



Transition to Adulthood: Foster Youth at 19

An Analysis of the 2013 National Youth in Transition Database Survey for Washington State

Irina Sharkova, PhD • Barbara Lucenko, PhD • Barbara E.M. Felver, MES, MPA

In collaboration with the DSHS Children's Administration, Barb Putnam, LICSW, Well-Being Unit Supervisor, Peggy Lewis, BA, Independent Living Program Manager, Barbara Geiger, LICSW, Performance Measurement Office Chief

THE NATIONAL YOUTH IN TRANSITION DATABASE (NYTD) survey authorized by the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (P.L. 106–169) collects information about current and former foster youth as the youth transition from foster care to independence. Washington foster youth who turned 17 years old in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2011 participated in the first-ever NYTD survey, and were followed up when they reached 19 years of age (in FFY 2013). This report, second in the series,¹ documents self-reported outcomes of the 19-year olds, such as their employment, educational attainment, presence of trusted adults in their lives, experience with homelessness, behavioral health, and other risk and protective factors. The outcomes are presented by gender and race/ethnicity of the youth. Complete survey results are available in the Technical Tables.

Key Findings

A total of 370 current and former foster youth participated in the second NYTD survey, out of 419 eligible youth (88 percent).² At 19 years of age, 4 out of 5 respondents are no longer in foster care. The youth report the following successes and challenges.

1. **Many foster youth report participating in education, employment, and job training.** Nearly one in two youth have received a high school diploma, GED, or vocational certificate. More than half attend school, vocational training, or college. 30 percent are currently employed part- or full-time.
2. **Close, supportive relationships with adults are a big success.** Nine in ten youth have established such relationships; three quarters are close to someone in their biological family. Nearly one in two youth agree that a lot was done to help them maintain these relationships since the youth entered foster care.
3. **Housing instability is the biggest reported challenge.** One in two youth have experienced homelessness in their lifetime. 30 percent have been homeless in the past two years, an increase of 67 percent since they were 17 years old.
4. **Utilization of the behavioral health support system has dropped precipitously since two years ago.** More than 80 percent of the youth report having Medicaid-to-21 or other medical coverage. However, only 15 percent receive counseling for a psychological or emotional problem, only one third as many as two years ago. Only 2 percent are in treatment for an alcohol or substance abuse problem, compared to 10 percent two years ago.

This report provides follow up information only about FFY 2011 participants who were able to be located in 2013 and who were willing to participate. The 49 youth who dropped out of this second survey experienced more serious risk factors as 17 year-olds than those who have remained in the survey, such as alcohol or substance abuse problems and criminal justice system involvement.

¹ See <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/rda/research-reports/transition-adulthood>.

² Only those who had completed surveys as 17 year-olds were eligible for this survey. The 419 eligible youth represent 92 percent of the initial cohort of 17 year-olds (456 youth) who had been identified and invited to participate in the survey.

Highlights

Foster Youth at 19

Employment

- 30 percent of the youth were employed at the time of the survey, earning on average \$9.58 per hour (median wage is \$9.25). Nearly 60 percent of the youth worked for pay at some point in their lives. For 75 percent of the youth, their longest job lasted less than 6 months.
- 18 percent had on-the-job training in the past year.

Financial Support, Medical Insurance

- Three quarters of the youth report receiving financial support, primarily from the government.
- 82 percent report having medical insurance coverage; 77 percent have Medicaid.

Education

- 46 percent of the 19-year-olds have earned a high school diploma or an equivalent.
- 53 percent are currently enrolled in high school, GED classes, post-high school vocational training, or college. Of those, one third pay for their education with the help of scholarships or grants, 10 percent have taken student loans, 6 percent use Education and Training Vouchers.
- One quarter of the respondents report barriers to continuing their education. Financial concerns and child care responsibilities are the main barriers. Nearly 20 percent do not have a reliable means of transportation to school and/or work.

Supportive Relationships

- Nine in ten youth have someone they can go to for advice or emotional support, and report a trusting, unconditional relationship with at least one adult.
- Three quarters have a close relationship in their biological family, and 60 percent identified a trusted family member.
- 42 to 47 percent feel that a lot was done to help them maintain these relationships since entering foster care.

Living Arrangements, Homelessness

- Nearly 40 percent of the 19-year-olds live on their own, with a spouse, friends, or roommates.
- 30 percent of the youth were homeless in the past two years; 52 percent in their lifetime.

