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# Child Welfare: Profiles of Current and Former Older Foster Youth Based on the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

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# Summary

Congress has long been concerned with the well-being of older youth in foster care and those who have recently emancipated from care without going to a permanent home. Research on this population is fairly limited, and the few studies that are available have focused on youth who live in a small number of states. This research has generally found that youth who spend time in foster care during their teenage years tend to have difficulty as they enter adulthood and beyond.

The Chafee Foster Care Independence Act (P.L. 106-169), enacted in 1999, specified that state child welfare agencies provide additional supports to youth transitioning from foster care under the newly created Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). The law also directed the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which administers child welfare programs, to consult with stakeholders to develop a *national* data system on the number, characteristics, and outcomes of current and former foster youth. In response to these requirements, HHS created the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) under a final rule promulgated in 2008. The rule requires that each state child welfare agency commence collecting and reporting the data beginning in FY2011 (October 1, 2010).

This report provides summary and detailed data about current and former foster youth, as reported by states to HHS via the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). Data are available on two sets of youth. First, states report information each fiscal year on eligible youth who currently receive independent living services regardless of whether they continue to remain in foster care, were in foster care in another state, or received child welfare services through an Indian tribe or privately operated foster care program. These youth are known as *served youth*. Data on served youth are intended to show how many youth received independent living services. Second, states report information on foster youth on or about their 17$^{th}$ birthday, on or about their 19$^{th}$ birthday, and on or about their 21$^{st}$ birthday. This reported information is based primarily on data collected through surveys of the youth. In this second group, foster youth at age 17 are known as the *baseline youth,* and at ages 19 and 21 they are known as the *follow-up youth*. Data from the tracked population of youth are intended to show education, work, health, and other outcomes of youth who were in foster care at age 17. These current and former foster youth are tracked regardless of whether they receive independent living services at ages 17, 19, and 21.

As noted, states began reporting NYTD data to HHS for served and baseline youth in FY2011. The data in this report include those for served youth in FY2011 through FY2013 and for follow-up youth for FY2013. Between 97,000 and 102,000 youth received an independent living service in each of FY2011 through FY2013. The median age of these youth was 18. In each of the three years, the most common independent living services they received were academic support, career preparation, and education about housing and home management. Approximately 7,500 follow-up youth were surveyed about their outcomes at age 19. About one-third of youth were working full-time and/or part-time. Just over half (54%) were enrolled in school. Almost all of the youth had a positive connection with an adult who could serve in a mentoring or substitute parent role. Most youth had not experienced homelessness or incarceration in their lifetimes. The majority of youth had Medicaid or some other health insurance. However, youth who were no longer in foster care tended to have more negative outcomes on certain indicators. For example, youth in foster care were much less likely to report ever having been homeless compared to youth who left care (11% versus 24%). Likewise, they were less likely to report having ever been incarcerated compared to these same peers (14% versus 29%).

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# National Youth in Transition Database

## Background

Research on former foster youth is limited and most of the studies on outcomes for these youth face methodological challenges. For example, they include brief follow-up periods; have low response rates, non-representative samples, and small sample sizes; and do not follow youth prior to exit from foster care.[1] Few studies include comparison groups to gauge how well these youth are transitioning to adulthood in relation to their peers in the foster care population or general population. However, two studies—the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study and the Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth—have tracked outcomes for a sample of youth across several domains, either prospectively (following youth in care and as they age out and beyond) or retrospectively (examining current outcomes for young adults who were in care at least a few years ago), and compared these outcomes to other groups of youth, either those who aged out and/or youth in the general population.[2] Nonetheless, these studies focus only on youth who were in foster care in four states.

The 1999 law (P.L. 106-169) authorizing the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) required that HHS develop a data system to capture the characteristics and experiences of certain current and former foster youth across the country.[3] The law directed the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to consult with state and local public officials responsible for administering independent living and other child welfare programs, child welfare advocates, Members of Congress, youth service providers, and researchers to (1) "develop outcome measures (including measures of educational attainment, high school diploma, avoidance of dependency, homelessness, non-marital childbirth, incarceration, and high risk behaviors) that can be used to assess the performances of States in operating independent living programs"; and (2) identify the data needed to track the number and characteristics of children receiving independent living services, the type of services provided, and state performance on the measures. In response to these requirements, HHS created the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). The final rule establishing the NYTD became effective April 28, 2008, and it required states to report data to HHS on youth beginning in FY2011.[4] This report provides summary and detailed data for FY2011 through FY2013.[5]

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[1] For a compendium of outcome studies and their methodologies, see Mark E. Courtney and Darcy Hughes Heuring. "The Transition to Adulthood for Youth 'Aging Out' of the Foster Care System" in Osgood et al., eds., *On Your Own Without a Net,* appendix, 2005.

[2] Peter J. Pecora et al., Improving Foster Family Care: Findings from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study, Casey Family Programs, 2005, http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/pdf/ImprovingFamilyFosterCare_FR.pdf; and Mark E. Courtney et al., Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: http://www.chapinhall.org/research/report/midwest-evaluation-adult-functioning-former-foster-youth,

[3] For further information about the CFCIP, see <CrsProductRef includeAuthors="False" productCode="RL34499" title="Youth Transitioning from Foster Care: Background and Federal Programs" url="http://www.crs.gov/pages/Reports.aspx?PRODCODE=RL34499" prodVerID="434897" />CRS Report RL34499, *Youth Transitioning from Foster Care: Background and Federal Programs, Youth Transitioning From Foster Care: Background and Federal Programs,* by Adrienne L. Fernandes-Alcantara.

[4] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Chafee National Youth in Transition Database," 73 *Federal Register* 10338, February 26, 2008. For further information, congressional clients may request a copy of a Congressional Distribution Memorandum, *Chafee Foster Care Independence Act National Youth in Transition Database*, by Adrienne L. Fernandes-Alcantara.

