

FYI WEEKLY BRIEFING

INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES & LANDLORD RECRUITMENT

JUNE 1, 2021

NOON – 1:30 PM EST

** this webinar is being recorded

Today's Guests

April M. Curtis-Rivera

President, Foster Care Alumni of America
NCHCW Policy Fellow
Chicago, IL

Pamela Bress, Esq.

Founder & Executive Director
Ready for Life Brevard County, FL

Betsy Farmer

Director of Community Outreach
Housing Authority of Brevard County, FL

Betsy Cronin

Director of Early Childhood Housing Outreach
NCHCW
Branford, CT

Ruth White

Co-Founder & Executive Director
NCHCW
College Park, MD

TODAY'S AGENDA

- Introduction & Welcome
- FYI Update
- Discussion of Youth & Alumni Advocacy & Expectations
- The Brevard County FYI Team on Independent Living Services
- Landlord Recruitment Tips
- Questions**

**Questions are welcome throughout the event. Just drop them in the chat box.



WE ARE INFINITELY GRATEFUL TO HUD'S REGIONAL AND HQ STAFF FOR IMPLEMENTING FYI SO QUICKLY!

- You can vote for the HUD FYI Team for a “Peoples Choice Award” here: <https://servicetoamericamedals.org/peoples-choice-award/>



ABOUT ▾ HONOREES VOTE DONATE

MICHELLE DANIELS, CHARLES D. ELDRIDGE, RYAN E. JONES and the Office of Public and Indian Housing Foster Youth to Independence team

2021 FINALIST
MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE

Created an innovative program offering housing assistance and social services to young people aging out of foster care to prevent them from becoming homeless and to provide an opportunity for self-sufficiency.



WHAT IS THE FOSTER YOUTH TO INDEPENDENCE INITIATIVE?

- A synchronized distribution method for HUD's Family Unification Program for youth.
- Allows public child welfare agencies (PCWA) to order three-year Housing Choice Vouchers for youth that are timed properly with their independent living plan.
- FYI vouchers are predictable and allow youth and the professionals working with them to be planful and have a sense of the future.
- FYI makes vouchers available to youth who are aging out of foster care and at risk of homelessness or youth who aged out of foster care and are homeless or at risk. Youth must be between the ages of 18 – 24*.
- Requires that PCWAs form a partnership agreement with a public housing agency (PHA).
- Requires that PCWAs identify an entity within the community that can assure youth have access to supportive services designed to move youth to increasing independence if they need such services for the duration of the housing assistance.
- FYI is (or can be) available everywhere in the US.

WHAT IS THE LATEST ON FYI FUNDING AND POLICY?



- On Friday May 25, 2021, President Biden released his FY 2022 Budget Request to Congress. Pres. Biden requested \$25 million in new funding for the Family Unification Program (FUP).
 - The request breaks down FUP into three categories:
 - \$5 million in competitive funds for FUP vouchers for families
 - \$10 million in competitive funds for FUP vouchers for youth
 - \$10 million in non-competitive funds for FUP vouchers for youth to be distributed via the FYI funding mechanism
 - All vouchers recycle with a reallocation option if a PHA no longer needs vouchers.
- In July HUD will implement the Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities (the Turner-Bass/Brown-Grassley Bill) or “FSHO.”
 - FSHO is a major opportunity to close the racial wealth gap and improve economic independence for all youth leaving care

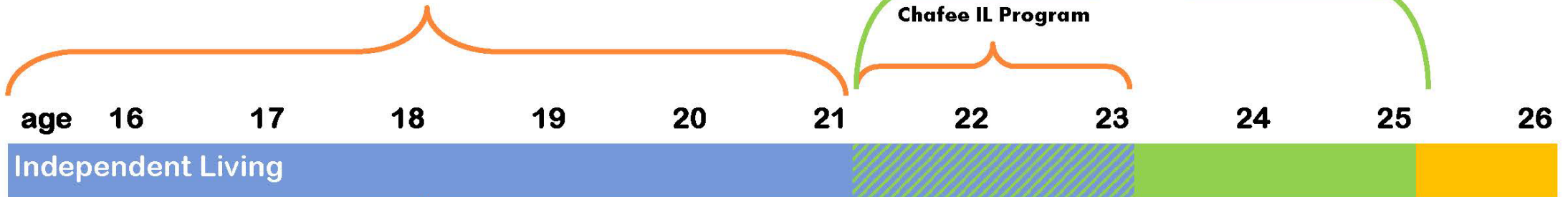
FOSTERING STABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES ACT

