

Appendix M: Discussion Guide for Implementation Study Interviews with Child Welfare Agency FUP Program Managers (Interview, Third 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.

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Third Site Visit (18-21 months after implementation)

Background

Interviewer: Is this the same person we spoke with at the early site visit? If yes, skip this section.

- Please tell me about yourself. What is your position at the agency?
- Is FUP the only program you work on? What other responsibilities do you have?
- When did you become the FUP liaison/manager?
- What did you do before that?

Services

Thinking about how things worked before COVID-19:

- What services does the child welfare agency provide to help FUP families through the housing application process?
 - o Probe: Does the child welfare agency provide help with housing application, getting documents, transportation to housing authority, paying off money owed to the housing authority, or interacting with the housing authority?*
- What services does the child welfare agency provide to help FUP families find housing?
 - o A current list of other organizations that can help families find units?*
 - o Neighborhood tours?*
 - o Unit viewings?*
 - o Landlord introductions?*
 - o Other services to help find housing?*

- *Probe: filling out the application for the property*
 - o (If yes to any of the above) Does the help that is provided to families focus on housing in low-poverty neighborhoods?
- Does the child welfare agency provide any financial assistance to FUP families to help them obtain housing?
 - o *Probe: Does the child welfare agency provide help paying off money owed to landlords or utilities, paying first month's rent, security deposit, first month's utilities, paying for furniture?*
- What services does the child welfare agency provide to help FUP families sign a lease or move in?
 - o *Probe: Does the child welfare agency provide help reading a lease, moving into the house, or counseling on compliance with rental or HCV requirements?*
- What services does the child welfare agency provide to FUP families to keep them in housing?
 - o budget counseling?
 - o credit counseling?
 - o periodic check-ins?
 - If so, what is the goal of these check-ins? And how often do you check in?
 - o subsequent move counseling if the family decides to move a second time?
 - o landlord-tenant mediation?
- What case management does the child welfare agency provide to FUP families?
 - o Does the child welfare agency:
 - conduct needs assessments to identify family's needs?
 - If so, does it cover both housing related and non-housing related needs? What needs does it cover?
 - provide referrals to services to address the family's needs?

- If so, do families typically follow up with the services they are referred to?
 - have regular contact based on need with the family to follow up on these referrals or provide new referrals as necessary? How do you follow up to ensure that families receive the services?
- Does the child welfare agency provide any other services directly to FUP families?
 - o *Probe: Does your organization provide adult education/employment, domestic violence services, substance abuse treatment, counseling, parenting education, self-sufficiency programming, help accessing benefits, child care, legal aid, health services, or budgeting and money management services?*
- Do the services provided to FUP families differ from those provided to other child welfare involved families? How do they differ? (probe for differences in which services are provided, how extensive the services are, other differences such as being given priority on referrals)
- How long does the child welfare agency provide services to FUP families? (probe: 6 months? 12 months?)
- How often does a caseworker meet with FUP families?
 - o Does this vary over time?
 - o Is this more often than for a typical client?
 - o Is there someone from another organization who (also) meets regularly with FUP families?
 - How often does that person meet with a FUP family?
 - Does it vary over time?
- [If site has project-based and tenant-based vouchers for families] What types of housing are available for FUP voucher recipients? Is it scattered site or project based or both? Do they have a choice?
 - o Are there differences in the housing search process for families that move into scattered site versus single site housing?
 - o Does the type of housing a family is in affect the services they receive?

