

# ***FAIR FUTURES PROGRAM MANUAL***

## ***SECTION 23***

### ***HOUSING & INDEPENDENT LIVING***

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## SECTION 23A & 23B

### A. AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE

Young people in foster care in NYC who do not achieve permanency by age 21 “age out” of the system.

**Permanency**, defined in legal terms, is **being reunited** with the young person’s birth family, **being adopted** by a foster parent, or **achieving Legal Custody/ Guardianship**.

The overall goal is to ensure that the young person is part of a safe, stable, loving family and has a broad network of supportive adults. There are many other ways a young person can achieve long-term, *relational permanency*, including a moral adoption or a Permanency Pact. However, unless the young person has a legal arrangement (adoption or Legal Custody/Guardianship), the young person will “age out” and leave foster care with an APPLA goal (Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement with a permanency resource).

When the young person has an APPLA goal, they are eligible for various forms of affordable housing in NYC (see [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 23C](#) for more information). As it is illegal to allow a young person to be discharged from foster care without achieving permanency or a “stable living arrangement,” young people can stay in the foster care systems past age 21 if they do not obtain housing by then.

A **stable living arrangement** is defined as: a living arrangement reasonably expected to be the young adult’s home for at least 12 months following discharge from care. A “stable living arrangement” cannot be a shelter or other temporary housing (such as a hotel or other living arrangement with 10 or more unrelated persons).

**If an agency does not have a permanent housing option identified for a young adult nearing or over their 21st birthday**, regardless of the extent to which the agency or young adult has made efforts to secure housing, a **Continuation of Care and Support (CCS21+) request** must be submitted to ACS for consideration and review.

### B. ROLE OF THE COACH VS. CASE MANAGER VS. HOUSING SPECIALIST

#### OVERVIEW

While Coaches can help facilitate permanency in a number of ways (e.g., helping the young person regain trust in adults), the roles/responsibilities associated with permanency are in the domain of the Case Planner. Case Planners will also help with the housing application process if the agency does not have a Housing Specialist.

The role of the Coach is to help oversee the housing application process by ensuring that all applications for all forms of housing are submitted as early as possible (ideally by 19 years old, if the young person has an APPLA goal), and assisting the appropriate agency staff, if needed.

Once the young person has housing, it is the role of the Coach to help them transition into the apartment, help them maintain stable housing, build independent living skills, and transition to into permanent housing (if applicable).

#### ROLE OF THE CASE PLANNER

One of the primary roles of the Case Planner is to help young people achieve permanency. *Some agencies may also have Family Finders and/or Wendy’s Wonderful Specialists who aid in the family finding process.*

If a young person has not achieved permanency and there are no plans in the works, a young person’s goal (on paper) becomes **APPLA**. Some young people may also voluntarily choose to have an APPLA goal and age out of foster care.

When a young person has an APPLA goal, the Case Planner’s role is to help the young person obtain housing/a stable living arrangement. Agencies that have Housing Specialists assist young people with the housing application process.

## ROLE OF THE HOUSING SPECIALIST



The Housing Specialist helps young people with an APPLA goal submit applications to all forms of housing.



Once submitted, they help them access housing by following up on the application status, navigating any administrative issues that arise, and keeping in touch with the Coach and Case Planner.

For young people who have housing and are ready to transition into more permanent housing by/before age 26, the Housing Specialist can work with the Coach to assist these young people with the process.

*If there is no Housing Specialist (as this role may be phased in over time), then the Case Planner (or Coach) would assist with the housing application process.*

Overall, a Housing Specialist:

- Works with young people who are aging out to submit all forms of housing applications, as early as possible
- Checks in on young people's application status; follows up with NYCHA and supportive housing residences, when needed
- Helps young people transition into permanent housing, when applicable, by helping them obtain Section 8 vouchers, apply to the NYC affordable housing lottery, etc.
- Liaises with the Case Planner and Coach, as needed

## ROLE OF THE COACH



**Coaches will stick with young people until age 26, regardless of their permanency status, as all young people need assistance with their academic and career goals and more positive adult relationships in their lives.**

In the Fair Futures model, once a young person has an APPLA+ goal, the Coach's role is to liaise with the Case Planner and Housing Specialist (and ACS, when needed) to ensure that the young person accesses stable, affordable housing. Regardless of who helps the young person fill out applications, the Coach will ensure that the process is moving along and that the young person attends their housing appointments.

During the application process and up until the time of discharge from foster care, the Coach serves as oversight and checks off a young person's progress completing "[Housing & Independent Living](#)" Goals. (See [Appendix E\\_Goals & Steps Guide and Worksheets](#) and [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 230](#))

Once a young person ages out and moves into their new home, they will no longer have a Case Planner; it then becomes the full role of the Coach to help them maintain stable housing and build independent living skills.

**Overall, Coaches help young people navigate the difficult transition to independent living.**

The Coach:

- Coordinates with a Housing Specialist (and/or Case Planner, if the agency does not have a Housing Specialist) to ensure that all young people's housing applications are submitted as early as possible (by age 19 if their goal is to age out);
- Accompanies the young person to visit supportive housing residences, when needed;
- Helps young people move in and obtain furniture;
- Helps young people obtain public assistance, if/when needed;
- Helps young people maintain their housing by providing independent living and life skills supports such as budgeting, obtaining a bank account, and advocating with landlords, if needed.

## SECTION 23C

### C. OVERVIEW OF TYPES OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR FOSTER YOUTH

There are several forms of housing available to foster youth aging out of care. Case Planners and Coaches should ensure that by age 19 foster youth with an APPLA goal apply for all forms of housing for which they are eligible for so that they have options.

That said, there are a number of factors to consider based on the young person's situation, needs, and preferences. Some young people may weigh certain factors more heavily than others or may not be eligible for certain types of housing.

#### KEY FACTORS:

- Proximity to work/school/family;
- Safety/neighborhood;
- Housing condition;
- Ability/willingness to live alone vs. with roommates;
- Permanent vs. temporary (until age 26) housing;
- Need for on-site supports (for young people with a mental health diagnosis, substance abuse history, or need support with day-to-day functioning);
- Other life/situational factors, including:
  - If the young person is pregnant/parenting;
  - If the young person has a felony record.

