



# City of Culver City

Mike Balkman Council  
Chambers  
9770 Culver Blvd.  
Culver City, CA 90232

## Staff Report Details (With Text)

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**Title:** CC:HA - CONSENT ITEM: Authorization to Submit a Grant Application to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to Fund a Family Unification Program for Qualified Transitional-Aged Youth Under the Foster Youth to Independence Program.

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**Attachments:** 1. 2024-04-08\_ATT\_SPY CYC CCHA Letter of Commitment.pdf

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**CC:HA - CONSENT ITEM: Authorization to Submit a Grant Application to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to Fund a Family Unification Program for Qualified Transitional-Aged Youth Under the Foster Youth to Independence Program.**

**Meeting Date:** April 08, 2024

**Contact Person/Dept.:** Tevis Barnes, Housing and Human Services Department

**Phone Number:** 310.253.5780

**Fiscal Impact:** Yes ☐ No ☒      **General Fund:** Yes ☐ No ☒

**Attachments:** Yes ☐ No ☒

**Public Notification:** Advisory Committee on Housing and Homelessness (04/02/2024); Safe Place for Youth (03/18/2024); California Youth Connection (03/18/2024); County of Los Angeles Department of Family and Children Services (03/18/2024); Exodus Recovery Inc. (04/02/2024); and (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (04/03/2024).

**Department Approval:** Tevis Barnes, Housing and Human Services Director (03/25/2024)

## RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council and Culver City Housing Authority (CCHA) Board, authorize the submittal of a grant application to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to

fund a Family Unification Program known as the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) that will provide rental assistance for Transitional-Aged Youth (TAY) facing homelessness or at-risk of becoming homeless and have been involved with the Foster Care System.

## **BACKGROUND**

According to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), 92% of homeless youth in Los Angeles County had a fragile social network and more than half (57%) of youth in the Coordinated Entry System (CES) reported to have had some type of contact with the foster care system. Due to these facts, specialized programs have rapidly grown for the TAY population along with partnerships with the community college and university system, Probation Department, and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to address the situations TAY often face. The DCFS has demonstrated a commitment to helping TAY by seeking out partnerships with housing authorities, one being with the CCHA.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced a funding opportunity for Public Housing Authorities to assist TAY, ages 18 to 24 years old, through the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) program. Implementing such a program will invest in local, collaborative efforts with the DCFS to prevent and end homelessness among transitional-aged youth with a current or prior history of child welfare involvement.

Late 2023, the CCHA was approached by A Safe Place for Youth (SPA) and the California Youth Connection (CYC) to apply to HUD under the FYI Program to support TAY living or associated with Culver City. Five TAY individuals either currently living in or with a relationship to Culver City have been identified through SPA and CYC. Staff had the opportunity to meet one such individual who graduated from Culver City High School and is currently attending the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). The relationship to Culver City is defined by attending Culver City Unified School District (CCUSD) schools and/or being part of the foster care program while living in Culver City.

A Letter of Support from both SPA and CYC is attached to this report (Attachment 1).

## **DISCUSSION**

Through the FYI Program, HUD will provide Tenant Protection Vouchers (TPV) for TAY who meet the eligibility criteria. These vouchers are referred to as FYI TPVs. HUD is investing in local, cross-system collaborative efforts to prevent and end homelessness among youth with a current or prior history of child welfare involvement. The success of this effort requires that community partners coordinate effectively to identify, target, and connect eligible youth at-risk of becoming homeless or currently experiencing homelessness to housing and related supports such as mental health services and health care needs. This program calls for the collaboration and partnership between the CCHA and DCFS.

The youth who are eligible for FYI TPV must be at least 18 years old and not more than 24 years old who:

- Exited foster care at age 16 or older 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

- Currently experiencing homelessness; or
- Are at risk of becoming homeless.

The CCHA will administer the FYI in partnership with the DCFS which is the responsible party for referring TAY to the CCHA for determination of eligibility for rental assistance. Once the DCFS makes the referral, the CCHA will determine whether the youth meets the voucher eligibility requirements, and will conduct all other processes relating to voucher issuance and administration.

In addition to rental assistance, supportive services to address the youth's needs beyond the housing stabilization will be provided by the DCFS for a period of at least 18 months for which the TAY participates in the program. Examples of the skills targeted by these services include information/counseling on money management, housekeeping, proper nutrition/meal preparation, access to vocational training and educational resources, and access to health care (e.g., doctors, medication, and mental and behavioral health services).

A Safe Place for Youth and CYC will work with the CCHA to identify and conduct outreach to attract local property to accept the FYI vouchers and to make their units available.

For Culver City, administering the FYI program will help TAY experiencing homelessness access housing resources and assistance and enhance the City's Continuum of Care to provide supportive service and care to the City's unhoused neighbors. Programs such as FYI can act as a preventative measure for TAY at-risk of homelessness and essentially act as a step to end the cycle of longer, or future episodes of homelessness. Additionally, FYI Program can reduce the likelihood of TAY engaging in substance abuse, alcohol use, and entering the criminal justice system. TAY with prior child welfare involvement can benefit from a rental assistance program coupled with DCFS supportive services because TAY who have gone through the foster care system and/or experience homelessness typically have often endured trauma or violence. A program such as FYI gives an opportunity for TAY to regain housing stability, restore a TAY's autonomy during the housing process, help them recover from trauma through the DCFS case management supports, establish an employment, financial, and educational plan with DCFS and CCHA's FSS Coordinator, and lastly, have TAY achieve self-sufficiency when the program reaches the 36-month mark.

If the application for funding is approved, the CCHA will administer the FYI program for a 36-month duration. When assistance expires after 36 months, the vouchers will sunset when the youth leave the program. The CCHA will request 5 vouchers from HUD.

As part of the FYI Program, the CCHA must enter into a MOU with DCFS. CCHA staff will return to the Council and Board to seek approval of the MOU with DCFS to administer the FYI Program once approval of the grant award is obtained from HUD.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action to apply for grant funds. Any award of vouchers will be deposited into CCHA accounts to pay for rental subsidies paid directly to property owners who make their units available for lease to FYI participants. Administrative fees are paid by HUD to the CCHA based on the number of units under a lease/contract. This administrative fee helps to cover staff costs associated with administering the FYI vouchers. The administration of the FYI Program will not impact the City's General Fund.

The supportive services provided to FYI participants through DCFS will be at no cost to the City or CCHA.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. 2024-04-08\_ATT No 1\_SPY CYC CCHA Letter of Commitment

## **MOTION**

That the Culver City Council and Culver City Housing Authority Board:

1. Approve the submittal of a grant application to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development to fund a Family Unification Program known as the Foster Youth to Independence that will provide rental assistance for Transitional-Aged Youth facing homelessness or at-risk of becoming homeless and have been involved with the Foster Care System; and
2. Authorize the City Attorney/Housing Authority General Counsel to prepare/review the necessary documents; and
3. Authorize the City Manager/Executive Director to execute such documents on behalf of the City and Housing Authority.