

An Overview of FYI/FUP Vouchers

A Resource for Current and Former Foster Youth in California

What is a housing voucher?

A housing voucher (also sometimes called a Housing Choice Voucher or “Section 8” Voucher) is money that is paid directly to a landlord by the Housing Authority to help pay an individual’s rent. Usually the amount of the voucher covers most of the rent and the individual pays a small amount to make up the difference. Landlords must agree to take a voucher. There are many types of housing vouchers. This resource focuses on a type of housing voucher that was designed to assist young people with experience in foster care, including youth who were placed in foster care by the juvenile justice court.

What is an FYI or FUP voucher?

FYI stands for the Foster Youth to Independence Program and FUP stands for the Family Unification Program. These are programs that provide a type of housing voucher for young people who are leaving or have left foster care. These programs are a collaboration between child welfare agencies (including juvenile probation departments) and housing authorities in a county and require that they work together to support young people. FYI and FUP were designed by young people who were in foster care and experienced homelessness after leaving care. The advocacy needed to create the FYI and FUP programs was led by the youth advocacy group [ACTION Ohio](#). Currently the FYI and FUP programs provide housing vouchers for young people with experience in foster care and the option to receive support services.

What are the eligibility requirements for an FYI or FUP voucher?

In order to be eligible for FYI/FUP, you must meet all of the following three criteria:

1. Be at least 18 and no more than 24 years old¹;
2. Have left foster care or will leave foster care in the next 90 days²;
3. Be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless at the age of 16 or older.

Do young adults receive any support services as part of the FYI or FUP program?

In addition to receiving assistance with your rent, the child welfare agency must provide or arrange for support services to help you maintain your housing and meet your goals. These services are voluntary. Support services can be very helpful and should respond to any needs and goals you identify. Examples

¹ A young person must be at least 18 and no more than 24 years old to receive the voucher. Once they receive the voucher they may use it past their 25th birthday.

² Note: a youth can be placed in foster care through the child welfare system (dependency court) or through the juvenile justice system (delinquency court). Youth who were placed in foster care by the delinquency court do not have to be dually involved or dual status with the dependency court to qualify for a FYI or FUP Voucher. To qualify for FYI/FUP, what matters is that the youth was placed in foster care by either court, and have exited, or will exit, foster care within 90 days, in accordance with a transition plan. This issue is complicated, and important, so reach out to YLC at info@ylc.org with any questions.

include: help with employment or school, getting connected with mental health services, or financial management support.

What is the process for getting a FYI or FUP voucher?

You should ask your social worker, juvenile probation officer, or your Independent Living Program (ILP) Worker (if you have one) to refer you for a voucher. They should be the ones to refer you to the Public Housing Authority to get a voucher. If you don't have a current caseworker, you can contact your prior social worker or probation officer, or your county's ILP coordinator (statewide list available [here](#)).

When can I ask to be referred for a FYI or FUP voucher?

If you are still in foster care or extended foster care, a request can be made on your behalf within 90 days of you leaving foster care. This process should be a part of your "transition planning." If you are out of foster care and under age 25, you can apply at any time. To start the process, you can reach out to the ILP coordinator (statewide list above).

What do I do if I ask to be referred for a FYI or FUP voucher and no action is taken?

If you have asked your caseworker and/or dependency attorney or juvenile defender (if you have one) but nothing has happened, you will likely need help from a legal aid attorney. Here is a [website](#) where you can find your local legal aid attorneys.

Can I live with family members if I have a voucher? What about a roommate?

While using a FYI or FUP voucher, you can share a unit with other people who have any Housing Choice Voucher (not just FYI/FUP) or people who don't have any housing assistance. For example, you could get a two-bedroom apartment with a friend who also has an FYI voucher. Once you have an FYI/FUP voucher, you are treated in the same way as any other voucher holder. This means that any rules that apply to general vouchers in the county, apply to you as well. For example, if your local Public Housing Authority would allow a family member to be added to a regular Housing Choice Voucher, they could also allow them to be added to your FYI or FUP voucher. If you are interested in living with other people, ask your caseworker about your specific situation.

Are parenting young people eligible for a voucher?

Yes. If you are a parenting young person you are eligible for both FYI and FUP (as long as you meet the other requirements). In that case, you may apply for the FYI/FUP voucher with your child or children and live with them.

How long can I use the voucher?

FYI/FUP is typically a 3 year voucher but can be extended for up to 2 additional years through the [Family Self-Sufficiency Program](#). You can also use the voucher after your 25th birthday so long as you were found eligible for the program before age 25 and have signed your payment contract with the Housing Authority before age 25. The Housing Authority should provide you information about options, but you should ask about the option to extend your voucher two more years if no one mentions it to you.

What do I do after the voucher ends?

Your housing caseworker should work with you to make sure you keep the FYI/FUP voucher for as long as possible and then help you find long-term stable and safe housing after your time in the program is up. You may be able to convert your FYI/FUP voucher into a different type of Housing Choice Voucher. You may even be able to convert your voucher and stay in your same unit!