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Housing - Section 8 - Family Unification

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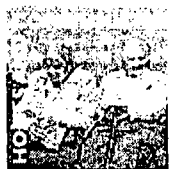
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family unification program

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Summary:

The Family Unification Program provides Section 8 rental assistance to families whose lack of adequate housing is a primary cause of the separation, or imminent separation, of a child or children from their families.

Purpose:

The Family Unification Program provides Section 8 rental assistance for eligible families so that children will not be separated from their parents because of lack of housing. It is available to help approximately 16,000 families. The program is funded and operated under the Section 8 certificate program.

Type of Assistance:

Section 8 certificates are provided to qualifying families. In the Section 8 certificate program, HUD awards funding for Section 8 certificates to public housing authorities (PHAs) and the PHAs issue the certificates to eligible households. The PHA pays the owner a subsidy that is equal to the difference between the tenant portion of the rent (30 percent of adjusted income, 10 percent of gross income, or the portion of welfare assistance designated for housing), family-paid utilities, and the HUD-established fair market rent for the area. HUD also pays the housing agency a fee to administer the program.

Eligible Grantees:

Beginning in 1997, all PHAs authorized under State law to develop or operate housing assistance programs may apply for funding to operate a Family Unification Program.

Eligible Customers:

To be eligible to receive a Section 8 certificate under the Family Unification Program, a family must be eligible for the Section 8 program, and the local public welfare agency must certify that the lack of adequate housing is a primary reason that the family's child(ren) may be placed in out-of-home care or prevented from returning to the family from out-of-home care. "Lack of adequate housing" means that the family is living in substandard housing or is (or will be) involuntarily displaced.

Eligible Activities:

In each funding round, participating PHAs or administering agencies are granted a specific number of certificates. In fiscal year 1997 (FY), HUD awarded funds for approximately 8,600 certificates for family unification. Families may receive Section 8 assistance as long as they remain eligible.

Application:

Housing authorities apply for funding by responding to Notices of Funding Availability (NOFAs) published in the Federal Register. Each NOFA identifies allocation areas, amounts of funds available per area, and the selection criteria for rating and ranking applications. PHAs are given at least 30 days to submit applications. Interested households apply for assistance through their PHA.

Funding Status:

From the FY1997 Congressional appropriation for Section 8, HUD allocated \$58.8 million in 1-year budget authority for the Family Unification Program.

Technical Guidance:

The Section 8 Family Unification Program is authorized by the U.S. Housing Act of 1937, as added to by Section 553 of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-625). It is administered by HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing, Office of Public and Assisted Housing Delivery; the telephone number is (202) 708-0477.