



# Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Initiative: Developing Data and Tracking Metrics

## Introduction to FYI

The Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) initiative makes Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) assistance available to Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) in partnership with Public Child Welfare Agencies (PCWAs). Under FYI, PHAs provide housing assistance on behalf of: Youth at least 18 years and not more than 24 years of age (have not reached their 25th birthday) who left foster care, 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 are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless at age 16 or older. FYI vouchers cannot exclude eligible youth with children or who are pregnant, consistent with the nondiscrimination requirements of the Fair Housing Act.

As required by statute, an FYI voucher issued to such a youth may only be used to provide housing assistance for the youth for a maximum of 36 months.<sup>1</sup> In addition to providing up to 36 months of rental assistance, youth must be provided supportive services to assist the young person on their path to self-sufficiency.

PHAs administer FYI in partnership with PCWAs who are responsible for identifying youth and certifying that they meet the FYI eligibility criteria listed above and referring them to the PHA for determination of eligibility for HCV assistance.<sup>2</sup> HUD awards FYI vouchers to PHAs through competitive and non-competitive processes. Under the FYI competitive program, a referral of a youth to FYI is triggered when the PHA notifies the PCWA of voucher availability. PCWAs must provide referral(s) for the available vouchers within 30 working days of being notified by the PHA of voucher availability. PCWAs and PHAs should be communicating regularly about the availability of FYI vouchers. In the non-competitive program, the PCWA will make the referral of a youth to the PHA first. The PHA will then apply to HUD for the voucher(s) and HUD will review applications in the order received. The application process requires specific partnerships and roles, as documented in a formal partnership agreement between a PHA and PCWA. The PHA is also encouraged to partner with the local Continuum of Care (CoC) to help identify eligible youth not in the PCWA's caseload. Youth use the FYI vouchers to lease decent, safe, and sanitary housing in local communities. PHAs may provide FYI as tenant-based and/or project-based housing voucher assistance.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities (FSHO) amendments (Section 103 of Division Q of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Pub. L. 116-260)) provides FYI youth with an extension of the 36-month time limit for up to an additional 24 months if they meet certain requirements. FSHO applies to FYI youth who first leased or leases a unit after the date of enactment of FSHO, December 27, 2020. HUD published an FSHO implementation notice in the Federal Register on January 24, 2022 (87 FR 3570). <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/01/24/2022-01285/implementation-of-the-fostering-stable-housing-opportunities-amendments>

<sup>2</sup> Notice PIH 2023-04 provides more details on the roles and responsibilities of the PCWAs. Notice PIH 2023-04 is accessible at the following link: <https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/2023PIH04.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> All FYI vouchers can be project-based except FYI TPVs awarded under Notice PIH 2019-20.

A tenant-based FYI voucher is assigned to an eligible youth and can transfer with the tenant as they move to a qualified housing unit. A project-based FYI voucher is committed to units within specific housing developments to serve eligible households that move into the units with project-based vouchers.

The purpose of this document is to provide information and insights on how to identify and leverage data and metrics to understand community needs, implement the FYI program, track progress and define success.

## Why Is Data Valuable to the FYI Program?

Data is valuable because it is a tracking measure that captures themes and patterns embedded in the lived experiences of child welfare-involved youth. Through consistent and thorough data collection efforts, data analysis, and culturally inclusive interpretation methods, service providers and community leaders can better understand the specific needs of youth with previous foster care involvement. Data is a powerful tool and can be used as a bridge to build authentic and sustainable partnerships with community members with lived experience of the foster care system. Data can help determine the amount of resources needed to implement FYI, identify needs and gaps especially for marginalized populations, help define what successful implementation of FYI looks like for any community, and be used to enhance local FYI program policies to better advocate for the needs and rights of program participants.

High-quality data arms professionals working in the sector with information needed to identify young people with a history of child welfare involvement who are at risk of homelessness, as well as support those exiting homelessness on their path to self-sufficiency. The PHA, the PCWA and the CoC can provide and/or use data to implement or maintain an FYI program by:

- Identifying the current status of FYI-eligible youth in the region.
- Demonstrating successes and identifying challenges in the existing FYI program.
- Serving as a source of information to demonstrate needs.
- Helping policymakers decide where to direct resources.