Behavioral Health and Risky Behaviors

- Only 2 percent of the youth reported being in treatment for substance abuse problems. 15 percent receive mental health counseling.
- Reported involvement in the criminal justice system has declined by half.
- 10 percent of the youth report giving birth or fathering children, almost all out of wedlock.

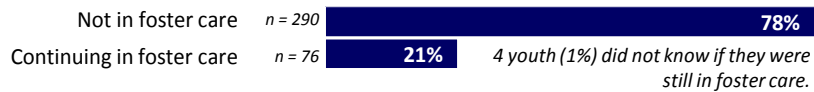
Transition to Independence

- 78 percent of the respondents are no longer in foster care. 57 percent of the respondents have been involved in the development of their Independent Living Plan (ILP).
- The majority of the youth say that their ILPs have adequately addressed their needs in stable housing (55 percent), health care (53 percent), education or training (58 percent), and developing relationships with potential sources of support (50 to 54 percent). 41 percent report that ILPs adequately addressed their employment needs.

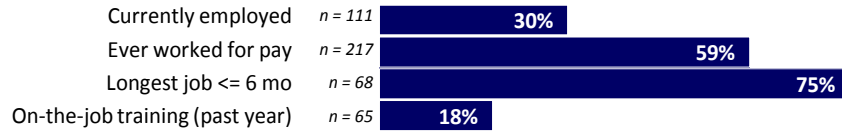
Survey at a Glance

Foster Youth at 19

Currently in Foster Care



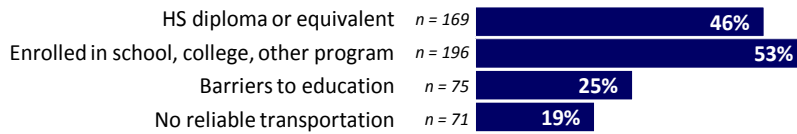
Employment



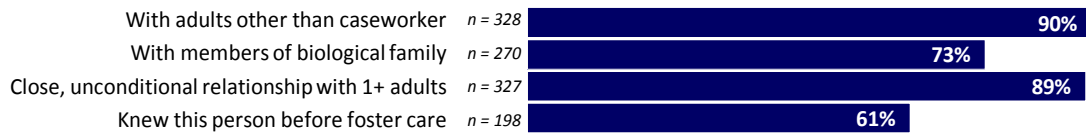
Financial Support



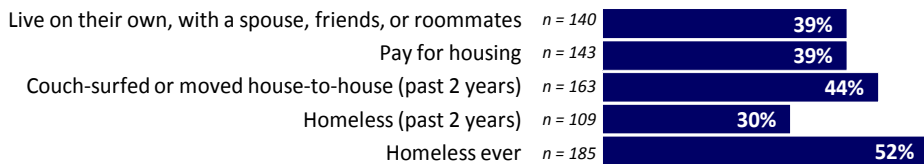
Education



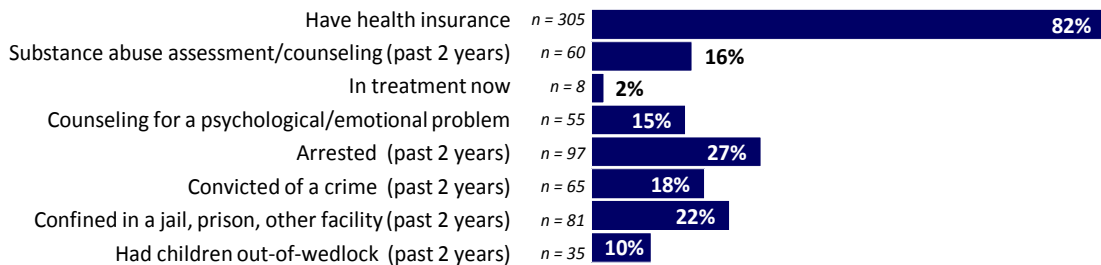
Supportive Relationships



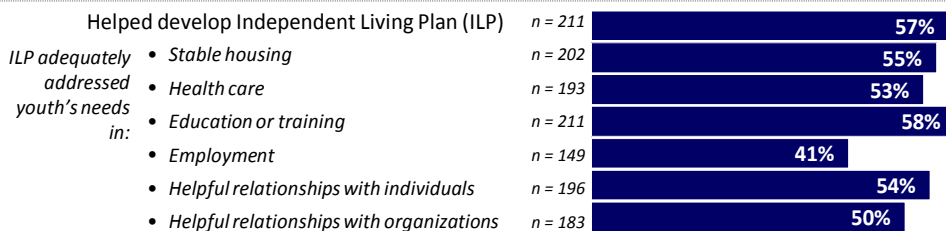
Living Arrangements, Homelessness



Behavioral Health and Risky Behaviors



Transition to Independence

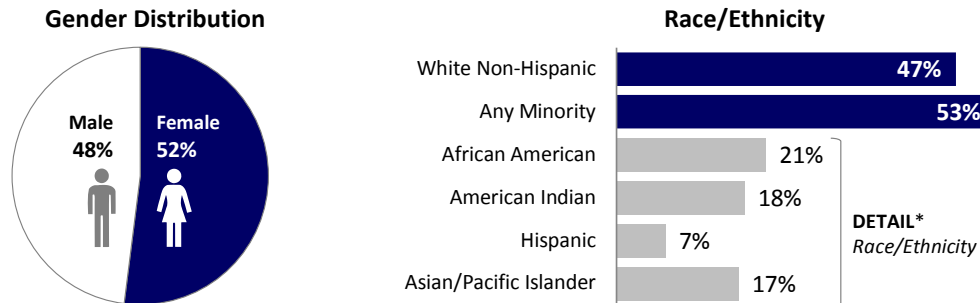


(*) The bars in the chart show responses to different questions; this is why percentages do not add up to 100 percent.

DEMOGRAPHICS

SUMMARY

- ▶ Slightly more females than males were interviewed; more racial or ethnic minority youth than non-Hispanic white youth were interviewed.
- ▶ The demographic makeup of the surveyed youth is very similar to what it was two years earlier, when the respondents were 17 years old.