#### **TIP!** IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE FAMILIAR WITH KEY INFORMATION AND TERMINOLOGY:

##### Affordable Housing

All of the housing available to foster youth is deemed **affordable**, meaning that tenants will never be charged more than 30% of gross (pre-tax) income, and that public assistance is a form of acceptable income/rent payment.



**Reminder: 30% of gross income is actually an estimated 50% of net (after-tax) income.**

It is critical to inform youth that their portion of the rent will be approximately one whole paycheck (if paid biweekly) so that they can plan ahead for the cost of living when leaving care.

##### Supportive Housing

Some housing options are **supportive**, meaning they offer on-site staffing supports and services. These services are almost always voluntary, not mandated, and the quality can vary widely by residence. *Some residences, such as Good Shepherd Services' The Foyer, require young people to participate in services to be accepted into the program.*

##### Temporary Housing

Some housing options are **temporary**, meaning the young person has to transition out by/before age 26.

##### Permanent Housing

Some are **permanent housing**, meaning the young person can stay in that apartment as long as needed, as long as they are paying rent and meeting the requirements.

##### NYCHA

The New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), a public agency that provides permanent, affordable housing to NYC residents. NYCHA does not provide supportive services.

##### NY/NY 3

NY/NY 3 is a temporary, supportive housing program that provides housing to certain populations, including foster youth who age out. It includes supportive housing in a residential/congregate setting and scatter-site housing.

##### NYC 15

NYC 15 is a permanent, supportive housing program that provides housing to certain populations, including foster youth who age out and meet certain eligibility criteria. It includes supportive housing in a residential/congregate setting and scatter-site housing (both of which are permanent). *It has much more robust funding and support services as compared to NY/NY 3.*

## TYPES OF HOUSING FOR FOSTER YOUTH AGING OUT

Please refer to the tools in [Appendices I1-I18](#) for each housing type for additional details related to eligibility, pros, cons, and for a full description of the application process, timeline, and tips.

### NYCHA Apartments: Permanent housing

Apartments in public housing developments located throughout NYC.

Foster youth are given studios; young people with children typically get a 1-bedroom

#### *Eligibility / How to apply:*

- ❖ Youth can be employed or get a Presumptive Budget Letter before getting on public assistance (see NYCHA tool)
- ❖ Youth with a criminal history or pending charges may be denied
- ❖ Rent is based on 30% of gross income and re-evaluated annually (an eligible source of income is required during these reviews); paychecks, SSI and Public Assistance are acceptable means of paying rent
- ❖ Federal laws do not allow tenants to be full-time students; in practice, this can depend on the residence and the case worker – but it is best for tenants in college to have work/study income, a part-time job, or be on public assistance

*Staffing & Supports:* None

### NY/NY 3 Supportive Housing (Residential Setting): Temporary

Apartments in a residence that provides on-site staffing supports and services

Some residences have single apartments/ studios and other residences have a congregate/roommate set-up

#### *Eligibility / How to apply:*

- ❖ No proof of income needed upon application
- ❖ Rent is based on 30% of gross income and re-evaluated annually; SSI and Public Assistance are acceptable means of paying rent, and some residences do not require a “formal source” of payment
- ❖ Residences charge \$215/month for young people who are not employed or on SSI
- ❖ Some residences only charge \$50/month for full-time students, whereas other residences (those that use tax credits) do not allow tenants to be full-time students; Coaches/Housing Specialists should be aware of which do and which do not

#### *Staffing & Supports:*

Case Managers on-site and sometimes other staff

Workshops and other services (e.g., job application assistance) are sometimes available; quality varies

#### *Temporary Housing*

Most residences require tenants to move out by age 26; however, this is difficult to enforce, and some tenants stay longer.

### NY/NY 3 Supportive Housing (Scattered-site): Temporary

Youth live in regular apartments throughout the City where landlords accept the NY/NY 3 voucher; these apartments are not always in accessible/desirable areas. Some tenants have roommates, and some are single unit apartments

#### *Eligibility / How to apply:*

- ❖ No proof of income needed upon application
- ❖ Rent is based on 30% of gross income and re-evaluated annually; SSI and Public Assistance are acceptable means of paying rent

#### *Staffing & Supports:*

A Case Manager makes home visits, but overall there are less supports through scatter-site housing vs. residential

#### *Temporary Housing*

Most residences require tenants to move out by age 26; however, this is difficult to enforce, and some tenants stay longer.

## TYPES OF HOUSING, CONTINUED

### NYC 15 Supportive, Scattered-site Housing (Residential Setting): Permanent Housing

Youth live in regular apartments throughout the City where landlords accept the NYC 15 voucher; these apartments are not always in accessible/desirable areas

Some tenants have roommates, and some are single unit apartments

#### **Eligibility / How to apply:**

- ❖ No proof of income needed upon application
- ❖ Rent is based on 30% of gross income and re-evaluated annually; SSI and Public Assistance are acceptable means of paying rent
- ❖ Some residents only charge \$215/month for young people who are not employed or on SSI
- ❖ There are certain eligibility criteria; youth must have a clear need for supportive housing, not just affordable housing

#### **Staffing & Supports:**

Full staffing model includes Case Managers, Specialists, a Social Worker, etc.

Workshops and other educational and employment services are available

**Permanent Housing:** While residents are not required to leave by age 26, moving on once the young person is ready is often encouraged by providers.

### NYC 15 Supportive Housing (Residential Setting): Permanent Housing

Apartments in a residence with on-site staffing and support services. Some tenants have roommates, and some are single unit apartments

#### **Eligibility / How to apply:**

- ❖ No proof of income needed upon application
- ❖ Rent is based on 30% of gross income and re-evaluated annually; SSI and Public Assistance are acceptable means of paying rent
- ❖ Some residents only charge \$215/month for young people who are not employed or on SSI
- ❖ There are certain eligibility criteria; youth must have a clear need for supportive housing, not just affordable housing

#### **Staffing & Supports:**

Full staffing model includes Case Managers, Specialists, a Social Worker, etc.

Workshops and educational and employment services are available

**Permanent Housing:** While residents are not required to leave by age 26, moving on once the young person is ready is often encouraged by providers.