[5] For further information, see HHS, Administration for Children and Families, *National Youth in Transition Database*

HHS uses NYTD to engage in two data reporting activities. First, states report information twice each fiscal year on eligible youth who currently receive independent living services regardless of whether they continue to remain in foster care, were in foster care in another state, or received child welfare services through an Indian tribe or privately operated foster care program. These youth are known as *served youth*. Independent living services refer to the supports that youth receive—such as academic assistance and career preparation services—to assist them as they transition to adulthood. Second, states report information on foster youth on or about their 17th birthday, two years later on or about their 19th birthday, and again on or about their 21st birthday. In this second group, foster youth at age 17 are known as the *baseline youth,* and at ages 19 and 21 they are known as the *follow-up youth* (and are also referred to as *tracked youth* in this report). These current and former foster youth are tracked regardless of whether they receive independent living services at ages 17, 19, and 21. States may track a sample of youth[6] who participated in the outcomes collection at age 17 to reduce the data collection burden. Information is to be collected on a new group of foster youth at age 17 every three years.

## Served Youth

**Table 1** includes an overview of data on the served youth who received an independent living service and the type of services they received for each of FY2011 through FY2013.

The number of youth receiving an independent living service in each of those years ranged from about 97,500 to nearly 102,000. Across all three years, youth were 18 years old, on average, and more than half were female (51% to 52%). The largest share of youth were white (41%-42%) followed by black (29%-31%) and Hispanic youth (19%). About 7 out of 10 youth were in foster care when they reported receiving a service. Youth generally had less than a 12th grade level of education, and about one out of five received special education instruction during a given fiscal year. In addition, nearly one out of five had been adjudicated delinquent, meaning that a court has found the youth guilty of committing a delinquent act.

Among the most frequently received services in most of the three years were academic support to assist the youth with completing high school or obtaining a general equivalency degree (GED), such as academic counseling and literacy training; career preparation services that focus on developing a youth's ability to find, apply for, and retain appropriate employment, including vocational and career assessments and job seeking and job placement support; and an independent living needs assessment to identify the youth's basic skills, emotional and social capabilities, strengths, and needs to match the youth with appropriate independent living services (see **Figure 1**). About 60% of youth received three or more independent living services.

## Follow-Up Youth

**Table 2** summarizes the characteristics and outcomes of the 19-year-old follow-up youth in FY2013. These youth—part of the follow-up population—were initially surveyed in FY2011 (at "baseline") when they were 17 years of age. The table displays information for the entire surveyed group of 19-year-olds (youth overall) as well as four sub-categories of these youth:

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*(NYTD), Federal Fiscal Year 2011,* Data Brief #1, September 2012; *National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD), Federal Fiscal Year 2012,* Data Brief #2, August 2013; *Youth in Transition Database (NYTD), Federal Fiscal Year 2013,* Data Brief #3, July 2014.

[6] A state must draw a sample of youth based on certain procedures. The sample size is based on the number of baseline youth who participated in the state's data collection at age 17. States must use specified formulas based on whether the number of baseline youth is above or below 5,000.

those who were in foster care and those who were not, and those who had received at least one independent living service and those who had not. These categories are not mutually exclusive. Most of the 19-year-old youth who were in foster care also received at least one independent living service.[7] Therefore, the data for these two groups are similar. In total, 7,536 youth participated in the survey at age 19 (this is compared to 15,597 who participated at age 17).[8] Those who did not participate had declined to participate, were considered to be on runaway or missing status; could not be otherwise located; were incapacitated or incarcerated; or were deceased.

**Figure 2** includes data on selected outcomes for youth in foster care and those who are no longer in foster care.

## Demographics

Slightly more than half of the 19-year-old youth participants were male. The largest share of youth were white (42%), followed by black (31%) and Hispanic (19%) youth. Youth were asked about their outcomes across six areas—financial self-sufficiency, educational (academic or vocational) training, positive connections with adults, homelessness, high-risk behaviors, and access to health insurance.

## Financial Self-Sufficiency

About one-third of youth were working full-time and/or part-time at age 19; however, youth in foster care were more likely to be working part-time and youth not in foster care or not receiving any independent living service were slightly more likely to be working full-time. Approximately 30% of youth had completed an apprenticeship, internship, or other type of on-the-job training in the past year. (For comparison, approximately 13% of these youth were working full-time and/or part-time and 20% had completed employment-related skills training when they were surveyed at age 17).

The 19-year-old youth were about equally likely to receive Social Security benefits, either Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) (12% to 14%), regardless of foster care status or receipt of independent living services. (About the same share of these youth was receiving Social Security at age 17.) Youth not receiving any independent living services were slightly less likely to report receiving other ongoing financial support (11% versus 13%-17%). Youth who were in foster care at age 19 did not qualify for public supports such as financial assistance, food assistance, and public housing. The other groups of 19-year-old youth—those not in care, those receiving at least one independent living service (and not in care), and youth not receiving any independent living services (and not in care)—were equally likely to receive such public supports.

[7] Most of the surveyed youth who were in foster care (9,214) had received at least one independent living service (7,147 youth, or 78%). In contrast, less than half of the youth who were no longer in foster care (17,886) had received at least one independent living service (8,409 or 47%).

[8] To correct for potential non-response bias at both baseline and follow-up, a weighting methodology was used. At baseline, results were weighted using variables from the FY2011 Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) records of all 17-year-olds identified by states as being eligible to complete the survey in FY2011 (n=28,218). At follow-up, AFCARS variables, as well as responses from the survey at age 17, were used to weight results. Accordingly, the responses at age 19 were weighted to represent a population of 27,101 youth. Weighted results are not markedly different from unweighted results, and are reported to increase confidence that the outcomes are representative of the FY2011 cohort of 17-year-olds that the survey is intended to assess over time.

## Educational Attainment

Overall, youth were most likely to have a high school diploma (56%) or its equivalent. Educational outcomes were notably distinct for follow-up youth at age 19 depending on whether or not they were in foster care or whether they received an independent living service. Youth who were in foster care at age 19 and/or who received at least one independent living service were also slightly more likely to have a high school diploma or equivalent than those youth who were not in care or had not received at least one independent living service (58%-60% versus 52%-53%). Overall, 54% of youth were enrolled in school at age 19, which could include high school, college, or vocational school. Among youth in foster care, 70% were currently enrolled. This is compared to 44%-62% of youth in the other three subgroups (youth not in care, youth receiving at least one independent living service, and youth not receiving at least one such service). (Also for comparison, when these youth were age 17, almost all (93%) were attending school and 8% had obtained a high school diploma or its equivalent.)