*Since a person can be a member of more than one minority group, the percentages for individual racial categories will sum to more than the percent shown for "Any Minority." "White, Non-Hispanic" and "Any Minority" sum to 100 percent.

Slightly more females than males were interviewed.

- 52 percent (n = 192) versus 48 percent (n = 174).

More respondents were from a minority group than non-Hispanic white.

- 53 percent (n = 193) versus 47 percent (n = 173).

African-American youth represent the largest minority group.

- 21 percent of all respondents were African American, 18 percent were Native American and 17 percent were Hispanic. Asian/Pacific Islander youth comprised the smallest proportion (7 percent).

Survey Results

1. EMPLOYMENT

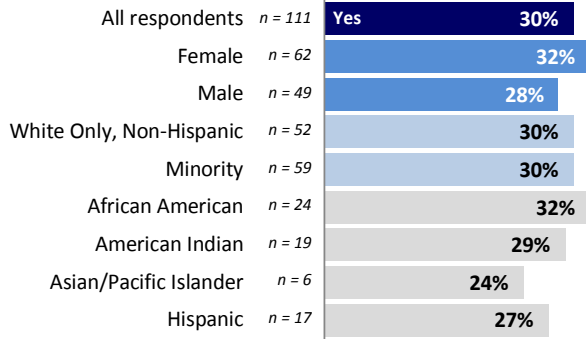
SUMMARY

- ▶ 30 percent of the 19-year-olds are currently employed, with an average wage of \$9.58 per hour.
- ▶ 39 percent of the employed have been on the job short-term (less than 3 months).
- ▶ 59 percent of the respondents have had experience working for pay.
- ▶ The longest job lasted less than six months for 75 percent of those responding.
- ▶ 18 percent of the 19-year olds had on-the-job training in the past year.

30 percent of the surveyed youth are employed.

- 11 percent of the survey participants are currently working full time, and 19 percent are working part time. This is three times higher than the percent reported by the youth when they were 17 years old and still in school.
- Females and African-American youth report the highest employment rate (32 percent).
- Employment for males has increased the most since two years ago.

Full-or Part-time Employment at Age 19 (N=370)



The average reported hourly wage is \$9.58; the median wage is \$9.25.

- This is slightly above the Washington minimum wage of \$9.19 in the calendar year 2013.
- Native American youth report the highest average hourly wages (\$10.31) while non-Hispanic white youth report the lowest (\$9.42).

