NCHCW links housing resources to child welfare agencies to improve family functioning, prevent family homelessness, safely reduce the need for out-of-home placement, and ensure that each young person who ages out foster care is able to access safe, decent, permanent housing.
No amount of services or housing of any kind can replace the connection to a permanent, loving family in the life of a young person.
What economic reality are unaccompanied youth up against?

- According to the NLIHC, in 2013, the housing wage – or the amount of money that a person needs to earn per hour - to afford an efficiency apartment in Oklahoma is $8.85. Here are the numbers for Tulsa and Oklahoma City:

  - Tulsa HMFA: $8.68 per hour at 40 hours ($18,054 annually)
  - OKC HMFA: $9.35 per hour at 40 hours ($19,448 annually)

- Report available at [http://nlihc.org/oor/2013/MD](http://nlihc.org/oor/2013/MD)
Finding housing options remains a common challenge

Results from the May 2014 GAO study of Fostering Connections Implementation:

Major Challenges Reported by States in GAO Survey Regarding Foster Placements

- Lack of available placements for large sibling groups: 9 states reported a minor challenge, 42 states a major challenge.
- Lack of placement resources near current school: 1 state reported a minor challenge, 38 states a major challenge.
- Identifying appropriate housing for youth after transitioning from care: 20 states reported no or minor challenge, 31 states a major challenge.

Source: GAO survey of the state child welfare agencies of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.
Housing is the biggest challenge in transition planning

Challenges reported by states in a nationwide survey:

- Identifying appropriate housing for youth after transitioning from foster care: 1 no or minor challenge, 20 minor challenge, 31 major challenge.
- Identifying/engaging supportive adults from the youth's life in the transition planning: 29 minor challenge, 21 major challenge.
- Lack of staff training or time to effectively engage youth in their transition planning: 8 no or minor challenge, 23 minor challenge, 21 major challenge.
- Difficulty arranging for stakeholders to meet for transition planning: 16 no or minor challenge, 24 minor challenge, 10 major challenge.
What are unaccompanied youth up against?

Substantial pent-up demand for housing:
Almost 1/3 of 18-34 year olds now living with their parents

% of all 18-34 years olds living with their parents

Source: Census, DB Global Markets Research

Deutsche Bank Research Torsten Slok June 2014
Knit funding streams together to maximize time for youth to prevent homelessness and achieve self-sufficiency

Age
16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

Independent Living

Family Foster Care/Residential

Unaccompanied/Homeless youth

Title IV-E

FUP for youth

Regular Sec. 8
Other Subsidy
Roommate
Private Housing/LL
States must use available flexibility to free up funds for housing

- Chafee funds can be used for housing – however, basic math dictates that most youth won’t get $ enough to help with housing
- States have considerable flexibility on the use of Title IV-E funds for this population. They must be encouraged to use it for housing.
- The way that state and county child welfare dollars are spent is dictated by state and local governments. They must be encouraged to use this funding for housing.
What can be done at the state level to address housing issues?

- Implement Fostering Connections to Success Act
- Housing must be a central feature of your state’s independent living curriculum.
- Ensure that your child welfare system organizes a continuum of housing resources – a BI-DIRECTIONAL CONTINUUM.
- Build statewide partnerships to create a range of affordable housing opportunities.
- Tap new and unusual streams of funding.
Planning for successful transition to adulthood is now required by federal law.

- The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351) (FCSA) requires CW to create a youth directed plan 90 days prior to discharge.

- This plan MUST include housing.
States *Can* Receive IV-E Reimbursement for SIL and other Age-Appropriate Placements for Youth 18-21

- Fostering Connections added “a supervised setting in which the individual is living independently” as a reimbursable setting for youth 18-21. 42 U.S.C.A. 672 (c).

- As states implement the older youth provisions of Fostering Connections, they will need to expand their capacity to provide SIL settings while youth are still in care.
Federal Guidance on SIL

- The feds are not going to issue regulations on this setting.

- States have “the discretion to develop a range of supervised independent living settings which can be reasonably interpreted as consistent with the law, including whether or not such settings need to be licensed and any safety protocols that may be needed.”
Examples of SIL Provided by HHS

- host homes,
- college dormitories,
- shared housing,
- semi-supervised apartments,
- supervised apartments
Federal Guidance Continued

- “We encourage the title IV-E agency to be innovative in determining the best living arrangements that could meet an older child's needs for supervision and support as he/she moves toward independence.”

