

Foster Youth Strategic Initiative 2018 Evaluation Report

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This report reflects events and activities that occurred throughout 2018. Child Trends continues to gather information on subsequent events that will be presented in the 2019 annual report.

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Executive Summary

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's Foster Youth Strategic Initiative (the Initiative) is focused on supporting older youth in foster care in becoming self-sufficient and thriving adults. Currently in its second phase (2017–2022), the Initiative strives to improve education and employment outcomes for transition-age foster youth (foster TAY), ages 16–24, in Los Angeles County (LA) and New York City (NYC). The Initiative has three objectives¹:

1. Strengthen systems and policy for foster TAY.
2. Expand and share knowledge with the field.
3. Advance innovative foster TAY programs.

Guided by these objectives, the Initiative has advanced systems reform in six issue areas: education (grades 8–12); postsecondary education; employment; placement; focused interventions (including reproductive health education, pregnant and parenting youth, and crossover youth); and coordination of data and the many systems that touch the lives of foster TAY.

In 2018, Child Trends became the Initiative's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) partner. Working together with the Foundation and key consultants, we developed an evaluation strategy to track progress toward the Initiative's goals, understand the grantees' and the Foundation's contributions, and identify opportunities to continue collective progress. Child Trends' role includes facilitating continuous learning and supporting the incorporation of evaluation findings back into the strategy, as well as strengthening the field by disseminating what we learn. In this inaugural report, we describe the Initiative's current context and areas of recent progress, and offer recommendations for further advancing its goals to support foster TAY.

Profile of 2018 grantees

Forty-four grantees collectively received \$19.3 million from the Initiative in 2018.² Since 2012, the Initiative has invested a total of \$72.8 million.

Locations

- **Eleven** grantees are working in New York City
- **Twenty** grantees are working in Los Angeles
- **Thirteen** grantees are working across both jurisdictions

Objectives

- **Twenty-three** grantees are working on the systems/policy objective
- **Twenty-two** grantees are working on the innovative programs objective
- **Thirteen** grantees are working on the knowledge expansion and sharing objective

Grantee names are italicized throughout this report.

¹ The full 2017–2022 strategy is available here: Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. (2017). *2017–2022 Foster Youth Strategic Initiative Strategy*. Retrieved from <https://www.hiltonfoundation.org/learning/2017-2022-foster-youth-strategic-initiative-strategy>

² This total includes funds received from May 2017 to December 2018.

Indicators of progress across all objectives

Throughout this report, we examine progress across the Initiative’s three objectives. The table below displays these objectives, their impact areas, the 2022 expected results, and highlights of the Initiative’s current work (as of 2018).

	Impact areas	2022 Expected results	Status in 2018
Strengthen systems and policy for foster TAY	A strong system and policy framework will be in place to enable all TAY to become self-sufficient, reinforced by effective advocacy and strong public and private investments	Public child welfare, education, juvenile justice, workforce development, and public health agencies will coordinate service delivery and align funding to improve foster TAY outcomes	Formal structures connect agencies and align funding in both LA and NYC
		Advocacy capacity will be expanded to promote and ensure the effective implementation of TAY-focused system and policy reform	While both jurisdictions have had successes, NYC struggles to achieve robust advocacy capacity
		A cumulative \$60 million in new public funding and \$30 million in private funding will be leveraged for foster TAY programs	Hilton grantees leveraged \$11.4 in public funding and \$9 million in private funding this year
Expand and share knowledge with the field	A robust pipeline of foster TAY-focused research will be established to inform and guide the development of strong policy and practice	Collection of critical data will be expanded to address existing gaps in order to build a more complete understanding of foster TAY	Although significant gaps exist, both jurisdictions are working toward collecting more and better data
		A comprehensive cross-sector data strategy will enable all relevant foster TAY-serving agencies to share administrative data and measure progress toward self-sufficiency	Both jurisdictions struggle to share data across agencies or sectors consistently
		Targeted research will be conducted and broadly disseminated to increase the knowledge and evidence base to improve foster TAY outcomes	Multiple examples of research on TAY support positive change in systems and programs
Advance innovative foster TAY programs	Foster TAY will have access to the supports, education, and career pathways they need to become self-sufficient and thrive	75% of foster TAY will graduate from high school by age 19	Policy and programs are in place to improve graduation rates, but both jurisdictions require better data to track school performance and graduation rates
		85% of foster TAY will attend only one school during a one-year period	Policy and programs are in place to improve school stability, but comprehensive data specific to foster TAY are not reported in either jurisdiction

	Impact areas	2022 Expected results	Status in 2018
		LA and NYC will track and report the rates of permanent part-time or full-time work for all foster TAY through age 24	Programs are in place to improve employment outcomes, but no comprehensive data regarding youth experiences after foster care exists in either jurisdiction

Objective 1: Strengthen systems and policy for foster TAY

Backed by the efforts of the Initiative, both LA and NYC experienced powerful policy shifts in support of foster TAY, including new policies and continued efforts to implement existing policies. In California, for example, implementation of Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) continues, with the goal of ensuring that “all children will live with a committed, permanent, and nurturing family.”³ Under CCR, the Resource Family Approval (RFA) program streamlines and standardizes approval processes and trainings for foster families and relative caregivers, and through legislation passed in 2018, California provides financial support to caregivers at the time of placement. These changes, which facilitate connections and relationships to consistent caregivers and families, have great potential to provide TAY with the stability and support they need to achieve better outcomes toward self-sufficiency.

In 2018, LA and NYC both continued to implement federal education law in ways that better support foster TAY. For example, New York State passed legislation clearly delineating the responsibilities of schools and child welfare agencies in supporting school stability and published an implementation toolkit to support policy implementation.

A strong system and policy framework will be in place to enable all TAY to become self-sufficient, reinforced by effective advocacy and strong public and private investments.		
2022 Expected results	Baseline status	Opportunities for progress
Public child welfare, education, juvenile justice, workforce development, and public health agencies will coordinate service delivery and align funding to improve foster TAY outcomes	Both jurisdictions have formal structures to connect systems and have aligned public and philanthropic funding in most issue areas. In LA , the Board of Supervisors issued several motions requiring collaboration across systems in 2017 and 2018. In NYC , the Interagency Foster Care Task Force, with representatives from child welfare, health, social services, youth and community development, community-based organizations, and youth, issued recommendations to support foster TAY in 2018.	Even where services are robust, foster TAY struggle to locate services, understand eligibility requirements, and complete application processes. Grantees are exploring ways to leverage technology—such as through comprehensive websites or online application platforms—to streamline participation in services. There are also efforts to strengthen connections for specific populations with unique challenges, such as expectant and parenting youth, and youth involved in child welfare and juvenile justice
Advocacy capacity will be expanded to promote and	Advocacy spearheaded by LA grantees pushed for new policies and	There are barriers to advocacy work in NYC , due to the structure of the system.

³ California Department of Social Services. (2017). *The Promise of Continuum of Care Reform (CCR)*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/CCR/CCRIInfographic.pdf?ver=2017-10-18-161318-400>

ensure the effective implementation of TAY-focused system and policy reform	implementation of existing policies around education, workforce, placement, and other supports. There are fewer advocacy grantees in NYC .	
\$60 million in new public funding and \$30 million in private funding will be leveraged for foster TAY programs	\$11.4 million in public funding and \$9 million in private funding was leveraged across LA and NYC . ⁴	There is ongoing work to support coordination across philanthropic partners and system leaders.

Objective 2: Expand and share knowledge with the field

Research and data are critically important to strengthen the field’s understanding of the experiences of foster TAY and what strategies might improve those experiences. The Initiative has invested in expanding knowledge on foster TAY—through both large research studies and dissemination to ensure the stories of foster TAY are shared more broadly. For example, the groundbreaking research conducted by the *University of Chicago* (Cal YOUTH study) and the *University of Southern California* (*Children’s Data Network*) is increasing the field’s understanding of foster TAY and driving research-based and data-informed decision making, both in California and nationally. Additionally, the Initiative works to strengthen public messaging around the lives and experiences of foster TAY through projects such as the upcoming HBO release of *Foster*, a documentary film that features five stories to put a human face on foster care. Program and advocacy grantees in both jurisdictions have made progress in gathering and using their own programmatic or administrative data to drive their work.

A robust pipeline of foster-TAY focused research will be established to inform and guide the development of strong policy and practice.		
2022 Expected results	Baseline status	Opportunities for progress
Collection of critical data will be expanded to address existing gaps in order to build a more complete understanding of foster TAY	Examples of robust data collection exist in both in LA and NYC . The California Child Welfare Indicators Project has an online reporting tool allowing users to explore experiences and outcomes of foster TAY in LA , and the CalYOUTH study is illuminating the experiences of a sample of foster TAY exiting foster care across California. In NYC , grantees support the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) in identifying and understanding trends in placement data.	In LA and NYC combined, there are around 7,000 youth ages 16-20 in foster care, and over 18,000 21-24-year-old former foster youth. In both jurisdictions, there are notable data gaps around school stability, employment data, and data on pregnant and parenting youth and crossover youth. Where data are available, it is not always provided consistently or publicly. Both jurisdictions also lack systematic data on the experiences and outcomes of all foster TAY after they leave foster care.

⁴ For more information on how leveraged funding was defined and calculated, see Appendix C.

<p>A comprehensive cross-sector data strategy will enable all relevant foster TAY-serving agencies to share administrative data and measure progress toward self-sufficiency</p>	<p>In both LA and NYC, there are examples of sharing or integrating data across public systems (e.g., education, child welfare). These efforts are supported by formal structures such as MOUs across multiple TAY-serving systems. Strong infrastructure exists to support data linking—<i>Children’s Data Network</i> in CA and the Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence (CIDI) in NYC. Knowledge grantees in LA link data across systems in their research.</p> <p>However, in both jurisdictions, data sharing does not involve all public systems, and is not done regularly or systematically. Of the 51 indicators identified by the Initiative as important to foster TAY progress, only seven are currently reported as defined, and an additional 22 had proxies available in LA and/or NYC.</p>	<p>The Initiative continues to partner with grantees and stakeholders in both jurisdictions to strengthen data sharing, integration, and reporting.</p> <p>Grantees are also working to promote the use of data that are available—such as CalPASS Plus for tracking participants in campus support programs.</p>
<p>Targeted research will be conducted and broadly disseminated to increase the knowledge and evidence base to improve foster TAY outcomes</p>	<p>There are examples of rigorous research and data being used in new ways to inform the field about the experiences of foster TAY. This work is shared with stakeholders in LA, NYC, and nationally. For example, the CalYOUTH study and the work of the <i>Children’s Data Network</i> on parenting foster TAY have been used in policy advocacy efforts.</p>	<p>Grantees continue to build on existing research to fill current knowledge gaps, such as those around what types of training and technical assistance support foster family recruitment and retention.</p> <p>There is also an increased focus on incorporating the input and ideas of foster TAY into studies and systems change efforts.</p>

Objective 3: Advance innovative foster TAY programs

Both LA and NYC have developed a broad range of innovative programs designed to support foster TAY and address each issue area. For example, in the Antelope Valley region of LA, Foster Ed, a project of the *National Center for Youth Law*, is partnering with *John Burton Advocates for Youth* and *United Friends of the Children* to develop a demonstration site to support the educational needs of youth involved in the child welfare and/or juvenile justice systems and youth experiencing homelessness. This work is done in partnership with education, child welfare, and probation agency partners at the local and county levels, as well as other Hilton grantees. In NYC, the Hilton Foundation’s investments deeply influenced the extensive supports available to youth from enrollment to completion at the City University of New York (CUNY). The *Research Foundation of the CUNY’s Foster Care Initiative* (FCI) supports youth to access remedial supports as needed and links students to CUNY’s Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP). In addition, FCI provides youth with support in the transition to college, paid on-campus internships, social and cultural events, and financial supports such as fee waivers and Metrocards.

Foster TAY will have access to the supports, education, and career pathways they need to become self-sufficient and thrive.

2022 Expected results	Baseline status	Opportunities for progress
75% of foster TAY will graduate from high school by age 19	<p>Robust efforts have been made in LA and NYC to establish state and local policies, procedures, and programs aimed at increasing graduation rates.</p> <p>LA's most recent data show a 47 percent graduation rate in four years (compared to 81 percent for all students).⁵ NYC's most recent data show that 68 percent of foster TAY who graduated high school did so within four years; this number does not account for students who drop out.⁶ These rates cannot be compared as LA and NYC use different methods to calculate graduation rates.</p>	<p>Local programs in LA and NYC are limited as they primarily rely on private funding, and there are unclear pathways to larger scale implementation.</p> <p>Both jurisdictions struggle to gather and report on data.</p>
85% of foster TAY will attend only one school during a one-year period	<p>Efforts have been made to establish state and local policies, procedures, and programs that give priority to school stability. School stability data are not reported for LA. In NYC, 72 percent of students of all ages remained in their school of origin 90 days after initial placement, and 77 percent remained in their school of origin 90 days after a placement change.⁷</p>	<p>Both LA and NYC continue to support implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to support school stability. Both jurisdictions struggle to gather and report on the data in the most meaningful way. NYC's Department of Education (DOE) does not disaggregate data on students in foster care. Although LA disaggregates data, there are no metrics specific to school stability.</p>
LA and NYC will track and report the rates of permanent part-time or full-time work for all foster TAY through age 24	<p>Robust efforts have been made in LA and NYC to establish programs to support workforce entry.</p> <p>At time of exit from foster care, 51 percent of TAY in LA had obtained employment,⁸ while 32 percent of TAY</p>	<p>In both jurisdictions, there is a need for more sustainable and scalable career and technical education programs. Foster TAY in both LA and NYC also need support in identifying and navigating available employment resources. Both jurisdictions lack the capacity to track and report data</p>

⁵ LA graduation rate based on obtaining a regular high school diploma within four years of entering ninth grade in the 2012-2013 school year. The foster TAY graduation rate includes any student with foster care experience during the four years. Source: California Department of Education. (n.d.) 2016-17 Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Outcome: Los Angeles County Report. Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/CohOutcome.aspx?aggleve=county&year=2016-17&cds=19&ro=y>

⁶ New York City Administration for Children's Services. (n.d.). *High School Graduation Rates of Youth in Foster Care Annual Report 2017*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2018/graduationrates.pdf>

⁷ New York City Administration for Children's Services. (n.d.). *Educational Continuity of Children in Foster Care (School Year 2017-2018)*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2018/citycouncilreport.pdf>

⁸ Includes youth exiting care of DCFS as well as crossover youth exiting care of the Department of Probation. Source: California Department of Social Services. (2018). *Outcomes for Youth Exiting Foster Care at Age 18 or Older*. Retrieved from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. [URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/CDSS_8A.aspx](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/CDSS_8A.aspx)

	in NYC had a verifiable source of income. ⁹	for this 2022 outcome, including information on retention.
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Evaluation strategy

To track progress made in each jurisdiction toward the Initiative’s three objectives, the Hilton Foundation and Child Trends developed the Results Framework. This framework comprises six issue areas: education (grades 8–12); postsecondary education; employment; placement; focused interventions (including access to reproductive health, supports for expecting and parenting foster TAY, and supports for foster TAY also involved in the juvenile justice system); and coordination across systems. Within each issue area, the Initiative established a set of goals and identified specific benchmarks that describe essential elements of progress toward each goal. To review the complete set of goals and benchmarks, see Appendix B.

To determine the extent to which each jurisdiction achieved the benchmarks, we assessed several types of information gathered from July to September 2018. These include public documents; interviews with system stakeholders; a focus group with youth; and information from grantees provided through progress reports, interviews, a survey, and publications. We cross-referenced and verified information received from grantees with stakeholder interviews and public reports/documents. In examining each benchmark, we searched for signs of political will, policy, programs, and data to understand whether and how each jurisdiction was making progress toward each of the identified benchmarks.

This evaluation strategy builds and expands on the work of the Initiative’s previous MEL partner, Westat, by establishing a rigorous methodology for assessing system-level progress in LA and NYC.

⁹ This report uses Preparing Youth for Adulthood (PYA) data, which is youth- or caseworker-reported and not verified, with more reliable administrative data. This data should be interpreted with caution. Source: New York City Administration for Children’s Services. (2017). *Report on Youth in Foster Care*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2017/YouthInFosterCare2017.pdf>

Key findings from issue area analysis

Key finding 1: Across all issue areas and objectives, grantees are innovating.

The table below shows just a few examples of grantees' progress toward meeting the objectives. This list is not exhaustive and only provides a small sample of the work done. Additional examples can be found in the body of the full report, organized by issue area.

Examples of innovative work toward objectives

Objective 1: Strengthen systems and policy for foster TAY.	
LA	NYC
<p>Promoting strong cross-system coordination. <i>LA Reproductive Health Equity Project for Foster Youth (LA RHEP)</i> brings together youth, public agencies, advocates, and organizations to promote evidence-informed sexual and reproductive health services for foster TAY, resulting in new statewide policies and a LA Board of Supervision's motion to ensure cross-agency coordination.</p>	<p>Promoting strong policies. The Fostering Youth Success Alliance, spearheaded by <i>Children's Aid</i>, successfully advocated for the continuation of NY State's Foster Youth College Success Initiative, which supports foster TAY with financial aid and programmatic resources, as well as an expansion of funding to \$6 million.</p>
<p>Implementing policy. The <i>Alliance for Children's Rights</i>, <i>Children's Law Center</i>, <i>Public Counsel</i> and the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) co-chair a steering committee, create tools, conduct webinars, and maintain continued county and state engagement focused on strengthening the state's efforts to increase family placements and its Resource Family Approval and caregiver support policies.</p>	<p>Implementing policy. <i>Juvenile Law Center (JLC)</i> has brought together working groups, conducted trainings, and provided technical assistance at the city and state levels to support strong implementation of ESSA requirements that promote school stability for foster TAY. <i>JLC</i> has consulted on a statewide toolkit to support ESSA implementation as well as draft ACS policies on transportation and best interest decision-making,</p>
Objective 2: Expand and share knowledge with the field.	
<p>Rigorous research. Research conducted by <i>Children's Data Network</i> was used by advocates to support legislation in California around reproductive health (SB 89) and child care (AB 1164), as well as the LA Board of Supervisors' motion of crossover youth. The CalYOUTH study, conducted by the <i>University of Chicago</i>, has been used in LA, NYC, and nationally to elevate the lives and outcomes of youth with foster care experience.</p>	
<p>Sharing knowledge. <i>FrameWorks Institute</i> began research to better understand effective communications strategies when sharing information on foster TAY. <i>Fostering Media Connections</i> expanded coverage of key child welfare issues impacting foster TAY in NYC, complementing their already robust reporting in LA.</p>	
Objective 3: Advance innovative foster TAY programs.	
LA	NYC
<p>Postsecondary programs. <i>United Friends of the Children</i> supports youth with intensive supports and academic preparation around postsecondary readiness and</p>	<p>Education programs. <i>New York Foundling's Road to Success</i> tutoring program provides one-on-one tutoring and advocacy for students. An adaptation of</p>

<p>access, as well as supports that follow foster TAY throughout their postsecondary experience. <i>John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY)</i> and partners trained caseworkers on the importance of higher education and available resources, resulting in improved caseworker knowledge and attitudes.¹⁰</p>	<p>this Hilton-funded program has expanded these supports to more youth across the city. In both NYC and LA, <i>First Star</i> operates on college campuses during the summer and on weekends during the school year to provide four years of support beginning in 9th grade. This support helps to ensure students are on track to graduate from high school and are enrolled in the classes they need to achieve their educational goals toward higher education.</p>
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Key finding 2: Programs are incorporating more data in their work but face ongoing challenges to accessing and using high-quality data to track youth outcomes.