- Does a case need to be kept open for the child welfare agency to provide services to FUP families?
 - o How often are cases kept open just to continue providing services?
- Do families receive any services from the PHA?
 - o If so, please describe.
 - o How often do they meet with someone from the public housing authority?
 - o How long does the public housing authority plan to provide services to FUP families?
- Do families receive any services from the continuum of care?
 - o If so, please describe.
 - o How often do they meet with someone from the continuum of care?
 - o How long does the continuum of care plan to provide services to FUP families?
- Do families receive any services from other community providers?
 - o If so, please describe.
 - o How often do they meet with someone from the community provider?
 - o How long does the community provider plan to provide services to FUP families?
- Have any families refused services? If so, why?
- Have any of the services or assistance available to families changed since COVID-19? If so, how?
 - o Are additional services now available? Are some services no longer available?
 - o Has it changed how often or how you meet with families?
 - o Do you plan to make any of these changes permanent or are they 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?
 - *[If no]* probe for reasons why and challenges with working with this population, as below
- Have these goals changed over time?
 - If so, how did they change? Why have they changed?
 - Have they changed as a result of COVID-19? If so, how?

Partnership with Public Housing Agency/Continuum of Care/Other Providers

- Has the structure of your partnership with the public housing agency and the continuum of care changed since you began implementation? How has it changed?
 - Please describe any changes in the way the FUP program is coordinated.
 - Changes in ...
 - how often agency officials meet to review whether the program is operating as desired and meeting its goals?
 - how often the liaisons or program managers meet?
 - whether and how often you jointly discuss the eligibility of specific families before they are referred?
 - whether and how often you jointly discuss the status of families' applications, housing search, and leasing up after referral?
 - whether and how often you jointly discuss the status of housed families in terms of maintaining their housing?
 - whether and how you coordinate data systems?
- How would you characterize the strength of your relationship? Why?

- o How would you characterize the strength of your relationship with the public housing authority and the continuum of care? Why? Have these relationships changed since receiving your new vouchers in 2018?
 - *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?*
- o Do you have partnerships with any other providers as part of the FUP program? If so, please describe any changes in how the FUP program is coordinated with them.
 - Changes in ...
 - how often agency officials meet to review whether the program is operating as desired and meeting its goals?
 - how often the liaisons or program managers meet?
 - whether and how often you jointly discuss the eligibility of specific families before they are referred?
 - whether and how often you jointly discuss the status of families' applications, housing search, and leasing up after referral?
 - whether and how often you jointly discuss the status of housed families in terms of maintaining their housing?
 - whether and how you coordinate data systems?

Community Context

- Thinking about before COVID-19: How has the local housing market affected your ability to house families with a FUP voucher?
 - o Has this changed at all during COVID-19? If so how?
 - o Have you altered the services you provide as you've learned more about the local housing market? If so, how?

- Have there been any new housing assistance programs in the past year?

Implementation Progress

- How many referrals has your agency received from caseworkers or other referrers?
- How many referrals has your agency sent to the PHA?
 - o *(If not all referrals are sent to the PHA) Which referrals are not sent?*
 - o What are most common reasons they are not sent?
- How many of these referrals have made it through the application process? If not, what are the common reasons they have not completed the application process?
- How many applications have been denied by the PHA? What are the most common reasons for denials?

Implementation Challenges and Supports

- 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 with caseworkers adhering to the eligibility guidelines?
 - o Have you had any challenges screening families to meet the PHA voucher eligibility requirements?
 - o Have you had any challenges helping families during the application or voucher issuance process?
 - o Have you had any challenges helping families obtain 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?
 - o Have you had challenges providing services to families because you couldn't keep their case open long enough?
- 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?

Outcomes

- Have you had any challenges with families maintaining their voucher?
- What have been the biggest challenges in keeping families in housing?
 - o Have families lost their vouchers while your agency is providing services to them?
 - o Are there services that have helped families in housing?
 - Please specify which services.
 - How did these services help families stay in housing?
 - o Are there additional services that would help families in housing?
 - Please specify which services.
 - How would these services help families stay in housing?
- Do you think FUP achieve its goals? Are you able to keep families together and/or get families reunited with FUP?
 - o How long after signing a lease do families get reunified or have their case closed?
- Do you see FUP families come back to the attention of the child welfare agency due to new reports of child maltreatment??

- o How do you think the rates of re-reports compare with other families that are reunified or have their case closed?

Big Picture and Reflecting

- How does housing make a difference for these families?
- If you had the opportunity, what would you change to improve the FUP program?
 - o *Probe for 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?