### Other Supportive Housing Residences (e.g., Harlem Dowling, The Foyer, McLaughlin Residence)

- ❖ The Harlem Dowling is a newly constructed building with 12 single units for foster youth in an accessible location.
- ❖ The McLaughlin Residence (formerly Edwin Gould Academy) is a housing program for young adults, ages 18 to 25 and has 36 studio apartments.
- ❖ The Foyer is a 2-year transitional supportive housing residence that serves provides supportive housing to young adults in their late teens and early twenties who have aged out of the child welfare system, are homeless, or at risk of homelessness.

#### **Eligibility / How to apply:**

Reach out to each individually for requirements.

#### **Staffing & Supports:**

All have on-site staffing and supports to varying degrees.

**Type:** The Harlem Dowling is a permanent supportive housing residence run by Children's Village. The Foyer is a 2-year transitional program and the McLaughlin Residence is temporary supportive housing (both are operated by Good Shepherd Services).

## Section 8 Apartment

A Section 8 voucher allows a young person to rent a market-rate apartment (for 30% of their gross income) anywhere that has a private landlord who accepts Section 8 vouchers. It can be difficult to locate an apartment.

### *Eligibility / How to apply:*

- ❖ Rent is based on 30% of gross income and re-evaluated annually
- ❖ While there are no income requirements to apply to Section 8, young people will need stable employment to secure an apartment; public assistance and/or scholarship funding are not accepted forms of income for landlords
- ❖ Most youth will need a broker, which ACS will not pay for unless the youth is under 21.5 years of age or on an approved CCS21+
- ❖ A credit score of over 500 is recommended to secure an apartment (some brokers can locate one with less)

*Staffing & Supports:* None

*Permanent Housing:* It is permanent as long as the youth can pay the rent on-time!

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## SECTION 23D

### D. HOUSING & INDEPENDENT LIVING GOALS & STEPS

All young people aging out of foster care (with an APPLA goal) should apply to all forms of housing for which they are eligible by age 19, as it can take a couple of years to obtain housing.

#### AT A MINIMUM, YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD APPLY TO:

- NYCHA
- NY/NY 3 and NYC 15 Supportive Housing (if a young person's application is submitted to either NY/NY 3 or NYC 15, it will be considered for both).

It is important to apply to these supportive housing pathways as they are less restrictive than NYCHA, particularly if the young person is a full-time student, and more supportive

**TIP!** [Appendix E Goals & Steps Guide and Worksheets](#) contains a Roadmap of Housing & Independent Living Goals for visual purposes.

#### APPLYING AND OBTAINING HOUSING SUMMARY:

<b>APPLY</b> ↓	Coaches start by selecting the " <a href="#">Apply to Housing</a> " Goals for as many forms of housing as the young person is eligible (minimally, NYCHA and Supportive Housing).
<b>OBTAIN</b> ↓	Once those Goals are completed and applications are submitted, the Goals will automatically become " <a href="#">Obtain Housing</a> " Goals.
<b>MAINTAIN</b> ✓	Once the young person obtains housing, the Goals automatically become " <a href="#">Maintain Housing</a> " and " <a href="#">Gain Independent Living/Life Skills</a> ";

For young people in **NY NY 3 Supportive Housing**, which ends at age 26, the next Goal will become "Obtain permanent housing".

One or more of the following Goals would be selected by the Coach or Housing Specialist:

<b>APPLY</b> ↓	" <a href="#">Apply to NYC Affordable Housing Lottery</a> " (if affordable housing is needed)
<b>OBTAIN</b> →	" <a href="#">Use portable Section 8 Voucher to transition from temporary to permanent housing</a> " (if affordable housing is needed and the youth has a Voucher)
	" <a href="#">Transition into Market-Rate Housing</a> " (for young people who are ready for this step)

**Young people who are already in permanent housing** can also apply to any of the above forms of housing, when they are ready (e.g., once they have stable employment, good credit, and strong financial management/budgeting skills).

Agencies can decide whether the Coach or the Housing Specialist checks off the steps related to applying to and obtaining housing, as some are in the Coach's domain and some are the responsibility of the Housing Specialist. At agencies where there is no Housing Specialist and Case Planners assist with the housing application process, the Coach should be responsible for checking off the steps after they are completed (e.g., overseeing the process and assisting if needed).

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## SECTION 23E

### E. OBTAINING A NYCHA APARTMENT

It is not uncommon for young people in foster care who are aging out to say that they do not want to apply to NYCHA. Many grew up in NYCHA developments and returning to them feels like coming full circle - going back to where they came from. Other concerns often include safety and the condition of the apartments themselves.

While all of these concerns are valid, Coaches/Case Planners should strongly encourage all young people to apply for all forms of housing. Some NYCHA developments are better than others (and some are in very desirable locations in NYC). A young person can always choose to reject it and pursue other housing options. Many young people also change their minds over the course of the years that they are waiting for housing; it is always better to have the option. If a youth has negative past experiences in a specific neighborhood or borough of the city, encourage the young person to make a borough selection that makes them more comfortable.

See [Appendix I1\\_Applying to and Obtaining a NYCHA apartment](#) for a comprehensive summary that includes: a description of NYCHA housing; key highlights/information; pros/cons and considerations when applying; eligibility requirements; application details (required documents, application process, and timeline); and tips for Coaches and staff (common mistakes, best practices, etc.).

#### GOALS & STEPS

All young people aging out should have “[Apply to NYCHA](#)” as one of their Goals for obtaining housing. For detailed Steps, please refer to the “[Apply to NYCHA](#)” Goal Worksheet in [Appendix E\\_Goals & Steps Guide and Worksheets](#)

##### Required Steps include:

- Get Memorandum of Attestation signed by agency Director
- Ensure youth has all vital documents and required documentation
- Accompany youth to ACS office to submit NYCHA application
- Ensure youth attends NYCHA Eligibility Interview

##### Potential Steps include:

- If youth is not employed, request Presumptive Budget Letter
- Follow up with ACS Housing to ensure application was accepted by NYCHA
- Advise youth to attend the ACS Housing Academy
- Prepare youth for eligibility interview

**After the “Apply to NYCHA” Goal is complete, the Coach should select the “[Obtain NYCHA apartment](#)” Goal.**

##### Required Steps include:

- Accompany youth to view the apartment they were offered
- Request discharge conference to be scheduled as soon as possible if youth does not reject apartment
- After discharge conference, apply for ACS \$1,000 discharge grant (for home goods, etc.)
- Help youth obtain the \$1,800 ACS grant to pay first month rent and needed furnishings
- Take youth shopping to select furniture
- Provide social-emotional support to young person during the transition process, check in on them

##### Potential Steps include:

- If youth is unhappy with apartment, discuss pros/cons of denying first choice
- Review home goods youth will need
- If youth is not employed, visit HRA with client to apply for public assistance (will need letter from agency that youth is being discharged)
- Assist youth with moving in - setting up the home, unpacking home goods, etc.