Both LA and NYC have invested in collecting and using data to support policy development, policy implementation, and programmatic decision making. For example, the CalPASS Plus data system tracks postsecondary progress and outcomes for foster TAY in community colleges and some four-year universities. LA’s Education Passport System, supported by MOUs between DCFS, the Probation Department, and all 80 school districts, shares key information to support the educational success of foster TAY. *California’s Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP)* also provides access to customizable reports on children and youth involved in the child welfare system. In NYC, ACS receives data on youth engaged, enrolled, and completing workforce programs. There is also monthly data sharing between ACS and NYC’s Department of Education, which provides school attendance and report card information. ACS has also used data to drive programmatic work through its Home Away from Home initiative. Both LA and NYC track congregate care placements.

However, notable gaps and obstacles currently prevent stakeholders in both jurisdictions from regularly using data; in many cases, legal barriers to accessing and sharing data contribute to these gaps. Challenges to accessing and using data include the following:

- **Data gaps.** In developing the evaluation plan, we created a series of 51 indicators designed to measure how TAY are faring in the six issue areas. However, only seven of the 51 are currently gathered and/or reported upon as defined; an additional 22 had proxies available in LA and/or NYC. These gaps, and others described in the full report, make it difficult to understand how youth with foster care experience are faring. The following are several examples:
 - Neither jurisdiction has access to data on foster TAY outcomes after their exit from foster care, meaning that we do not know about TAY’s postsecondary education experiences or employment trajectory.
 - The Economic Development Scorecard in LA reports the number of foster TAY served by workforce development programs, but advocates and public agencies see opportunities to further strengthen the data elements captured in this report.
 - In NYC, it is possible for education data to be disaggregated and reported by foster care status on a regular basis, but NYC is not currently doing so. As a result, stakeholders cannot examine educational outcomes for foster TAY as a group outside of the limited annual data reports published by ACS.

¹⁰ The term “caseworker” is used throughout this report to refer to the individual at DCFS (in LA) or at a provider agency (in NYC) who is responsible for all child welfare case management activities.

- **Inability to link data across systems.** Youth in foster care touch other public systems, such as education, workforce, and health. To gain a full understanding of how they are faring requires connecting the data from these other systems with child welfare data. For example, to understand school stability after a placement change, schools need access to placement data gathered by the child welfare agency. Although there are some examples of linking, both LA and NYC struggle to regularly link and report aggregate data across agencies.
- **Data are not reported with sufficient frequency.** Some data are only reported periodically, making them less useful for decision-making purposes. Although much of the cutting-edge research conducted in LA and NYC rely on linked data, those data are only available for the duration and purposes of the research project and may not be available in a consistent way to all stakeholders. The research projects paint an important picture of the issues facing foster TAY, but do not have long-term applicability for advocacy or programmatic work.
- **Data are not collected or shared in useful formats.** When data are available, they may not be formatted or shared in a useful way. For example, caseworkers in LA are required to enter data on youth who have had reproductive health education as narrative text, making it difficult to run reports and understand what is happening beyond the individual level. In NYC, data are shared between ACS and the Department of Education via spreadsheets, which are difficult for some users to manipulate and analyze.
- **Data are not always shared with service providers.** In several issue areas, particularly in NYC, service providers struggle to access information on eligible foster TAY who may need access to their programming. Without sharing data with service providers, it is a challenge for programs to connect with youth who need services.

Key finding 3: The Hilton Foundation plays a unique and powerful role in both jurisdictions.

Beyond the work of its grantees, the Foundation has also spurred systems change in a variety of ways:

- **Setting the agenda for older youth improvements.** Meeting with leaders in both LA and NYC, Foundation staff regularly connect with the most senior agency executives and child welfare stakeholders to understand their priorities, promote the work of the Initiative, and help set the public agenda for older youth improvements. The Foundation's grants and other activities help keep older youth in the larger conversations of foster care and child welfare.
- **Catalyzing sustained public investments** to support foster TAY. Foundation investments, such as postsecondary education supports for foster TAY in NYC, have been credited by stakeholders with deepening public agency commitment to and investment in these areas.
- **Providing bridge funding** to fill gaps. For example, the Foundation provided bridge funding to support three education consultants at select DCFS offices in LA to process transportation requests in support of school stability. DCFS committed to hiring an additional eight consultants in the future.
- **Coordinating with and leveraging support from other funders** through participation in collaborative efforts such as the Youth Transition Funders Group and the California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership. Through these collaborations, Foundation staff create opportunities for shared learning, priority setting, and leveraging of resources to support foster TAY.
- **Convening and energizing grantees** through annual meetings that provide opportunities to hear from leaders in both jurisdictions, learn from experts in the field, network, and explore potential partnerships with each other.

Foster Youth Strategic Initiative Strategy

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's Foster Youth Strategic Initiative (the Initiative) focuses on supporting older youth in foster care to become self-sufficient and thriving adults. The Initiative strives to improve education and employment outcomes for transition age foster youth (foster TAY) ages 16-24, in Los Angeles County (LA) and New York City (NYC). As they transition to adulthood, foster TAY face unique challenges in accessing college and career options, and they often have few supportive adults in their lives. To build on foster TAY's resilience and transform the opportunities available to them, the Initiative has three objectives.¹¹

- Strengthen systems and policy for foster TAY.
- Expand and share knowledge with the field.
- Advance innovative foster TAY programs.

During the first phase of the Initiative (2012-2017), the Foundation invested \$53.5 million—working with grantees, stakeholders, and other funders—to advance systems reforms, provide innovative programs, increase the knowledge base around this population, and convene leaders across the many sectors that touch the lives of foster TAY. Now in its second phase (2017-2022), the Initiative continues its work to ensure that “all foster TAY have the education, skills, and opportunities to lead healthy and productive lives.” The outcomes the Initiative is pursuing during this second phase are identified below.¹²

Phase II Strategy: Measuring Success

By 2022, the Initiative will achieve the following outcomes in LA and NYC:

1. A strong system and policy framework will be in place to enable all TAY to become self-sufficient, reinforced by effective advocacy and strong public and private investments
 - Public child welfare, education, juvenile justice, workforce development, and public health agencies will coordinate service delivery and align funding to improve foster TAY outcomes
 - Advocacy capacity will be expanded to promote and ensure the effective implementation of TAY-focused system and policy reform
 - \$60 million in new public funding and \$30 million in private funding will be leveraged for foster TAY programs
2. A robust pipeline of foster TAY-focused research will be established to inform and guide the development of strong policy and practice
 - Collection of critical data will be expanded to address existing gaps in order to build a more complete understanding of foster TAY
 - A comprehensive cross-sector data strategy will enable all relevant foster TAY-serving agencies to share administrative data and measure progress toward self-sufficiency
 - Targeted research will be conducted and broadly disseminated to increase the knowledge and evidence base to improve foster TAY outcomes
3. Foster TAY will have access to the supports, education, and career pathways they need to become self-sufficient and thrive
 - 75% of foster TAY will graduate from high school by age 19
 - 85% of foster TAY will attend only one school during a one-year period

¹¹ The full 2017-2022 strategy is available here: Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. (2017). *2017-2022 Foster Youth Strategic Initiative Strategy*. Retrieved from <https://www.hiltonfoundation.org/learning/2017-2022-foster-youth-strategic-initiative-strategy>

¹² Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. (2017). *2017-2022 Foster Youth Strategic Initiative Strategy*. Retrieved from <https://www.hiltonfoundation.org/learning/2017-2022-foster-youth-strategic-initiative-strategy>

- LA and NYC will track and report the rates of permanent part-time or full-time work for all foster TAY through age 24

2017-2022 Foster Youth Strategic Initiative Strategy, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

Role of the MEL

Child Trends' role as the Initiative's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) partner is to track progress toward the Initiative's goals, understand the grantees' and the Foundation's contributions, and identify opportunities to continue collective progress.¹³ This role includes facilitating continuous learning, supporting the incorporation of evaluative findings back into the strategy, and strengthening the field by sharing and disseminating what we learn.

Profile of 2018 grantees

Forty-four grantees funded by the Initiative in 2018 collectively received \$19.3 million from the Initiative.¹⁴ Since 2012, the Initiative has invested a total of \$72.8 million.

Locations

- **Eleven** grantees are working in New York City
- **Twenty** grantees are working in Los Angeles
- **Thirteen** grantees are working across both jurisdictions

Objectives

- **Twenty-three** grantees are working on the systems/policy objective
- **Twenty-two** grantees are working on the innovative programs objective
- **Thirteen** grantees are working on the knowledge expansion and sharing objective

For a list of grantees by location and area(s) of focus, see Appendix A. Grantee names are italicized throughout this report.

Note on data limitations

To understand whether progress made at the system level has spurred positive changes for foster TAY, we present youth-level indicators (outlined in Appendix B) by issue area throughout this report. We also present demographic and contextual information for LA and NYC. As described later in this report, current data reporting limits the availability and consistency of data reporting across LA and NYC. We caution that data from LA and NYC should not be directly compared as each jurisdiction collects and reports this information differently. Child Trends will work with the Initiative and its partners to explore opportunities for expanding and strengthening data collection and reporting in the coming years.

LA data regarding the experiences of youth ages 18-21 exiting foster care are published by the *California Child Welfare Indicators Project* using quarterly data reported to the California Department of Social Services by each county. This data includes crossover youth, or youth in foster care under the supervision

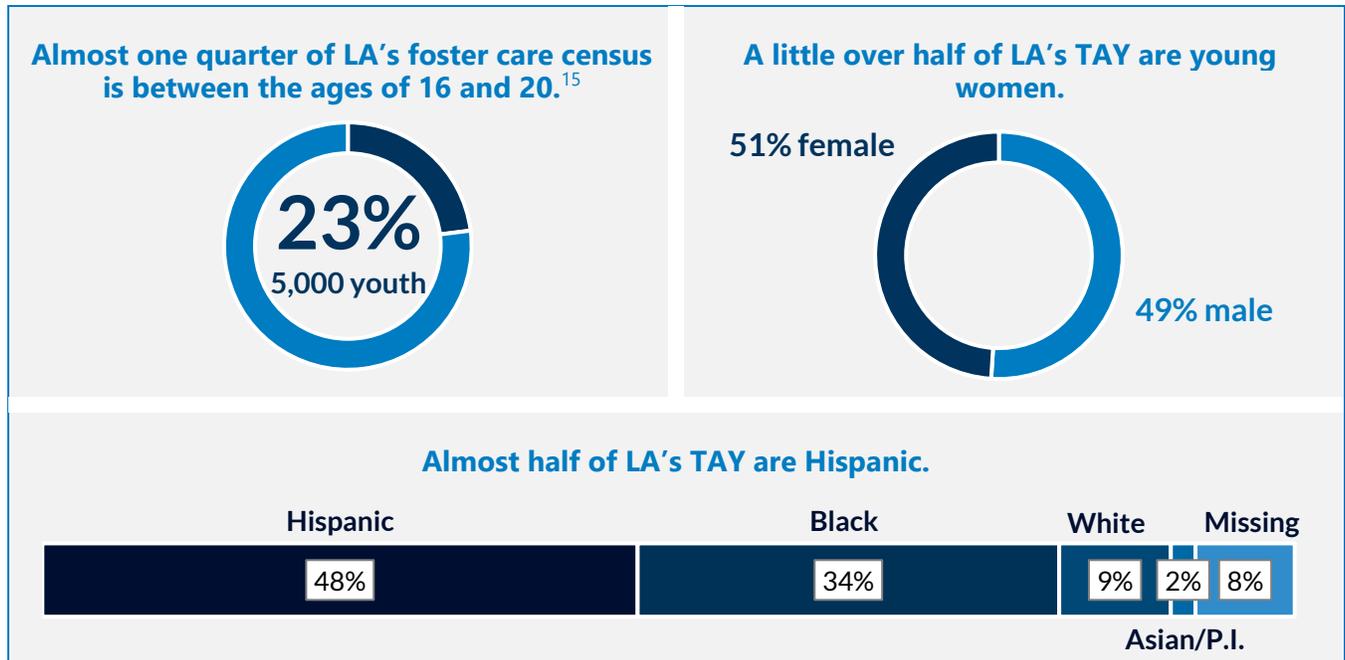
¹³ To learn more about the role of the MEL at the Foundation, see: David, T. (2016). *Emphasizing the "L" in MEL: Guest Post*. Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. Retrieved from: <https://www.hiltonfoundation.org/news/151-emphasizing-the-l-in-mel-guest-post>.

¹⁴ This total includes funds received from May 2017 to December 2018.

of the probation system. Data are only reported for youth “whose whereabouts are known” and are missing for some counties; therefore, this data may not be representative of all youth exiting care.

NYC reports this data in ACS’s *Report on Youth in Foster Care*, which draws on several data sources. Some data sources (e.g., the Preparing Youth for Adulthood Checklist) are youth- or caseworker-reported and not verified and should be interpreted with caution.

Youth in Los Angeles



¹⁵ As of January 1, 2018, rounded to the nearest hundred. Includes youth in foster care who are supervised under the probation system. Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., ..., Morris, N. (2018). *CCWIP reports*. Retrieved from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/PIT.aspx

In 2017, **1,100** youth ages 18 and older exited foster care in LA.¹⁶

Almost all youth ages 18 and older who exited care in 2017 had a permanent connection or housing arrangement when they left care.¹⁷



In addition to serving youth currently in foster care, Hilton grantees also serve former foster youth ages 21-24.

There are an estimated **11,000** former foster youth ages 21-24 in LA.¹⁸

Systems in Los Angeles

We include the information in this section to provide context for understanding the systems with which foster TAY engage in LA. Throughout the remainder of the report, we discuss systems' specific strengths and challenges with respect to supporting TAY.

The **Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)** is the public agency in Los Angeles County responsible for child welfare services. Child welfare services are county-administered, with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) providing direction and support at the state level. DCFS has 19 local offices across the county responsible for case management. Supporting these local offices are centralized functions, including the Youth Development Services Division, which focuses on providing TAY with independent living program (ILP) services and resources to successfully transition to self-sufficiency.

¹⁶ Rounded to the nearest hundred. Includes youth in foster care who were supervised under the probation system. Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., ..., Morris, N. (2018). *CCWIP reports*. Retrieved from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/CDSS_8A.aspx?r=1

¹⁷ Among youth whose whereabouts were known at the time of discharge. Includes youth in foster care who were supervised under the probation system. Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., ..., Morris, N. (2018). *CCWIP reports*. Retrieved from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/CDSS_8A.aspx?r=1.

¹⁸ Based on Child Trends' analysis of AFCARS FFY 2010-2016 data. These analyses include all youth who were in foster care after age 16, spent at least 45 days in foster care, and were ages 21-24 on December 31, 2017, excluding youth with a discharge reason of "death of child."

Key public agencies and institutions that partner with DCFS to support TAY

Governing Body for LA County: County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors	
Chief Executive Office	Supports the Board of Supervisors
Office of Child Protection	“The office’s mission is to strengthen the child protection system and promote better communication, coordination and accountability—minimizing, if not eliminating, the risk that a child known to one or more entities in our system will be harmed.” ¹⁹
Public Agencies	
K-12 Education	Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), and 80 school districts reporting to the State Board of Education and the California Department of Education (CDE)
Postsecondary Education	Community colleges, California State University, University of California, private colleges
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>County:</i> Workforce Development, Aging & Community Services (WDACS) • <i>City:</i> Economic & Workforce Development Department (EWDD) • <i>Additional Workforce Development Agencies:</i> South Bay Workforce Investment Board, Pacific Gateway Workforce Innovation Network, Southeast LA Workforce Development Board, Foothill Workforce Development Board, and Verdugo Workforce Development Board
Juvenile Justice	Probation Department
Health/Mental Health	Department of Health Services, Department of Mental Health, Department of Public Health
Public Benefits	Department of Public Social Services
Courts and Judicial System	
LA Superior Court	Dependency System (including the Non-Minor Dependency Court), Delinquency System

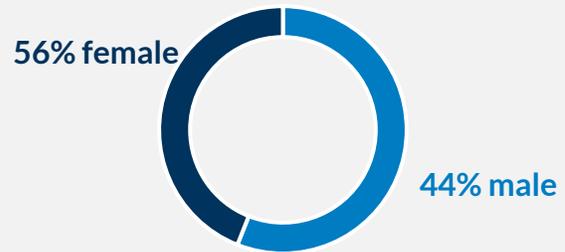
¹⁹County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office. (n.d.). Priorities and Initiatives: Office of Child Protection. Retrieved from: <https://ceo.lacounty.gov/office-of-child-protection-priorities/>

Youth in New York City

Almost one quarter of NYC's foster care census is between the ages of 16 and 20.²⁰



Over half of NYC's TAY are young women.

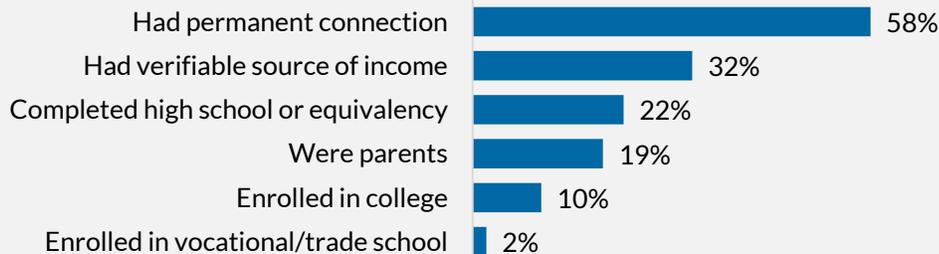


More than half of NYC's TAY are black.



In 2017, **600** youth ages 18 and older aged out of foster care in NYC.²¹

More than half of youth ages 18 and older who aged out of care in 2017 had a permanent connection.²²



In addition to serving youth currently in foster care, Hilton grantees also serve former foster youth ages 21-24.

²⁰ On December 31, 2017, rounded to the nearest hundred. Source: New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2017). *Report on Youth in Foster Care*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2017/YouthInFosterCare2017.pdf>

²¹ Rounded to the nearest hundred. Source: New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2017). *Report on Youth in Foster Care*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2017/YouthInFosterCare2017.pdf>

²² Among other data sources, this report uses Preparing Youth for Adulthood (PYA) data which is youth- or caseworker-reported and not verified, with more reliable administrative data. This data should be interpreted with caution. Source: New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2017). *Report on Youth in Foster Care*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2017/YouthInFosterCare2017.pdf>

There are an estimated **6,000 - 7,000** former foster youth ages 21-24 in NYC.²³

Systems in New York City

We include the information in this section to provide context for understanding the systems with which foster TAY engage in NYC. Throughout the remainder of the report, we discuss systems' specific strengths and challenges with respect to supporting TAY.

The **Administration for Children's Services (ACS)** is the public agency in New York City responsible for child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care and education services. Child welfare services are county-administered, with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) providing direction and support at the state level. ACS contracts with private, non-profit community providers for prevention and foster care services. In 2018, 26 private agencies were responsible for providing placements and case management services for children and youth in foster care.

Key public agencies and institutions that partner with ACS to support TAY

Governing Legislative Body for NYC: New York City Council	
Foster Care Interagency Task Force	Created by City Council and includes representatives from agencies, service providers, and youth
Public Agencies	
K-12 Education	Department of Education (DOE)
Postsecondary Education	City University of New York (CUNY), State University of New York (SUNY), private colleges
Employment	Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD)
Juvenile Justice	Administration for Children's Services' Division of Youth and Family Justice
Health/Mental Health	Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Courts and Judicial System: New York City Family Court	

²³ Based on Child Trends' analysis of AFCARS FFY 2010-2016 data. These analyses include youth who were in foster care after age 16, spent at least 45 days in foster care, and were ages 21-24 on December 31, 2017, excluding youth with a discharge reason of "death of child." This analysis is limited by data quality issues in the AFCARS data, which include approximately 2,000 youth without a discharge date/reason. This may be at least partially attributed to differences in discharge reasons in New York's administrative data and AFCARS. It is also possible that some of these youth may be duplicate entries. Due to these data quality issues, we have provided an estimated range rather than an exact estimate.

