

## XXVIII. FAMILY UNIFICATION PROGRAM (FUP)

- 1) Eligibility Criteria
- 2) Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA)
- 3) Referral, Opening the Waitlist and Selection
- 4) Waitlist Management and Collaboration
- 5) Collaboration with the COC
- 6) Preference: Continued Assistance for FUP-Youth Vouchers
- 7) Continued assistance for FUP-Families
- 8) Housing Search Assistance
- 9) Services provided to FUP- Eligible Youth
- 10) Portability
- 11) Termination of Rental Assistance
- 12) Project Based Voucher
- 13) Reporting Requirements
- 14) Criteria for Beneficiary

**Award:** CDC was awarded funds from the Family Unification Program Notice of Funding Availability for Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018.

**Addendums:** A. MOU, B. FUP Q&A's

All provisions of the Housing Choice Voucher Administrative Plan apply to the Family Unification Program, unless otherwise specified, or exempted by regulation or by this Family Unification Program Chapter.

### **1) ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

FUP is a Targeted Program under which Housing Choice Vouchers are provided to:

- a. **FUP–Family** Vouchers are families that the Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA) has certified as a family for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in either:
  - o The imminent placement of the family's child, or children, in out-of-home care; or
  - o The delay of discharge of a child, or children, to the family from out-of-home care; and

There is no time limitation on FUP family vouchers

- b. **FUP–Youth** Vouchers are for a youth that the PCWA has certified to be at least 18 years old and not more than 24 years of age (has not reached their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday) who;

- Left foster care at age 16 or older 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
- At Risk of Becoming Homeless.

FUP Youth Vouchers are limited, by statute, to 36 months of housing assistance.

The Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA) is responsible for determining eligibility for part a. and b. listed above

- c. FUP families must meet all other eligibility requirements for the Housing Choice Voucher Program. CDC will determine eligibility of these households for the Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance in accordance with the policies set forth in Chapter III of this administrative plan.

The family must remain FUP-eligible through lease-up and in compliance with their Family Re-unification plan.

In order to meet the definition of a FUP-eligible family, lack of adequate housing must be a primary factor in the imminent placement of the family's child, or children, in out-of-home care, or in delaying the reunification.

If the lack of adequate housing is no longer a primary factor for the family not reunifying, the family is no longer eligible for the FUP preference and CDC must determine if;

- The family is eligible to remain on the tenant based voucher waiting list with the FUP preference removed or,
- Remove/deny admission to the FUP because the family was not otherwise eligible for the waiting list without the FUP preference.

## **2) PUBLIC CHILD WELFARE AGENCY (PCWA) MOU**

CDC has a signed MOU with the Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA), see addenda A.

The Family and Children's Services (FCS) division of the Health and Human Services Agency, administers the provision of child welfare services for the entire County as the Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA) and is responsible under applicable State law to determine the eligibility criteria set forth in Part 1, a. and b. of this Chapter.

## **3) REFERRAL, OPENING THE WAITLIST AND SELECTION**

The Family and Children's Services (FCS) agency will identify and certify families and youth that qualify for the FUP, will refer these households to the CDC, and the FCS will provide housing search and retention assistance for these households for whom the

lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in the imminent placement of the family's child in out of home care, or in the delay of discharge of the child back to the family.

The FCS may refer FUP applicants to CDC only if the waiting list is open for the FUP Preference.

CDC will only accept referred FUP eligible applicants from the FCS. The referral from the FCS will include a completed referral and release form signed by the applicable FCS staff member and submitted to CDC with a completed FUP Pre-Application completed by the applicant.

If the CDC'S HCV waiting list is closed for the FUP preference, the CDC may choose to reopen its waiting list for brief periods of time to accept FUP applicants not already on the HCV waiting list.

When CDC opens the waiting list for the FUP preference, all other preferences for Housing Choice Voucher program are applicable for the FUP applicant.

**Waiting List Selection:** When the waiting list is open for the FUP preference and CDC receives the referral from the FCS, the applicant will be admitted onto the tenant based voucher waiting list with the FUP preference and identified as FUP-Eligible. FUP applicants are not maintained on separate waiting list.

CDC will follow the selection criteria set forth in Chapter III. of this administrative plan when selecting applicants from the waiting list.

CDC may choose to skip non-qualified families on the waiting list when a FUP Voucher is available.

CDC will select for the FUP only those applicants listed on the HCV waiting list with the FUP preference.

Applicants will be selected for the FUP according to date and time of the FUP referral and highest preference points claimed. In instances where the applicant was already on the HCV waiting list, CDC will apply the FUP preference to the original application record.

#### **4) WAITLIST MAINTENANCE**

The CDC may receive a list of families and youths currently in the FCS's caseload from the FCS and may:

- Compare the names with those of families and youths already on CDC's HCV waiting list, and

- Will review the By Name List from the Coordinated Entry process.

Any family or youth on the CDC's HCV waiting list that matches with the FCS's list will maintain the order of their position on the Housing Choice Voucher waiting list. Once the referral is received from the FCS for the FUP, CDC will apply the FUP preference.

## **5) COLLABORATION WITH THE COC**

The Mendocino County Homeless Services Continuum of Care is committed to cooperating with and assisting the CDC and FCS in the administration of FUP, including integrating the prioritization and referral process for FUP eligible youth into the local CoC's coordinated entry process.

