

Highlights from the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD), Federal Fiscal Year 2013

Background

The Children’s Bureau is pleased to release the following highlights from state NYTD data submissions from Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2013 (October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013). In this third year of data collection, states reported information on (1) all youth and young adults who received independent living services during FFY 2013 (the “served population”) paid for or provided by the state agency that administers the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and (2) responses from the young adults who took the NYTD outcomes survey for the second time at age 19¹. A companion brief (Data Brief #4) will highlight the comparison of outcomes reported at baseline (youth in foster care at age 17) and the outcomes reported by youth again at age 19.

In this data brief:

We present highlights from state NYTD reports submitted in FFY 2013, including information on independent living services provided to youth and the outcomes of 19-year-olds in NYTD Cohort 1.

For more information, please contact the Children’s Bureau at NYTDinfo@acf.hhs.gov



Information on Youth Receiving Independent Living Services

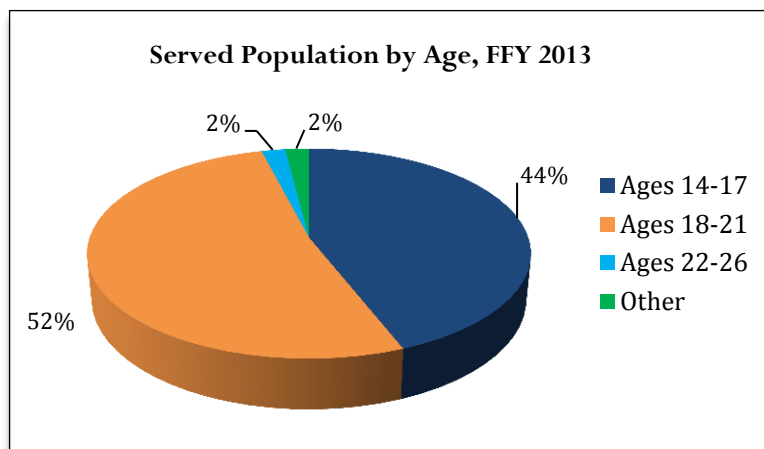
In FFY 2013, states³ reported that **99,974** youth and young adults received at least one service to aid in the transition from foster care to adulthood. As shown in the highlights below, states are providing a broad array of services and supports to a diverse group of youth.

Demographics

- The majority were White and approximately one-third were African American. Close to one in five were Hispanic.⁴
- About the same number of males (49%) and females (51%) received services.
- Over half (52%) were between the ages of 18 and 21. Another 44% were between ages 14 and 17.

Served Population by Race and Ethnicity, FFY 2013

Race ²	
American Indian or Alaska Native	4%
Asian	1%
Black or African American	34%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1%
White	58%
Unknown	2%
Declined	6%
Ethnicity	
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	19%