## Positive Connections with Adults

Almost all youth at age 19—regardless of foster care status or receipt of independent living services—said that they had a positive connection to an adult who could serve in a mentoring or substitute parent role, including a relative, former foster parent, birth parent, or older member of the community. (Nearly all youth had reported the same when they were surveyed at age 17.)

## Homelessness and High-Risk Behaviors

Most of the 19-year-old youth had not experienced homelessness in their lifetime, and youth in foster care were much less likely to report being homeless than the other groups (11% versus 18%-24%). (This is compared to 16% of youth overall when they were surveyed at age 17.)

Youth in care at age 19 were also less likely to report having been incarcerated (14% versus 20%-29%). About the same share of youth (13%-17%) self-referred or were referred for an alcohol or drug abuse assessment or counseling during the fiscal year, regardless of foster care or independent living status. Youth in care and/or receiving at least one independent living service were slightly less likely to report that they had ever given birth to, or fathered, any children (9%-10% versus 13%-14%).

## Access to Health Insurance

In general, nearly 9 out of 10 youth had Medicaid or some other health insurance at age 19 (about the same share of youth had health insurance coverage at age 17). Youth in care and/or youth receiving at least one independent living service were more likely to report having health insurance (95%-99%), compared to youth not in care nor receiving independent living services (74%-88%). Most youth in care or receiving at least one independent living service received Medicaid coverage (81%-85%). About the same share of youth (14% to 17%), regardless of foster care status or their receipt of independent living services, had other health insurance. Among youth who had health insurance, youth receiving at least one independent living service and/or not in foster care were slightly more likely than youth in foster care and/or not receiving any independent living services to have insurance coverage for at least some prescription drugs (77%-78% versus 70%-72%).

**Table 1. Characteristics of Current and Former Foster Youth Who Received an Independent Living Service and Service(s) Received, FY2011-FY2013**

Based on Data for "Served Youth," Which Includes Youth Who Received One or More Independent Living Services Paid For or Provided by the State During the Fiscal Year

| Data Element | Description | FY2011 Number and Percentage n=97,453 | FY2012 Number and Percentage n=101,780 | FY2013 Number and Percentage n=99,974 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Demographics*** | | | | |
| Age | The age of youth receiving services (by age group). | 14-16: 25,877 (27%) | 14-16: 27,238 (27%) | 14-16: 24,952 (25%) |
| | | 17-18: 40,924 (42%) | 17-18: 41,515 (41%) | 17-18: 39,590 (40%) |
| | | 19-20: 22,493 (24%) | 19-20: 24,420 (24%) | 19-20: 26,054 (26%) |
| | | 21-26: 6,819 (7%) | 21-26: 7,421 (7%) | 21-26: 8,161 (8%) |
| Median Age and Average Age | The median age and average age of youth receiving services. | Median Age: 18 | Median Age: 18 | Median Age: 18 |
| | | Average Age: 18 | Average Age: 18 | Average Age: 18 |
| Sex | Youth who are male or female. | Male: 46,389 (48%) | Male: 49,625 (49%) | Male: 48,859 (49%) |
| | | Female: 50,614 (52%) | Female: 52,155 (51%) | Female: 51,115 (51%) |
| Race and Ethnicity | Youth self-identifies, or is identified by a family member, as a member of racial group or as Hispanic or Latino. Youth or family member may select all that apply, or may decline to do so. (For purposes of this table, any youth who identifies as Hispanic is shown in that category and is not counted in any of the race categories.) | American Indian/Alaskan Native: 1,752 (2%) | American Indian/Alaskan Native: 1,686 (2%) | American Indian/Alaskan Native: 1,767 (2%) |
| | | Asian: 911 (1%) | Asian: 964 (1%) | Asian: 997 (1%) |
| | | Black or African American: 30,206 (31%) | Black or African American: 31,404 (31%) | Black or African American: 29,418 (29%) |
| | | Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander: 474 (1%) | Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander: 527 (<1%) | Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander: 428 (<1%) |
| | | White: 40,270 (41%) | White: 41,932 (41%) | White: 41,794 (42%) |
| | | Hispanic: 18,666 (19%) | Hispanic: 19,308 (19%) | Hispanic: 19,329 (19%) |
| | | Two or More Races: 3,994 (4%) | Two or More Races: 4,400 (4%) | Two or More Races: 4,813 (5%) |
| | | Unknown: 744 (1%) | Unknown: 856 (1%) | Unknown: 744 (1%) |
| | | Declined: 106 (<1%) | Declined: 223 (<1%) | Declined: 165 (<1%) |

| Data Element | Description | FY2011 Number and Percentage n=97,453 | FY2012 Number and Percentage n=101,780 | FY2013 Number and Percentage n=99,974 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Foster Care Status | Youth was in foster care at any point during the fiscal year. | 69,465 (71%) | 70,615 (69%) | 69,776 (70%) |
| Federally Recognized Tribe | Youth was enrolled in or eligible for membership in a federally recognized tribe. | 4,537 (5%) | 2,964 (3%) | 2,602 (3%) |
| Adjudicated Delinquent | "Adjudicated delinquent" means that a federal or state court has ever found that the youth is guilty of committing a delinquent act. | 16,497 (17%) | 18,457 (18%) | 18,881 (19%) |
| Educational Level[a] | Youth's highest educational level | Postsecondary education or training college (at least one semester): 9,267 (9%) | Postsecondary education or training college (at least one semester): 8,907 (9%) | Postsecondary education or training college (at least one semester): 8,598 (9%) |
| | | 12th Grade: 17,006 (18%) | 12th Grade: 18,125 (18%) | 12th Grade: 18,319 (18%) |
| | | Less than 12th Grade: 68,302 (70%) | Less than 12th Grade: 72,190 (71%) | Less than 12th Grade: 69,635 (70%) |
| Special Education Status | Youth received special education instruction during the fiscal year. | 19,795 (20%) | 21,338 (21%) | 21,337 (21%) |
| ***Service Elements*** | | | | |
| Multiple Services | Youth received three or more independent living services. | 55,699 (57%) | 59,732 (59%) | 57,900 (58%) |
| Independent Living Needs Assessment | Youth received an independent living needs assessment during the fiscal year. | 43,403 (44%) | 43,392 (43%) | 42,488 (42%) |
| Academic Support | Youth received services that can help him/her complete high school or obtain a GED. | 44,315 (46%) | 48,344 (48%) | 47,506 (48%) |

