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DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

[Docket No. FR-6624-N-01]

Request for Information to Promote the Success of the Melania Trump Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Initiative

AGENCY: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing (PIH), HUD.

ACTION: Request for information.

SUMMARY: HUD is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) to solicit feedback from stakeholders on the Melania Trump Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) initiative. HUD will use the information gathered through this RFI to make recommendations to Congress (1) to improve program operations; (2) to assist youth in navigating the housing search process and preventing returns to homelessness after the subsidized rental assistance sunsets; and (3) on how Federal, State, and local stakeholders can best support participants as they transition from foster care to successful adulthood.

DATES: Comments are requested on or before [**INSERT DATE 45 DAYS FROM DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER***]. Late-filed comments will be considered to the extent practicable.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments responsive to this RFI. Copies of all comments submitted are available for inspection and downloading at *https://www.regulations.gov*. To receive consideration as public comments, comments must be submitted through one of the two methods specified below. All submissions must refer to the docket number and title above.

1. Electronic Submission of Comments. Interested persons may submit comments electronically through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at https://www.regulations.gov. HUD strongly encourages commenters to submit comments electronically. Electronic submission of comments allows the commenter maximum time to prepare and submit a comment, ensures

timely receipt by HUD, and enables HUD to make them immediately available to the public. Comments submitted electronically through the https://www.regulations.gov website can be viewed by other commenters and interested members of the public. Commenters should follow the instructions provided on that site to submit comments electronically.

2. Submission of Comments by Mail. Comments may be submitted by mail to the Regulations Division, Office of General Counsel, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 7th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20410.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ryan E. Jones, Director, Housing Voucher Management and Operations Division, Office of Public and Indian Housing, Department of Housing and Urban Development, 451 7th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20410; telephone number (202) 402–2677. (This is not a toll-free number.) HUD welcomes and is prepared to receive calls from individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as individuals with speech or communication disabilities. To learn more about how to make an accessible telephone call, please visit https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/telecommunications-relay-service-trs. Questions about this document can be sent to FUPVouchers@hud.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

I. Background

The Melania Trump Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) was established in 2019 in response to the advocacy of foster youth and alumni regarding the need for housing assistance for young people upon their exit from foster care. According to the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, on average 15,000 young people age-out of foster care each year, and nearly 25 percent of youth responding to the National Youth in Transition Database report experiencing homelessness after leaving foster care. Yet, there were no Federal housing resources solely dedicated to serving this population.

Prior to the establishment of FYI, the primary Federal housing resource for young people transitioning out of foster care was the Family Unification Program (FUP). Through public

housing agencies (PHAs), FUP provides housing choice vouchers (HCVs) that can be issued to either child welfare-involved families or youth transitioning out of foster care.[1] FUP participants use their HCVs to rent housing in the private market and generally pay 30 percent of their adjusted monthly income towards rent while the voucher pays the remaining portion of the rent. However, FUP vouchers are only available in a small number of communities[2] and have been primarily used to assist child welfare-involved families, rather than youth transitioning out of foster care. When FYI was established in 2019, 95 percent of FUP vouchers were being used to serve child welfare-involved families, and the remaining 5 percent were being used to serve youth transitioning out of foster care.

FYI provides a dedicated source of vouchers for youth transitioning out of foster care. Since fiscal year (FY) 2020, Congress has appropriated a total of $165 million for new incremental FYI vouchers. Further, in FY 2021, Congress codified an on-demand distribution mechanism for FYI vouchers, meaning that any of the more than 2,000 PHAs administering the HCV program can establish an FYI program and request FYI vouchers on a rolling basis to serve youth as they are identified.[3] This enables HUD to provide young people with FYI vouchers that are timed with their emancipation from foster care so that they do not experience homelessness when they leave care.

