

Empowering Rhode Islanders Through Strategic Partnerships and Dedicated Support for Stable Housing

Rhode Island Housing

Special Needs Housing: Housing for Persons with Special Needs

HFA Staff Contact

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Summary

Imagine a young mother, recently reunified with her children after a period of separation caused by housing instability. A devastating challenge she faced in the wake of Rhode Island’s historic housing crisis. With the help of a Family Unification Program (FUP) voucher administered by RIHousing—and the supportive services made possible through the partnership network we built around it—she secures a safe, affordable home. For the first time in years, her family has a stable foundation to help rebuild their future.

Stories like this are the types of life-changing outcomes of RIHousing’s work—multi-faceted efforts to create a stronger and more supportive housing system for Rhode Island’s most vulnerable residents.

In 2024, RIHousing secured highly competitive voucher allocations—Family Unification Program and Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers. Successful administration would require a deep web of strategic partnerships, staffing support, and a reimagining of our approach to supporting these vulnerable families. From bold partnerships with state agencies and local service providers, to coordination across jurisdictions, we built a new wrap-around support system for families navigating these programs, and have already begun seeing its impact, with dozens of successful housing leases executed.

Background

Rhode Island is in the midst of a historic housing crisis. An extremely low statewide vacancy rate of just 3.5%—well below the “equilibrium point” where rents are generally stable—combined with surging rents and inflation has made securing stable housing nearly impossible, particularly for low-income families, veterans, and youth aging out of foster care. Homelessness has surged 121% between 2020 and 2024.

RIHousing is dedicated to serving low- and extremely-low-income Rhode Islanders through many of our programs, from funding the development of affordable housing to administering federal housing vouchers. The individuals and families we serve as a Public Housing Authority (PHA) are the “but for” individuals—*but for* these vouchers, they would likely be facing homelessness. RIHousing serves as the PHA for 19 jurisdictions across the state, administering HUD’s Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Project-Based Voucher (PBV) programs. In 2024, we provided over \$267 million in federal rental assistance to more than 17,000 households.

But for many Rhode Islanders, particularly youth aging out of foster care, families facing reunification, and veterans experiencing homelessness, a standard voucher alone is not enough. These populations require intensive, coordinated support—and that’s why we pursued two special-purpose vouchers: the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) and Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers. Despite their complex administrative needs and service requirements, RIHousing leaned into this opportunity—we built an infrastructure that was ready to hit the ground running on day one—setting us apart from other agency applicants. Through strategic partnerships with a state agency and service providers, along with additional PHAs to expand our network, we built a robust system to last.

Proactive Preparation for Impact

RIHousing’s approach didn’t begin with the special voucher application process. Long before we were awarded the VASH and FUP vouchers, we were building a foundation for success. Anticipating the complexity of administering these vouchers and ensuring we provided

meaningful impact in the lives of their holders, we built a robust support system of service agencies and partners:

- **Launched New PHAs Network**—We identified other local PHAs to strategically share jurisdiction, and executed eight successful Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs). Through this effort, our voucher holders are not limited to our RIHousing jurisdictions, giving families more flexibility and opportunity to find stable housing in other communities without risk of losing the supportive services tied to the voucher. The MOAs are each tailored to ensure each PHA’s unique needs are met and provides reciprocal shared jurisdiction with RIHousing. Without these MOAs, other PHAs may not have the resources, time, or capacity to serve these special populations, and now they can bring this resource into their communities.
- **Collaboration with the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) and key service providers**—In collaboration with DCYF, we developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)—contingent on RIHousing receiving the FUP vouchers—that created a funding mechanism for DCYF-funded partners to deliver critical supportive services. These included financial assistance to help families and youth overcome leasing barriers such as security deposits, utility arrears, and moving costs. This level of preparedness allowed us to present HUD with a compelling, ready-to-launch support infrastructure—setting our applications apart and ultimately contributing to our successful awards. Service providers included:
 - Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC)
 - Foster Forward
 - Family Service of Rhode Island (FSRI)

Implementation Strategy and Outcomes

After being awarded 25 VASH and 28 FUP vouchers in 2024, we immediately activated our pre-built framework and bolstered our response to effectively implement these voucher programs:

- **Dedicated special vouchers team:** Formed within our RIHousing Leased Housing division in direct response to these special voucher programs, this team provides oversight, and high-touch support to clients and partners.
- **Officially executed MOAs with other PHAs:** Enables jurisdictional sharing across Rhode Island, so voucher holders can find housing in communities beyond RIHousing’s 19-jurisdiction footprint, including urban core areas like Providence.
- **Strong, supportive partner network:** Our partners were on-call and ready to deploy their wrap-around services to families, from the challenging needs of veterans to unique hurdles families faced.
- **Monthly partner meetings:** We launched a monthly meeting cadence to maintain strong communication loops with our partners—a central connection to troubleshooting implementation issues, sharing data, and strengthening outcomes through collaboration.

