

Housing for Options for Youth: Planning, Predicting, and Securing a Platform for Economic Success

July 19, 2019



Ruth White
National Center for Housing
and Child Welfare

The National Center for Housing and Child Welfare (NCHCW)

2

- NCHCW links housing resources to child welfare agencies to improve family functioning, prevent family homelessness, safely reduce the need for out-of-home placement, and ensure that each young person who ages out foster care is able to access safe, decent, permanent housing.

Disclaimer

No amount of services or housing of any kind can replace the connection to a permanent, loving family in the life of a young person.

“Everyone is living in their parents’ basement”

- 1. More “youth” in their 20s and 30s are still at home than at any other time since the Great Depression.
- 2. Average age of total financial independence was 26 in 2000.
- 3. A majority of current college seniors are planning on moving back home after graduation.
- 4. Youth employment rate the lowest since 1940s.
- 5. Many traditional entry-level jobs are now overseas. Many entry-level jobs have no health insurance.
- 7. Americans, 25-26, still get an average of \$2,323 a year from parents. One out of 8 Americans is getting food stamps.

What can be done at the state level to address housing issues?

- Implement the Fostering Connections Act
- Housing must be a central feature of your state's independent living curriculum.
- Ensure that your child welfare system organizes a continuum of housing resources – a BI-DIRECTIONAL CONTINUUM.
- Build statewide partnerships to create a range of affordable housing opportunities.
- Tap new and unusual streams of funding.



Planning for successful transition to adulthood is now required by federal law

- The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351) (FCSA) **requires CW** to create a youth directed plan 90 days prior to discharge.
- This plan **MUST** include housing.
- Congratulations on your new state law, Pennsylvania!!!