Issue areas overview

Within the LA and NYC contexts described above, much progress has been made to support foster TAY. To track progress made in each jurisdiction toward the Initiative’s three objectives, the Hilton Foundation and Child Trends developed the Results Framework. This framework comprises six issue areas: education (grades 8–12), postsecondary education, employment, placement, focused interventions, and coordination across systems. Within each issue area, the Initiative established a set of goals:

Issue area	Goals
1. Education (grades 8-12)	School stability for foster TAY in high school Targeted supports to students and schools in service of graduation
2. Postsecondary education	Accessible postsecondary education options Targeted supports in service of postsecondary completion
3. Employment	Accessible postsecondary education options Targeted workforce preparation for foster TAY
4. Placement	Caregiver support Emphasis on families and family-like settings
5. Focused interventions	Accessible reproductive health care Tailored supports for expectant and parenting foster TAY Targeted supports for crossover youth
6. Coordination	Coordinated service delivery across systems Research and data-informed decision-making Data collection and integration

Each goal was refined into specific benchmarks that identify essential elements of progress toward that goal. For a full list of the benchmarks, see Appendix B.

To measure system-level progress toward each of the benchmarks, we assessed several types of information.

1. Public documents, including government agency reports, research conducted by independent organizations, academic literature, policy documents, advocacy reports, webinars, and press releases
2. Interviews with stakeholders, including public agency executives and staff
3. A focus group with transition age youth
4. Information provided by grantees, including progress reports, interviews with grantee executives and staff, a grantee survey, and grantee publications

To develop a holistic understanding of grantees’ work and the progress being made toward the Initiative's goals, we assessed information from grantees themselves and cross-referenced that information through

interviews with external stakeholders and verification via public reports and documents. Data collection occurred between July and September 2018. In examining each benchmark, we searched for the following four implementation components:

1. Political will: Agency or institution central to the benchmark (or a multi-agency or multi-sector collaborative) has made a documented commitment to addressing the benchmark
2. Policy: Codified requirements committing key agencies or institutions to action regarding the benchmark and active implementation efforts
3. Programs: Sustainable and scalable local services aligned to the benchmark
4. Data: Regular administrative or survey data collection, analysis, and reporting activities to track local progress related to the benchmark over time

For more details on the methodology, see Appendix C. In the following sections, we systematically explore the progress made in both jurisdictions in each of the six issue areas.

Issue area 1: Improving educational outcomes for transition age foster youth

A high school diploma opens doors to higher education opportunities, is a requirement for many entry-level jobs, and creates ties to a community of adults and mentors. Youth with foster care experience are less likely to graduate from high school than their peers.

Advancing the Initiative's objectives

Through the work of the grantees and the Foundation, the Initiative advanced reform in NYC and LA in several ways. Below we highlight examples of this important work.

Strengthening systems and policy. Federal policymakers have passed legislation—including the Uninterrupted Scholars Act of 2014 and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015—to improve information sharing between education and child welfare agencies and strengthen school stability for youth in foster care. With these shifts on the national stage, communities must work to operationalize federal requirements as they address areas of education need. In LA, many child welfare and education stakeholders, including Hilton grantees, worked to develop and implement a pilot program to transport students to their schools of origin, as required by ESSA. Transportation options have been expanded to include a ride service in partnership with Hop Skip Drive. Throughout the pilot, stakeholders have strived to understand what works well, streamline procedures, conduct trainings, and build partnerships. Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and DCFS have agreed to allocate \$1.1 million additional dollars to extend the transportation pilot to June 2019.

In NYC, the *Juvenile Law Center (JLC)* has supported work at the county and state levels around school stability, culminating in a toolkit that was released to support implementation of state legislation passed in April 2018.

Innovative programs. In LA and NYC, *First Star* operates on college campuses during the summer and on weekends during the school year, providing four years of academic, social, and emotional support, beginning in 9th grade, to ensure students are on track to graduate from high school and enrolled in the classes they need to achieve their educational goals toward higher education. *First Star* staff in LA also connect with school guidance and foster youth achievement counselors at each school and with caregivers when issues arise. In NYC, *NY Foundling's Road to Success* tutoring program provides students with one-on-one tutoring, as well as advocacy. An adaptation of this Hilton-funded program has expanded these supports to more youth across the city.

Foundation as a change agent

In LA, Hilton funding was used as a bridge to support three Education Consultants at select DCFS offices who will process transportation requests in support of school stability. DCFS has committed funding to hire eight additional Consultants in the future.

Expanding and sharing knowledge. In LA, *Fostering Media Connections'* analysis of state compliance with ESSA accountability requirements found LA out of compliance. In response to this reporting, a plan and funding were quickly put in place to address the compliance problem. Several Hilton grantees also serve as advisors to LACOE on the development and launch of the Education Passport System. Through MOUs between DCFS, the Probation Department, and all 80 school districts, the Education Passport System will share key information to support the educational success of foster TAY. Opportunities for continued expansion are being explored for 2019.

Overview of education benchmarks and opportunities

Benchmark	Opportunities
Goal 1: School stability for foster TAY in high school	
Schools and child welfare agencies prioritize school stability when placements change	Implementation of the school stability provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is still in the early stages in both LA and NYC. Continued efforts are required to standardize and enforce processes and educate necessary stakeholders. Child welfare agency policies on school stability during placement decision making exist in LA, but there are opportunities to strengthen implementation. With an Initiative-funded outreach coordinator, LA will seek to build necessary capacity beyond pilot programs and establish and coordinate long-term transportation agreements between DCFS and school districts.
Cost-sharing arrangements between education and child welfare support foster TAY with transportation and planning to promote school stability	
Goal 2: Targeted supports to students and schools in service of graduation	
Schools prioritize student engagement and persistence when supporting foster TAY during school transitions	Local programs in both LA and NYC support this goal but are limited as they rely primarily on private funding and often have unclear pathways to larger scale implementation. Data challenges exist in both jurisdictions. While CA disaggregates data for youth in foster care, advocates raised concerns about the accuracy of the data and the need for additional metrics specific to youth in foster care. Policies exist in LA, but dedicated funding streams and enforcement to ensure accountability specifically for foster youth outcomes need further
Foster TAY have consistent graduation counseling (e.g., designated individuals assigned to youth, case management plans, specialized services)	
Academic support services are accessible to foster TAY	

School environments support the socioemotional and/or behavioral needs of foster TAY	development. NYC Department of Education does not disaggregate data or have dedicated staff focused on students in foster care, outside of the newly established Family Support Manager for Vulnerable Populations. Supports available to foster TAY also vary by provider agency in NYC.
Schools receive tailored supports to assist foster TAY and are held accountable for foster TAY performance	

An example of efforts toward the education benchmarks, representing the work of the Initiative and its grantees as well as other system stakeholders and partners, is presented below for each jurisdiction. We recognize that there may still be room for progress across these areas and will continue to monitor over time.

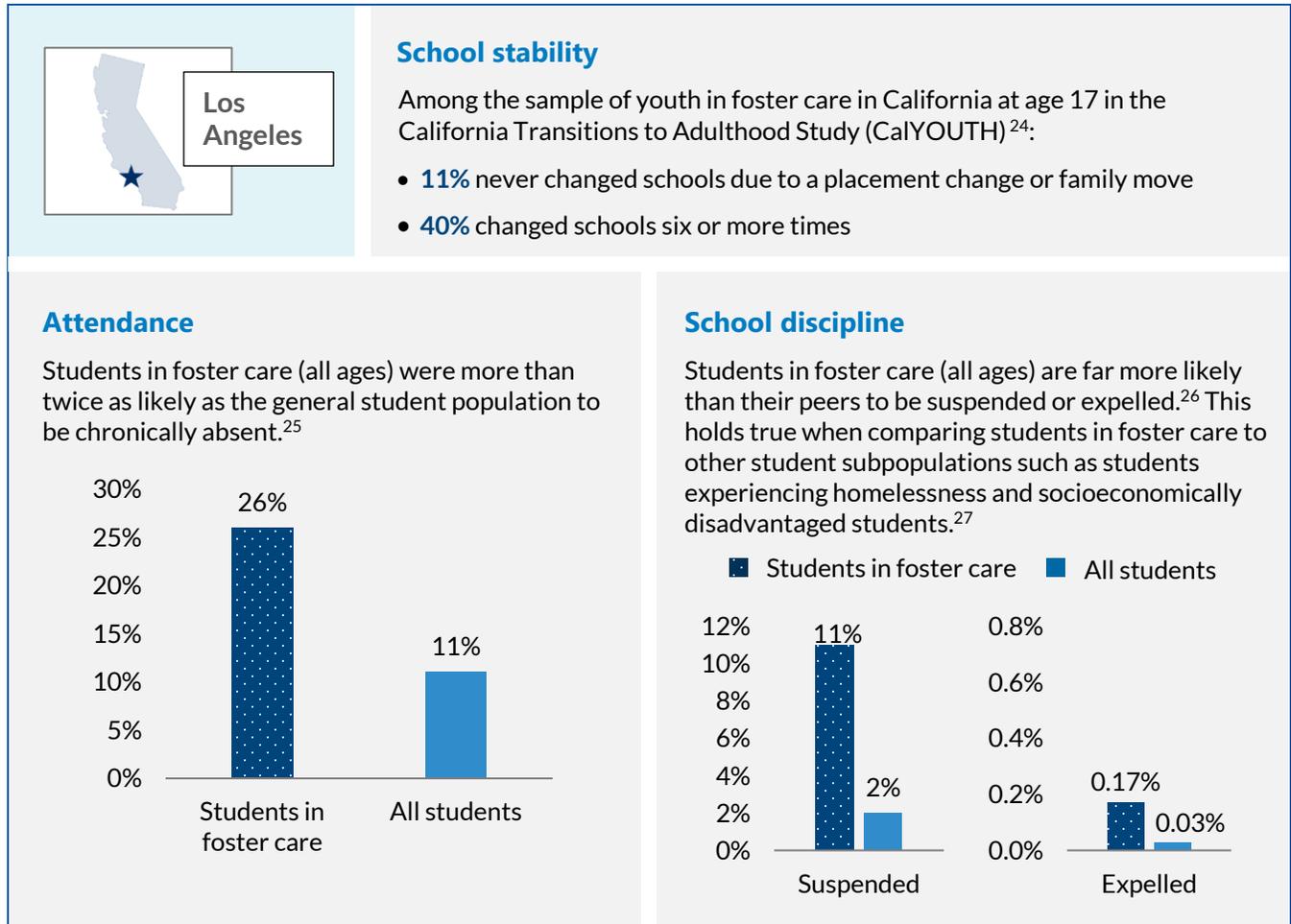
Figure 2. Examples of work in LA and NYC toward education benchmarks

	LA BENCHMARK EXAMPLE:	NYC BENCHMARK EXAMPLE:
	Schools receive tailored supports to assist foster TAY and are held accountable for foster TAY performance	Schools and child welfare agencies prioritize school stability when placements change
Political Will 	Civil Grand Jury reviewed funding and outcomes specific for foster TAY and issued recommendations for improvement.	Interagency Foster Care Task Force recommended issuance of new regulations regarding school stability.
Policy 	Local Controlled Funding Formula (LCFF) includes foster TAY as one of three identified subgroups. School districts outline foster TAY-specific goals in their Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAPs). LACOE conducts regional learning networks to support these plans, and the <i>Alliance for Children's Rights</i> leads a Professional Learning Network for six districts.	New procedures are in place for coordination between DOE's Office of Enrollment and ACS when a school change is requested.
Program 	If a school district has performance disparities for any subgroup of students (such as foster TAY) in two or more LCFF priorities, the district receives differentiated assistance to improve those scores.	<i>Juvenile Law Center</i> provided training and consultation on school stability at the state and local levels.
Data 	Through DataQuest and the California Dashboard, CDE publicly reports on how schools and local educational agencies are performing on key indicators, disaggregated for foster TAY.	ACS is required to report annually on school stability under Local Law 142.

Educational experiences and outcomes of foster TAY in LA and NYC

The Initiative continues to work toward meeting its 2022 expected results related to education:

- **85%** of foster TAY will attend only one school during a one-year period
- **75%** of foster TAY will graduate from high school by age 19



²⁴ Chronically absent is defined as missing 10% or more of enrolled days. Source: Courtney, M.E, Pajarita, C., Okpych, N.J., Napolitano, L., Halsted, K. (2014). *Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CalYOUTH): Conditions of Foster Youth at Age 17*. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/CY_YT_RE1214-1.pdf

²⁵ California Department of Education. (n.d.) 2016-17 Chronic Absenteeism Rate. Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/DQCensus/AttChrAbsRate.aspx?aggllevel=County&cds=19&year=2016-17>

²⁶ California Department of Education. (n.d.) 2016-17 Suspension Rate. Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqCensus/DisSuspRate.aspx?year=2016-17&aggllevel=County&cds=19> & California Department of Education. (n.d.) 2016-17 Expulsion Rate. Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqCensus/DisExpRate.aspx?year=2016-17&aggllevel=County&cds=19>

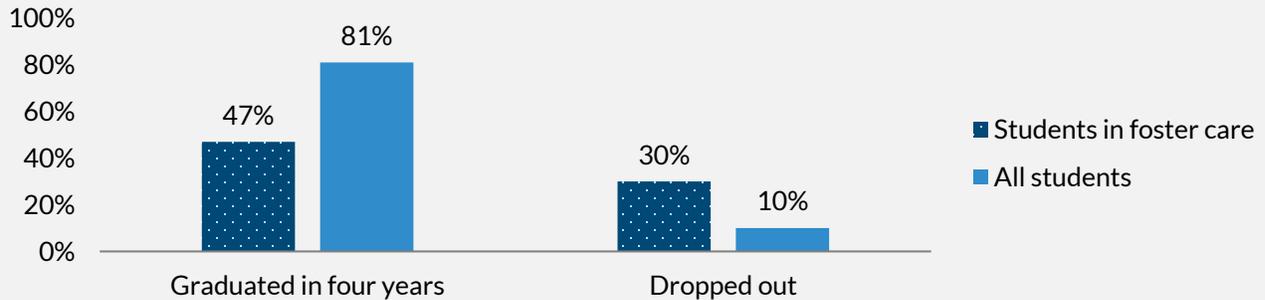
²⁷ California Department of Education. (n.d.) 2016-17 Suspension Rate. Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqCensus/DisSuspRate.aspx?year=2016-17&aggllevel=County&cds=19> & California Department of Education. (n.d.) 2016-17 Expulsion Rate. Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqCensus/DisExpRate.aspx?year=2016-17&aggllevel=County&cds=19>

Graduation

CaLYOUTH findings indicate that, among youth who were in foster care in California at age 17:

- **Two-thirds** had earned their high school diploma by age 19
- **80%** had earned their diploma by age 21 (in 2017)^{28, 29}

California Department of Education's DataQuest tracks high school graduation within four years for all students, and students who experienced foster care at any time during the four years³⁰:



²⁸ Courtney, M., Okpych, N. J., Charles, P., Mikell, D., Stevenson, B., Park, K., ... Feng, H. (2016). *Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CaLYOUTH): Conditions of Youth at Age 19*. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/CY_YT_RE0516_4.pdf

²⁹ Courtney, M., Okpych, N. J., Park, K., Harty, J., Feng, H., Torres-Garcia, A., & Sayed, S. (2018). *Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CaLYOUTH): Conditions of Youth at Age 21*. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/CY_YT_RE0518_1.pdf

³⁰ Among students who entered high school in 2012-2013. Source: California Department of Education. (n.d.) 2016-17 Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Outcome: Los Angeles County Report. Retrieved from <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/CohOutcome.aspx?aggllevel=county&year=2016-17&cds=19&ro=y>



School stability

Among children and youth in foster care ages 5-20 during the 2016-2017 school year³¹:

- **72%** remained in their school of origin 90 days after initial placement
- **77%** remained in their school of origin 90 days after a placement change

Attendance



More than three in four foster TAY ages 16-20 (77%) had an attendance rate of less than 90 percent.³² Attendance rates among all NYC youth have increased for several years.³³

School discipline

No data available.

Graduation



- Of the 263 youth in foster care who graduated from high school in 2015-2016, **over two-thirds (68%)** graduated in four years or less.³⁴
- Data on the dropout rate for foster TAY were unavailable.
- Graduation rates among all NYC youth have increased for several years, while the dropout rate has declined.³⁵

Challenges and next steps

Strengthening systems and policy. Both NYC and LA are in the early stages of implementing ESSA school stability requirements. In LA, education and child welfare partners will turn their attention to long-term solutions based on learnings from their pilot program. Workgroup and pilot partners have developed a draft transportation plan template to support the development of long-term interagency agreements between DCFS and school districts. As these relationships are formalized, ongoing education of all involved stakeholders will be important to successful implementation. Furthermore, schools in LA are not always aware of the educational policies that are in place to support foster TAY, and challenges persist in timely and accurate identification of Education Rights Holders (adults, or foster TAY over age 18, who make educational decisions for foster TAY) to inform education decisions, eligibility for credits, and enrollment. Implementation of existing child welfare policy related to school stability could also be strengthened when placement decisions are made.

³¹ New York City Administration for Children's Services. (n.d.). *Educational Continuity of Children in Foster Care (School Year 2017-2018)*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2018/citycouncilreport.pdf>

³² New York City Administration for Children's Services. (n.d.). *Educational Continuity of Children in Foster Care (School Year 2017-2018)*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2018/citycouncilreport.pdf>

³³ Ross, T and Mayevskaya, Y. (2018). *Trends in New York City Education Outcomes*. Hilton Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Team Policy Brief No. 4.

³⁴ New York City Administration for Children's Services. (n.d.). *High School Graduation Rates of Youth in Foster Care Annual Report 2017*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2018/graduationrates.pdf>

³⁵ Ross, T and Mayevskaya, Y. (2018). *Trends in New York City Education Outcomes*. Hilton Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Team Policy Brief No. 4.

While LCFF in CA elevates schools' focus on foster TAY as one of three identified subgroups, the Civil Grand Jury found significant limitations to this funding and accountability structure. The funding formula uses an unduplicated count of students who have low socioeconomic status, are English language learners, or are in foster care, which means that students crossing multiple categories are only counted once for additional funding. School districts are not required to use these funds for youth in foster care, and only five of ten school districts assessed by the Civil Grand Jury had designated funding for substantial programming to meet foster TAY's needs.³⁶

NYC does not have a dedicated office or staff at DOE focused on students in foster care, although the newly established Family Support Manager for Vulnerable Populations at DOE is intended to help fill this gap. Schools do not receive funding specifically tied to their number of students in foster care. Further, while many NYC foster care provider agencies have Education Specialists to support foster TAY in reaching their educational goals, not every foster TAY has access to this support due to insufficient funding and a lack of standardization in this role.

Innovative programs. There are multiple examples of programmatic work being done by grantees in both jurisdictions. However, pathways toward larger-scale implementation were unclear. Although program leaders see the need to expand to additional youth, sustainability poses a challenge, and many academic support programs are supported exclusively by private dollars.

Grantees in both LA and NYC are also grappling with how foster TAY's experiences of trauma should be addressed in their educational settings. Schools and teachers, while mandated to report child maltreatment, are not necessarily trained in how to support the complex needs of youth who have experienced trauma. The *Alliance for Children's Rights* is conducting trainings in schools to help bring awareness to this issue. *Public Counsel* is leading wide-scale reform efforts to end school discrimination against trauma-impacted students and to use proven models of trauma-informed learning.