The CDC will determine if any families with children or youths age 18 through 24 on its HCV waiting list are living in temporary shelters or on the street and;

- Notify them that they may qualify for the FUP by contacting and working with the local homeless services providers and the Continuum of Care, and
- Review the By Name List from Coordinated Entry to determine if these such households have been screened and would refer such applicants to the FCS.

## **6) PREFERENCE: CONTINUED ASSISTANCE FOR FUP- YOUTH VOUCHERS**

The FUP Targeted Program refers to special purpose vouchers operated within the Housing Choice Voucher program and is intended to serve specific subpopulations and corresponds with supportive services.

Although the FUP–Family Vouchers provide ongoing housing assistance as long as the household is income eligible, the FUP–Youth Vouchers have an expiration period of 36 months. CDC recognizes that this practice could potentially result in homelessness or other unstable living conditions, therefore, CDC will exercise the option to continue assistance to such populations under the Housing Choice Voucher program. This option will be available to FUP–Youth

To ensure that housing assistance opportunities remain available for all waitlisted applicants CDC will have a preference for “continued assistance of FUP–Youth Vouchers”. This preference will be limited to 5 slots per year and the offer of a Housing Choice Voucher is contingent on funding availability.

The intent of providing the continued assistance option is to provide continuity and housing stability for youth who have an expiring FUP voucher.

CDC may issue a Housing Choice Voucher provided there is a slot available, there is funding availability and ALL criteria below are met:

- Participant is in compliance with the rules and regulations of the program for the past 6 consecutive months.
- If the participant owes the CDC for a Repayment Agreement, they must be in compliance with that agreement, or pay the balance in full.
- The FCS must submit a recommendation for a regular Housing Choice Voucher and confirm the participant is in compliance with the FCS.
- If the household is comprised of a “remaining family member” and the Youth is no longer part of the household, CDC will grant this preference if all other criteria listed above is met. See “Criteria for Beneficiaries” listed below.

CDC will apply 800 preference points for a family that meets the criteria listed above (800 points maximum for this preference). If points are awarded to the household, any other preference points will be added and the total points will impact placement on the waiting list.

## **7) CONTINUED ASSISTANCE FOR FUP FAMILY VOUCHERS**

Once a household is housed and their involvement with the FCS has ended (successfully reuniting children or aging out of eligible TAY foster care services), the FCS will notify CDC in writing. The CDC is required to maintain a special program code for FUP participants in line 2n of the Family Report (50058) for the entirety of their program participation.

## **8) HOUSING SEARCH ASSISTANCE**

Refer to the attached addenda A. MOU, Part IV. for information regarding housing search assistance from the FCS for FUP eligible families.

## **9) SERVICES PROVIDED TO FUP ELIGIBLE YOUTH**

Refer to the attached addenda A. MOU, Part V. for information regarding services provided from the FCS to FUP eligible youth.

## **(10) PORTABILITY**

A FUP household has the same rights to portability as Housing Choice Voucher recipients.

If a household chooses to exercise its portability option, it is the initial PHA's responsibility to ensure that line 2n of the Family Report is properly coded, FUPF or FUPY before it is sent to the receiving PHA. See part 13. Reporting Requirements of this Chapter for further definition.

It is then the receiving PHA's responsibility to maintain the FUP program codes in line 2n of the Family Report, regardless of whether it absorbs the family or bills the initial PHA.

If the receiving PHA will bill the initial PHA for the portable FUP family or youth, the initial PHA must ensure that the FUP program codes are properly maintained on the appropriate line of the family or youth's family report.

### **(11) TERMINATION OF RENTAL ASSISTANCE**

Rental assistance may be terminated if the family violates conditions of occupancy in accordance with Chapter XIV of this Administrative Plan. However, prior to termination of a FUP household, CDC will exercise their discretion and consider all relevant circumstances of the specific case, including granting reasonable accommodations for a person with a disability in accordance with 24 CFR part 8, such as;

- Including the role of a PCWA staff member or other qualified service provider and the impact that ongoing case management services can have on mitigating the conditions that led to the potential termination.

Applicants and participants of the FUP will be afforded the same rights as regular HCV applicants and participants to appeal negative action taken against the family by CDC in accordance with the policies set forth in this administrative plan chapter XIV.

### **(12) PROJECT BASED VOUCHERS**

If allowable, CDC may request to project base these vouchers.

### **(13) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The CDC is required to maintain a special program code for FUP participants in line 2n of the Family Report (50058). HUD has established two program codes;

- **FUPF:** use if the FUP participant is a FUP-eligible family
- **FUPY:** use if the FUP participant is a FUP-eligible youth

These codes must remain on the Family Report for the duration of the FUP family or youth's participation in the program.

**Voucher Issuance:** The CDC must track issuance of FUP vouchers through the Public and Indian Housing Information Center (PIC) by entering action code 10 in line 2a of the Family Report, to ensure proper monitoring and tracking of FUP.

**Voucher Management System (VMS) Reporting:**

VMS FUP Fields. HUD has implemented a single FUP field for PHAs to use for VMS reporting. PHAs will be required to report all their FUP vouchers leased for the applicable month in the single VMS field. In addition, a single FUP VMS field will also be used by PHAs when reporting the corresponding HAP expenses.

**(14) CRITERIA FOR BENFICIARY**

Remaining family members for both a FUP-Family and FUP-Youth may keep the voucher and the voucher would continue to be coded as such on the 50058.