| Data Element | Description | FY2011 Number and Percentage n=97,453 | FY2012 Number and Percentage n=101,780 | FY2013 Number and Percentage n=99,974 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Post-Secondary Educational Support | Youth received post-secondary educational support, including services that help a youth enter or complete college. | 24,404 (25%) | 25,666 (25%) | 25,991 (26%) |
| Career Preparation | Youth received career preparation services that develop a youth's ability to find, apply for, and retain appropriate employment. | 38,049 (39%) | 39,701 (39%) | 37,879 (38%) |
| Employment Programs or Vocational Training | Youth received vocational preparation services designed to build a youth's skills for a specific trade, vocation, or career through classes or onsite training. | 20,404 (21%) | 20,887 (20%) | 21,271 (21%) |
| Budget and Financial Management | Youth received budget and financial management services related to budget and financial independent living skills, including education and practice in budgeting, banking, consumer awareness, and information about credit, loans, and taxes. | 34,063 (35%) | 36,781 (36%) | 36,227 (36%) |
| Housing Education and Home Management Training | Youth received housing education and home management training, including instruction and support services to locate and maintain housing, understand tenant and landlord responsibilities, and acquire home management skills. | 36,658 (38%) | 39,540 (39%) | 38,709 (39%) |
| Health Education and Risk Prevention | Youth received health education on health-related topics (but not direct receipt of health services), including the benefits of preventive care, fitness, nutrition, and risk prevention. | 35,621 (37%) | 38,139 (38%) | 35,837 (36%) |

| Data Element | Description | FY2011 Number and Percentage n=97,453 | FY2012 Number and Percentage n=101,780 | FY2013 Number and Percentage n=99,974 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Family Support and Healthy Marriage Education | Youth received health education on maintaining healthy families, including parenting and childcare skills, spousal communication, family violence prevention, and responsible fatherhood. | 29,992 (31%) | 31,596 (31%) | 31,411 (31%) |
| Mentoring | Youth received programs or services in which the youth met regularly with a screened and trained adult on a one-on-one basis. | 17,308 (18%) | 18,992 (19%) | 20,129 (20%) |
| Supervised Independent Living | Youth received supervised independent living under the supervision of an agency, but the youth was not supervised 24 hours a day. Youth were often provided with increased responsibilities, such as paying bills and assuming leases. | 11,291 (12%) | 10,076 (10%) | 10,599 (11%) |
| Room and Board Financial Assistance | Youth received room and board assistance, including rent deposit, utilities, and other household start-up expenses. | 13,535 (14%) | 14,468 (14%) | 14,173 (14%) |
| Education Financial Assistance | Youth received financial assistance for education or training, including for textbooks, uniforms, and other education supplies; tuition assistance, scholarships; payments for educational preparation and support services; and payment for GED and other educational tests. This includes education and training vouchers. | 22,214 (23%) | 21,809 (21%) | 21,505 (22%) |

| Data Element | Description | FY2011 Number and Percentage n=97,453 | FY2012 Number and Percentage n=101,780 | FY2013 Number and Percentage n=99,974 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Other Financial Assistance | Any other type of financial assistance that the child welfare agency provides to a youth in order to help the transition from foster care to self-sufficiency. | 26,535 (27%) | 29,052 (29%) | 28,854 (29%) |

**Source:** Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) based on information provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, September 2014.

