Appendix G: Discussion Guide for Implementation Study Interviews with Referral Provider Administrators (Interview, Second Site Visit)

This information is being collected to inform the evaluation of the Family Unification Program (FUP) being conducted by a research team at the Urban Institute, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago and Child Trends. 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. All the information you provide will be kept private to the extent permitted by law.

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

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If you agree to participate in this study and feel that your rights have been violated or that you have
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Discussion Guide for Implementation Study Interviews with Referral Provider Administrators (Interview, Second Site Visit)

Second Site Visit (6-9 months after implementation)

Background

Let's start off by talking about you and your organization, and your role in the FUP program.

- What is your position in the organization?

- What services does your organization provide?

- In what capacity do you and your organization work with the FUP program?

- With which agency, do you have a contract or memorandum of understanding? The public housing authority, the public child welfare agency, the continuum of care or another agency?

- Does one of your partnering organizations set aside a certain number of vouchers to your organization? If so, how many?

- Do you work with intact families where FUP is intended to keep the family together, with families with children in out-of-home care where FUP is intended to speed up reunification, or both?

Partnership (based on partnering organization)

- How did the collaboration for FUP come about? Did someone at the [partnering organization] contact your organization, or vice versa? At what level was the contact made (agency head, program director, etc.)?

- Have you ever collaborated with the [partnering organization] in the past, on either FUP or another project? If so, please describe that collaboration.

- Please describe the structure of your partnership with the [partnering organization].

  o Do you have a contract? An MOU?

  o Please describe the way the FUP program is coordinated with the [partnering agency].

    ▪ How often do agency officials meet to review whether the program is operating as desired and meeting its goals?

    ▪ How often do the liaisons or program managers meet?

    ▪ Do you jointly discuss the eligibility of specific families before they are referred?

    ▪ Do you jointly discuss the status of families' applications, housing search, and signing a lease after referral?

    ▪ Do you jointly discuss the status of housed families in terms of maintaining their housing?

    ▪ Do you coordinate data systems?

  o How would you characterize the strength of your relationship with the [partnering agency]? Why?

    ▪ Probe: Are there clear roles and responsibilities? Is there a sense of a common mission? Are processes tailored to work effectively, or are they built as work-arounds to existing processes?   Is there trust between the agencies? Has the partnership led to other joint ventures?

If the public child welfare agency is not the partnering agency:

  o Please describe the way your agency coordinates the FUP program with the public child welfare agency:

    ▪ How often do agency officials meet to review whether the program is operating as desired and meeting its goals?

    ▪ How often do the liaisons or program managers meet?

    ▪ Do you jointly discuss the eligibility of specific families before they are referred?

- Do you jointly discuss the status of families' applications, housing search, and leasing up after referral?

- Do you jointly discuss the status of housed families in terms of maintaining their housing?

- Do you coordinate data systems?

- Have you ever collaborated with the public child welfare agency in the past, on either FUP or another project? If so, please describe the collaboration.

  o How would you characterize the strength of your relationship with the public child welfare agency? Why?

    - Probe: Are there clear roles and responsibilities? Is there a sense of a common mission? Are processes tailored to work effectively, or are they built as work-arounds to existing processes? Is there trust between the agencies? Has the partnership led to other joint ventures?

Eligibility, Referral Process, and Screening

Thinking about how things worked before COVID-19:

- How are FUP eligible families identified?

- How is housing need identified?

- Please describe the FUP referral process.

  o Who makes the referral?

  o Where does the referral go?

  o Is there a referral screener sheet?

  o What other housing resources are explored to help the family?

  o What are typical housing outcomes for families that don't get a FUP voucher?

- Do you do any screening to account for the FUP requirements of the public housing authority?

  o Probe: income, criminal background, substance use, rental history, other PHA eligibility requirements.

- Has the identification and referral of FUP eligible families changed since COVID-19? If so, how?

    - Probe: Have you stopped requiring signatures? Have you discovered new ways of identifying families?

Program Model

Thinking about how things worked before COVID-19:

- What types of assistance do you give filling out the voucher application?

    - Do you help gather documents?

    - Do you help address barriers to voucher approval?

- What types of assistance do you give in the voucher process?

    - Provide transportation to the voucher briefing?

    - Attend the voucher briefing?

- What types of housing search assistance do you provide?

- What types of assistance do you provide to help families sign a lease?

    - Landlord advocacy

    - Lease review

    - Financial support

- What types of support do you provide for moving in?

    - Furniture, groceries, household supplies, financial support?

- Has any of the services or assistance available to families changed since COVID-19?

    - Has it changed how often or how service providers meet with families?

    - Are additional services now available? Are some services no longer available?

Implementation Challenges and Supports

- Have you encountered any challenges implementing the FUP program?

- Have you had any challenges adhering to the eligibility guidelines?

- Have you had challenges with getting the public child welfare agency to certify your referrals as FUP-eligible?

- Have you had any challenges screening families to meet the PHA voucher eligibility requirements?

- Have you had any challenges helping families during the application or voucher issuance process?

- Have you had any challenges helping families obtain a lease?

- Have you had challenges with matching the families' need for housing with the time to make a referral, obtain a voucher, and find housing?

- Have you had challenges working with the PHA due to:

  - Poor communication?

  - Difficulty getting in touch with the right person?

  - Difficulty getting problems resolved?

  - Lack of data sharing?

  - Unwillingness to be flexible in their application requirements?

  - They don't provide the services you thought they would?

- How have you overcome those challenges?

- Have any factors been particularly helpful in implementing the program?

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?