- Capitalizes on the predictable nature of youth homelessness
- Eliminates obvious systems gaps by synchronizing existing resources; specifically Title IV-E foster care funds & FUP + HUD's FUP-FSS demo.
- Elements of the bill:
 - Directs PHAs to issue 36-month FUP vouchers "On Demand" for the purpose of serving eligible youth timed with their emancipation from care.
 - PHAs are directed to offer FSS or an FSS-like program to all FUP youth for their consideration.
 - Young people who elect to participate in a self-sufficiency program may extend their voucher for an additional two years (for a total of five years).

Closing the Gaps Through Which Youth Fall Into Homelessness and Human Trafficking

Funding source for housing options for youth under the age of 21 should be drawn from state and federal child welfare funds. HUD funding must not supplant funds available for foster care placements.

Funding Source is Housing Choice Voucher



- Foster Care
- Kinship Care
- Host Homes
- Group Home
- Homelessness
- RHYA TLP
- Other RHYA
- Dual Juvenile Justice

In VPA states, Title IV-E can be used to extend foster care placements including rental assistance in private apartments, ongoing case management, and savings accounts. Per ACYF guidance, youth must work or go to school 80 hours per month to remain eligible.

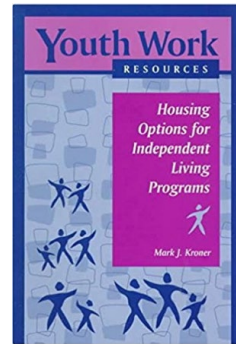
HCV for youth drawn from FUP or TPV, Title IV-E self sufficiency efforts are maintained. Chafee IL services continue through age 23 to assure youth's momentum towards self-sufficiency. All youth interested in FSS are offered spots when available at the PHA. Young people in non-FSS jurisdictions are connected to local CAP agency.

Chafee Independent Living Assistance can be used to support case management, job training, transportation assistance, emergency cash assistance for youth until the age of 23 per the Family First Act. Chafee does not have a work requirement. ETVs were extended to 26 per FFPSA as well.

For a youth transitioning to HCV, this funding can also be used for first month's rent, security deposit, furniture, moving costs, and landlord recruitment.

- Private apt
 - LIHTC
 - Permanent Supportive Housing
 - Roommate
 - Other subsidy
 - Adult Services
- ** the young person and the public system have had, at this point, potentially as many as ten years to plan for the transi-

A RICH HISTORY OF INDEPENDENT LIVING TOOLS AND TRAINING



*The child welfare field, and particularly social work, has been perfecting the approach to independent living services for over 30 years. The pre-eminent author of these tools with respect to housing stability is **Mark J. Kroner**.*

“Independent living without housing is like driver’s education without a car”



THE POWER OF THE ALUMNI VOICE IN POLICY MAKING

April Curtis-Rivera, NCHCW
Policy Fellow and President,
Foster Care Alumni of America

Foster Care Awareness Month



APRIL M. CURTIS RIVERA



Ready for Life
Brevard

Changing Lives Beyond Foster Care



THE FYI TEAM

PAMELA BRESS, READY FOR LIFE BREVARD COUNTY & BETSY FARMER, HOUSING AUTHORITY OF BREVARD COUNTY

After years of frustration, this attorney opened a center to help young adults aging out of foster care

Ready For Life Brevard assists with everything from housing to jobs and mental health



Tips for Landlord Recruitment

Finding landlords and keeping them happy



- **HUD’s Policy Development & Research Department has done some great work on landlord engagement. For an example see: <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Urban-Landlords-HCV-Program.pdf>**

“In the words of a young Cleveland landlord, Keith McAdam, the “right” tenants are those who ‘pay the rent relatively on time and call when stuff breaks. It’s really simple stuff like take out your trash, clean up your yard, you know?’”