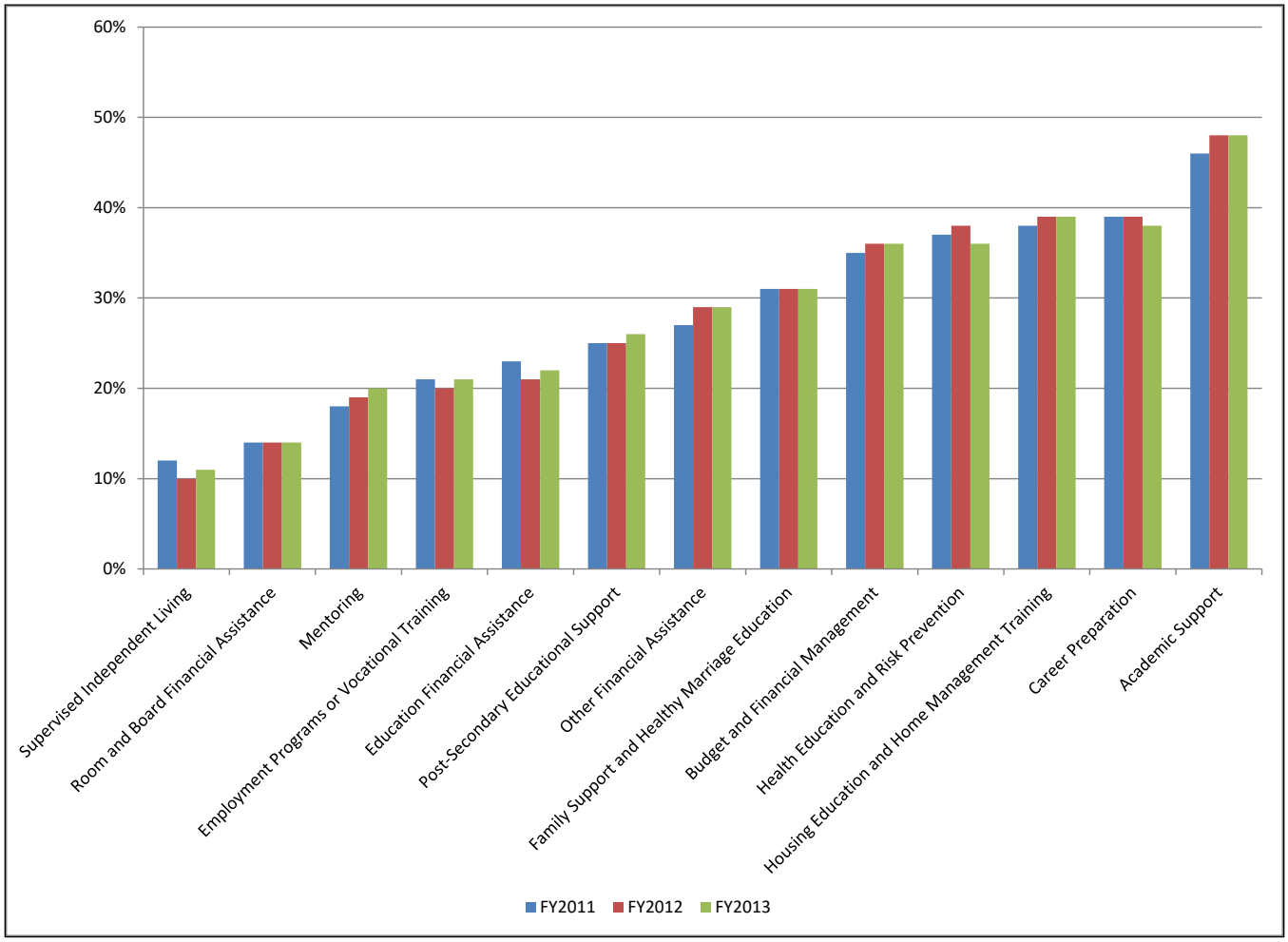
**Notes:** Data were reported as of June 2014, and were submitted via the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) by all 52 jurisdictions (50 states, DC, and PR). The description of each data element is nearly verbatim from the regulation. For a full description of each data element, see HHS, "Chafee National Youth in Transition Database," 73 *Federal Register* 10338, February 26, 2008.

Some data were missing for each element or the data were in error, and therefore the number of youth does not total to the overall number for a given fiscal year and the percentage does not total to 100 in those categories that have multiple variables.

a. This table does not include tabulations of data outcomes, such as education, by age. The relatively low level of educational attainment is likely due to the fact that the median age is 18 (and about 70% are age 18 or younger), when youth are generally expected to have a high school diploma or its equivalent, or to be nearly finished with high school.

**Figure 1. Share of Current and Former Foster Youth Who Received an Independent Living Service(s) by Type of Service Received, FY2011-FY2013**

Based on Data for "Served Youth," Which Includes Youth Who Received an Independent Living Service Paid For or Provided by the State During the Fiscal Year




**Source:** Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) based on information provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, September 2014.

**Notes:** Data were reported as of June 2014, and were submitted via the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) by all 52 jurisdictions (50 states, DC, and PR). For a full description of each data element, see HHS, "Chafee National Youth in Transition Database," 73 *Federal Register* 10338, February 26, 2008.

**Table 2. Demographics of Current and Former Foster Youth at Age 19 and Their Outcomes By Foster Care Status and Receipt of Independent Living Services, FY2013**

Based on Weighted Data for "Follow-Up" from the National Youth in Transition Database Who Had Participated in "Baseline" Data Collection at Age 17

| Data Element | Description | Youth Overall | Youth in Foster Care | | Youth Receiving At Least One Independent Living Service | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| ***Demographics*** | | | | | | |
| Youth | Participants in the Survey. | 27,101 | 9,214 | 17,887 | 15,556 | 11,545 |
| Sex | Youth who are male or female. | Male: 14,179 (52%) | Male: 53% | Male: 52% | Male: 50% | Male: 55% |
| | | Female: 12,922 (47%) | Female: 47% | Female: 48% | Female: 50% | Female: 45% |
| Race | Youth self-identifies, or is identified by a family member as a member of racial group or as Hispanic or Latino. Youth or family member may select all that apply, or may decline to do so. (For purposes of this table, any youth who identifies as Hispanic is shown in that category and is not counted in any of the race categories.) | American Indian/Alaskan Native: 302 (1%) | American Indian or Alaska Native: 1% | American Indian or Alaska Native: 1% | American Indian or Alaska Native: 1% | American Indian or Alaska Native: 1% |
| | | Asian: 238 (1%) | Asian: 1% | Asian: 1% | Asian: 1% | Asian: 1% |
| | | Black or African American: 8,374 (31%) | Black or African American: 33% | Black or African American: 30% | Black or African American: 32% | Black or African American: 31% |
| | | Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander: 0 (0%) | Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 0% | Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 0% | Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 0% | Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 0% |
| | | White: 11,273 (42%) | White: 33% | White: 46% | White: 38% | White: 46% |
| | | Hispanic (of any race): 5,219 (19%) | Hispanic (of any race): 25% | Hispanic (of any race): 16% | Hispanic (of any race): 22% | Hispanic (of any race): 15% |
| | | Two or more Races: 1,335 (5%) | Two or More Races: 5% | Two or More Races: 5% | Two or More Races: 5%: | Two or More Races: 5% |
| | | Unknown: 127 (1%) | Unknown: <1% | Unknown:1% | Unknown: 1% | Unknown: 1% |
| | | Declined: 0 (0%) | Declined: 0% | Declined: 0% | Declined: 0% | Declined: 0% |