## Leveraging Data for FYI Implementation

First, it is important to understand what conditions youth experiencing homelessness face in a local context. Essential data for communities who intend to implement FYI include the number of FYI-eligible youth in the community who are involved with child welfare agencies, the number of FYI-eligible youth who are no longer involved with child welfare agencies (e.g., youth who left foster care and are now homeless or at risk of becoming homeless), and existing housing capacity and expected allocations and turnover of housing resources. For the Competitive FYI funding opportunity, HUD requires a statement citing the aforementioned data to demonstrate a need for FYI vouchers within the PHA jurisdiction.

### Potential Data Sources to Estimate FYI Need:

- Public Housing Authority waiting list
- Public Child Welfare Agency administrative data
- [National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect](#)

- [Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System \(SACWIS\) / Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System \(CCWIS\)](#)
- [Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System \(AFCARS\)](#)
- [National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System \(NCANDS\)](#)
- [National Youth in Transition Database](#)
- [CoC, HMIS & Point in Time \(PIT\) count](#)
- [CSH National Supportive Housing Needs Assessment](#)
- Research institutions, university partners, state/county data warehouse, etc.
- Child welfare agency case review of open cases to assess general prevalence of risk factors
- Local survey data
- [Education system annual homeless count data](#)

### Data Sharing

FYI requires youth to be provided supportive services beyond housing, which presents an opportunity for PHAs and PCWAs to access and leverage data in other service systems, such as education, justice, and healthcare. When systems share information, they can more effectively and efficiently address the needs of youth and assist them in achieving housing stability and other personal wellness goals. While privacy and confidentiality remain urgent priorities in child and family systems, data-sharing provides continuity in housing assistance and other supportive services that aid in preventing homelessness.

Understanding which data constitutes a data-sharing agreement and which data can be shared without an agreement helps navigate these challenges. For example, a data-sharing agreement is not needed to share aggregate data, which can be used to conclude the determined need for an FYI voucher request. Following the program’s implementation, develop a data-sharing agreement that allows partners and stakeholders to share information about eligible participants. Partnering organizations can document provisions for sharing in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which can be explored further in the webinar [FYI Initiative Webinar Series: Partnership Development and Maintenance - HUD Exchange](#). If a data-sharing agreement is customized, it should include what data is being shared, the secure method by which it is being exchanged, as well as agreed-upon practices for sharing. The [Administration for Children and Families Data Sharing Toolkit](#) outlines child welfare data-sharing procedures. The toolkit addresses data sharing specifically between courts and child welfare agencies, but sample agreements provided can serve as a template for PHAs and PCWAs.

### Data Elements to Understand the Needs of FYI-Eligible Youth

Data sources and data elements can also assist with developing a more in-depth reflection of FYI-eligible youth needs, informing housing assistance needs as well as matching supportive services that align with their path to self-sufficiency. Given the FYI requirement to offer supportive services, data elements, such as household income sources, housing status, and length of time in the child welfare system, may be factors to consider in determining what supportive services to offer to program participants. A more in-depth analysis may be achieved by reviewing case files. Using a standardized tool, such as a spreadsheet, to identify critical information about potential FYI-eligible case files may streamline identifying and prioritizing needs. Below are factors to consider in determining need based on case file review:

- Housing stability history

- Current housing status/stability
- Current housing livability/safety
- Months placed out of home
- Youth foster care transition/exit date
- Involvement/history related to the justice system, domestic violence, chronic health/behavioral health conditions

Together, the local PHAs, PCWAs, and other community partners working with FYI-eligible youth can collaborate to review the data and identify the exact needs of the FYI voucher recipients. Doing so will improve immediate outcomes such as successful lease-up, the provision of culturally competent supportive services and a reduction in the number of terminations from the program.

