



# **Tipping Point Community of Practice Training:**

## **The Untapped Potential of U.S. HUD's Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Housing Vouchers for Transition Aged Foster Youth**

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## Presentation Agenda

1. Brief Overview of FYI
2. Important Updates to FYI
3. Role of Youth Service Providers
4. Promising Practices: Lessons Learned from FYI Community of Practice
5. FYI Resources from JBAY and Youth Law Center
6. Discussion and Q&A

# 1. Overview of FYI Housing Vouchers

## **FYI Overview**

- **The Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) initiative is a youth-written distribution mechanism for Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers for youth.**
- **FUP vouchers are a type of Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) that are designated for families or youth involved with the child welfare system.**
- **Origins: Designed by young people who were in foster care and experienced homelessness after leaving care.**

## FYI Overview

### Which young people are eligible? (FYI does not change FUP eligibility)

- Be at least 18 and no more than 24 years old;
- Have left foster care or will leave foster care in the next 90 days,
- Be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless at the age of 16 or older.

# How FYI is Administered

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Makes FYI Available in Two Ways:

## 1. Competitive Vouchers

- HUD issues Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to invite applications from eligible applicants for the program and purpose described within the NOFO. The most recent [NOFO](#) was issued in 2024.

## 2. Non-Competitive Vouchers

- **Requirements to draw down Non-Competitive vouchers include:**
  - Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA) and Public Housing Authority (PHA) must collaborate through a MOU or letter of intent.
  - PCWA must refer youth and verify their eligibility.
  - PCWA must provide for or arrange for services.
  - PHA must take referrals from the PCWA and request the voucher from HUD.

## How FYI is Administered Cont.

- The PHA provides the voucher and the child welfare agency provides or arranges for support services to help youth maintain housing and meet their goals. These support services are voluntary.
- Services can include: help with employment or school, getting connected with mental health services, or financial management support. (They are identical to the type of services that are provided through the Chafee program.)
- Program length: FYI vouchers last for three years, but can be extended for two additional years if the young adult is participating in the Family Self Sufficiency Program (FSS) and/or working or going to school.



# How FYI is Administered Cont.

## The Referral Process

- Young person can ask social worker, juvenile probation officer, or their Independent Living Program (ILP) Worker (if they have one) to refer them to the PCWA point of contact (PCWA Contact). Attorneys can also make this request. PCWAs can also identify other third parties who are able to make referrals to PCWAs and start the referral process.
- JBAY's FYI Point of Contact Roster: <https://jbay.org/resources/fyi-roster/>

# How FYI is Administered Cont.

## The Referral Process Cont.

- The PCWA Contact notifies the Public Housing Authority and begins the process to get the get a voucher.
- If the young person is still in foster care or EFC, a request can be made on their behalf within 90 days of leaving foster care. This process should be a part of their “transition planning.”
- If they are out of foster care and have not reached their 25th birthday, they can apply at any time.

IL coordinator (or POC) and young person file FUP paperwork with PHA POC about 3- 6 months prior to leaving care

2

PHA requests FYI voucher(s) from HUD (HUD-52515)

3

HUD



HUD dispenses the funds "on demand" (ACC)

The Public Housing Authority

4



PHA Waiting List



The PHA administers FYI to landlord and youth

5



The Public Child Welfare Agency Independent Living Coordinator

1



\*FSHO is conducted without further disadvantaging waiting list households

PCWA assists with landlord recruitment and positive youth development services for the duration of the voucher (36 months)

## 2. Important Updates to FYI

## Important Updates From [PIH 2023-04](#)

- All PHAs that issue HCVs are eligible to administer vouchers via FYI.
- PHAs can have FUP and FYI vouchers.
- All PHAs offer participating youth the opportunity to extend FYI vouchers for 2 additional years with participation in the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program or through meeting other conditions.
- Use a letter of intent or MOU is allowed. Clarification that the PCWA can provide or arrange for provision of services.