“As a wide-reaching agency dedicated to helping Rhode Island’s children and families, Family Service of Rhode Island was excited to partner with RIHousing on the Family Unification Program. The FUP vouchers are critical to reuniting

families or keeping them together, providing stability, security, and support. It's been a great experience working with RIHousing on the program and we're already seeing lives changed for the better because of it across the state."

Margaret Holland McDuff, Chief Executive Officer, Family Service of Rhode Island

"RIHousing's leadership in bringing the FYI and FUP vouchers to Rhode Island has been instrumental in securing subsidized rental assistance for child welfare-involved youth and families. Without the vouchers it would be very difficult to secure safe and stable housing for the youth and families we serve and to effectively engage them in educational, workforce and financial literacy programming that support them in sustaining their housing success."

Lisa Guillette, Executive Director, Foster Forward

Early Results (as of April 2025):

The VASH contract began on April 1, 2024, and the FUP referrals started in July of that same year. Thanks to our new special vouchers team and our services providers, every one of these vouchers has already been issued to an eligible household. As of April 2025:

- **VASH:** 20 veterans are housed, with 5 in the search process.
- **FUP:** 15 families are housed, with 13 actively working toward lease-up.

This is significant and promising progress. It's clear that our robust plan to administer and support these vouchers—and more importantly, the lives of real Rhode Islanders—is working. Our goal is for full lease-up by fall 2025.

Replicable Impact That Matters—And Outweighs Its Cost

These aren't just numbers. These are families regaining stability, youth aging out of foster care securing their first homes, and veterans no longer sleeping in shelters or on the streets. Every voucher represents a new turning point in a life—and RIHousing's work ensures that turning point is backed by real, lasting support.

Our model—characterized by proactive partnership-building, jurisdictional collaboration, and hands-on program management—is not only replicable, it's essential for PHAs seeking to serve complex populations effectively.

Regarding cost, the benefits of this work far outweigh the financial investment. Our direct cost has been the time and effort of our staff, especially those who further developed our partnerships and the individuals who moved to the special vouchers team, which involved a shifting of their responsibilities and focus that the employees completed seamlessly. The staff working on coordinating shared jurisdiction with other PHAs have also put in extensive time—and this work continues, as RIHousing is in talks with additional PHAs to add to our list, expanding the opportunities for voucher holders to find suitable housing.

Conclusion

RIHousing's deliberate, strategic, and people-centered approach has allowed us to deploy these critical resources swiftly and meaningfully. In the face of a housing crisis, we are not just placing people into housing units—we are restoring hope, stability, and dignity to those who need it most in our state.

Press and Media Coverage

[HUD Awards More than \\$350,000 to Help Families and Youth at Risk of Homelessness \(January 8, 2024\)](#)



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 8, 2024

CONTACT:
HUD Public Affairs
202-708-0685
HUD.gov/Press

HUD Awards More than \$350,000 to Help Families and Youth at Risk of Homelessness

Funding focuses on homeless or at-risk youth with a foster care history and families whose insufficient housing is the primary reason their children are in foster care.

Providence, RI – The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded \$354,369 to Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation to assist youth with a history of foster care involvement who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and families whose lack of adequate housing is the primary reason their children are in foster care. This funding, offered through HUD's **Family Unification Program (FUP)**, will provide 28 housing vouchers to youth and families in Rhode Island.

[Reed Delivers \\$576,000 to Help 50 More Homeless Veterans Find Housing \(January 30, 2024\)](#)



JACK REED
United States Senator for Rhode Island

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JANUARY 30, 2024

Reed Delivers \$576,000 to Help 50 More Homeless Veterans Find Housing

RI IS NOW ELIGIBLE FOR NEARLY 300 HUD-VASH VOUCHERS IN 2024

WASHINGTON, DC -- U.S. Senator Jack Reed today announced an additional \$575,829 in federal funding for RIHousing and the North Providence Housing Authority to help homeless veterans and their families find and retain permanent housing. The program combines rental assistance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with case management and clinical services from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Third Amendment to Memorandum of Agreement

This Third Amendment to Memorandum of Agreement ("Third Amendment") is entered into this 17th day of October 2024 by and between Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation, a public corporation and instrumentality of the State of Rhode Island having a business address of 44 Washington Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903 ("RIHousing") and the Housing Authority of the City of Providence, a city housing authority organized under chapter 25 of title 45 of the Rhode Island General Laws, also commonly known as the Providence Housing Authority, having a business address of 100 Broad Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903 ("PHA"). RIHousing and PHA collectively may be referred to herein as the "Parties."