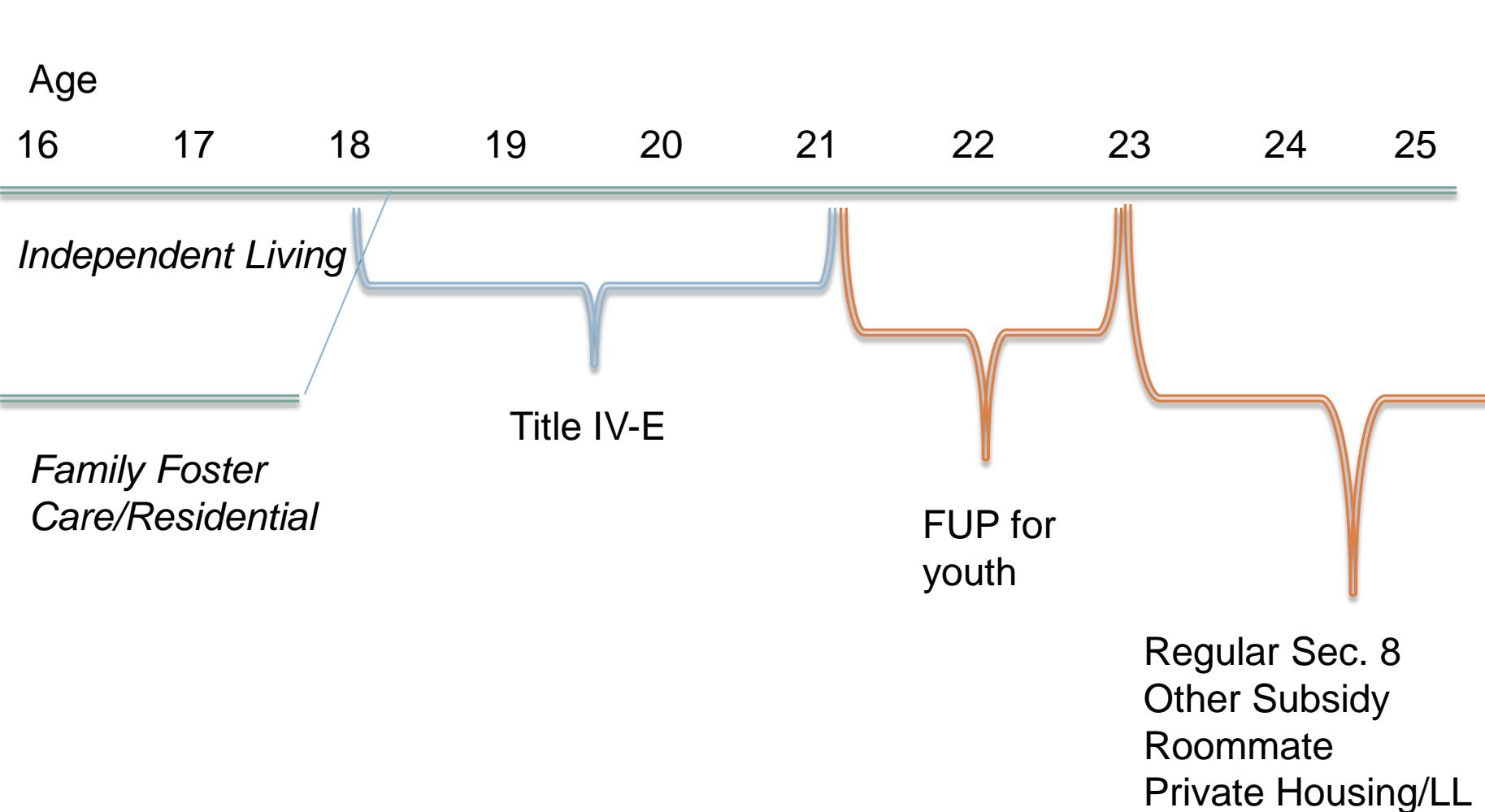


Funding for IL Housing Services

- The Chafee Act was amended to allow for up to 30% of state IL dollars to be used for room and board.
- The FCSA (P.L. 110-351) allows those states that TAKE THE OPTION to extend foster care to age 21 to draw down federal money to cover IL housing placements.
- Some states use IL money for first month's rent, security deposit, and furniture.



Knit funding streams together to maximize time for youth to achieve self-sufficiency



Using State CW Dollars Creatively

- The Illinois Department of Children and Families (DCFS) uses Chafee dollars to support its Youth Housing Assistance Program. The project provides housing advocacy and cash assistance services for youth at risk of becoming homeless who have already transitioned or are preparing to exit the foster care system and have not yet reached 21.
- Connecticut and California use a mix of child welfare and other state funding subsidize scattered site housing.

Leave no stone unturned when seeking housing resources

This is just a partial list of housing resources you can tap:

- Community Action Programs
- HOME
- Low Income Housing Tax Credit
- City and State housing funds, SHFAs
- Public Housing Authorities – Section 8 and PH
- Family Unification Program/FYI

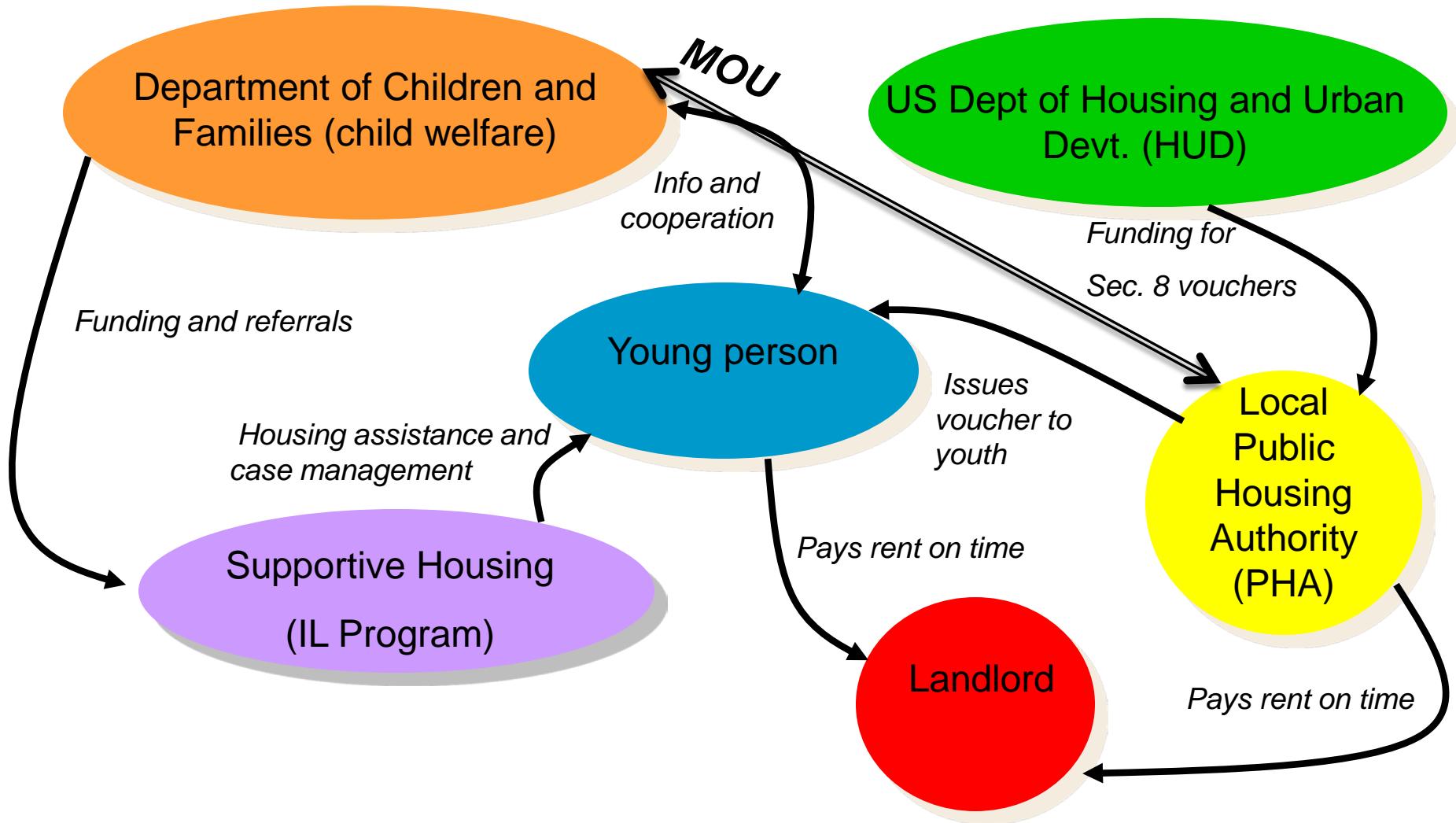
For more information about all of these and more please visit the National Low Income Housing Coalition's Advocates' Guide at <https://nlihc.org/explore-issues/publications-research/advocates-guide>

