

HUD provides 2,500 housing vouchers to keep families together

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WASHINGTON - The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced today that it is awarding 2,500 rental assistance vouchers to 37 public housing authorities across the U.S. to reunite more than 7,500 children with their parents. The children are currently in foster care.

"As a father of two sons, I can't imagine the pain parents must feel when their family is separated because of the lack of affordable housing," said HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan. "I am pleased to announce these vouchers will allow thousands of children to live with their families."

HUD is providing nearly \$20 million in funding through its [Family Unification Program \(FUP\)](#), which provides Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) rental assistance to families whose lack of adequate housing is a primary cause of parents being separated or near separation from their children. In addition, approximately 20 percent of these vouchers will help provide stable housing for about 1,500 young adults (ages 18-22) who have "aged-out" of the foster care system.

These vouchers, like regular Housing Choice Vouchers, allow a family to rent housing from a private landlord and generally pay 30 percent of the family's monthly adjusted gross income towards rent and utilities.

According to statistics gathered by the National Center for Housing and Child Welfare (NCHCW), an affordable housing/child welfare advocacy group, keeping children in foster care is an expensive alternative to affordable housing. On average, it costs more than \$48,000 annually per family when children enter foster care. By contrast, housing and services to keep a family together costs approximately \$15,000 annually. Supportive services for FUP families and youth are provided by agencies funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This \$20 million investment in FUP vouchers will save more than \$134 million in foster care costs.

"We appreciate Secretary Donovan for recognizing the critical role that stable housing plays in keeping families together and safe," said Ruth White, Executive Director of NCHCW. "FUP will foster the kind of interagency collaboration necessary to prevent homelessness among families and youth making the transition to adulthood from foster care."

Housing authorities that are awarded the vouchers work closely with local public welfare

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agencies to identify youth at risk of homelessness and families for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary reason the family's children are in, or must be placed in, foster care.