WHEREAS, RIHousing and PHA are parties to that certain Memorandum of Agreement dated December 15, 2017, which governs RIHousing's administration of Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher ("HCV") assistance and related special programs, including the Homeownership Program, Family Self-Sufficiency ("FSS") program, and Project Based Voucher program within the City of Providence (as amended from time to time, the "Original Agreement"); and

WHEREAS, for their mutual convenience, the Parties wish to amend the Original Agreement to include RIHousing's allocation of Special Purpose Vouchers.

NOW, THEREFORE, for good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the Parties do hereby agree as follows:

1. Paragraph 3(d) of the Original Agreement is hereby deleted, and the following shall substitute therefor:
 - i. RIHousing acknowledges and agrees that the list attached hereto as Exhibit G consists of all Special Purpose Vouchers that RIHousing administers within the PHA's jurisdiction as of the date of this Third Amendment. Based on this representation from RIHousing, the PHA hereby authorizes RIHousing to continue administering the Special Purpose Vouchers identified in Exhibit G, provided RIHousing strictly complies with the following terms and conditions: (A) RIHousing will apply Payment Standards established by the PHA; (B) RIHousing will submit to the PHA a detailed Quarterly Report using the reporting schedule and data outlined in Exhibit F of the Original Agreement for all Special Purpose Vouchers listed in Exhibit G that lease in the PHA's jurisdiction; and (C) 120 days before the end of the Foster Youth Initiative (FYI) and/or Family Unification Program (FUP) voucher term, RIHousing will promptly notify the PHA and offer to transfer the voucher holder to the PHA using HUD's portability procedures set forth in HUD regulations, at which time the PHA will determine whether to bill or absorb the voucher holder and will notify RIHousing of its decision in accordance with HUD regulations. RI Housing acknowledges and agrees that it will not accept or administer any Special Purpose Vouchers within the PHA's jurisdiction except for those listed in Exhibit G without the PHA's express written permission.
2. Except as modified herein, the Parties agree that the Original Agreement shall remain in full force and effect and is in all other respects ratified and confirmed. This Third Amendment shall be effective as of the date first above written.
3. This Third Amendment may be executed in several counterparts, and by the Parties hereto on separate counterparts, and each counterpart, when so executed and delivered, shall constitute an original instrument, and all such separate counterparts shall constitute but one and the same instrument.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have this day caused this Third Amendment to be executed by their respective duly authorized officers or other representatives.

**Rhode Island Housing and
Mortgage Finance Corporation**

**Housing Authority of the
City of Providence**

DocuSigned by:

Carol Ventura

372B6BA0EFC41EA
Name: Carol Ventura
Executive Director

Signed by:

Melissa Sanzaro

6DF8D66056474C2
Name: Melissa Sanzaro
Executive Director

Exhibit G

Special Purpose Vouchers

- Mainstream – vouchers for non-elderly persons with disabilities;
- Veterans Affairs for Supportive Housing (VASH) - vouchers for veterans experiencing homelessness;
- Foster Youth Initiative (FYI) – vouchers for young adults aging out of foster care who are homeless or at risk of homelessness;
- Family Unification Program (FUP) – vouchers for families and youth who have engaged or are at-risk of engagement with the child welfare system;
- Move Up/Move On – vouchers for individuals and families who have experienced homelessness and no longer require the wrap-around services available in Permanent Supportive Housing

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
SHARED JURISDICTION FOR SPECIAL PURPOSE VOUCHERS

This Memorandum of Agreement is entered into on this 15th day of Nov 2024 by and between Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation, a public corporation and Instrumentality of the State of Rhode Island having a business address of 44 Washington Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903 (“RIHousing”) and the Pawtucket Housing Authority, having a business address of 214 Roosevelt Avenue, Pawtucket, Rhode Island 02860 (“PHA”). RIHousing and PHA collectively will be referred to herein as the “Parties”.

WHEREAS, RIHousing and the PHA each administer and provide federally funded tenant-based rental assistance pursuant to the Housing Choice Voucher (“HCV”) Program, an initiative of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”); and

WHEREAS, RIHousing serves as the housing authority to administer HCVs in the following Rhode Island jurisdictions: Barrington, Charlestown, Exeter, Foster, Glocester, Hopkinton, Jamestown, Little Compton, Middletown, New Shoreham, North Kingstown, North Smithfield, Portsmouth, Richmond, Scituate, West Greenwich; and

WHEREAS, by agreement with the local housing authorities RIHousing currently shares jurisdiction to administer HCV’s in the Town of Narragansett, South Kingstown, and City of Newport; and

WHEREAS, HUD notified RIHousing and PHA of their allocations of Special Purpose Vouchers, as detailed in Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, RIHousing notified HUD of their acceptance of their respective HUD award; and

WHEREAS, the Special Purpose Vouchers may be ported to other jurisdictions within Rhode Island; the supportive services associated with the voucher do not transfer with the voucher; and

