



# The Bright Futures Bridge Subsidy Pilot:

## A Rental Assistance Voucher Program for Youth Aging out of Foster Care

August 2025

Youth aging out of foster care are at higher risk of homelessness, unemployment, incarceration, substance abuse, and early parenting compared to their peers. Stable housing for youth is critical to helping them avoid such adverse outcomes. Establishing a permanent rental assistance voucher is a viable approach to help youth aging out of foster care secure stable housing. While other federal programs such as the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) and Family Unification Program (FUP) support this population, the restrictions of these programs limit opportunities for stable housing.

**THDA’s Bright Futures Bridge Subsidy (BFBS) Pilot Program was the first state funded rental assistance voucher program that assisted youth aging out of foster care in the state of Tennessee.** In contrast to other federal programs, this program accepted FYI vouchers, helping to expand housing options for youth as they aged out of the system.

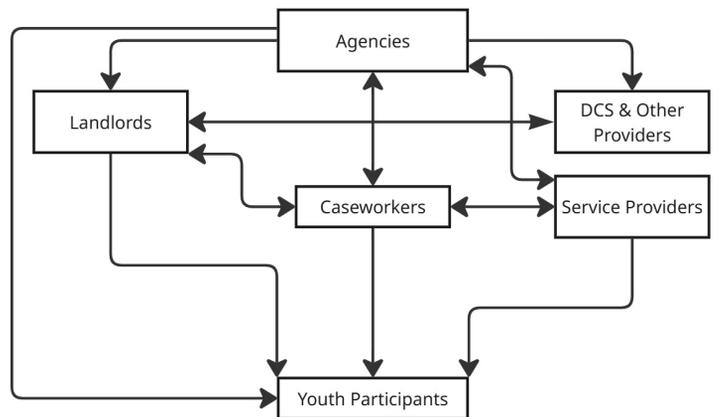


Figure 1: Recommended operating model for BFBS Pilot Program

The program was administered in partnership with two nonprofit organizations in Nashville and Knoxville. It helped 69 youth secure housing and increased their housing stability as a result. Approximately 40% of the participants accomplished long-term educational or employment goals because of stable housing. Interested agencies should consider the following recommendations for implementation of similar programs:

- 1 Ensure a program timeline of up to 5 years
- 2 Connect landlords with service providers
- 3 Agencies should partner with DCS
- 4 Pair funding with project-based housing
- 5 Provide permanent funding for services



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1

**A program  
timeline of up  
to 5 years**

Administering agencies should consider implementation of a program timeline of up to five years. A timeline of up to five years will allow agencies to establish enduring relationships with providers during and support participants in pursuit of their long-term outcomes, some of which might include pursuing higher education or full-time employment.

2

**Connect  
landlords  
with service  
providers**

Administering agencies should aim to build connections between landlords and service providers as pre-existing relationships between landlords and service providers are rare. Existing relationships between these parties would engender trust, hasten service provision, and create avenues to increase housing opportunities for participants.

3

**Partner with  
DCS**

Administering agencies should establish an ongoing partnership with DCS and other housing partners. Such partnerships would expedite the integration of supportive services into the program. Furthermore, because the BFBS program accepted FYI vouchers, a partnership with DCS would allow for the inclusion of rural youth on FYI vouchers, as rural areas are more likely to be devoid of service providers.

4

**Pair funding  
with project-  
based  
housing**

Pairing funding with project-based housing would streamline service delivery by creating centralized housing which integrates independent living with supportive service options. Pairing funding in this way would also support long-term housing outcomes for the population as service delivery could be maintained despite tenant turnover.

5

**Provide  
permanent  
funding for  
services**

Given the limitations of eligible activities in federal sources of funding, agencies should explore providing permanent funding from other more flexible sources. Paired funding sources would allow for coverage of essential coordinated services like case management and other wraparound supportive services, which were critical to the success of participants.