

Instrument 8: Interview Guide for Public Child Welfare Agency Administrator and FUP Liaison

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 and Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago is working with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to learn about how communities are using the Family Unification Program (FUP) to serve youth. We are not evaluating your agency or its programs. The information we gather will be used to inform efforts by ACF and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to improve the administration of the program.

As part of this process, we are talking with representatives from public housing agencies that received FUP vouchers in 2018, along with their child welfare agency, Continuum of Care, and service and referring agency partners. You or another staff member from your agency completed a survey earlier this year about how FUP is being used to serve youth in your community. Based on the results of that survey, we identified the program in your community as a promising one for further study.

A pair of researchers will ask you some questions about [PHA name]'s FUP program, including questions about your collaboration with community partners, ways in which serving youth may differ from serving families, and successes or challenges you may have encountered serving youth, along with lessons learned. The discussion that will take about 60 minutes. 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. With your permission, we will audio record the discussion so that we have an accurate record of what is said. However, we will not audio record if you do not want it to be recorded. One of the researchers will be taking detailed notes, but the notes will not include your name.

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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Discussion Guide for Public Child Welfare Agency Administrator and FUP Liaison

On-Site Conversation

Introduction

We are interested in how your agency collaborates with [PHA name] and [CoC name] to serve FUP-eligible youth. We know that you may work with other PHAs or CoCs, but we would like to focus on these. Also, we know that you may also use FUP to serve families, but we would like to focus on youth for our conversation today.

Do you have questions before we continue?

Do you consent to be recorded?

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

Please tell me about yourself and your agency.

(Ask all respondents, unless otherwise indicated)

- What is your position at the agency?
 - o Please describe your primary responsibilities.
 - o How much of your time do you spend on FUP?
- (Ask FUP Liaison) Are you the primary staff person responsible for FUP?
 - o If not, who else is responsible?
 - o What is/are their role(s)?

Child Welfare Context

(Ask agency administrator)

Now I'm going to ask a bit about the how your agency serves youth who age out of foster care.

- Our understanding is that the child welfare system in this state is [county-administered, state-administered, or privatized]. Is that correct?
- It is also our understanding that [name of state] allows young people to remain in foster care until [age]. Is that correct?
- (If serves youth over age 18) How old are most youth when they age out of foster care in [PHA jurisdiction]?
- What transition planning does your agency provide, or requires partner agencies to provide, to youth preparing to age out of foster care.
 - o How old are youth when this planning begins?
 - o Who develops the transition plan?
 - o What is typically included in the transition plan?
 - o How are housing needs typically addressed in the transition plan?
- What does your agency do to help youth who age out of foster care address their housing needs?
- What, if any, aftercare services does your agency (or partners) provide to youth who have aged out?
 - o What proportion of youth who have aged out receive these services?

- What is your agency's strategy for using different funding streams to serve transition age youth? Funding streams could include Title IV-E extended foster care, state extended foster care, Chafee funds, Education and Training Vouchers, and any other source of funding your agency might have.

Housing Need

(Ask all respondents)

Now we have a few questions about housing needs.

- How easy or difficult is it for FUP-eligible youth in [PHA jurisdiction] to find and maintain stable housing?
 - o What are the biggest challenges they face?
- What services or supports do these youth need most to find and maintain stable housing?

Service Partnership Development

(Ask agency administrator)

Now let's talk a bit about your partnership with [PHA name] and [CoC lead organization name] in administering FUP and related services.

- When did you begin partnering with [PHA name] to administer FUP?
- Why did you enter this partnership?
- Before this FUP partnership, did you have a relationship with [PHA name]?
 - o If yes: How would you describe the relationship?
- Did your original Memorandum of Understanding, or MOU, with [PHA name] include language about serving youth?
 - o If no, when was this added?
 - o If no, why was this added?
 - o Did your agency approach [PHA name] about serving youth, or did [PHA name] approach your agency?
- How did your agency decide to serve both youth and families with FUP?
 - o Probe: Who made the decision?
- What does your MOU with [PHA name] and [CoC lead organization name] require of each party?
 - o Probe: prioritization of FUP youth, coordination of referrals, integration into coordinated entry system, identification of services funded through CoC, quarterly meetings, common goals and standards of success
 - o Did you develop your own MOU or use a standard template from HUD or another organization?
 - o How, if at all, do you update your MOU to reflect changes in activities?

Service Coordination with the PHA

(Ask FUP Liaison, unless otherwise indicated)

Now we'd like to discuss your coordination with [PHA name] to use FUP to serve youth.

- Is there a single point of contact at [PHA name] to address issues around serving youth using FUP?
 - o If not: Would having a single point of contact be helpful?
- Does your agency have a point of contact for [PHA name] to reach out to with questions about serving youth with FUP?