WHEREAS, Special Purpose Voucher holders who leave or move outside of their housing authority’s jurisdiction risk losing access to critical supports that help maximize the potential of the voucher opportunity; and

NOW THEREFORE RIHousing and PHA agree as follows:

1. PHA will honor a mutually shared jurisdiction for the administration and implementation that is limited to the Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers, Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers, Foster Youth Initiative (FYI) vouchers, as well as Move Up vouchers.
2. RIHousing will not allocate ongoing administrative fees, as allowed by HUD (PIH 2024-10, PIH 2022-18) deemed necessary for the program success including, but not limited to:
 - Housing search assistance
 - Tenant fees
 - Renter’s insurance
 - Utility and/or security deposits

- Tenant readiness services
 - Moving expenses
 - Essential household items
 - Owner recruitment, retention, damages and incentive fees
3. RIHousing will employ waivers and alternative requirements as deemed necessary for program success including, but not limited to, eligibility determination, etc. as allowed in 24 CFR Parts 982 and 983 [8-13-2024].
 4. RIHousing will manage all required administrative responsibilities for their respective vouchers.
 5. PHA and RIHousing will honor a mutually shared jurisdiction for the administration and implementation of the types of Special Purpose Vouchers as listed within attached Exhibit A (Voucher Schedule). As such, the Parties agree to assist their respective voucher holders with the process of “leasing-up” suitable housing within any and all of the Parties’ combined jurisdictions, as such jurisdictions are set forth above,
 6. Parties will manage all required administrative responsibilities and costs associated with the management of their respective vouchers, to include the administration of waitlists, respectively
 7. Parties commit to working together in an equitable manner and in good faith to ensure the efficient and effective administration, including coordination with services provider agencies for the target population participating in any of the Special Purpose Vouchers, as detailed in Exhibit A,
 8. Parties will apply the prevailing payment standard of the other Public Housing Authority when leasing tenants in the jurisdiction of other Public Housing Authority.
 9. Further, Parties shall use their best efforts to collaborate regarding outreach efforts and maintain contact with community referral agencies who provide supportive services to voucher holders,
 10. Parties agree to maintain adequate records of their programs and to share data with respect to Special Purpose Voucher utilization and availability as requested,
 11. Parties agree to provide each other with regular program updates on a mutually agreed upon schedule in a mutually agreed upon manner,
 12. RIHousing agrees to develop materials, including but not limited to this MOA, related to the sharing of jurisdiction for Special Purpose Vouchers, with PHA’s input and for PHA’s review and consideration, as they are needed or requested
 13. Either party may terminate this MOA, without showing cause, upon sixty (60) days’ prior written notice, however, termination of this MOA shall not affect units within shared jurisdiction already under contract in the receiving jurisdiction,
 14. The Parties shall hold any information or material disclosed through any means of communication, by their agents or representatives to the other Party or its agents or representatives, that contains personal information identifiable to any applicant for or recipient of a Special Purpose HCV, in strict confidence and protect such information with the same degree of care the Party uses to protect its own similar confidential information (but not less than a reasonable degree of care),

- 15. This MOA may be executed in multiple counterparts, each of which shall be fully effective as an original, but which together shall be fully effective as an original, but which together shall constitute one instrument.
- 16. The undersigned represent and warrant that they are duly authorized to enter this MOA on behalf of their respective organization, that their respective organizations have the power and capacity to make the representations herein, and that any necessary approvals have been obtained.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have caused this Agreement to be duly executed by their duly authorized representatives as of the date first written above.

Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Corporation (RIHousing)

DocuSigned by:
Carol Ventura November 5, 2024
372B8BA0EFGA4EA...

Authorized Signature

Date

Name: Carol Ventura

Title: Executive Director

Pawtucket Housing Authority

Paula McFarland 11-1-24

Authorized Signature

Date

Name: Paula McFarland

Title: Executive Director

Exhibit A

HUD Special Purpose Vouchers

- **Veterans' Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH):** Vouchers are for veterans experiencing homelessness.
- **Foster Youth to Independence Initiative (FYI):** Vouchers for young adults aging out of foster care who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- **Family Unification Program (FUP):** Vouchers for families and youth who have engaged or are at-risk of engagement with the child welfare system.
- **Move Up/Move On:** Vouchers for individuals and families who have experienced homelessness and been enrolled in Permanent Supportive Housing for at least two-years.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been created and entered into on _May 24, 2023_ by and between the following parties in relation to their application for FUP assistance:

Rhode Island Housing (“RIHousing”)

44 Washington Street, Providence RI 02903

Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (“DCYF”)

101 Friendship Street, Providence, RI 02903

Rhode Island Continuum of Care (“RiCoC”)