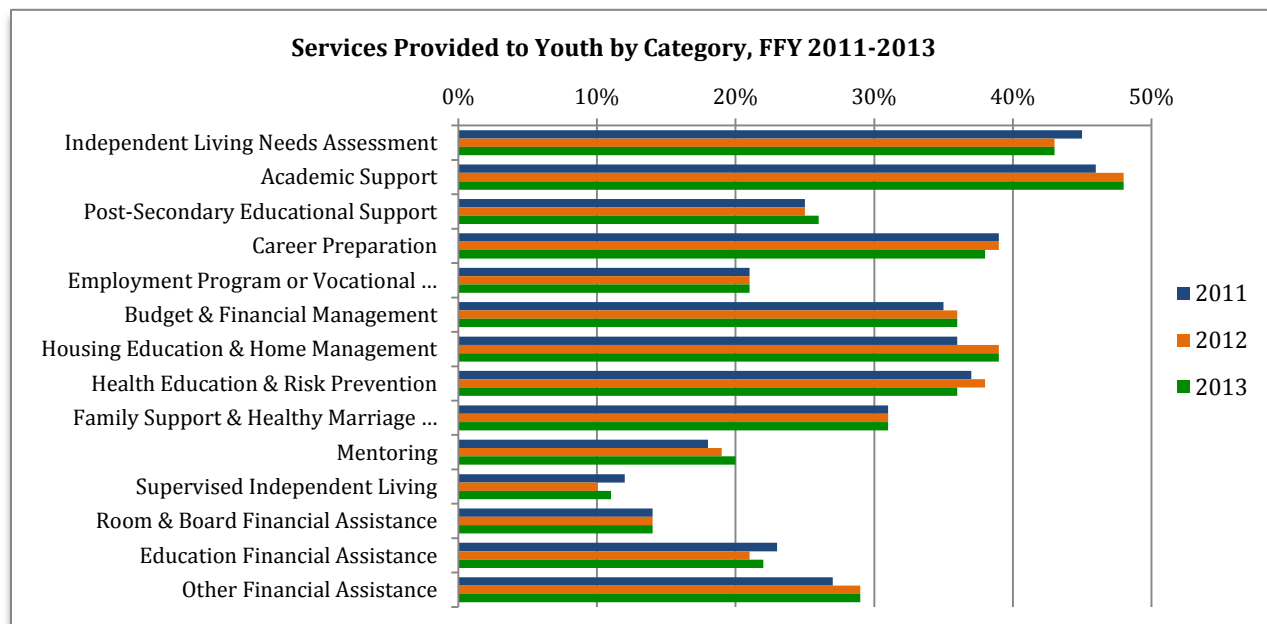


- Seventy percent of youth receiving services were still in foster care during the report period in which they received services.
- Almost one in five youth (19%) receiving services were adjudicated delinquent.
- About one in five youth (21%) receiving services were also receiving special education instruction.

Services Paid for or Provided to Youth

The number and type of services youth and young adults receive has remained about the same over the past three years⁵. Below are highlights from FFY 2013:

- Approximately two-thirds (68%) of youth received at least one independent living life skills support service (e.g., budget and financial management, housing education and home management, supervised independent living, or independent living needs assessment).
- Over half (56%) received at least one educational support service (academic support and/or post-secondary education support).
- Nearly half (45%) received a career preparation or employment training service.
- Over half (58%) of young people received three or more services.



Information on the Outcomes of Youth at Age 19

In FFY 2013, states reported information on 11,316 youth who had previously completed the NYTD survey in FFY 2011 at age 17. Of these 19-year-olds, 310 (3%) were reported as being incarcerated, incapacitated, or deceased. Of the remaining 11,006 youth, 7,536 (69%) participated in the NYTD survey in FFY 2013.⁶ Reasons for non-participation included youth declining (6%) or youth unable to be located or invited to participate (24%). While nationally 69% of youth completed the survey at age 19, response rates varied widely by state, from a low of 26% to a high of 95%. Given the variety of response rates nationally and the potential for non-response bias⁷, the following descriptive results tell us about the youth who completed the survey but may not represent the experiences of all 19-year-olds who are or formerly were in foster care.

Demographics

- There were roughly equal numbers of males (52%) and females (48%) who participated in the NYTD survey.
- Survey participants were racially diverse. Sixteen percent were Hispanic.
- Approximately one-third (32% or 2,416 youth) were in foster care when surveyed and 68% (5,120 youth) had exited foster care by the time they were surveyed.
- Nearly 60% of all surveyed youth also received at least one independent living service from the state. The most common services and supports provided were financial assistance (47%), academic support (43%), housing education and home management (43%), and career preparation (40%).

Survey Participants by Race and Ethnicity, FFY 2013

Race ⁸	
American Indian or Alaska Native	4%
Asian	2%
Black or African American	34%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1%
White	60%
Unknown	2%
Ethnicity	
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	16%

Youth Outcomes at Age 19

Ensuring that young people leave the child welfare system prepared to live independently as productive members of their communities is a primary goal of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). As of May 2014, 19 states have extended title IV-E foster care assistance to youth beyond age 18. As these young people choose to leave, stay, or return to the child welfare system, outcomes may differ depending on those choices.⁹ NYTD data can provide a glimpse of some of the differences and similarities between the outcomes of youth who remain in care after age 18 and the outcomes of youth who exit care. Highlights from the survey of 19-year-olds are included below and are reported separately for those youth who were in care and those who were not in care at the time they completed the survey.

Outcome 1: Financial self-sufficiency¹⁰

To better understand a youth’s outcome experiences in the area of financial self-sufficiency, the NYTD survey poses questions to youth regarding their acquisition of skills necessary to enter the labor market and their access to financial resources to help meet their living expenses.

- Overall, about one-third (34%) of all youth reported being employed either full-time (24%) or part-time (12%)¹¹. Forty-four percent reported receiving at least one form of financial assistance (other than public assistance) including Social Security (14%), educational aid (24%), or some other form of financial support (15%).
- Among youth not in care at age 19, 36% reported that they were receiving at least one type of public assistance (housing, food, or financial).

