



Housing Connect Secures 52 Foster Youth to Independence Housing Vouchers to Support Local Foster Youth

- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

Salt Lake City, UT – October 21, 2024 – Housing Connect is proud to announce that it has been awarded 52 Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Vouchers, a significant step forward in the fight to end youth homelessness in our community. These vouchers will be available for use beginning December 1, 2024, and will provide critical housing assistance for youth ages 18-24 who left foster care or are transitioning out of foster care and are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funded FYI Voucher Program offers housing support for up to 36 months, with an option to extend an additional 24 months if certain requirements are met. This program provides rental assistance vouchers that cover a portion of rent, making housing more affordable for participants. By reducing the financial burden of rent, these vouchers allow youth to align resources toward other essential needs, such as education, employment, and healthcare. In addition to housing assistance, the program emphasizes securing vital supportive services to help youth participants achieve self-sufficiency and transition into stable, independent living.

Affordable housing is crucial for stabilizing foster care youth, who often face significant challenges when transitioning to independent living. Access to safe and stable housing not only provides a foundation for daily life but also promotes emotional well-being and security. By ensuring that youth have a reliable place to live, the program helps reduce the risk of homelessness and housing instability, which can be particularly disruptive for those who have already experienced trauma in the foster care system. Additionally, stable housing allows these young individuals to focus on building skills and relationships that foster self-sufficiency, ultimately empowering them to thrive in their communities.

"Securing FYI vouchers has been a huge goal for our community and for Housing Connect," said Krysta Niemczyk, Housing Connect Director of Policy & Strategic Initiatives. "These vouchers will directly address the needs of some of our community's most vulnerable youth, giving them the support as they build successful futures."

The achievement is part of a broader community action plan to end youth homelessness. The many partners involved have played a critical role in the process, bringing vision, advocacy, and expertise to secure this vital resource. Thank you to the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Child and Family Services, the Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness, Salt Lake County's Youth Action Board, Salt Lake County Youth Services, Salt Lake County Office of Homelessness and Criminal Justice Reform, the 1999 Collective, The Road Home, and Volunteers of America, Utah.

“In addition to the FYI vouchers, HUD recently awarded Salt Lake County a Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program grant of \$2.7M over two years for permanent housing and support. VOA Utah’s housing case managers are thrilled to have more housing options for youth to move out of homelessness.” said Kathy Bray, President & CEO of Volunteers of America, Utah

The FYI Vouchers will provide young people leaving foster care with the stability they need to build independent lives. This milestone marks a major victory for Housing Connect's ongoing goal to create equitable housing opportunities and ensure that every young person in our community has a safe place to call home.

"This success is the result of strong collaboration and dedication from our team and community partners with our aligned goal to end youth homelessness," said Janice Kimball, Housing Connect CEO. "We are immensely grateful for the leadership and partnerships that made this possible."

HUD Press Release - https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/hud_no_24_241

About Housing Connect

Founded in 1970, Housing Connect (formerly the Housing Authority of the County of Salt Lake) was established to ensure access to safe and affordable housing in Salt Lake County. This pursuit continues today embedded in the agency’s mission to connect people and communities to quality affordable housing opportunities while promoting self-sufficiency and neighborhood revitalization.

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