For detailed Steps, refer to the “[Obtain NYCHA apartment](#)” Goal Worksheet in [Appendix E\\_Goals & Steps Guide and Worksheets](#)

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## SECTION 23F

### F. OBTAINING SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (NY/NY 3 OR NYC 15)

**NY/NY 3 is a temporary, supportive housing program** that serves nine distinct populations, including foster youth who age out. In this program, young people need to transition out by age 26.

It includes both **congregate/residential supportive housing**, where services are voluntary, and **scattered-site housing**.

*Note: The quality of services varies by housing provider.*

**NYC 15 is an initiative to provide 15,000 units of permanent, supportive housing over 15 years.**

It has more funding than NY/NY 3 and thus more comprehensive staffing supports and on-site services for residents (all of which are voluntary). Under NYC 15, a youth aging out of care can qualify for single adult housing or housing for parenting youth (if they are pregnant/parenting). As NYC 15 is a more recent program, there are more spots open/opening.

**The key differences between NY/NY 3 and NYC 15 are:**

- NYC 15 is permanent housing and NY/NY 3 is temporary
- NYC 15 includes more robust staffing/on-site supports than NY/NY 3 (both are voluntary)
- While both applications require applicants to show they need supportive housing (not just affordable housing), NYC 15 is stricter about these requirements. Most foster youth aging out should meet these requirements – a clinical diagnosis is not required – if the forms are filled out correctly.

See [Appendix I7\\_Applying to and Obtaining Supportive Housing\\_NYC 15](#) to ensure that a young person's application is accepted.



**When a NY/NY 3 application is submitted, the application is also automatically screened for NYC 15 eligibility.**

It is important that all submitted documents align with each other and clearly describe the need for supportive housing (not just affordable housing). While a young person's strengths can and should be highlighted, it is necessary to provide specifics and examples as to why they still need support in order for the application to be approved.

See [Appendix I5\\_Applying to and Obtaining Supportive Housing\\_NY NY 3](#) and [Appendix I7\\_Applying to and Obtaining Supportive Housing\\_NYC 15](#) or a comprehensive summary of both programs that includes: a program description; key highlights/information; pros/cons and considerations when applying; eligibility requirements; application details (required documents, application process, and timeline); and tips for Coaches and staff (common mistakes, best practices, etc.).

For a list of housing providers, see [Appendix I6\\_NY NY 3 Housing Providers](#) and [Appendix I8\\_NYC 15 Supportive Housing Providers](#).

### GOALS & STEPS

All young people aging out should have "[Apply to supportive housing \(NY/NY 3 or NYC 15\)](#)" as one of their Goals for obtaining housing.

**Required Steps** include:

- Complete psychosocial; ensure that the psychosocial outlines need for supportive housing and is consistent with the application
- Submit HRA2010e application via online PACT system
- Contact ACS Housing to assess which agencies the client's packet was submitted

**Potential Steps** include:

- If psychiatric evaluation is required, work with client's psychiatrist to have this completed
- Request a copy of the supportive housing application

**After the “Apply to Supportive Housing (NY/NY3 or NYC 15)” Goal is complete, the Coach should select the Goal, “Obtain Supportive Housing (NY/NY 3 or NYC 15)”**

**Required Steps** include:

- Contact supportive housing providers where packet was submitted
- Prepare youth for interview once a spot opens
- Accompany youth on day of interview and ensure youth has all documents
- Once accepted, schedule trial discharge conference
- Apply for \$645 ACS grant for first month’s rent
- Apply for discharge grant for home goods/furniture
- Provide social-emotional support to young person during the transition process – check in on them

**Potential Steps** include:

- Advocate for youth to receive an interview at any agency with a vacancy
- Visit residences with young person to increase chances of being accepted
- If youth is not employed, visit HRA with client to apply for public assistance (will need letter from agency that youth is being discharged)
- Assist youth with moving in - setting up the home, unpacking home goods, etc.

See [Appendix I5\\_Applying to and Obtaining Supportive Housing\\_NY NY 3](#) and [Appendix I7\\_Applying to and Obtaining Supportive Housing\\_NYC 15](#) for additional information.

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## SECTION 23G

### G. OBTAINING OTHER SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

There are some supportive housing residences that do not receive the **NY/NY 3** or **NYC 15** funding, and thus have separate application processes. Two of these residences include: the Harlem Dowling residence and the McLaughlin East Harlem residence.

#### THE HARLEM DOWLING RESIDENCE

This building has 12 units for former foster youth and provides permanent, supportive housing. It is operated by [Children's Village](#). The residence blends supportive, affordable housing with market-rate units. The studio apartments are large, spacious, and filled with sunlight, and the building is located in a desirable location in Harlem, easily accessible by public transportation.

See [Appendix I10 Applying to and Obtaining Supportive Permanent Housing\\_Harlem Dowling](#) for a comprehensive summary that includes: key highlights/information; pros/cons and considerations when applying; eligibility requirements; application details (required documents, application process, and timeline); and tips for Coaches and staff (common mistakes, best practices, etc.).

#### THE MCLAUGHLIN EAST HARLEM RESIDENCE

This building is run by [Good Shepherd Services](#). McLaughlin East Harlem Residence is a housing program for young adults, ages 18 to 25, that provides safe, affordable housing to 36 young adults in studio apartments. The residence also has 15 supportive housing units which consist of 15 one-bedroom apartments for a single parent with one child.

