MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ("MOU"), dated as of December 1, 2010, serves as a facilitating document toward establishing cooperation

BETWEEN THE

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY WATERBURY (the "HACW")
2 LAKEWOOD ROAD
WATERBURY, CT 06704

AND THE

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (the "DCF")
505 HUDSON STREET
HARTFORD, CT 06106.

This MOU is in relation to their application for HUD 2010 Family Unification funding.

1. Background

1.1 The HACW and DCF have a joint interest in very low-income families for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in the separation, or threat of imminent separation, of children from their families or where the lack of adequate housing is a barrier to reunifying children with their families.

1.2 The HACW and DCF also have a joint interest in helping youths age 18 through 21 for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor inhibiting a youth's transition to independence.

1.3 The HACW's mission, as set forth in the Connecticut statutes and the resolution establishing the Public Housing Authority ("PHA") in 1953, is to provide safe and sanitary dwelling accommodations available to families of low income at rentals they can afford, and the HACW has been implementing that mission since then.

1.4 The DCF, established by section 17a-2 of the Connecticut General Statutes in 1969, has as a central focus working with families and communities to improve child safety, ensuring that more children have permanent families, and advancing the overall well-being of children. These efforts are accomplished by respecting and working within individual cultures and communities in Connecticut, and in cooperation with other organizations.

1.5 The HACW is applying to HUD to participate in HUD's Family Unification Program ("FUP") so that it might assist very low-income families to lease or purchase decent, safe and sanitary housing that is affordable in the private housing market, thereby

hindering familial disintegration. In order to meet the criteria for the FUP application, HACW seeks to collaborate with DCF to fulfill the FUP requirements and improve services to those families targeted under the HUD FUP.

2. Past Experience

2.1 The HACW has progressively expanded its capacity to provide housing and housing assistance for all moderate to low income families and individuals. The HACW has embraced family unification as a core strategy in helping strengthen its community. HACW's programs include:

(a) The HACW currently administrates Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers ("HCV"), and has done so for over 25 years. The HACW is currently the primary administrator of roughly 2000+ HCVs. We are currently a "Standard Performer" and have been since the inception of the Section Eight Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) rating system.

(b) Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) - the HACW currently administrates 60 VASH vouchers and has does so since 2009, in a partnership with the Department of Veteran Affairs.

(c) Shelter plus Care Certificates - the HACW currently administrates 116 SPC certificates and has done so since 2001, in a partnership with Department of Mental Health and Addictive Services (DMHAS), Salvation Army and Connecticut Outreach West.

(d) Family Unification Program ("FUP") Administration – for more than six years, HACW has provided services to Connecticut's Department of Social Services ("DSS") as a subcontractor, administering approximately 1,100 HCVs, including FUP vouchers.

(e) Family Self Sufficiency ("FSS") program – will be established in Spring 2011 to help voucher families obtain employment that will lead to economic independence and self-sufficiency. The HACW works with welfare agencies such as DCF, schools, businesses, and other local partners to develop individual strategies to give participating FSS family members the skills and experience to enable them to obtain employment that pays a living wage.

2.2 DCF has extensive experience in developing and administering programs designed to mitigate familial collapse and to assist foster youths age 18 to 21 ("FUP-eligible youths") achieve independence. DCF's many programs for maintaining family unity include:

(a) Community Housing Assistance Program ("CHAP") is semi-supervised, subsidized housing for youths. The program increases competence, self-reliance and self-sufficiency as youth transition into out-of-home placement;

(b) A decade-long participation in FUP partnerships with Connecticut PHAs. These joint DCF-PHA programs are integral to the execution of DCF's mission.

2.3 The HACW and DCF will establish a new partnership:

(a) in administering existing FUP HCVs through a subcontractor relationship with Connecticut's Housing Subsidy contractor with DCF to provide administrative support for FUP HCVs.

3. HACW and DCF staff positions for FUP liaison

3.1 Identify staff positions at both the HACW and the DCF who will serve as the lead FUP liaisons. These positions will be responsible for the transmission and acceptance of FUP referrals.

Name and title of HACW staff position:

Belinda Arce, Director of Client Services

Name and title of DCF staff position:

Kimberly Somaroo-Rodriguez, Program Supervisor

4. Partnership Goals

4.1 For families whose children for whom the lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in the imminent placement of the family's child in out-of-home care or delay in the discharge of the child to the family from out-of-home care, the HACW and DCF will work together to:

(a) Ensure that adequate housing is not the primary barrier to the separation or continued separation between a family and its children;

(b) Develop and apply methods to identify and assist families with adequate housing; and

(c) Empower them to resolve their own problems, enabling them to effectively utilize assistive services, and advocate for themselves and their children with schools, public and private agencies, and other community institutions.

