

Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Voucher Program:

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM RULES

[Foster Youth to Independence](#) (FYI) vouchers provide dedicated rental assistance to support youth in two situations: youth exiting foster care who are at risk of homelessness, and youth who have become homeless (or at risk of homelessness) after having been in foster care. The program is designed to provide rental assistance to youth for 36 months; youth who meet certain conditions can have their rental assistance extended beyond this for an additional 24 months, allowing those youth to receive rental support for a 5-year period.



Who Administers FYI Vouchers?

Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) that administer Housing Choice Vouchers and partner with a child welfare agency are eligible to apply to receive FYI vouchers through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Who Applies for FYI Vouchers?

PHAs can apply for FYI vouchers in two ways. One way is through a national competition in response to a periodic Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) issued by HUD.

PHAs partnering with a child welfare agency can also apply for FYI vouchers through a noncompetitive process. This allows PHAs to access vouchers on an as-needed basis, whenever an eligible youth is referred by the child welfare agency partner. The noncompetitive process affords every eligible PHA the opportunity to access FYI vouchers on behalf of youth in their locality.

Who is Eligible for FYI Voucher Assistance?

The FYI vouchers can be used to assist youth who are eligible for the [Family Unification Program](#) (FUP) vouchers. This includes youth who:

- have left foster care or will leave foster care within 90 days as part of a transition plan;
- are at least 18 years of age (or will be upon receipt of the voucher) and not more than 24 years of age (i.e., not yet reached their 25th birthday) at point of referral and execution of FYI rental assistance contract; and
- are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- Youth exiting institutional settings (such as mental health or correctional facilities) are among those potentially eligible for FYI rental assistance.

What Services Are Provided to Youth?

Youth receiving FYI vouchers are strongly encouraged to participate in Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) programs, if the PHA offers the program and is accepting participants. The child welfare agency partner must agree to deliver or secure additional services to help youth access housing, achieve housing stability, and meet their own educational and employment goals.

FYI voucher assistance cannot be made contingent on youth agreeing to accept services. However, youth who do not participate in an FSS program, if available to them, will be ineligible for an extension of rental assistance beyond 36 months unless they are exempt from doing so.

What is Required of Youth to Receive an Extension Beyond 36 Months?

Youth who first leased a unit with their FYI voucher after December 27, 2020, are assessed by the PHA as they approach receipt of 36 months of FYI assistance to determine eligibility for a 12-month extension. They are assessed again as they approach receipt of 48 months of FYI assistance for an additional 12-month extension.

PHAs must extend FYI voucher rental assistance to all youth eligible for an extension. This includes youth who:

- Participated in an FSS or a Moving to Work self-sufficiency program;
- Were unable to enroll in an FSS program but who did engage in education, or workforce development activities or were employed in 9 of the preceding 12 months; or
- Are exempt from participation in an FSS program or education, workforce development, or employment activities due to caring for a dependent child under age 6 or an incapacitated person; engaging in drug or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation; or being incapable of participating in FSS or educational, workforce development or employment activities due to a documented medical condition.

HUD does not provide a threshold (e.g.: number of hours of employment each month) as to what constitutes youths' engagement in education, employment, or workforce development activities nor do they identify documentation requirements. Each PHA can define their own threshold for what meets the expectation of participation in education or workforce development or employment, however, HUD does encourage PHAs to offer extensions to the broadest number of youth possible while remaining compliant with rules.



How Can Your Jurisdiction Access Vouchers to Assist Youth?

Implementing FYI vouchers requires partnerships between PHAs and child welfare agencies. The noncompetitive process enables all PHAs who administer Housing Choice Vouchers to access FYI vouchers on behalf of eligible youth once they have established a partnership agreement with a local child welfare agency. No PHA may receive more than 50 FYI vouchers through the noncompetitive process in a fiscal year.

PHA Responsibilities

PHAs must develop a partnership with their local child welfare agency.

The agreement between these agencies, in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding or a letter of intent, must delineate how each partner will fulfill the requirements of the FYI voucher program.

Youth referred by the child welfare agency must be added to the HCV waitlist. The PHA can open a waitlist for the exclusive purpose of adding youth eligible for FYI vouchers.

Once the PHA and the child welfare agency have established a partnership agreement, the PHA can use the FYI Application Request Form on HUD's website to request an FYI voucher from HUD.

Child Welfare Agency Responsibilities

The child welfare agency must agree to identify and refer eligible youth.

The child welfare agency is also expected to demonstrate how supportive services will be provided to youth for 36 months. Services may be offered by the child welfare agency or by a third party.

Child welfare agencies are also required to develop a system to prioritize youth for FYI voucher assistance among all eligible potential recipients. This includes youth preparing to transition from foster care and youth who are currently homeless after exiting care.

HUD directs child welfare agencies to prioritize youth for FYI voucher assistance based on "level of need and appropriateness of the intervention." Any system of prioritization must not violate fair housing, civil rights, and HUD's Equal Access Requirements.

Where Can I Learn More About FYI Vouchers?

The [National Center on Child Welfare](#) offers a wide variety of resources on FYI vouchers. These resources include information targeted to youth currently in foster care, foster care alumni, child welfare workers, and program administrators.

[HUD](#) offers a rich array of resources on a dedicated FYI webpage. The webpage includes information about FYI vouchers available through the competitive and noncompetitive process, FAQs, archived webinars, and a list of PHAs that have accessed FYI vouchers on behalf of youth.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness and its partners understand that helping localities maximize use of the FYI program requires identifying and documenting emerging promising practices. The Alliance welcomes input from partners utilizing FYI vouchers to prevent and end youth homelessness so those lessons can be translated to the larger field. Please feel free to reach out to Sharon McDonald (smcdonald@naeh.org) and Malik Rivers (mrivers@naeh.org) with local insights and experiences.