In addition to housing, McLaughlin East Harlem Residence offers a host of services and supports which include counseling, peer groups, life-skills training, and referrals-all designed to meet the emotional, employment, housing, educational, and legal needs of youth in one convenient setting.

**YOUNG PEOPLE APPLYING TO SUPPORTIVE HOUSING SHOULD ALSO APPLY TO BOTH THE HARLEM DOWLING & MCLAUGHLIN EAST HARLEM RESIDENCES.**

#### GOALS & STEPS

The **Required Steps** associated with the goal, "[Apply to other supportive housing residence program \(e.g., Harlem Dowling, McLaughlin East Harlem Residence, etc.\)](#)", include:

- Reach out to residence
- Complete application

**Potential Steps** include:

- Submit any other required documentation (e.g., credit check, background check, paystubs, etc.)

Once the Goal "[Apply to other supportive housing residence program \(e.g., Harlem Dowling, McLaughlin East Harlem Residence, etc.\)](#)" is complete, Coaches should select the Goal, "[Obtain other supportive housing residence \(e.g., Harlem Dowling, McLaughlin East Harlem Residence, etc.\)](#)".

**Required Steps** include:

- Follow up to ensure application was received and assess for upcoming vacancies
- Prepare youth for interview process
- Provide social-emotional support during the transition process - check in on them (*text, call, visit*)

**Potential Steps** include:

- If called for interview, accompany youth on day of interview
- Assist youth with moving in - setting up the home, unpacking home goods, etc

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## SECTION 23H

### H. OBTAINING SECTION 8 – PERMANENT HOUSING

**NYCHA Section 8** is administered by NYCHA and provides **Section 8 vouchers** to youth ages eighteen and older who are transitioning out of foster care.

A **Section 8 voucher** allows a young person to rent a market-rate apartment (for 30% of their gross income) anywhere that has a private landlord who accepts Section 8 vouchers. **In general, this pathway is not recommended for youth aging out of care unless they have very stable employment and good credit, which is not often the case.**

Vouchers for foster youth aging out are also limited and there is a waiting list. Some supportive housing providers also get access to Section 8 vouchers for residents so they can transition out by/before age 26.

#### GOALS & STEPS

The **Required Steps** for the “[Apply to Section 8 Housing while in foster care](#)” Goal include:

- Contact ACS with required information to add youth to waitlist

**Potential Steps** include:

- Inform youth of long waitlist for Section 8 and the pros/cons of the program
- If youth is approaching or already 24 years old, inform ACS of urgency of case

See [Appendix I9 Applying Directly to Section 8 from Foster Care](#) for details about Applying to and Obtaining Section 8 Housing.

#### GOALS & STEPS

The steps for the “[Obtain Section 8 Housing straight from foster care](#)” Goal:

**Required Steps** include:

- Ensure youth has stable employment and good credit before trying to obtain housing
- Run youth's credit score
- Once called for voucher, immediately assist youth in locating an apartment (no fee apartments or connect to broker)
- Discuss with youth and agency staff how the one-month security deposit will be paid to landlord
- Once a signed lease is secured, submit to ACS Housing staff
- Provide social-emotional support to young person during the transition process – check in on them

**Potential Steps** include:

- Outreach to brokers to find those with section 8 apartments available for viewing
- If needed, work with youth to build positive credit
- Counsel youth during this trying and difficult process
- If a broker was used, apply to the \$1,800 ACS grant and ACS discharge grant to cover the broker fee
- If a broker was used, discuss with youth and agency how furniture and home goods will be provided for
- Assist youth with moving in - setting up the home, unpacking home goods, etc.

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## SECTION 23I

### I. HOUSING FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS: THE DORMITORY PROJECT AND ACS COLLEGE ROOM & BOARD

**The Dorm Project**, as discussed in the [Fair Futures Program Manual Section 21E](#), is a collaboration among ACS, CUNY, and the New York Foundling to enable foster youth attending any CUNY college to live in dorms affiliated with Queens College, City College, and John Jay College with a variety of supports, including tutors and college success coaches.

**While these are not considered Housing “Goals,” they can be a great option for students who have not yet secured housing and who want to have the dorm experience.** Students can remain in the dorm until age 25 or until college graduation (whichever comes first). They are supported with a range of academic, financial, and social supports - on site tutoring, workshops, a living stipend, and College Success Coaches.

Students attending colleges other than CUNY with dorms can also apply to the ACS College Room & Board program, where they receive the financial stipend and all expenses covered.

#### Benefits:

- Youth can have the ‘dorm experience’ and can move out of the foster home prior to securing independent housing;
- Youth can stay in the dorm while awaiting NYCHA/supportive housing/section 8 approval;
- The cost of college tuition, room, board, books, and transportation is fully covered;
- Youth receive a robust weekly stipend that combines their various forms of financial aid so that they do not have to work and can stay on-track financially (instead of having their funding provided in large lump sums);
- Youth in The Dormitory Project receive comprehensive on site supports (both coaching and weekly tutoring).

#### Important considerations:

Once young people’s NYCHA apartment or supportive housing spot becomes available, they have to make the difficult decision of whether to take the housing (which will provide them with stability after college) and forgo the robust financial and academic supports they receive through the Dorm Project, or stay at the Dorm Project.

In the event they reject the housing but end up getting kicked out of the Dorm Project or leaving college, the young person is in a difficult situation.

If a youth leaves The Dormitory Project while under 21 years of age they can return to their agency and be placed in a foster home. However, this option is not available to youth who are over 21 years old.

- Youth could apply for Section 8 and reapply for supportive housing, but these options would not lead to an immediate housing solution.
- Youth in The Dormitory Project or ACS College Room & Board are not on CCS21+ status – so they will not be eligible for ACS grants when they secure an apartment if they are past the age of 21.5 years old.
- Youth must secure another apartment before college graduation, and likely will not have a full-time job and the financial resources to do so.
- Students attending school in boroughs outside of Queens may have a long commute.
- Students will share the apartment with 2 to 4 other college foster youth

#### Eligibility:

Students must be: between 17-24 years old, enrolled in a CUNY college, and in foster care (or have a history of foster care at least one year past 16th birthday).