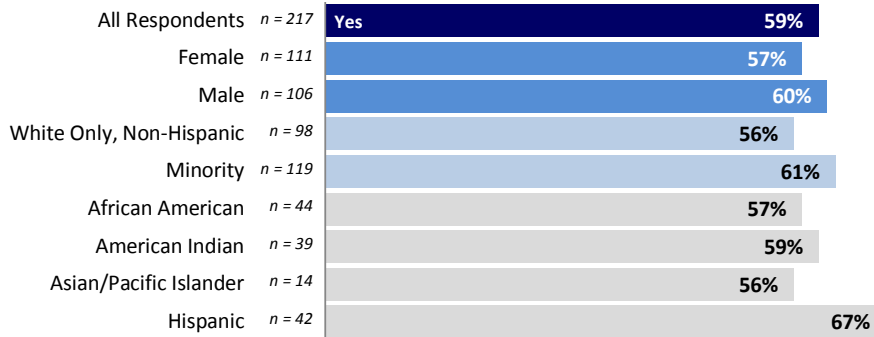
39 percent of the employed youth have worked at their current job less than 3 months.

- The proportion of males employed is higher than females: 45 percent versus 33 percent.
- Short-term employment is more frequent among Native American youth (59 percent).

59 percent of the surveyed youth have ever worked for pay.

- Hispanic youth report the highest proportion: 67 percent.

Ever worked for pay? (N=370)



The job held the longest ever lasted less than 6 months for 75 percent of those responding, about the same proportion for males and females.

18 percent of the surveyed youth received on-the-job training in the past year: they completed an apprenticeship, internship, or another type of on-the-job training, paid or unpaid.

- Fewer Native American youth (14 percent) received on-the-job training, while Asian/Pacific Islander youth had the highest rates of on-the-job training (24 percent).

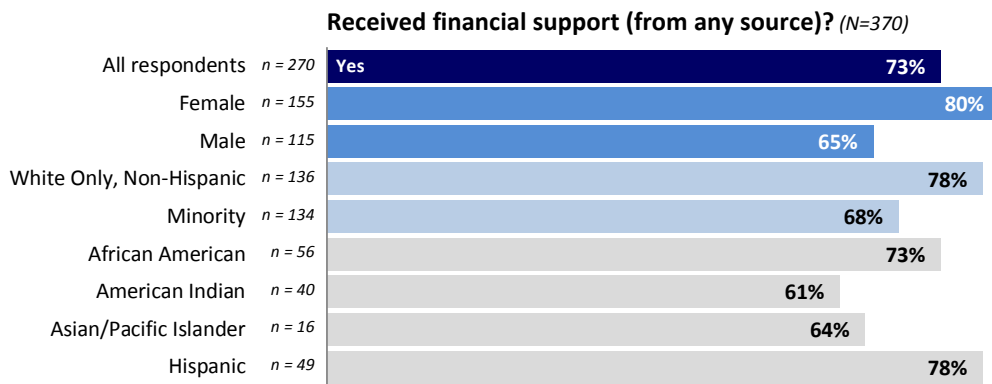
2. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

SUMMARY

- ▶ Three quarters of the 19-year-olds report receiving financial support, primarily from the government.
- ▶ One half say they receive public food assistance, three in ten youth receive Supplemental Security Income or TANF.
- ▶ 22 percent rely on scholarships and other aid to cover their educational expenses.
- ▶ More than half say they have their own bank account.

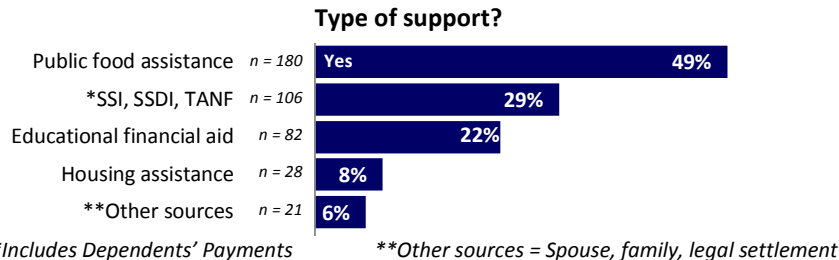
73 percent of the 19-year olds receive financial support.

- The proportion of females receiving financial support is higher than males: 80 percent versus 65 percent.
- The proportion of non-Hispanic whites receiving financial support is higher than minority youth: 78 percent versus 68 percent.



The financial support comes primarily from the government.

