

## Chapter 19

### SPECIAL PURPOSE VOUCHERS

#### INTRODUCTION

Special purpose vouchers are specifically funded by Congress in separate appropriations from regular HCV program funding in order to target specific populations. Special purpose vouchers include vouchers for the following programs:

- Family Unification Program (FUP)
- Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) program
- Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)
- Mainstream
- Non-Elderly Disabled (NED)

#### COC Policy

COC will administer the following types of special purpose vouchers:

#### **Family Unification**

#### **Mainstream**

This chapter describes HUD regulations and PHA policies for administering special purpose vouchers. The policies outlined in this chapter are organized into five sections, as follows:

#### Part I: Family Unification Program (FUP)

#### Part II: Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) program

#### Part III: Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)

#### Part IV: Mainstream voucher program

#### Part V: Non-Elderly Disabled (NED) vouchers

Except as addressed by this chapter and as required under federal statute and HUD requirements, the general requirements of the HCV program apply to special purpose vouchers.

## **PART I: FAMILY UNIFICATION PROGRAM (FUP)**

### **19-I.A. PROGRAM OVERVIEW [Fact Sheet, Housing Choice Voucher Program Family Unification Program (FUP)]**

#### **Overview**

The Family Unification Program (FUP) was authorized by Congress in 1990 to help preserve and reunify families. PHAs that administer the program provide vouchers to two different populations—FUP families and FUP youth.

Families eligible for FUP are families for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in:

- The imminent placement of the family's child or children in out-of-home care; or
- The delay in the discharge of the child or children to the family from out-of-home care.

There is no time limitation on FUP family vouchers, and the family retains their voucher as long as they are HCV-eligible. There is no requirement for the provision of supportive services for FUP family vouchers.

Youth eligible for FUP are those who:

- Are at least 18 years old and not more than 24 years of age;
- Have 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 at age 16 and older; and
- Are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

FUP youth vouchers are limited by statute to a period between 36 and 60 months of housing assistance. Supportive services must also be provided to FUP-eligible youth by the Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA) or by another agency or organization under contract with the PCWA for the period of time defined in the notice or Notice of Funding Availability/Opportunity (NOFA/O) for which funding was made available.

PHAs that wish to administer FUP vouchers must apply to HUD by submitting an application under an active Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). While the FUP program is administered in accordance with HCV regulations, the FUP NOFOs issued by HUD provide specific program information and requirements.

In order to administer the program, COC must also form a partnership with a local PCWA who is responsible for determining the family or youth meets FUP eligibility requirements and referring them to COC. Once the referral is received, COC is responsible for placing the FUP family or youth on COC's waiting list and determining whether they are eligible to receive assistance under COC's HCV program.

## **Assigning Vouchers [FUP FAQs]**

COC may, but is not required to, assign a specific number or percentage of FUP vouchers for FUP youths and FUP families. Unless COC assigns a specific number or percentage of FUP vouchers to a designated FUP population, COC must serve any referrals (youths or families) that meet all program eligibility requirements up to COC's designated FUP program size.

### COC Policy

COC has not designated any specific number or percentage of FUP vouchers for youths or families. COC will serve all referrals that meet program eligibility requirements, up to COC's FUP voucher allocation. COC does not currently administer FUP youth vouchers.

## **19-I.B. PUBLIC CHILD WELFARE AGENCY (PCWA)**

Families and youth do not apply directly to COC for FUP vouchers. They are instead referred by a PCWA with whom COC has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The partnering PCWA initially determines whether the family or youth meets the FUP program eligibility requirements listed in 19-I.C. and 19-I.D. and then refers those families or youths to COC.

HUD strongly encourages PHAs and PCWAs to make decisions collaboratively on the administration of the program and to maintain open and continuous communication. The PCWA must have a system for identifying FUP-eligible youth within the agency's caseload and for reviewing referrals from a Continuum of Care (COC) if applicable.

### COC Policy

COC has entered into an MOU with the following partnering organizations ***The Connection, Inc, Family & Children Agency, and The Housing Collective.***

## **Supportive Services**

The PCWA must provide supportive services for the period of time defined in the notice or NOFA/O for which the funding was made available to all FUP-eligible youth regardless of their age. The MOU between COC and the PCWA should identify the period of time in which supportive services will be provided.

### **COC Policy**

. COC does not administer FUP youth vouchers.

Supportive services may be provided to FUP-eligible youth by the PCWA or by another agency or organization under agreement or contract with the PCWA, including COC. The organization providing the services and resources must be identified in the MOU. The following services must be offered:

- Basic life skills information or counseling on money management, use of credit, housekeeping, proper nutrition or meal preparation, and access to health care (e.g., doctors, medication, and mental and behavioral health services);
- Counseling on compliance with rental lease requirements and with HCV program participant requirements, including assistance or referrals for assistance on security deposits, utility hook-up fees, and utility deposits;
- Providing such assurances to owners of rental property as are reasonable and necessary to assist a FUP-eligible youth to rent a unit with a FUP voucher;
- Job preparation and attainment counseling (where to look and how to apply, dress, grooming, relationships with supervisory personnel, etc.); and
- Educational and career advancement counseling regarding attainment of general equivalency diploma (GED), or attendance or financing of education at a technical school, trade school, or college, including successful work ethic and attitude models.

### **COC Policy**

COC does not administer FUP youth vouchers.

## 19-I.C. FUP FAMILY VOUCHER ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

FUP family assistance is reserved for eligible families that the PCWA has certified are a family for whom a lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in:

- The imminent placement of the family's child or children in out-of-home care, or
- The delay in the discharge of the child or children to the family from out-of-home care.

*Lack of adequate housing* means the family meets any one of the following conditions:

- Living in substandard housing, which refers to a unit that meets any one of the following conditions:
  - Does not have operable indoor plumbing
  - Does not have a usable flush toilet inside the unit for the exclusive use of a family or youth
  - Does not have a usable bathtub or shower inside the unit for the exclusive use of a family or youth
  - Does not have electricity, or has inadequate or unsafe electrical service
  - Does not have a safe or adequate source of heat
  - Should, but does not, have a kitchen
  - Has been declared unfit for habitation by an agency or unit of government, or in its present condition otherwise endangers the health, safety, or well-being of the family or youth
  - Has one or more critical defects, or a combination of intermediate defects in sufficient number or to the extent that it requires considerable repair or rebuilding. The defects may result from original construction, from continued neglect or lack of repair, or from serious damage to the structure
- Being homeless as defined in 24 CFR 578.3
- Living in a unit where the presence of a household member with certain characteristics (i.e., conviction for certain criminal activities) would result in the imminent placement of the family's child or children in out-of-home care, or the delay in the discharge of the child or children to the family from out-of-home care
- Living in housing not accessible to the family's disabled child or children due to the nature of the disability

- Living in an overcrowded unit, which is defined as living in a unit where one of the following conditions has been met:
  - The family is separated from its child or children and the parents are living in an otherwise standard housing unit, but, after the family is reunited, the parents' housing unit would be overcrowded for the entire family and would be considered substandard; or
  - The family is living with its child or children in a unit that is overcrowded for the entire family and this overcrowded condition may result, in addition to other factors, in the imminent placement of its child or children in out-of-home care.
  - For purposes of this definition, the determination as to whether the unit is overcrowded is made in accordance with COC subsidy standards in Chapter 5, Part III of this policy.

Since HUD does not define *imminent placement*, the partnering PCWA may use its discretion to determine whether the potential out of home placement of the family's child or children is imminent [FUP FAQs].

## 19-I.D. FUP YOUTH VOUCHER ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

While FUP family vouchers operate as regular HCVs after the family is referred from the PCWA, there are several aspects of the FUP youth vouchers that make them distinct from the FUP family vouchers and from regular HCVs.

### Eligibility Criteria

A FUP-eligible youth is a youth the PCWA has certified:

- Is at least 18 years old and not more than 24 years of age (has not yet reached their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday);
  - The FUP youth must be no more than 24 years old at the time the PCWA certifies them as eligible and at the time of HAP contract execution.
- Has 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;
  - Foster care placement can include, but is not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, childcare institutions, and pre-adoptive homes in accordance with 24 CFR 5.576.
- Is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless at age 16 or older;
  - *At risk of being homeless* is fully defined at 24 CFR 576.2.
    - o This includes a person that is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a healthcare facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution).
    - o Therefore, youth being discharged from an institution may be eligible for a FUP voucher [FUP FAQs].
- Has an annual income at or below 30 percent of area median income; and
- Does not have sufficient resources or support networks (e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks) immediately available to prevent them from moving to a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living arrangements.

## **19-I.E. ASSISTANCE PERIOD [FR Notice 1/24/22]**

### **Maximum Assistance Period**

Although there is no time limit on FUP family vouchers, FUP youth vouchers are limited by statute. Unless the FUP youth meets an exception outlined below, after 36 months of assistance, the FUP youth voucher must be terminated. However, any period of time for which no subsidy (HAP) is being paid on behalf of the youth does not count toward the 36-month limitation.

If the FUP youth does meet the requirements outlined below, the statutory limit on FUP assistance is a total of 60 months of FUP voucher assistance [FR Notice 1/24/22].

**COC Policy** COC does not administer FUP youth vouchers.

### **Statutory Exceptions**

A FUP youth will be entitled to receive an extension of assistance for up to 24 months beyond the 36-month time limit without participating in COC's FSS program if they certify that they meet one of the exceptions below:

- The FUP youth is a parent or other household member responsible for the care of a dependent child under the age of six or for the care of an incapacitated person.

#### COC Policy

COC does not administer FUP youth vouchers.

- The FUP youth is a person who is regularly and actively participating in a drug addiction or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation program.

#### COC Policy

- COC does not administer FUP youth vouchers. The FUP youth is a person who is incapable of complying with the requirement to participate in a FSS program as described above or engage in education, workforce development, or employment activities as described below, as applicable, due to a documented medical condition.

#### COC Policy

COC does not administer FUP youth vouchers. A FUP youth that meets one of the above exceptions must still be offered an opportunity to enroll in COC's FSS program (if it is available to them) and receive any supportive services available to FUP youth. A FUP youth may choose to participate in an FSS program or engage in education, workforce development, or employment activities, even if they meet one of the above statutory exceptions.



## Education, Workforce Development, or Employment Activities

If COC that carries out an FSS program is unable to offer a FUP youth an FSS slot during their first 36 months of receiving FUP youth assistance, the youth is considered to have been “unable to enroll” in the program and may have their voucher extended by meeting the education, workforce development, or employment criteria described below:

- The youth was engaged in obtaining a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

### COC Policy

- COC does not administer FUP youth vouchers. The youth was enrolled in an *institution of higher education*, as such term is defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)) or an institution that meets the definition of a *proprietary institution of higher education* or a *postsecondary vocational institution* under sections 102(b)(1) and (c)(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(b)(1) and (c)(1)), respectively.

### COC Policy

- COC does not administer FUP youth vouchers.

The youth was participating in a career pathway, as such term is defined in Section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102). The term *career pathway* means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that:

- Aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the state or regional economy involved;
  - Prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships registered under the Act of August 16, 1937 (commonly known as the “National Apprenticeship Act”; 50 Stat. 664, chapter 663; 29 U.S.C. 50 et seq.) (referred to individually in this Act as an *apprenticeship*, except in section 3226 of this title);
  - Includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals;
  - Includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
  - Organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
  - Enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least one recognized postsecondary credential; and
  - Helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
- The youth was employed.

