattle Tina Naugler tina.naugler@acf.hhs.gov 701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1600, MS-73 Seattle, WA 98104 (206) 615-3657 States: Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington</p>