- 49 percent of the 19-year-olds report receiving public food assistance. 29 percent report receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), dependents' payments, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
- 22 percent receive a scholarship, grant, stipend, student loan, voucher, or another type of educational financial aid to cover their educational expenses.
- 8 percent report receiving housing assistance.
- Only 6 percent receive any substantial financial support from other sources such as their spouse or partner, a family member, child support, or legal settlements.

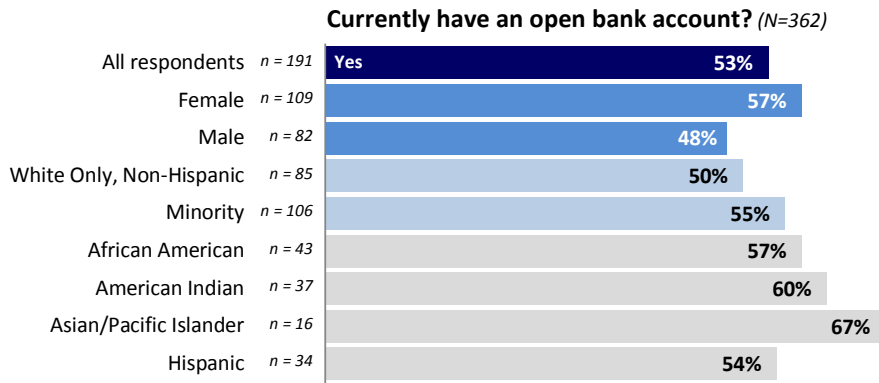


NOTE: The accuracy of these self-reported rates of public assistance has not been verified with records of actual support services received by the survey participants. The rates should be treated with caution since they could be affected by the youth's understanding of these complex systems of financial support and his/her willingness to disclose this information.

53 percent of the surveyed youth have an open bank account (checking or savings).

- More females have a bank account (57 percent) than males (48 percent).
- More minority youth have a bank account (55 percent) than non-Hispanic whites (50 percent).

- Two thirds of Asian/Pacific Islander youth have a bank account (67 percent, the highest rate); just over one half of Hispanic youth have a bank account (54 percent, the lowest rate).



3. EDUCATION

SUMMARY

- ▶ 46 percent of the 19-year-olds report having high school diploma, GED, or vocational certificate.
- ▶ Three quarters of the high school graduates received a regular diploma.
- ▶ 53 percent of the youth are in school and pursuing high school, college, or other education.
- ▶ 25 percent of the respondents report barriers to continuing their education; lack of money and childcare responsibilities are the main barriers.

46 percent of surveyed 19-year-olds have obtained a high school diploma, GED, or vocational certificate.

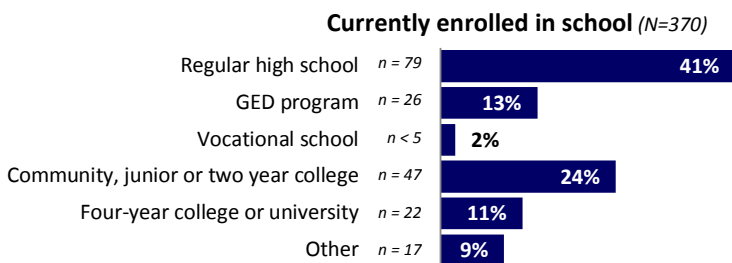
- African American youth have the highest rate (49 percent) of having obtained a diploma or certificate; Native American youth have the lowest rate (35 percent).

Three quarters of the high school graduates report having a regular diploma, while the rest received a GED or equivalency or a certificate of completion.

- The proportion with a regular high school diploma is higher among minority youth than white youth: 80 percent versus 73 percent.
- Hispanic youth have the highest proportion (86 percent) with a regular high school diploma.

More than half of the respondents (53 percent) are currently in school: they attend high school, GED classes, alternative schools, post-high school vocational training, other adult education programs, or college.

- The proportion of Asian/Pacific Islander youth currently in school is the highest (56 percent); the proportion of Hispanic youth is the lowest (51 percent).
- Among the respondents currently in school, 35 percent (69 youth) are in community college or university.

