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| LOCAL COMMISSIONERS MEMORANDUM |
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DSS-4037EL (Rev. 9/89)

Transmittal No: 97 LCM-36

Date: May 2, 1997

Division: Services and
Community
Development

TO: Local District Commissioners

SUBJECT: FAMILY UNIFICATION PROGRAM 1997
Opportunity to Apply

ATTACHMENTS: (1) DHCR Section 8 Local Administrators (on-line)
(2) Letter of Intent format (on-line)
(3) Needs/Coordination Supplement format (on-line)

1. PURPOSE

This Memorandum advises social services districts of the opportunity to participate in the 1997 Family Unification Program administered by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Preliminary notice of this opportunity was sent to districts via GIS Message on May 1, 1997. A local district may apply to participate by (1) joining a local HUD-certified public housing authority (HA) direct application to HUD or (2) joining a statewide Family Unification Program application being made by the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) and the New York State Department of Social Services (SDSS) if the district is one in which DHCR has a Section 8 Local Administrator (LA). (A list of DHCR Section 8 Local Administrators by county is included with this Memorandum as Attachment 1.) Districts with both a local HUD-certified HA and a DHCR Section 8 Local Administrator may do either of these or both.

If after reviewing this Memorandum your district wishes to participate in the joint DHCR/SDSS application, notify the Family Unification Program Coordinator listed in Section 5 by Friday, May 16. This notification must include confirmation that you have had contact with the DHCR Section 8 Local Administrator who has indicated interest in joining in the application.

This notification does not commit the district to final participation, but it will allow the Department to target technical assistance to interested districts for submission of necessary application information.

The due date for submission of all application material is May 28, 1997.

2. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Family Unification Program

The Family Unification Program provides federal Section 8 rental assistance to families for whom a lack of adequate housing is a primary factor which would result in:

- (a) the imminent placement of the family's child or children in out-of-home care, or
- (b) the delay of discharge of a child or children to the family from out-of-home care.

Lack of adequate housing is defined as a situation in which a family is homeless, is living in substandard or dilapidated housing, is or will be involuntarily displaced from a housing unit because of actual or threatened domestic violence, or is living in an overcrowded unit.

The Family Unification Program rental certificates are to be used for families who meet these criteria as certified by the local public child welfare agency (PCWA) and who meet the HUD Section 8 housing eligibility criteria. Statewide the PCWA is SDSS; locally the PCWA is the social services district.

Family Unification Program rental certificates are fully federally funded. The local district investment in the Family Unification Program would be staff time and resources necessary for certifying the eligibility of families in the district's child welfare caseload for the Family Unification Program and for ensuring coordination with the local HA.

DHCR, SDSS and local districts have previously submitted applications to HUD for Family Unification Program Section 8 rental certificates. A successful application for 1992-93 resulted in the allocation of 50 certificates in 16 participating districts. Applications for 1993-94 and for 1994-95 were unsuccessful. The FY 1995 application resulted in a February 1996 award of 50 certificates which were allocated to 14 participating districts. A FY 1996 application resulted in an allocation of 25 certificates each in 2 New York City Metropolitan area districts. The remainder of the FY 1996 application was unsuccessful.

1997 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

The 1997 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) was published in the April 18, 1997 Federal Register. HUD expects to make approximately 6400 Section 8 rental certificate units available for the Family Unification Program for FY 1997. HUD is allocating 1100 of these certificates to HAs that were qualified for the FY 1996 lottery but which were not included due

to insufficient funds. HUD will make the remaining approximately 5300 certificates available to be awarded on a nationwide lottery basis to qualifying applicants. The maximum number of certificates to be awarded to any one public housing authority (HA), including DHCR, is 100 for HAs that have in excess of 500 Section 8 units and 50 for HAs that have 500 or less Section 8 units. DHCR qualifies to apply for 100 certificates, so the combined DHCR/SDSS application will be for a total of 100 FUP certificates for New York State.

