

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING - FAMILY UNIFICATION PROGRAM

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was created on July 19, 2018 by the below parties in relation to their application. The initial term of this MOU was from March 1, 2019 through March 1, 2021 and is renewed through March 1, 2024. This MOU will be renewed for additional time periods as specified in the renewal MOUs for as long as HUD continues to fund the program.

PHA: (CA084) Community Development Commission of Mendocino County, Housing
Authority
1076 N. State Street
Ukiah, CA 95482

PCWA: Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency
Family & Children's Services
P.O. Box 839
Ukiah, CA 95482

CoC: (CA-509) Mendocino County Homeless Services Continuum of Care
C/O Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency
Adult and Aging Services
747 S. State Street
Ukiah, CA 95482

I. Introduction and Goals

- a. The Family and Children's Services (FCS) division of the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), administers the provision of child welfare services for the entire County as the Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA) and is responsible under applicable State law for determining that:
1. A child is at imminent risk of placement in out-of-home care, or that a child in out-of-home care and under the supervision of the public agency, may be returned to his or her family; or
 2. A youth is at least 18 years and not more than 24 years of age (has 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 is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless at age 16 or older.

In the administration of child welfare services, FCS will identify and certify families and youth that qualify for the FUP, will refer these households to the CDC, and the FCS will provide housing search and retention assistance for these households for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in the imminent placement of the family's child in out-of-home care, or in the delay of discharge of the child to

the family from out-of-home care. As defined in the Family Unification Program Notice of Funding Availability for Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018 FR-6100-N-41, lack of adequate housing is a situation in which a family or youth is living in dilapidated housing; homeless; living in an overcrowded unit, living in a unit where a household member has certain characteristics (i.e., conviction for certain criminal activities) that would result in the imminent placement of the family's child or delay the return of the child home; or living in housing not accessible to its disabled child due to the nature of the disability. Substandard housing is a unit that does not have operable indoor plumbing; a usable flush toilet inside the unit for the exclusive use of a family or youth; a usable bathtub or shower inside the unit for the exclusive use of a family or youth; electricity or has inadequate or unsafe electrical service; safe or adequate source of heat; a kitchen; declared unfit for habitation, endangers the health, safety, or well-being of the family or youth; and/or has a sufficient number of defects that it requires considerable repair or rebuilding.

The CDC will determine eligibility of these households for Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance. The Housing Choice Voucher Program is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and administered by the Community Development Commission (CDC), which is the Public Housing Authority (PHA) in Mendocino County. Under the Housing Choice Voucher Program, monthly rental assistance payments are made to property owners who rent qualified rental units pursuant to the provisions of Section 8 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937 (hereinafter "Section 8").

To facilitate assistance to those identified as eligible for the Family Unification Program, FCS and CDC are committed to collaborating in the administration of the FUP. This collaboration will include meetings between front line staff, (those working directly with households identified at both the PCWA and the PHA).

These meetings will be a case conference, where issues are identified and solutions are discussed and implemented in order to maximize success of these households in re-unification of families as well as locating and maintaining housing.

- b. The Mendocino County Homeless Services Continuum of Care (CoC) is committed to cooperating with and assisting the PHA and PCWA in the administration of the FUP, including integrating the prioritization and referral process for FUP-eligible youth into the local CoC's coordinated entry process.
- c. The PHA and PCWA's goals and standards of success in administering the program are to assist up to 35 eligible FUP families and youth with housing vouchers.
 1. It is the goal of the PHA and the PCWA to issue and house 90% of households referred for the Family Unification Program Housing Choice Vouchers in the 12 months following award.
 2. It is the goal of the PHA and the PCWA that 85% of households housed will remain housed for at least 12 months. Of those in the re-unification process, 85% of these households will successfully re-unify with their

children. Of those FUP eligible youth, 75% will remain successfully housed for at least 12 months.

3. Once a household is housed and their involvement with the PCWA has ended (successfully reuniting children or aging out of eligible TAY foster care services), it is anticipated that, if funding is available, these households would "graduate" to a regular Housing Choice Voucher in order to free up the FUP voucher for another eligible household. A minimum of 12 months of being stably housed will be required, as will a recommendation from the PCWA to the PHA regarding "graduation" to a regular Housing Choice Voucher. This process will be included in the administrative plan and may limit how many each year are offered a regular Housing Choice Voucher.