To establish an FYI program, a PHA must enter into a partnership agreement with a public child welfare agency (PCWA). Under the partnership agreement, the PHA provides the youth with FYI voucher assistance for 36 months, which may be extended for up to an additional 24 months if the youth is working toward economic self-sufficiency or meets one of the statutory

[1] There are two eligible populations for FUP: (1) 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 delayed discharge of the child or children to the family from out-of-home care; and (2) youth who have attained at least 18 years of age and not more than 24 years of age and who have left foster care, or will leave foster care within 180 days, in accordance with a transition plan described in section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act, and is homeless or is at risk of becoming homeless at age 16 or older.

[2] There are approximately 300 PHAs that administer FUP out of the nearly 2,000 PHAs nationwide that administer the HCV program.

[3] Notice PIH 2026-19 (https://www.hud.gov/sites/default/files/PIH/documents/PIH-2026-19.pdf) is the most recent notice implementing this on-demand process.

exceptions to this requirement.[4] The PCWA provides or secures the provision of supportive services for the youth for 36 months. The combination of time-limited rental assistance and supportive services is intended to provide youth with a platform to move toward economic self-sufficiency.

Since the rollout of FYI, HUD has allocated more than 9,000 FYI vouchers to assist individual youth. Yet, HUD recognizes that many more youth can benefit from the program. While FYI has experienced steady growth with the program being administered by 373 PHAs in 48 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands as of June 2026 Voucher Management System (VMS) data, there are still many communities where youth cannot access FYI. Further, as of June 2026 VMS data, eligible youth are utilizing only 64 percent of the more than 8,000 available FYI vouchers to lease a unit.

HUD has heard anecdotally that the uptake of FYI vouchers has been limited due to various administrative barriers that communities and young people face when trying to access FYI. Through this RFI, HUD is interested in learning what statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements are preventing communities from participating in FYI; what barriers young people face in accessing and utilizing an FYI voucher; and what changes can be made to reduce these barriers. Since FY 2024, Congress has provided HUD with the authority to establish waivers and alternative requirements related to the administration of waiting lists, local preferences, the initial term and extensions of tenant-based vouchers, and the timing of referral of youth leaving foster care, in order to reduce barriers to accessing and utilizing an FYI voucher. HUD implemented this waiver authority through Notice PIH 2025-08. HUD is interested in learning whether statutory or regulatory barriers remain and, if so, what statutory changes and/or waiver authority

[4] The Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities (FSHO) amendments, enacted as section 103 of division Q of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 on December 27, 2020 (Pub. L. 116-260), provide an extension of FYI assistance for up to 24 months for youth participating in a Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program under section 23 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 and for youth who are unable to enroll in an FSS program who engaged in education, workforce development, or employment activities for at least 9 months of the 12-month period preceding the extension. FSHO also provides an extension of assistance for up to 24 months for youth who meet one of the following exceptions: (1) The youth is a parent or other household member responsible for the care of a dependent child under the age of 6 or for the care of an incapacitated person; (2) The youth is a person who is regularly and actively participating in a drug addiction or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation program; or (3) The youth is a person who is incapable of complying with the requirement to participate in an FSS program or engage in education, workforce development, or employment activities, as applicable, due to a documented medical condition. See HUD's FSHO implementation notice published in the Federal Register on January 24, 2022 (87 FR 3570).

for the HCV program or FYI program beyond that which has already been provided would help increase utilization of FYI. HUD is also interested in learning how PHAs are taking advantage of the changes that were recently made through Notice PIH 2026-19 to help expand access to FYI, specifically the elimination of the utilization threshold and the removal of the cap on the number of FYI vouchers that can be requested.

HUD has also heard that the lack of dedicated Federal resources for supportive services can pose a barrier to establishing an FYI program, particularly in smaller, rural communities where there are few or no local resources for supportive services. HUD welcomes comments on how Federal resources can be better targeted or coordinated to reduce these barriers and support youth as they transition from foster care to successful adulthood. Additionally, HUD is interested in feedback on what changes can be made to the program to ensure that it provides a platform for youth to achieve economic self-sufficiency consistent with the goals of the Fostering the Future initiative established under Executive Order 14359, *Fostering the Future for American Children and Families*.