Because of the availability of FUP certificates to any local HUD-certified HA and the fact that the joint DHCR/SDSS application is to be allocated among participating districts, local districts may enhance their opportunities for access to Family Unification Program certificates by exploring the possibility of joining a local public HA to apply for inclusion in the Family Unification Program. Please note, however, that one of the criteria for HAs to be able to apply for the Family Unification Program is that the HA have an active Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) program or an approved FSS action plan. Any HA (or DHCR Section 8 Local Administrator) that does not meet this FSS requirement will not be qualified to apply for Family Unification Program certificates.

The Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Family Unification Program requires coordination between the local HA and local PCWA both in applying for inclusion in the program and in implementation if the HA/PCWA are awarded certificates for the Family Unification Program. At the application level, the NOFA requires the local PCWA to supply information for the completion of two portions of the application: Criterion 3, "Coordination Between HA and Public Child Welfare Agency to Identify and Assist Eligible Families," and Criterion 4, "Public Child Welfare Agency Statement of Need for Family Unification Program." For the joint DHCR/SDSS application, the Department will complete the Criterion 3 and 4 statements based on current experience with FUP and information to be supplied by local districts as outlined in sections 4 and 5 of this memorandum.

The major local district tasks in implementation will be to determine the eligibility of families in the district's child welfare caseload for the Family Unification Program and to coordinate with the local HA in ensuring that eligible families are identified and assisted in a timely manner. Written certification that a family qualifies for the Family Unification Program by child welfare standards is submitted by the district to the HA which will determine whether the family is on the Section 8 waiting list.

The local district's determination of child welfare eligibility will be based on the same characteristics as apply to the Preventive Housing Services program. A district must determine either that lack of adequate housing is the primary factor preventing the return home of a child from foster care pursuant to the standards contained in Section 430.9(e)(2) of Department Regulations or that lack of adequate housing is a factor creating a risk of placement or re-placement of a child into foster care in a family that has at least one preventive services need other than lack of adequate housing in accordance with the standards for Preventive Housing Services to prevent foster care placement contained in 95 LCM-110.

Families which are eligible under the child welfare standard and which are on the HA's Section 8 waiting list will be served for provision of a Family Unification Program rental certificate in order of their position on the waiting list in accordance with HUD regulations and procedures. For families certified by the local district as eligible for the Family Unification Program but which are not on the HA's Section 8 waiting list, the Section 8 Administrator will determine the family's eligibility according to HUD standards for Section 8 housing assistance. Any family found eligible will be added to the HA's Section 8 waiting list. The waiting list must be opened, or re-opened, for Family Unification Program families certified by the local PCWA, that is, the social services district.

As part of local PCWA (local district) responsibilities in implementing the Family Unification Program locally, the local district has to agree to commit sufficient staff resources to ensure that Family Unification Program eligible families are identified and certified in a timely manner. This will also include receiving referrals from the HA and evaluating and reporting to the HA whether such referrals meet the child welfare eligibility criteria for FUP. Districts must also agree to cooperate with evaluation activities conducted by HUD on the Family Unification Program.

3. DISTRICT PARTICIPATION

DHCR/SDSS Statewide Application

As noted above, districts may participate in the Family Unification Program by a joint application with a local HA direct to HUD, or by joining in the statewide application being made by DHCR and SDSS. However, the following districts do not have a housing program with a Section 8 agreement with DHCR and thus cannot be included in the joint application:

ALBANY	BROOME	CORTLAND
ERIE	FULTON	MONROE
MONTGOMERY	ONEIDA	ONONDAGA
RENSSELAER	SCHENECTADY	SCHOHARIE
WARREN		

THESE DISTRICTS CAN ONLY PARTICIPATE IN THE FAMILY UNIFICATION PROGRAM THROUGH JOINT APPLICATION WITH A LOCAL PUBLIC HA THAT IS CERTIFIED BY HUD.

With the exception of the 13 districts which do not have DHCR Section 8 Local Administrators, any local district may join the joint Family Unification Program application being made by DHCR and SDSS. The only additional exception would occur when a Section 8 Local Administrator does not have an FSS program.

The DHCR/SDSS application will be for 100 rental certificate units that, if awarded, will be allocated among the districts that join in the statewide application. Allocation is subject to an agreement between DHCR and SDSS and approval by HUD.