## Logic Model to Track Metrics and CQI<sup>4</sup>

Without context and action, data has little meaning. Many communities have collected data in the past but do not know how to apply it to effect change. The logic model below is a visual illustration of how a program intends to achieve a goal or solve a problem and what resources are required. It provides a framework for leveraging data, helps keep partners and stakeholders on the same page, and is crucial for transforming data into strategic action. A logic model visually depicts the relationship between a program’s investment, the impact the program has on the community, and the data needed to facilitate that impact. Programs can use logic models to map out assets, resources, activities, and partnerships needed to collectively solve an issue.

### Logic Model Template

**Problem:** What is the goal, problem, or situation being addressed?

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes		Impact
Resources and Capacity	Actions and Activities	Participants	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes	Intended Impact
What does your program invest?  How much time, planning efforts, expertise, money, materials, equipment, etc. does your program need to invest to make this happen?	What action steps and activities need to be implemented?  What does your program need to plan, develop, create, launch, facilitate and/or complete in order to make this happen?	Who does your program intend to reach?  Who are the existing contributors and partners in this process?  Who will be impacted by this initiative?	What changes do you expect to see immediately after the activities and actions have been completed?	What changes do you expect to see down the road?	How will you know when you’ve resolved the problem?  What does your community look like after this work is done?

Planned Efforts

Intended Results

<sup>4</sup> Children’s Data Network. (2019). [Child Protection Involvement Among Homeless Families Accessing Services from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority \(LAHSA\)](#)

At the top is a section to clearly state the goal, problem, or situation being addressed. The four primary categories include inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact. Inputs are what resources and capacity the organization can invest in addressing the situation.

### **Problem Statement/Determining Need**

The overarching problem FYI exists to address is that a disproportionate number of youths with prior foster care involvement experience homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless. Each community should use data (as mentioned on page 2 above) to determine if the problem exists, and to what extent, within that community, and in turn, the need for FYI.

### **Inputs**

Once a community has determined the need for FYI, partnering agencies must assess resources and capacity to implement the FYI program effectively. In addition to trained staff, allotted time, adequate funding, and strategic partnerships, organizations should also assess the housing stock. Make sure suitable units are available in the community for those who do qualify. Some potential data sources that can contribute to estimating existing housing resources are:

- Public Housing Authority reports on voucher allocations, turnover, and utilization rates
- PHA landlord inventory listings or other community survey data

### **Outputs**

Outputs are the action steps and activities that the organization will facilitate, as well as the participants involved in those action steps. Developing these tracking metrics will help assess the impact of the FYI program and policies, pinpoint gaps in service, and can be particularly useful when assessing factors in racial inequities in the community. Potential output data sources may include the number of vouchers successfully leased up, success rate for FYI vouchers, the number of youths who do not successfully lease-up an FYI voucher, the number of youths accessing various types of supportive services and more.

### **Outcomes**

Outcomes are the resulting short- and long-term changes expected from the inputs and outputs. Outputs and outcomes are opportunities for FYI administrators, community leaders, and supportive service providers to collaborate on a unified vision for the program. A highly recommended activity is for partners to share and discuss and to also identify common goals and indicators that can be used to understand the impact services are having on youth. Partnerships should identify data metrics that can be tracked for performance feedback and periodic assessment of program progress that can be used to modify the program, as necessary. Potential metrics that partnering agencies can leverage to assess outcome may include the number of FYI voucher holders obtaining jobs with living wages, enrolling in or completing postsecondary education, leaving the program and do not need an HCV or other housing support after 36 months (or any FSHO extension), or qualitative data gathered from case workers or during exit interviews with FYI youth, etc.

## Impact

The intended impact is a statement that reflects the big picture. What are the indicators that a program has succeeded? That vision can be developed by partnering with current FYI-eligible youth, former FYI program participants, and other impacted parties so that lived expertise leads this modeling process.

After partnering agencies have completed a logic model, compiled and reviewed FYI-eligible youth data, identified community resources and capacity (input), developed action steps, and identified participants (output), they will be best positioned to identify the appropriate resources to meet the needs of the FYI program participants.

### Example of Data Utilization to Monitor Milestones

One community in Illinois has established regular quarterly meetings between the housing authorities that administer FYI, the Department of Children & Family Services, and youth housing advocates to examine quantitative and qualitative data regarding their clients and improve outcomes.