## Important Updates From [PIH 2023-04](#) Cont.

- **Increase in access to more non-competitive vouchers.**
  - PHAs can request up to 25 vouchers each fiscal year with the option to request 25 more. (Total of 50 per PHA).
  - Creates exceptions to the 90% utilization rate so that PHAs can request more vouchers.

## Important Updates to FYI Cont.

- **PIH-2023-04 also:**
  - **Makes clear that the CoC can, but does not have to be, part of accessing vouchers.**
  - **Clarifies that PHAs must comply with the Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities (FSHO) provisions that were passed into law and may provide an additional 24 months for youth to continue receiving voucher assistance if they meet certain requirements.**
    - (e.g., participating in a self-sufficiency program or engaging in education, workforce development, or employment activities; more details on this can be found [“Implementation of the Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Amendments”](#) in the Federal Register).

## Federal Legislative Updates

- **HR 4366 is an Appropriations bill that became effective law on March 9, 2024. It contains appropriations for several federal departments including HUD.**
- **The bill has a few important provisions that impact FYI and FUP**
  - \$30 million is appropriated for the FUP program, with \$25 million allocated for non-competitive FYI vouchers.
  - Eliminates the requirement that PHAs place young people on the general HCV waiting list.
  - Directs HUD to encourage PHAs to amend their Administrative Plan to include FYI.



# Relevant State Budget Updates

## Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program (HNMP):

- **The HNMP is administered through the CA Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to county child welfare agencies to provide housing navigators to help young adults secure and maintain housing. Current and former foster youth are a priority population.**
- **HNMP funds were increased in 2022-23 to \$13.7 million (annually) and designated for TAY.**
  - These funds have been allocated to nearly all counties, but some counties have not yet claimed their 2022-23 funds. State is working on expediting funds administration process.
- **The Newsom Administration's 24-25 state budget maintains HNMP funding.**
  - The Governor ultimately decided to maintain annual \$13.7 million funding despite the funds initially being proposed for elimination in response to California's budget deficit.

# Housing Navigation and Maintenance Program (HNMP) (cont.):

- **These funds can be used for:**
  - move-in costs;
  - security deposits;
  - housing navigation (i.e. help youth to locate housing units);
  - recruiting and supporting landlords (e.g. provide landlord incentives) so counties have available units for young people to use their vouchers;
  - provide ongoing supportive services (e.g. case management, education/employment support, budgeting and other independent living skills, etc.).

## 3. Role of Youth Service Providers

# Role of Youth Service Providers

**What is the role of advocates in helping young adults secure stable housing by accessing FYI vouchers?**

## **Role of Youth Service Providers Cont.**

**1. If the young person is still in foster care, ask the child welfare agency to refer the youth to the FYI program as part of the transition planning process. The referral to the PHA can be made as early as 90 days before leaving foster care. You can begin to work with the youth to start gathering the info and docs that are needed. The housing search can also begin.**

## Role of Youth Service Providers Cont.

2. Assist young people who have already aged out make a request that the child welfare agency refer them to the PHA for an FYI voucher. Here is a [link](#) to a template you can use.

## **Role of Youth Service Providers Cont.**

**3. Some of you may have been identified as part of how PCWAs are meeting the obligation to provide supportive services to youth who are receiving FYI vouchers.**

## **Role of Youth Service Providers Cont.**

**4. Youth service providers could also connect youth with legal aid attorneys or dependency counsel to support them in navigating the administrative process to obtain a FYI voucher.**



## Role of Youth Service Providers Cont.

- **What should you do if you are supporting youth in a county that is not accessing FYI vouchers?**
  - At least one housing authority in each of the six Tipping Point counties issues FYI vouchers (San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Marin Counties).
  - If the child welfare agency has not yet connected with local PHAs so that they can distribute FYI housing vouchers or you are confronting other barriers with your advocacy, you can contact YLC or JBAY to help you make these connections.