Inclusion in the DHCR/SDSS joint application requires the completion of a Letter of Intent and the submission of supporting information and data

regarding need, the local district's experience with obtaining housing assistance from HUD, local HAs, or other sources, and the coordination of assistance with the DHCR Section 8 Local Administrator. These requirements are set out more completely in Section 5 of this Memorandum. The local district must collaborate with the DHCR Section 8 Local Administrator with whom the district will join in the operation of the Family Unification Program. DHCR Section 8 Local Administrators were advised of the availability of 1997 Family Unification Program funding and of the requirement for local HA and PCWA collaboration in DHCR General Mailing 97-14 dated April 29, 1997.

Letters of Intent and the supporting statements are due to the Department by 5:00 PM, Wednesday, May 28, 1997 in accordance with the instructions set out in Sections 4 and 5 below.

Districts will not be included in the joint DHCR/SDSS application unless there is confirmation of an agreement between the district and the DHCR Section 8 Local Administrator to join the DHCR/SDSS Family Unification Program application. This means that the DHCR Section 8 Local Administrator has agreed to and will submit the required local HA material/information to DHCR in time for inclusion in the application to HUD.

Local Applications

As an alternative to or in addition to participating in the joint DHCR/SDSS application, a local district may join with a local public HA that serves its locality and which wishes to apply to HUD for inclusion in the Family Unification Program certificates lottery. This specifically includes the 13 districts that do not have housing programs with DHCR Section 8 Local Administrators.

As this local application may be for up to 100 certificates for HAs that have in excess of 500 Section 8 units or up to 50 certificates for those HAs with 500 or less Section 8 units to be awarded directly to the local public HA, local districts may enhance their opportunity to obtain access to Family Unification Program Section 8 rental certificates by making a local application, if the local public HA agrees. The local public HA must be the lead applicant.

If you wish to apply with your local public HA, you must work with the HA in the completion of the application. The due date for Family Unification Program applications to be in hand at the relevant HUD office is June 17th at 3:00 PM local time. If you have not already done so, immediate contact with the local public HA is necessary if you are interesting in joining in a local application.

If you apply at the local level with a local public HA, complete details on what must be included are set out in the HUD program announcement that appeared in the April 18, 1997 Federal Register. If you wish a copy of the announcement and cannot obtain a copy from your local public HA, contact the SDSS Family Unification Program Coordinator as noted in Section 5 below.

4. SUBMISSIONS FOR DHCR/SDSS APPLICATION

Districts that wish to join the DHCR/SDSS joint statewide application will need to complete and submit to SDSS a Letter of Intent along with the supporting "Needs/Coordination Supplement" form. The formats for these documents are included as Attachments 2 and 3 to this Memorandum.

To the extent possible, SDSS will compile needed information from existing data sources (MAPS, CCRS, etc.). However, information is requested from local districts to strengthen the quality of the application regarding specific local needs information and HA/PCWA (HA/local districts) coordination and cooperation.

The directions set out below request information that is not available in regular State data resources and about which your local data is either expected to be more complete or more relevant for identifying need and describing the coordination with the DHCR Section 8 Local Administrator. However, districts do not need to do special surveys or data analyses to provide the data and information requested. You are expected only to have to refer to existing data. Brief statements based on the best information readily available are what you should provide. It would help, however, to identify sources or relevant times or time frames if you are relying on specific data or information for your statement(s).

To complete the first section of the "Needs/Coordination Supplement" form, provide the following information to the best of your ability:

- description of the impact of homelessness and family violence on foster care placements in the local district, including any relevant local statistics available;
- information regarding the number and characteristics of families in which inadequate housing is a primary factor in a child's risk of foster care placement or in the delay of a child's return home from placement.

The second section of the "Needs/Coordination Supplement" form is critical as it relates specifically to your local district and cannot be completed from any State data resources. This section must be completed describing any local district experience in administering similar programs (including Preventive Housing Services and other local district provision of or participation in a housing assistance program or services) and the local district's experience (success or lack of success) in obtaining housing through HUD, local HAs, or other programs for housing assistance. This section must be completed.