The success rate of voucher holders in Mendocino County is at an historic low. It is anticipated that these households, with the support offered by the PCWA and the Housing Navigators recently hired, would be more successful than other voucher holders.

Should an opportunity arise to project base some of the FUP vouchers, if awarded, the PHA will explore this through the regulatory requirements and may initiate a project-based contract with a developer for new construction or for existing units.

This program will promote family unification and housing stability by providing housing assistance to families for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in the separation, or the potential separation of children from their families. The program will also promote housing stability for youth ages 18 to 24 who have exited foster care or will exit foster care within 90 days and are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

- d. Staff positions at the PHA, PCWA, and CoC who will serve as the lead FUP liaisons.
 1. PHA staff position: Lisa Judd, Housing Manager (or a designee)
 2. PCWA staff positions:
 - FUP-eligible families: Laura Stebbins, Sr. Program Specialist (or a designee).
 - FUP-eligible youth: Cerre Knox, Independent Living / Extended Foster Care Program Social Worker Supervisor (or a designee).
 3. CoC staff position: Dan McIntire, Rural Communities Housing Development Commission and Jacque Williams, Ford Street Project, MCHSCoC Co-Chairs.

II. Statement of cooperation

The PHA and PCWA agree to cooperate with HUD, provide requested data to HUD or HUD-approved contractor delegated the responsibility of program evaluation, and follow all evaluation protocols established by HUD or HUD-approved contractor, including possible random assignment procedures.

Define the two populations (families and youth) eligible for FUP assistance

1. **FUP-Eligible Family** is defined as a family that the Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA) has certified as a family for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in the imminent placement of the family's child, or children, in/out-of-home care, or in the delay of discharge of a child, or children, to the family from out-of-home care, and that the PHA has determined is eligible for a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV).
2. **FUP-Eligible Youth** is defined as a youth that the PCWA has certified to be at least 18 years old, and not more than 24 years of age (has not reached their 25th birthday), and who has 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 is homeless or is at risk of becoming homeless at age 16 or older.

IV. Housing Search Assistance

For FUP-eligible families, FCS refers families to Ford Street Project, a community-based organization, which provides assistance and case management services to homeless families. The Ford Street Project assists FCS families in applying for Permanent Supportive Housing (CoC funded) and Housing Choice Vouchers when the waiting list is open and temporary shelter. The Ford Street Project also screens FCS families to determine their nearness to reunification and will provide the family with a subsidized family housing unit if a unit is available. FCS Social Worker Assistants assist families in locating available housing, transportation to look at available housing and completing housing applications. These FCS staff also work with the family to budget funds to cover credit check fees.

FUP-eligible youth will be referred by the FCS Independent Living / Extended Foster Care Program Social Worker Supervisor to the contracted Transitional Housing Program-Plus (THP-Plus) service provider, Redwood Community Services (RCS), for case management services and assistance in obtaining housing. The THP-Plus program serves former foster youth ages 18 to 24 for up to 24 cumulative months and up to age 25 for 36 cumulative months if the participant is completing secondary education, or an equivalent program, or is enrolled in an institution that provides postsecondary education. FUP-eligible youth who are no longer eligible for THP-Plus will work with the Independent Living / Extended Foster Care Program Social Worker Assistant to locate available housing, transportation to look at available housing and completing housing applications.

The Mendocino County Homeless Services Continuum of Care uses the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) electronic database to match homeless clients to available housing resources using a vulnerability index assessment tool to identify the client's vulnerability and therefore level of and prioritization of need ensuring that fastest placement in the most suitable living situation is identified. The client's case manager inputs the client's data into HMIS. Currently, many of the housing programs that FCS refers clients to are already using HMIS.

Within Mendocino County, there are three community-based organizations that provide Housing Navigation and Care Manager Support services: RCS serves inland Ukiah Valley, Manzanita Services serves the inland north county and Mendocino Coast Hospitality Center serves the coastal region. These services will be available to all FUP youth. Housing Navigators are responsible for relationship development with land owners and property managers in order to foster communication to assist in obtaining and maintaining client housing. Care Managers provide non-billable support services to assist youth in accessing services to improve their ability to become or continue to be self-sufficient to the extent possible for each individual.

FUP-eligible families and youth are referred to Legal Services and/or CalWORKs for assistance in helping clear up credit problems.