#### **COC Policy**

COC does not administer FUP youth vouchers.**FSS Enrollment at 24 Months**

If the FUP youth has not been provided an opportunity to enroll in the FSS program during the first 24 months of FUP assistance, HUD encourages COC to remind the youth at the 24-month reexamination of the education, workforce development, and employment requirements described above so that the youth has enough time to meet these requirements prior to the expiration of the 36-month time period for FUP assistance.

#### **COC Policy**

COC does not administer FUP youth vouchers.

### **FSS Enrollment Between 36 and 48 Months**

If an FSS slot becomes available between the 36-month and 48-month mark:

- COC does not administer FUP youth vouchers, development, or employment requirements described above.

### **FSS Enrollment After 48 Months**

COC may, but is not required to, offer a FUP youth an FSS slot that becomes available between the 48-month mark and the 60-month mark, since the youth will have already received their second and final extension.

#### COC Policy

COC does not administer FUP youth vouchers..

### **Extensions of Assistance**

At the 36-month and 48-month reexamination, COC must extend FUP youth assistance if the youth is participating in and in compliance with the FSS program as long as the youth is still eligible for the HCV program.

In any case, the FUP youth cannot receive more than a total of 60 months of FUP youth voucher assistance, even if the FSS Contract of Participation time period extends beyond the voucher 60-month mark.

## **No FSS Program or Unable to Enroll in FSS**

If COC does not carry out an FSS program or the FUP youth has been unable to enroll in the program during the first 36 months of receiving FUP assistance, the FUP youth is entitled to receive an extension of assistance for up to two successive 12-month periods beyond the 36-month time limit provided that the youth engaged in at least one of the education, workforce development, or employment activities described above for not less than nine months of the 12-month period preceding each extension. In order to meet the nine months out of the preceding 12 months requirement, the youth may have engaged in one of the education, workforce development, or employment activities described above or a combination of these activities.

## **Verification Prior to Annual Reexam**

In order to provide an extension of assistance, COC must verify compliance with the above requirements at the end of the 36-month time period and the 48-month time periods. COC does not need to verify compliance with these requirements at the end of the 60-month time period since the maximum length of assistance is 60 months.

To verify compliance with the education, workforce development, or employment requirement or one of the statutory exceptions, COC must provide the FUP youth written notification informing them that they may receive an extension of their FUP assistance and providing instructions on how the youth may demonstrate that they meet one of these conditions. This notification must be provided sufficiently in advance of the end of the 36-month or 48-month time periods, as applicable, to allow the FUP youth to demonstrate that they meet the education, workforce development, or employment requirement, or one of the statutory exceptions, and for COC to conduct an annual reexamination prior to the expiration of the FUP assistance.

### COC Policy

COC does not administer FUP youth vouchers. COC will use the following verification methods to verify a FUP youth's eligibility for voucher extensions:

To verify compliance with the FSS requirement, COC will examine its records to confirm, or obtain confirmation from COC's FSS program staff, that the FUP youth participant is in compliance with FSS program requirements and has not been terminated from the FSS program.

To meet the education, workforce development, or employment requirement, COC will verify that the FUP youth was engaged in at least one education, workforce development, or employment activity for at least nine months of the 12-month period immediately preceding the end of 36-month or 48-month time period, as applicable.

Due to the timing of when COC verifies compliance and conducts the annual reexamination, the FUP youth may have not yet met the nine-month requirement but may be able to demonstrate that they will meet the nine-month requirement as of the end of the 36-month or 48-month time period. In such cases, the FUP/FYI youth will still be considered to have met the requirements.

In order for the FUP youth to meet one of the statutory exceptions described above, the youth must submit a certification to COC that they meet one of these

exceptions. This certification is the only documentation that the FUP youth must submit in order to demonstrate that they meet one of the statutory exceptions.

A FUP youth who received an extension of voucher assistance at the end of the 36-month time period based on meeting one of the conditions described in this chapter does not have to meet the same conditions when they reach the end of the 48-month time period. The FUP youth may demonstrate that they meet a different condition in order to receive an extension of their assistance.

If COC determines that the youth meets one of the statutory conditions, COC would then conduct an annual reexamination. If the annual reexamination determines that the youth is still eligible for the HCV program, COC must provide the FUP youth the extension of voucher assistance.

## **Termination of Assistance for Failure to Meet Conditions**

Failure of the FUP youth to meet one of the above conditions will only impact their ability to receive subsequent extensions of assistance. It will not serve as a basis for terminating the FUP assistance prior to the annual reexam.

If the FUP youth does not meet any of the conditions described in in this chapter, the youth is subject to the statutory time limit of 36 months or the time limit of any extension that the youth has already received, and the FUP youth voucher must be terminated once the youth reaches this time limit. The calculation of the time limit begins from the date the first HAP contract is signed (for tenant-based vouchers) or from the date the youth entered into the initial lease agreement (for project-based vouchers). The number of months is calculated based on the number of months that HAP subsidy is being paid on behalf of the youth, not the number of months that the youth is in the FUP youth program. Prior to termination, COC must offer the FUP youth the opportunity to request an informal hearing, in accordance with Chapter 16.

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## **19-I.F. REFERRALS AND WAITING LIST MANAGEMENT**

### **Referrals**

The PCWA must establish and implement a system to identify FUP-eligible families and youths within the agency's caseload and make referrals to COC. The PCWA must certify that the FUP applicants they refer to COC meet FUP eligibility requirements. COC is not required to maintain full documentation that demonstrates the family's or youth's FUP eligibility as determined by the PCWA but should keep the referral or certification from the PCWA.

#### **COC Policy**

As part of the MOU, COC and PCWA have identified staff positions to serve as lead FUP liaisons. These positions will be responsible for transmission and acceptance of FUP referrals. The PCWA must commit sufficient staff and resources to ensure eligible families and youths are identified and determined eligible in a timely manner.

When FUP vouchers are available, COC liaison responsible for acceptance of referrals will contact the PCWA FUP liaison via email indicating the number of vouchers available and requesting an appropriate number of referrals. No more than 10 business days from the date the PCWA receives this notification, the PCWA liaison will provide COC with a list of eligible referrals include the name, address, and contact phone number for each adult individual who is being referred; a completed release form for each adult family member; and a written certification for each referral indicating the youth or family is FUP-eligible.

COC will maintain a copy of the referral or certification from the PCWA in the participant's file along with other eligibility paperwork.

COC must serve any referrals (youths or families) that meet all program eligibility requirements. If COC determines that it has received a sufficient number of referrals from the PCWA so that COC will be able to lease all FUP vouchers awarded, COC may request that the PCWA suspend transmission of referrals. If COC determines that additional referrals will be needed after it has made such a request, COC may request that the PCWA resume transmission of referrals [Notice PIH 2011-52].

## **Waiting List Placement**

A family that is already participating in the regular HCV program cannot be transferred to a FUP voucher.

Once a referral is made, COC must compare the list of PCWA referrals to its HCV waiting list to determine if any applicants on the PCWA's referral list are already on COC's HCV waiting list. Applicants already on COC's HCV waiting list retain the order of their position on the list. Applicants not already on COC's HCV waiting list must be placed on the HCV waiting list.

If COC's HCV waiting list is closed, COC must open its HCV waiting list in order to accept new FUP applicants. If necessary, COC may open its waiting list solely for FUP applicants, but this information must be included in COC's notice of opening its waiting list (see section 4-II.C., Opening and Closing the Waiting List of this administrative plan).

### **COC Policy**

Within 10 business days of receiving the referral from the PCWA, COC will review the HCV waiting list and will send the PCWA a list confirming whether or not referrals are on the waiting list.

Referrals who are already on the list will retain their position and the list will be notated to indicate the family or youth is FUP-eligible.

For those referrals not already on the waiting list, COC will work with the PCWA to ensure they receive and successfully complete a pre-application or application, as applicable. Once the pre-application or application has been completed, COC will place the referral on the HCV waiting list with the date and time of the original referral and an indication that the referral is FUP-eligible.

## **Waiting List Selection**

COC selects FUP-eligible families or youths based on COC's regular HCV waiting list selection policies in Chapter 4, including any preferences that may apply.



## **19-I.G. PHA HCV ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION**

Once a FUP-eligible family or youth is selected from the HCV waiting list, COC must determine whether the family or youth meets HCV program eligibility requirements. Applicants must be eligible under both FUP family or youth eligibility requirements, as applicable, and HCV eligibility requirements as outlined in Chapter 3 of this policy.

The PCWA may, but is not obligated to, provide information to COC on the family's criminal history.

### **COC Policy**

Subject to privacy laws, the PCWA will provide any available information regarding the applicant's criminal history to COC.

COC will consider the information in making its eligibility determination in accordance with COC's policies in Chapter 3, Part III.

### **Additional FUP Eligibility Factors [FUP FAQs]**

For FUP family vouchers, the family must remain FUP-eligible thorough lease-up.

- If, after a family is referred by the PCWA but prior to issuing a family FUP voucher, COC discovers that the lack of adequate housing is no longer a primary factor for the family not reunifying, the FUP voucher may not be issued to the family.
- Similarly, if the FUP voucher has already been issued before COC discovers that the reunification will not happen, but the family has not yet leased up under the voucher, COC must not execute the HAP contract, as the family is no longer FUP-eligible.

FUP-eligible youth must be no more than 24 years old both at the time of PCWA certification and at the time of the HAP execution. If a FUP youth is 24 at the time of PCWA certification but will turn 25 before the HAP contract is executed, the youth is no longer eligible for a FUP youth voucher.

### **COC Policy**

Any applicant that does not meet the eligibility criteria for the HCV program listed in Chapter 3 or any eligibility criteria listed in this section will be notified by COC in writing following policies in Section 3-III.F., including stating the reasons the applicant was found ineligible and providing an opportunity for an informal review.

### **19.I.H. LEASE UP [FR Notice 1/24/22]**

Once COC determines that the family or youth meets HCV eligibility requirements, the family or youth will be issued a FUP voucher in accordance with PHA policies.

During the family briefing, PHAs must inform the FUP youth of:

- The extension of assistance provisions and requirements;
- The availability of the FSS program and offer them an FSS slot, if available, or offer to place them on the FSS waiting list (provided COC has an FSS program); and
- Supportive services available to them, the existence of any other programs or services, and their eligibility for such programs and services. However, participation in supportive services cannot be required as a condition of receiving FUP youth assistance.

#### **COC Policy**

Eligible applicants will be notified by COC in writing following policies in Section 3-III.F. of this administrative plan. FUP families will attend a standard HCV briefing in accordance with PHA policies in Part I of Chapter 5 of this administrative plan. FUP youth will be briefed individually. COC will provide all aspects of the written and oral briefing as outlined in Part I of Chapter 5 but will also provide an explanation of the required items listed above, as well as discussing supportive services offered by the PCWA.

