

# Appendix I: Discussion Guide for Implementation Study Interviews with Public Housing Authority FUP 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.

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*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](mailto:mpergamit@urban.org).*

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

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

## **Background**

- What is your position at the agency?
- Is FUP the only program you work on?

## **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 and Referral Process**

- What are the eligibility requirements for your FUP program? Please describe. How do these compare to the requirements for your regular Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program? How do they differ?
  - o *Probe: criminal background, substance use, rental history, other HCV eligibility requirements)*
- What organizations refer FUP eligible households?
- Thinking about how the program operated before COVID-19: Please describe what happens after you receive a referral.
  - o Is there an application that is required by the public housing authority?

- o Are there any other materials that are required by the public housing authority?
- o Is there a waiting list for FUP vouchers?
- o What happens when a family reaches the top of the waiting list?
- 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 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?
  - o Does the child welfare agency take into account public housing authority requirements in their referrals?
    - How well does the child welfare agency account for PHA requirements?
    - Which requirements do they not account for? How often do they miss them?
- How has this process changed since COVID-19?
- Are these changes permanent or temporary?

### **Program Model**

- Thinking about how the program operated before COVID-19: Please describe how families move through the program.
  - o Is the FUP referral form reviewed for eligibility before the family can submit an application?
  - o What additional screening is done at the housing authority before the family can submit an application? How does it compare with screening for Housing Choice Vouchers?
    - *Probe: criminal background, substance use, rental history, other HCV eligibility requirements*
  - o Are the vouchers tenant-based, project-based, or both?
    - If both, how do you decide which type of voucher to provide to a family?

- If you use project-based vouchers: Please describe the housing families have when using project-based vouchers.
- o Is there a housing orientation or any meetings or classes that families must attend?
  - If yes: please describe when these meetings take place and what is involved in the meetings.
  - If yes: what happens if families do not attend?
- o What assistance is provided with the application process?
  - *Probe: Does the PHA provide help with getting documents, filling out the application, transportation to housing authority?*
- o What reasons might families have their application denied?
- o Is there a voucher briefing? Is it specific for families with FUP vouchers or the same as for those with Housing Choice Vouchers?
- o How long is allowed for the housing search process?
- o What housing search assistance is provided?
  - Does your organization provide:
    - A current list of other organizations that can help families find units?
    - Neighborhood tours?
    - Apartment viewings?
    - Landlord introductions?
    - Other services to help families find housing?
      - o *Probe: filling out the application for the property?*
- o What does the PHA do to encourage and help families find housing in low-poverty neighborhoods?
- o After the FUP family leases,
  - Do they receive any services from the PHA? If so, please describe.

- Does your organization provide:
  - o budget counseling?
  - o credit counseling?
  - o periodic check-ins?
  - o subsequent move counseling if the family decides to move a second time?
  - o landlord-tenant mediation?
- Do they receive any services from the child welfare agency? If so, please describe.
- Do they receive any services from other community providers? If so, please describe.
- o Do any FUP families participate in the Family Self Sufficiency program or a similar program?
  - If yes:
    - How many FUP families participate?
    - Is it provided by the PHA or by another organization?
    - Please describe this program.
      - o What services do families receive through FSS?
      - o Which services are required and which are voluntary?
      - o Do those services differ from the ones provided for families involved in FUP by [PCWA, CoC AND/OR SERVICE ORGANIZATION] ?
- 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 temporary?

### **Service Goals**

- What are your agency's goals for the FUP families?
- How were these goals determined?
- Have FUP families been able to meet these goals?
  - o *[If no] probe for reasons why and challenges with working with this population*
- Have these goals changed over time?
  - o If so, how did they change? Why have they changed?

### **Data Systems**

- What type of data system do you use to record for the FUP program?
- Has your data system changed since beginning implementation of the FUP program?
- What types of information do you track?
- Who is responsible for entering/tracking the information?
- How do you use the information you collect?

### **Partnership with Public Child Welfare Agency and Continuum of Care**

- Please describe the structure of your partnership with the public child welfare agency.
  - o What part of the FUP program is the responsibility of the public child welfare agency?
  - o What part of the FUP program is the responsibility of the PHA?
- Please describe the structure of your partnership with the Continuum of Care.
  - o What part of the FUP program is the responsibility of the Continuum of Care?

- Please describe the way the FUP program is coordinated with the public child welfare agency.
  - o How often do agency officials meet to review whether the program is operating as desired and meeting its goals?
  - o How often do the liaisons or program managers meet?
  - o Do you jointly discuss the eligibility of specific families before they are referred?
  - o Do you jointly discuss the status of families' applications, housing search, and leasing up after referral?
  - o Do you jointly discuss the status of housed families in terms of maintaining their housing?
  - o Do you coordinate data systems?
  - o Does the PHA provide training to PCWA or CoC staff on voucher and housing requirements?
  - o Does the PCWA provide training to PHA staff on child welfare families and their special circumstances as a result of being involved in child welfare (e.g. their child may not be with them when they move into housing)?
- How would you characterize the strength of your relationship with the public child welfare agency? Why?
  - o *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?*
- How would you characterize the strength of your relationship with the continuum of care? Why?
  - o *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 part of the FUP program is this agency or organization responsible for administering?
- o Please describe how the FUP program is coordinated with them, including [as laid out above] (a) frequency of meetings/reviews of the program among agency officials., (b) frequency of meetings between liaisons or program managers, (c) joint discussion of the status of families, and (d) coordination of data systems.
- o How would you characterize the strength of your relationship with the agency/organization? 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?*

### **Implementation Progress, Challenges, and Supports**

- What are the most common reasons applications for FUP vouchers do not get completed?
- What are the most common reasons FUP voucher applications are denied?
- Have you encountered any major challenges implementing the FUP program?
  - o Have you had any challenges adhering to the numbers of vouchers for specific groups such as families and youth or types of families?
  - o Have you had any challenges helping families during the application or voucher issuance process?
  - o Have you had any challenges helping families get a lease?
  - o 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 child welfare agency due to:
  - o Poor communication?



- o Difficulty getting in touch with the right person?
  - o Difficulty getting problems resolved?
  - o Lack of data sharing?
  - o 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?

### **Big Picture and Reflecting**

- How does housing make a difference for these families?
- If you had the opportunity, what would you do to change or improve the FUP program?
  - o *Probe: additional services, eligibility/screening criteria, length of services*
- Do you feel that the program does what it was intended to do?

### **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?