| Data Element | Description | Youth Overall | Youth in Foster Care | | Youth Receiving At Least One Independent Living Service | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| ***Outcome 1: Increase Young People's Financial Self-Sufficiency*** | | | | | | |
| Full-Time Employment[a] | Youth was employed full-time (35 hours or more a week) during the reporting period. | Yes: 3,100 (11%) | Yes: 9% | Yes: 13% | Yes: 10% | Yes: 14% |
| | | No: 23,698 (87%) | No: 90% | No: 86% | No: 89% | No: 85% |
| | | Declined: 0 (0%) | Declined: 0% | Declined: 0% | Declined: 0% | Declined: 0% |
| Part-Time Employment[a] | Youth was employed part-time (less than 35 hours a week) during the reporting period. | Yes: 6,106 (23%) | Yes: 28% | Yes: 20% | Yes: 24% | Yes: 20% |
| | | No: 20,428 (75%) | No: 71% | No: 78% | No: 74% | No: 78% |
| | | Declined: 273 (2%) | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% |
| Employment-Related Skills | Youth completed an apprenticeship, internship, or other type of on-the-job training in the past year. | Yes: 8,004 (30%) | Yes: 31% | Yes: 29% | Yes: 32% | Yes: 27% |
| | | No: 18,503 (68%) | No: 67% | No: 69% | No: 66% | No: 71% |
| | | Declined: 584 (2%) | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% |
| Social Security | Youth received Social Security benefits, including Social Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), either directly or as a dependent beneficiary. | Yes: 3,695 (14%) | Yes: 12% | Yes: 14% | Yes: 13% | Yes: 14% |
| | | No: 22,635 (84%) | No: 85% | No: 83% | No: 84% | No: 83% |
| | | Declined: 743 (2%) | Declined: 3% | Declined: 3% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 3% |

| Data Element | Description | Youth Overall | Youth in Foster Care | | Youth Receiving At Least One Independent Living Service | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Educational Aid | Youth received educational financial assistance—a scholarship, education or training voucher, grant, stipend, student loan, or other type of educational financial aid—during the reporting period. | Yes: 6,507 (24%) | Yes: 32% | Yes: 20% | Yes: 29% | Yes: 17% |
| | | No: 19,834 (73%) | No: 66% | No: 77% | No: 69% | No: 79% |
| | | Declined: 744 (3%) | Declined: 2% | Declined: 3% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 4% |
| Other Financial Support | Youth received any other ongoing financial resources or support not included in the previous financial elements during the reporting period, such as financial support through a spouse, child support payments, or a legal settlement. | Yes: 3,869 (14%) | Yes: 17% | Yes: 13% | Yes: 17% | Yes: 11% |
| | | No: 22,529 (83%) | No: 80% | No: 85% | No: 81% | No: 86% |
| | | Declined: 0 (0%) | Declined: 0% | Declined: 0% | Declined: 0% | Declined: 0% |

| Data Element | Description | Youth Overall | Youth in Foster Care | | Youth Receiving At Least One Independent Living Service | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Public Financial Assistance (applies only to youth age 19 or older and who are not in foster care) | Youth received any ongoing cash assistance payments from the government to support basic needs. This excludes child care subsidies, education assistance, food stamps, or housing assistance. | Yes: 1,801 (10%) | Not applicable | Yes: 10% | Yes: 11% | Yes: 9% |
| | | No: 15,301 (86%) | | No: 86% | No: 86% | No: 86% |
| | | Declined: 448 (3%) | | Declined: 3% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 4% |
| Public Food Assistance (applies only to youth age 19 or older and who are not in foster care) | Youth received food assistance that includes food stamps in any form (government-issued coupons or debit cards used to buy eligible food at authorized stores) and assistance from Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. | Yes: 5,350 (30%) | Not applicable | Yes: 30% | Yes: 31% | Yes: 29% |
| | | No: 11,903 (67%) | | No: 66% | No: 67% | No: 66% |
| | | Declined: 227 (2%) | | Declined: (2%) | Declined: (1%) | Declined: (3%) |

| Data Element | Description | Youth Overall | Youth in Foster Care | | Youth Receiving At Least One Independent Living Service | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Public Housing Assistance (applies only to youth age 19 or older and who are not in foster care) | Youth received housing assistance from the government such as public housing or a housing voucher that allows participants to choose their own housing while the government pays part of the housing costs. This does not include payments from a child welfare agency for room and board. | Yes: 1,077 (6%) | Not applicable | Yes: 6% | Yes: 7% | Yes: 5% |
| | | No: 16,178 (90%) | | No: 90% | No: 91% | No: 90% |
| | | Declined: 454 (2%) | | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 3% |
| ***Outcome 2: Improve Young People's Educational (Academic or Vocational) Training*** | | | | | | |
| Highest Educational Certification Received | Youth's highest level of educational certification. | Vocational Certificate/License: 422 (1%) | Vocational Certificate/License: 1% | Vocational Certificate/License: 2% | Vocational Certificate/License: 1% | Vocational Certificate/License: 2% |
| | | High School Diploma or GED: 15,062 (56%) | High School Diploma or GED: 60% | High School Diploma or GED: 53% | High School Diploma or GED: 58% | High School Diploma or GED: 52% |
| | | Associate's Degree or Higher: 21 (<1%) | Associate's Degree or Higher: <1% | Associate's Degree or Higher: <1% | Associate's Degree or Higher: <1% | Associate's Degree or Higher: <1% |
| | | None of the above: 10,203 (38%) | None of the above: 35% | None of the above: 39% | None of the above: 36% | None of the above: 40% |
| | | Declined: 616 (2%) | Declined: 3% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% |

| Data Element | Description | Youth Overall | Youth in Foster Care | | Youth Receiving At Least One Independent Living Service | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Current Enrollment and Attendance | Youth was enrolled in and attending school during the reporting period, including youth who remained enrolled in school while on a break or out of session. | Yes: 14,658 (54%) | Yes: 70% | Yes: 47% | Yes: 62% | Yes: 44% |
| | | No: 11,769 (43%) | No: 28% | No: 51% | No: 36% | No: 53% |
| | | Declined: 628 (2%) | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 3% |
| ***Outcome 3: Improve Young People's Positive Connections with Adults*** | | | | | | |
| Connection to Adult | Youth had a positive connection to an adult who could serve in a mentoring or substitute parent capacity during the reporting period, including—a relative, former foster parent, birth parent, or older member of the community. This excludes a peer or current caseworker. | Yes: 24,139 (89%) | Yes: 92% | Yes: 88% | Yes: 91% | Yes: 87% |
| | | No: 2,272 (8%) | No: 5% | No: 10% | No: 7% | No: 10% |
| | | Declined: 639 (2%) | Declined: 3% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 3% |