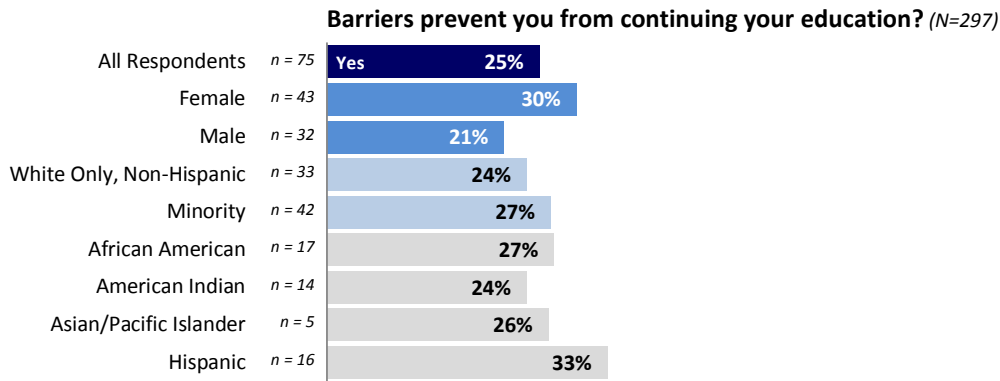


One third of currently enrolled youth pay for their education with the help of scholarships or grants.

- 10 percent have taken student loans, 6 percent use Education and Training Vouchers.

25 percent of the 19-year-olds say there are barriers preventing them from continuing their education.

- The proportion reporting barriers is almost 3 times higher than two years ago.
- The proportion of those with barriers is higher for females than males: 30 percent versus 21 percent.
- Hispanic youth have the highest proportion reporting barriers: 33 percent.
- Among those with barriers to education, 25 percent report a lack of finances and 11 percent report child care responsibilities as the biggest barrier.



19 percent of the surveyed youth do not have a reliable means of transportation to school and/or work compared to 6 percent two years ago when the youth were 17 years old.

- There are few differences among the population subgroups.

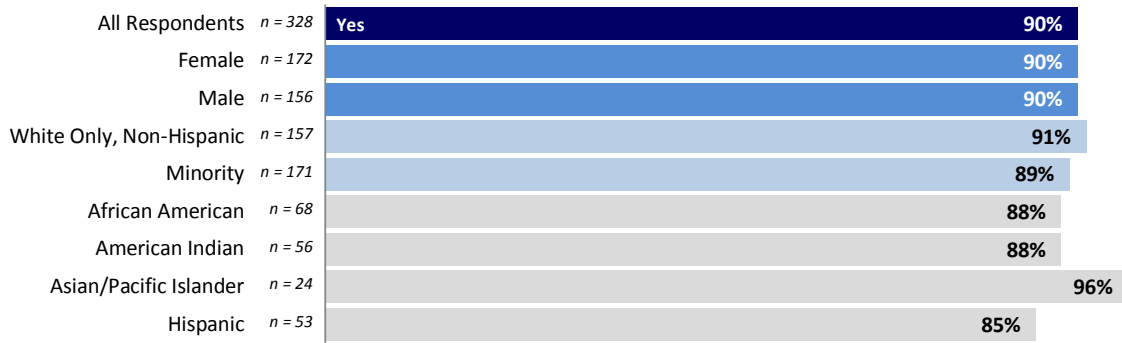
4. SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- SUMMARY**
- ▶ 90 percent of the 19-year-olds have someone they can go to for advice or emotional support.
 - ▶ Three quarters have a close relationship in their biological family.
 - ▶ 89 percent have a trusting, unconditional relationship with at least one adult, with 60 percent identifying a family member as this person.
 - ▶ 42 to 47 percent feel that a lot was done to help them maintain these relationships since the youth entered foster care.

90 percent of surveyed 19-year olds have someone they can go to for advice or emotional support, other than their caseworker.

- The percentage declined only slightly since the survey two years ago.
- The proportions are similar across the demographic groups.
- Asian/Pacific Islander youth are the most likely to have someone to go to for advice or support (96 percent).

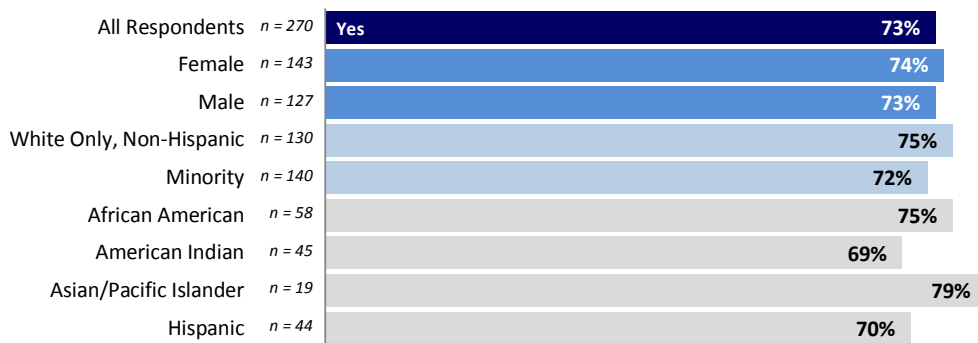
Can you go to someone for advice or emotional support? (N=365)



73 percent of the 19-year olds have a close relationship with someone from their biological family.