It may be that the district either has no experience or has no information regarding some of the areas to be included in the Statements. Leave blanks if this is the situation. Report only what you actually can. However, information on what the local experience has been regarding similar programs and particularly with obtaining (or attempting to obtain) HUD assisted services must be included.

After the "Needs/Coordination Supplement" form is completed, complete the Letter of Intent. In each space where required, fill in the name of your county/district. In paragraph 1 of the letter, also fill in the name of the Section 8 Administrator and the Administrator's agency affiliation, indicating the district's contact with the HA. In paragraph 4 of the letter, fill in the name and phone contact information for the person who will be responsible for implementation of the Family Unification Program in the local district and who may be contacted if necessary to obtain additional information related to the district's participation in or implementation of the Family Unification Program. The Letter of Intent also includes a commitment to provide sufficient resources and support for the implementation of the Family Unification Program, and an agreement to provide data and information as necessary to assist in program evaluation. The letter also acknowledges the district's recognition that allocation of any certificates awarded to DHCR/SDSS as a result of the HUD application is subject to joint DHCR/SDSS agreement and HUD approval of an allocation plan. The Letter of Intent signed by the Commissioner indicates that the local district will participate in the Family Unification Program if certificates are awarded to New York State and DHCR.

5. TRANSMITTAL TO SDSS

As soon as the Letter of Intent and the two supporting statements are complete and the letter has been signed by the local Commissioner, send the original to:

Hal Harkess
Family Unification Program Coordinator
Division of Services and Community Development
New York State Department of Social Services
40 North Pearl Street, 11-D
Albany, New York 12243.

In order to allow for consolidation and processing of application materials for submission to DHCR in time to meet HUD deadlines, the absolute deadline for receipt of letters and supporting documents in order for your district to be included in the 1995 DHCR/SDSS Family Unification Program application is 5:00 PM, Wednesday, May 28, 1997. That means in the office of the Coordinator no later than that date and time.

Only an original letter with Commissioner's signature will be accepted. Fax copies may not be submitted. Districts are responsible for utilizing an appropriate delivery mechanism to ensure receipt of their submissions at SDSS by the required deadline. The Department reserves the right to determine that incomplete application materials or application materials received after the May 28th deadline may not be included in the 1997 DHCR/SDSS application.

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Mr. Harkess is available by telephone or E-Mail to answer any questions and to provide assistance to local districts regarding the completion of their letters and supplements. He may be reached by phone at 1-800-343-8859, extension 49584, or directly at 518-474-9584. The OFISLINK E-Mail address is 0fb110. Alternative contact is Betty Devine, 518-474-9426 or by E-Mail to 0fb070.

Rose M. Pandozy
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Services and Community Development

SECTION 8 LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS
affiliated with
NEW YORK STATE DIVISION OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY RENEWAL

ALLEGANY COUNTY

Darlene Brown
Accord Corporation
84 Schuyler Street
Belmont, NY 14813

(716) 268-7605

CATTARAUGUS COUNTY

Terri J. Stranburg
Cattaraugus Development Corporation
201 South Union Street
Olean, NY 14760

(716) 372-2550

CAYUGA COUNTY

Helen Wilmont
Cayuga Development Corporation
60 Clark Street
Auburn, NY 13021

(315) 253-8451

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY

Diane Salvo
Chautauqua Opportunity, Inc.
200 East 3rd Street
Jamestown, NY 14701

(716) 661-9430

CHEMUNG COUNTY

Judy Celelli
Tri-County Action Council
382 East Second Street
Corning, NY 14830

(607) 962-2477

CHENANGO COUNTY

Nancy Matz
Opportunity for Chenango
44 W. Main Street
Norwich, NY 13815

(607) 334-7114

CLINTON COUNTY

Carole K. Harsh
Clinton County Housing
Surrogate Bldg.
135 Margaret St.
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

(518) 565-4698

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Gail Paone
Columbia Opportunities, Inc.
802 Columbia Street
Hudson, NY 12534