These quarterly meetings are centered around whether clients have met collectively agreed-upon milestones and are grouped by “pre-move in” and “post-move in”. These include:

- \* Pre-Move In: time between referral, application, briefing, unit inspection, unit approval, and move-in date.
- \* Post-Move In: increases in income, time until voucher expires, time until 23rd birthday (this is when clients can be referred to another state program that assists youth until they turn 30)

While most of the quantitative milestones are contained in the spreadsheet, qualitative data, such as the youth’s search for housing, their experience a few months after they move in, additional resources available based on client eligibility, or other challenges are also discussed during the meeting. By collecting and discussing both qualitative and quantitative data, the community can analyze how to best meet the needs of their clients to ensure housing placement and stability.

## Data to Help Target Resources

Limited housing and supportive services pose a historical and current limitation for many PHAs operating FYI. To overcome these challenges, communities are increasingly embracing community partnerships and equitable data-informed approaches to garner services and funding to meet the needs of the youth.

HUD requires a PHA and a PCWA to enter into an agreement before a PHA can request FYI voucher allocations from HUD. Including additional community partners such as the State, schools, faith-based organizations, CoC, and CoC recipients is encouraged to enhance data sharing and evaluation and access and coordination of mainstream and community-based support services. Under the FYI non-competitive process, the partnership agreement can be a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or letters of intent between the parties.<sup>5</sup> See the *FYI MOU* Topic Guide for more information on this process.

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<sup>5</sup> FYI Notice PIH 2023-04 <https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/OCHCO/documents/2023-04pihn.pdf>

After partnerships have been formed and needs are determined, communities are encouraged to work with partners to look for gaps in resources and capacity in terms of service provision, data collection, or staff capacity. This can be done by leveraging the logic model framework to address barriers in the inputs section. Then, the community can develop specific goals, actionable steps, and delegate responsibility to close them. Consider whether concerted resource targeting is needed and include a plan for ongoing staffing, funding, or collaboration as applicable to fill the gap.

Indicators such as those listed below can be used as tracking metrics and should be analyzed across various subpopulations (race, ethnicity, gender, etc.) to ensure disparities are not present:

- Housing stability
  - Days homeless/unstable housing
  - Housing inspections, rent payments, lease violations, evictions and transitions
- Youth well-being
  - Mental health symptoms, employment, education, physical health, financial management, economic security, healthy relationships, social behavior
  - Community safety and incidents of domestic violence
- Service engagement
  - Frequency/intensity of services like case management, mental health, substance use, parenting assistance, youth development, etc.
- Outcomes
  - Time to housing (between referral and placement)
  - Rates of exits to permanent housing situations when exiting the program
  - Rates of recidivism (requires data sharing)

Data collection and analysis should be ongoing beyond the initial point of starting the FYI program. Longitudinal evaluation methods that track program strengths and weaknesses can highlight areas of improvement and systemic inequities and, over time, increase the likelihood of favorable program outcomes. This can be done by compiling the data sources mentioned throughout this guide, over an established length of time to measure trends in the data. Apply the data collected in determining needs to identify, build, and sustain additional partnerships that can supplement input efforts by providing time, labor, funds, space, materials, and/or expertise needed to build capacity for FYI in the community.

## FYI Youth - Language Awareness

What and how language is used when communicating data to other community partners and stakeholders is influential in acquiring resources. Data can provide an accurate reflection of FYI-eligible youth needs by representing the conditions that FYI-eligible youth face. It is especially important to practice language awareness while reviewing and conveying information about FYI-eligible youths' potential involvement in the justice system, domestic violence, mental unwellness, or disability status. There are limited instances where PHAs must deny admission solely based on criminal history. Additionally, parenting and pregnant youth who meet the program requirements are still eligible for FYI vouchers. Even if these conditions do not disqualify youth, the narratives formed around their history can impact perceptions regarding housing programs and landlord participation. Be mindful of implicit or explicit biases, as they influence how the youth engage with FYI supportive services and how housing programs and communities perceive program participants.