4.2 For FUP-eligible youths, the HACW and DCF will work together to:

(a) Ensure that they have adequate and stable housing opportunities to support their successful transition to adulthood; and

(b) Empower them to resolve their own problems, to effectively utilize assistive services, and to advocate for themselves with public and private agencies, and other community institutions.

5. Partnership Standards for Success

5.1 For families with FUP vouchers:

(a) After six months, at least 90% remain together in their subsidized unit;

(b) After one year, at least 75% remain together in their subsidized unit; and

(c) After two years, at least 65% remain together, whether or not they continue living in subsidized housing.

5.2 For FUP-eligible youths with FUP vouchers:

(a) After six months, at least 90% of will remain in the subsidized housing; and

(b) After the 18-month term of their FUP voucher, at least 80% will successfully transition to safe, affordable, permanent housing.

Accordingly, the parties agree as follows:

6. HACW Responsibilities

6.1 The HACW shall amend its administrative plan in accordance with applicable program regulations and requirements to facilitate the requirements imposed by the FUP. These amendments include:

(a) A means of accepting lists of families and youths certified by the DCF as eligible for the FUP from the DCF for processing in a timely manner. Specifically, for each FUP applicant, the HACW will at a minimum compare the names with those of applicants already on the HACW's HCV waiting list. If the FUP applicant is on the HACW's HCV waiting list, that applicant will be assisted in accordance with the HACW's HCV admission policies. Otherwise, FUP applicants will be placed on the HACW's HCV waiting list, regardless of the HACW's HCV waiting list's closure, and processed according to plan; and

(b) A means of determining, as is reasonably feasible, if any families with children, or youths age 18 through 21 on the HACW's HCV waiting list are living in temporary shelters or on the street (i.e., are homeless) and may qualify for the FUP, and referring such applicants to the DCF.

6.2 The HACW shall execute its administrative plan, as amended from time to time, for administering the HCV program in accordance with applicable program regulations and requirements. This performance includes:

(a) Placing families on the HACW's HCV waiting list;

(b) Assisting applicants in the order of their position on the waiting list in accordance with HACW admission policies; and

(c) Determining if applicants are eligible for HCV assistance.

6.3 The HACW shall maintain sufficient staff resources to continue to assure the quality of its administration of FUP HCVs is in accordance with applicable program regulations and requirements.

6.4 The HACW shall maintain data relevant to evaluating the performance of the FUP in accordance with applicable program regulations and requirements.

6.5 The HACW shall cooperate with the HUD office or a HUD-approved contractor in evaluating the FUP program.

6.6 Comply with the provisions of this MOU

6.7 Upon notification that vouchers have been awarded, train DCF staff on the HACW's HCV procedures; and

6.8 Conduct regular meetings (at least quarterly) with the DCF

7. DCF Responsibilities

7.1 The DCF shall maintain a system to identify FUP-eligible families and FUP-eligible youths within the agency's caseload and to review referrals from the HACW.

7.2 The DCF shall provide written certification to the HACW that a family qualifies as a FUP-eligible family, or that a youth qualifies as a FUP-eligible youth, based upon the criteria established in section 8(x) of the United States Housing Act of 1937, and the Federal Register Docket No. FR-5415-N-15 (the Notice of Funding Availability for FUP).

7.3 The DCF shall maintain appropriate resources to continue to assure that eligible families and FUP-eligible youths are identified and qualified as eligible in a timely manner. This commitment must include a process to ensure that the DCF's active caseload is reviewed at least once a month (when the HACW has FUP vouchers available), to identify FUP-eligible families and FUP-eligible youths, and refer them to the HACW. Additionally, the DCF must be prepared to provide referrals to the HACW within 30 working days of receiving notification from the HACW about voucher availability.

7.4 The DCF shall provide cash assistance to income FUP eligible families and FUP-eligible youths, as appropriate, in locating housing units and working with property owners to secure appropriate eligible units. This includes mobility and cash assistance when needed.

7.5 DCF shall maintain sufficient resources to continue to provide appropriate follow-up supportive services to FUP families and FUP-eligible youths leasing FUP units, including housing search assistance in low poverty census tracts and mobility assistance-pre-move and post-move counseling.

7.6 The DCF shall provide to families and FUP-eligible youths leasing FUP HCV-subsidized units intensive case management designed to assist families and youths to develop and use, as appropriate, a network of services for solving issues related to, and including: personal economics, social welfare, health, relapse prevention, child abuse, and substance abuse.