Expanding and sharing knowledge. Both jurisdictions struggle to capture accurate and timely data on foster TAY and their educational experiences, and grantees are working to improve data infrastructure. In LA, the *Alliance for Children's Rights* leads the Professional Learning Network in eastern Los Angeles County, which convenes six school districts to focus on students in foster care. The Network has been developing meaningful metrics for measuring foster TAY progress and outcomes beyond those required by the state, which may help to inform data reporting in other districts in LA in the future. School stability is one key measure that is not required by the state. However, this measure could be produced by using the data shared between the child welfare and education agencies. Advocacy around adding this measure is an area of opportunity for the Initiative.

In NYC, the education workgroups convened by the *Juvenile Law Center* have identified a need to further explore how the data currently being shared between DOE and ACS can be used and enhanced to better understand the progress and outcomes of students in foster care. Unlike school districts in California, NYC's DOE does not maintain disaggregated data on their students in foster care. All available data are maintained by ACS and compiled through data exchanges via spreadsheets.

³⁶ Los Angeles County Grand Jury. (n.d.). *2017-2018 Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury Final Report*. Retrieved from <http://grandjury.co.la.ca.us/pdf/2017-2018%20Los%20Angeles%20County%20Civil%20Grand%20Jury%20Final%20Report.pdf>

Upcoming areas of focus

The Initiative and grantees are directly supporting robust implementation of new school stability policies. An outreach coordinator hired with Hilton support will facilitate relationship-building and transportation agreements between DCFS and individual school districts in LA starting in Fall 2018.

Grantees will also provide programmatic support in expanded ways next year. JLC is completing a series of ten training modules for Education Specialists in NYC. This optional, online training covers topics like special education, school discipline issues, and enrollment, and will help align supports and promote consistency across agencies. In LA, the *National Center for Youth Law* will begin locating FosterEd liaisons directly in schools in the Antelope Valley region during the 2018-2019 school year to support students who are system-involved.

Issue area 2: Improving postsecondary outcomes for transition age foster youth

The nation's workforce increasingly requires higher-level educational credentials to open career pathways that lead to family-sustaining wages; yet foster TAY enter and complete postsecondary education at a rate lower than their peers.

Advancing the Initiative's objectives

Through the work of the grantees and the Foundation, the Initiative advanced reform in several ways in NYC and LA. The list below is not exhaustive, as both grantees and the Foundation have worked in many additional ways to pursue postsecondary goals.

Strengthening systems and policy. In New York State, the Foster Youth Success Alliance (FYSA), spearheaded by *Children's Aid*, successfully advocated for the continuation of the Foster Youth College Success Initiative (FYCSI). Funding was expanded to \$6 million for FY 2019 and will continue to support foster TAY with financial and programmatic resources. Access to FYCSI supports is predicated on enrollment in an approved opportunity program, and FYSA has been working to break down this barrier in two ways: First, FYSA has successfully partnered with State University of New York (SUNY) to add a mechanism to identify current and former foster youth at the point of college application to support access to programmatic and financial supports. Second, through legislation passed in 2018, foster TAY attending SUNY schools can now access financial support for housing and meal plans through FYCSI without enrolling in an approved program.

In California, Hilton grantees supported several state laws that were passed and/or implemented this year, including:

- SB 12 (2017): Requires the identification in the child welfare case plan of an individual to support each youth in foster care 16 or older to apply for college and financial aid; the law also streamlines financial aid eligibility verification process and expands the maximum number of districts the could be funded under the NextUp campus-based support programs.
- AB 1809 (2018): Expands access to Cal Grant funds from four to eight years for current and former foster youth who apply before age 26; the law provides an additional \$5.3 million in Cal Grant funding for this population and extends the Cal Grant application deadline for current and former foster youth.
- AB 1811 (2018): Extends Chafee eligibility up to age 26 (from 22). This was supported by a \$4 million expansion in the state budget.

Through these expansions of Chafee, Cal Grant, and NextUp, California is now investing \$32.3 million annually for the postsecondary success of foster TAY.³⁷

Advancing innovative programs. In LA, *United Friends of the Children* provides extensive supports and academic preparation around postsecondary readiness and access, as well as case management supports that follow foster TAY throughout their postsecondary experience. In Antelope Valley, *John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY)* has partnered with DCFS, LACOE, and *National Center for Youth Law* to train caseworkers on the importance of higher education and the resources that are available for youth.³⁸ This pilot successfully improved caseworkers' knowledge and attitudes (as measured by pre- and post-surveys). JBAY is working on additional resources to support caseworkers in this region with postsecondary planning. This work could serve as a model for other areas of the county and NYC. In LA, JBAY and the *LA Chamber of Commerce* are also working with LACOE, DCFS, and the California Community College Chancellor's Office to implement county-wide strategies to improve stakeholder knowledge and youth access to financial aid, postsecondary options, and campus supports. This effort builds off JBAY's successful statewide FAFSA completion campaign, which led to strong support across education and child welfare agencies to set goals, support youth, and track data on FAFSA completion. Because of this work, LA knows for the first time how many seniors in foster care completed the FAFSA (37% in the 2017-18 school year) and will use this information for future goal setting.

In both jurisdictions

First Star partners with the child welfare agencies and colleges in LA and NYC to provide immersive summer experiences on college campuses for foster youth in high school. Through early exposure to college campuses and support with postsecondary prerequisites, *First Star* supports postsecondary access for its students.

In NYC, the supports available to youth at the City University of New York (CUNY)—from enrollment to completion—are extensive and deeply influenced by the Foundation's investments. Through a grant to the *Research Foundation of the CUNY*, the Initiative supports CUNY's Foster Care Initiative (FCI), which provides foster TAY with remedial supports as needed through the CUNY Start and Math Start academic bridge programs, and then links them to CUNY's ASAP accelerated degree program. Throughout their involvement with FCI, foster TAY are connected to support with the college transition, paid on-campus internships, social and cultural events, and financial supports such as fee waivers and Metrocards. FCI is just one support for foster TAY on CUNY campuses. The Fostering College Success Initiative, also referred to as the Dorm Project, is a partnership between ACS, CUNY, and *NY Foundling*. It is designed to serve 200 students with year-round housing in CUNY dorms, supplemented with individualized tutoring and social emotional support. The Foundation's investment in postsecondary supports in NYC is widely credited with deepening public agency commitment to and investment in these types of supports for foster TAY.

Expanding and sharing knowledge. In LA, JBAY's promotion and utilization of CalPASS Plus to track postsecondary progress and outcomes for foster TAY in community colleges and California's four-year universities has the potential to generate information to benefit individual programs and the broader field. *University of Chicago's CalYOUTH* report on California foster TAY at age 21 (2018) and issue brief on predictors of high school completion and college entry (2017) continue to deepen the field's understanding of foster TAY's postsecondary pathways and experiences.

In NYC, the Hilton Foundation supports three faculty researchers through the *Research Foundation of the CUNY* to contribute to the knowledge base on foster youth in higher education. A symposium will be held in December 2018 highlighting their research.

³⁷ California College Pathways (2018, November 15). California College Pathways: A case study on how strategic philanthropy leads to system change [Webinar]. Retrieved from <http://www.cacollegepathways.org/california-college-pathways-case-study-on-how-strategic-philanthropy-leads-to-system-change/>

³⁸ The term "caseworker" is used throughout this report to refer to the individual at DCFS (in LA) or at a provider agency (in NYC) who is responsible for all child welfare case management activities.

Overview of postsecondary benchmarks and opportunities

Benchmark	Opportunities
Goal 1: Accessible postsecondary education options	
Academic bridge programs facilitate transition into postsecondary education for foster TAY	Academic bridge programs in LA are limited and rely primarily on private funding. Formalizing existing partnerships between college campuses, high schools, and child welfare agencies could strengthen postsecondary pathways and increase academic supports during the bridge period. There is also a need for more sustainable and scalable career and technical education programs for foster TAY in both LA and NYC , with efforts underway in LA to strengthen awareness of career and technical programs among foster TAY and stakeholders.
Supports are available to help foster TAY complete postsecondary prerequisites (e.g., selection, application, standardized tests, and financial aid)	
Foster TAY are given priority in enrollment decisions and course access	
Foster TAY have access to career and technical education as a viable postsecondary option	
Goal 2: Targeted supports in service of postsecondary completion	
Financial supports are available for foster TAY for tuition and related expenses (excluding housing)	While several programs support foster TAY in LA and NYC , youth face significant challenges in identifying and navigating these resources. Forthcoming efforts to centralize information on postsecondary resources in both jurisdictions will be one important step in addressing these challenges. Recent legislation in CA expanded financial resources for foster TAY, and we will monitor for implementation activities in the coming year. Youth homelessness remains a significant area of concern among LA grantees and stakeholders. NYC has efforts underway across all benchmarks for this goal, and we will look for evidence of sustained momentum next year.
Programs and/or structures designed to support foster TAY students are available (e.g., designated foster liaison, programs to identify and support foster TAY students, guardian scholars, and EOPS programs)	
Programs and/or structures are available to provide year-round housing supports for foster TAY students	

An example of efforts toward the postsecondary education benchmarks, representing the work of the Initiative and its grantees, as well as other system stakeholders and partners, is presented below for each jurisdiction. We recognize that there may still be room for progress across these areas and will continue to monitor over time.

Figure 3. Examples of work in LA and NYC toward postsecondary education benchmarks

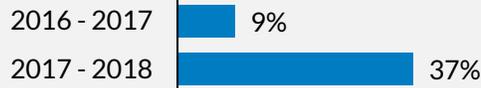
	LA BENCHMARK EXAMPLE:	NYC BENCHMARK EXAMPLE:
	Programs and/or structures designed to support foster TAY students are available (e.g., designated foster liaison, programs to identify and support foster TAY students, guardian scholars, and EOPS programs)	Supports are available to help foster TAY complete postsecondary prerequisites (e.g., selection, application, standardized tests, and financial aid)
Political Will 	CA Community College Chancellor's Office commits to campus support programs, including issuing a press release on the importance of expanding the Next Up program.	Interagency Foster Care Task Force recommended that DOE explore providing dedicated counselors for students in foster care, who would be trained to support youth in preparing for, exploring, and applying to college.
Policy 	AB 1567 (2017) requires community colleges and California State Universities to notify foster youth about campus support programs and provide students with instructions to access these programs.	CUNY has application fee waivers to reduce barriers to application among low-income students, including students in foster care.
Program 	SB 12 (2017) expanded the Next Up program to half of LA's 22 community colleges. The 2018 budget included funds to provide supportive service coordination, counseling, tutoring, and other assistance to foster youth. Other local services are provided by Hilton grantees (e.g., <i>United Friends of the Children</i> and <i>Coalition for Responsible Community Development</i>).	Several grantees (e.g., <i>Graham Windham</i> , <i>Good Shepherd Services</i> , <i>NY Foundling</i>) help foster TAY plan for and complete postsecondary prerequisites.
Data 	CalPASS Plus is a data system that allows campus support programs to track outcomes for cohorts of participating students.	The ACS Youth Experience Survey regularly tracks the number of youth needing assistance with prerequisites and the percent who have those needs met.

Postsecondary experiences and outcomes of foster TAY in LA and NYC



Prerequisites

In LA, 37% of high school seniors in foster care completed a FAFSA application in the 2017-2018 school year.³⁹



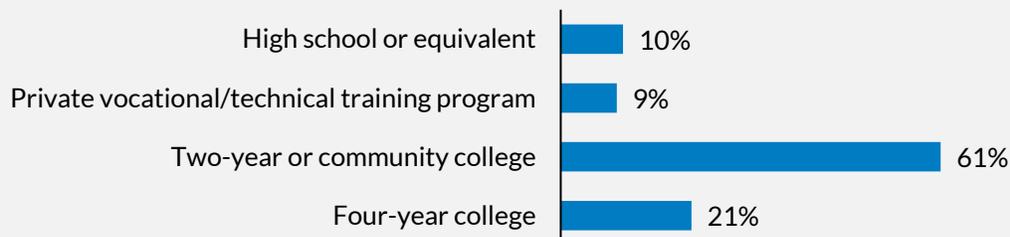
Enrollment

In LA, enrollment of current or former foster youth in community colleges totaled **4,126** in Fall 2017 and **3,675** in Spring 2018.⁴⁰



29% of CalYOUTH respondents were enrolled in school at age 21.

Those enrolled attended⁴¹:



³⁹ Note: The figure for 2016 – 2017 is an estimate. LACOE Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program (May 2018). *Newsletter for the FYSCP Executive Advisory Committee*.

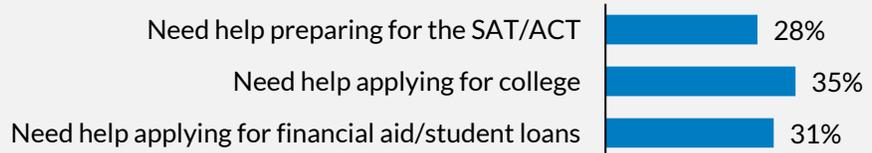
⁴⁰ Unduplicated head count of students identified as foster youth in the following community college districts (CCDs): Antelope CCD, Cerritos CCD, Citrus CCD, El Camino CCD, Glendale CCD, Long Beach CCD, Los Angeles CCD, Mt. San Antonio CCD, Pasadena CCD, Santa Clarita CCD, and Santa Monica CCD. Source: California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, Management Information Systems Data Mart. (n.d.) *Special Population/Group Student Count*. Retrieved from https://datamart.cccco.edu/services/special_pop_count.aspx

⁴¹ High school equivalent includes GED classes and continuation schools (alternative high school diploma programs for students ages 16 and older who have not graduated, are required to attend school, and are at risk of not graduating): Courtney, M., Okpych, N. J., Park, K., Harty, J., Feng, H., Torres-Garcia, A., & Sayed, S. (2018). *Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CalYOUTH): Conditions of Youth at Age 21*. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/CY_YT_RE0518_1.pdf



Prerequisites

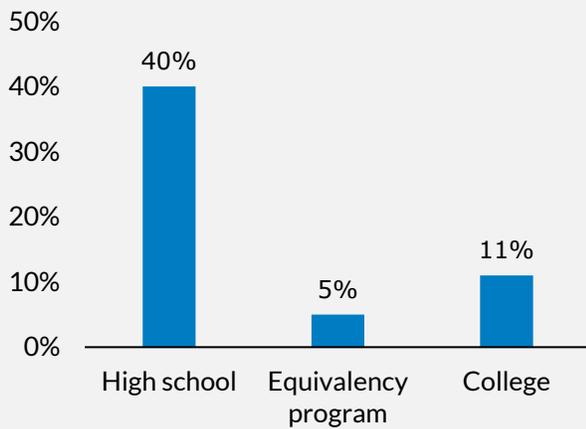
Among foster youth in grades 9 and above who completed the ACS Youth Experience Survey:



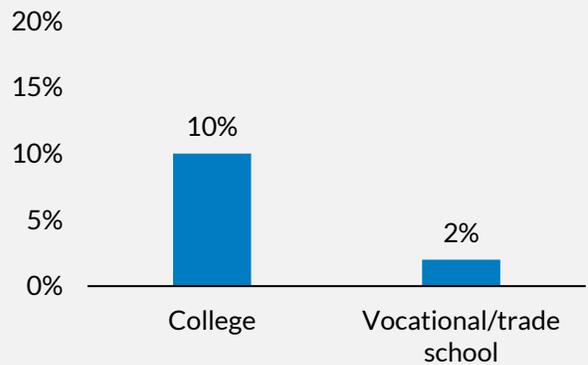
Among youth who reported needing this help, approximately **half** report receiving it.⁴²

Enrollment

Enrollment among foster TAY in care ages 18-20⁴³:



Enrollment among youth age 18 and older who aged out in NYC in 2017⁴⁴:



⁴²New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2018). *Youth Experience Survey 2018*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2018/ACSYouthExperienceSurveyMay152018.pdf>

⁴³ Among other data sources, this report uses Preparing Youth for Adulthood (PYA) data which is youth- or caseworker-reported and not verified, with more reliable administrative data. This data should be interpreted with caution. Source: New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2017). *Report on Youth in Foster Care*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2017/YouthInFosterCare2017.pdf>

⁴⁴ Among other data sources, this report uses Preparing Youth for Adulthood (PYA) data which is youth- or caseworker-reported and not verified, with more reliable administrative data. This data should be interpreted with caution. Source: New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2017). *Report on Youth in Foster Care*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2017/YouthInFosterCare2017.pdf>

Challenges and next steps

Strengthening systems and policy. Policies are in place across many of the benchmarks in this issue area in both LA and NYC. To ensure that newly passed and existing policies are implemented as intended, we will monitor for active implementation activities in the coming year.

Advancing innovative programs. Significant challenges were identified in both LA and NYC regarding foster TAY's ability to navigate and access available resources. Connections to resources vary based on the individual youth's caseworker, probation officer, independent living coordinator, or caregiver. Additionally, differing eligibility requirements may exclude some foster TAY and create additional barriers to navigating resources. Community college campuses in LA often have multiple programs that support foster TAY with varying degrees of coordination; this issue presents an opportunity to further align program application processes and strengthen coordinated supports for foster TAY. In addition, while community colleges are beginning to engage more with local high schools, formal academic bridge programs to support foster TAY's transition to college are limited, making these programs an area for further development in LA—particularly as many rely primarily on private funding.

What are young people saying?

In LA, youth explained that they had stumbled upon campus resources or heard of them through word of mouth, rather than being informed about or connected to resources in a systematic way.⁴⁵

In NYC, concern was expressed that certain services and supports are unavailable to youth who have exited foster care; moreover, youth are not always made aware of these implications when making decisions about exiting care. At the same time, there are programs that are expanding eligibility, and they could serve as models. For example, the Foster Care Initiative, supported through the *Research Foundation of the CUNY*, changed its eligibility criteria to serve youth ages 17-25 who have experienced foster care or juvenile justice involvement.

Innovative approaches to year-round housing are being implemented in NYC through The Dorm Project, a partnership between CUNY, ACS, and *NY Foundling*; however, stakeholders in both cities indicate that housing challenges remain. Youth homelessness is a significant challenge in LA as well. *JBAY* has worked to connect campus support programs with the Youth Coordinated Entry System (CES) to facilitate access to housing support. Additionally, the *Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCDD)* serves as a lead for the CES in South LA, helping connect young people with housing resources. In NYC, youth in foster care are given priority for New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) housing; however, youth without children qualify only for studio apartments—and NYCHA has a very limited supply of these units, with no expansion plans. Furthermore, if NYCHA offers an apartment to a youth attending college outside NYC, the youth must either leave school to obtain their apartment or stay at school and move to the bottom of the list. In addition to identifying housing challenges for TAY, grantees providing postsecondary supports underscored the importance of connecting youth with mental health services to support their well-being and postsecondary persistence.

Finally, while there are examples of innovative vocational opportunities in NYC (e.g., *The Door's* programming; the partnership between the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), ACS, and York College) and in LA (e.g., *First Place for Youth's* Career Pathway Program and *CRCDD's* Project Tipping Point), pathways toward larger-scale implementation are unclear. LA grantees have been working to raise awareness of existing vocational opportunities on community college campuses, and NYC grantees voiced a greater need for vocational training programs. This is an issue for which grantees in both locations may be able to come together in a learning community to advance programming in their respective jurisdictions.

