lack of adequate housing is a primary factor in the imminent placement of the family's child, or children, in out-ofhome care, or in the delay of discharge of a child, or children, to the family from out-of-home care; and

- (*B*) The HA has determined is eligible for Section 8 rental assistance.
- (ii) The lack of adequate housing means a situation in which a family:
- (A) Is living in substandard housing or homeless, as defined in 24 CFR 982.212 and 982.213, or
- (*B*) Is, or will be, involuntarily displaced from a housing unit because of actual or threatened violence against a family member under the circumstances described in 24 CFR 982.211.
- (iii) Public child welfare agency (PCWA) means the public agency that is responsible under applicable State or Tribal law for determining that a child is at imminent risk of placement in out-of-home care or that a child in out-of-home care under the supervision of the public agency may be returned to his or her family.
 - (b) HA Responsibilities. HAs must:
- (i) Accept families certified by the PCWA as eligible for the Family Unification Program. If the HA has a closed waiting list, it must reopen the waiting list to accept Family Unification applicant families. The HA is not required to review its waiting list for eligible families. The HA upon receipt of the PCWA list of families currently in the PCWA caseload must compare the names with those of families already on the HA's Section 8 waiting list. Any family on the HA's Section 8 waiting list that matches with the PCWA's list must be assisted in order of their position on the waiting list in accordance with HA admission policies;
- (ii) Determine if any applicants on its waiting list are living in temporary shelters or on the street, and refer such applicants to the PCWA;
- (iii) Determine if families referred by the PCWA are eligible for Section 8 assistance and place eligible families on the Section 8 waiting list;
- (iv) Amend the administrative plan in accordance with applicable program regulations and requirements;
- (v) Administer the rental assistance in accordance with applicable program regulations and requirements; and
- (vi) Assure the quality of the evaluation that HUD intends to conduct on the Family Unification Program, and cooperate with and provide requested data to the HUD office or HUD-approved contractor responsible for program evaluation.

- (c) Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA) Responsibilities. Public child welfare agencies must:
- (i) Establish and implement a system to identify Family Unification eligible families within the agency's caseload and to review referrals from the HA:
- (ii) Provide written certification to the HA that a family qualifies as a Family Unification eligible family;
- (iii) Commit sufficient staff resources to ensure that Family Unification eligible families are identified and certified in a timely manner; and
- (iv) Cooperate with the evaluation that HUD intends to conduct on the Family Unification Program, and submit a certification with the HA's application for Family Unification funding that the PCWA will agree to cooperate with and provide requested data to the HUD office or HUD-approved contractor having responsibility for program evaluation.
- (d) Section 8 Rental Certificate Assistance.

The Family Unification Program provides assistance under the Section 8 rental assistance programs. Although HUD is providing a special allocation of rental certificates, the HA may use both rental vouchers and certificates to assist families under this program.

HAs must administer this program in accordance with HUD's regulations governing the Section 8 rental certificate and rental voucher programs. The HA may issue a rental voucher to a family selected to participate in the Family Unification Program if the family requests a rental voucher and the HA has one available. If Section 8 assistance for a family under this program is terminated, the rental assistance must be reissued to another Family Unification eligible family during the five-year term of the ACC for the Section 8 rental certificates provided under this program.

(C) Family Unification Allocation Amounts

This NOFA announces the availability of up to \$76 million for the Family Unification Program which will support assistance for about 2,000 families. Each HA may apply for funding for a maximum of 50 units.

The amounts allocated under this NOFA will be awarded under a national competition based on demonstrated need for such assistance and a lottery for selection from all approvable applications. The Family Unification Program is exempt from the fair share allocation requirements of section 213(d) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, and from 24

- CFR part 791, subpart D, the HUD regulation implementing section 213(d).
- (D) Family Unification Application Submission Requirements
- (1) Letter of Intent and Narrative

All the items in this Section and Section I.(D), Application Submission Requirements—General, must be included in the application submitted to the HUD Office. The application must include an explanation of how the application meets, or will meet, Threshold Criteria 1 through 4 in Section III.(E)(2) below.

The application must also include a letter of intent from the PCWA stating its commitment to provide resources and support for the Family Unification Program. The PCWA letter of intent must explain:

- (i) The method used to identify eligible families,
- (ii) The process to certify eligible families,
- (iii) The PCWA assistance to families to locate suitable housing,
- (iv) The staff resources committed to the program, and
- (v) PČWA experience with the administration of similar programs including cooperation with an HA.

The PCWA serving the jurisdiction of the HA is responsible for providing the information for Threshold Criterion 4, PCWA Statement of Need for Family Unification Program, to the HA for submission with the HA application. The application must include a statement by the PCWA describing the need for a Family Unification Program. This should include a discussion of the case-load of the PCWA and information about homelessness, family violence resulting in involuntary displacement, number and characteristics of families who are experiencing the placement of children in out-of-home care as a result of inadequate housing, and the PCWA's experience in obtaining housing through HUD assisted housing programs and other sources for families lacking adequate housing. A State-wide Public Child Welfare Agency must provide information on Threshold Criterion 4, PCWA Statement of Need for Family Unification Program, to all HAs that request data; otherwise, HUD will not consider applications from any HAs with the State-wide PCWA as a participant in its program. The HA must state in its cover letter to the application whether it will accept a reduction in the number of rental certificates and the minimum number of rental certificates it will accept since the funding is limited and HUD may only have enough funds to approve a smaller amount than