7.7 The DCF shall provide cash assistance to families and FUP-eligible youths leasing FUP HCV-subsidized units for but not limited to security deposits, utility or arrears, furniture or households necessary to maintain stable housing.

7.8 The DCF shall engage one full-time (40-hours) case manager for every approximately twelve families or FUP-eligible youths for a period up to 2 years. In addition, the DCF shall provide each family or FUP-eligible youth access to other specialists, including a Housing Specialist, an Employment Specialist, and a Clinical Director.

7.9 The DCF shall engage FUP-eligible youths no longer in the DCF caseload through the DCF Re-entry program.

7.10 The DCF provide access to community-based family support services after their child protection case is closed

7.11 The DCF shall maintain data relevant to evaluating the performance of the FUP in accordance with applicable program regulations and requirements.

7.12 The DCF shall cooperate with the HUD office or a HUD-approved contractor in evaluating the FUP program by providing relevant FUP data to the HUD office or contractor.

7.13 When the HACW issues FUP HCVs to youths, the HACW and DCF shall form an agreement whereby DCF agrees to provide a HACW FUP HCV-assisted youth, at a minimum, the following services for a period of not less than eighteen months:

(a) Basic life skills information/counseling on money management, use of credit, housekeeping, proper nutrition/meal preparation; and access to health care (e.g., doctors, medication, and mental and behavioral health services).

(b) Counseling on compliance with rental lease requirements and with HCV program participant requirements, including assistance/referrals for assistance on security deposits, utility hook-up fees, and utility deposits.

(c) Providing such assurances to owners of rental property as are reasonable and necessary to assist a FUP-eligible youth to rent a unit with a FUP voucher.

(d) Job preparation and attainment counseling (where to look/how to apply, dress, grooming, relationships with supervisory personnel, etc.).

(e) Educational and career advancement counseling regarding attainment of general equivalency diploma (GED); attendance/financing of education at technical school, trade school or college; including successful work ethic and attitude models.

(f) Participation of FUP-eligible youths in the assessment and implementation of actions to address their needs, including the development of an individual case plan on each youth for services to be received and the youth's commitment to the plan (youth required to sign a service plan agreeing to attend counseling/training sessions and to take other actions as deemed appropriate to the youth's successful transition from foster care.

7.14 Comply with the provisions of this MOU

7.15 Upon notification that vouchers have been awarded, train HACW staff on the DCF's referral procedures; and

7.16 Conduct regular meetings (at least quarterly) with the HACW.

8. Miscellaneous

8.1 The performance by both parties of the commitment of time, resources and responsibilities set forth and agreed to in this MOU are contingent upon an award of FUP HCVs to the HACW in 2011 and its continued funding.

8.2 Terms not specified in this MOU are found in HUD HCV regulations [24 C.F.R. 982, et seq.].

8.3 The words "include," "includes," and "including" are to be read as if they were followed by the phrase "without limitation".

8.4 The term of this agreement shall be from December 1, 2010 through thirty days after the end date of the grant, if awarded.

8.5 All other terms and conditions may be modified by written proposal and acceptance of both parties.

8.6 Either party may terminate this agreement with 60 days prior notice to the other and with express approval of the grantor.

To evidence the parties' agreement to the MOU, they have executed and delivered it on the date set forth in the preamble.

On behalf of the Department of Children and Families

Susan I. Hamilton, MSW, JD
Commissioner

On behalf of the Housing Authority of the City of Waterbury

Ronald C. Dubuque
Executive Director

DCF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT of CHILDREN and FAMILIES

Making a Difference for Children, Families and Communities

Susan I. Hamilton, M.S.W., J.D.
Commissioner

M. Jodi Rell
Governor

November 22, 2010

State of Connecticut
Department of Children and Families
505 Hudson Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Public Child Welfare Agency Statement of Need for Family Unification Program

The City of Waterbury Housing Authority is seeking to partner with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to apply for federal funding of 100 units to serve FUP eligible families and youth in the Waterbury area. DCF is the state child welfare agency in Connecticut. Child Welfare services are provided statewide to children and families through 14 local area offices. Annually DCF receives approximately 30,000 reports of abuse and neglect. The majority of referrals are physical neglect, including a considerable number of reports of "inadequate shelter" of child(ren). Housing is a major issue for child welfare, having a major impact on the preservation and reunification of families.