Expanding and sharing knowledge. While some data exist regarding foster TAY's pathways to and experiences in postsecondary education, significant work remains. CalPASS Plus is currently

⁴⁵ Los Angeles Youth Focus Group. (2018). Child Trends.

underutilized as a tool for tracking campus support program participants, and JBAY continues to work to raise awareness and use of this resource.

Upcoming areas of focus

Both LA and NYC are prioritizing efforts to support foster TAY in identifying and accessing available resources. This includes expanding information for youth, caregivers, caseworkers, and other professionals through online and/or application platforms. Initiative grantees are closely involved in these efforts. In NYC, *Juvenile Law Center* will be exploring avenues to publish an inventory of programs and services that support access to and success in postsecondary education, complementing *iFoster's* work at the state level to revamp and expand New York State's Youth in Care website. LA, under the leadership of the Chief Executive Office, is developing an online county-wide TAY Hub that will coordinate access to the full spectrum of resources and information across county agencies and community partners, including postsecondary resources.

The Foster Youth Success Alliance, led by *Children's Aid* in NY, will be exploring mechanisms to identify applicants as current and former foster youth at CUNY, mirroring their success at SUNY. They will also monitor expanded foster TAY access to FYSCI funding for housing and meal plans to advocate for appropriate funding levels. Grantees in LA anticipate advocacy work around strong implementation of SB 12 and expanded eligibility for Cal Grant and Chafee funding in the coming year.

Issue area 3: Improving employment outcomes for transition age foster youth

Having stable employment that supports a healthy standard of living is critically important for all youth transitioning to adulthood.

Advancing the Initiative's objectives

Through the work of the grantees and the Foundation, the Initiative advanced reform in several ways in NYC and LA. Below, we highlight examples of this important work.

Strengthening systems and policy. In November 2017, the LA Board of Supervisors passed a motion calling for county-wide engagement around foster TAY self-sufficiency. The *Opportunity Youth Collaborative (OYC)* has helped bring attention to this void, and the motion instructed that foster TAY be prioritized by public workforce development agency leaders. In NYC, *The Door* partnered with ACS, DYCD, and Opportunities for a Better Tomorrow to improve the structure of the Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP Plus) to better meet the needs of youth in foster care. YAIP Plus connects ACS-involved youth with job training and internships.

Foundation as a change agent

Agency stakeholders attribute DCFS's contribution of \$1 million to support workforce programming for foster youth to the collaborations that have been fostered through the Initiative.

Advancing innovative programs. In LA, *First Place for Youth* has a Career Pathway Program with nine different pathways (e.g., healthcare, green technology, logistics), supported by Employment and Education Specialists who work closely with youth to become employment ready. Youth progress through a series of steps including assessment, career readiness, career exposure and pathway selection, and technical training and employment. *PBS So Cal* has hosted several workforce development programs, providing opportunities for transition age youth to gain experience in arts industries. These have included video diary creation workshops, photography programs, work shadows, writing workshops, field trips, and the stewardship of internships.

The Door in NYC provides its Bronx Academy participants with a breadth of career development services, including job training, internship and employment placement, and job retention support. Career

Advancement Coaches work with youth to develop individualized career plans and navigate *The Door's* tiered career services. *The Door* connects youth with internships and job opportunities and provides one year of retention support to support connection to the workforce.

Expanding and sharing knowledge. In LA, World of Work, the evidence-based workforce development curriculum developed by Columbia University's School of Social Work and implemented by the TAY Collaborative, a partner of OYC, is embedded into six of the seven workforce development agencies to train and match youth with competitive jobs. In addition, LACOE, the Probation Department, DCFS, and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) all signed MOUs to begin using this curriculum in their agencies. In NYC and LA, *iFoster* measures success of their program through retention rate, average length of time to promotion, and length of employment.

University of Chicago's CalYOUTH study continues to expand the field's understanding of the early adulthood experiences of youth who were in foster care at age 17. In 2018, findings from the third wave of the CalYOUTH study detailed youth's experiences at age 21, including current and recent employment experiences described below.

In both jurisdictions

iFoster provides training (World of Work curriculum), assesses work readiness, and helps to reduce workplace barriers (e.g., cell phone access, transportation, stable housing, child care). Once youth pass the readiness assessment, they can be matched with employers. Although youth face a competitive interview process, TAY applications are moved up to the front of the line for interviews. *iFoster* prepares TAY for interviews and may also provide assistance to youth or employers after they begin work.

Overview of employment benchmarks and opportunities

Benchmark	Opportunities
Goal 1: Employer engagement with foster TAY	
Formal structures enable foster TAY to directly engage employers (e.g., job fairs, online tools, training programs, etc.) ⁴⁶	Youth seeking employment in both LA and NYC would benefit from increased opportunities to engage a range of different employers to facilitate connections in their fields of interest. In NYC in particular, many internship opportunities are in social services. Next year, we will assess foster TAY's access to employment retention supports, which emerged as an area needing attention.
Training and mentoring opportunities are available to support employed TAY	
Goal 2: Targeted workforce preparation for foster TAY	
Training opportunities (e.g., skill building workshops, internships, apprenticeships) are available to TAY unprepared for employment	LA is working to streamline foster TAY access to public agency workforce programming but lacks a sustainable funding solution to ensure dedicated program slots for foster TAY. In NYC , accessible and flexible training opportunities that are responsive to the needs and experiences of the full range of foster TAY are needed. Data infrastructure is an ongoing area of focus in both LA and NYC .
Reengagement strategies exist to identify and reconnect foster TAY who lack access to high school equivalency, higher education, and employment	

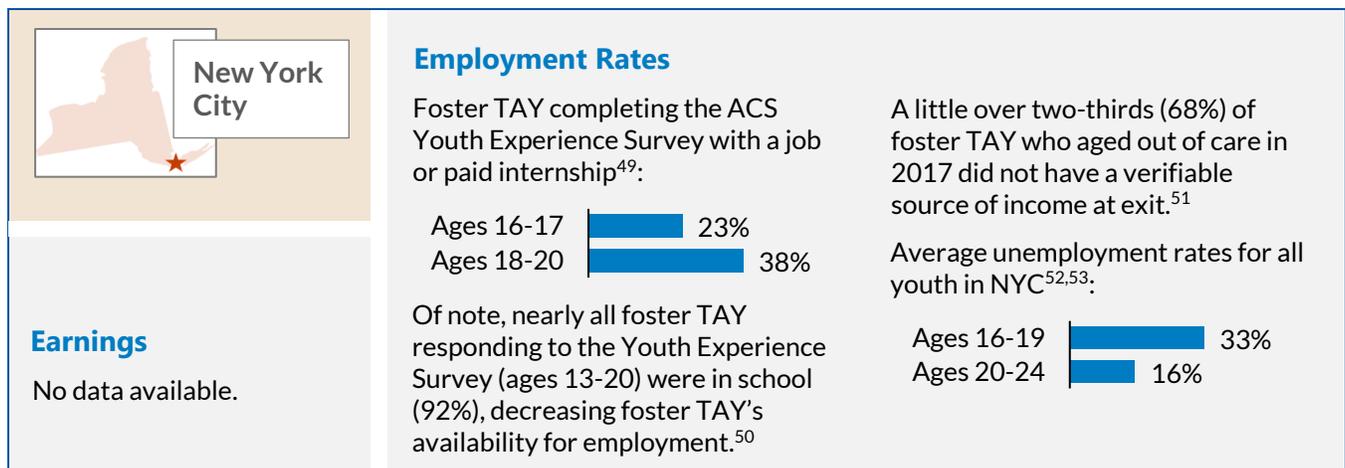
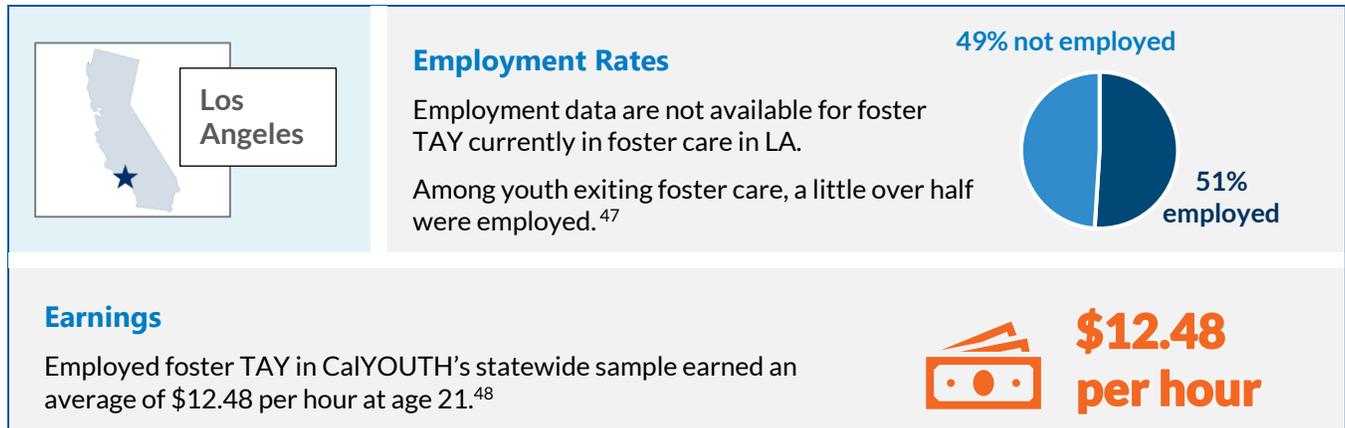
⁴⁶ Training programs that provide foster TAY with the opportunity to directly engage with employers across a variety of fields are included here. This benchmark does not include internships or apprenticeships that connect youth with a single employer, which are captured under the first benchmark for Goal 2.

An example of efforts toward the employment benchmarks, representing the work of the Initiative and its grantees as well as other system stakeholders and partners, is presented below for each jurisdiction. We recognize that there may still be room for progress across these areas and will continue to monitor over time.

Figure 4. Examples of work in LA and NYC toward employment benchmarks

	LA BENCHMARK EXAMPLE:	NYC BENCHMARK EXAMPLE:
	Training opportunities (e.g., skill building workshops, internships, apprenticeships, etc.) are available to TAY unprepared for employment.	Training opportunities (e.g., skill building workshops, internships, apprenticeships, etc.) are available to TAY unprepared for employment
Political Will 		ACS demonstrated commitment to this benchmark by establishing the Office of Employment and Workforce Development Initiatives.
Policy 	LA has dedicated 100% of its federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds to disconnected (out of work/school) youth. The Opportunity Youth Collaborative (OYC) ensured the county received a waiver through LA's Performance Pilot Partnership (P3) that allows foster youth in school to be included in WIOA programs.	
Program 	Several programs run by city and county agencies provide training experiences that are sustainable and scalable. For example, LA County's Youth@Work program provides youth with 120 hours of training and work experience, and DCFS partners with the South Bay Workforce Investment Board to provide foster TAY with training and internships. Several OYC partners also provide job training programs.	Sustainable and scalable programming is in place in NYC to provide training to foster TAY. In partnership with DYCD, ACS connects foster TAY to the Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP) Plus and the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). Several grantees also provide direct services.
Data 	The Economic Development Scorecard reports on the number of individuals in foster care served by workforce development programs.	ACS captures some employment data through its annual Youth Experience Survey, including the number of foster youth who are employed or would like to be employed.

Employment experiences and outcomes of foster TAY in LA and NYC



⁴⁷ Includes youth exiting care of DCFS as well as crossover youth exiting care of the Department of Probation. Source: California Department of Social Services. (2018). *Outcomes for Youth Exiting Foster Care at Age 18 or Older*. Retrieved from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website: [URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/CDSS_8A.aspx](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/CDSS_8A.aspx)

⁴⁸ Courtney, M., Okpych, N. J., Park, K., Harty, J., Feng, H., Torres-Garcia, A., & Sayed, S. (2018). *Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CalYOUTH): Conditions of Youth at Age 21*. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/CY_YT_RE0518_1.pdf

⁴⁹ New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2018). *Youth Experience Survey 2018*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2018/ACSYouthExperienceSurveyMay152018.pdf>

⁵⁰ New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2018). *Youth Experience Survey 2018*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2018/ACSYouthExperienceSurveyMay152018.pdf>

⁵¹ Among other data sources, this report uses Preparing Youth for Adulthood (PYA) data which is youth- or caseworker-reported and not verified, with more reliable administrative data. This data should be interpreted with caution. Source: New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2017). *Report on Youth in Foster Care*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2017/YouthInFosterCare2017.pdf>

⁵² Three-year combined estimate from 2014-2016 for youth actively seeking employment. Source: Citizens' Committee for Children of New York. (2018). *Teen Unemployment (16 to 19 Years)*. Retrieved from <https://data.cccnewyork.org/data/map/81/teen-unemployment-16-to-19-years#81/a/3/125/22/a>

⁵³ Five-year combined estimate from 2014-2017 for youth actively seeking employment. Source: Citizens' Committee for Children of New York. (2018). *Youth Unemployment (20 to 24 Years)*. Retrieved from <https://data.cccnewyork.org/data/map/1180/youth-unemployment-20-to-24-years#1180/a/3/1312/25/a>

Challenges and next steps

Strengthening systems and policy. While DCFS has provided one-time funding to dedicate training slots for foster youth at publicly-funded workforce agencies in LA, long-term cross-system solutions are needed.

Advancing innovative programs. Although there are some exciting programs designed to equip foster TAY to enter the workforce, they tend to focus on and incentivize job placement. Stakeholders shared concerns that fewer supports promote retention. Pursuing stronger long-term partnerships between workforce systems and employers, so that the system is incentivized beyond the first day of hire, would help with this issue.

In NYC, there are concerns that some of the requirements and criteria for participating in workforce programs are too structured to be appropriate for foster TAY, who often face chaotic housing and caregiver situations. This, combined with the multiple ways of accessing employment services, may prevent these programs from reaching a wide range of foster TAY. Limited opportunities also exist for foster TAY to directly engage with employers from a range of industries, which may contribute to difficulties that youth report in finding places that are hiring. Many available opportunities are within social services, and youth would benefit from a range of opportunities to foster and explore other interests.

Finally, workforce resources in LA are sometimes underutilized due to challenges with identifying and engaging foster TAY. With their different areas of expertise, child welfare and workforce agency staff would benefit from continued cross-system learning opportunities. The Los Angeles Performance Partnership Pilot (LAP3) initiative, which seeks to improve education and employment outcomes for disconnected youth, including foster TAY, provides one avenue for this cross-sector learning and support. Monthly regional LAP3 workgroups bring together public and private agencies from health, education, workforce, probation, and child welfare, and the OYC continues to prioritize support of foster youth in these efforts.

Expanding and sharing knowledge. Both jurisdictions are working on improving data infrastructure. In LA, advocates and public agencies will work to strengthen the data elements captured in the Economic Development Scorecard described above. In NYC, although ACS receives data on the number of youth engaged, enrolled, and completing workforce programs, leaders would like more data on outcomes and better data to help inform which youth are eligible for and would benefit from programs.

What are young people saying?

NYC: Two-thirds of youth need help finding places that are hiring. Of the youth who needed this assistance, less than half (46%) had this need met. Almost half (48% of youth) also indicated needing help learning what jobs to apply for, and less than half (42%) had this need met.⁵⁴

LA: Training and vocational work opportunities should recognize that not every youth wants to be in construction, retail, or grocery. Ask youth about their interests and build responsive opportunities.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2018). *Youth Experience Survey 2018*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2018/ACSYouthExperienceSurveyMay152018.pdf>

⁵⁵ Los Angeles Youth Focus Group. (2018). *Child Trends*.

Upcoming areas of focus

In the later months of 2018, much work was done in LA to develop a uniform process for referrals from DCFS to all seven Workforce Development Boards. An MOU is in development to formalize this process, with the support of the OYC. Workforce Development agencies will be required to contact referred youth within seven days, with a feedback loop to let the youth's caseworker know what services or supports were utilized. Finalization and implementation of this new process to open and streamline entry into public training and work experience programs will be a part of 2019's work. OYC is also working on a guide to support youth with their employment pathways, and OYC partners will convene an employment summit in July 2019, bringing together workforce and child welfare partners to increase cross-system understanding of resources and improve youth access to services. In partnership with OYC and DCFS, *iFoster* will recruit, train, supervise, and place 100 foster TAY into AmeriCorps internships hosted at public Workforce Agency locations, college campus support programs such as Guardian Scholars, DCFS, and other county and community offices.

Issue area 4: Improving placement experiences for transition age foster youth

Placing foster TAY in supportive and nurturing family foster homes allows them to form close relationships with adults who help them transition to adulthood.

Advancing the Initiative's objectives

Through the work of the grantees and the Foundation, the Initiative advanced reform in several ways in NYC and LA. Below we highlight examples of this important work.

Strengthening systems and policy. LA system leaders and Initiative grantees have invested deeply in California's Continuum of Care Reform (CCR), which provides the policy framework to support all children and youth in foster care to live with committed, nurturing, and permanent families. Grantees have done significant work around CCR implementation. For example, related to the Resource Family Approval (RFA), grantees have taken leadership roles on the RFA Steering Committee, which meets monthly and is co-chaired by the *Alliance for Children's Rights*, *Children's Law Center*, *Public Counsel*, and DCFS. Advocates also championed AB 1811, which provides funding at time of placement while families await finalization of RFA approval, and SB 1083, which makes the RFA process more timely by extending the conversion deadline and establishing time limits on family assessments.

The Step Up Coalition is a partnership of several Hilton grantees (the *Alliance for Children's Rights*, *Children's Law Center*, *John Burton Advocates for Youth*, *Public Counsel*, and *Children Now*) and other organizations that mobilizes systems, engages kin caregivers, and elevates the focus on kin caregiver needs in these and other related policy efforts.

Advancing innovative programs. As part of Home Away from Home, Hilton funding to *New Yorkers for Children* supports intensive technical assistance and data analysis directly to provider agencies to improve recruitment, training, support, and retention. Results from the first year show marked increases in foster care recruitment at these agencies, and little change at those who did not receive this intensive support.

Grantees in both LA and NYC have done much work to support caregivers through their programs. In LA, the RFA Toolkit developed by the Step Up Coalition guides prospective resource parents through the RFA application process and provides easy-to-understand information on the services and financial supports available to resource families. Grantees are augmenting the core services available to resource families under CCR by developing training programs (e.g., JBAY developed a training program on how to create college-going cultures in the home, and the *LA Reproductive Health Equity Project [LA RHEP]* is collaborating with Seattle Children’s Hospital to revise their reproductive health curriculum for caregivers). In LA and NYC, *First Star* hosted workshops for caregivers on topics such as postsecondary admissions requirements. Similarly, in NYC, *Children’s Village’s Families Supporting Teens (FaST)* program provides foster families with in-home visits at least monthly to discuss goals, progress, and crisis intervention, as well as access to 24/7 support. *Graham Windham* also keeps in monthly contact with families to support educational plans and positive family dynamics.

Foundation as a change agent

Although all provider agencies in NYC receive support around foster home recruitment, the six Home away from Home Innovation sites, funded with support from the Hilton Foundation, have seen the greatest successes. They have increased their numbers of new foster homes by 50%, compared to 4% for the rest of the system, and 20-25% will accept teens immediately.

Expanding and sharing knowledge. The dynamic reporting tools on *California Child Welfare Indicators Project’s (CCWIP)* website allow users to drill down to better understand the experiences and outcomes of foster TAY in LA. CCWIP’s website provides a wide range of data across several issue areas, including quarterly placement data by office in LA, allowing stakeholders to monitor progress toward family-based and kin placements and variability across the county. In LA and NYC, *FosterMore* launched an advertising campaign to recruit foster parents, including online media, PSAs, a website, and a Foster Parent of the Year promotion.