- How regularly do you meet with [PHA name] about serving youth with FUP?
 - o Please describe those meetings.
 - Probe: mode, topics, frequency
- What other communication, beyond regular meetings, do you have with [PHA name]?
 - o Probe: Topics
 - o Do you think there should be more or less communication, or is the amount about right?
- Does your agency provide any training to staff at [PHA name] around using FUP to serve youth?
 - o If yes: What training does your agency provide?
 - o If yes: How often do you provide the training?
 - o If no: Are there any plans for future training?
- Does [PHA name] provide any training to staff at your agency around using FUP to serve youth?
 - o If yes: What training does [PHA name] provide staff at your agency?
 - o If yes: How often do they provide the training?
 - o If yes: How helpful do you find the training?
 - o If yes: Would training on other topics be helpful?
 - o If no: Would this type of training be helpful?
 - o If no: What topics would be helpful to cover?
 - o If no: Are there any plans for future training?
- (Ask all respondents) How successful overall would you describe your agency's relationship with [PHA name]?
 - o What factors have contributed to successful collaboration?
 - o What barriers to collaboration has your agency encountered?
 - o How has your agency dealt with those barriers?
 - o What else, if anything, could be done to improve the collaborative relationship?

Service Coordination with Continuum of Care

(Ask FUP Liaison, unless otherwise indicated)

We now have some questions about your partnership with [CoC name] to serve youth using FUP.

- How is [CoC name] involved in the administration of FUP?
 - How long have [CoC lead organization name] and/or CoC-funded agencies been referring youth to your agency for FUP?
- Is there a staff person at [CoC lead organization name] and/or CoC-funded agencies who is responsible for identifying FUP-eligible youth and referring them to your agency?
- What training, if any, is [CoC lead organization name] providing to your agency around youth homelessness or serving youth with FUP?
- What training, if any, is your agency providing to [CoC lead organization name] and/or CoC-funded agencies around serving youth with FUP?
- What kinds of services are provided to youth with FUP vouchers using CoC program funds?
- (Ask all respondents) How successful overall would you describe your agency's relationship with [CoC name]?
 - o What factors have contributed to successful collaboration?

- o What barriers to collaboration has your agency encountered?
- o How has your agency dealt with those barriers?
- o What else, if anything, could be done to improve the collaborative relationship?

Service Coordination with Other Providers

(Ask all respondents, unless otherwise indicated)

We'd also like to understand your partnership with other service providers that serve youth with FUP vouchers.

- What other public agencies or private organizations does your agency partner with to serve youth who receive FUP vouchers? Please describe the roles of each of these partners.
- How formal are these partnerships (i.e., is there a contract or MOU established)?
- Which, if any, of these partners does your agency provide funding to?
 - o If provides funding: How does that work?
- What advantages or disadvantages are associated with maintaining these partnerships?
- (Ask FUP Liaison) What communication do staff at your agency communicate have with these partners?
 - o Do you think that this communication is too much, too little, or about right? Why?
- How would you characterize your relationship with these partners?
 - o Probe: Are there clear roles and responsibilities?
 - o Is there a sense of common mission?

Identification of FUP-Eligible Youth

(Ask FUP Liaison)

Now we'd like to learn more about how your agency identifies FUP-eligible youth.

- How does your agency identify FUP-eligible youth who are still in foster care?
- How does your agency identify youth formerly in foster care who are eligible for FUP?
- How, if at all, is the referral process integrated into the [CoC name] coordinated entry system?
 - o What role did your agency play in developing this integration?
- From what other outside sources does your agency receive referrals?
 - o How do outside sources refer youth to your agency?
- Approximately how many FUP-eligible youth has your agency identified since [most recent voucher award date]?
- Approximately how many FUP-eligible youth have been referred to your agency by the [CoC lead organization name] and CoC-funded organizations since [most recent voucher award date]?
- Approximately how many FUP-eligible youth have been referred by other sources?

Referral to PHA

(Ask FUP Liaison, unless otherwise indicated)

Now we'd like to learn more about how your agency refers FUP-eligible youth to [PHA name].

- Approximately how many FUP-eligible youth has your agency referred to the [PHA name] since [most recent voucher award date]?
 - Do you send a referral form to the [PHA name]?
- Does your agency ever refer youth to [PHA name] before they age out of foster care?
 - If yes: How soon before youth age out does your agency typically refer them to [PHA name]?
- Does your agency refer ALL youth who are identified as FUP-eligible to [PHA name]?
 - If no: How does your agency decide which youth to refer (e.g., based on need, first-come, first-served)?
 - Does your agency screen youth for Housing Choice Voucher eligibility?
 - How, if at all, is this different from the way that decisions are made about which FUP-eligible families to refer?
 - Who makes the decision about which youth to refer?
 - Does your agency prioritize certain youth?
 - What are the most common reasons FUP-eligible youth are not referred to [PHA name]?
- Does your agency ever have to choose between referring FUP-eligible youth and referring FUP-eligible families?