Connecticut recognizes that family homelessness is a growing problem and has continued to monitor this trend across the state. Every year HUD requires all applicants for federal homeless assistance grants to conduct a "point in time" count of people who are homeless in their communities the last week in January. This count helps to evaluate the causes of homelessness, effectiveness of state and local programs and to monitor progress on eliminating homelessness. According to the last available Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness[1] annual Point in Time Count Report it was reported that on January 28, 2009 there were 430 families and 801 children in families found to be homeless in Connecticut. There were also 18 accompanied youth found homeless that night.

Many Connecticut communities such as, Hartford, Waterbury, New Britain, New Haven, and Middlesex County, have established and implemented their own "10 Year Plan to End Homelessness". These communities also participate in the annual point in time count and have developed a "Continuum of Care", (a group

[1] Connecticut Coalition 2009 Annual Point in Time Final Report, 2010 report is unavailable at this time.

of local community providers working together to eliminate homelessness). These groups have consistently found that the top causes of homelessness are the lack of well-paid employment and affordable housing. In Connecticut, the average cost of a modest two-bedroom apartment is $1,062 a month. A parent would need to earn at least $20.42 an hour to be able to afford this apartment.[2] The state minimum wage is $8.25. This is a huge gap considering that if an individual worked two minimum wage jobs, they still would not be able to afford housing for their family. Maintaining housing is a huge struggle, as rent rates continue to increase and wages do not. In Hartford county alone 2/3 of the population live below the poverty line. Areas such as these have the largest concentration of child welfare cases. Poverty, substance abuse, domestic violence, are all exacerbated by the lack of affordable housing. Ultimately children are removed and families are separated.

In an effort to alleviate this dilemma, DCF established the Supportive Housing for Families Program (SHF). Over eleven years ago DCF partnered with the Department of Social Services (DSS) to create this program which provides intensive case management and housing together. The program assists families to develop and utilize a network of services in the following areas: economic (financial support, employment assistance), social (housing, transportation, family support, parenting education, child care) and health (medical/mental health care for adult and child, relapse prevention, domestic/child/substance abuse issues). Permanent housing is established once families receive a Family Unification Voucher or Connecticut's Rental Assistance Program (RAP) Certificate. Families are eligible for housing services for up to two years, even when Child Welfare intervention is no longer required thus ensuring housing stability. The SHF program can serve up to 500 families annually, but only if permanent housing vouchers are made available. The SHF program's success rate is 80%.[3]

Additionally, DCF proposes to utilize housing vouchers obtained under this NOFA for young adults leaving foster care. DCF has seen a steady increase in youths leaving foster care who experience homelessness. Within one year DCF will receive approximately 100 young adults (average of 8-12 per month) seeking to re-enter the Foster Care system. Sixty (60%) to Seventy (70%) percent of these young adults are seeking assistance from DCF due to their biological families'

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[2] Out of Reach 2006, National Low Income Housing Coalition

[3] Connections, Inc 2008 Annual Report

inability or desire to provide them with adequate and safe housing.[4] Therefore, these young adults face homelessness unless housing supports are made available.

With our partnership with the City of Waterbury Housing Authority, we will be able to use awarded vouchers to serve 100 FUP families and FUP eligible youths in the city of Waterbury. Currently there is estimated to be over two hundred (200) families awaiting supportive housing services in the Waterbury area. These families are currently homeless or at risk of homeless. This number is based on the Supportive Housing for Families (SHF) waitlist as of April 30, 2009 and the average of 100 referrals to the SHF statewide program received a month statewide throughout SFY 2009[5]. The waitlist was closed in April 2009 due to the lack permanent housing vouchers.

The Department of Children and Families and the city of Waterbury are seeking federal assistance to execute our Memorandum of Understanding to allow our agencies to prevent and/or alleviate homelessness for families, children, and young adults. The need for these housing vouchers is especially critical in this economic climate. The need will continue to grow as deficits rise and budgets are cut. Connecticut is one of the few if not the only state with a proven and successful child welfare program that incorporates intensive case management services with a permanent housing voucher for families. DCF has utilized each and every housing voucher received since the Supportive Housing for Families Program began over 11 years ago. Federal Unification Vouchers are a critical resource to meeting the needs of Connecticut's DCF families and young adults aging out of foster care. Currently the state of Connecticut is unable to continue to provide state rental assistance vouchers for the program, which puts this nationally recognized program in jeopardy.

On behalf of DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES:

Susan I. Hamilton
Commissioner

11/24/10
Date

[4] DCF Re-entry Policy 42-20-50
[5] Connection Inc. In-take Unit