Public Catalyst, which provides intensive technical assistance and trainings to provider agencies, and Action Research, which provides research and data support, meet monthly with ACS to discuss current trends for foster TAY, caregiver recruitment and retention, foster care utilization and placement, and best practices through Home Away from Home, which the Initiative funds through *New Yorkers for Children*.

Overview of placement benchmarks and opportunities

Benchmark	Opportunities
Goal 1: Caregiver support	
Sufficient number of appropriate caregivers are recruited and retained to provide family-based placement to all TAY	Training and technical assistance related to resource family recruitment and retention continue in both LA and NYC through Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) and Home Away from Home, respectively. Additional strategies are required to recruit more families generally and to support more experienced foster parents to provide care for TAY and youth with intensive therapeutic needs. Legislative activity is anticipated in LA related to an urgent response system for resource families and foster TAY, along with continued CCR implementation support on topics such as the level of care assessment tool for specialized needs.
All caregivers, including relative caregivers, receive ongoing and adequate financial supports	
Caregivers are supported to adequately meet the mental and physical health, education, and developmental needs of the foster TAY placement	
Goal 2: Emphasis on families and family-like settings	

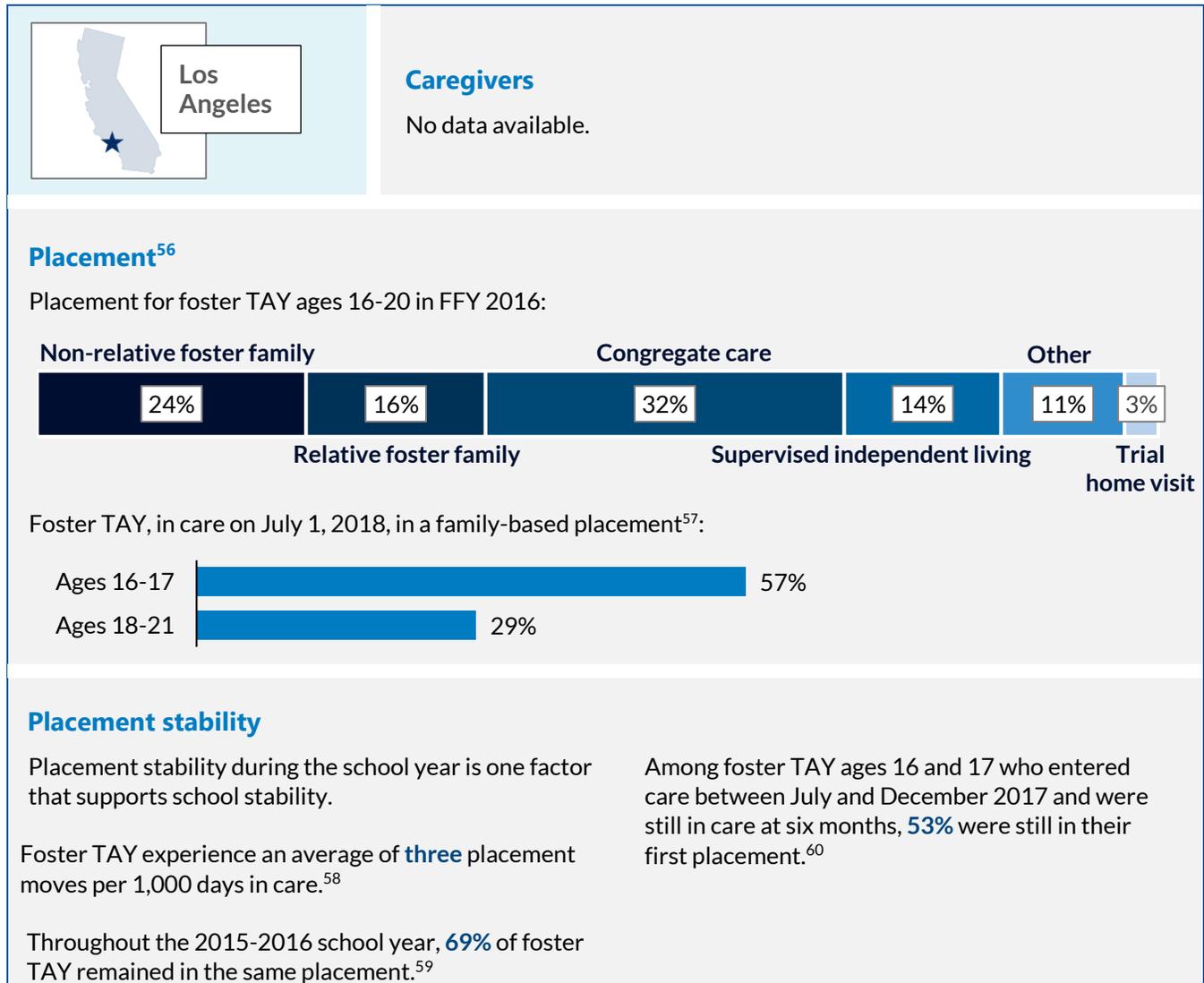
Child welfare agency gives priority to placements with families, including kin	As with Goal 1, continued implementation of CCR and Home Away from Home will support progress in LA and NYC toward strengthening family-based placement and reducing congregate care.
Child welfare agency works to reduce placement and length of stay in congregate care with appropriate planning for step down and into family settings	

An example of efforts toward the placement benchmarks, representing the work of the Initiative and its grantees as well as other system stakeholders and partners, is presented below for each jurisdiction. We recognize that there may still be room for progress across these areas and will continue to monitor over time.

Figure 5. Examples of work in LA and NYC toward placement benchmarks

	LA BENCHMARK EXAMPLE: Sufficient number of appropriate caregivers are recruited and retained	NYC BENCHMARK EXAMPLE: Child welfare agency gives priority to placements with families, including kin
Political Will 	DCFS has identified recruitment priorities, including increased coordination with the Family Foster Agencies (FFAs), targeted recruitment, and caregiver engagement.	Interagency Foster Care Task Force recommended ACS explore hiring Kinship Specialists to identify and support kin placement. This recommendation has been implemented.
Policy 	Continuum of Care Reform (AB 403) augmented funding for foster parent recruitment, retention, and support. This funding has been extended into a fourth year.	State legislation broadened supports available through KinGAP (subsidized permanent guardianship).
Program 	DCFS has contracted with community-based organizations to support prospective and current foster parents. CA has engaged an expert consultant to train counties on recruitment and retention. LA's Probation Department is coordinating with DCFS on the use of \$5 million in state funding for recruitment.	Home Away from Home provides technical assistance to a subset of provider agencies and workshops for all provider agencies on increasing kin and family-based care. ACS launched a pilot to increase the proportion of children placed with kin.
Data 		ACS reports monthly placement data, including kin placements, in its Flash Report. More detailed data are available to providers on a monthly basis. ACS has set a goal of increasing kin placement from 31% to 46% by the end of 2020.

Placement experiences of foster TAY in LA and NYC



⁵⁶ TAY placement data presented here are based on Child Trends' analysis of AFCARS FFY 2016 data. These analyses include youth who were age 16 or older at the end of the year and had spent at least 45 days in foster care. Congregate care includes group homes and institutions for these analyses.

⁵⁷ Family-based placements include pre-adoptive, relative/NREFM, foster, FFA, guardian-dependent, and guardian-independent, and trial home visit. Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILPs) are not counted here, although some 18-21-year-old foster TAY in SILPs are also living in family settings. Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., ..., Morris, N. (2018). *CCWIP reports*. Retrieved from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

⁵⁸ Child Trends' analysis of AFCARS FFY 2016 data.

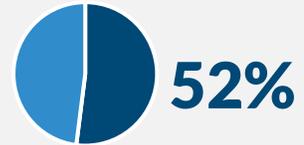
⁵⁹ Based on Child Trends' analysis of AFCARS FFY 2016 data. These analyses include youth who were age 16 or older at the end of the year and had spent at least 45 days in foster care. Entry into foster care was not counted as a placement change.

⁶⁰ Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., ..., Morris, N. (2018). *CCWIP reports*. Retrieved from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare



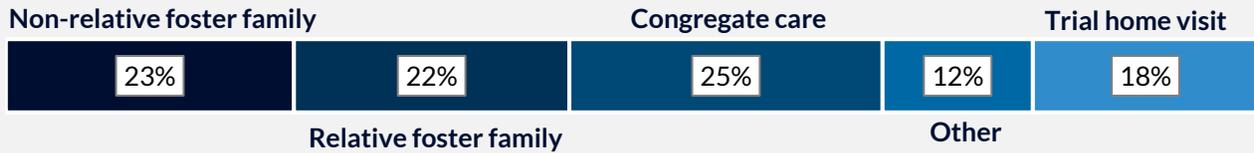
Caregivers

ACS reports that **52%** of licensed caregivers have provided a home to a teenager in foster care.⁶¹



Placement⁶²

Placement for foster TAY ages 16-20 in FFY 2016



In 2017, **54%** of initial placements for 13-17-year-olds were in a family-based setting.⁶³



Although **one in three** TAY were placed in a residential setting, most ultimately moved to a family-based setting.⁶⁴

Placement stability

Placement stability during the school year is one factor that supports school stability.

Foster TAY experience an average of **four** placement moves per 1,000 days in care.⁶⁵

Throughout the 2015-2016 school year, **63%** of foster TAY remained in the same placement.⁶⁶

⁶¹ New York City Administration for Children’s Services. (2018). *ACS Foster Care Strategic Blueprint FY 2019-FY 2023 & Findings from the Rapid Permanency Reviews*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2018/ACSFiveYrPlanRPRreportFinalMay152018.pdf>

⁶² TAY placement data presented here are based on Child Trends’ analysis of AFCARS FFY 2016 data. These analyses include youth who were age 16 or older at the end of the year and had spent at least 45 days in foster care. Congregate care includes group homes and institutions for these analyses.

⁶³ New York City Administration for Children’s Services. (2018). *ACS Foster Care Strategic Blueprint FY 2019-FY 2023 & Findings from the Rapid Permanency Reviews*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2018/ACSFiveYrPlanRPRreportFinalMay152018.pdf>

⁶⁴ New York City Administration for Children’s Services. (2018). *ACS Foster Care Strategic Blueprint FY 2019-FY 2023 & Findings from the Rapid Permanency Reviews*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2018/ACSFiveYrPlanRPRreportFinalMay152018.pdf>

⁶⁵ Child Trends’ analysis of AFCARS FFY 2016 data.

⁶⁶ Based on Child Trends’ analysis of AFCARS FFY 2016 data. These analyses include youth who were age 16 or older at the end of the year and had spent at least 45 days in foster care. Entry into foster care was not counted as a placement change.

Challenges and next steps

Strengthening systems and policy. LA faced a funding cut this year in dollars to support foster parent recruitment, retention, and support. The program scaled back from \$44.4 million to \$21.6 million in the July 2018 budget.

Further, as with any large-scale policy change, California and LA have encountered some challenges in implementing CCR. In partnership with the advocacy community, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is working to strengthen its draft level of care tool to support foster families to meet youth's unique needs in family settings. DCFS also experienced delays in processing Resource Family Approval (RFA) applications and has been actively working through this backlog, which was expected to be cleared by Fall 2018.

Both jurisdictions will also be preparing for implementation of the federal Family First Prevention Services Act, which has implications for kin and congregate care settings.

Advancing innovative programs. LA and NYC are both investing deeply in supporting family-based placements of foster TAY and still have room to grow. NYC is challenged by a severe shortage of foster parents that took years to develop. Shortages of homes often affect TAY significantly, as parents with a choice concerning which children they will foster often opt for younger children. In addition, compared to parents fostering for the first time, experienced foster parents are usually better equipped to handle the challenges of caring for adolescents. Parents fostering teens often benefit from specialized training to understand the unique risks that foster TAY face (such as child trafficking or gang involvement), as well as how to support TAY working through trauma. Without sufficient family foster homes in LA, supervised independent living placements are often the default for foster TAY.

Expanding and sharing knowledge. *Children Now*, California Youth Connection, Youth Engagement Project, and CDSS are developing a youth satisfaction survey to learn how youth are doing in their placements. They hope to launch the survey in 2019.

What are young people saying?

Youth in NYC highly value genuine and caring foster parents, remaining together with their siblings, and safety and security in their placements.⁶⁷

What are caregivers saying?

At a caregiver focus group in LA, caregivers reported that the certification process is complicated, long, and can feel intrusive. However, they do find the RFA required classes helpful, particularly around understanding how TAY feel when they first enter care.⁶⁸

⁶⁷New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2018). ACS Foster Care Strategic Blueprint FY 2019-FY 2023 & Findings from the Rapid Permanency Reviews. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2018/ACSFiveYrPlanRPRreportFinalMay152018.pdf>

⁶⁸Alliance for Children's Rights. (2018). *Assessing Family Interactions with the Resource Family Approval Process to Inform Opportunities for Process Improvements*. Retrieved from <https://kids-alliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/RFA-Focus-Groups-Report-8.6.18.pdf>

Upcoming areas of focus

Grantees will continue to monitor the RFA process in LA, particularly around the high number of caregivers who have withdrawn from the application process. *Children Now* will be supporting CCR implementation under its next grant from the Foundation. Advocates are also working in partnership with CDSS on the level of care system that will determine specialized payment rates for resource families.

LA grantees continue to promote innovative supports for caregivers, including an “urgent response system”— a statewide number for all foster parents and foster youth to call when they need immediate support over the phone or through a mobile crisis unit. The system was introduced into legislation this year but not signed by the governor. Stakeholders anticipate it will be successful in 2019.

NYC will be working toward achieving its recruitment targets, identified by ACS through Home Away from Home. NYC has seen progress in increasing recruitment, and Public Catalyst and Action Research will continue working with Innovation sites and ACS staff to achieve target rates.

Issue area 5: Providing focused interventions for transition age foster youth

The Initiative supports focused interventions to support all foster TAY in accessing reproductive/sexual health care and to provide supports and advocacy for foster TAY who are expectant or parenting and those involved in the juvenile justice system.

Advancing the Initiative’s objectives

Through the work of the grantees and the Foundation, the Initiative advanced reform in several ways in NYC and LA. Below we highlight examples of this important work.

Strengthening systems and policy. In California, *Children Now*, in partnership with other grantees and partner organizations, brought together child welfare and child care stakeholders to successfully advocate for the “Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children & Parenting Foster Youth.” California’s 2017-2018 budget included \$31 million for this program, which makes emergency child care vouchers available to parenting foster TAY and foster parents statewide. Advocates including the *Alliance for Children’s Rights*, *Children’s Law Center*, and *Public Counsel* were successful in LA’s expansion of the Infant Supplement, which makes funding available to female foster TAY beginning in their seventh month of pregnancy. LA County departments established a shared commitment and released their plan to achieve an optimal integrated system of high-quality home visitation support for expectant and parenting foster TAY. Through their work with DCFS on the Expectant and Parenting Youth Workgroup, Hilton grantees including the *Alliance for Children’s Rights*, *Children’s Law Center*, and *Public Counsel* have consistently advocated for this resource to be available to all pregnant foster TAY.

Advancing innovative programs. In LA, the *LA Reproductive Health Equity Project for Foster Youth (LA RHEP)* is a collective impact initiative focused on promoting evidence-informed strategies to reduce unplanned pregnancies and increasing access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education and services for youth in foster care. *LA RHEP* brings together youth, public agencies, advocates, and organizations across sectors (e.g., reproductive health coalitions and the medical community) to ensure

In both jurisdictions

The Initiative’s reach extends beyond high school to college through *Power to Decide’s* Campus Sexual Health Initiative, a partnership with 11 college campuses in NYC and LA. Each college has completed an online assessment and identified best practices to meet the needs of students. *Power to Decide* has revised its materials to be relevant for foster TAY and is engaging peer leaders on campuses to help young people engage one another in conversations on reproductive and sexual health.

that foster TAY, caregivers, caseworkers, judicial officers, and health providers have resources and training on foster TAY sexual and reproductive health.

In NYC, the Department of Health and Mental Health’s Adolescent Health Unit is strengthening reproductive/sexual health education and access for TAY through a variety of approaches, with a Hilton grant administered to the *Fund for Public Health*. The unit is partnering with provider agencies to identify foster TAY and conduct targeted outreach at its school-based health clinics. This innovative use of existing resources to provide immediate and ongoing access to reproductive health services is complemented by the unit’s training of caseworkers and efforts to expand access to contraceptives at provider agencies. Trainings have focused on discussing sexual and reproductive health in regular interactions with foster TAY. With Hilton support, five agencies received grants to provide access to a full range of contraception to foster TAY, including long-acting reversible contraceptives, which were not previously available at any of the recipient agencies.

To better serve crossover youth and with prior support of the Initiative, NYC implemented the crossover youth practice model developed at Georgetown University, which focuses on diverting youth from the juvenile justice system. To ensure coordination between agencies serving crossover youth, there is a joint protocol for Family Court, ACS, and the Department of Probation, and provider agency staff have access to ongoing, free training on the practice model to support implementation.

Expanding and sharing knowledge with the field. Prior research on pregnant and parenting teens in foster care conducted by the *Children’s Data Network* has been used to support legislative efforts including SB 89 and expand parenting TAY’s access to child care under the Emergency Bridge Program. In LA, research on crossover youth, from the *Children’s Data Network* and Dr. Denise Hertz at Cal State LA’s School of Criminal Justice and Criminalistics, also propelled a Board of Supervisors’ motion on crossover youth and the convening of the Dual-Status Youth Workgroup to develop a countywide plan for crossover youth.

Overview of focused interventions benchmarks and opportunities

Benchmark	Opportunities
Goal 1: Accessible reproductive health care	
Caseworkers, courts, providers, and caregivers are knowledgeable of reproductive health services and encourage TAY to access the services	Both LA and NYC have strong policies related to reproductive health care for foster TAY. Implementation support and stakeholder training efforts will be needed to sustain momentum, particularly as DCFS works to meet caseworker and caregiver training requirements under SB 89 in LA , and as the Department of Health and Mental Health continues to partner with provider agencies to train staff and identify youth for services in NYC . Data sharing between education and child welfare on foster TAY’s receipt of reproductive/sexual health education would help measure progress in this area.
Reproductive/sexual health education is available to all foster TAY	
Goal 2: Tailored supports for expectant and parenting foster TAY	
Expectant and parenting foster TAY are connected to prenatal services, home visitation and parenting supports, and housing	Services for expectant and parenting foster TAY are available in LA and NYC but are currently limited in reach. As stakeholders explore opportunities for service expansion, the federal Family First Prevention Services Act, with its provisions for pregnant and parenting foster TAY, is one avenue to explore.
Affordable child care options are available to parenting foster TAY	

Goal 3: Tailored supports for crossover youth	
Initiatives are in place to prevent foster TAY arrest and promote diversion	<p>LA's heightened focus on diversion from the juvenile justice system provides a promising foundation for strengthening diversion of foster TAY; however, early plans do not include specific protocols to serve foster TAY, a critical gap stakeholders and grantees will be advocating to address in the coming year. Through NYC's implementation of Raise the Age, more crossover TAY will be served by the juvenile justice system under the Crossover Youth Practice Model; this will be an important area to monitor in the coming year.</p>
Crossover TAY are assessed for educational needs and receive appropriate educational services	
Crossover TAY have access to supports to prevent recidivism (e.g., parenting, legal, health, and mental health resources)	
Employers and postsecondary institutions do not inhibit applications from crossover youth	

An example of efforts toward the focused intervention benchmarks, representing the work of the Initiative and its grantees as well as other system stakeholders and partners, is presented below for each jurisdiction. We recognize that there may still be room for progress across these areas and will continue to monitor over time.