For both FUP youth and FUP families, vouchers will be issued in accordance with PHA policies in Chapter 5 Part II, except that COC will consider one additional 30-day extension beyond the first automatic extension for any reason, not just those listed in the policy in Section 5-II.E.

Once the family or youth locate a unit, COC conducts all other processes relating to voucher issuance and administration per HCV program regulations and COC's policies (including, but not limited to: HQS inspection, determination of rent reasonableness, etc.).

## **19-I.I. TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE**

### **General Requirements**

With the exception of terminations of assistance for FUP youth after the statutorily required time period, terminations of FUP assistance are handled in the same way as the regular HCV program. Termination of a FUP voucher must be consistent with regulations for termination in 24 CFR Part 982, Subpart L and be in compliance with PHA policies (Chapter 12).

If the person who qualifies for the FUP voucher passes away, the family retains the FUP voucher. In the case of a FUP-youth voucher, assistance will terminate after the statutorily required time period, even if the FUP-eligible youth is no longer included in the household.

If the person who qualifies for the FUP voucher moves, the remaining family members may keep the FUP voucher based on COC Policy (see administrative plan, Section 3-I.C., Family Breakup and Remaining Member of Tenant Family).

### **FUP Family Vouchers**

If parents lose their parental rights or are separated from their children after voucher lease-up (or their children reach adulthood), the family is still eligible to keep their FUP assistance, as the regulations do not permit HCV termination for a family losing parental rights or the children reaching adulthood. However, COC may transfer the assistance of a FUP family voucher holder to regular HCV assistance if there are no longer children in the household.

#### **COC Policy**

COC will transfer the assistance of a FUP family voucher holder to regular HCV assistance if there are no longer children in the household and there is no prospect of any minor child being returned to the household.

If COC has no regular HCV vouchers available at the time this determination is made, including if no vouchers are available due to lack of funding, COC will issue the family the next available regular HCV voucher after those being issued to families residing in PBV units claiming Choice Mobility.

## **FUP Youth Vouchers**

COC cannot terminate a FUP youth's assistance for noncompliance with PCWA case management, nor may COC terminate assistance for a FUP youth for not accepting services from the PCWA.

COC may not transfer the assistance of a FUP youth voucher holder to regular HCV assistance upon the expiration of the statutorily required time period. However, COC may issue a regular HCV to FUP youth if they were selected from the waiting list in accordance with PHA policies and may also adopt a preference for FUP youth voucher holders who are being terminated for this reason.

### COC Policy

COC does not administer FUP youth vouchers. Upon the expiration of the statutorily required time period, a FUP youth voucher holder who has children and who lacks adequate housing may qualify for a FUP family voucher provided they are referred by the PCWA as an eligible family and meet the eligibility requirements for COC's HCV program.

## **9-I.J. FUP PORTABILITY**

Portability for a FUP family or youth is handled in the same way as for a regular HCV family. COC may not restrict or deny portability for a FUP family or youth for reasons other than those specified in the HCV program regulations, as reflected in Chapter 10 of the administrative plan.

A FUP family or youth does not have to port to a jurisdiction that administers FUP.

If the receiving PHA administers the FUP voucher on behalf of the initial PHA, the voucher is still considered a FUP voucher regardless of whether the receiving PHA has a FUP program.

If the receiving PHA absorbs the voucher, the receiving PHA may absorb the incoming port into its FUP program (if it has one) or into its regular HCV program (if the receiving PHA has vouchers available to do so) and the family or youth become regular HCV participants. In either case, when the receiving PHA absorbs the voucher, a FUP voucher becomes available to the initial PHA.

### **Considerations for FUP Youth Vouchers**

If the voucher is a FUP youth voucher and remains such upon lease-up in the receiving PHA's jurisdiction, termination of assistance must still take place once the youth has received assistance for the statutorily required time period. If the receiving PHA is administering the FUP youth voucher on behalf of the initial PHA, the two PHAs must work together to initiate termination upon expiration of the statutorily required time period.

## **19-I.K. PROJECT-BASING FUP VOUCHERS [Notice PIH 2017-21; FR Notice 1/24/22]**

COC may project-base FUP vouchers without HUD approval in accordance with Notice PIH 2017-21, FR Notice 1/24/22, and all statutory and regulatory requirements for the PBV program. Project-based FUP vouchers are subject to the PBV program percentage limitation discussed in Section 17-I.A.

COC may limit PBVs to one category of FUP-eligible participants (families or youth) or a combination of the two.

While FUP vouchers can be used for either families or youth, a PBV unit may only be counted towards COC's 10 percent exception authority under the program cap and the project's income-mixing requirement if the FUP PBV assistance is provided on behalf of an eligible youth. COC must amend its administrative plan to include the limitation of these FUP PBV units to eligible youth.

### **COC Policy**

COC will not project-base FUP vouchers. All FUP vouchers will be used to provide tenant-based assistance.

## **PART II: FOSTER YOUTH TO INDEPENDENCE INITIATIVE**

### **19-II.A. PROGRAM OVERVIEW [Notice PIH 2020-28; Notice PIH 2021-26; FR Notice 1/24/22]**

The Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) initiative was announced in 2019. The FYI initiative allows PHAs who partner with a Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA) to request targeted HCVs to serve eligible youth with a history of child welfare involvement that are homeless or at risk of being homeless. Rental assistance and supportive services are provided to qualified youth for a period of between 36 and 60 months.

Funding is available either competitively through an FYI NOFA or noncompetitively on a rolling basis in accordance with the application requirements outlined in Notice PIH 2020-28 or Notice PIH 2021-26, as applicable. Under the noncompetitive process, PHAs are limited to 25 vouchers in a fiscal year with the ability to request additional vouchers for those PHAs with 90 percent or greater utilization or utilization of its FUP and/or FYI vouchers, as applicable. For competitive awards, the number of vouchers is dependent on PHA program size and need.

## **19-II.B. PARTNERING AGENCIES [Notice PIH 2021-26; FYI Updates and Partnering Opportunities Webinar]**

### **Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA)**

COC must enter into a partnership agreement with a PCWA in COC's jurisdiction in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or letter of intent. The PCWA is responsible for identifying and referring eligible youth to COC and providing or securing a commitment for the provision of supportive services once youth are admitted to the program.

#### COC Policy

COC will implement a Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) program in partnership with *[insert name(s) of PCWA(s)]*.

The PCWA is responsible for:

- Identifying FYI-eligible youth;
- Developing a system of prioritization based on the level of need of the youth and the appropriateness of intervention;
- Providing a written certification to COC that the youth is eligible; and
- Providing or securing supportive services for 36 months.

### **Continuum of Care (CoC) and Other Partners**

HUD strongly encourages PHAs to add other partners into the partnership agreement with the PCWA such as state, local, philanthropic, faith-based organizations, and COC, or a CoC recipient it designates.

#### COC Policy

In addition to the PCWA, COC will implement the FYI program in partnership with *[insert names of any other partners COC designates in the partnership agreement]*.

## **19-II.C. YOUTH ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA [Notice PIH 2021-26; FYI Q&As; FYI FAQs]**

The PCWA is responsible for certifying that the youth has prior qualifying foster care involvement. As determined by the PCWA, eligible youth:

- Are at least 18 years of age and not more than 24 years of age (have not yet reached their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday);
  - Youth must be no more than 24 years of age at the time the PCWA certifies them as eligible and at the time of HAP contract execution.
- Have 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;
  - Placements can include, but are not limited to, placements in foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential facilities, child care institutions, and pre-adoptive homes in accordance with 24 CFR 5.576;
- Are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless at age 16 and older;
  - *At risk of being homeless* is fully defined at 24 CFR 576.2.
    - o This includes a person that is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a healthcare facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution). Therefore, youth being discharged from an institution may be eligible for an FYI voucher [FYI FAQs].

Eligibility is not limited to single persons. For example, pregnant and/or parenting youth are eligible to receive assistance assuming they otherwise meet eligibility requirements.



#### **19-II.D. SUPPORTIVE SERVICES [Notice PIH 2021-26; FYI Updates and Partnering Opportunities Webinar; FYI Q&As]**

Supportive services may be provided by COC, PCWA or a third party. The PCWA must provide or secure a commitment to provide supportive services for participating youth for the period of time defined in the NOFA/O for which the funding was made available. At a minimum, the following supportive services must be offered:

- Basic life skills information/counseling on money management, use of credit, housekeeping, proper nutrition/meal preparation, and access to health care (e.g., doctors, medication, and mental and behavioral health services);
- Counseling on compliance with rental lease requirements and with HCV program participant requirements, including assistance/referrals for assistance on security deposits, utility hook-up fees, and utility deposits;
- Providing such assurances to owners of rental property as are reasonable and necessary to assist eligible youth to rent a unit with a voucher;
- Job preparation and attainment counseling (where to look/how to apply, dress, grooming, relationships with supervisory personnel, etc.); and
- Educational and career advancement counseling regarding attainment of general equivalency diploma (GED) or attendance/financing of education at a technical school, trade school, or college, including successful work ethic and attitude models.

##### COC Policy

Additional supportive services will not be offered.

Since participation in supportive services is optional, but strongly encouraged, an FYI participant may decline supportive service.

## **19-II.E. REFERRALS AND WAITING LIST MANAGEMENT [Notice PIH 2021-26; FYI Updates and Partnering Opportunities Webinar FYI FAQs]**

### **Referrals**

The PCWA is responsible for certifying that the youth has prior qualifying foster care involvement. Once the PCWA sends COC the referral certifying the youth is program-eligible, COC determines HCV eligibility.

The PCWA must have a system for identifying eligible youth within the agency's caseload and reviewing referrals from other partners, as applicable. The PCWA must also have a system for prioritization of referrals to ensure that youth are prioritized for an FYI voucher based upon their level of need and appropriateness of the intervention.

Referrals may come from other organizations in the community who work with the population, but the PCWA must certify that the youth meets eligibility requirements, unless the PCWA has vested another organization with this authority.

COC is not required to maintain full documentation that demonstrates the youth's eligibility as determined by the PCWA but should keep the referral or certification from the PCWA. The PCWA is not required to provide COC with HCV eligibility documents.

#### COC Policy

COC and PCWA have identified staff positions to serve as lead FYI liaisons. These positions will be responsible for transmission and acceptance of referrals. The PCWA must commit sufficient staff and resources to ensure eligible youths are identified, prioritized, and determined eligible in a timely manner.

When vouchers are available, COC liaison responsible for acceptance of referrals will contact the PCWA liaison via email indicating the number of vouchers available and requesting an appropriate number of referrals. No more than 10 business days from the date the PCWA receives this notification, the PCWA liaison must provide COC with a list of eligible referrals, a completed release form, and a written certification for each referral indicating the referral is eligible. The list will include the name, address, and contact phone number for each adult individual who is being referred.

COC will maintain a copy of each certification from the PCWA in the participant's file along with other eligibility paperwork.

## **Waiting List Placement [Notice PIH 2021-26 and FYI FAQs]**

COC must use the HCV waiting list for the FYI program. Youth already on the HCV program may not be transferred to an FYI voucher since they are not homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

Once a referral is made, COC must compare the list of PCWA referrals to its HCV waiting list to determine if any applicants on the PCWA's referral list are already on COC's HCV waiting list. Applicants already on COC's HCV waiting list retain the order of their position on the list. Applicants not already on COC's HCV waiting list must be placed on the HCV waiting list.

