

# Appendix E: Discussion Guide for Implementation Study Interviews with Public Housing Authority Management (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:

Michael Pergamit  
Urban Institute  
202-261-5276  
mpergamit@urban.org

Mark Courtney  
Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago  
773.702.1219  
markc@uchicago.edu

If you agree to participate in this study and feel that your rights have been violated or that you have not been treated fairly, contact:

The Institutional Review Board Coordinator  
Everett Madden  
Urban Institute  
2100 M Street NW  
Washington DC 20037  
Phone: 202-261-5632

*The Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This collection of information is voluntary and will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Family Unification Program. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 60 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB number and expiration date for this collection are OMB #: 0970-0514, Exp: 09/30/2021. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Michael Pergamit at mpergamit@urban.org.*

## **Discussion Guide for Implementation Study Interviews with Public Housing Authority Management (Interview, Second Site Visit)**

*Second Site Visit (6-9 months after implementation)*

### **PHA Background**

Please tell me about your agency.

- What is your position at the agency?
- How many Housing Choice vouchers does your agency have? Is there a waiting list? How long is it?
- Do you manage public housing? If so, how many units?
- What other types of housing programs does your agency operate?
- How many staff do you have at your Public Housing Authority (PHA)?
- Is there a staff person who is responsible for FUP? Is FUP the only program they work on?
- Do you use tenant-based vouchers, project-based vouchers, or both?
- Do you provide or refer families to the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program or any similar programs?
  - If yes, please describe how the program works.
    - What services are offered?
    - Which services are required and which are voluntary?
- If yes, are FUP families participating in the program? What share of FUP families participate?
- How has COVID-19 impacted your general operations, if at all?
  - Are these changes permanent or are they temporary?

## **FUP Voucher Allocation**

- Our records indicate your plan was to distribute vouchers as follows:  
  
[From information collected to create the evaluation plan, relate plan regarding serving families and youth, allocations of vouchers across families and youth, allocation of vouchers across family types, allocation of vouchers as tenant-based or project-based, allocation of vouchers across partners.]
  - o Has any of this plan changed? If so, what is the current plan?
  - o Why did you change the plan?

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

- What are the eligibility requirements for your FUP program? How do these compare to the requirements for your regular Housing Choice Voucher program?
- Thinking about how the program operated before COVID-19: Please describe what happens after you receive a referral to FUP.
  - o Is there an application that is required by the PHA?
    - *[Note to interviewer: if so, ask for a copy.]*
  - o Is there a waiting list for FUP vouchers?
  - o What happens when a family reaches the top of the waiting list?
  - o How was the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) waiting list utilized in the process (e.g. sent all the names on the waitlist to the public child welfare agency to identify public child welfare families, or check if public child welfare agency referrals are already on the HCV waitlist, or the waitlist does not play a role in the process, or other)
- What screening of referrals is done by the public child welfare agency? Does the public child welfare agency take into account PHA requirements in their referrals? How well does the public child welfare agency account for PHA requirements in their referrals?
- Is there additional screening done by the PHA? Do you apply the same conditions on FUP voucher applications as you do HCV applications? How do they differ?

- o *Probe: criminal background, substance use, rental history, other HCV eligibility requirements*
- How has this process changed since COVID-19?
  - o Are families still moving through the process?
  - o How have you dealt with challenges related to families obtaining documents (e.g. social security cards)?
  - o Have there been any additional challenges related to COVID-19?
  - o Are these changes permanent or are they temporary?

### **Partnership with Public Child Welfare Agency and Other Collaborating Agencies**

- How did the collaboration with the public child welfare agency (PCWA) and the Continuum of Care (CoC) for FUP come about? Did someone at the Public Housing Authority or the Continuum of Care contact the PCWA? At what level was the contact made (agency head, program director, etc.)?
  - o Have you ever collaborated with the public child welfare agency in the past, on either FUP or another project? If so, please describe that collaboration.
  - o Have you ever collaborated with the Continuum of Care in the past, on either FUP or another project? If so, please describe.
  - o Please describe the structure of your partnership with the public child welfare agency (PCWA) and the Continuum of Care (CoC).
    - What part of the FUP program is the public child welfare agency responsible for participating in?
    - What part of the FUP program is the PHA responsible for participating in?
    - What part of the FUP program is the CoC responsible for participating in?
    - Please describe the way the FUP program is coordinated
      - frequency of meetings between liaisons or program managers

- coordination of data systems and/or referral lists of families with vouchers
    - frequency of meetings/reviews of the program among agency officials.
  - o How would you characterize the strength of your relationship with the PCWA? 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?*
  - o How would you characterize the strength of your relationship with the CoC? Why?
    - *Probe: Are there clear roles and responsibilities? Is there a sense of 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?*
- Are you collaborating with any other agencies or organization around FUP?
  - o What role does this agency/organization play in FUP?
  - o How did that collaboration come about?
  - o How did you determine their role in administering FUP?
  - o How did you work with this organization in developing the FUP application?
  - o Once the vouchers were awarded, did the organization's role in administering FUP change? If so, how?
  - o Have you ever collaborated with this agency/organization in the past, on either FUP or another project? If so, please describe that collaboration.
  - o How would you characterize the strength of your relationship? Why?
    - *Probe: Are there clear roles and responsibilities? Is there a sense of 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?*

### **Community Context**

- Thinking about before COVID-19: Please describe the local housing market. Is it a tight or loose market? How has the local housing market affected your ability to house families with a FUP voucher?
  - Has this changed at all during COVID-19? If so how?
- Have many families ported-out their vouchers to other areas?
- Are there housing assistance programs outside the PHA?
- Thinking about before COVID-19: Please describe the social services landscape. How widely available are other social services?
  - Has this changed at all during COVID-19? If so how?

### **Implementation Challenges and Supports**

- Have you encountered any challenges implementing the FUP program? If so, please describe.
  - o Do you receive referrals in a timely manner?
  - o Have you had any challenges with families during the application or voucher issuance process?
  - o Have you had any challenges with families signing a lease for housing?
  - o Have you had any challenges around voucher retention?
- How did 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?