For more information, including a detailed description of the supports, the application process, and tips for Coaches, see [Appendix G13\\_Fair Futures Guide to the Dorm Project](#) and [Appendix G14\\_ACS College Room & Board](#).



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## SECTION 23J

### J. ACS FURNITURE & HOUSING GRANTS

#### ACS HAS TWO “ONE-SHOT” GRANTS FOR FOSTER YOUTH:

Note: Youth cannot be older than 21.5 years of age to apply

-  **A move-in grant of \$1,800** which can be used for a security deposit, first month’s rent, broker’s fee, moving expenses, and/or furniture (as applicable).  
Youth moving into supportive housing are only eligible for \$645 of the move-in grant, not the full \$1,800.
-  **A grant of up to \$1,800 for rent arrears;** this can only be used one time

In 2017, ACS reinstated the **Discharge Grant**. This provides additional funding of up to **\$1,000** to assist youth aging out of foster care with essential items needed when moving into their apartment. The grant will cover items such as home goods, metro-cards, food, furniture, toiletries, etc.

The **Discharge Grant** can be used for a TV no larger than 50 inches, but all other entertainment electronics (video games etc.) will not be reimbursed.

Note: ACS will not reimburse sales tax.

**TIP!** Coaches should always ensure the young person applies for these grants, when needed, whether it is the Case Planner, Housing Specialist, or Coach assisting in the process.  
**This is one of the Required Steps in each of the “obtaining housing” goals.**

For details on how to apply and tips, see [Appendix I11\\_ACS Housing Subsidy](#) and [Appendix I13\\_Discharge Grant Reimbursement Request Forms](#).

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## SECTION 23K

### K. TRANSITIONING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO HOUSING

The Coach's role is to help ensure that young people transition smoothly into housing. Ideally, the Coach helps the young person set up their apartment. This can be an important bonding experience.

#### **MOVING INTO A FIRST APARTMENT IS A BIG TRANSITION, AND THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS COACHES CAN DO TO LESSEN THE STRESS INVOLVED FOR THE YOUNG PERSON:**

##### **Help them move in and furnish their apartment**

- Work with the Housing Specialist and Case Planner to ensure all grants are applied for as fast as possible. It will be much harder if the youth must live in their apartment for weeks without the basic necessities.
- Involve the young person in picking out decor items for the apartment (e.g., ask them to think about what color they want for their bedding and bathroom, shop online or in person together to select the items).  
See [Appendix I14\\_FairFutures\\_Home Goods Checklist](#) for a list of items that young people will need for their apartment.
- Assist the young person in actually setting up the home; open boxes together and put away items, help set up the bedding and bathroom, etc. It will be a better experience for the young person if they have help with the set up and clean up. Many young people do not know how to put together furniture, and guidance can be great independent living skills instruction in the real environment.

##### **Make a budget and explain how rent works**

- Explain housing rules so they know what to expect:
  - Their rent will go up as income increases;
  - Relay to youth that they can expect 50% of their income, or one full paycheck, to be their rent calculation. Help youth plan for rent increases by discussing this when they receive a raise/higher paying job.
  - If they lose a job, they must immediately apply for public assistance and get HRA to pay the rent so they do not accrue arrears while seeking employment;
  - In some situations youth may have their cash assistance turned off, but not fully understand this because they are still receiving food stamps. Youth should check their rent statement monthly to ensure HRA paid the rent.
- Work out a budget with the young person outlining their income and each expense item. It is important to know how much money they can allocate to food/entertainment after paying their rent and necessary bills.  
If the young person is working and not eligible for full HRA, they may still be entitled to food stamps.

Seeing their budget broken down will help the Coach determine if this should be explored further.

See [Appendix I16\\_Independent Living Budget Tool](#).

##### **Provide social/emotional support**

- Talk to young person a lot in the first weeks and months of the transition. Despite the fact that many young people cannot wait to leave foster care, it is often scarier than they predicted! Many young people are used to having multiple other people in the home, noise, and voices at night; it can be disconcerting to be alone in an apartment for the first time.
- Understand how hard this transition is and that youth may regress or push away temporarily.  
**It is more important than ever to remain consistent in their lives!**



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## SECTION 23L

### L. APPLYING FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

If a young person does not have a regular paycheck when they move into NYCHA or supportive housing, they need to apply for public assistance.

**TIP!** *There may be some exceptions to this, however - some supportive housing residences allow young people enrolled in school/vocational program to only pay a certain amount.*

#### **Youth who are aging out of care are eligible to apply for Public Assistance through the Special Projects Center.**

Youth in any borough are eligible for this location on 109 East 16th Street, 12th floor, NY, NY.

The staff at this HRA location are more knowledgeable about aging out of foster care, the wait time is significantly lower, and the experience is overall less stressful for the young person.

The youth can select a morning or afternoon appointment but will be assigned the specific time.

#### **The Coach or Case Planner should always accompany a young person to obtain public assistance.**

It is a very stressful office and can be overwhelming for the young person. The Coach can be there to provide emotional support, model appropriate self-advocacy, and assist in ensuring all needed documents and information are presented.

Coaches should also note the dates for follow up appointments and remind youth of these dates prior to the assigned day. *If a youth misses any of the follow up appointments, the case will be declined and the whole process must begin again.* This can cause an unnecessary delay in securing income, which could lead to the youth accruing arrears immediately after securing an apartment.



**Once a youth is out of care for approximately six months, they are no longer eligible to utilize the Special Projects Center.** For a young person whose case has closed and needs help re-applying, they must access their local assigned office. Coaches should be sure to verify the correct office prior to meeting a youth. HRA staff will not be able to assist youth who are not zoned for their specific office.

**Each agency should apply to become Provider Portal Partners with HRA.** This allows for clients to voluntarily opt to share the case information with the Coach or Housing Specialist. Coaches can access upcoming appointments, receive case alerts, assist clients with recertifying without visiting a HRA office, requesting fair fares cards, and many other features.

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## SECTION 23M

### M. MAINTAINING HOUSING

**One in 4 youth will be homeless within 3 years of leaving foster care in NYC.** The role of the Coach is to ensure this does not happen by helping young people who age out maintain stable housing and build independent living skills while supporting them on their academic/career paths.