Figure 6. Examples of work in LA and NYC toward focused interventions benchmarks

	LA BENCHMARK EXAMPLE:	NYC BENCHMARK EXAMPLE:
	Reproductive/sexual health education is available for all foster TAY	Pregnant and parenting foster TAY are connected to prenatal services, home visitation and parenting supports, and housing
Political Will 	LA Board of Supervisors recognized May 2018 as Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month and directed public agencies to collaborate with efforts such as <i>LA Reproductive Health Equity Project (LA RHEP)</i> and <i>Power to Decide</i> .	Interagency Foster Care Task Force recommended that NYC facilitate access to home visiting programs for pregnant and parenting youth in foster care.
Policy 	SB 89 requires caseworkers to document that youth have received comprehensive sexual health education, have been informed of their rights, had barriers to care addressed, and know where to go for education and services. An All County Letter provides further implementation guidance.	ACS policy requires timely prenatal care, and the Checklist for Pregnant and Parenting Young People in Out of Home Care guides case planning and connection to resources.
Program 	Reproductive/sexual health is woven into services by Hilton grantees. For example, <i>Children's Law Center's</i> Reproductive Health Specialist meets individually with youth in the CARE program, and <i>First Place for Youth</i> partners with <i>LA RHEP</i> partners to provide workshops and trainings.	Home visiting programs are available to parenting foster TAY, including the Nurse Family Partnership-Targeted City Initiative (NFP-TCI) through DOHMH and Healthy Families New York. ACS has specialized units serving expectant and parenting youth and a curriculum for co-parenting.

Data 		ACS maintains data on pregnant and parenting mothers.
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Experiences and outcomes of foster TAY targeted with focused interventions

	<p>Births to foster TAY</p> <p>Previous research by the <i>Children’s Data Network</i> provides some insight into the prevalence of births to TAY while in foster care in LA, as well as maltreatment rates among children of foster youth.^{69, 70, 71}</p>	<p>Reproductive health education</p> <p>No data available.</p>						
<p>Crossover youth</p> <p>The majority of youth exiting probation placements in 2015 experienced a maltreatment report.⁷²</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">Reported maltreatment</td> <td style="width: 50%;"><div style="background-color: #0070c0; height: 15px; width: 83%;"></div></td> <td style="width: 20%; text-align: right;">83%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Substantiated maltreatment</td> <td><div style="background-color: #0070c0; height: 15px; width: 38%;"></div></td> <td style="text-align: right;">38%</td> </tr> </table>			Reported maltreatment	<div style="background-color: #0070c0; height: 15px; width: 83%;"></div>	83%	Substantiated maltreatment	<div style="background-color: #0070c0; height: 15px; width: 38%;"></div>	38%
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Substantiated maltreatment	<div style="background-color: #0070c0; height: 15px; width: 38%;"></div>	38%						

⁶⁹ In LA, among female TAY in foster care at age 17 between 2003 and 2007, 11.5 percent had their first birth before age 18, and 27.5 percent had their first birth before age 20. *Source:* Putnam-Hornstein, E., & King, B. (2013). *California’s most vulnerable parents: Cumulative teen birth rates among girls in foster care at age 17*. Los Angeles, CA: Children’s Data Network. Retrieved from: <https://hilton-production.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/20/attachments/Vulnerable Parents Full Report 11-11-13.pdf?1439759005>

⁷⁰ Among infants born to adolescent mothers in LA between 2006 and 2007, 25.6 percent were born to mothers who had been the subject of a maltreatment report between age 10 and becoming pregnant. *Source:* Putnam-Hornstein, E., Cederbaum, J.A., King, B., Lane, A., & Tricket, P. (2013). *California’s most vulnerable parents: Adolescent mothers and intergenerational child protective services involvement*. Los Angeles, CA: Children’s Data Network. Retrieved from: <https://hilton-production.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/20/attachments/Vulnerable Parents Full Report 11-11-13.pdf?1439759005>

⁷¹ Children born to an adolescent mother who was the subject of a maltreatment report were more likely to be reported to CPS than children whose mothers had no CPS involvement (30.7% of children whose mothers had an unsubstantiated report of maltreatment and 39.8% of children whose mothers had a substantiated report of maltreatment, compared to 15.8% of children whose mothers were not the subject of a CPS report). *Source:* Putnam-Hornstein, E., Cederbaum, J.A., King, B., Lane, A., & Tricket, P. (2013). *California’s most vulnerable parents: Adolescent mothers and intergenerational child protective services involvement*. Los Angeles, CA: Children’s Data Network. Retrieved from: <https://hilton-production.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/20/attachments/Vulnerable Parents Full Report 11-11-13.pdf?1439759005>

⁷² Among 387 youth exiting suitable placement and camp cohort placements. *Source:* McCroskey, J., Herz, D., & Putnam-Hornstein, E. (2017). *Crossover youth: Los Angeles County probation youth with previous referrals to child protective services*. Los Angeles, CA: Children’s Data Network. Retrieved from: <http://www.datanetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/CrossoverYouth.pdf>

 <p>New York City</p>	<h3>Births to foster TAY</h3>  <p>About one-fifth of youth who aged out of foster care in 2017 were parents.⁷³</p> <p>While data on teen pregnancy rates are not available for foster TAY, the overall teen pregnancy rate in NYC dropped by 48% from 2005 to 2014.⁷⁴</p>
<h3>Reproductive health education</h3> <p>Data are not available on the number and percentage of youth receiving reproductive health education.</p> <p>93% of TAY who reported needing sexual health/family planning care on the ACS Youth Experience Survey received it.⁷⁵</p>	<h3>Crossover youth</h3> <p>No data available.</p>

Challenges and next steps

Strengthening systems and policy. The Family First Prevention Services Act, signed into law in February 2018, opens federal funding streams to provide services to families at risk of entering the child welfare system. Pregnant and parenting foster TAY are one population of focus under this law, and both jurisdictions will be working to understand how to leverage federal resources to support this population.

LA stakeholders are actively engaged in developing and implementing strategies to promote juvenile justice diversion. However, these plans lack a targeted focus on crossover youth, which the Dual-Status Youth Workgroup, including several Hilton grantees, is seeking to address through its focus on delinquency prevention, diversion, and supports for crossover youth. The implementation of Raise the Age in New York will be an area to monitor over the coming year, as more crossover TAY will be served by the juvenile justice system under the provisions of the Crossover Youth Practice Model. Raise the Age will increase the age of criminal responsibility in New York to 18 by October 2019. Both jurisdictions have laws prohibiting employers from asking about criminal history until after a conditional offer of employment is made. While implementation of these laws did not surface as a significant challenge in this year's data collection, we will monitor for any implementation barriers, as well as programmatic supports specifically designed for foster TAY in the coming year.

Advancing innovative programs. In both jurisdictions, there are challenges around ensuring the educational rights of crossover youth. For example, TAY returning from juvenile justice settings have the right to return to their previous schools or into mainstream, comprehensive classes but may experience barriers to doing so. In LA, the *Alliance for Children's Rights* has provided training in partnership with judicial stakeholders to the school districts on the educational rights of students returning from probation placements. Needs for support extend beyond education. The *Children's Law Center's* Crossover Advocacy and Resource Effort (CARE) program supports youth on probation by connecting them to services and

⁷³ ACS relies on provider agencies to report this information, which is not always done consistently. Further, among other data sources, this report uses Preparing Youth for Adulthood (PYA) data, which is youth- or caseworker-reported and not verified, with more reliable administrative data. This data should be interpreted with caution. Source: New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2017). *Report on Youth in Foster Care*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2017/YouthInFosterCare2017.pdf>

⁷⁴ To 48.1 pregnancies per 1,000 females aged 15-19 in 2014: Tim Ross, T., and Mayevskaya, Y. (2018). *Trends and Measurement in New York City Teen Reproductive Health*. Hilton Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Team Policy Brief No. 2.

⁷⁵ New York City Administration for Children's Services. (2018). *Youth Experience Survey 2018*. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2018/ACSYouthExperienceSurveyMay152018.pdf>

supports related to housing, education, mental health, substance abuse, health, and family dynamics, but more services and sustainable models of case management are needed.

NYC struggles overall with a lack of coordination around supports for pregnant and parenting TAY and reproductive health care. Although the city has strong policies and numerous services available, the youth and families involved in child welfare are not able to easily navigate or locate those services. Further, privacy protections have made it challenging for programs to identify eligible foster TAY for targeted outreach.

LA struggles with a shortage of housing providers for pregnant and parenting foster TAY. Caring for these youth is more expensive than caring for foster TAY generally, but caregivers and housing providers do not receive a higher rate of payment. Although the Infant Supplement payment was meant to offset this challenge, additional needs remain since these dollars go to meeting the basic needs for the child, not to the placement of the foster youth.

Expanding and sharing knowledge. Both LA and NYC struggle to access data on reproductive/sexual health services for foster TAY. Because reproductive health data are not shared between child welfare and health or education agencies, stakeholders do not know if youth have had education or received services. Caseworkers in LA are required to enter data on receipt of comprehensive sexual health education as narrative text, but they cannot run reports to monitor progress, as a specific field is not yet built into their case management system. Similarly, in NYC, data on pregnant and parenting mothers in foster care are manually tracked by ACS, but use of the data is complicated by the fact that ACS is not regularly notified by provider agencies when a young person becomes pregnant or gives birth. Tracking access to services such as Nurse Family Partnership also relies on youth self-report.

Upcoming areas of focus

LA will be working to expand access to Expectant and Parenting Youth Conferences. These conferences are currently staffed by the *Alliance for Children's Rights, Public Counsel*, and DCFS and help connect expectant and young parents with resources such as education, workforce, housing, material supports, home visitation, and support for coping with being pregnant/parenting. However, not all eligible youth receive a conference, and there is a waiting list. LA RHEP is exploring opportunities to expand these conferences with existing public funding streams. LA RHEP will continue to support the development and implementation of trainings compliant with SB 89 and will also partner with DCFS to develop materials caseworkers can use in conversations with foster TAY about sexual/reproductive health (e.g., conversation guides and youth resources).

NYC will continue to expand reproductive health services in schools and child welfare agencies. The Adolescent Health Unit has revamped their training materials for caseworkers and will be exploring further opportunities to partner with ACS to expand enrollment in these trainings. The Adolescent Health Unit will also continue partnering with foster care agencies to identify foster TAY attending schools served by School-Based Health Clinics to better connect foster TAY to these resources.

Issue area 6: Coordinating services and supports for transition age foster youth, and collecting and using data to drive decisions

Strong services and supports for foster TAY rely on the coordination of multiple public systems, sustained funding that demonstrates the commitment of public and philanthropic resources, and the use of data and research to drive decision making.

Advancing the Initiative's objectives

Through the work of the grantees and the Foundation, the Initiative advanced reform in several ways in NYC and LA. Below we highlight examples of this important work.

Strengthening systems and policy. In LA, grantees have convened partners and stakeholders in collaborative efforts to strengthen outcomes for foster TAY, including the following examples:

- FosterEd's demonstration site in Antelope Valley brings together public partners (e.g., school districts, LACOE, DCFS, the Office of Child Protection, the Probation Department, Juvenile Court, and the Education Coordinating Council) and grantees (e.g., *John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY)* and *United Friends of the Children*) as well as other community partners to design and implement changes to the education system.
- The Foster Youth College Advancement Project (FYCAP) was conceived as an *Opportunity Youth Collaborative (OYC)* postsecondary education pathway. FYCAP, led by *JBAY*, brings together leaders from public agencies, secondary and postsecondary education, nonprofit organizations, and advocacy groups. It has strengthened its impact through policy implementation, data collection and sharing across sectors, along with training programs and technical assistance toward the goal of increasing foster youth access and admission to higher education.

Additionally, system innovations such as LA's specialized courtroom for non-minor dependents, ages 18-21, complements the work of Hilton grantees by ensuring that foster TAY have access to judges, attorneys, caseworkers, advocacy and community-based organizations, and peer advocates with comprehensive expertise to help them understand their options and eliminate barriers to self-sufficiency.

In NYC, the education workgroups convened by the *Juvenile Law Center* bring together cross-agency participants, including representatives from ACS, DOE, SUNY, and CUNY, as well as legal advocates. The Fostering Youth Success Alliance coordinated by *Children's Aid* works across systems to promote postsecondary success through its 100 member organizations.

Advancing innovative programs. In the Antelope Valley region of LA, the *National Center for Youth Law's* FosterEd program's collaborative approach to bringing together education, child welfare, and probation agency partners is credited with strengthening partnerships between child welfare and education in this region; these efforts have resulted in public funding for school-based foster youth liaisons.

In NYC, the Foundation is supporting an innovative partnership between the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and ACS focused on sexual and reproductive health. This partnership is described in more detail under Focused Interventions.

There is also evidence in both locations that public and philanthropic funding is being braided together to support programs in multiple TAY-serving systems. Examples include the following:

Foundation as a change agent

The Hilton Foundation has built strong working relationships with system and philanthropic partners. Through participation in a range of local and national funding collectives, Foundation staff create opportunities for shared learning, priority-setting, and collaborative leveraging of resources to support foster TAY. Jeannine Balfour, Senior Program Officer, Domestic Programs at the Foundation, chairs the Youth Transition Funders Group.

Across **LA** and **NYC**, the Foundation also plays a critical role supporting knowledge sharing and relationship building across grantees at its annual convening.

Leveraged Funding

\$9 million in private funding and \$11.4 million in public funding was leveraged across **LA** and **NYC**.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ From April 1, 2017-March 31, 2018. Leveraged funding is funding defined as using one source of funding (Hilton Foundation) to attract the commitment of funds from other sources for the project that is part of the Foster Youth Strategic Initiative. For further information on calculation, see Appendix C.

- The Hilton Foundation’s provision of short-term funding for Education Consultants in LA to support school stability while DCFS went through its budgeting process to make these permanent positions
- Expansion of *The Door’s* Bronx Youth Center’s Academy, funded by the Hilton Foundation, which is replicated in Manhattan with financial support from the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office
- Complementary resources for foster TAY at CUNY via the publicly-funded Dorm Project and the Hilton-funded Foster Care Initiative.

Expanding and sharing knowledge. Hilton knowledge grantees are approaching their research projects in a manner that serves as a model for other researchers. For example, the *University of Chicago’s* CalYOUTH study has been highlighted by other funders as an example of a model approach to bringing together researchers, state agencies, county agencies, and the philanthropic community to advance shared goals and understanding. Research and data linkages from *Children’s Data Network* and Cal State LA have helped spur a county-wide collaboration to enhance supportive services for foster TAY who cross into the delinquency system, prevent delinquent behaviors, and divert foster youth from entering the delinquency system. Furthering the integration of cross-system data, *Children’s Data Network* completed a “proof of concept” data linkage across programs within the California Health and Human Services Agency. Building off this work, additional entities have joined a global agreement for data sharing within the Agency.

Overview of coordination benchmarks and opportunities

Benchmark	Opportunities
Goal 1: Coordinated service delivery across systems	
Formal structures connect foster TAY-serving systems, such as child welfare, education, juvenile justice, and workforce	Both LA and NYC identified the need to continue strengthening youth engagement in system change efforts. While numerous collaborative efforts connect system leaders across LA , further efforts are needed to enhance relationships and knowledge of resources and partnerships among front-line staff. Both jurisdictions are leveraging public and philanthropic funding sources to meet the needs of foster TAY, although many programs receive their primary funding from private sources. Hilton funding has served and can continue to serve as a catalyst for sustained public investments.
Public and philanthropic funding sources are aligned to create a robust service array for foster TAY	
Goal 2: Data collection and integration	
Agencies collect disaggregated administrative data on foster TAY and its subgroups	Data sharing in both LA and NYC is supported by formal structures such as MOUs across multiple TAY-serving systems. However, capacity to link, aggregate, and report cross-system data on an ongoing basis needs further development. While education data is matched and shared with provider agencies in NYC , key systems such as DOE in NYC do not maintain their own disaggregated data for foster TAY. Like other jurisdictions, LA and NYC lack data on the experiences and outcomes of foster TAY after they leave foster care.
Agencies use sophisticated techniques (e.g., student identifiers or probabilistic matching) to regularly link data across systems	
Agencies are linking data across systems	
Formal structures support data sharing between agencies	

Goal 3: Research and data-informed decision making	
Service providers have access to administrative data on foster TAY	While NYC's public agency has analytic capacity, most foster care and related service providers in NYC have little or no capacity to analyze data on TAY. Privacy protections also inhibit some service providers in NYC from obtaining information on foster TAY who would be eligible for their services, thus inhibiting recruitment efforts.
Policymakers use research and data to inform their decision making	
Service providers use research and data to inform their decision making	

An example of efforts toward the coordination benchmarks, representing the work of the Initiative and its grantees as well as other system stakeholders and partners, is presented below for each jurisdiction. We recognize that there may still be room for progress across these areas and will continue to monitor over time.

Figure 7. Examples of work in LA and NYC toward coordination benchmarks

	LA BENCHMARK EXAMPLE:	NYC BENCHMARK EXAMPLE:
	Formal structures connect foster TAY-serving systems, such as child welfare, education, juvenile justice, and workforce	Formal structures support data sharing
	Several collaborative efforts catalyzed the Board of Supervisors motions (e.g., to support TAY self-sufficiency through the creation of a coordinated resource hub). These efforts have included engagement of representatives from child welfare, education, workforce, juvenile justice, and other TAY-serving systems. Other examples of collaborations include formal protocols among DCFS, the courts, and Probation; formal relationships between education and child welfare related to the school stability transportation pilot; the Education Passport System for data sharing; increased utilization of financial aid for college access; and reproductive and sexual health education protocols.	There is evidence of data sharing between agencies through formal structures such as memoranda of understanding. An MOU between ACS and DOE facilitates monthly data sharing, which ACS then makes available to provider agencies. ACS and CUNY have an MOU through which ACS provides CUNY with data for research purposes. Data is shared between ACS's child welfare and juvenile justice divisions. The Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence (CIDI) within the Mayor's Office analyzes shared data from city agencies.

Challenges and next steps

Strengthening systems and policy. Public agency stakeholders in LA pointed to significant progress made in developing strong working relationships at the leadership level; however, they also expressed concern that these relationships should translate down to frontline staff to support increased opportunities for young people.

Engaging youth voice in systems change efforts is another gap in collaborative efforts and partner engagement for both LA and NYC. While youth voice is being sought, or will be, through surveys in both locations (e.g., the Youth Experience Survey in NYC and a survey on placement experiences under development in California), grantees identified opportunities for strengthening youth engagement. For example, in NYC, there is no grassroots organization currently providing the infrastructure to engage

foster TAY on issues that are important to them at a system level. Grantees also expressed that there is a need to lift up different voices, as many of the same youth are engaged across organizations and projects. In LA, grantees and other partners bring together youth and family members to inform systems reform and services, serve on public agency councils, and testify in public forums. Despite such efforts, these grantees and partners still identify the need for continued development of true youth leadership and partnership. Resources such as the *Youth Led Organizing* report developed by *Foster Youth in Action* with Hilton Foundation support may provide helpful strategies for addressing some of these gaps through grassroots youth organizing efforts to transform TAY-serving systems.

Advancing innovative programs. In LA, stakeholders and grantees expressed that while their region is resource rich, youth are often “stumbling into” these resources, rather than accessing them through a coordinated and intentional pipeline. The youth focus group echoed this concern. Differing eligibility requirements for services also complicate youth and caseworkers’ ability to navigate resources. LA’s size poses a significant challenge in coordinating these efforts to reach foster TAY. Youth are mobile and may move in and out of a range of existing services; they also face multiple competing barriers related to homelessness, transportation, child care needs, and emotional well-being.