44 Washington Street, Providence RI 02903

Foster Forward

55 S Brow St, East Providence, RI 02914

Family Service of Rhode Island

9 Pleasant Street, Providence, RI 02906

Introduction and Goals

1. RIHousing (a Public Housing Authority), in coordination and cooperation with DCYF (a Public Child Welfare Agency), share a commitment to implement and administer the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Family Unification Program (FUP) to ensure that families and young adults who reside in the State of Rhode Island and have been and/or are involved with DCYF are provided resources to connect to stable housing in accordance with the goals and objectives of FUP.
2. The Rhode Island Continuum of Care (RiCoC) is a statewide Continuum of Care that oversees Rhode Island’s Coordinated Entry System to divert, assess, prioritize, and refer households experiencing homelessness to available, participating resources. The RiCoC commits to cooperate with and assist RIHousing and DCYF in the identification of FUP eligible families and youth who are experiencing homelessness and may no longer be in the active caseload of the DCYF for potential referral to the available FUP vouchers.
3. Foster Forward is authorized to do business in the State of Rhode Island. Foster Forward has committed to provide supportive services to FUP eligible youth upon their referral by DCYF into the FUP program and for the duration of the youth’s enrollment in the voucher and program. Foster Forward partners with the RiCoC and participates in its Coordinated Entry System. A comprehensive array of supportive services that include assessment, housing search/counseling, case management, connection to community resources, building life and money management skills, crisis mental health counseling, access to basic needs, and career and educational supports are provided by Foster Forward through a mix of state and philanthropic funding.
4. Family Service of Rhode Island (FSRI) is authorized to do business in the State of Rhode Island. Family Service of Rhode Island has committed to provide supportive services to FUP eligible families upon their referral by DCYF into the FUP program and for the duration of families’ enrollment in the FUP voucher and program. Family Service of Rhode Island will provide wraparound services to eligible families, including:
 - Family-led wraparound services
 - Crisis response and intervention
 - Development of family-centered service plans, addressing a variety of social, behavioral health, and family goals

- Assistance accessing community resources, including basic needs.
 - Flexible funding for families to achieve goals.
 - Referral to community-based services and supports.
 - Integration and development of natural supports to ensure families have supports within their communities.
5. RIHousing and DCYF agree to establish and maintain a collaborative oversight structure to promote and provide assistance to achieve the following goals:
- Ensure that eligible, identified, families and youth are provided opportunities to acquire FUP housing subsidy and obtain and maintain housing.
 - Ensure that eligible, identified, families and youth are provided opportunities for DCYF funded services they need to support resolving their housing instability and promote basic life skills and self-sufficiency services;
 - Empower families to advocate for their children with schools, public and private agencies, and other community institutions;
 - Initiate and sustain methods that identify housing and related family problems as early as possible and engage clients in a change process to manage or remedy these problems;
 - Ensure that at least 90% of eligible families referred due to housing instability as a primary reason for potential child welfare involvement and who receive a FUP voucher are diverted from opening (a Family Court supervised case) by DCYF for child abuse/neglect issues;
 - Ensure that at least 90% of eligible families referred due to housing instability as a primary barrier and who receive a FUP voucher to achieve reunification have their child(ren) reunified with them after attaining housing and are able to close an existing Family Court supervised case initiated by DCYF for child abuse and neglect reasons within 6 months of attaining housing; and,
 - Ensure that at least 90% of eligible youth referred who receive a FUP voucher are able to maintain their housing for the full duration of the FUP voucher.
6. The parties have identified the following individuals as their lead FUP liaisons:
- RIHousing: Michael DiChiaro, mdichiaro@rihousing.com
Director, Leased Housing and Rental Services
 - DCYF: Mike Burk, mike.burk@dcyf.ri.gov
Administrator Educational and Constituent Support Services
 - RICoC: Ben Darby, bdarby@rihousing.com
RICoC Planner
 - Foster Forward: Victoria Ferrara, victoria.ferrara@fosterforward.net
Director of Programs
 - Family Service of Rhode Island: Anthony Faccenda, faccendaan@familyserviceri.org
Director of Housing and Economic Mobility,

Responsibilities of the FUP liaisons:

- Upon notification of an award of FUP vouchers, the FUP liaisons will meet on at least monthly basis for the initial year of the program to support prompt eligibility determinations, voucher issuance, unit location and housing lease up of at least 90% of awarded vouchers within the first year.

- After the initial program year, the FUP liaisons will meet on a quarterly basis, or more often, as needed, to ensure the ongoing successful implementation and administration of the program.

Statement of Cooperation

RIHousing, DCYF, the RICoC, Foster Forward, and Family Service of Rhode Island agree to cooperate with any program evaluation efforts undertaken by HUD, HHS, or a HUD or HHS-approved contractor, including compliance with HUD and HHS-approved evaluation protocols and data sharing requests.