#### **AVOIDING RENT ARREARS.**

Rental arrears are the primary reason why young people lose their apartments. NYCHA can begin eviction proceedings after two months of lack of payment on the account.

#### **IMPORTANT TIP FOR COACHES: Ask about rent every month.**

The Coach should ask the young person about their ability to pay their rent, or any fear that they will be unable to pay in the coming months. Catching arrears in the first month or two can make the difference in avoiding housing court.

#### **WAYS TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE AVOID RENTAL ARREARS BASED ON THEIR SITUATION:**

##### **Loss of employment**

- If a young person loses their job, rental arrears can quickly pile up. As soon as a youth is unemployed, they should bring a letter of termination and proof of Unemployment Benefits application (if applicable) to their NYCHA Housing Assistant/Supportive Housing management office.
- The rent cannot be recalculated without proof of income. Therefore, the youth must also immediately apply for public assistance benefits to cover the rent cost while they search for new employment. The Coach can accompany them to public assistance and ensure the youth attends all follow up appointments.
- The HRA case will be automatically closed if the young person misses any follow up appointments, and the process will have to start again. It takes HRA 30 days to make a determination, so applying immediately is crucial to not incurring ongoing rental arrears.

##### **Loss of public assistance**

- For youth on public assistance, it is crucial that their case remain active and open in order for the rent to be paid. **If an HRA case is closed for any reason, the rent will not be paid and arrears will accrue.** Youth and Coaches should check via NYCHA's online portal or app every month to make sure that the rent has been paid by HRA.

##### **Increase in rent**

- If a young person has secured their apartment with a presumptive budget letter, the rent will automatically be set at the HRA amount (around \$215) even if the youth is paying the rent on their own.
- If a young person either gains employment or earns a higher wage, their rent will be increased when NYCHA does the annual case review. For youth who see a large increase in wages, the increase in rent can be significant. For example, it is very hard for youth accustomed to paying \$200-300 in rent to suddenly owe \$800-900.

#### **YOUTH SHOULD BE ADVISED THAT RENT IS TYPICALLY THE COST OF ONE FULL BIWEEKLY PAYCHECK.**



If a youth obtains a new job and makes \$500 every 2 weeks, they should begin to save and budget for an increase in their rent to around \$500 a month. Preparing the youth prior to this increase taking effect allows them to prepare by saving and lessens the potential shock of seeing that level of increase.

## **AVOIDING EVICTION**

**NYCHA can start eviction proceedings after two months of lack of payment on the account. It is less common for a supportive housing residence to proceed with eviction, however.**

If a young person receives a court notice in the mail, they should tell their Coach immediately. The Coach should always attend any Court appearance with the youth in order to advocate and clearly articulate the issues. While supportive housing, by nature, is not adamant about pursuing eviction of a youth for lack of payment, this can become an issue as they approach 26. Therefore, every step should be taken to avoid accruing large arrears despite the type/level of housing.

**There are options for paying rental arrears:**

- **HRA One-Shot Deal**  
Youth are eligible for an HRA one-shot deal whether on public assistance or not. However, you must have income to receive the one-shot deal; any youth who applies and does not have income (either from employment or public assistance) will be denied.
- **ACS One-Shot Deal**  
ACS will pay up to \$1,800 in rental arrears one time per youth. However, the youth cannot be older than 21.5 years of age, making this not a viable option for older youth.

## **WAYS TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE AVOID EVICTION BASED ON THEIR SITUATION:**

### **If the young person is employed:**

The young person and the Coach can apply directly for a one-shot deal without applying for any other HRA benefits.

If the rent is more than the \$215 that HRA designates for a single adult, then the youth will owe this money to HRA. HRA will set up a payment plan and the youth would make monthly payments to HRA. *Youth will need proof of identity, proof of residence, proof of income, and a rental breakdown from NYCHA stating how much is owed.*

### **If the young person is not employed:**

The young person and the Coach must apply for overall public assistance. This will both stop further arrears from accruing and will allow the youth to have income. Youth will need proof of identity and residence to apply.

After the case has been opened (30 days), then the Coach should accompany the youth to HRA to apply for a one-shot deal.

### **Eviction Proceeding in Court:**

NYCHA can pursue an eviction proceeding either through their NYCHA office (250 Broadway) or one of the borough civil courts. The purpose of these hearings is to create a stipulation to get the arrears paid, which if not done by the date agreed upon, can lead to an eviction.

Court personnel are familiar with HRA timelines, so 3 months is frequently given to allow for payment to be made. The young person and the Coach should bring any Court stipulations with them to HRA, if applying for the one-shot deal after a court date has been attended.

### **Coaches should explain the housing rules/policies:**

The Coach should ensure the young person understands housing rules and policies around smoking, pets, noise, guests, etc.

### **Young people can be evicted for having unauthorized adults living in the home.**

If a young person has someone staying temporarily, the young person should inform NYCHA. The guest can remain off the lease as long as they stay is under 6 months.

For anyone staying longer than 6 months, NYCHA asks that they be added to the lease. The rent would then be increased based on an increase in household composition size. If the individual has certain criminal history, they can be denied.

## **MAINTAIN HOUSING - GOALS & STEPS**

Once housing is obtained, the Coach should select the Goal "[Maintain Housing](#)" and complete the Steps listed in the worksheet.

### **Required Steps** include:

- Every month, ask young person if rent was paid, or if they expect any difficulty paying rent in the future
- Discuss the lease renewal process with youth and how rent can increase/decrease based on changes in income
- Walk through any housing rules/regulations so the young person is clear on what could get them kicked out

### **Potential Steps** include:

- Have youth download NYCHA app and create online account
- Coach youth on how to use the NYCHA app to submit tickets for repairs, check balances, make payments, etc.
- If applicable, ask youth if any issues paying utilities
- Meet with housing manager to rectify any issues (rent too high, repairs needed, etc.)
- If youth becomes unemployed, help youth get rent re-adjusted and get on public assistance while seeking employment
- If facing eviction, Coach/Housing Specialist to immediately meet with youth to review notices and gather documents needed for Court
- If facing eviction, Coach/Housing Specialist to accompany youth to any court or NYCHA hearings
- If facing eviction and there is no current income source, Coach/Housing Specialist to accompany youth to open a PA case so they can get a one-shot deal to pay for the arrears
- Coach/Housing Specialist to accompany youth to HRA to apply for a one-shot deal to pay arrears
- If facing eviction, Coach to stay in contact. Communicate with youth every 1-2 days to manage the anxiety and stress that proceedings cause.