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## FYI/FUP Community of Practice

- JBAY convened FYI/FUP Community of Practice in partnership with NCHCW from **February 2023 through April 2024**.
- County child welfare agencies and Public Housing Authorities from **15 counties participated**, often in partnership with their contracted service providers.
- Community of Practice consisted of monthly **individual TA sessions** working toward specific goals, and topical **peer learning sessions**.
- Beginning July 1, 2024, JBAY will continue to work intensively with just **3 counties**, with funding from Tipping Point:
  - Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin

## 4. Promising Practices: Lessons Learned from FYI Community of Practice

## Promising Practices: Lessons Learned from FYI Community of Practice

01

### Collaborative Practice

- Maximize vouchers available by taking advantage of both competitive and on-demand vouchers each federal fiscal year.
- Set standing meetings among all involved parties to maintain efficient and effective voucher distribution.
- Streamline FYI referral and distribution process to minimize unnecessary steps.
- Do not utilize Coordinated Entry System to administer vouchers; CoCs should be referral partners.
- Identify best partner to conduct landlord recruitment and provide incentives.

## Promising Practices: Lessons Learned from FYI Community of Practice

02

### Child Welfare Agency Practice

- Partner with as many Public Housing Authorities as possible to maximize vouchers and locations.
- Establish policy to make FYI voucher referral mandatory at each 90-day transition planning meeting
- Fully utilize Housing Navigation & Maintenance Program allocation annually.
- Research opportunities to utilize Cal-AIM to fund housing supports.
- Offer a waiver for youth with an FYI voucher to opt out of supportive services *if they choose*.
- Utilize flexible contract language for services providers working with FYI youth, meeting minimal federal requirements and allowing for providers to meet youth where they are.

## Promising Practices: Lessons Learned from FYI Community of Practice

03

### Public Housing Authority Practice

- Auto-enroll youth participants into FSS if available, and make sure youth clearly understand participation conditions for two-year voucher extension.
- Review youth communication protocols with county child welfare or service provider partners to ensure optimum results (e.g. blocked numbers/emails)
- Transition youth with an FYI voucher to a standard Housing Choice Voucher at the end of the term.
- Re-issue vouchers to new youth upon voucher expiration or housing search time expiration.

## 5. FYI Resources from Youth Law Center & John Burton Advocates for Youth

## YLC Resources

- **YLC Fact Sheets and Resources**
  - [Maximizing Housing Entitlements for Current and Former Foster Youth](#)
  - [An Overview of FYI and FUP for Advocates](#)
  - [An Overview of FYI/FUP Vouchers: A Resource for Current and Former Foster Youth in California](#)
  - [Bench Card: Ensuring Housing Security by Utilizing FYI Vouchers](#)
  - [Foster Youth to Independence FAQ](#)
  - [Template Referral Letters](#)
  - [Policy Alert: THP-Plus Program Expansion: A Resource for Current and Former Foster Youth in California \(note: this is about a different housing program available to former foster youth\)](#)
- **FYI Toolkit**
  - [This toolkit of resources](#) includes documents so advocates can help young people access Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) vouchers and support stakeholders to build local FYI programs and spread the word about the availability of vouchers to an array of stakeholders (landlord, PHAs, advocates, youth, Board of Supervisors, City Council).



## JBAY Resources & Reports

- **Utilization of FYI/FUP for Youth in California:**
  - a. **2023 Report** - *What's Stopping California from Maximizing Federal Housing Assistance for Youth? A Statewide Analysis of Housing Choice Vouchers for Former Foster Youth*  
(<https://jbay.org/resources/2023-fyi-report/>)
  - b. **2021 Report** - *2020-21 Statewide Analysis of Supportive Housing for Former Foster Youth in California* (<https://jbay.org/resources/2020-21-supportive-housing-for-ffy/>)
- **FYI Points-of-Contact**
  - a. **Statewide Roster** - <https://jbay.org/resources/fyi-roster/>
- **Information about the Preservation of Housing Navigation & Maintenance Program (HNMP) in California's 2024-25 State Budget:**
  - a. **Fact Sheet:** <https://jbay.org/resources/hnmp-fact-sheet-2024/>

## 6. Discussion and Q&A

**Thank you for your time today!  
If you have any questions about this  
presentations please contact:**

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