

+-----+
| LOCAL COMMISSIONERS MEMORANDUM |
+-----+

Transmittal No: 92 LCM-126

Date: August 19, 1992

Division: Family & Children
Services

TO: Local District Commissioners

SUBJECT: Federal Family Unification Demonstration program

- ATTACHMENTS: 1. Model Letter of Intent (available on-line)
2. Fund Availability for FY 1992 and Program Guidelines for the Family Unification Demonstration Program (Federal Register publication for Thursday, July 23, 1992, Part III, Department of Housing and Urban Development) (not available on-line)

The purpose of this LCM is to solicit your interest in participating in the federally funded Family Unification Demonstration Program which provides Section 8 rental certificates to families who meet the federal Section 8 eligibility criteria and for whom lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in the imminent placement of the family's child(ren) in out-of-home care or in the delay of discharge of child(ren) to the family from out-of-home care. The guidelines for the Family Unification Demonstration program issued by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the Federal Register are attached.

New York State is one of the eleven states eligible to apply to HUD for the Family Unification Demonstration program and is eligible for approximately 262 certificates for a total amount of \$10,779,425. The Department is working in cooperation with the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) to submit an application for the Family Unification Demonstration program by the September 8th deadline. DHCR has issued a notice soliciting the interest of local public housing administrators in participating in the program.

The Family Unification Demonstration program will require coordination between the public child welfare agency (i.e., the social services district) and the local public housing authority or local Section 8 Administrator. Social Services district responsibilities include the following:

- (1) providing written certification to the local public housing authority or local Section 8 Administrator that a family meets the criteria for imminent placement of children or delay in the discharge of children due to the lack of adequate housing as a primary factor.
- (2) Establishing and implementing a system to identify eligible families within the agency's caseload and reviewing referrals from the local public housing authority or local Section 8 Administrator.
- (3) Committing sufficient staff resources to ensure that eligible families are identified and the certification process completed in a timely manner.

Local public housing authority or local Section 8 Administrator responsibilities include the following:

- (1) Reviewing the Section 8 waiting list to identify families that may be eligible for the program and referring them to the public child welfare agency for a determination of eligibility.
- (2) Determining whether families referred by the public child welfare agency are eligible for Section 8 assistance.
- (3) Administering the Family Unification Section 8 rental certificate program.

Both the local public housing authority or local Section 8 Administrator and the social service district must agree to cooperate with and provide requested data to the HUD office having responsibility for the program evaluation.

The Department will be applying the eligibility standards utilized for the provision of housing services to discharge a child from foster care pursuant to Section 430.9(i)(2) of Department regulations and those utilized for the preventive housing grant demonstration program to prevent foster care placement pursuant to 91 LCM 139. Lack of adequate housing is defined in the program guidelines as a situation in which a family is living in substandard housing or is or will be involuntarily displaced from a housing unit pursuant to federal regulations.

Date August 19, 1992

Trans. No. 92 LCM-126

Page No. 3

We encourage you to participate in this program as it offers an opportunity to meet the housing needs of some of your foster care and preventive services families without expending local funds. These certificates cannot be used to replace current expenditures under the state's existing preventive services housing programs, but it is an excellent opportunity to meet additional unmet housing needs.

If you are interested in participating, we are requesting that you notify your local public housing authority or local Section 8 Administrator of your interest and submit a letter of intent to us by Wednesday, August 26th. A model letter of intent is attached. If you elect to participate in the Family Unification Demonstration program, we may be seeking additional information from you concerning local need, your experience with the Section 8 housing program and how you assist families in locating housing that will assist us in completing the application to HUD.

Please direct any questions on this to Jayne Stillwell, Bureau of Policy Planning, at 1-800-342-3715, extension 486-3448. Letters of intent may be mailed to me or directed via e-mail to Jayne Stillwell (User ID 0fb090).

Joseph Semidei
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Family
and Children Services

Model

Letter of Intent

Dear Deputy Commissioner Semidei:

The (county) Department of Social Services wishes to participate in the Family Unification Program Demonstration Program pursuant to the federal guidelines for this program. Written notification has been provided to the local public housing authority or local Section 8 Administrator of this interest.

The (county) Department of Social Services agrees to provide information on local need, experience with existing housing programs, and assistance provided to families on locating housing which may be needed to assist the Department and the Division of Housing and Community Renewal in the application process and implementation of this program.

Commissioner
(County) Department of
Social Services