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## SECTION 23N

### N. BUILDING INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS

Once housing is obtained, the Coach should also select the Goal “[Gain Independent Living/Life Skills](#)” and follow the Required and Potential Steps to help a young person maintain housing.

**Required Steps** include:

- Obtain copies of all vital documents;
- Obtain bank account;
- Create a monthly budget.  
(See [Appendix I16\\_Independent Living Budget Tool](#)).

**Potentials Steps** include:

- Discuss means of building positive credit and take steps to enact plan;
- Open a savings account;
- Take financial management workshop or course;
- Learn how to grocery shop and make meals;
- Discuss home organization/maintaining a home;
- Encourage youth to attend networking events, workshops, and agency events to build professional adult relationships.

The best way to gain skills is through experiential activities. See [Appendix I15\\_Building Independent Living Skills](#) for examples of critical independent living skills and experiential activities.

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## SECTION 230

### O. TRANSITIONING TO PERMANENT HOUSING

**Young people living in temporary housing will have to transition out by age 26.** In practice, some young people stay past 26, but the goal should always be to help them successfully transition by/before then. Other young people living in NYCHA apartments may reach the point where they would like to obtain a nicer apartment.

**TIP!** The Coach and the Housing Specialist should help with this second transition into independent living, which will require stable employment, good credit, and financial management/budgeting skills.

If the young person needs to maintain affordable housing (which many will, living in NYC), the two primary pathways are through a **portable Section 8 Voucher** or the **NYC Affordable Housing Lottery**.

#### PORTABLE SECTION 8 VOUCHERS

Some supportive housing providers get access to **Section 8 vouchers** for residents so they can transition out by/before age 26.

**A Section 8 voucher allows a young person to rent a market-rate apartment** (for 30% of their gross income) anywhere that has a private landlord who accepts Section 8 vouchers. Landlords will require stable employment and good credit.

See [Appendix I17\\_Transitioning to Permanent Housing – Using a Portable Section 8 Voucher](#), for a summary that includes: key highlights/information; pros/cons and considerations; eligibility; and tips on securing an apartment.

#### GOALS & STEPS

For young people with the Goal [“Use Portable Section 8 Voucher to transition from temporary to permanent housing”](#):

**Required Steps** include:

- Ensure young person has stable employment and solid financial management/budgeting skills
- Outreach to brokers to find those with Section 8 apartments available for viewing
- Run youth's credit score
- Assist youth in locating/visiting apartments (no fee apartments or connect to broker)
- Discuss with youth how the one-month security deposit will be paid to landlord
- Provide social-emotional support to young person during the transition process – check in on them.

**Potential Steps** include:

- If needed, work with youth to build positive credit
- Counsel youth during this trying and difficult process
- Assist youth with moving in - setting up the home, unpacking home goods, etc.

#### NYC AFFORDABLE HOUSING LOTTERY

There are many affordable, rent-stabilized apartments throughout NYC at a variety of income levels. If/when a young person is ready to transition out of their supportive housing or NYCHA apartment into permanent, affordable housing, they should apply to the **NYC Affordable Housing Lottery**. Many of the buildings are new and in desirable locations.

**All young people can apply to the NYC Affordable Housing Lottery, as long as they have stable employment** (public assistance is not an eligible form of income).

Once a young person is nearing a living-wage career path and has been able to maintain steady employment, the Coach or Housing Specialist should help them apply to the **NYC Affordable Housing Lottery**, as it can take 1-2+ years to get called.

During that waiting period, the Coach should help the young person build stronger financial management and budgeting skills, perhaps by connecting them to workshops.

See [Appendix I18\\_Transitioning to Permanent Housing – NYC Affordable Housing Lottery](#) for details

## **GOALS & STEPS**

For young people with a Goal "[Apply to NYC Affordable Housing Lottery](#)":

**Required Steps** include:

- Ensure young person has stable employment and solid financial management/budgeting skills before considering this transition
- Meet with youth to create an online account on [NYC Housing Connect](#)
- Apply for any housing youth is currently eligible for

**Potential Steps** include:

- Review and explain to the youth how to use the website

## **GOALS & STEPS**

Once the "Apply to NYC Affordable Housing Lottery" Goal is complete, Coaches should select the Goal, "[Obtain NYC Affordable Housing Lottery](#)":

**Required Steps** include:

- Discuss plan with youth for moving from current housing situation
- Provide social-emotional support to young person during the transition process – check in on them

**Potential Steps** include:

- If contacted for an apartment, assist youth in completing application
- Prepare youth for interview
- Follow up with youth after interview
- Coach youth on length of time the process can take, and provide regular support
- Assist youth with moving in - setting up the home, unpacking home goods, etc.

See [Appendix I18\\_Transitioning to Permanent Housing – NYC Affordable Housing Lottery](#) for details.

## **MARKET-RATE APARTMENTS**

Some young people may be ready to transition into a market-rate setting (although if this is the case, they should still apply to the NYC Affordable Housing Lottery).

**For young people exploring this option, the Coach should help them understand the financial implications/responsibilities as well as the pros/cons of leaving affordable housing:**

They should help them understand that this often requires a broker's fee, first/last month rent, and a security deposit, a substantial amount of money.

They should also be very clear that once a young person moves into a market-rate apartment, there is no option for rental adjustment if they lose their job or get another (lower-paying) one. The young person would have to make sure never to leave their job until they have another one secured.

## **GOALS & STEPS**

For young people that have the Goal of "[Transition into market-rate housing](#)", the **Required Steps** include:

- Walk through the pros and cons of leaving current situation/giving up their apartment for market-rate housing
- Create a budget with young person: assess ability to pay rent for the first and last months, and pay a security deposit

**Potential Steps** include:

- Encourage young person to explore options in affordable areas outside of the 5 boroughs (e.g., New Jersey)
- Assist young person in searching for and viewing apartments
- Assist youth with moving in (e.g., setting up the home, unpacking home goods, etc.)

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