Partnerships with Public Housing

- Family Unification Program
- Priority Codes for Youth Leaving Care
- Housing Choice Vouchers
- Project Based Section 8



Agency Partnership



Making the Case...



- For the Community: it is the preferred option and it's cheaper: a 2004 cost benefit analysis showed that it costs Colorado \$53,655 to maintain one youth in the criminal justice system, but it only costs the state \$5,887 to provide housing and services.
- See *handout*

Colorado State Example

- The Colorado Family Unification Program (FUP) focuses on serving former foster care youth experiencing homelessness. In 2001, the Colorado Department of Human Services received 100 FUP vouchers.
- These Section 8 vouchers last for 18 months and are targeted specifically for youth ages 18–21 that leave foster care at age 16 or older with inadequate housing.
- Recently partnered with Mile High United Way to beef up case management. Through this partnership, youth have access to job training and IDAs!

City of Las Vegas PHA Example

- As a proactive measure, the Housing Authority of the City of Las Vegas created a local waitlist preference to ensure when its Housing Choice Voucher Wait list opens, the first 10 eligible foster youth through a referral system, receive vouchers.
- With the success of the first ten youth, we plan to increase this allocation each year.

State Housing Finance Agencies

- State-chartered authorities established to help meet the affordable housing needs of the residents of their states. Although they vary widely in characteristics such as their relationship to state government, most HFAs are independent entities that operate under the direction of a board of directors appointed by each state's governor.
- State Housing Agencies administer a number of housing funding streams, including HOME, Low Income Housing Tax Credit and some homeless funds.
- More can be learned about State Housing Agencies at www.ncsha.org.



HOME Program

- The Home Investment Partnership Program is a federal block grant that provides states with a flexible affordable housing funding stream. This money can be used to subsidize rent (best kept secret of HOME!)
- States receive 40% of HOME dollars.
- Florida and California are just a few examples of states where jurisdictions are using these funds to subsidize rent for youth leaving foster care.



Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program

The LIHTC was established in 1986 in order to encourage the construction and rehabilitation of rental housing affordable to low income households.

LIHTC offers a reduction in tax liability or credit to developers or owners for the first ten years.

These properties can be used for youth and often are, however there are some restrictions that affect foster youth.



FYI history

Foster Care Alumni have been working with Congress, HUD, & housing experts for years to get FSHO right



2000

Sen. Bond adds youth to FUP

FUP for families has been an eligible use of HUD's TPVs since 1990. Youth are added and eligible to receive time-limited (18 mo.) vouchers through FUP.



2013

Youth identify FUP synchronization problems

Few youth are referred to FUP because the vouchers are not timed with emancipation. Vouchers are also only available in limited areas of the U.S.