(518) 828-4612

DELAWARE COUNTY

Mary Kilmer
Delaware Opportunities
91 Townsend Street
Walton, NY 13856

(607) 865 6424

DUTCHESS COUNTY

Donna Osborne
Rural New York Farmworkers
Hollobrook Office Park
15 Myers Corners Road, Suite 3F
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590

(914) 298-8998

ESSEX COUNTY

Sue S. Reaser
Housing Assistance Program of
Essex
P.O. Box 157
Elizabethtown, NY 12932

(518) 873-6888

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Candace Breen
Franklin County Community Housing
121 East Main Street
Malone, NY 12953

(518) 483-5934

GENESSEE COUNTY

Kevin Kennedy
Rural New York Farmworker
106 Main Street--8A
Batavia, NY 14020

(716) 343-3861

GREENE COUNTY

Zenna Rose
Greene County Planning
Mountain Avenue
Cairo, NY 12413

(518) 622-2593

HAMILTON COUNTY

Shirley A. Smith
Housing Assistance Program of
Hamilton County
County White House
P.O. Box 207
Lake Pleasant, NY 12108

(518) 548-5981

HERKIMER COUNTY

Scott D. Holden
Community Action in Herkimer County
327 King Street
Herkimer, NY 13350

(315) 866-0030

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Lila Youngs
Lewis County Opportunity Inc.
Housing Assistance Program
749 Leray Street
Watertown, NY 13601

(315) 788-0193

LEWIS COUNTY

Brenda Monnat
Lewis County Opportunity Inc.
P.O. Box 111
New Bremen, NY 13412

(315) 376-8202

LIVINGSTON COUNTY

Ruth Swift
Livingston County Govt. Ctr.
6 Court Street
Suite 305--Room 360A
Geneseo, NY 14454-1043

(716) 243-7555

MADISON COUNTY

Terri Galavotti
Madison Business Development
P.O. Box 220
Town of Eaton Building
Morrisville, NY 13408

(315) 684-3222

NASSAU COUNTY

Daniel G. Simmonds
Nassau County Office of
Intergovernmental Affairs
250 Fulton Avenue
Hempstead, NY 11501

(516) 572-0871

NIAGARA COUNTY

Helen Del Signore
Department of Community Development
Leased Housing Program
1022 Main Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14302-0069

(716) 286-8820

NEW YORK CITY

Linda Kedzierski
New York State Division of
Housing & Community Renewal
One Fordham Plaza, Room S242
Bronx, NY 10458

(718) 563-5496

ONTARIO COUNTY

Eileen O'Brien Stokes
Ontario County Department of Housing
Community Resources
3871 County Road #46
Canandaigua, NY 14424

(716) 396-4036/7

ORANGE COUNTY

Carmen Nieves
Rural New York Farmworker
53 Highland Avenue
Middletown, NY 10940

(914) 343-0771/72

ORLEANS COUNTY

Sheila Alport
Department of Housing Assistance
Administration Building
14016 Route 31 West
Albion, NY 14411

(716) 589-3200/3207

OSWEGO COUNTY

Dona Lee Falciatano
Oswego County Planning Board
46 East Bridge Street
Oswego, NY 13126

(315) 349-8263

OTSEGO COUNTY

Mabel Rice
Otsego Rural Housing Assistance
27 Railroad Avenue
Cooperstown, NY 13326

(607) 547-9293

PUTNAM COUNTY

Stephanie Stephenson
Putnam County Housing
7 Seminary Hill Road
Carmel, NY 10512

(914) 225-8493/94

ROCKLAND COUNTY

Lisa E. Rappold
Rockland County Office of
Community Development
151 South Main Street, Suite 212
New City, NY 10956

(914) 638-5199

SARATOGA COUNTY

Dottie O'Donald
Saratoga County R.P.C.
36 Church Avenue
Ballston Spa, NY 12020

(518) 885-0091

SENECA COUNTY

Sue Gallagher
Seneca Housing Inc.
13 West Main Street
Waterloo, NY 13165

(315) 539-3409

STEUBEN COUNTY

Judy Celelli
Tri-County Action Council
382 East Second Street
Corning, NY 14830

(607) 962-2477

SULLIVAN COUNTY

Betsy Wiltse
Rural Opportunities
43 Sturgis Road
Monticello, NY 12701

(914) 794-4880

TOMPKINS COUNTY

Lee Dillon
Tompkins County E.O.C.
Biggs Center, Building A
301 Dates Drive
Ithaca, NY 14850