If COC's HCV waiting list is closed, COC must open its HCV waiting list in order to accept new referrals. COC may reopen the waiting list to accept an FYI eligible youth without opening the waiting list for other applicants; however, the requirements at 24 CFR 982.206 for giving public notice when opening and closing the waiting list apply COCCOC (see section 4-II.C., Opening and Closing the Waiting List of this administrative plan).

### COC Policy

Within 10 business days of receiving the referral from the PCWA, COC will review the HCV waiting list and will send the PCWA a list confirming whether or not referrals are on the waiting list.

Referrals who are already on the list will retain their position and the list will be notated to indicate the applicant is FYI-eligible.

For those referrals not already on the waiting list, COC will work with the PCWA to ensure they receive and successfully complete a pre-application or application, as applicable. Once the pre-application or application has been completed, COC will place the referral on the HCV waiting list with the date and time of the original referral and an indication that the referral is FYI-eligible.

## **Waiting List Selection**

COC selects eligible youths based on COC's regular HCV waiting list selection policies in Chapter 4, including any preferences that may apply.

#### **19-II.F. PHA HCV ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION [FYI FAQs]**

Once an eligible youth is selected from the HCV waiting list, COC must determine whether the youth meets HCV program eligibility requirements. Applicants must be eligible under both FYI eligibility requirements and HCV eligibility requirements as outlined in Chapter 3 of this policy.

The PCWA may, but is not obligated to, provide information to COC on the youth's criminal history.

##### COC Policy

Subject to privacy laws, the PCWA will provide any available information regarding the applicant's criminal history to COC.

COC will consider the information in making its eligibility determination in accordance with COC's policies in Chapter 3, Part III.

#### **Additional Eligibility Factors**

Youth must be no more than 24 years old both at the time of PCWA certification and at the time of the HAP execution. If a youth is 24 at the time of PCWA certification but will turn 25 before the HAP contract is executed, the youth is no longer eligible for a FYI voucher.

##### COC Policy

Any applicant that does not meet the eligibility criteria for the HCV program listed in Chapter 3 or any eligibility criteria listed in this section will be notified by COC in writing following policies in Section 3-III.F, including stating the reasons the applicant was found ineligible and providing an opportunity for an informal review.

### **19-II.G. LEASE UP [FR Notice 1/24/22]**

Once COC determines that the family or youth meets HCV eligibility requirements, the youth will be issued an FYI voucher in accordance with PHA policies.

During the family briefing, PHAs must inform the FYI voucher holder of:

- The extension of assistance provisions and requirements;
- The availability of the FSS program and offer them an FSS slot, if available, or offer to place them on the FSS waiting list (provided COC has an FSS program); and
- The supportive services available to them, the existence of any other programs or services, and their eligibility for such programs and services. However, participation in supportive services cannot be required as a condition of receiving FYI assistance.

#### COC Policy

Eligible applicants will be notified by COC in writing following policies in Section 3-III.F. of this policy. FYI youth will be briefed individually. COC will provide all aspects of the written and oral briefing as outlined in Part I of Chapter 5.

Vouchers will be issued in accordance with PHA policies in Chapter 5, Part II, except that COC will consider one additional 30-day extension beyond the first automatic extension for any reason, not just those listed in the policy in Section 5-II.E.

Once the youth locates a unit, COC conducts all other processes relating to voucher issuance and administration per HCV program regulations and COC Policy in Chapter 9.

Should a youth fail to use the voucher, COC may issue the voucher to another eligible youth if one has been identified [Notice PIH 2021-26].

#### **Turnover [FYI FAQs]**

For PHAs awarded FYI Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPVs) under Notice PIH 2019-20 where the recipient of the FYI TPV leaves the program, COC may request an FYI voucher under the requirements of Notice PIH 2021-26.

For PHAs awarded FYI vouchers under Notices PIH 2020-28 and PIH 2021-26, where the recipient of the FYI voucher leaves the program, COC must continue to use the FYI voucher for eligible youth upon turnover. Where there are more eligible youth than available FYI turnover vouchers, COC may request an FYI voucher under the requirements of Notice PIH 2021-26. If another eligible youth is not available, COC must notify HUD, and HUD will reduce COC's HCV assistance to account for the removal of the FYI assistance from COC's HCV baseline.

## **19-II.H. MAXIMUM ASSISTANCE PERIOD [Notice PIH 2021-26 and FYI FAQs; FR Notice 1/24/22]**

Vouchers are limited by statute to a total of between 36 months and 60 months of housing assistance. At the end of the statutory time period, assistance must be terminated. However, any period of time for which no subsidy (HAP) is being paid on behalf of the youth does not count toward the limitation. It is not permissible to reissue another FYI TPV to the same youth upon expiration of their FYI assistance.

Participants do not “age out” of the program. A participant may continue with the program until they have received the period of assistance for which they are eligible. Age limits are only applied for entry into the program.

### **Extension of Assistance**

FYI voucher holders who first leased or lease a unit after December 27, 2020, may be eligible for an extension of assistance up to 24 months beyond the 36-month time limit (for a total of 60 months of assistance).

While FYI voucher holders cannot be required to participate in the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program as a condition of receipt of assistance, an eligible youth who participates in the FSS program and is in compliance with the applicable terms and conditions of the program is entitled to receive assistance for up to an additional 24 months. A FYI voucher holders must accept an FSS slot if it is offered to them prior to the 36-month mark in order to receive an extension of assistance (unless the youth meets one of the statutory exceptions described below).

### **Statutory Exceptions**

FYI voucher holders will be entitled to receive an extension of assistance for up to 24 months beyond the 36-month time limit without participating in COC’s FSS program if they certify that they meet one of the exceptions below:

- The FYI voucher holder is a parent or other household member responsible for the care of a dependent child under the age of six or for the care of an incapacitated person.

#### COC Policy

COC defines *incapacitated person* as **[insert definition under state and local law]**.

COC will apply this exception in a manner that provides extensions of FYI assistance to the broadest population possible consistent with the statutory requirements.

The FYI voucher holder will be required to self-certify that they meet this exception on COC-provided form. This certification is the only documentation that the FYI voucher holder must submit.

The child or incapacitated person is not required to reside in the household in order for the FYI voucher holder to certify they meet this exception. For example, a child in a joint custody arrangement under the age of six who resides in the household only part time may qualify the FYI voucher holder for this exception.

- The FYI voucher holder is a person who is regularly and actively participating in a drug addiction or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation program.

#### COC Policy

COC will define *regular and active participation* in a manner that provides extensions of FYI voucher holder assistance to the broadest population possible consistent with the statutory requirements.

The FYI voucher holder will be required to self-certify that they meet this exception on COC-provided form. This certification is the only documentation that the FYI voucher holder must submit.

- The FYI voucher holder is a person who is incapable of complying with the requirement to participate in a FSS program as described above or engage in education, workforce development, or employment activities as described below, as applicable, due to a documented medical condition.

#### COC Policy

COC will apply this requirement in a manner that provides extensions of FYI voucher holder assistance to the broadest population possible consistent with statutory requirements.

The FYI voucher holder will be required to self-certify that they meet this exception on COC-provided form. This certification is the only documentation that the FYI voucher holder must submit.

An FYI voucher holder that meets one of the above exceptions must still be offered an opportunity to enroll in COC's FSS program (if it is available to them) and receive any supportive services available to FYI voucher holders. An FYI voucher holder may choose to participate in an FSS program or engage in education, workforce development, or employment activities, even if they meet one of the above statutory exceptions.

## Education, Workforce Development, or Employment Activities

If COC that carries out an FSS program is unable to offer a FYI voucher holder an FSS slot during their first 36 months of receiving FYI assistance, the FYI voucher holder is considered to have been “unable to enroll” in the program and may have their voucher extended by meeting the education, workforce development, or employment criteria described below:

- The FYI voucher holder was engaged in obtaining a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

### COC Policy

COC will use the definitions of *recognized postsecondary credential* and *secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent* under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). WIOA defines a *recognized postsecondary credential* as a credential consisting of an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship, a license recognized by the state involved or federal government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree (29 U.S.C. 3102). Examples of a recognized postsecondary credential include, but are not limited to, an associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree, occupational licensure, or occupational certification (see U.S. Department of Labor, Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 10–16, Change 1). For the purpose of WIOA, the U.S. Department of Labor defines a *secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent* as a secondary school diploma (or alternate diploma) that is recognized by a state and that is included for accountability purposes under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A secondary school equivalency certification signifies that a student has completed the requirement for a high school education. Examples of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent include, but are not limited to, obtaining certification of attaining passing scores on a state-recognized high school equivalency test, earning a secondary school diploma or state-recognized equivalent, or obtaining certification of passing a state-recognized competency-based assessment.

- The FYI voucher holder was enrolled in an *institution of higher education*, as such term is defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)) or an institution that meets the definition of a *proprietary institution of higher education* or a *postsecondary vocational institution* under sections 102(b)(1) and (c)(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(b)(1) and (c)(1)), respectively.

### COC Policy

The FYI voucher holder must be enrolled in education activities on at least a half-time basis, as defined by the institution which they attend. However, COC may make exceptions to this requirement if the FYI voucher holder is unable to enroll in a sufficient number of classes due to a lack of course offerings by the educational institution where they are enrolled.



- The FYI voucher holder was participating in a career pathway, as such term is defined in Section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).
- The FYI voucher holder was employed.

#### COC Policy

COC will consider the FYI voucher holder to be employed if they work a minimum of 20 hours per week. COC may make exceptions to this requirement if the FYI voucher holder's hours are reduced due to circumstances beyond their control or the FYI voucher holder must temporarily reduce their work hours due to a verified family emergency.

### **FSS Enrollment at 24 Months**

If the FYI voucher holder has not been provided an opportunity to enroll in the FSS program during the first 24 months of FYI assistance, HUD encourages COC to remind the FYI voucher holder at the 24-month reexamination of the education, workforce development, and employment requirements described above so that they have enough time to meet these requirements prior to the expiration of the 36-month time period for FYI assistance.

#### COC Policy

If the FYI voucher holder has not been provided an opportunity to enroll in the FSS program during the first 24 months of FYI assistance, COC will remind the FYI voucher holder at their second regular reexam of the education, workforce development, and employment requirements described above.

### **FSS Enrollment Between 36 and 48 Months**

If an FSS slot becomes available between the 36-month and 48-month mark:

- COC must offer the slot to an FYI voucher holder who had their voucher extended based on meeting the education, workforce development, or employment requirement listed above, or one of the statutory exceptions listed above (even if the FYI voucher holder previously declined an FSS slot because they met one of the statutory exceptions).
- COC must work with the FYI voucher holder to determine whether enrollment in FSS is feasible and in their best interest given any education, workforce development, or employment activities that the FYI voucher holder is engaged in and any statutory exceptions that apply to the FYI voucher holder, as well as the remaining time on their voucher.
- If the FYI voucher holder accepts the FSS slot, COC must work with them to establish Contract of Participation goals and an Individual Training and Services Plan (ITSP) that can be accomplished within the time period left on the voucher.

