

FUP-FSS Demonstration Evaluation Interview Guide for Public Housing Authority Staff

Consent Script for Public Housing Authority Staff

Before we begin, I want to tell you a few things about this study and your participation in it. Please feel free to ask me any questions you might have. We will also provide you a copy of this information.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has contracted with the Urban Institute, and with Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago as their subcontractor, to learn how communities are using the Family Unification Program (FUP) – Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) Demonstration (or FUP-FSS for short) to serve youth who were formerly in foster care. The Urban Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization based in Washington, DC that conducts research and program evaluations on social policy and practice. The information gathered for the evaluation will be used to help HUD understand how FUP-FSS has been implemented; the effectiveness of partnerships among the participating housing authorities, public child welfare agencies, and other organizations that collaborate on the Demonstration; the agencies' experiences with implementation; and short-term outcomes for participating youth. We are not evaluating your agency or its role in the Demonstration.

As part of this process, we are talking with representatives from public housing agencies (or PHAs) participating in the FUP-FSS Demonstration, along with their partner child welfare agencies. In a small number of communities, we may also talk to Continuum of Care partners and other partner agencies that make referrals or provide FUP-FSS services. You or another staff member from your agency completed a survey earlier this year about how the FUP-FSS Demonstration is being used to serve youth in your community. Based on the results of that survey, we identified the Demonstration in your community as a promising one for further study.

If you agree to participate in a voluntary interview, a pair of researchers will ask you some questions about the FUP-FSS Demonstration, including questions about your collaboration with [PCWA name], the challenges associated with serving youth, your perspective on the Demonstration, and how well the Demonstration meets the needs of youth.

Your participation in this study is completely **voluntary**. Participating or choosing not to participate will in no way affect your interactions with the Federal Government, including HUD, the US Department of Health and Human Services, and/or any other federal agencies. The interview will last about 60 minutes. The interview does not include sensitive questions beyond your experiences with the FUP-FSS Demonstration. That being said, you may choose to skip any questions you don't want to answer, and you may stop participating in the interview at any time. With your permission, we will audio record the interview to have an accurate record of what is said. One of the researchers will be taking detailed notes, but we will not identify your name in our notes. We may contact you after the interview to ask for clarification.

We will make every effort to protect your confidentiality and will not disclose information that you share in any way that would identify you. We will not allow anyone outside the research team to listen to the audio recordings or review the notes we take. Information provided to us will be reported in the aggregate by role, organization type or other broad categories. Individuals will not be identified by name or title. When we report our findings, we will combine the information we gather from everyone we talk to and present it in a way that does not allow the responses of individuals to be easily identified. However, we may

identify the agency you work for, and unique roles could allow an individual to indirectly attribute a statement to you. Although we are taking steps to mitigate potential risks, there is a chance that you could be identified through a combination of survey responses and interview findings. We believe this risk to be minimal and will protect your identity by removing specific identifiers in our interview transcripts, only reporting findings in the aggregate, and not attributing comments or quotes to you unless we have your permission to do so.

You will be provided a document that answers questions about the FUP-FSS Demonstration Evaluation and the interviews we are conducting. After you review, you can decide if you still want to participate. We want to be sure that you freely consent to participate in this interview and that you are aware that you are not obligated to answer any questions you do not wish to answer.

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY OR TODAY'S DISCUSSION?

MAY WE PROCEED WITH THE DISCUSSION OF YOUR FUP-FSS DEMONSTRATION?

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Interview Guide for Public Housing Authority Staff
On-Site and phone interviews

Do you consent to be recorded?

[IF YES: I will turn on the audio recorder and begin the interview now and we can get started]

Introduction

We are interested in how your agency launched and implemented your FUP-FSS Demonstration for youth, and how you collaborate with [PCWA name] or other partners to serve FUP-FSS youth. We know that you may use FUP to serve families, but we would like to focus on youth for our conversation today, and specifically on the FUP-FSS Demonstration.

Do you have questions before we continue?