Youth Outcomes in Financial Self-Sufficiency by Foster Care Status at Age 19, FFY 2013

Outcome area	All Youth (n=7,536)	Youth in foster care (n=2,416)	Youth not in foster care (n=5,120)
Employed full- time	12%	9%	13%
Employed part-time	24%	28%	22%
Receiving employment-related skills training	30%	33%	29%
Receiving Social Security	14%	12%	15%
Receiving educational aid	24%	31%	20%
Receiving other financial support	15%	19%	13%
Receiving public assistance ¹²	--	--	36%

Outcome 2: Educational attainment

Achieving a high school diploma or General Equivalency Degree (GED) can be considered a minimal requirement for self-sufficiency and can assist in establishing a solid educational foundation that will prepare youth for future educational pursuits. Participating in education activities is also one of the allowable conditions required to extend title IV-E foster care assistance to youth beyond age 18¹³. The NYTD survey asks young people to report their current enrollment status in an educational program and the highest educational certification received.

- Among youth in foster care at age 19, 70% were attending school compared to 47% of youth who were no longer in care at age 19. As noted above, completing secondary or post-secondary education is one of the reasons youth are able to remain in foster care after age 18.
- A higher percentage of 19-year-olds in foster care (60%) reported receiving a high school diploma or GED compared to 19-year-olds not in foster care (54%).

Outcome 3: Connections with adults

Permanency for youth in foster care should include a permanent legal connection to a family. Even when youth leave care without a permanent family, establishing a positive, consistent and lasting relationship with at least one adult is a critical component in making a successful transition to adulthood. The NYTD survey asks youth whether there is currently at least one adult in their life, other than a caseworker, to whom they can go for advice or emotional support.¹⁴

- The vast majority of 19-year-olds (92% of youth in care and 89% of youth not in care) reported currently having a positive connection to an adult.

Outcome 4: Experiences with homelessness

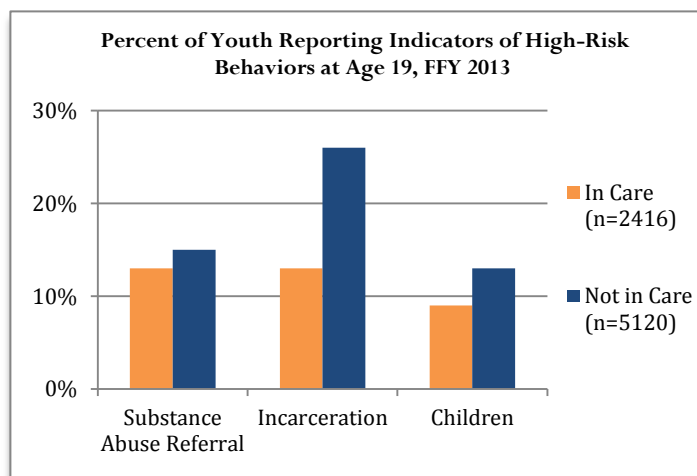
Permanent and adequate housing can protect against a number of negative outcomes. Young people who leave foster care unprepared to live on their own are at risk for becoming homeless soon after discharge. In FFY 2013, the NYTD survey asked 19-year-olds if they had experienced homelessness within the past two years.

- Nearly a quarter (24%) of 19-year-old youth who had exited foster care reported having been homeless at some point within the past two years. Among youth in foster care at age 19, only 10% reported experiencing homelessness in the past two years.

Outcome 5: High-risk behaviors

Many behaviors place youth in foster care at risk for a variety of negative outcomes. The NYTD survey collects information on three key behavior-related outcomes that have been associated with hindering successful transitions to adulthood among youth in foster care.¹⁵ Results from the survey indicate that the majority of 19-year-olds, both in and out of care, do not report any indicators of high-risk behaviors.

- Overall, 14% of surveyed youth reported having been referred for substance abuse assessment or counseling at some point between ages 17 and 19.
- A higher proportion of youth who had left foster care by age 19 reported being incarcerated within the past two years compared to youth who remained in care (26% versus 13%).
- In the past two years, 12% of all 19-year-olds (17% of young women and 6% of young men) reported having given birth to or fathered a child. Of those, 9% of youth were in foster care and 13% were not in foster care.



Outcome 6: Access to health insurance

Access to health care can help ensure youth receive the prevention and treatment services they need to remain healthy. Youth in title IV-E foster care are categorically eligible to receive Medicaid. Additionally, a number of provisions under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) increase access to health care for former foster youth¹⁶, including the extension of Medicaid coverage to young people up to age 26. The NYTD survey asks youth whether they are receiving Medicaid or some other type of health insurance coverage. The 19-year-old survey results demonstrate that youth who leave care experience barriers to accessing health insurance coverage.

- Eighty-five percent of 19-year-olds in foster care and 66% of youth not in foster care reported having Medicaid.
- Just 14% of youth in foster care and 16% of youth not in foster care reported having some other type of medical insurance at age 19.

