

# HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

## Family Unification Program (FUP)

*Office of Housing Voucher Programs, Memphis Housing Authority*

*In Partnership with Community Alliance for the Homeless*

### **What is the Family Unification Program (FUP)?**

FUP is a program under which Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) are provided to:

1. Families for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in either:
  - a. The imminent placement of the family's child or children in out-of-home care.
  - b. The delay in the discharge of the child or children to the family from out-of-home care.

There is no time limitation on FUP family vouchers.

### **Families eligible for FUP will only be referred from within the Child Welfare System: Department of Children's Services (DCS)**

2. Youth at least 18 years old and not more than 24 years old who:
  - a. Left foster care at age 16 or older or will leave foster care within 90 days, in Accordance with a transition plan described in section 475(5)(H) of the Social Security Act; and
  - b. Are homeless; or
  - c. Are at risk of homelessness.

FUP vouchers used by youth are limited, by statute, to 36 months of housing assistance.

### **Youth eligible for FUP can be referred through the Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry System (CES) and/or from within DCS.**

**The housing choice voucher program** is the federal government's major program for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. The participant is free to choose any housing that meets the requirements of the program and is not limited to units located in subsidized housing projects. The participant that is issued a housing voucher is responsible for finding a suitable housing unit of the participant's choice where the owner agrees to rent under the program. This unit may include the participant's present residence. Rental units must meet minimum standards of health and safety, as determined by the public housing authority (PHA). A housing subsidy is paid to the landlord directly by the PHA on behalf of the participant. The participant then pays the difference between the actual rent charged by the landlord and the amount subsidized by the program.

## FUP Eligibility Requirements

For youth, the CES and DCS will certify that the youth is at least 18 years old and not more than 24 years old (has not reached his/her 25th birthday), that he/she left foster care at age 16 or older or will leave foster care within 90 days, and **is homeless or at risk of homelessness**. Please see the definitions section for further details.

## HCV Eligibility Requirements

MHA will admit only applicants who are qualified according to all the following criteria:

- Have income at or below HUD-specified income limits. [24 CFR Part 5, Subpart F](#)
- Provide documentation of Social Security numbers for all household members, or certify that they do not have Social Security numbers. [24 CFR Part 5, Subpart B](#)
- Qualify on the basis of citizenship or the eligible immigrant status of family members. [24 CFR Part 5, Subpart E](#)
- Fulfill all initial and on-going eligibility requirements.
- Are in compliance with MHA's criminal background policy as stated below.

Criminal Background Policy:  
[24 CFR 5.903](#); [24 CFR 5.905\(d\)](#)

MHA may conduct a criminal background check on all adult household members, 18 years of age or older, at new admission and adult additions to the household. MHA will prohibit admission to any applicant household member (1) who has ever been convicted of drug-related criminal activity for the manufacture or production of methamphetamine on the premises of federally assisted housing or (2) who is subject to a lifetime registration requirement under a State sex-offender registration program.

MHA will also deny admission and may terminate assistance under the following circumstances:

1. Any household member has been convicted of drug-related or violent criminal activity, within the past five (5) years.
2. Any household member has been convicted of non-violent criminal activities, within the past five (5) years that may threaten the health, safety or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents. A household member has a pattern of arrests for engaging in criminal activity within the past five (5) years. MHA has reasonable cause to believe that the household member's pattern of criminal activity may threaten the health or safety of the owner, property management staff or MHA employees or their contractors and agents. Arrest records will not be the sole reason for denial or termination of assistance.
3. MHA has reasonable cause to believe that a household member's use of illegal drugs or alcohol abuse may threaten the health, safety, or right to peaceful enjoyment of the premises by other residents or persons.
4. Households who fail to meet HUD's social security number disclosure and verification requirements.

5. A household member who has been identified as ineligible due to outstanding debt or termination of assistance as provided in HUD’s EIV verification system. In this case, HUD regulations regarding contesting EIV data will apply. Outstanding debts owed to MHA or other PHAs must be paid in full before admittance to the HCV program.

## How do I apply for FUP vouchers?

### To refer a youth who meets the above criteria:

1. Fill out the MHA FUP Voucher Application (Found on CAFTH.org)
2. Fill out the HUD-form 9886, Authorization for Release of Information (Found on CAFTH.org)
3. Please email both forms to our CoC Coordinator, Kirsten Hipkins; [Kirsten@cafth.org](mailto:Kirsten@cafth.org)
4. You must include a brief description of how you are certifying that the individual is homeless or at-risk of homelessness in your email.

Once a history of foster care involvement is confirmed with DCS, then the application will be turned into MHA. From there, MHA will email the referring agency of the applicant’s appointment time to fill out additional paperwork surrounding MHA eligibility criteria. MHA will then make the final eligibility determination.

\*Application procedures are expected to change slightly during implementation. Thank you for your patience and flexibility!

## Order of Priority

Once we are getting close to running out of available vouchers, an order of priority will be implemented. But for now, individuals/families who are eligible for a FUP HCV will be served on a first-come, first-serve basis.

## Definitions ([§24 CFR 576.2](#))

### A youth meets the definition of “**at risk of homelessness**” if the youth:

- (i) Has an annual income below 30 percent of median household income for the area, as determined by HUD;
- (ii) Does not have sufficient resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith based or other social networks, immediately available to prevent them from moving to an emergency shelter or another place described in paragraph (1) of the “homeless” definition in this section; and
- (iii) Meets one of the following conditions:
  - a. Has moved because of economic reasons two or more times during the 60 days immediately preceding the application for homelessness prevention assistance;
  - b. Is living in the home of another because of economic hardship;
  - c. Has been notified in writing that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated within 21 days after the date of application for assistance;

- d. Lives in a hotel or motel and the cost of the hotel or motel stay is not paid by charitable organizations or by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals;
- e. Lives in a single-room occupancy or efficiency apartment unit in which there reside more than two persons or lives in a larger housing unit in which there reside more than 1.5 persons reside per room, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau;
- f. Is exiting a publicly funded institution, or system of care (such as a healthcare facility, a mental health facility, foster care or other youth facility, or correction program or institution); or
- g. Otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness;

**A youth meets the definition of “homeless” if the youth:**

- (1) An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning:
  - (i) An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;
  - (ii) An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals); or
  - (iii) An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution;
- (2) An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:
  - (i) The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;
  - (ii) No subsequent residence has been identified; and
  - (iii) The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks, *e.g.*, family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, needed to obtain other permanent housing;
- (3) Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:
  - (i) Are defined as homeless under section 387 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5732a), section 637 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832), section 41403 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2), section 330(h) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b(h)), section 3 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012), section 17(b) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786(b)) or section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a);

- (ii) Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing at any time during the 60 days immediately preceding the date of application for homeless assistance;
  - (iii) Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the 60-day period immediately preceding the date of applying for homeless assistance; and
  - (iv) Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse (including neglect), the presence of a child or youth with a disability, or two or more barriers to employment, which include the lack of a high school degree or General Education Development (GED), illiteracy, low English proficiency, a history of incarceration or detention for criminal activity, and a history of unstable employment; or
- (4) Any individual or family who:
- (i) Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence;
  - (ii) Has no other residence; and
  - (iii) Lacks the resources or support networks, *e.g.*, family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, to obtain other permanent housing.