Do you consent to be recorded?

[If consented to recording] I am going to turn on the recorder now, and we can get started.

1. Please tell me about yourself.

- What is your position at the PHA?
 - What are your primary responsibilities?
- How long have you held this position?
- How much of your time do you spend on FUP youth?
- How much of your time do you spend on the FUP-FSS Demonstration?

2. [PHA name’s] FUP youth participation.

- When did [PHA] start enrolling youth in FUP?
- How many youth are currently enrolled in FUP?
- Are youth provided tenant-based vouchers, project-based assistance, or both?

3. Thinking about the FUP-FSS Demonstration specifically.

- When did [PHA] start enrolling youth in the FUP-FSS Demonstration?
- Since joining the demonstration, how many FUP youth have enrolled in the demonstration?
 - How many are currently enrolled?
 - What proportion of eligible FUP youth participate in the demonstration?

4. [PHA’s] Motivation for FUP-FSS participation.

- From your perspective, what factors motivated [PHA name] to apply to participate in the FUP-FSS Demonstration?
- Who at [PHA name] was involved in the decision to apply for the demonstration?

- What was your perspective on the demonstration when it first began?
- Why did you feel the demonstration was needed [or not needed]?
 - o In what ways did you think youth would benefit from the demonstration?
 - o What, if any, reservations did you have about the demonstration?
- In what ways has your perspective on the demonstration changed since it began?

5. FUP-FSS program structure.

- Who else at your agency is involved in administering FUP-FSS?
 - o What are their roles? PROBE FOR:
 - Who else at your agency is involved with voucher issuance and lease up?
 - Who else at your agency is involved with FSS services to FUP youth?
 - Is a dedicated staff person assigned to FUP youth?
 - Is a dedicated staff person assigned to the FUP-FSS Demonstration?
 - o Are FSS coordinators staffed by the PHA or by partner organizations?
- [If different HCV and FSS staff] How do FSS and FUP voucher staff coordinate to serve youth?
 - o How frequently do FUP and FSS staff communicate about FUP-FSS participants?

6. FUP-FSS referral and enrollment.

- How do FUP-eligible youth learn about the FUP-FSS Demonstration?
 - o Is FSS offered to all FUP-eligible youth?
 - Is the demonstration offered to both existing FUP youth as well as those with new issuances?
 - o If not offered to all FUP-eligible youth, which FUP youth are offered the opportunity to participate in the demonstration?
 - Does your PHA have specific FUP-FSS eligibility requirements?
 - If yes, what are they?
 - o Does [PHA] market or promote the demonstration to potentially eligible youth?
 - If so, how?
 - What do you tell youth about the benefits of enrolling in FUP-FSS?
 - o Does the PCWA play a role in identifying youth for FUP-FSS?
 - If yes, describe their role.
 - o How else are youth referred for FUP-FSS participation?
- Do you or your PCWA partner set aside a certain number of vouchers for youth?
- (if yes:) On what basis do you allocate FUP vouchers to youth?
 - o Probe: Who decided the priority?
 - Is it primarily you [the PHA] or [PCWA] that decides the allocation?
 - o How, if at all, do these priorities differ from those for the voucher waitlist?
- (if no:) How do you determine when to offer a voucher to a youth versus a family?

- o Probe: Are families prioritized before youth for FUP?
- o Probe: Based on need, first-come/first-served?
 - (If based on need) Which youth does your agency prioritize?
- Do you have a preference in your administrative plan for youth aging out of foster care?

7. Experience implementing the FUP-FSS Demonstration.

- Has FUP-FSS participation take-up by eligible youth met [PHA's] initial expectations?
 - o How so?
 - [If no] What do you attribute low FUP-FSS participation to?
 - [If yes] What do you attribute the success to?
- Have there been challenges to recruiting youth for the demonstration?
 - o If yes, what are they?
- From your perspective, what are benefits to FUP youth participating in the FUP-FSS Demonstration?
 - o *Probe for:* extended voucher timeline, escrow account, case management, FSS goal-setting, FSS services, other?
- From your perspective, what are common reasons youth opt *out* of FUP-FSS?