(If yes)

- How does your agency choose between referring FUP-eligible youth and referring FUP-eligible families?
- Does your agency sometimes choose to refer a family instead of a youth because the services required for youth are not available?
- Does your agency ever refer FUP-eligible youth to a housing program other than FUP?
 - If yes: What other program(s) does your agency refer FUP-eligible youth to?
 - If yes: Why does your agency refer FUP-eligible youth to those programs?
- (Ask all respondents) (If PCWA serves youth over age 18) How has the fact that youth can stay in care beyond age 18 affected how your agency uses FUP to serve youth?
- (Ask all respondents) Does your agency encourage youth stay in care beyond age 18 rather than apply for a FUP voucher?
 - Why or why not?

Application and Eligibility Determination

(Ask FUP Liaisons)

Now we want to talk about what happens once your agency has referred a youth to [PHA name].

- What types of assistance does your agency provide with the voucher application process? (e.g. gathering documentation, filling out the form).
 - Does your agency provide that assistance directly or is it provided by a contracted agency?

- Approximately how many youth have completed the voucher application process since [most recent voucher award date]?
 - What are the most common reasons youth don't make it through the application process?
- How long does it typically take your agency to determine a youth's eligibility?
- Approximately how many youth have been determined to be ineligible since [most recent voucher award date]?
 - What are the most common reasons youth are determined to be ineligible?

Issuing Vouchers

(Ask FUP Liaisons)

- How long does it typically take for a voucher to be issued once a youth's eligibility is confirmed?
- To what proportion of eligible youth are FUP vouchers issued?
- How would you describe the voucher briefing that youth are required to attend?
 - Probe: Purpose, topics
- Does someone from your agency typically attend the voucher briefing with the youth?

Securing Housing

(Ask FUP Liaison)

Next, we have some questions about the housing search and lease up process for youth who have been issued a FUP voucher.

- How much time do youth have to lease up once a voucher is issued?
- How long does it typically take for youth to lease up?
- What housing search assistance does your agency provide to youth?
 - Probe: provide assurances to landlord, help with moving expenses
 - Does your agency provide this assistance directly or is it provided by a contracted agency?
 - What proportion of youth does your agency provide housing search assistance to?
 - How much time do staff typically spend with each youth they assist?
 - How does this compare to the housing search assistance your agency provides to families with FUP vouchers?
- Do youth receive housing search assistance from [PHA name]?
 - If yes, what type of housing search assistance?
 - If yes, how does your agency coordinate housing search assistance with the PHA?
- Do youth receive housing search assistance from CoC-funded organizations?
 - If yes, what type of housing search assistance?
 - If yes, how does your agency coordinate housing search assistance with [CoC name] and/or with these organizations?
- What proportion of youth who receive FUP vouchers lease up?
 - How, if at all, does this proportion differ for parenting youth versus those who are childless? Why do you think that is?
 - What are some of the most significant barriers to leasing up?

Other Supportive Services

(Ask FUP Liaison, unless otherwise indicated)

We'd also like to know what other supportive services you and other agencies provide to youth who have leased up with a FUP voucher.

- How long after lease-up are you and other agencies providing supportive services to youth? To what extent does this vary?
- What supportive services does your agency provide to youth who have leased up with a FUP voucher?
 - o Probe: basic life skills information including help with credit problems or money management, counselling on compliance with lease, job counselling and help with job search, educational and career advancement counselling and support, healthcare access assistance, cash assistance for essential expenses
 - o Do you provide these services directly or are they provided by a contracted agency?
 - o How frequently are these services typically provided?
 - o For how long are these services typically provided?
 - o Does your agency also provide supportive services to families?
- How often do youth participate in these services?
 - o Are youth required to participate any of these services?
 - o If participation is required: What are the consequences of not participating?
- How often does someone from your agency have contact with youth after they lease up?
 - o For what reasons do they typically have contact?
- Is someone from your agency required to meet with youth in person after they lease up?
 - o How frequently are these in-person meetings required to take place?
- What, if any, supportive services does [PHA name] provide after youth lease up with a FUP voucher?
- What, if any, supportive services do CoC-funded organizations provide after youth lease up?
- What proportion of youth who lease up with FUP are eligible for services from CoC-funded programs? What makes them eligible?
- How, if at all, does your agency coordinate the provision of supportive services with [PHA name] and/or CoC-funded organizations?
- In your opinion, which of the services that are offered to youth who have leased up are the most essential? Why?
- (Ask all respondents) Are there additional services that youth need after lease-up that your agency or partners do not provide?
 - o If yes: What are those services?
 - o (Ask agency administrator) If yes: Why is your agency not currently providing those services?