Service providers’ data capacity and access varies in NYC. As ACS continues to take data-driven approaches to tackling challenges such as foster parent recruitment, provider agencies vary in their technical skills and human resources to analyze, interpret, and act on this data. A handful of program grantees also noted that, due to privacy protections, they are restricted from accessing data on foster youth who would be eligible for their programming, which significantly inhibits recruitment efforts.

Expanding and sharing knowledge. While significant progress has been made in sharing data across TAY-serving systems, concern was expressed in both LA and NYC that data-linking often occurs within the context of specific research projects and may not include ongoing reporting. Strong infrastructure in LA (*Children’s Data Network*) and NYC (CIDI) supports data linkage, although opportunities exist to further build the case for the importance of ongoing data linking and reporting to measure and improve foster TAY outcomes. California will build on the momentum of its global agreement for data sharing between programs within the CA Health and Human Services Agency to explore funding sources for a research data hub to host this linked data. Partners envision that this hub would make linked data available to public agency staff, partners, and researchers. Another common need was supporting agency staff and service providers’ understanding and use of data. Staff at the *California Child Welfare Indicators Project* have supported DCFS staff at multiple levels in analyzing and using their available data, and this effort may serve as a model for addressing this challenge. Additionally, neither location currently has the infrastructure to track youth outcomes after leaving foster care. In LA and California as a whole, the fact that that data linking expertise is primarily held by researchers external to the public system is an additional challenge.

While there is currently data sharing between education and child welfare in NYC, these exchanges take place via spreadsheets, and agency stakeholders spoke to efforts underway to develop a database approach to strengthen data sharing infrastructure. ACS reports educational data for students in foster care, but opportunities to strengthen this reporting were identified (e.g., by reporting school dropout rates in addition to graduation data). Unlike LA, there is no disaggregated reporting on NYC foster youth outcomes by DOE.

Upcoming areas of focus

As a knowledge grantee, *FrameWorks Institute* will continue its work on a research-based communication strategy to support the ability of the Initiative and its partners to communicate more effectively about foster TAY and their needs. Public messaging will also be strengthened through *Foster*, a documentary that shares the stories of individuals and families involved with DCFS, which will be released nationally through HBO this coming year. *Fostering Media Connections'* expanded coverage of NYC through the Initiative's support further elevates awareness of key issues in the field. Through these efforts, the Initiative seeks to strengthen public understanding of and action to support foster TAY.

In NY, CUNY will convene a symposium to share research findings on foster youth and postsecondary education, and the Adolescent Health Unit will continue to strengthen their collaborations with ACS and foster care providers to reach TAY with comprehensive sexual/reproductive health services.

LA grantees and stakeholders have identified several areas of focus for the coming year to address some of the challenges identified above. OYC has partnered very closely with DCFS, the Probation Department, Workforce Development, Aging & Community Services (WDACS), and the other six LA Workforce Investment Boards to develop a streamlined, universal referral process to connect foster TAY with workforce services. Over the coming year, they will be working to formalize these relationships and processes through an MOU. To support foster TAY, caregivers, and caseworkers in understanding and accessing available resources, Hilton grantees and other OYC partners will remain involved in informing and developing the county-wide TAY Hub. In 2019, *iFoster* will also build increased cross-agency partnership and supports for foster TAY through the training and placement of 100 foster TAY as AmeriCorps interns, in partnership with OYC and the DCFS Youth Development Services Division. The interns will be placed with Guardian Scholars programs, America's Job Centers/WorkSource Centers, and DPSS offices to provide peer support to foster TAY around academics, employment, and self-sufficiency.

Next steps

The Initiative has made exciting progress this year. In each issue area, both the grantees and the Foundation have put tremendous effort into their objectives. In doing so, they are guiding LA and NYC closer toward providing foster TAY with the resources, supports, and services they need to thrive while in foster care and later in life.

As we consider the Initiative's progress and challenges and look forward to its upcoming work, we make the following recommendations:

1. **Closely monitor whether and how recommendations are implemented.** Through our work this year, we were excited to see strong political will in place in LA and NYC. In both jurisdictions, numerous working groups and task forces are focused on supporting foster TAY. As these groups issue recommendations, we encourage the Initiative to carefully track whether and how those recommendations translate into policy and practice change.
2. **Build a case for high-quality, timely, and publicly available data in LA and NYC.** Although some proxies are available, we are unable to report on most of the indicators the Initiative identified to track how foster TAY are faring. We recommend that the Initiative select a few indicators in each jurisdiction—based on where there is already some progress or political will in place—and invest energy in 2019 toward making those data available. Such early wins can serve as examples of how to build the relationships and infrastructure necessary to move forward in other indicators.
3. **Identify common challenges between LA and NYC and build collaborative communities.** Although each jurisdiction's context and strengths are unique, we did see many commonalities across the two. For example, program grantees in both jurisdictions were interested in expanding vocational services to improve employment opportunities for foster TAY. In addition, all grantees discussed with great frequency the challenges to accessing and using data. By providing opportunities for grantees focused on building specific capacities to learn from each other, the Initiative may help them find creative solutions to address common issues.
4. **Look closely at barriers to advocacy in NYC.** The Initiative's Phase II strategy elevated the need to increase advocacy capacity among NYC grantees. Through this year's evaluation work, we are just starting to understand some of the context-specific issues, such as the relationship between the child welfare agency and some grantees, that make NYC different from LA. With these distinctions in mind, we recommend taking a close look—perhaps through a facilitated session at this summer's convening or a focus group of grantees—to further understand what barriers exist and strategize specific supports needed to increase advocacy.

Appendix A: Grantee List

Hilton grantees are categorized below based on their location and the focus of their Hilton grant. Many grantees work across multiple areas of focus outside of their Hilton-funded projects.

	Systems/ Policy	Program	Knowledge
New York City			
Children's Aid	•	•	
Fostering Media Connections			•
Fund for Public Health in New York, Inc.	•	•	
Good Shepherd Services		•	
Graham Windham		•	
Juvenile Law Center	•		
New Yorkers for Children	•		
Research Foundation of the City University of New York	•	•	•
The Children's Village		•	
The Door - A Center of Alternatives, Inc.		•	
The New York Foundling		•	
Los Angeles			
Cal State Northridge*			•
Children Now	•		
Children's Law Center of California	•	•	
Coalition for Responsible Community Development		•	
Community Initiatives	•		
First Place for Youth		•	
John Burton Advocates for Youth	•		
Koce-TV Foundation		•	•
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce Foundation	•		
National Center for Youth Law - FosterEd	•	•	
National Center for Youth Law - Reproductive Health	•		
Pepperdine University*		•	
Public Counsel	•	•	
Regents of the University of California at Berkeley			•
Safe and Sound*			•
Southern California Grantmakers	•		
The Alliance for Children's Rights	•	•	
United Friends of the Children		•	
University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration			•
USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work			•
Dual Location			
Fedcap Rehabilitation Services	•	•	
First Star Inc.		•	
Foster Youth in Action	•		•
FrameWorks Institute			•
iFoster		•	
International Documentary Association			•
Philanthropy Northwest*	•		

	Systems/ Policy	Program	Knowledge
Power to Decide	•		
The Annie E. Casey Foundation		•	•
The Aspen Institute	•		
The Forum for Youth Investment	•	•	
Tides Center			•
Youth Policy Institute of Iowa*	•		

*Not included in data collection

Appendix B: Results Framework

Goal	Benchmarks	Youth-level indicators * Data known to be available for LA and NYC ^Proxy data
Issue area: Education (Grades 8-12)		
School stability for foster TAY in high school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools and child welfare agencies prioritize school stability when placements change • Cost-sharing agreements between education and child welfare support foster TAY with transportation and planning to promote school stability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and % who attend only one school during a one-year period^ • Of foster TAY with two or more placements in a school year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ # and % who attend only one school during a one-year period • Of foster TAY ages 16-18: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ # and % enrolled in high school^ ○ # and % who ever attended two or fewer high schools ○ # and % receiving academic support services ○ # and % on track to graduate in 4 years^ ○ # and % on track to graduate in 5 years^ ○ # and % who missed >= 11 days of school in past 12 months^ ○ # and % with >= 2 suspensions on the past 12 months^ ○ # and % expelled in past 12 months^ • Of foster TAY in 12th grade: # and % of those in 12th grade proficient in reading and/or math • Of foster TAY ages 19-20: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ # and % who graduated from high school in 4 years^ ○ # and % with a high school diploma^ • Of foster TAY ages 16-20: # and % who dropped out of high school^ • Of foster TAY ages 21-24: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ # and % with a high school diploma ○ # and % who dropped out of high school

Goal	Benchmarks	Youth-level indicators <i>* Data known to be available for LA and NYC</i> <i>^Proxy data</i>
Issue area: Education (Grades 8-12)		
Targeted supports to students and schools in service of graduation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools prioritize student engagement and persistence when supporting foster TAY during school transitions • Foster TAY have consistent graduation counseling (e.g., designated individuals assigned to youth, case management plans, specialized services) • Academic support services are accessible to foster TAY • School environments support the socioemotional and/or behavioral needs of foster TAY • Schools receive tailored supports to assist foster TAY, and are held accountable for foster TAY performance 	

Goal	Benchmarks	Youth-level indicators * Data known to be available for LA and NYC ^Proxy data
Issue area: Postsecondary education		
Accessible postsecondary education options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic bridge programs facilitate transition into postsecondary education for foster TAY • Supports are available to help TAY complete postsecondary prerequisites (e.g., selection, application, standardized tests, & financial aid) • Foster TAY are given priority in enrollment decisions and course access • Foster TAY have access to career and technical education as a viable postsecondary option 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of TAY ages 18-24: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ # and % who have ever submitted a college application^ ○ # and % who have ever submitted two or more college applications ○ # and % who have completed the FAFSA in the prior 12 months^ ○ # and % who have taken the SAT^ ○ # and % ever enrolled in post-secondary education^ • Of foster TAY age 22-24: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ # and % who have completed a 4-degree ○ # and % who have completed a 2-year degree ○ # and % who have completed a technical credential
Targeted supports in service of postsecondary completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial supports are available for foster TAY for tuition and related expenses (excluding housing) • Programs and/or structures designed to support foster TAY students are available (e.g., designated foster liaison, programs to identify and support foster TAY students, Guardian Scholars and EOP programs) • Programs and/or structures are available to provide year-round housing supports for foster TAY students 	

Goal	Benchmarks	Youth-level indicators * Data known to be available for LA and NYC ^Proxy data
Issue area: Employment		
Employer engagement with foster TAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal structures enable foster TAY to directly engage employers (e.g., job fairs, online tools, training programs)⁷⁷ • Training and mentoring opportunities are available to support employed TAY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and % of foster TAY ages 16-19 who are employed[^] • # and % of foster TAY ages 20-24 who are employed[^] • Among employed foster TAY: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Average quarterly earnings[^] ○ # and % of foster TAY earning a living wage at age 25 ○ % of foster TAY who have ever been employed for four consecutive quarters
Targeted workforce preparation for foster TAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training opportunities (e.g., skill building workshops, internships, apprenticeships, etc.) are available to TAY unprepared for employment • Reengagement strategies exist to identify and reconnect foster TAY who lack access to high school equivalency, higher education, and employment 	

⁷⁷ Training programs that provide foster TAY with the opportunity to directly engage with employers across a variety of fields are included here. This benchmark does not include internships or apprenticeships that connect youth with a single employer.

Goal	Benchmarks	Youth-level indicators * Data known to be available for LA and NYC ^Proxy data
Issue area: Focused Interventions		
Accessible reproductive health care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caseworkers, courts, providers, and caregivers are knowledgeable of reproductive health services and encourage TAY to access the services • Reproductive/sexual health education is available to all foster TAY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # and % of foster TAY receiving reproductive health education^ • # and % of foster TAY with health insurance coverage^ • Among female foster TAY ages 16 to 24: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ # and % who have given birth at ages 15 – 21^ • Among male foster TAY ages 16 to 24: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ # and % who fathered a child at ages 15 – 21
Tailored supports for expectant and parenting foster TAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectant and parenting foster TAY are connected to prenatal services, home visitation and parenting supports, and housing • Affordable child care options are available to parenting foster TAY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of foster TAY ages 16-24 who have given birth to or fathered a child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ # and % with a substantiated maltreatment allegation^ • # and % of foster TAY diversions • # and % of foster TAY with adjudicated delinquent cases
Tailored supports for crossover youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives are in place to prevent foster TAY arrest and promote diversion • Crossover TAY are assessed for educational needs and receive appropriate educational services • Crossover TAY have access to supports to prevent recidivism (e.g., parenting, legal, education, health, and mental health resources) • Employers and postsecondary institutions do not inhibit applications from crossover youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of foster TAY placed in juvenile residential facilities^ • # of foster TAY on probation

Goal	Benchmarks	Youth-level indicators * Data known to be available for LA and NYC ^Proxy data
Issue area: Placement		
Caregiver support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient number of appropriate caregivers are recruited and retained to provide family-based placement to all TAY • All caregivers, including relative caregivers, receive ongoing and adequate financial supports • Caregivers are supported to meet the mental and physical health, education, and developmental needs of the foster TAY placement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of TAY in foster care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ % with no placement changes after the first 45 days in care ○ % in non-relative foster families* ○ % in relative foster families (licensed and unlicensed)* ○ % in congregate care* • Of TAY in foster care <6 months: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ % in non-relative foster families* ○ % in relative foster families (licensed and unlicensed)* ○ % in congregate care* • Of TAY exiting residential treatment center in a year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ % whose stay in RTC was < 12 months • Of TAY who enter care in the 12-month period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ rate of placement moves per day* • # of licensed foster care families who will accept foster TAY, relative to the # of foster TAY^ • # of licensed foster care families who will accept youth pregnant and parenting youth, relative to the number of pregnant/parenting foster TAY • % of licensed foster care families who will accept TAY, with tenures of > 1 year and no disrupted placements • % of licensed foster care families who will accept youth pregnant and parenting youth, with tenures of > 1 year and no disrupted placements
Emphasis on families and family-like settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child welfare agency gives priority to placements with families, including kin • Child welfare agency works to reduce placement and length of stay in congregate care with appropriate planning for step down and into family settings 	

Goal	Benchmarks	Youth-level indicators <i>* Data known to be available for LA and NYC</i> <i>^Proxy data</i>
Issue area: Coordination		
Coordinated service delivery across systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal structures connect foster TAY-serving systems, such as child welfare, education, juvenile justice, and workforce • Public and philanthropic funding sources are aligned to create a robust service array for foster TAY 	These systems changes will indirectly affect youth level indicators.
Data collection and integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies collect disaggregated administrative data on foster TAY and its subgroups • Agencies use sophisticated techniques (e.g., student identifiers or probabilistic matching) to regularly link data across systems • Agencies are linking data across systems • Formal structures support data sharing between agencies 	
Research & data-informed decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service providers have access to administrative data on foster TAY • Policymakers use research and data to inform their decision-making • Service providers use research and data to inform their decision-making 	

Appendix C: Methodology

Data collection

In order to measure progress toward system-level goals and youth-level indicators, Child Trends gathered qualitative and quantitative data from various data sources. These data are utilized throughout the annual report.

Grantee reports, products, and communications. Child Trends collected documents created by grantees, youth-serving agencies, media, and other sources, and reviewed them between July and September 2018 for indications of progress toward systems goals and benchmarks. We reviewed 33 grantee progress reports and more than 48 other documents. Document types included grantee progress reports, grantee newsletters, policy documents, notes on grantee webinars, and media coverage on foster TAY in LA and NYC.

Grantee interviews. From July 2018 through September 2018, Child Trends conducted interviews with 25 grantees to gather information on the focus of their policy, programmatic, and knowledge-building efforts; understand how they assess progress toward system goals; explore any challenges that face foster TAY in New York City and Los Angeles; and identify any strategies or solutions grantees are working on to overcome those challenges.

The interviews varied by the type of grantee and the scope of the grantee's work. However, interviews generally addressed the following topics:

- Grantee goals for foster TAY self-sufficiency (including alignment with the Results Framework benchmarks)
- Collective goals for the systems that interact with foster TAY
- Progress—both individual and collective—toward benchmarks and goals
- Challenges and success toward benchmarks and goals
- Windows of opportunity for systems change
- Collaboration and alignment between grantees
- Self-assessment strategies
- Ways grantees and the field have used data and/or research on foster TAY
- Gaps in data and research on foster TAY, especially as they pertain to our data indicators
- Leveraged funding

Grantee survey. Grantees who did not participate in the interviews were sent a brief survey to gather information on leveraged funding and their input on barriers, progress, and opportunities to advance the Initiative's goals. Ten of 13 survey responses were received, for a response rate of 77 percent.

Local agency and other stakeholder input. In conjunction with the Foundation, Child Trends identified numerous commissions, public agencies, and working groups in LA and NYC that work on issues related to foster TAY and can speak to how systems are moving and where barriers lie. The stakeholders represented a range of key public systems including child welfare, education (primary and post-secondary), workforce, and the judiciary systems. The team conducted 11 interviews and numerous informal conversations with the identified key stakeholders to collect information on the focus of their policy and programmatic efforts, how they view progress toward systems goals, what challenges continue to impede serving TAY in LA and NYC, what solutions are being proposed or are in progress, and their collection and use of data on foster TAY.

Interviews with MEL Consultants and the Foundation. In addition to frequent consultation with MEL consultants and Foundation staff to ensure accuracy of this annual report, Child Trends held formal interviews with our LA and NYC consultants and key contacts/consultant(s) with the Foundation to discuss:

- Current strategies to reach the goals
- Areas of recent growth and areas for potential growth in systems serving TAY
- Challenges and successes toward reaching the goals
- Work in the field that involves a cross-systems approach, including integrated data

Youth perspective. Child Trends utilized the 2018 NYC Administration of Children’s Services Youth Experience Survey report to draw in NYC foster TAY’s perspective. Additionally, Child Trends, with the support of the Alliance for Children’s Rights, held a focus group in September 2018 with 13 foster TAY ages 19-25 in LA to gain the youths’ perspectives on how the foster care, education, community college/college, workforce, and juvenile justice systems are working together to support the success of young people who have experienced foster care.

Administrative and other quantitative data sources. In addition to the data gathered from grantees, stakeholders, and others, Child Trends used numerous quantitative data sources to track progress toward Initiative’s goals for systems and for foster TAY. Below is a list of quantitative data sources:

- **California:** Published reports using Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) data, CalYOUTH, Children’s Data Network reports, California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP), California Health and Human Services Agency Open Data Portal, California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office DataMart, California Department of Education DataQuest, and AFCARS
- **New York:** Published reports using CNNX administrative records data, published reports using Preparing Youth for Adulthood (PYA) data, NYC ACS Youth Experience Survey 2018, and AFCARS

Leveraged Funding. Child Trends asked grantees about public and private funding leveraged between April 1, 2017 and March 31, 2018. Leveraged funding was defined as the use of one source of funding (Hilton Foundation) to attract the commitment of funds from other sources for the project that is part of the Foster Youth Strategic Initiative.

The totals presented in this report exclude funding that was specified as a future award outside of this timeframe, which will be captured in subsequent MEL reports. When funding timeframes were not provided, we have counted the total here and will omit those resources from future annual reports to ensure accurate accounting across the second phase of the Initiative. Leveraged funding received shortly before the start of a Hilton grant was counted when the two funders were described as seeing their investments to be mutually supportive. For grantees serving foster TAY in multiple locations, only funds used to support LA and/or NYC efforts are counted here. Finally, public leveraged funds include resources to support TAY that are outside of but complement the Initiative’s priority areas (e.g., funding to support housing).