CDC is administering the recently awarded County HOME TBRA program and intends these funds to be used for Security Deposit Assistance. These Security Deposit assistance funds would be made available to eligible households who are referred by the PCWA for the Family Unification Vouchers. The program is in the final stages of approval with the California Housing and Community Development office. These funds are available when the program begins and until exhausted.

V. Services to be provided to FUP-eligible youth:

The following services and resources will be provided to FUP-eligible youth by FCS during Independent Living Skills classes, which are available to youth until their 21st birthday, and individually with youth:

- a. Basic life skills information/counseling on money management, use of credit, housekeeping, proper nutrition/meal preparation, and access to health care (e.g., doctors, medication, and mental and behavioral health services).
- b. Counseling on compliance with rental lease requirements and with HCV program participant requirements, including assistance/referrals for assistance on security deposits, utility hook-up fees, and utility deposits.
- c. Providing such assurances to owners of rental property as are reasonable and necessary to assist a FUP-eligible youth to rent a unit with a FUP voucher.
- d. Job preparation and attainment counseling (where to look/how to apply, dress, grooming, relationships with supervisory personnel, etc.).
- e. Educational and career advancement counseling regarding attainment of general equivalency diploma (GED); attendance/financing of education at a technical school, trade school or college; including successful work ethic and attitude models.

Through participation in FCS' Transitional Housing Program-Plus, FUP-eligible youth will also receive the following supportive services from contracted provider, Redwood Community Services:

- a. In coordination with FCS' ILP staff, assistance to complete a Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) outlining his/her educational, employment, and housing goals.
- b. Educational advocacy and support, including linkages to Foster Youth Services with the goal of each youth obtaining a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED) of High School Proficiency prior to graduation from the program.
- c. Encouragement to seek college or other post high school training to better prepare for the future. The program will actively assist in helping participants apply for college or trade school admission and for scholarships and grants for which they may be eligible.
- d. Job readiness training and support including linkages to Mendocino County Private Industry Council (MPIC) resources, MPIC Work Readiness Certification, Mendocino Works, and other appropriate employment resources.
- e. Assistance at the completion of the program, in finding or maintaining affordable housing at costs no more than 30% of the youth's gross income if the housing model selected is transitional.
- f. Monthly supplement for basic living expenses.
- g. Basic household furnishings.
- h. Case management services and assistance in completion of their TILP goals.
- i. 24-hour crisis intervention and support which will include providing each participant with on-call professional assistance, resource referral to Mental Health Services, access to a 24-hour Staff Mental Health Professional, individual and group therapy.
- j. Assistance in accessing comprehensive health care and linking them to appropriate health insurance.
- k. Connection to regular pre-natal care for pregnant participants.
- l. Encourage parenting THP-Plus participants to enroll in a parenting class and assist with enrollments.
- m. Services to build and support relationships with family and community.
- n. Aftercare services including support groups and referrals to community resources that utilize proven adult mentors who will commit to remaining with program participants for a minimum of six months following graduation from the program.
- o. Timely notification to FCS ILP staff if a participant is not complying with his/her THP-Plus TILP Plan.

Services will be provided for a period of at least 18 months to FUP participants who reside in Mendocino County and are receiving rental assistance through the use of a FUP voucher, regardless of age. FCS will provide in-kind case management and services for FUP-eligible youth who enter the FUP program and are still eligible for services even though the youth no longer meets the initial age of eligibility for FUP youth. The 18 months of services will be provided consecutively and will commence upon the youth receiving the FUP voucher. The maximum age that a FUP-eligible youth would receive case management services from FCS would be 26 years and 5 months.

IV. PHA Responsibilities:

The PHA will fulfill each of the following responsibilities:

- a. The PHA will accept families and youths certified by the PCWA as eligible for the FUP. The PHA, upon receipt of the PCWA list of families and youths currently in the PCWA caseload, will compare the names with those of families and youths already on the PHA's HCV waiting list, and will also review the By Name List from the Coordinated Entry process. Any family or youth on the PHA's HCV waiting list that matches with the PCWA's list must be assisted in order of their position on the waiting list in accordance with PHA admission policies. The PHA will develop and adopt a preference for FUP eligible households to move them to the top of the waiting list. This preference would be in an amount equal to the total award of Family Unification Vouchers initially, and then in an amount equal to Family Unification Vouchers available upon turn over. Any family or youth certified by the PCWA as eligible and not on the HCV waiting list will be placed on the waiting list. The PHA has opened the waiting list annually for the past several years, and recently has begun opening the waiting list every 6 months.
- b. The PHA will determine if any families with children, or youths age 18 through 24 on its HCV waiting list are living in temporary shelters or on the street and may qualify for the FUP by working closely with the local homeless services providers and the Continuum of Care. The PHA will review the By Name List from Coordinated Entry to determine if these such households have been screened and would refer such applicants to the PCWA.
- c. The PHA will determine if families with children, or youths age 18 through 24 referred by the PCWA are eligible for HCV assistance and place eligible families/youths on the HCV waiting list through its normal eligibility processes in compliance with the PHA's administrative plan.
- d. The PHA will amend the administrative plan in accordance with applicable program regulations and requirements, as needed.
- e. The PHA will administer the vouchers in accordance with applicable program regulations and requirements.
- f. The PHA agrees to comply with the provisions of this MOU.
- g. The PHA agrees to train PCWA staff on the PHA's HCV procedures. The PHA had recently implemented a "social worker" training, and would incorporate this program into this training, as well will use the training for the PCWA staff training.
- h. The PHA agrees to conduct regular meetings, at least quarterly, but planned to be monthly with the PCWA and CoC.

V. PCWA Responsibilities

FCS will fulfill each of the following responsibilities:

- a. Establish and implement a system to identify FUP-eligible families and FUP- eligible youth within the agency's caseload and will review referrals from the PHA

and CoC. For families, the FCS will prioritize families with an open case due to a substantiated report of child abuse and neglect, whose children are already in out-of-home care, are at high risk for experiencing additional negative child welfare outcomes (e.g., long-term open cases, reentry to the child welfare system in the form of re-reports of abuse or neglect, and repeat open cases), and where housing assistance could help the parent(s) to stabilize and participate in any other services necessary for subsequent reunification. Referrals will be made for priority families as soon as they are identified, not only upon successful completion of other aspects of families' case management plans.

- b. Establish and implement a system to identify FUP-eligible youth not currently within FCS' active caseload in cooperation with the CoC and other Transitional Age Youth serving agencies including The Arbor Youth Resource Center where many Transitional Age Youth congregate for services and supports.
- c. Provide written certification to the PHA that a family qualifies as a FUP-eligible family, or that a youth qualifies as a FUP-eligible youth, based upon the criteria established in Section 8(x) of the United States Housing Act of 1937, and the Family Unification Program Notice of Funding Availability for Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018.
- d. Commit sufficient staff resources to ensure that eligible families and youths are identified and determined eligible in a timely manner. This commitment includes ensuring a monthly review of FCS' active caseload (when the PHA has FUP vouchers available) to identify FUP-eligible families and FUP-eligible youths and refer them to the PHA. Additionally, FCS is prepared to provide referrals to the PHA within 30 working days of receiving notification from the PHA about voucher availability.
- e. Commit sufficient staff resources to provide follow-up supportive services after the youth leases a unit. The funding for these services will be provided by the State Transitional Housing Program-Plus allocation to the County, State realignment funding to the County and the County's Independent Living Program with funds from the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and can assist with expenses such as moving costs, security deposits and utility startups.
- f. Provide post-move counseling to FUP-eligible families including basic life skills information/counseling on money management, use of credit, housekeeping and counseling on compliance with rental lease requirements and with HCV program participant requirements, including assistance/referrals for assistance on security deposits, utility hook-up fees, and utility deposits. FCS Social Workers and Social Worker Assistants / Parent Partners will provide these in-home counseling supports and check-ins with the families as part of the regular child welfare case management activities provided to families with open child welfare cases.
- g. Provide case management services to FUP families who reside in Mendocino County. All FUP eligible families will have open cases with FCS with written case plans and assigned social workers. FCS utilizes several needs assessment tools including the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment tool, Safety Organized Practice (SOP) mapping tools and Structured Decision Making (SOM) safety and risk assessment tools. These tools assist the social worker in identifying all of the family's needs, including housing-related needs

and non-housing related needs such as behavioral health, physical health, employment, child care, and other services needed. Based on the assessments, the social worker provides the family with referrals to services to address the family's needs, maintains regular contact with the family at least once a month in-person to follow up on the referrals and provides new referrals as necessary.