| Data Element | Description | Youth Overall | Youth in Foster Care | | Youth Receiving At Least One Independent Living Service | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| ***Outcome 4: Reduce Homelessness among Young People*** | | | | | | |
| Homelessness | Youth has *ever* been homeless. | Yes: 5,386 (20%) | Yes: 11% | Yes: 24% | Yes: 18% | Yes: 22% |
| | | No: 20,992 (77%) | No: 86% | No: 73% | No: 80% | No: 75% |
| | | Declined: 699 (3%) | Declined: 3% | Declined: 3% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 3% |
| ***Outcome 5: Reduce High-Risk Behavior among Young People*** | | | | | | |
| Substance Abuse Referral | Youth was referred or self-referred for alcohol or drug abuse assessment or counseling during the reporting period. | Yes: 4,137 (15%) | Yes: 13% | Yes: 17% | Yes: 14% | Yes: 17% |
| | | No: 22,362 (83%) | No: 85% | No: 81% | No: 85% | No: 80% |
| | | Declined: 563 (2%) | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 1% | Declined: 3% |
| Incarceration | Youth has ever been confined to a jail, prison, or juvenile detention facility in connection with allegedly committing a crime. | Yes: 6,450 (24%) | Yes: 14% | Yes: 29% | Yes: 20% | Yes: 29% |
| | | No: 19,978 (74%) | No: 83% | No: 69% | No: 78% | No: 67% |
| | | Declined: 635 (2%) | Declined: 3% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 3% |
| Children | Youth has ever given birth to, or fathered, any children. | Yes: 3,138 (12%) | Yes: 9% | Yes: 13% | Yes: 10% | Yes: 14% |
| | | No: 23,058 (85%) | No: 89% | No: 83% | No: 88% | No: 82% |
| | | Declined: 879 (3%) | Declined: 2% | Declined: 4% | Declined: 3% | Declined: 4% |

| Data Element | Description | Youth Overall | Youth in Foster Care | | Youth Receiving At Least One Independent Living Service | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Marriage at Child's Birth (applies only to youth who reported having had, or fathered, any children) | Youth was married to the child's other biological parent at the time of the birth of any children | Yes: 212 (7%) | Yes: 4% | Yes: 8% | Yes: 6% | Yes: 8% |
| | | No: 2,826 (90%) | No: 93% | No: 89% | No: 90% | No: 90% |
| | | Declined: 9 (3%) | Declined: 2% | Declined: 3% | Declined: 4% | Declined: 2% |
| ***Outcome 6: Access to Health Insurance*** | | | | | | |
| Medicaid | Youth was participating in a Medicaid-funded state program. | Yes: 19,227 (71%) | Yes: 85% | Yes: 64% | Yes: 81% | Yes: 57% |
| | | No: 5,703 (21%) | No: 8% | No: 27% | No: 12% | No: 33% |
| | | Did Not Know: 1,555 (5%) | Did Not Know: 4% | Did Not Know: 6% | Did Not Know: 5% | Did Not Know: 7% |
| | | Declined: 586 (2%) | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% |
| Other Health Insurance | Youth had health insurance (third-party pay) other than Medicaid. | Yes: 4,028 (15%) | Yes: 14% | Yes: 16% | Yes: 14% | Yes: 17% |
| | | No: 20,367 (75%) | No: 75% | No: 75% | No: 77% | No: 73% |
| | | Did Not Know: 1,988 (7%) | Did Not Know: 9% | Did Not Know: 7% | Did Not Know: 8% | Did Not Know: 7% |
| | | Declined: 629 (2%) | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 3% |
| Health Insurance Type—Medical (applies only to youth who had Other Health Insurance) | Youth had insurance that pays for all or part of medical health service. | Yes: 3,407 (85%) | Yes: 80% | Yes: 87% | Yes: 82% | Yes: 88% |
| | | No: 213 (5%) | No: 10% | No: 3% | No: 7% | No: 4% |
| | | Did Not Know: 336 (8%) | Did Not Know: 8% | Did Not Know: 9% | Did Not Know: 9% | Did Not Know: 8% |
| | | Declined: 46 (1%) | Declined: <1% | Declined: 1% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 1% |

| Data Element | Description | Youth Overall | Youth in Foster Care | | Youth Receiving At Least One Independent Living Service | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Health Insurance Type—Mental Health (applies only to youth who had Other Health Insurance) | Youth had insurance coverage for at least some mental health services. | Yes: 2,688 (67%) | Yes: 64% | Yes: 68% | Yes: 66% | Yes: 68% |
| | | No: 202 (5%) | No: 3% | No: 6% | No: 4% | No: 6% |
| | | Did Not Know: 512 (13%) | Did Not Know: 11% | Did Not Know: 14% | Did Not Know: 11% | Did Not Know: 15% |
| | | Declined: 142 (3%) | Declined: 6% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 5% | Declined: 2% |
| | | Missing Data: 484 (12%) | Missing Data: 15% | Missing Data: 10% | Missing Data: 15% | Missing Data: 9% |
| Health Insurance Type—Prescription Drugs (applies only to youth who had Other Health Insurance) | Youth had insurance coverage for at least some prescription drugs. | Yes: 3,013 (75%) | Yes: 70% | Yes: 77% | Yes: 72% | Yes: 78% |
| | | No: 130 (3%) | No: 2% | No: 4% | No: 2% | No: 4% |
| | | Did Not Know: 276 (7%) | Did Not Know: 6% | Did Not Know: 7% | Did Not Know:6% | Did Not Know: 8% |
| | | Declined: 123 (3%) | Declined: 6% | Declined: 2% | Declined: 5% | Declined: 1% |
| | | Missing Data: 486 (12%) | Missing Data: 15% | Missing Data: 10% | Missing Data: 15% | Missing Data: 9% |

**Source:** Table prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) based on information provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, September 2014.