If the FYI voucher holder is offered an FSS slot prior to the 36-month mark, the FYI voucher holder:

- Will be required to enroll in the FSS program in order to receive an extension of assistance at the end of the 36-month time period (unless they meet one of the statutory exceptions described above).

- Will not be considered to have been “unable to enroll” in the FSS program, and as a result, will not be eligible to receive an extension of assistance based on meeting the education, workforce development, or employment requirements described above.

### **FSS Enrollment After 48 Months**

COC may, but is not required, to offer an FYI voucher holder an FSS slot that becomes available between the 48-month mark and the 60-month mark, since the FYI voucher holder will have already received their second and final extension.

#### COC Policy

If an FSS slot becomes available between the 48 and 60-month marks, COC will not offer the FSS slot to an FYI voucher holder.

### **Extensions of Assistance**

At the 36-month and 48-month reexamination, COC must extend FYI assistance if the FYI voucher holder is participating in and in compliance with the FSS program as long as the FYI voucher holder is still eligible for the HCV program.

In any case, the FYI voucher holder cannot receive more than a total of 60 months of FYI assistance even if the FSS Contract of Participation time period extends beyond the voucher 60-month mark.

### **No FSS Program or Unable to Enroll in FSS**

If COC does not carry out an FSS program or the FYI voucher holder has been unable to enroll in the program during the first 36 months of receiving FYI assistance, the FYI voucher holder is entitled to receive an extension of assistance for up to two successive 12-month periods beyond the 36-month time limit provided that the FYI voucher holder engaged in at least one of the education, workforce development, or employment activities described above for not less than nine months of the 12-month period preceding each extension. In order to meet the nine months out of the preceding 12 months requirement, the FYI voucher holder may have engaged in one of the education, workforce development, or employment activities described above or a combination of these activities.

### **Verification Prior to Annual Reexam**

In order to provide an extension of assistance, COC must verify compliance with the above requirements at the end of the 36-month time period and the 48-month time periods. COC does not need to verify compliance with these requirements at the end of the 60-month time period since the maximum length of assistance is 60 months.

To verify compliance with the education, workforce development, or employment requirement or one of the statutory exceptions, COC must provide the FYI voucher holder written notification informing them that they may receive an extension of their FYI assistance and providing instructions on how the FYI voucher holder may demonstrate that they meet one of these conditions. This notification must be provided sufficiently in advance of the end of the 36-month or 48-month time periods, as applicable, to allow the FYI voucher holder to demonstrate that they meet the education, workforce development, or employment requirement, or one of the statutory exceptions, and for COC to conduct an annual reexamination prior to the expiration of the FYI assistance.

## COC Policy

COC will verify compliance with the education, workforce development, or employment requirement, or one of the statutory exceptions, at the end of the 36-month and 48-month time periods prior to the FYI voucher holder's scheduled annual reexamination. COC will not verify compliance at the end of the 60-month time period.

COC will provide each FYI voucher holder on COC's program with a written notification informing them that they may receive an extension of their FYI assistance if they meet conditions outlined in this chapter and providing them with instructions on how they may demonstrate compliance at least 60 days prior to their scheduled annual reexam date. When necessary, COC will provide this notification in a format accessible to FYI voucher holders with disabilities and in a translated format for FYI voucher holders with limited English proficiency in accordance with Chapter 2.

COC will use the following verification methods to verify an FYI voucher holder's eligibility for voucher extensions:

To verify compliance with the FSS requirement, COC will examine its records to confirm, or obtain confirmation from COC's FSS program staff, that the FYI participant is in compliance with FSS program requirements and has not been terminated from the FSS program.

To meet the education, workforce development, or employment requirement, COC will verify that the FYI voucher holder was engaged in at least one education, workforce development, or employment activity for at least nine months of the 12-month period immediately preceding the end of the 36-month or 48-month time period, as applicable.

Due to the timing of when COC verifies compliance and conducts the annual reexamination, the FYI voucher holder may have not yet met the nine-month requirement but may be able to demonstrate that they will meet the nine-month requirement as of the end of the 36-month or 48-month time period. In such cases, the FYI voucher holder will still be considered to have met the requirements.

In order for the FYI voucher holder to meet one of the statutory exceptions described above, the FYI voucher holder must submit a certification to COC that they meet one of these exceptions. This certification is the only documentation that the FYI voucher holder must submit in order to demonstrate that they meet one of the statutory exceptions.

An FYI voucher holder who received an extension of voucher assistance at the end of the 36-month time period based on meeting one of the conditions described in this chapter does not have to meet the same conditions when they reach the end of the 48-month time period. The FYI voucher holder may demonstrate that they meet a different condition in order to receive an extension of their assistance.

If COC determines that the FYI voucher holder meets one of the statutory conditions, COC would then conduct an annual reexamination. If the annual reexamination determines that the FYI voucher holder is still eligible for the HCV program, COC must provide the FYI voucher holder the extension of voucher assistance.

### **Termination of Assistance for Failure to Meet Conditions**

Failure of the FYI voucher holder to meet one of the above conditions will only impact their ability to receive subsequent extensions of assistance. It will not serve as a basis for terminating the FYI assistance prior to the annual reexam.

If the FYI voucher holder does not meet any of the statutory conditions described in this chapter, the youth is subject to the statutory time limit of 36 months or the time limit of any extension that the youth has already received, and the FYI voucher must be terminated once they reach this time limit. The calculation of the time limit begins from the date the first HAP contract is signed (for tenant-based vouchers) or from the date the FYI voucher holder entered into the initial lease agreement (for project-based vouchers). The number of months is calculated based on the number of months that HAP subsidy is being paid on behalf of the FYI voucher holder, not the number of months that they are in the FYI program. Prior to termination, COC must offer the FYI voucher holder the opportunity to request an informal hearing, in accordance with Chapter 16.

### **19-II.I. TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE [FYI FAQs]**

Termination of a FYI voucher is handled in the same way as with any HCV; therefore, termination of a FYI voucher must be consistent with HCV regulations at 24 CFR Part 982, Subpart L and PHA policies in Chapter 12. Given the statutory time limit that requires FYI vouchers to sunset, COC must terminate the youth's assistance once the limit on assistance has expired.

COC cannot terminate a FYI youth's assistance for noncompliance with PCWA case management, nor may COC terminate assistance for a FYI youth for not accepting services from the PCWA.

COC may not transfer the assistance of FYI voucher holders to regular HCV assistance upon the expiration of the limit on assistance. However, COC may issue a regular HCV to FYI voucher holders if they were selected from the waiting list in accordance with PHA policies. COC may also adopt a waiting list preference for FYI voucher holders who are being terminated for this reason.

#### **COC Policy**

COC will not provide a selection preference on COC's HCV waiting list for FYI voucher holders who are terminated due to the time limit on assistance.

## **19-II.J. PORTABILITY [FYI FAQs]**

Portability for an FYI youth is handled in the same way as for a regular HCV family. COC may not restrict or deny portability for an FYI youth for reasons other than those specified in the HCV program regulations, as reflected in Chapter 10 of the administrative plan.

An FYI youth does not have to port to a jurisdiction that administers FYI vouchers.

If the receiving PHA absorbs the voucher, COC may absorb the youth into its regular HCV program if it has vouchers available to do so. If the receiving PHA absorbs the youth into its regular HCV program, that youth becomes a regular HCV participant with none of the limitations of an FYI voucher.

The initial and receiving PHA must work together to initiate termination of assistance upon expiration of the time limit on assistance.

## **19-II.K. PROJECT-BASING FYI VOUCHERS [FYI FAQs; FR Notice 1/24/22]**

COC may project-base certain FYI vouchers without HUD approval in accordance with all applicable PBV regulations and PHA policies in Chapter 17. This includes FYI vouchers awarded under Notices PIH 2020-28 and PIH 2021-26. Assistance awarded under Notice PIH 2019-20 is prohibited from being project-based.

### COC Policy

COC will not project-base FYI vouchers. All FYI vouchers will be used to provide tenant-based assistance.

## PART III: VETERANS AFFAIRS SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (VASH) PROGRAM

### 19-III.A. OVERVIEW

Since 2008, HCV program funding has provided rental assistance under a supportive housing program for homeless veterans. The Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program combines HCV rental assistance with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) at VA medical centers (VAMCs) and Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs), or through a designated service provider (DSP) as approved by the VA Secretary. Eligible families are homeless veterans and their families that agree to participate in VA case management and are referred to the VAMC's partner PHA for HCV assistance. The VAMC or DSP's responsibilities include:

- Screening homeless veterans to determine whether they meet VASH program participation criteria;
- Referring homeless veterans to COC;
  - The term *homeless veteran* means a veteran who is homeless (as that term is defined in subsection (a) or (b) of Section 103 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302)). See 38 U.S.C. 2002.
- Providing appropriate treatment and supportive services to potential VASH participants, if needed, prior to PHA issuance of a voucher;
- Providing housing search assistance to VASH participants;
- Identifying the social service and medical needs of VASH participants, and providing or ensuring the provision of regular ongoing case management, outpatient health services, hospitalization, and other supportive services as needed throughout the veterans' participation period; and
- Maintaining records and providing information for evaluation purposes, as required by HUD and the VA.

VASH vouchers are awarded noncompetitively based on geographic need and PHA administrative performance. Eligible PHAs must be located within the jurisdiction of a VAMC and in an area of high need based on data compiled by HUD and the VA. When Congress funds a new allocation of VASH vouchers, HUD invites eligible PHAs to apply for a specified number of vouchers.

Generally, the HUD-VASH program is administered in accordance with regular HCV program requirements. However, HUD is authorized to waive or specify alternative requirements to allow PHAs to effectively deliver and administer VASH assistance. Alternative requirements are established in the HUD-VASH Operating Requirements, which were originally published in the Federal Register on May 6, 2008, and updated September 27, 2021. Unless expressly waived by HUD, all regulatory requirements and HUD directives regarding the HCV program are applicable to VASH vouchers, including the use of all HUD-required contracts and other forms, and all civil rights and fair housing requirements. In addition, COC may request additional statutory or regulatory waivers that it determines are necessary for the effective delivery and administration of the program.

The VASH program is administered in accordance with applicable Fair Housing requirements since civil rights requirements cannot be waived under the program. These include applicable authorities under 24 CFR 5.105(a) and 24 CFR 982.53 including, but not limited to, the Fair Housing Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Age Discrimination Act and all PHA policies as outlined in Chapter 2 of this document.

When HUD-VASH recipients include veterans with disabilities or family members with disabilities, reasonable accommodation requirements in Part II of Chapter 2 of this policy apply.

### **19-III.B. REFERRALS [FR Notice 9/27/21 and HUD-VASH Qs and As]**

VAMC case managers will screen all families in accordance with VA screening criteria and refer eligible families to COC for determination of program eligibility and voucher issuance. COC has no role in determining or verifying the veteran's eligibility under VA screening criteria, including determining the veteran's homelessness status. COC must accept referrals from the partnering VAMC and must maintain written documentation of referrals in VASH tenant files. Upon turnover, VASH vouchers must be issued to eligible veteran families as identified by the VAMC.