2014

HUD research confirms synchronization problems

PHAs & PCWAs report problems making FUP referrals due to the unpredictable nature of FUP voucher availability



2016

Rep. Leutkemeyer extends FUP to 3 yrs, Sen. Murray creates FUP-FSS Demo

Young people form the FSHO Coalition and begin devising a way to universalize FUP-FSS demo for their brothers & sisters in care



2019

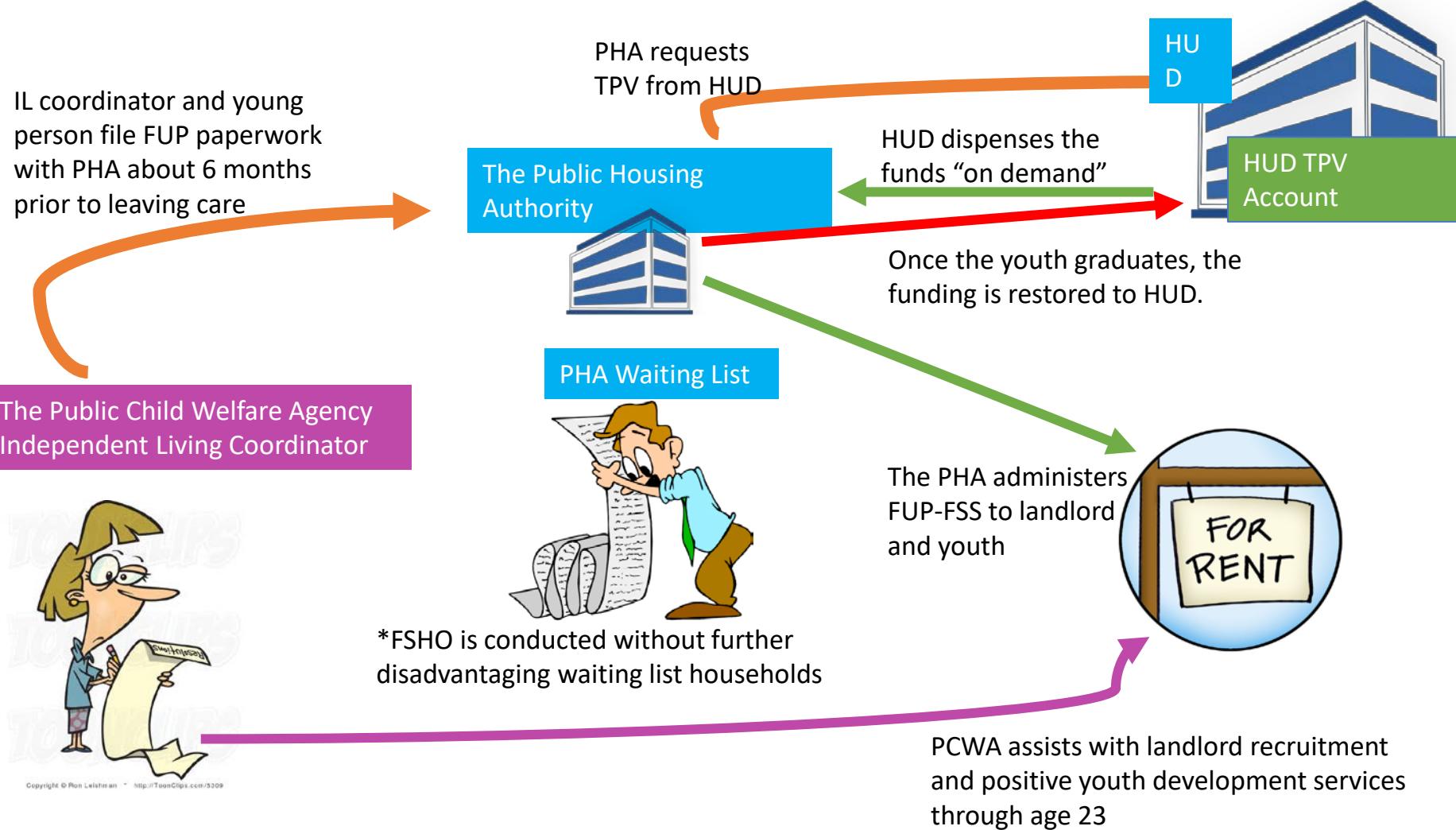
Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act

Reps. Turner & Bass, HUD & young people tap FUP TPV eligibility & the FUP-FSS Demo to universalize assistance for all youth leaving care

history

about





Partnerships with Public Housing

- Create a spread sheet of youth for forecasting
- Identify a point of contact at PCWA and the PHA
- Regular meetings
- Recruit landlords & other community members who want to help.
- Refer youth when they are ready to rent. This is NOT a “housing first” program in the way that CoCs describe them.



Example Client Log

Contact Information

Ruth White

National Center for Housing and Child Welfare

4707 Calvert Rd

College Park, MD 20740

301-699-0151

rwhite@nchcw.org

info@nchcw.org

www.nchcw.org