- The proportion declined only slightly since the survey two years ago.
- The proportions are similar across the demographic groups.
- Asian/Pacific Islander youth are the most likely to have a close relationship (79 percent).

Close relationship with family member? (N=368)



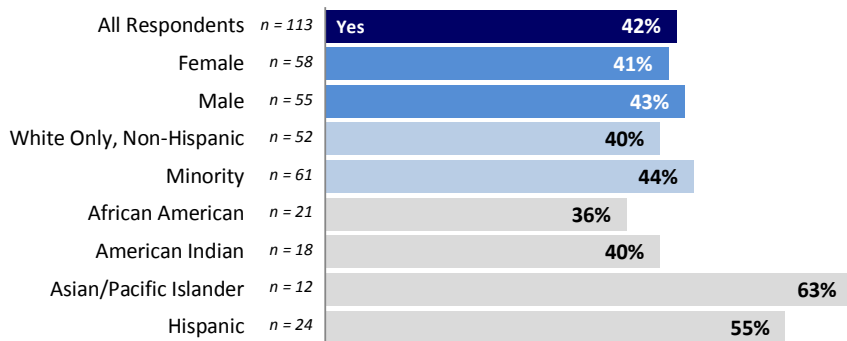
Among those with a close relationship with family, 61 percent are close to a sibling, 43 percent are close to their mother, 39 percent to a grandparent, 35 percent to an aunt or uncle, 26 percent to their father, and 20 percent to a cousin.

- Family members are identified more often by males than females.
- Minority youth identified relatives of the same generation more often than non-Hispanic whites.
- American Indian and Hispanic youth identified a sibling more often as their closest relationship.
- Non-Hispanic whites identified a grandparent more often than minority youth.

42 percent feel that a lot was done since they have been in foster care to help them maintain or strengthen their relationships with biological family members to whom they feel close.

- The proportion has declined slightly since the survey two years ago.
- Similar results are reported by females and males, and by non-Hispanic whites and minority youth as a whole.
- More Asian/Pacific Islander youth felt a lot was done (63 percent), while significantly fewer African American youth felt a lot was done (36 percent).
- 28 percent of the youth report that “nothing was done to help” them maintain or improve the relationships with their family.
- 29 percent of the youth report that not enough was done in this area.

A lot was done to maintain or strengthen relationship with family? (N=270)



89 percent of the surveyed 19-year-olds have adults in their lives with whom they have trusting, supportive, and unconditional relationships.

- The proportion has not changed much since the survey two years ago.
- African American and American Indian youth report slightly lower levels: 86 percent.

60 percent have identified a family member (including adoptive parents and spouses/partners) when asked to identify an adult who provides the closest trusting, supportive, and unconditional relationship.

- This is 7 percentage points higher than in the survey two years ago.
- Family members are identified more by females (63 percent) and African American (66 percent), Asian/Pacific Islander (65 percent) and Hispanic youth (63 percent).

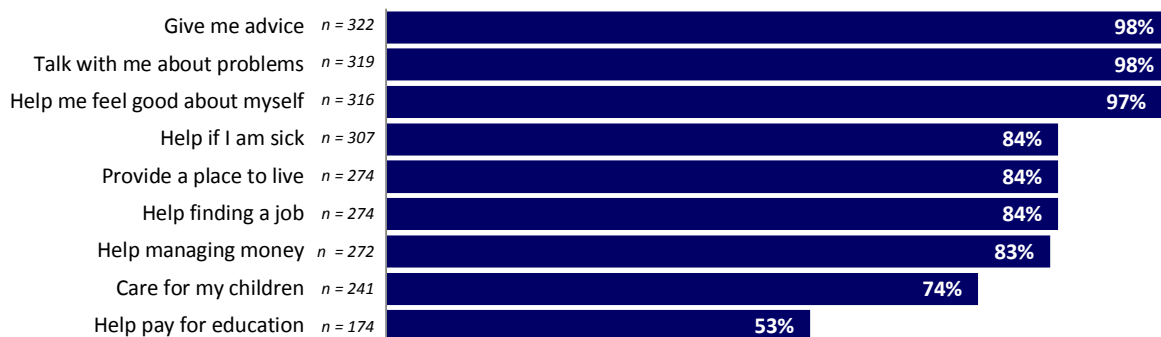
19 percent identified their foster parents (current or former) or legal guardians.