#### COC Policy

In order to expedite the screening process, COC will provide all forms and a list of documents required for the VASH application to the VAMC. Case managers will work with veterans to fill out the forms and compile all documents prior to meeting with COC and submitting an application. When feasible, the VAMC case manager should email or fax copies of all documents to COC prior to the meeting in order to allow COC time to review them and start a file for the veteran.

After the VAMC has given COC a complete referral, COC will perform an eligibility screening within five business days of receipt of a VAMC referral.

### **19-III.C. HCV PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY [FR Notice 9/27/21]**

Eligible participants are homeless veterans and their families who agree to participate in case management from the VAMC.

- A *VASH Veteran* or *veteran family* refers to either a single veteran or a veteran with a household composed of two or more related persons. It also includes one or more eligible persons living with the veteran who are determined to be important to the veteran's care or well-being.
- A veteran for the purpose of VASH is a person whose length of service meets statutory requirements, and who served in the active military, naval, or air service, was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable, and is eligible for VA health care.

Under VASH, PHAs do not have authority to determine family eligibility in accordance with HCV program rules and PHA policies. The only reasons for denial of assistance by COC are failure to meet the income eligibility requirements and/or that a family member is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program. Under portability, the receiving PHA must also comply with these VASH screening requirements.

#### **Social Security Numbers**

When verifying Social Security numbers (SSNs) for homeless veterans and their family members, an original document issued by a federal or state government agency, which contains the name and SSN of the individual along with other identifying information of the individual, is acceptable in accordance with Section 7-II.B. of this policy.

In the case of the homeless veteran, COC must accept the Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD-214) or the VA-verified Application for Health Benefits (10-10EZ) as verification of SSN and cannot require the veteran to provide a Social Security card. A VA-issued identification card may also be used to verify the SSN of a homeless veteran.

#### **Proof of Age**

The DD-214 or 10-10EZ must be accepted as proof of age in lieu of birth certificates or other PHA-required documentation as outlined in Section 7-II.C. of this policy. A VA-issued identification card may also be used to verify the age of a homeless veteran.

#### **Photo Identification**

A VA-issued identification card must be accepted in lieu of another type of government-issued photo identification. These cards also serve as verification of SSNs and date of birth.



## **Income Eligibility**

COC must determine income eligibility for VASH families in accordance with 24 CFR 982.201 and policies in Section 3-II.A. If the family is over-income based on the most recently published income limits for the family size, the family will be ineligible for HCV assistance.

While income-targeting does not apply to VASH vouchers, COC may include the admission of extremely low-income VASH families in its income targeting numbers for the fiscal year in which these families are admitted.

### COC Policy

While income-targeting requirements will not be considered by COC when families are referred by the partnering VAMC, COC will include any extremely low-income VASH families that are admitted in its income targeting numbers for the fiscal year in which these families are admitted.

## **Screening**

COC may not screen any potentially eligible family members or deny assistance for any grounds permitted under 24 CFR 982.552 and 982.553 with one exception: COCs is still required to prohibit admission if any member of the household is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a state sex offender registration program. Accordingly, with the exception of denial for registration as a lifetime sex offender under state law and PHA policies on how sex offender screenings will be conducted, COC Policy in Sections 3-III.B. through 3-III.E. do not apply to VASH. The prohibition against screening families for anything other than lifetime sex offender status applies to all family members, not just the veteran.

If a family member is subject to lifetime registration under a state sex offender registration program, the remaining family members may be served if the family agrees to remove the sex offender from its family composition. This is true unless the family member subject to lifetime registration under a state sex offender registration program is the homeless veteran, in which case the family would be denied admission to the program [New HCV GB, *HUD-VASH*, p. 6].

## **Denial of Assistance [Notice PIH 2008-37]**

Once a veteran is referred by the VAMC, COC must either issue a voucher or deny assistance. If COC denies assistance, it must provide the family with prompt notice of the decision and a brief statement of the reason for denial in accordance with Section 3-III.F. Like in the standard HCV program, the family must be provided with the opportunity for an informal review in accordance with policies in Section 3-III.F. In addition, a copy of the denial notice must be sent to the VAMC case manager.

## **19-III.D. CHANGES IN FAMILY COMPOSITION**

### **Adding Family Members [FR Notice 9/27/21]**

When adding a family member after the family has been admitted to the program, PHA policies in Section 3-II.B. apply. Other than the birth, adoption, or court-awarded custody of a child, COC must approve additional family members and will apply its regular screening criteria in doing so.

### **Remaining Family Members [HUD-VASH Qs and As]**

If the homeless veteran dies while the family is being assisted, the voucher would remain with the remaining members of the tenant family. COC may use one of its own regular vouchers, if available, to continue assisting this family and free up a VASH voucher for another VASH-eligible family. If a regular voucher is not available, the family would continue utilizing the VASH voucher. Once the VASH voucher turns over, however, it must go to a homeless veteran family.

### **Family Break Up [HUD-VASH Qs and As]**

In the case of divorce or separation, since the set-aside of VASH vouchers is for veterans, the voucher must remain with the veteran. This overrides COC's policies in Section 3-I.C. on how to determine who remains in the program if a family breaks up.

### **19-III.E. LEASING [FR Notice 9/27/21]**

#### **Waiting List**

COC does not have the authority to maintain a waiting list or apply local preferences for HUD–VASH vouchers. Policies in Chapter 4 relating to applicant selection from the waiting list, local preferences, special admissions, cross-listing, and opening and closing the waiting list do not apply to VASH vouchers.

#### **Exception Payment Standards**

To assist VASH participants in finding affordable housing, especially in competitive markets, HUD allows PHAs to establish a HUD-VASH exception payment standard. PHAs may go up to but no higher than 120 percent of the published area-wide fair market rent (FMR) or small area fair market rent (SAFMR) specifically for VASH families. PHAs who want to establish a VASH exception payment standard over 120 percent must still request a waiver from HUD through the regular waiver process outlined in Notice PIH 2018-16.

#### **Voucher Issuance**

Unlike the standard HCV program which requires an initial voucher term of at least 60 days, VASH vouchers must have an initial search term of at least 120 days. PHA policies on extensions as outlined in Section 5-II.E. will apply.

##### COC Policy

All VASH vouchers will have an initial term of 120 calendar days.

The family must submit a Request for Tenancy Approval and proposed lease within the 120-day period unless COC grants an extension.

COC must track issuance of HCVs for families referred by the VAMC or DSP in PIC as required in Notice PIH 2011-53.

#### **Initial Lease Term**

Unlike in the standard the HCV program, VASH voucher holders may enter into an initial lease that is for less than 12 months. Accordingly, COC Policy in Section 9-I.E., Term of Assisted Tenancy, does not apply.

#### **Ineligible Housing [FR Notice 6/18/14]**

Unlike in the standard HCV program, VASH families are permitted to live on the grounds of a VA facility in units developed to house homeless veterans. This applies to both tenant-based assistance and PBV. Therefore, 24 CFR 982.352(a)(5) and 983.53(a)(2), which prohibit units on the physical grounds of a medical, mental, or similar public or private institution, do not apply to VASH for this purpose only. Accordingly, COC Policy in 9-I.D., Ineligible Units, does not apply for this purpose only.

## **HQS Pre-Inspections**

To expedite the leasing process, PHAs may pre-inspect available units that veterans may be interested in leasing in order to maintain a pool of eligible units. If a VASH family selects a unit that passed an HQS inspection (without intervening occupancy) within 45 days of the date of the Request for Tenancy Approval (Form HUD-52517), the unit may be approved if it meets all other conditions under 24 CFR 982.305. However, the veteran must be free to select their unit and cannot be steered to these units.

### COC Policy

To expedite the leasing process, COC may pre-inspect available units that veterans may be interested in leasing to maintain a pool of eligible units. If a VASH family selects a unit that passed a HQS pre-inspection (without intervening occupancy) within 45 days of the date of the RTA, the unit may be approved provided that it meets all other conditions under 24 CFR 982.305. The veteran will be free to select their unit.

When a pre-inspected unit is not selected, COC will make every effort to fast-track the inspection process, including adjusting the normal inspection schedule for both initial and any required reinspections.

## **19-III.F. PORTABILITY [FR Notice 9/27/21 and Notice PIH 2011-53]**

### **General Requirements**

Portability policies under VASH depend on whether the family wants to move within or outside of the initial VA facility's catchment area (the area in which the VAMC or DSP operates). In all cases, the initial VA facility must be consulted prior to the move and provide written confirmation that case management will continue to be provided in the family's new location. VASH participant families may only reside in jurisdictions that are accessible to case management services, as determined by case managers at the partnering VAMC or DSP.

Under VASH, applicant families may move under portability even if the family did not have legal residency in the jurisdiction of the initial PHA when they applied. As a result, PHA policies in Section 10-II.B. about nonresident applicants do not apply.

If the family no longer requires case management, there are no portability restrictions. Normal portability rules apply.

### **Portability within the Initial VAMC or DSP's Catchment Area**

A VASH family can move within the VAMC's catchment area as long as case management can still be provided, as determined by the VA. If the initial PHA's partnering VAMC will still provide the case management services, the receiving PHA must process the move in accordance with portability procedures:

- If the receiving PHA has been awarded VASH vouchers, it can choose to either bill the initial PHA or absorb the family if it has a VASH voucher available to do so.
  - If COC absorbs the family, the VAMC or DSP providing the initial case management must agree to the absorption and the transfer of case management.
- If the receiving PHA does not administer a VASH program, it must always bill the initial PHA.

### **Portability Outside of the Initial VAMC or DSP's Catchment Area**

If a family wants to move to another jurisdiction where it will not be possible for the initial PHA's partnering VAMC or DSP to provide case management services, the initial VAMC or DSP must first determine that the VASH family could be served by another VAMS or DSP that is participating in the VASH program, and the receiving PHA has an available VASH voucher.

In these cases, the family must be absorbed by the receiving PHA either as a new admission or as a portability move-in, as applicable. Upon absorption, the initial PHA's VASH voucher will be available to lease to a new VASH-eligible family, and the absorbed family will count toward the number of VASH slots awarded to the receiving PHA.

### **Portability Outside of the Initial VAMC or DSP's Catchment Area under VAWA**

Veterans who request to port beyond the catchment area of the VAMC or DSP where they are receiving case management to protect the health or safety of a person who is or has been the victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and who reasonably believes they are threatened with imminent harm from further violence by remaining in the unit may port prior to receiving approval from the receiving VAMC or DSP. The initial PHA must follow its emergency transfer plan (see Exhibit 16-3). PHAs may require verbal self-certification or a written request from a participant seeing a move beyond the catchment area of the VAMC or DSP.

The verbal self-certification or written request must include either a statement expressing why the participant reasonably believes that there is a threat of imminent harm from further violence if they were to remain in the same unit or a statement that the tenant was a sexual assault victim and that the sexual assault occurred on the premises during the 90-day period preceding the participants request for the move.

The participant must still port to COC that has a VASH program. If the receiving PHA does not have a VASH voucher available to lease, they may bill the initial PHA until a VASH voucher is available, at which point the porting veteran must be absorbed into the receiving PHA's program.