(607) 273-8816

SCHUYLER COUNTY

Judy Celelli
Tri-County Action Council
382 East Second Street
Corning, NY 14830

(607) 962-2477

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY

Nancy Casey
St. Lawrence County Community
Development Program
1 Commerce Lane
Canton, NY 13617

(315) 386-1102

SUFFOLK COUNTY

Beverly Weinberg
Suffolk Community Development
Corporation
2100 Middle Country Road
Centereach, NY 11720

(516) 471-1215

TIOGA COUNTY

Sherrie Fethers
Tioga Opportunities Program, Inc.
P.O. Box 600
Owego, NY 13827

(607) 687-0707

ULSTER COUNTY

Alice Martin
Rural Ulster Preservation Company
289 Fair Street
Kingston, NY 12401

(914) 331-2140

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Robert Guillily
Washington County Housing
P.O. Box 67
Fort Edwards, NY 12828

(518) 747-6481

WAYNE COUNTY

Tom West
Community Action for Self-Help
9 Broad Street
Lymons, NY 14489

(315) 946-6992

WESTCHESTER COUNTY

Norma Drummond
Westchester County Planning
Department
150 Grand Street
White Plains, NY 10601

(914) 285-2420

WYOMING COUNTY

Alan Bliss
Office of Human Services
5632 Mungers Mill Road
Silver Springs, NY 14550

(716) 786-8835

YATES COUNTY

Loretta Henrie
Rural New York Farmworker
100 East Main Street
Penn Yan, NY 14527

(315) 536-7439

Ms. Rose M. Pandozy
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Services and Community Development
New York State Department of Social Services
40 North Pearl Street
Albany, New York 12243

Dear Ms. Pandozy:

The _____ County Department of Social Services agrees to join in the application for a Family Unification Program demonstration award being made by the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) and the New York State Department of Social Services (SDSS) to the US Department of Housing and Urban Department (HUD). Written notification has been provided to the local Section 8 Administrator with whom we will collaborate in the operation of the Family Unification Program [_____of_____].

A "Needs/Coordination Supplement" providing available local information on local needs and on local experience with similar programs and coordination with the DHCR Section 8 Local Administrator is attached to this letter.

_____ County Department of Social Services agrees to commit necessary resources and support to the Family Unification Program and also agrees to provide information and data on the experience of families and the local department in the implementation, development, and outcome(s) of the Family Unification Program to SDSS, to DHCR, or to HUD to assist in the evaluation and assessment of the Family Unification Program.

_____ is responsible for the implementation of the Family Unification Program for the _____ County Department of Social Services and can be contacted at (____) ____-_____ for any additional information related to participation in or implementation of the program.

I understand that there is a maximum allotment of 50 Section 8 certificates available to New York State and that allocation of any award made to New York State will be distributed among cooperating Section 8 Local Administrators (and their collaborating social services districts) subject to an agreement by DHCR and SDSS and HUD approval of an allocation plan.

On the basis of the information and understandings outlined above, I commit the _____ County Department of Social Services to participation in the Family Unification Program if certificates are awarded to New York State.

Commissioner

_____County Department of Social Services

Date: _____

FAMILY UNIFICATION PROGRAM 1996
Needs/Coordination Supplement

_____County Department of Social Services

The need for housing assistance and specifically for the Family Unification Program to assist families in preventing out-of-home placement of children or averting delays in returning children from out-of-home placement is indicated by the following:

Describe district past experience in obtaining Housing through HUD assisted programs and other sources for families lacking adequate housing. (Include any past district experience with the administration of similar programs and any past cooperation with the DHCR Section 8 Local Administrator).

[COMPLETION OF THIS SECTION IS REQUIRED]