II. Purpose of this Request for Information

HUD is interested in promoting and strengthening FYI and supporting the goals of the Fostering the Future initiative established under Executive Order 14359, *Fostering the Future for American Children and Families*. HUD will share the information received through this RFI with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and separately consult with HHS on these topics. In accordance with Senate Report 119-47, HUD will use the information gathered through this RFI and its consultation with HHS to issue a report to Congress with its recommendations: (1) to improve program operations; (2) to assist youth in navigating the housing search process and preventing returns to homelessness after the subsidized rental assistance sunsets; and (3) on how Federal, State, and local stakeholders can best support participants as they transition from foster care to successful adulthood.

III. Request for Information

Senate Report 119-47 requests that HUD consult with stakeholders on FUP, which includes FYI. While FUP serves two eligible populations—families and youth—HUD interprets the Senate Report language as being specific to the youth population served under FUP. For example, the Senate Report suggests that HUD consult with stakeholders on statutory time limits, which only apply to the youth population served under FUP. Further, the Senate Report asks HUD to use the information gathered through the stakeholder consultations to make recommendations to Congress on areas that are specific to youth (i.e., assisting youth in navigating the housing search process, preventing returns to homelessness after the subsidized rental assistance ends, and supporting participants as they transition from foster care to successful adulthood). Therefore, HUD is issuing this RFI to solicit feedback on FYI specifically from current and former foster youth, PHAs, PCWAs, experts on child welfare, and other stakeholders regarding any potential program challenges due to statutory time limits, statutory criteria, policy definitions, or other operational aspects of FYI. While this RFI focuses on FYI, HUD also welcomes comments from PHAs that do not participate in FYI but administer FUP vouchers issued to youth, particularly those administering the FUP-FSS demonstration established under Notice PIH 2016-01 (https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/16-01pihn.pdf). HUD also welcomes comments from PHAs that do not currently participate in FYI regarding barriers to implementing an FYI program.

Consistent with Senate Report 119-47, HUD is requesting information on the topics below but welcomes comments on all aspects of FYI.

Statutory time limits. By statute, a youth may receive FYI assistance for 36 months, which may be extended for up to an additional 24 months if the youth meets one of the following criteria:

1. The youth is participating in an FSS program under section 23 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937;

2. If the youth is unable to enroll in an FSS program, the youth engaged in education,

workforce development, or employment activities for at least 9 months of the 12-month period preceding the extension; or

3. The youth meets one of the following exceptions: the youth is a parent or other household member responsible for the care of a dependent child under the age of 6 or for the care of an incapacitated person; the youth is a person who is regularly and actively participating in a drug addiction or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation program; or the youth is a person who is incapable of complying with the requirement to participate in an FSS program or engage in education, workforce development, or employment activities, as applicable, due to a documented medical condition.

Questions for consideration:

- Is 36 months, with an opportunity for a 24-month extension, the appropriate amount of time for youth to achieve self-sufficiency? If not, what would be the appropriate amount of time?
- Have youth been able to take advantage of the 24-month extension? If not, why not?
- Are there other types of self-sufficiency activities that should qualify youth for the 24-month extension in addition to those already recognized under the law?
- Are there unique challenges for PHAs to administer a time-limited voucher in comparison to regular vouchers?

Statutory criteria. By statute, a youth must meet the following criteria to be eligible for FYI:

1. Is at least 18 years of age and not more than 24 years of age;

2. Has left foster care, or will leave foster care within 180 days,[5] in accordance with a transition plan described in section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act; and

[5] Section 8(x)(2) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f(x)(2)) allows youth to be referred for FYI assistance within 90 days of transitioning out of foster care. HUD has used the waiver and alternative requirement authority provided in recent appropriations acts to extend the referral timeframe to within 180 days of transitioning out of foster care (see Notice PIH 2025-08 (https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/OCHCO/documents/PIH_2025-08.pdf).