Target Populations Defined

The two populations eligible for assistance under this FUP program are:

1. FUP eligible family is defined as a family 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; and
2. FUP eligible Youth is defined as a youth at least 18 years and not more than 24 years of age (have not reached their 25th birthday) who 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, and are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless at age 16 or older.

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

Time Limit for FUP Vouchers Issued to Youth and Extensions under the Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities (FSHO) Amendments

RIHousing will comply with the time limit for FUP vouchers issued to youth, including any extension of this time limit that the youth is entitled to under the Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities (FSHO) amendments (Section 103 of Division Q of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Pub. L. 116-260)) and HUD's FSHO implementation notice published in the Federal Register on January 24, 2022 (87 FR 3570) or subsequent notice.

Housing Search Assistance

Foster Forward will provide the Housing Search assistance to FUP youth. Foster Forward will provide the Housing Search and Counseling assistance to FUP youth that includes but is not limited to supporting youth's understanding of leases, tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities, touring neighborhoods, viewing units, landlord introductions and mediation, for first and subsequent moves. Youth will be supported in looking for housing statewide, including low-poverty census tracts.

Financial assistance in the form of moving assistance, utility arrears and/or security deposits will be provided either directly to the youth by DCYF or by Foster Forward through this contract.

DCYF will offer to youth to pay for up to two of the three financial assistance supports (moving assistance, utility arrears and/or security deposits) based on their need.

Family Service of Rhode Island will provide the Housing Search assistance to FUP families. Family Service of Rhode Island (FSRI) will provide assistance to FUP families in locating housing units and working with landlords to secure appropriate eligible units. Within this overall framework, FSRI will provide:

- Housing search assistance in low-poverty census tracts, including, as appropriate for family's unique goals neighborhood tours, unit viewing, and landlord introductions;
- Flexible funding (emergency funds) for use to meet family's housing goals, including moving cost assistance, security deposit assistance, and utility startup (including for bills in arrears);
- Post-move counseling, as appropriate and agreed to by families in furtherance of their family goals;
- Case Management to FUP families (for all families who agree to this service), including an assessment of family's needs (including housing-related needs), and referrals to services that address family's needs and goals, follow up with referrals and additional/new referrals as needed. Case management will be offered for a minimum of 12 months after the family has been issued a voucher.

Financial assistance in the form of moving assistance, utility arrears and/or security deposits will be provided either directly to the families by DCYF or by Family Service of RI through this contract. DCYF will offer to families to pay for up to two of the three financial assistance supports (moving assistance, utility arrears and/or security deposits) based on their need.

Supportive Services List, FUP Youth

DCYF will enter into contracts with Foster Forward to support youth who will receive the vouchers. Generally, DCYF enters into 12-month contracts to align with state budgetary fiscal years. The terms of the current contract with Foster Forward allow for the contract to be mutually extended for 12 month periods, and generally, for a maximum of five years. The state of RI Purchasing rules do not allow for DCYF to enter into a contract with an outside Contractor beyond 5 years. If the current contract with the proposed Contractors is terminated by purchasing rules, DCYF is committed to procure these services. If for some reason this does not work out DCYF, is committed to providing these services directly to youth.

As a part of a contract between DCYF and Foster Forward for FUP case management services to youth, the services to be provided by Foster Forward will be the supportive services identified below. Financial assistance in the form of moving assistance, utility arrears and/or security deposits will be provided either directly to the youth by DCYF or by Foster Forward through this contract. All of the below services will be offered at least 36 months and for the duration of enrollment in the FUP voucher, whichever is longer, to FUP youth regardless of age. For example, if a FUP youth enters the program at age 24 and 10 months, Foster Forward must still offer services for the duration of the youth's enrollment in the FUP program, even though after two months the youth no longer meets the initial age of eligibility for the FUP program. A FUP youth cannot be required to participate in these services as a condition of receipt of the FUP voucher.

Services provided will include but are not limited to the following:

1. 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).
2. Through our ASPIRE program, youth will be giving financial literacy training, money management education, seeded with a bank account, and will have matched savings towards the purchase of assets to support their self-sufficiency.
3. Case management support will assist youth in identifying needs and will help youth build independent living skills, access community resources, and connect to social safety net supports (e.g., SNAP, WIC, Child Care, Medicaid, etc.)
4. 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.
5. Housing counseling will include post move counseling for initial moves, as well as subsequent-move counseling for youth who decide to move a second time. Youth will be supported in any necessary landlord-tenant mediation to help support housing stability and build youth understanding of responsibility.
6. Providing such assurances to owners of rental property as are reasonable and necessary to assist a FUP youth to rent a unit with a FUP voucher.
7. Foster Forward works to build relationships with owners of rental property detailing the extensive support, services, and case management available to the youth. This case management is guaranteed for at least 12 months after the issuance of the voucher, providing assurances to the owners that if issues arise, we can help to mitigate it.
 - a. Job preparation and attainment counseling (where to look/how to apply, dress, grooming, relationships with supervisory personnel, etc.).
 - b. Foster Forward commits to supporting youth with job preparation and career coaching through its Works Wonders program that provides soft skill training, one-on-one coaching, job search, application support, and supportive employment opportunities.
8. Educational and career advancement counseling regarding attainment of general equivalency diploma (GED); attendance/financing of education at a technical school, trade school or college; including successful work ethic and attitude models.
9. Through Works Wonders youth are supported in developing a Career/Ed plan and assisted in connecting to vocational training and credentialing, as well as educational pathways such as higher education and GED.
10. Service coordination for clinical services including but not limited to physical, behavioral, and mental health resources as needed.
11. Foster Forward will provide FUP youth with access to a licensed, master's level clinician for crisis mental health support and referrals to behavioral health supports and medication.
 - i. Following referral, Foster Forward will conduct a comprehensive needs assessment around social determinants of health (i.e., housing, food security, health and mental health needs, employment, childcare, etc.) that is used to develop case plan. The case plan is used during case management and regularly assessed to track progress toward goals and identify any new needs of the youth as they arise.
 - ii. Foster Forward offers youth access to emergency food, clothing, laundry, and coordinated volunteer and donation efforts to support youth in setting up their new apartment with needed items.

- iii. Foster Forward will collocate with Family Service of Rhode Island in a new supportive housing project, ensuring regular meetings and coordination of services and supports to FUP program participants.
- iv. Foster Forward will help youth access state funded financial services to pay for moving cost assistance, security deposit assistance, and utility startup (including utility arrears) as needed.

Supportive Services List, FUP Families

DCYF will enter into contracts with FSRI to support families who will receive the vouchers. Generally, DCYF enters into 12-month contracts to align with state budgetary fiscal years. The terms of the current contract with FSRI allows for contracts to be mutually extended for 12 month periods, and generally, for a maximum of five years. The state of RI Purchasing rules do not allow for DCYF to enter into a contract with an outside Contractor beyond 5 years. If the current contract with the proposed Contractors is terminated by purchasing rules, DCYF is committed to reprocur these services. If for some reason this does not work out DCYF, is committed to providing these services directly to these families.

As a part of a contract between DCYF and FSRI for case management services for families, the services to be provided by FSRI will be the supportive services identified below. DCYF will contract with Family Service Rhode Island (FSRI) to provide the supportive services identified below. Financial assistance in the form of moving assistance, utility arrears and/or security deposits will be provided either directly to the youth by DCYF or by FSRI through this contract. All of the below services will be offered for a period of 12 months following lease up. A FUP family cannot be required to participate in these services as a condition of receipt of the FUP voucher.

Case management services will be provided to all eligible families who choose to receive these services for a period of 12 months following lease-up. These services will be based on needs assessment of each family and include such services as addressing housing related needs and non-housing related needs (such as behavioral health, physical health, employment, child care and other services), referrals to services to address the identified needs for the family and regular contact per the family's case management plan to follow up on referrals and provide new referrals if necessary. Examples of the services to be provided include, but are not limited to:

Services provided will include but are not limited to the following:

- Family-led assessment and service planning, identifying family needs, strengths, and goals.

- Basic life skills information/counseling on money management, use of credit, housekeeping, proper nutrition/meal preparation, and access via referral and case management 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.

- Partnering with families and owners of rental property as are reasonable and necessary to assist a FUP family to rent a unit with a FUP voucher.

- Job preparation and attainment counseling (where to look/how to apply, dress, grooming, relationships with supervisory personnel, etc.), as aligned with family goals.

Educational and career advancement counseling regarding attainment of general equivalency diploma (GED); attendance/financing of education at a technical school, trade school or college; including successful work ethic and attitude models.
Service coordination for clinical services including but not limited to physical, behavioral, and mental health resources as needed.
Referral and identification of community resources for basic needs or other social and human services as appropriate.
FSRI will help youth access state funded financial services to pay for moving cost assistance, security deposit assistance, and utility startup (including utility arrears) as needed.

PHA Responsibilities

RIHousing will fulfill each of the following responsibilities:

