



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

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**ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**  
**Administration on Children, Youth and Families**  
330 C Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

December 11, 2020

Dear Child Welfare Director:

I write today to share information on important updates the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has made to the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) initiative.

As you may know, the FYI initiative provides an exciting opportunity for communities across the country to build upon efforts to prevent and end homelessness among youth with a current or prior history of child welfare involvement. We know that a significant number of youth who age out of foster care experience homelessness and many more experience housing instability. We also know that the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has increased this risk. In recent months, we have heard directly from young adults around the country about their fears and concerns for their own housing situation and that of their peers.

Since the FYI initiative was launched in June 2019, 34 states and 105 public housing authorities (PHAs) have received over \$8.4 million in FYI funding to prevent or end homelessness among young adults under age 25 who are in, or have recently left, the foster care system without a home to go to.

On October 6, 2020, HUD issued [Notice PIH 2020-28](#), a new notice that makes the FYI (2.0) program available to more communities and expands the population of eligible youth.

The following aspects of the FYI program remain unchanged:

- PHAs partner with child welfare agencies, current and former foster youth, and Continuums of Care and other partners, to request Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) to assist eligible youth for a period of up to 36 months.
- These HCVs will allow a qualifying young person to choose and lease privately-owned rental housing. A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly on behalf of the participating youth. The young person then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program. Generally, the youth must pay 30 percent of his or her monthly adjusted gross income for rent and utilities.
- The HCV assistance is used to leverage 36 months of supportive services for the young person.

However, the new notice implements the following important changes to expand the program:

- Opens up the opportunity to every public housing agency (PHA) that administers an HCV program, including those PHAs that have a 90 percent utilization rate of their Family Unification Program program.
- Increases the maximum award to a cap of 50 vouchers per fiscal year for those PHAs that have an FYI voucher utilization rate of 90 percent or greater.
- Allows PHAs to request funding on a rolling basis to the extent funding remains available.

Additionally, the youth eligibility language has been revised to explicitly reference the “16 or older” requirement, as listed below, making more youth who have experienced foster care eligible for the FYI 2.0 program. An FYI-eligible youth:

- 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.

In the upcoming months, the Children’s Bureau plans to support HUD in conducting webinars and other outreach to share the news about updates to the program. While we acknowledge that there are still challenges with how the child welfare agency can provide the required supportive services, we also know that many communities have come together to identify who can provide the supportive services through the network of philanthropy, state funds, and community partnership, so that no young adult formerly in foster care is homeless. We plan to share these successful examples in the webinars.

For more information and resources about the initiative, please see HUD’s webpage on FYI, located here:

[https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/hcv/fyi](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/fyi).

We are excited to continue to partner with HUD in promoting and supporting implementation of the FYI initiative.

Sincerely,



Jerry Milner  
Associate Commissioner  
Children’s Bureau