



HUD and FYI: Overcoming Barriers to Voucher Access

The Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) initiative provides on-demand Housing Choice Vouchers through Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) in partnership with public child welfare agencies to prevent and end homelessness for young adults under age 25 with a history of foster care.

These vouchers were youth-driven, and came to reality through support and partnership from HUD. From 2013 to 2020, Ohio foster care youth and alumni partnered with the National Center for Housing and Child Welfare—volunteering their time, fundraising locally, and traveling annually to Washington, D.C., to advocate for this provision. Since its launch, we have continued volunteering our time to provide critical technical assistance, support, training, articles, and webinars.

The First Lady's championing of this provision offers a historic opportunity to further streamline access to FYI vouchers for the foster youth they are intended to serve.

Three Recommendations:

1. Partner with the architects of this provision to design a What to Say When.

Ruth White's [article for The Imprint](#) encapsulates the harmful misinformation currently circulating in the field. Caring adults and the young people themselves are being told that vouchers are unavailable, that supply caps have run out, that federal funding is depleted, that local shortfalls create a barrier, and that youth must be already be experiencing homeless to be eligible. Falsehoods can only be dismantled with the truth. Any outdated FAQs must be completely replaced as soon as possible.

2. Maintain data transparency through the national dashboard. To sustain accountability and track progress, HUD must restore and commit to regular, public updates regarding national distribution of FYI vouchers. Previously, this vital information was publicly accessible through HUD's dedicated [HCV Dashboard](#) portal, but it has been removed. Transparency ensures that advocates, public housing authorities, and child welfare agencies can identify regional gaps, measure voucher utilization rates, and quickly spot where technical assistance is needed most. Keeping this data accessible is vital.

3. Include the authors of this provision in technical assistance. We care about the complications of federal contracts. However, the most effective trainings about this provision have come from those with lived experience. This maintains the sense of urgency and avoids potential conflicts of interest by other entities.