Conclusion

The information from the third year of NYTD data collection continues to inform what we know about the independent living services states are providing to youth and the experiences youth are having as they become young adults. Over the past three years, we have seen few differences in the number and type of independent living services states are providing to the served population, which numbers about 100,000 youth per year. Academic and career services remain the most common types of services provided, and most young adults are receiving at least three services in a federal fiscal year.

While perhaps not reflective of the experiences of all 19-year-olds, the latest NYTD survey results do paint a helpful picture of some of the positive and challenging outcomes youth face as the age—both in and out of foster care. Many of these youth have earned their high school diploma or GED, most all have an adult they can rely on for guidance and advice, and most have health insurance. Across many indicators, however, there are some differences in the outcomes for youth who are in foster care compared to those who have left care that may need to be considered when data are analyzed further. While descriptive, these results may help to underscore the importance of providing supports to youth as they transition to adulthood, including the impact of extending title IV-E foster care assistance during this transition.

We hope states view these FFY 2013 results as one additional piece of information that may be used to help inform transition planning practices, service provision, foster care extension policies, and data collection procedures. Because permanency has a lasting impact on a youth's outcomes in adulthood, we also hope that states use NYTD as an opportunity to understand and highlight the importance of helping youth make permanent connections before they leave foster care. To do so, we encourage states to continue to engage young people as partners in data collection, data analysis, and dissemination of survey results.

Endnotes

¹ States are required to survey youth during the six-month reporting period in which they turn age 19. Depending on when the state invites the youth's participation, a youth may be age 18 or 19 when surveyed. Because the goal of the second NYTD survey is to capture the outcome of experiences on or around the youth's 19th birthday, we refer to these youth as 19-year-olds in this brief.

² States report all races that apply to a youth. "Unknown" is used to indicate when the race or at least one race of the youth is unknown. "Declined" is used to indicate when the youth or parent has declined to provide any race information.

³ "States" refers to all 50 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. All 52 states provided information on independent living services paid for or provided to youth in FFY 2013.

⁴ Percentages may not total 100% since states could report all races that apply to a particular youth. Hispanic ethnicity is reported separately from race.

⁵ For NYTD data highlights on the served population for FFY 2011 and FFY 2012, see NYTD Data Briefs #1 and #2 at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/data-briefs>

⁶ In FFY 2011, 15,597 youth participated in the NYTD survey at age 17. Because 12 states chose to follow a sample of these youth for the purposes of administering the follow-up survey at ages 19 and 21, the number of youth eligible for the NYTD survey in FFY 2013 was slightly lower (11,712). Of those eligible, states reported 11,316 youth records FFY 2013. Please note that while the NYTD regulation requires states to attempt to administer the NYTD survey to all those eligible, youth who are unable to participate because of their incarceration, incapacitation or death are excluded from the calculation of survey participation discussed in this brief.

⁷ For example, youth who had left the foster care system by age 19 had much higher rates of non-response than those who remained in care at age 19.

⁸ States report all races that apply to a youth. "Unknown" is used to indicate when the race or at least one race of the youth is unknown. "Declined" is used to indicate when the youth or parent has declined to provide any race information.

⁹ The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P. L. 110-351) provides an option for states and tribes to extend eligibility for title IV-E assistance to young people age 18 up to age 21. See 475(8) of the Social Security Act.

¹⁰ Financial self-sufficiency includes whether or not the youth reports (1) being employed full-time, (2) being employed part-time, (3) completing training that acquired employment-related skills, and/or (3) receiving financial supports such as Social Security, educational aid, or some other type of financial assistance. See 45 CFR 1356.83(g) for complete definitions of NYTD data elements.

¹¹ A number of youth reported being employed both full-time and part-time, but each youth is only counted once in this calculation. As a result, the total of 34% does not add to the total of full-time and part-time employment categories (36%) as seen in the corresponding table.

¹² The NYTD survey questions related to a young person's use of public assistance are only asked of youth no longer in foster care.

¹³ Public Law 110-351 permits a title IV-E agency to extend title IV-E assistance to youth between ages 18 and 21 provided that they be engaged in certain work or education activities, or be documented as incapable of participating in such activities.

¹⁴ "Adult" is considered to be someone other than the youth's spouse/partner, boyfriend/girlfriend, or current caseworker.

¹⁵ Risk behaviors include histories of substance abuse assessment or referral, incarceration, or having children. The NYTD survey also asks a youth if they were married at the time of the child's birth. Only 6% of the 867 youth who had children were married at the time of the child's birth.

¹⁶ Section 1902(a)(10)(A)(i)(IX) of the Social Security Act extends Medicaid assistance to former foster youth in certain circumstances. This provision became effective January 1, 2014, after 19-year-olds completed the NYTD survey in FFY 2013.