## Resources

- HUD Webpage for Foster Youth to Independence  
[https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/hcv/fyi](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/fyi)
- HUD Webpage for Family Unification Program  
[https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/hcv/family](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/family)
- Family Unification Program (FUP): Developing Data and Tracking Metrics Topic Guide (forthcoming)
- FYI Initiative Webinar Series: Data Analytics  
<https://www.hudexchange.info/trainings/courses/fyi-initiative-webinar-series-data-analytics1/>
- ACF Data-Sharing Toolkit  
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/training-technical-assistance/data-sharing-courts-and-child-welfare-agencies>
- Criteria and Benchmarks for Achieving the Goal of Ending Youth Homelessness. (2018). United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH).  
<https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/criteria-and-benchmarks-for-ending-youthhomelessness/>
- Navigating Homelessness and Housing Needs Data: Tailoring and Driving Local Solutions. (2020) United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH).  
[https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset\\_library/Navigating-Homelessness-HousingNeeds-Data-2020-update.pdf](https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Navigating-Homelessness-HousingNeeds-Data-2020-update.pdf)
- Cross Systems Data to Support Outcomes Focused Financing: Critical data elements to use in planning. CSH. Social Innovation Fund, Corporation for National and Community Service.  
[https://d155kunxf1aozz.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/OutcomesFocusedSH\\_CrossSystemDataElements.pdf](https://d155kunxf1aozz.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/OutcomesFocusedSH_CrossSystemDataElements.pdf)
- Change and Implementation in Practice. Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative: Capacity Building Center for States.  
<https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/cqi/changeimplementation/>
- Harnessing Cross Systems Data to Keep Families Together. One Roof, CSH. (2021)  
<https://www.csh.org/resources/harnessing-cross-systems-data-to-keep-families-together/>
- System Performance Measures web link:  
<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/system-performance-measures/#guidance>



- HDIS web link: <https://bcsh.ca.gov/calich/hdis.html>
- FYI web page link:  
[https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/public\\_indian\\_housing/programs/hcv/fyi](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/fyi)
- James Bell Associates. (2018). Guide to Data-Driven Decision Making: Using Data to Inform Practice and Policy Decisions in Child Welfare Organizations. Washington, DC: Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.  
<https://www.jbassoc.com/resource/guide-data-driven-decision-making-using-data-informpractice-policy-decisions-child-welfare-organizations/>
- CCWIS Final Rule Overview Presentation. (June 2016). Washington, DC: Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.  
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/training-technical-assistance/ccwis-final-rule-overviewpresentation>

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## Appendix

### Sample Assessment of Need Tool

- A. This tool can be used to analyze and project FYI voucher annual need, including planning for potential funding opportunities for new vouchers, and as an annual activity for FYI partners operating existing programs to monitor and adjust to FYI voucher needs/allocations across youth populations within the PHA’s jurisdiction not being met through existing programs.

#	Eligible Population Need Category	Anticipated Eligible Population over 12months	Existing resources anticipated as available over 12-months	FYI Vouchers unmet need anticipated over 12months	Data Source(s)	Methodological tips and considerations
1	FYI eligible youth in the community on the PCWA's active caseload.	[enter total # of anticipated eligible youth]	[enter total # of anticipated housing resources to be available]	[enter total # of vouchers needed for this population]	[enter sources of data used]	Consider PCWA and CoC data; Include extended foster care, Chafee and Education and Training Voucher data, Youth provider surveys; NYTD survey; PHA waitlist data.
2	FYI eligible youth no longer on PCWA active caseload (left foster care; now homeless/at risk).	[enter total # of anticipated eligible youth]	[enter total # of anticipated housing resources to be available]	[enter total # of vouchers needed for this population]	[enter sources of data used]	
		<b>Total Eligible</b>	<b>Total Non-FYI</b>	<b>Total Need</b>		
3	Totals	[enter total of lines 1 to 2]	[enter total of lines 1 to 2]	[enter total of lines 1 to 2]		

B. This blank FYI Logic Model template can be used to supplement this guide, assisting with communities to brainstorm the implementation or the improvement of the FYI program.

## FYI Logic Model Template

Problem:

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes		Impact
Resources and Capacity	Actions and Activities	Participants	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes	Intended Impact

Planned Efforts

Intended Results