**Notes:** Data were reported as of June 2014, and were submitted via the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) by 50 states/jurisdictions (two states had 0% follow-up response rates and were not included in this dataset). The description of each data element is nearly verbatim from the regulation. For a full description of element, see HHS, "Chafee National Youth in Transition Database," 73 *Federal Register* 10338, February 26, 2008.

The table displays information based on whether the youth were in foster care and whether they received at least one independent living service. These categories are not mutually exclusive, and most of the youth who were in foster care also received at least one independent living service.

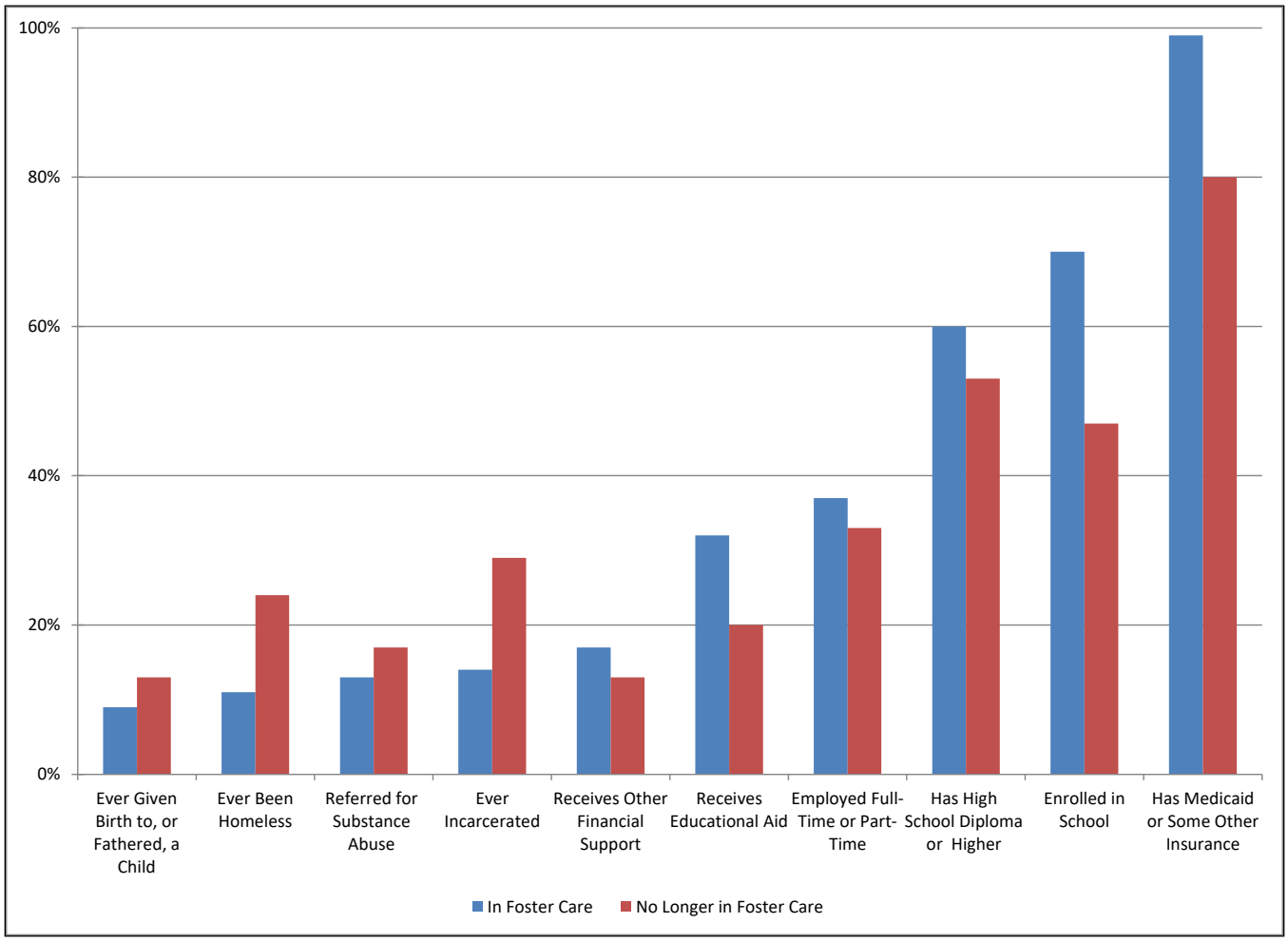
In total, 7,536 youth participated in the survey at age 19. To correct for potential non-response bias at both baseline and follow-up, a weighting methodology was used. At baseline, results were weighted using variables from the FY2011 Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) records of all 17-year-olds identified by states as being eligible to complete the survey in FY2011 (n=28,218). At follow-up, AFCARS variables, as well as responses from the survey at age 17, were used to weight results. Accordingly, the responses at age 19 were weighted to represent a population of 27,101 youth. Weighted results are not markedly different from unweighted results, and are reported to increase confidence that the outcomes are reflective of the experiences of the entire 17-year-old baseline population used to ensure that youth who completed the survey are representative of FY2011 cohort of 17-year-olds that the survey is intended to assess over time. Some youth had declined to participate, were considered to be on runaway or missing status; could not be otherwise located; were incapacitated or incarcerated; or were deceased. Missing data refers to instances where no data have been entered, if applicable, for a particular data element. Except for two data elements (Health Insurance Type—

Mental Health and Health Insurance Type—Prescription Drugs) the table excludes the missing data since the numbers are negligible. For this reason, and because of rounding, some of the categories with multiple variables may not round to 100%.

a. A youth may have held full-time and part-time jobs concurrently.

**Figure 2. Selected Outcomes of Current and Former Foster Youth at Age 19, FY2013**

Based on Weighted Data for "Tracked Population" from the National Youth in Transition Database Who Had Participated in Baseline Data Collection at Age 19




**Source:** Table prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) based on information provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, September 2014.

**Notes:** Unless otherwise noted, these outcomes pertain to the youth's status in FY2013.

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