

# Appendix A: Discussion Guide for Recruitment with Public Housing Authority and Public Child Welfare Agency Administrator (Phone Interview, Prior to Implementation)

*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 email you a copy of this information.*

A team of researchers from the Urban Institute, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, and Child Trends is working with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to build the evidence base for child welfare interventions through rigorous evaluation of programs, practices, and policies. This project identifies interventions that have shown some evidence through rigorous evaluation and conducts additional rigorous evaluations to further raise the level of evidence. We are currently evaluating the Family Unification Program (FUP). This evaluation has been approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

As part of this process, we are talking with representatives from public housing authorities that received FUP vouchers in 2018, along with their child welfare agency partners, to learn more about their FUP program and to identify appropriate and interested sites to conduct the evaluation.

We will ask you some questions about the [INSERT NAME OF PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY] FUP program including questions about FUP voucher allocation, program eligibility, the referral and screening process, the program model, your partnership with the [PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCY/CHILD WELFARE AGENCY] and any other partners, and any data that your program might collect about its operation. This information will be used to inform the US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (HHS ACF) and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to improve the administration of the FUP program.

A pair of researchers will conduct the discussion that will last no more than an hour. We may contact you after the interview to ask for clarification. Your participation in this discussion is voluntary.

We will share what we learn about your Family Unification Program with ACF as part of our evaluation activities. All the information you provide will be kept private to the extent permitted by law.

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

MAY WE PROCEED WITH THE DISCUSSION OF YOUR FUP PROGRAM?

If you have questions or concerns about the study, please contact:

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If you feel that your rights have been violated or that you have not been treated fairly, contact:

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# **Discussion Guide for Recruitment with Public Housing Authority and Public Child Welfare Agency Administrator (Phone Interview, Prior to Implementation)**

*Pre-Selection Phone Conversation (within 2 weeks after FUP grant award)*

## **FUP Voucher Allocation**

- Is this your agency's first time administering the FUP program?
- How many FUP vouchers did you have before your recent award?
- What is your plan for use of the new FUP vouchers? Will you serve both families and youth?
  - o If youth: have you chosen to set aside a certain number of vouchers for youth? How many?
- Will you serve both intact families to prevent removal and families trying to reunify with children in out-of-home care?
  - o If both: have you chosen to set aside a certain number of vouchers for each type of family? How many for intact families? How many for reunification families?
- How did you decide to set aside vouchers to different groups?
- How many families do you believe meet these criteria in your community?
  - o How many "preservation families"?
  - o How many "reunification families"?
- Will the vouchers you use for families be tenant-based, project-based, or both?
  - o If both: how many vouchers will be tenant-based? How many project-based?

## **Eligibility, Referral Process, and Screening**

- How are FUP eligible families identified?
  - o Who identifies eligible families?
    - Is there a review of all child welfare cases to identify eligible families?

- How do staff identify that families have a housing need?
  - Does someone review the referral (e.g. caseworker supervisor)?
- o Who certifies the family as FUP-eligible?
- o Is there a waiting list in your current FUP program? How long is the list?
  - Are families referred on a first-come, first-served basis, or can a family be placed higher on the waitlist? When would you place a family higher on the waitlist?
- Is there a referral form? If so, what is included?
  - o Would you be willing to modify your form so that the evaluation can collect consistent information across sites?
- Is there screening done by the public child welfare agency to account for PHA voucher eligibility requirements?
  - o Probe: income, criminal background, substance use, rental history, other PHA eligibility requirements.

### **Data Systems**

- What type of data system do you use to record client data? What about for the FUP program?
- What types of information do you track about your clients? About FUP families specifically?
- What is the process for an external research organization to access administrative data? (*probe: IRB? Data Sharing Agreements?*)
  - o Have you shared data before with external researchers?

### **Partnership between Public Child Welfare Agency and Housing Authority**

- Please describe the structure of your partnership with the [If Housing Authority, PUBLIC CHILD WELFARE AGENCY; If Public Child Welfare Agency, HOUSING AUTHORITY] and the Continuum of Care (CoC).
  - o What part of the FUP program is the child welfare agency responsible for administering?

- o What part of the FUP program is the PHA responsible for administering?
- o What part of the FUP program is the CoC responsible for administering?
- o Are there other partners in the FUP program? Who are they and what are their roles?

### **The Leasing Process and Retention Rate**

- Please describe the housing process.
  - o Referral to PHA
  - o Application Submission
  - o Voucher Approval/Denial
  - o Signing a Lease for Housing
- In your current FUP program, what proportion of families referred to the housing authority sign a lease for housing?

### **RCT**

- Would your agency be willing to participate in an experimental test of the effectiveness of FUP? This would involve each referral be put through a lottery where half of the referred eligible families would be offered the opportunity to apply for a FUP voucher while the other half would be placed in a control group and not offered that opportunity. Families in the control group would still receive any other service for which they are eligible. We would work with you to design a process that works as much as possible within your existing FUP referral process.
  - o If not, what are your concerns?

### **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 the FUP program or your experience with FUP families?

Do you have any final questions for me about the study or about the research team?