3. Is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless at age 16 or older.

Questions for consideration:

- Does the age eligibility requirement pose a barrier to otherwise eligible youth accessing FYI?
- HUD recently extended the referral timeframe from 90 days to 180 days prior to when a youth will transition out of foster care in order to allow more time for the youth to find housing with an FYI voucher prior to leaving foster care. Is 180 days enough time or would another timeframe be more appropriate?
- While not required by statute, HUD has historically defined "homeless" and "at risk of becoming homeless" in the FYI program using the definitions for "homeless" and "at risk of homelessness" in the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program and the Continuum of Care (CoC) program. In the most recent FYI notice,[6] HUD no longer uses the ESG and CoC definition of "at risk of homelessness" verbatim but has made several changes to the definition to expand who is considered "at risk of becoming homeless" for FYI vouchers awarded through the non-competitive process. Specifically, HUD revised the definition to change the income eligibility requirement from 30 percent of area median income to 50 percent of area median income, removed the requirement to not have sufficient resources or support networks immediately available to prevent moving to an emergency shelter or another place described in the ESG and CoC definition of "homeless," and revised several items on the list of additional conditions. Are these the appropriate definitions to apply or should HUD use different definitions of "homeless" and "at risk of becoming homeless" in the FYI program?

[6] Notice PIH 2026-19 (https://www.hud.gov/sites/default/files/PIH/documents/PIH-2026-19.pdf).

Policy definitions. The policy definitions applicable to FYI can be found in the various funding notices for the program.[7] Most significantly, the funding notices establish policies in the following areas: partnership agreements, supportive services, and youth prioritization.

Questions for consideration:

- What are changes that HUD can make in these policy areas to help facilitate the provision of FYI and better support youth?

Operational aspects: HUD requests information on any other operational aspects of FYI that could be improved.

Questions for consideration:

- What changes can be made to FYI to better assist youth in navigating the housing search process?
- What changes can be made to FYI to better prevent youth from returning to homelessness after the subsidized rental assistance sunsets?
- How can Federal, State, and local stakeholders best support FYI youth?
- What barriers do communities face when trying to establish an FYI program?
- What barriers do youth face in accessing and utilizing an FYI voucher?
- Does the lack of dedicated Federal resources for supportive services pose a barrier to establishing an FYI program, and how can Federal resources be better targeted or coordinated to support youth as they transition from foster care to successful adulthood?
- Since FY 2024, Congress has provided HUD with the authority to establish waivers and alternative requirements related to the administration of waiting lists, local preferences, the initial term and extensions of tenant-based vouchers, and the timing of referral of youth leaving foster care, in order to reduce barriers to

[7] See FY 2020/2021 FYI-Competitive NOFA (FR-6400-N-41); FY 2022 FYI-Competitive NOFO (FR-6600-N-41); FY 2024 FYI-Competitive NOFO (FR-6800-N-41); FYI-Tenant Protection Voucher Notice (Notice PIH 2019-20); and FYI Non-Competitive Notices (Notices PIH 2020-28, PIH 2021-26, PIH 2023-04, and PIH 2026-19).

accessing and utilizing an FYI voucher. HUD implemented this waiver authority through Notice PIH 2025-08. Are there statutory changes and/or waiver authority for the HCV program or FYI program beyond that which has already been provided that would help increase utilization of FYI? If yes, please explain.

- How are PHAs taking advantage of the changes that were recently made through Notice PIH 2026-19 to help expand access to FYI, specifically the elimination of the utilization threshold and the removal of the cap on the number of FYI vouchers that can be requested?
- What are other aspects of FYI that could be improved?

HUD is also interested in feedback on what changes can be made to the program to ensure that it provides a platform for youth to achieve economic self-sufficiency consistent with the goals of the Fostering the Future initiative established under Executive Order 14359, *Fostering the Future for American Children and Families*.

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