- “Further, we note that a title IV-E agency should continue to work with youth who are in supervised independent living settings to form permanent connections with caring adults.”

Accessing local, state, and federal resources

Progress through partnerships
Leave no stone unturned when seeking housing resources

This is just a partial list of housing resources you can tap (for this presentation, I will focus on state and local funds):

- Community Action Programs
- CDBG and SSBG
- HOME
- Public Housing Authorities – Section 8 and Public Housing
- Family Unification Program
- Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program grants
- Low Income Housing Tax Credit
- City and State housing funds / housing trust funds
- State Housing Finance Agencies (HFAs)
- Private Landlords, Private Corporations
- Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO)
For the Community: it is the preferred option and it’s cheaper: a 2004 cost benefit analysis showed that it costs Colorado $53,655 to maintain one youth in the criminal justice system, but it only costs the state $5,887 to provide housing and services.
Partnerships with Public Housing

- Family Unification Program
- Priority Codes for Youth Leaving Care
- Housing Choice Vouchers
- Project Based Section 8
Agency Partnership

1. **Department of Children and Families (child welfare)**
   - MOU with **US Dept of Housing and Urban Devt. (HUD)**
   - Funding and referrals
   - Housing assistance and case management
2. **Young person**
   - MOU with **Local Public Housing Authority (PHA)**
   - Issues voucher to youth
   - Pays rent on time
3. **Supportive Housing (IL Program)**
   - Funding and referrals
   - Info and cooperation
4. **Landlord**
   - Pays rent on time
   - Info and cooperation

**Funding for** Sec. 8 vouchers
State Housing Finance Agencies

• State-chartered authorities established to help meet the affordable housing needs of the residents of their states. Although they vary widely in characteristics such as their relationship to state government, most HFAs are independent entities that operate under the direction of a board of directors appointed by each state's governor.

• State Housing Agencies administer a number of housing funding streams, including HOME, Low Income Housing Tax Credit and some homeless funds.

• More can be learned about State Housing Agencies at www.ncscha.org.
HOME Program

- The Home Investment Partnership Program is a federal block grant that provides states with a flexible affordable housing funding stream. This money can be used to subsidize rent. Distributed based on your state or local consolidated plan.

- States receive 40% of HOME dollars.
- Florida and California are just a few examples of states where jurisdictions are using these funds to subsidize rent for youth leaving foster care.
The LIHTC was established in 1986 in order to encourage the construction and rehabilitation of rental housing affordable to low income households.

LIHTC offers a reduction in tax liability or credit to developers or owners for the first ten years. These properties can be used for youth and often are, however there are some restrictions that affect foster youth.
LIHTC governed by the state
Qualified Allocation Plan

- A “QAP” is a “plan which sets forth selection criteria to be used to determine housing priorities of the housing credit agency which are appropriate to local conditions”
- OK Qualified Allocation Plan follows state law
- “Targeted Populations" means such populations as may be designated from time to time in the annual AP by official action of the Trustees, which designations may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the Homeless, the Elderly, persons with mental and physical disabilities and/or disabled persons.”
Decisions about how this funding is generated and how it is spent are made at the state and local level.

This funding is used for a variety of housing-related expenses; for example:

- Rental assistance, homeless prevention
- Re-habilitation, Repair of owner occupied housing
- Gap financing for housing projects
- Shelters, Transitional Housing, Permanent Supportive housing
Working with Corporate or Private Partners

- Apply for a Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program Grant or any other housing funding stream with a private partner (i.e., Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing)
- Work with local religious communities, congregations to develop property
- Engage local realtors and property owners in a collaboration to assist low income folks and youth aging out
Some final thoughts on where to start

- Pay a visit to the states that have made strides, learn from their mistakes and achievements.
- States can use some homeless services and housing dollars for youth, but again, there are restrictions.
- The creation of housing options requires a patchwork quilt of funding (often federal funds are a necessary patch on this quilt).
- Collaborations are the fastest, most efficient way to create a range of housing options.
- Get a seat at the table – mayor’s task force, housing alliance, join your community continuum care.
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