### **19-III.G. TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE [FR Notice 9/27/21]**

With the exception of terminations for failure to receive case management, HUD has not established any alternative requirements for termination of assistance for VASH participants. However, prior to terminating VASH participants, HUD strongly encourages PHAs to exercise their discretion under 24 CFR 982.552(c)(2) as outlined in Section 12-II.D. of this policy and consider all relevant circumstances of the specific case. This includes granting reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, as well as considering the role of the case manager and the impact that ongoing case management services can have on mitigating the conditions that led to the potential termination.

VASH participant families may not be terminated after admission for a circumstance or activities that occurred prior to admission and were known to COC but could not be considered at the time of admission due to VASH program requirements. COC may terminate the family's assistance only for program violations that occur after the family's admission to the program.

#### **Cessation of Case Management**

As a condition of receiving HCV rental assistance, a HUD-VASH-eligible family must receive case management services from the VAMC or DSP. A VASH participant family's assistance must be terminated for failure to participate, without good cause, in case management as verified by the VAMC or DSP.

However, a VAMC or DSP determination that the participant family no longer requires case management is not grounds for termination of voucher or PBV assistance. In such a case, at its option, COC may offer the family continued assistance through one of its regular vouchers. If COC has no voucher to offer, the family will retain its VASH voucher or PBV unit until such time as COC has an available voucher for the family.

#### **VAWA [FR Notice 9/27/21]**

When a veteran's family member is receiving protection under VAWA because the veteran is the perpetrator of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the victim must continue to be assisted. Upon termination of the perpetrator's VASH assistance, the victim must be given a regular HCV if one is available, and the perpetrator's VASH voucher must be used to serve another eligible veteran family. If a regular HCV is not available, the perpetrator must be terminated from assistance and the victim will continue to use the VASH voucher.

## **19-III.H. PROJECT-BASING VASH VOUCHERS**

### **General Requirements [Notice PIH 2017-21 and FR Notice 9/27/21]**

COCPHAs are authorized to project-base their tenant-based VASH vouchers without additional HUD review or approval in accordance with Notice PIH 2017-21 and all PBV program requirements provided that the VAMC will continue to make supportive services available. In addition, since 2010, HUD has awarded VASH vouchers specifically for project-based assistance in the form of PBV HUD-VASH set-aside vouchers. While these vouchers are excluded from the PBV program cap as long as they remain under PBV HAP contract at the designated project, all other VASH vouchers are subject to the PBV program percentage limitation discussed in Section 17-I.A. Note that VASH supportive services only need to be provided to VASH families receiving PBV assistance in the project, not all families receiving PBV assistance in the project. If a VASH family does not require or no longer requires case management, the unit continues to count as an excepted PBV unit as long as the family resides in the unit.

If COC project-bases VASH vouchers, COC must consult with the partnering VAMC or DSP to ensure approval of the project or projects. PHAs may project-base VASH vouchers in projects alongside other PBV units and may execute a single HAP contract covering both the VASH PBVs and the other PBVs. COC must refer only VASH families to PBV units exclusively made available to VASH families and to PBV units funded through a HUD set-aside award.

If a VASH family is referred to COC and there is an available PBV unit that is not exclusively made available to VASH families, COC may offer to refer the family to the owner if allowable under the selection policy for that project, and the owner and PHA may amend the HAP contract to designate the PBV unit as a VASH PBV unit.

COC and owner may agree to amend a PBV HAP contract to redesignate a regular PBV unit as a unit specifically designated for VASH families so long as COC first consults with the VAMC or DSP. Additionally, COC and owner may agree to amend a PBV HAP contract to redesignate a unit specifically designated for VASH families as a regular PBV unit, so long as the unit is not funded through a VASH PBV set-aside award and is eligible for regular PBV (i.e., the unit is not on the grounds of a medical facility and the unit is eligible under COC's program and project caps).

Policies for VASH PBV units will generally follow PHA policies for the standard PBV program as listed in Chapter 17, with the exception of the policies listed below.



### **Failure to Participate in Case Management [FR Notice 9/27/21]**

Upon notification by the VAMC or DSP of the family's failure to participate, without good cause, in case management, COC must provide the family a reasonable time period to vacate the unit. COC must terminate assistance to the family at the earlier of either the time the family vacates or the expiration of the reasonable time period given to vacate.

#### COC Policy

Upon notification by the VAMC or DSP that a VASH PBV family has failed to participate in case management without good cause, COC will provide written notice of termination of assistance to the family and the owner within 10 business days. The family will be given 60 days from the date of the notice to move out of the unit.

COC may make exceptions to this 60-day period if needed for reasons beyond the family's control such as death, serious illness, or other medical emergency of a family member.

If the family fails to vacate the unit within the established time, the owner may evict the family. If the owner does not evict the family, COC must remove the unit from the HAP contract or amend the HAP contract to substitute a different unit in the project if the project is partially assisted. COC may add the removed unit to the HAP contract after the ineligible family vacates the property.

### **Moves [HUD-VASH Qs and As, FR Notice 9/27/21]**

When a VASH PBV family is eligible to move from its PBV unit in accordance with Section 17-VIII.C. of this policy, but there is no other comparable tenant-based rental assistance, the following procedures must be implemented:

- If a VASH tenant-based voucher is not available at the time the family wants (and is eligible) to move, COC may require a family who still requires case management to wait for a VASH tenant-based voucher for a period not to exceed 180 days;
- If a VASH tenant-based voucher is still not available after that period, the family must be allowed to move with its VASH voucher. Alternatively, COC may allow the family to move with its VASH voucher without having to meet this 180-day period. In either case, COC is required to replace the assistance in the PBV unit with one of its regular vouchers, unless COC and owner agree to temporarily remove the unit from the HAP contract; and
- If a VASH veteran is determined to no longer require case management, COC must allow the family to move with the first available tenant-based voucher if not VASH voucher is immediately available and cannot require the family to wait for a VASH voucher to become availableCOCOCOCOC.

## **PART IV: MAINSTREAM VOUCHER PROGRAM**

### **19-IV.A. PROGRAM OVERVIEW [Notice PIH 2020-01]**

Mainstream vouchers assist non-elderly persons with disabilities and their families in the form of either project-based or tenant-based voucher assistance.

Aside from separate funding appropriations and serving a specific population, Mainstream vouchers follow the same program requirements as standard vouchers. COC does not have special authority to treat families that receive a Mainstream voucher differently from other applicants and participants. For example, COC cannot apply different payment standards, establish conditions for allowing portability, or apply different screening criteria to Mainstream families.

The Mainstream voucher program, (previously referred to as the Mainstream 5-Year program or the Section 811 voucher program) was originally authorized under the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990. Mainstream vouchers operated separately from the regular HCV program until the passage of the Frank Melville Supportive Housing Investment Act of 2010. Funding for Mainstream voucher renewals and administrative fees was first made available in 2012. In 2017 and 2019, incremental vouchers were made available for the first time since the Melville Act (in addition to renewals and administrative fees), and PHAs were invited to apply for a competitive award of Mainstream vouchers under the FY17 and FY19 NOFAs. In 2020, Notice PIH 2020-22 provided an opportunity for any PHA administering an HCV program to apply for Mainstream vouchers noncompetitively, while Notice PIH 2020-09 authorized an increase in Mainstream voucher units and budget authority for those PHAs already awarded Mainstream vouchers under the FY17 and FY19 NOFAs.

Funds for Mainstream vouchers may be recaptured and reallocated if COC does not comply with all program requirements or fails to maintain a utilization rate of 80 percent for COC's Mainstream vouchers.

#### **19-IV.B. ELIGIBLE POPULATION [Notice PIH 2020-01 and Notice PIH 2020-22]**

All Mainstream vouchers must be used to serve non-elderly persons with disabilities and their families, defined as any family that includes a person with disabilities who is at least 18 years old and not yet 62 years old as of the effective date of the initial HAP contract. The eligible disabled household member does not need to be the head of household.

The definition of person with disabilities for purposes of Mainstream vouchers is the statutory definition under section 3(b)(3)(E) of the 1937 Act, which is the same as is used for allowances and deductions in the HCV program and is provided in Exhibit 3-1 of this policy.

Existing families receiving Mainstream vouchers, where the eligible family member is now age 62 or older, will not “age out” of the program as long as the family was eligible on the day it was first assisted under a HAP contract.

COC may not implement eligibility screening criteria for Mainstream vouchers that is different from that of the regular HCV program.

#### **19-IV.C. PARTNERSHIP AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES [Notice PIH 2020-01]**

PHAs are encouraged but not required to establish formal and informal partnerships with a variety of organizations that assist persons with disabilities to help ensure eligible participants find and maintain stable housing.

##### COC Policy

COC will implement a Mainstream program, in partnership with ***The Housing Collective and Abilis.***

## **19-IV.D. WAITING LIST ADMINISTRATION**

### **General Waiting List Requirements [Notice PIH 2020-01 and Mainstream Voucher Basics Webinar, 10/15/20]**

PHAs must not have a separate waiting list for Mainstream voucher assistance since COC is required by the regulations to maintain one waiting list for tenant-based assistance [24 CFR 982.204(f)]. All PHA policies on opening, closing, and updating the waiting list, as well as waiting list preferences in Chapter 4, apply to the Mainstream program.

When COC is awarded Mainstream vouchers, these vouchers must be used for new admissions to COC's program from the waiting list. COC must lease these vouchers by pulling the first Mainstream-eligible family from its tenant-based waiting list. PHAs are not permitted to reassign existing participants to the program in order to make regular tenant-based vouchers available. Further, COC may not skip over Mainstream-eligible families on the waiting list because COC is serving the required number of Mainstream families.

Upon turnover, vouchers must be provided to Mainstream-eligible families. If a Mainstream turnover voucher becomes available, COC must determine if the families at the top of the waiting list qualify under program requirements.

### **Admission Preferences [Notice PIH 2020-01; FY17 Mainstream NOFA; FY19 Mainstream NOFA]**

If COC claimed points for a preference in a NOFA application for Mainstream vouchers, COC must adopt a preference for at least one of the targeted groups identified in the NOFA.

#### **COC Policy**

COC claimed a preference for a targeted group as part of an application for Mainstream vouchers under a NOFA. COC will offer the following preference:

Transitioning out of institutional and other segregated settings

At serious risk of institutionalization

Currently experiencing homelessness

Previously experienced homelessness and currently a client in a permanent supportive housing or rapid rehousing project

At risk of experiencing homelessness

#### **19-IV.E. PORTABILITY [Notice PIH 2020-01 and Mainstream Voucher Basics Webinar, 10/15/20]**

Mainstream voucher participants are eligible for portability under standard portability rules and all PHA policies regarding portability in Chapter 10, Part II apply to Mainstream families.

The following special considerations for Mainstream vouchers apply under portability:

- If the receiving PHA has a Mainstream voucher available, the participant may remain a Mainstream participant.
  - If the receiving PHA chooses to bill the initial PHA, then the voucher will remain a Mainstream voucher.
  - If the receiving PHA chooses to absorb the voucher, the voucher will be considered a regular voucher, or a Mainstream voucher if the receiving PHA has a Mainstream voucher available, and the Mainstream voucher at the initial PHA will be freed up to lease to another Mainstream-eligible family.
- If the receiving PHA does not have a Mainstream voucher available, the participant may receive a regular voucher.