8. PHA/PCWA/community partner collaboration.

Now we would like to discuss your agency's relationship with the [PCWA] and other local partners, and how the demonstration has affected it.

PCWA partnership:

- How successful would you say [PHA's] relationship is with [PCWA]?
 - o What factors have contributed to that success?
- What barriers to collaboration have your agency and [PCWA] encountered?
 - o How has your agency dealt with those barriers?
- How has the FUP-FSS Demonstration affected coordination and collaboration between [PHA] and [the PCWA]?
 - o To what extent have you developed or increased your engagement with the PCWA?
 - In what ways?
 - Have you developed any cross-agency trainings on FUP-FSS?
 - o If yes, what are the trainings focused on?
 - How often do you interact with PCWA staff about FUP-FSS?
 - o Have referrals for youth from the PCWA increased since the launch of the demonstration?
- What else, if anything, do you think could be done to improve [PHA's] relationship with [PCWA]?

CoC partnership:

- Is the CoC a partner to the [PHA/PCWA] collaboration?

- o If the CoC is a partner:
 - How, if at all, has the CoC's involvement impacted FUP-eligible youth referrals?
 - How, if at all, has the CoC's involvement impacted services available to FUP youth, or FUP-FSS youth?
- [If CoC is a partner], who at [CoC name] and agencies funded through the CoC are responsible for FUP-eligible youth?
- How has the FUP-FSS partnership affected collaboration or coordination between the PHA and the CoC?

Community partners:

- Are there other key partner organizations that you work with to serve FUP-FSS youth?
 - o If so, please describe the roles of each of these partners.
 - o If so, who at [partner name] is responsible for serving FUP-FSS participants?
- Were these partnerships in place before your agency's FUP or FUP-FSS programs launched (note to interviewer: distinguish if started before FUP, after FUP but before FUP-FSS, or after FUP-FSS)?
- How has the FUP-FSS partnership affected collaboration or coordination between the PHA and community partners?

9. [MTW ONLY] Role of MTW status in the FUP-FSS Demonstration.

Please describe how, if at all, your agency's MTW status impacts the FUP-FSS program.

- Did MTW status influence [PHA name's] decision to participate in the demonstration?
 - o If so, how?
- Have any MTW flexibilities been applied for the FUP-FSS Demonstration?
 - o If so, how?
- Do MTW flexibilities allow [PHA] to adapt programs or services to better meet FUP-FSS youth needs?
 - o If so, how?

[For PHA staff with no direct engagement with FUP-FSS youth or service provision SKIP TO Q14 (e.g., executive directors, senior leadership)]

10. Engaging FUP-FSS Demonstration participants.

[For staff with direct engagement with youth]

- How does serving youth aging out of foster care differ from serving other demographics?
- What are unique considerations to engaging and serving FUP-FSS youth participants as compared to families or older adults?
 - o [For HCV staff] for housing assistance?
 - o [For FSS staff] for self-sufficiency services?
- In your experience working with FUP youth, how does the trauma they have experienced influence their service needs?

- o How does having been “system-involved” affect youths’ ability to move towards self-sufficiency?
- What are unique considerations for serving participants who are parents?
- How have you tried to address the needs of FUP-FSS youth?
- How has [PHA] adapted its services to meet the needs of youth exiting foster care?
 - o For example, have voucher program policies been adapted?
 - *[Probe for issuance or orientation procedures, search times, search assistance, occupancy requirements]*
 - o For example, have FSS services been adapted?
 - *[Probe for educational services, case management model, other supportive services]*

11. Services available to youth participating in FUP-FSS, and FUP youth service needs.

Regarding services for FUP youth:

- What, if any, housing search assistance does your agency provide to youth with FUP vouchers?
- How does [PHA] help FUP youth retain/maintain housing once they are leased-up?
- What additional supportive services does [PHA] provide directly to youth who lease-up with a FUP voucher?
- What services, if any, do partner agencies provide to FUP youth?
 - o The PCWA or its contracted agencies?
 - o The CoC?
 - o Other community partners?
- How, if at all, does your agency coordinate the provision of these supportive services?
- Are youth required to participate in any of these services?
 - o [If yes] What are the consequences of not participating?
 - How has [PHA] adapted its housing services to meet the needs of FUP youth?

