

Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Housing Voucher Program

Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) is a HUD-funded housing voucher program that provides housing assistance and supportive services to youth transitioning out of foster care. Public Housing Authorities (PHAs), Local Departments of Social Services (LDSSs), and Supportive Service Providers can maximize available vouchers in Virginia by partnering to establish or expand FYI in their localities.

Who does FYI Serve?

The FYI program serves youth who are:

- ▶ Between 18 and 25 years of age
- ▶ Transitioned out of foster care, or are leaving foster care within 180 days, and
- ▶ Currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless

What are the benefits?

- ▶ On average, youth receive over \$1,000 per month towards rent through FYI
- ▶ Vouchers are provided for 36 months with an option of extending for an additional 24 months
- ▶ Youth receive supportive services

*“The FYI Voucher has drastically **changed my life...** It’s not just financial help; it’s a lifeline.”* - Young Adult recipient of FYI voucher in VA

Who establishes FYI programs?

- ▶ The HUD-funded FYI program is made locally available across Virginia through partnerships between:
 - 👑 **Local Departments of Social Services** – identify, prioritize, and refer youth; secure or provide supportive services
 - 🏠 **Public Housing Authorities** – receive referrals and issue vouchers
 - 👤 **Supportive Service Provider** – voluntarily provide direct supportive services to youth (often a third party)

Ready to Learn More?

Watch the two-part FYI webinar training series!

- ▶ **FYI 101 – Introduction to FYI, an overview of stakeholder responsibilities and the FYI process**
<https://youtu.be/ZKH2JL1A-gU>
- ▶ **FYI 201: Beyond the Basics – Step-by-step guidance and best practices for establishing and administering FYI**
<https://youtu.be/fMM4fLqyMgE>

Contact va.ilp@dss.virginia.gov with questions about the FYI program



Frequently Asked Questions



Q: Why is FYI needed? How can FYI help?

A: *There is a shortage of affordable housing in Virginia. Many youth transitioning out of foster care struggle to find an affordable place to live. By providing housing assistance for youth, FYI can support independence and self-sufficiency in this transition and reduce related stress and anxiety.*

Q: What is the difference between FYI and Family Unification Program (FUP)?

A: *Vouchers for 18–24-year-olds who left foster care were originally granted under the FUP. In 2019, FYI began to operate independently to provide additional resources and assistance for FUP-eligible youth. FUP continues to serve families and youth who lack adequate housing. While there is a 36-month maximum time limitation (with the possibility of 24-month extension) for FYI and FUP youth, there is no time limitation for FUP families. [See the FUP fact sheet for additional details on the eligibility criteria for FUP families.](#)*

Q: How does a PHA begin administering FYI vouchers?

A: *A PHA must apply to administer FYI vouchers through the competitive or non-competitive process. Prior to applying, they must establish a partnership agreement with a LDSS and update their administrative plan. If applying for non-competitive FYI, they must also identify eligible youth recipients before applying.*

Q: What's the difference between competitive and non-competitive FYI?

A: *Non-competitive FYI allows PHAs to more easily secure up to 25 FYI vouchers on demand. When a youth is identified and referred to the PHA, the PHA can request a voucher by completing the [FYI Application Request Form](#). If the PHA needs more vouchers and meets HUD requirements, they can request up to an additional 25 for that year. Competitive FYI may allow access to a larger number of FYI vouchers depending on HCV allocation; however, there are additional requirements for a competitive application. PHAs can apply for competitive vouchers in response to a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) published by HUD.*

Q: I'm struggling to meet the program's Supportive Services requirement. How can I find partners?

A: *If one third-party cannot supply all supportive services, try to utilize multiple partners. For example, contact a local youth mentorship program to provide the "educational and career advancement counseling" or a managed care organization for "basic life skills" support.*

Q: How can I support a youth who is in the custody of a LDSS but wants to live in another locality?

A: *First, contact the PHA in the locality in which the youth wants to live to see if the PHA has FYI vouchers. Note: PHAs cannot apply a residency preference to FUP or FYI applicants. Second, if the PHA in the locality where the youth wants to live does not have a FYI voucher, and the PHA in the locality where the youth currently lives has a voucher, the youth can access the FYI voucher in the locality they currently live in and port it to the other locality in accordance with the administering PHA's portability guidelines.*

Q: What changes were made in early 2025 to HUD guidance for the FYI initiative?

A: *In April 2025, HUD provided new guidance on requirements for the FYI and FUP-Youth programs. Most notably, HUD extended the timing for the referral of youth leaving foster from the 90-day transition period to 180 days, set requirements for housing search time (i.e., 120 days), and established new requirements for extensions of vouchers. [See Notice PIH 2025-08 for additional details.](#)*

Q: I have already established an FYI initiative – is there anything else I need to do?

A: *Although FYI initiatives have been successfully implemented across Virginia, there is a large opportunity to increase the availability and utilization of vouchers. By learning more about the program, application process, and best practices you can help maximize vouchers in your area. Review the FYI 201: Beyond the Basics training for more information!*

Detailed FYI program information is available through HUD FYI Voucher Homepage: [HERE](#)