1. Accept families and youths certified by DCYF as eligible for the FUP. RIHousing, upon receipt of a referral(s) from DCYF, must compare the names with those of families and youths already on RIHousing's HCV waiting list. Any family or youth on RIHousing's HCV waiting list that matches with DCYF's referral must be assisted in order of their position on the waiting list in accordance with RIHousing admission policies. Any family or youth certified by DCYF as eligible and not on the HCV waiting list must be placed on the waiting list. If RIHousing has a closed HCV waiting list, it must reopen the waiting list and place on the waiting list a FUP applicant family or youth who is not currently on RIHousing's HCV waiting list. (RIHousing may reopen the waiting list to accept a FUP applicant family or youth without opening the waiting list for other applicants.)
2. Determine whether families with children, or youth aged 18 through 24 referred by DCYF, are eligible for HCV assistance in accordance with RIHousing's HCV Administrative Plan.
3. Determine whether any families with children, or youth aged 18 through 24 on its HCV waiting list, are living in temporary shelters or otherwise meet the definition of "homeless" and may qualify for the FUP and refer such applicants to DCYF and/or CoC, as applicable.
4. Amend the administrative plan in accordance with applicable program regulations and requirements, if needed.
5. Administer the vouchers in accordance with applicable program regulations and requirements.
6. Upon notification that FUP vouchers have been awarded, train DCYF and CoC staff on the RIHousing's HCV program.
7. Work with DCYF and CoC to develop necessary data and tracking metrics for tracking and improvement purposes.
8. RIHousing administers the HUD Family Self-Sufficiency program and has current targeted policies or proposed strategies to encourage enrollment of all FUP youth.
9. Conduct regular meetings (at least quarterly) with DCYF and CoC.
10. Comply with the provisions of this MOU.

PCWA Responsibilities

DCYF will fulfill each of the following responsibilities:

1. Establish and implement a system to identify FUP-eligible families and FUP-eligible youth within the agency's caseload and to review referrals from the PHA and CoC. For families, the system should prioritize families with an open case with a substantiated report of child abuse and neglect, and whose children are at high risk for out-of-home placement or, for families whose children are already in out-of-home care, at high risk for experiencing additional negative child welfare outcomes (e.g., long-term open cases, reentry to the child welfare system in the form of re-reports of abuse or neglect, and repeat open cases), and where housing assistance could help the parent(s) to stabilize and participate in any other services necessary for subsequent reunification. Referrals should be made for priority families as soon as they are identified and not only upon successful completion of other aspects of families' case management plans.
2. Work with the CoC to integrate into the coordinated entry process the identification, prioritization, and referral of FUP-eligible youth not currently within DCYF's caseload.
3. Provide written certification to RIHousing that a family qualifies as a FUP-eligible family, or that a youth qualifies as a FUP-eligible youth, based upon the criteria established in Section 8(x) of the United States Housing Act of 1937.
4. Commit sufficient staff resources to ensure that FUP-eligible families and FUP-eligible youth are identified and referred in a timely manner. This commitment includes that DCYF will ensure that DCYF's active caseload is reviewed at least once a month (when RIHousing has FUP vouchers available) to identify FUP-eligible families and FUP-eligible youth and refer them to RIHousing. Additionally, DCYF will be prepared to provide referrals to the PHA within 30 working days of receiving notification from the PHA about voucher availability.
5. Establish and continue to secure a commitment for the provision of the supportive services that must be provided to FUP youth and families, documenting the source of funding for these services. These supportive services must be offered to FUP youth for at least 36 months and for FUP families for the duration of their enrollment in the program.
6. Upon notification that FUP vouchers have been awarded, train PHA and CoC staff on the work of DCYF as it relates to FUP-eligible families and FUP-eligible youth.
7. Conduct regular meetings (at least quarterly) with the PHA and CoC.
8. Comply with the provisions of this MOU.

CoC Responsibilities


The RICoC will fulfill each of the following responsibilities:

1. Work with DCYF to identify, prioritize, and refer potential FUP-eligible families and youth not currently within DCYF's caseload through the RICoC's Coordinated Entry System. [Youth who are part of the DCYF's active caseload do not have to be added to the CoC's coordinated entry process.] The CoC uses a standard assessment as part of its Coordinated Entry System. This assessment asks youth if they were open to DCYF when they turned 18. The CES can use this self-reported information to support identification of potential FUP eligible youth. The COC can use the resulting standardized assessment acuity score for the youth and families to determine that a FUP voucher is the appropriate level of assistance needed.
2. Participate in regular meetings conducted by the PHA and PCWA (at least quarterly).
3. Upon notification that FUP vouchers have been awarded, train RIHousing and DCYF staff on the work of the CoC; and
4. Comply with the provisions of this MOU.


[Signatures on the following page]

Signatures

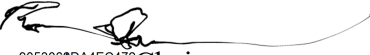
RIHousing:

DocuSigned by:

914F3DD8120D49F
James Comer, Deputy Director
Date: May 23, 2023


DCYF:

DocuSigned by:

15D1A351709481
Ashley Deckert, Director
Date: May 24, 2023

RICoC:

DocuSigned by:

0053061DA4EC472
Peter Asen, Chair
Date: May 23, 2023

Foster Forward:

DocuSigned by:

1C6FF82293174F0
Lisa Guillette, Executive Director
Date: May 23, 2023

Family Service of Rhode Island:

DocuSigned by:

104FD799FA684186
Margaret Holland McDuff, Executive Director
Date: May 23, 2023