Regarding services for FUP-FSS Demonstration participants:

- How do FSS staff engage with FUP youth?
 - o How often do FSS case managers meet with FUP-FSS participants?
 - o How do FSS case managers interact and communicate with participants? (phone, in-person, email)
 - When and how often is each mode used?
 - o How does engagement differ for FUP-FSS youth versus other FSS participants?
 - In frequency or mode?
 - In approach to setting self-sufficiency goals?
- Please describe FUP-FSS youths’ Individual Training and Services Plan (ITSP) goals.
 - o To what extent do FUP-FSS goals focus on education versus employment?
 - o How do goals vary for FUP-FSS youth compared to other FSS participants?

- o How do FSS service needs vary for FUP-FSS youth compared to other FSS participants?
- What self-sufficiency services, if any, does [PHA name] provide directly to FUP-FSS youth?
- To which FSS-related community services are FUP-FSS youth referred, if any?
- Are youth required to participate in services?
- How, if at all, does [PHA] coordinate self-sufficiency services for FUP youth?
 - o Probe for: how do services connect to supports provided by [PHA's] FSS coordinator?
- How has [PHA] adapted its FSS program to address FUP-FSS youth needs?

12. Data and tracking outcomes:

- How do [PHA] staff track their engagements with FUP-FSS youth?
 - o What types of information do you collect?
 - o Who is responsible for data collection?
 - o From whom do you collect the information?
 - o How do you use the information?
 - [Request a copy of data tracking tools]
- How do [PHA] staff report FUP-FSS participant information to HUD?
 - o Are FUP-FSS participants uniquely identified in 50058? Other reporting?
 - If yes: How are they identified?
- How do [PHA] staff track outcomes for FUP-FSS youth?
 - o Probe for: formal or informal tracking tools (excel shared by case managers, by individual case managers?)
 - If yes: What outcomes are tracked?
 - Probe for: Escrow account balances?
 - If yes: How frequently are they tracked (e.g. monthly, semi-annually)?
 - [Request a copy of any outcomes tracking tools]

13. Early outcomes.

We would like to hear your perspective on any early implementation outcomes.

- For youth:
 - o In what ways has participation benefitted FUP-FSS participants?
 - o In what ways has participation been challenging for FUP-FSS participants?
 - o Have youth sustained their participation in FSS?
 - o Have FSS case managers or program partners identified any early trends or progress towards FUP-FSS participants' contracts/goals?
 - o How, if at all, has average length of FUP participation varied for those enrolled in the demonstration compared to FUP youth who are not participating in the demonstration?
 - o Have case managers identified any early trends in FUP-FSS participants' ability to sustain their housing?

14. Reflections.

As we approach the end of our conversation, we'd like to ask you to reflect on your experience with using FUP-FSS to serve youth and provide any recommendations you may have about how this combination of services could be improved.

- In what ways has participation in the demonstration been beneficial to [PHA]?
- In what ways has participation in the demonstration been challenging to [PHA]?
 - What advice, if any, do you have for other PHAs about using [FUP/FUP-FSS] to serve youth?
 - Are there lessons you would share about using FSS to serve youth?
- What do you think could be done to encourage more PHAs to use a program model similar to the FUP-FSS Demonstration?
- What changes do you think are needed to make a similar program more effective?

15. Closing.

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today.

- Is there anything that I did not ask about that you think I should know about your experience with the FUP-FSS Demonstration?
- Are there any community partners or other PHA staff that you think we should talk to?
- Do you have any final questions for me about the study?