#### **19-IV.F. PROJECT-BASING MAINSTREAM VOUCHERS [FY19 Mainstream Voucher NOFA Q&A]**

COC may project-base Mainstream vouchers in accordance with all applicable PBV regulations and PHA policies in Chapter 17. PHAs are responsible for ensuring that, in addition to complying with project-based voucher program requirements, the project complies with all applicable federal nondiscrimination and civil rights statutes and requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504), Titles II or III of the Americans with Disabilities (ADA), and the Fair Housing Act and their implementing regulations at 24 CFR Part 8; 28 CFR Parts 35 and 36; and 24 CFR Part 100. Mainstream vouchers are subject to the PBV program percentage limitation discussed in Section 17-I.A.

## PART IV: NON-ELDERLY DISABLED (NED) VOUCHERS

### 19-V.A. PROGRAM OVERVIEW [Notice PIH 2013-19]

NED vouchers help non-elderly disabled families lease suitable, accessible, and affordable housing in the private market. Aside from separate funding appropriations and serving a specific population, NED vouchers follow the same program requirements as standard vouchers. COC does not have special authority to treat families that receive a NED voucher differently from other applicants and participants.

Some NED vouchers are awarded to PHAs through competitive NOFAs. The NOFA for FY2009 Rental Assistance for NED made incremental funding available for two categories of NED families:

- **Category 1** vouchers enable non-elderly persons or families with disabilities to access affordable housing on the private market.
- **Category 2** vouchers enable non-elderly persons with disabilities currently residing in nursing homes or other healthcare institutions to transition into the community. PHAs with NED Category 2 vouchers were required to partner with a state Medicaid or health agency or the state Money Follows the Person (MFP) Demonstration agency.

Since 1997, HCVs for NED families have been also awarded under various special purpose HCV programs: Rental Assistance for Non-Elderly Persons with Disabilities in Support of Designated Housing Plans (Designated Housing), Rental Assistance for Non-Elderly Persons with Disabilities Related to Certain Types of Section 8 Project-Based Developments (Certain Developments), One-Year Mainstream Housing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, and the Project Access Pilot Program (formerly Access Housing 2000).

- **Designated Housing** vouchers enable non-elderly disabled families, who would have been eligible for a public housing unit if occupancy of the unit or entire project had not been restricted to elderly families only through an approved Designated Housing Plan, to receive rental assistance. These vouchers may also assist non-elderly disabled families living in a designated unit/project/building to move from that project if they so choose. The family does not have to be listed on COC's voucher waiting list. Instead, they may be admitted to the program as a special admission. Once the impacted families have been served, COC may begin issuing these vouchers to non-elderly disabled families from their HCV waiting list. Upon turnover, these vouchers must be issued to non-elderly disabled families from COC's HCV waiting list.

- **Certain Developments** vouchers enable non-elderly families having a person with disabilities, who do not currently receive housing assistance in certain developments where owners establish preferences for, or restrict occupancy to, elderly families, to obtain affordable housing. These non-elderly families with a disabled person do not need to be listed on COC's HCV waiting list in order to be offered and receive housing choice voucher rental assistance. It is sufficient that these families' names are on the waiting list for a covered development at the time their names are provided to COC by the owner. Once the impacted families have been served, COC may begin issuing these vouchers to non-elderly disabled families from their HCV waiting list. Upon turnover, these vouchers must be issued to non-elderly disabled families from COC's HCV waiting list.
- **One-Year Mainstream Housing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (One-Year Mainstream)** vouchers enable non-elderly disabled families on COC's waiting list to receive a voucher. After initial leasing, turnover vouchers must be issued to non-elderly disabled families from COC's voucher waiting list.

## **19-V.B. ELIGIBLE POPULATION**

### **General Requirements [Notice PIH 2013-19]**

Only eligible families whose head of household, spouse, or cohead is non-elderly (under age 62) and disabled may receive a NED voucher. Families with only a minor child with a disability are not eligible.

In cases where the qualifying household member now qualifies as elderly due to the passage of time since the family received the NED voucher, existing NED participant families do not "age out," as the family was eligible on the day it was first assisted under a housing assistance payments (HAP) contract.

The definition of person with disabilities for purposes of NED vouchers is the statutory definition under Section 3(b)(3)(E) of the 1937 Act, which is the same as is used for allowances and deductions in the HCV program and is provided in Exhibit 3-1 of this policy.

COC may not implement eligibility screening criteria for NED vouchers that is different from that of the regular HCV program.

### **NED Category 2 [Notice PIH 2013-19 and NED Category 2 FAQs]**

In addition to being eligible for COC's regular HCV program and a non-elderly person with a disability, in order to receive a Category 2 voucher, the family's head, spouse, cohead, or sole member must be transitioning from a nursing home or other healthcare institution and provided services needed to live independently in the community.

Nursing homes or other healthcare institutions may include intermediate care facilities and specialized institutions that care for those with intellectual disabilities, developmentally disabled, or mentally ill, but do not include board and care facilities (e.g., adult homes, adult day care, adult congregate living).

COC cannot limit who can apply to just those persons referred or approved by a Money Follows the Person (MFP) Demonstration agency or state health agency. Other individuals could be placed on the waiting list if they can show, with confirmation by an independent agency or organization that routinely provides such services (this can be the MFP or partnering agency, but need not be), that the transitioning individual will be provided with all necessary services, including care or case management.

For each Category 2 family, there must be documentation (e.g., a copy of a referral letter from the partnering or referring agency) in the tenant file identifying the institution where the family lived at the time of voucher issuance.

## **19-V.C. WAITING LIST**

### **General Requirements [Notice PIH 2013-19]**

Families must be selected for NED vouchers from COC's waiting list in accordance with all applicable regulations and PHA policies in Chapter 4.

Regardless of the number of NED families COC is required to serve, the next family on the waiting list must be served. Further, COC may not skip over NED-eligible families on the waiting list because COC is serving the required number of NED families.

### **NED Category 2 Referrals [NED Category 2 FAQs]**

For NED Category 2 families, the partnering agency may make referrals of eligible families to COC for placement on the waiting list. COC will then select these families from the waiting list for voucher issuance. Because language in the NOFA established that vouchers awarded under the NOFA must only serve non-elderly disabled families transitioning from institutions, COC does not need to establish a preference in order to serve these families ahead of other families on COC's waiting list.

PHAs must accept applications from people living outside their jurisdictions or from people being referred from other Medicaid or MFP service agencies in their state.

If COC's waiting list is closed, COC must reopen its waiting list to accept referrals from its partnering agency. When opening the waiting list, PHAs must advertise in accordance with 24 CFR 982.206 and PHA policies in Section 4-II.C. In addition, COC must ensure that individuals living in eligible institutions are aware when COC opens its waiting list by reaching out to social service agencies, nursing homes, intermediate care facilities and specialized institutions in the local service area.



### **Reissuance of Turnover Vouchers [Notice PIH 2013-19]**

All NED turnover vouchers must be reissued to the next NED family on COC's waiting list with the following exception: A Category 2 voucher must be issued to another Category 2 family upon turnover if a Category 2 family is on COC's waiting list. If there are no Category 2 families on COC's waiting list, COC must contact its partnering agency as well as conduct outreach through appropriate social service agencies and qualifying institutions to identify potentially eligible individuals. Only after all means of outreach have been taken to reach Category 2 families can COC reissue the voucher to another Category 2 NED family on COC's waiting list. Any subsequent turnover of that voucher must again be used for a Category 2 family on COC's waiting list, and COC is under the same obligation to conduct outreach to Category 2 families if no such families are on COC's waiting list.

For PHAs that received both Category 1 and Category 2 vouchers, if at any time COC is serving fewer Category 2 families than the number of Category 2 HCVs awarded under the NOFA, when a Category 2 family applies to the waiting list and is found eligible, COC must issue the next NED voucher to that family. HUD monitors the initial leasing and reissuance of Category 2 HCVs. These vouchers may be recaptured and reassigned if not leased properly and in a timely manner.

All NED vouchers should be affirmatively marketed to a diverse population of NED-eligible families to attract protected classes least likely to apply. If at any time following the turnover of a NED HCV COC believes it is not practicable to assist NED families, COC must contact HUD.

## **19-V.D. LEASE UP [Notice PIH 2013-19]**

### **Briefings**

In addition to providing families with a disabled person a list of accessible units known to COC, HUD encourages, but does not require, PHAs to provide additional resources to NED families as part of the briefing.

#### COC Policy

In addition to providing families with a disabled person a list of accessible units known to COC, COC will provide a list of local supportive service and disability organizations that may provide such assistance as counseling services and funding for moving expenses or security deposits in the briefing packet. These organizations include state protection and advocacy agencies, Centers for Independent Living, state Medicaid agencies, and disability advocacy groups that represent individuals with a variety of disabilities.

Further, if other governmental or non-governmental agencies provide available resources such as housing search counseling, moving expenses, security deposits, and utility deposits, COC will include this information in the briefing packet.

COC will also offer specialized housing search assistance to families with a disabled person to locate accessible units if requested. Trained PHA staff or a local supportive service or disability organization may be able to provide this service.

### **Voucher Term**

While COC is not required to establish different policies for the initial term of the voucher for NED vouchers, HUD has encouraged PHAs with NED vouchers to be generous in establishing reasonable initial search terms and subsequent extensions for families with a disabled person.

#### COC Policy

All NED vouchers will have an initial term of 120 calendar days.

The family must submit a Request for Tenancy Approval and proposed lease within the 120-day period unless COC grants an extension.

All other PHA policies on extensions and suspension of vouchers in Section 5-II.E. will apply.

## **Special Housing Types [Notice PIH 2013-19 and NED Category 2 FAQs]**

In general, COC is not required to permit families to use any of the special housing types and may limit the number of families using such housing. However, COC must permit the use of a special housing type if doing so provides a reasonable accommodation so that the program is readily accessible to and usable by a person with disabilities.

Such special housing types include single room occupancy housing, congregate housing, group homes, shared housing, cooperative housing, and manufactured homes when the family owns the home and leases the manufactured home space.

Persons with disabilities transitioning out of institutional settings may choose housing in the community that is in a group or shared environment or where some additional assistance for daily living is provided for them on site. Under HUD regulations, group homes and shared housing are considered special housing types and are not excluded as an eligible housing type in the HCV program. Assisted living facilities are also considered eligible housing under the normal HCV program rules, as long as the costs for meals and other supportive services are not included in the housing assistance payments (HAP) made by COC to the owner, and as long as the person does not need continual medical or nursing care.

## **19-V.E. PORTABILITY [NED Category 2 FAQs]**

NED voucher participants are eligible for portability under standard portability rules and all PHA policies regarding portability in Chapter 10, Part II apply to NED families. However, COC may, but is not required to, allow applicant NED families to move under portability, even if the family did not have legal residency in the initial PHA's jurisdiction when they applied.

### COC Policy

If neither the head of household nor the spouse or cohead of a NED applicant family had a domicile (legal residence) in COC's jurisdiction at the time that the family's initial application for assistance was submitted, the family must lease a unit within the initial PHA's jurisdiction for at least 12 months before requesting portability.

COC will consider exceptions to this policy for purposes of reasonable accommodation (see Chapter 2) or reasons related to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.