1. The agencies which FCS clients are routinely referred for services include but are not limited to: Substance Use Disorder Treatment for substance abuse treatment and drug/alcohol testing, Family Resource Centers, Redwood Community Services for adult and child mental health services, Tapestry Family Services for child mental health services, Project Sanctuary for domestic violence services, The Ford Street Project for detox and residential substance abuse treatment services and drug/alcohol testing, North Coast Opportunities for child care, Redwood Coast Regional Center for physical and developmental disability services and medical clinics for health care.
2. Length of time case management will be made available: While a family is in reunification services with their child in out-of-home care, case management services may last 6 to 24 months. When a child is returned home, continued case management services are offered for a minimum of 6 months. However, services may extend up to 12 months and even longer should the family need continued support and oversight. All cases are reviewed every six months to determine whether the family has made sufficient progress, is stable and the harm/danger related to the substantiated child abuse or neglect has been resolved.

All FUP families will receive services unless they decline to participate or receive the services. Case management services to FUP eligible youth will be provided as specified in Section V.

- h. Comply with the provisions of this MOU.
- i. Train PHA staff on FCS' referral procedures.
- j. Conduct regular meetings, at least quarterly, but planned to be monthly with the PHA and CoC.

VI11. CoC Responsibilities:

The CoC will fulfill each of the following responsibilities:

- a. FUP eligible youth will be integrated into the MCHSCoC Coordinated Entry System as would any other special population. Programs and housing options that meet the needs of the FUP eligible youth will be available in the system and will be made available to these clients based on need and vulnerability. Coordinated Entry staff will use the VI SPDAT, or other appropriate assessment tool to ensure youth receive the best possible placement in a timely manner. The CoC will integrate the prioritization and referral process for FUP eligible youth into the CoC's coordinated entry process by establishing the vulnerability threshold for the FUP program and announce the availability of this program at CoC meetings and through the CoC membership mailing list. All Coordinated Entry training will include the FUP referral process.

- b. The MCHSCoC Chair will attend quarterly meetings conducted by the PHA and PCWA and will report back all information shared to the MCHSCoC board at their next meeting. The CoC Vice Chair will participate in regular meetings conducted by the PHA and PCWA, to be held at least quarterly, but planned to be monthly.
- c. The CoC agrees to comply with the provisions of the MOU.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF

DEPARTMENT/PCWA/CoC NAME

By: Bekkie Emery
Bekkie Emery, HNSA Assistant Director/
Social Services Director/
Child Welfare Director

Date: May 4, 2021

Budgeted: N/A

Grant: Yes No

COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

By: Dan Gjerde
DAN GJERDE, Chair
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Date: MAY 27 2021

ATTEST:

CARMEL J. ANGELO, Clerk of said Board

By: Amap
Deputy

MAY 27 2021

I hereby certify that according to the provisions of Government Code section 25103, delivery of this document has been made.

CARMEL J. ANGELO, Clerk of said Board

By: Amap
Deputy

MAY 27 2021

INSURANCE REVIEW:

By: Andrew Pelt
Risk Management

Date: 04/19/2021

CONTRACTOR/COMPANY NAME

By: Todd L Crabtree
Todd Crabtree, Executive Director

Date: 4/21/21

NAME AND ADDRESS OF CONTRACTOR:

Community Development Commission of Mendocino County
1076 N. State Street
Ukiah, CA 95482
707-463-5462, crabtree@cdchousing.org

CONTINUUMM OF CARE CHAIR

By: Jacqueline Wilton

Date: May 3, 2021

By signing above, signatory warrants and represents that he/she executed this Agreement in his/her authorized capacity and that by his/her signature on this Agreement, he/she or the entity upon behalf of which he/she acted, executed this Agreement

COUNTY COUNSEL REVIEW:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CHRISTIAN M. CURTIS,
County Counsel

By: Charlotte Scott
Deputy

Date: 04/19/2021

EXECUTIVE OFFICE/FISCAL REVIEW:

By: Danese Gentle
Deputy CEO

Date: 04/19/2021

Signatory Authority: \$0-25,000 Department; \$25,001- 50,000 Purchasing Agent; \$50,001+ Board of Supervisors
Exception to Bid Process Required/Completed N/A
Mendocino County Business License: Valid
Exempt Pursuant to MCC Section: Government / Located within city limits in Mendocino County