“right” or “good” tenant by landlords in our sample. In the words of a young Cleveland landlord, Keith McAdam, the “right” tenants are those who “pay the rent relatively on time and call when stuff breaks. It’s really simple stuff, take out your trash, clean up your yard, you know?”


Landlords can list specific tools that they use to screen tenants such as criminal background, residential history, and credit checks, but most admit that finding the right tenant comes down to a gut feeling. When we observed respondents meeting with prospective tenants and debriefed afterward, their minds were nearly always made up before processing any of the official application paperwork. They based their opinion of a prospective tenant on how she dressed for the interview, whether or not she returned phone calls in a timely manner, how she parented her children, and the types of questions she asked (or did not ask) about the unit. In an extreme example, one landlord told us about his ‘pet’ theory: “The larger the dog, the worse the credit... Because if you think about it, anyone who has a large dog in a small apartment is irresponsible anyway.”

Although making important decisions about tenants based on shallow first impressions might seem like bad business, it comes from a place of necessity. Landlords have little formal official documentation from which to distinguish between applicants, and few poor tenants have good credit and unblemished rental histories. For landlords with properties in high poverty neighborhoods, waiting for a tenant with a slate of desirable attributes is not an option. Liam, a White man in his sixties who has owned property in Baltimore since the 1970s, explained that for a property in a disadvantaged neighborhood, “because of where it is located, if I can verify they have the resources to pay, and I know that their credit’s probably messed up, and they are willing to live in that neighborhood, I’ve got to rent to them.” The key for these properties, then, is to identify the “diamonds in the rough”—the tenant of limited means who will nonetheless pay rent every month and reside in the unit for years without complaint.

Liam shared a tool he finds especially useful for screening tenants. For him, the content of the credit report is far less informative than the tenant’s ability to provide the report in the first place.

A lot of time I make a tenant—an applicant—do something to prove to me that first of all they’re motivated, and second of all that they can do something. Because if they can’t do a simple task that I’m asking them to do, how can they do a bigger task of paying me the rent? So I might say that I would really like a look at your credit report, but I really don’t want your Social Security number.

Liam gives the prospective tenant a list of the websites from which they can access and print their own credit report for free, telling the tenant: “Here, you take care of this.” If the tenant fails to produce the report, Liam takes this as a signal of their inability to follow directions, which he



A nugget from p. 18

Liam shared a tool he finds especially useful for screening tenants. For him, the content of the credit report is far less informative than the tenant's ability to provide the report in the first place.

A lot of time I make a tenant—an applicant—do something to prove to me that first of all they're motivated, and second of all that they can do something. Because if they can't do a simple task that I'm asking them to do, how can they do a bigger task of paying me the rent? So I might say that I would really like a look at your credit report, but I really don't want your Social Security number.

Liam gives the prospective tenant a list of the websites from which they can access and print their own credit report for free, telling the tenant: "Here, you take care of this." If the tenant fails to produce the report, Liam takes this as a signal of their inability to follow directions, which he says does not bode well for the future. He claimed, "I'm not playing a trick, that's my way of

A few tips on increasing the pool

- Emphasize the selling points of your programming
 - FYI (Section 8) guarantees rent regardless of a tenant's income
 - Your history of success
 - The preparation & training youth receive on tenant responsibilities & finances
 - Services for FYI youth continue for the life of the voucher (there will always be someone to call)
 - Ability to fill vacancies quickly & reduce the owner's advertising costs
 - Share youth success stories
 - Some agencies offer premiums or enhanced payments to landlords to increase the pool*
- Host events, reward your landlords, and acknowledge great landlords with awards among their peers
- Include events with the Faith-Based community & child welfare donor community
- Don't forget to encourage youth to do their own housing search & prepare them well for it

Questions and Answers



Upcoming Weekly FYI Briefings

June 8, 2021 Noon EST

FSHO: A Pathway to Economic Success
([register](#))

Open Forum Fridays at 3:00 pm (EST)
visit www.nchcw.org to learn more