Youth Mobility and Exit from FUP-Assisted Housing (ask only if PHA served youth with FUP previous to most recent award) (Ask FUP Liaison)

Now we'd like to learn more about what happens when youth move or reach the end of their 36-months of eligibility for housing assistance payments.

- How often do youth move between approved units during their 36-months of eligibility for housing assistance payments?
 - Does your agency ever encourage or discourage youth from moving?
 - How and why?
- How often do youth voluntarily exit the program before their 36-months of housing assistance is exhausted?
 - How does this compare to the rate for FUP families?
 - What are the most common reasons youth give up their voucher voluntarily?
 - What, if anything, does your agency do to prevent these voluntary exits?
- How often do youth involuntarily exit the program before their 36-months of housing assistance is exhausted?
 - How does this compare to the rate for FUP families?
 - What are the most common reasons youth give up their voucher involuntarily?
 - What, if anything, does your agency do to prevent these involuntary exits?
- How, if at all, do the rates of successfully maintaining a lease differ for parenting youth than for those who are childless? Why do you think this is?
- What, if any, assistance does your agency provide to youth as they near the end of the 36 months of housing assistance payments?

Funding FUP Administration

We have a few questions about your funding sources.

- (Ask agency administrator) What funding sources does your agency use to cover the costs associated with administering FUP?
- (Ask all respondents) How much, if at all, does your budget constrain your ability to refer all FUP-eligible youth to [PHA name]?
- (Ask agency administrator) What funding sources does your agency use to cover the costs associated with providing supportive services to youth with FUP vouchers?
 - Do you use any Chafee funds to provide these supportive services?
 - (If has extended foster care to age 21) How, if at all, has the ability to provide Chafee funded services until age 23 changed how your agency covers the cost of service provision associated with FUP?
- (Ask all respondents) How much, if at all, does your budget constrain your ability to provide supportive services to youth with FUP vouchers?

Data and Evaluation

We'd like to ask about how you may be tracking data on FUP youth.

- (Ask all respondents) Does your agency collect any data about youth with FUP vouchers?
 - If yes: What system does your agency use to record the data?
 - If no: Why not?
- (Ask FUP Liaison) If yes: What types of information does your agency collect?
 - How are those data collected (e.g. from youth, from partner agencies)?
 - Who is responsible for collecting those data?
 - *(Request a list of measures or shells of spreadsheets)*

- o How does this compare to the data your agency collects for families?
- (Ask all respondents) How does your agency use the data it collects?
- (Ask agency administrator) Has the FUP in this community ever been evaluated? *[If appropriate, request a copy of the study/report.]*
 - o If yes: What can you tell me about that evaluation?
 - o If no: Are there any plans to evaluate the FUP in this community?
- (Ask agency administrator) Does your agency share this information with external researchers?
 - o What is the process to obtain access to these data for research? (e.g. an Institutional Review Board or a Research Review Board, Data Sharing Agreement)

Community Context

Please tell us some more about how the community context you work in affects how you serve FUP-eligible youth.

- (Ask all respondents) How has the local housing market affected the ability to house youth with FUP vouchers?
- (Ask all respondents) How widely available are social services for FUP-eligible youth?
- (Ask all respondents) How widely available are housing assistance programs? E.g. public housing? Section 8 vouchers? State funded vouchers?
 - o (Ask all respondents) How widely available are these programs for FUP-eligible youth?
 - o (Ask FUP Liaison) How often do you refer youth to these programs?
 - o (Ask FUP Liaison) How often are these programs able to address the housing needs of the youth your agency refers?
- (Ask all respondents) How, if at all, are youth in the community given opportunities to shape the FUP program (e.g., through advisory boards)?
- (Ask all respondents) What, if any, regulatory or statutory barriers are there to serving youth in [PHA jurisdiction]?

Reflections

(Ask all respondents)

As we approach the end of our conversation, we'd like to ask you to reflect on your experience using FUP to serve youth and provide any recommendations you may have.

- What are the biggest challenges your agency has encountered using FUP to serve youth?
 - o Probe: lease length; tenant screening
- What lessons have you learned about using FUP to serve youth?
- What advice, if any, do you have for other PCWAs about using FUP to serve youth?
- What could be done to encourage more communities to use FUP to serve youth?
- What could be done to help PCWAs better serve youth?

Closing

(Ask all respondents)

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 FUP or your experience using FUP to serve youth?
Do you have any final questions for me about the study?