- 6 percent identified their case worker, social worker, teacher, coach, mentor, or someone from a church or faith-based community. Another 7 percent identified a parent of a friend.
- Foster parents, case workers, teachers, mentors and fellow church members are identified more often by males than females: 31 percent versus 19 percent.

Nearly all respondents can count on this special adult to give them advice, talk about their problems and help the youth feel good about them.

- 83 to 84 percent can rely on this person to help when the youth is sick, help manage their money, help find a job and provide a place to live.
- Three quarters say they can count on this person to help care for their children and 53 percent report that they can rely on this person to help pay for their education.

What can you count on this person to do? (N=327)



61 percent knew this special adult before they entered foster care.

- 47 percent feel that a lot was done to help them maintain or strengthen their relationships with this person while 25 percent believe that nothing was done, and 17 percent thought something was done, but not enough.

5. LIVING ARRANGEMENTS, HOMELESSNESS

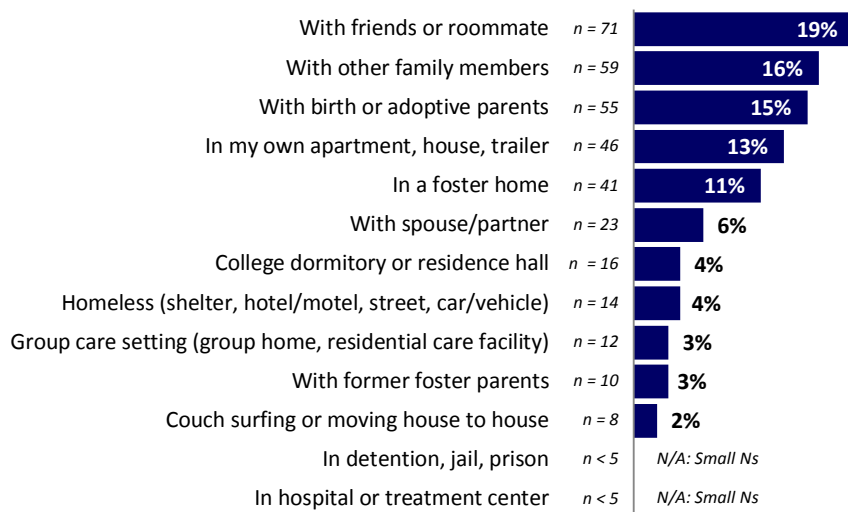
SUMMARY

- ▶ 39 percent of the 19-year-olds live on their own, with a spouse or partner, friends, roommates.
- ▶ 39 percent of the youth have to pay for their housing, and 22 percent of those who pay do not have enough money for other living expenses.
- ▶ 52 percent of the youth experienced homelessness in their lifetime.
- ▶ 30 percent of the youth were homeless at some point in the past two years.

Living arrangements at the time of the survey reflect the growing independence of the youth: 19 percent live on their own or with a spouse/partner and 20 percent live with friends or a roommate.

- Only 14 percent report living in a foster home or with former foster parents compared to 54 percent two years ago.
- 32 percent of the youth live with birth or adoptive parents or other family members, an 11 percentage point increase compared to two years ago.
- 9 percent of 19-year olds live in group quarters (4 percent in a college dormitory, 3 percent in a group home, 1 percent in a hospital or treatment center, 1 percent in a correctional facility).
- 6 percent report that they are homeless (including 2 percent who are “couch surfing”).³

What best describes your current living situation? (N=368)



39 percent have to pay for their housing, higher proportions of females and non-Hispanic whites (43 percent and 44 percent, respectively) than males and minority youth (both at 34 percent).

- A smaller proportion of Asian/Pacific Islander and African American youth report that they have to pay for housing (24 percent and 27 percent, respectively).

Of those paying for their housing, 22 percent report not having enough money for other living expenses such as food, transportation, or utilities, about the same proportion of males and females.

- 29 percent of African American youth report not having enough money, the highest proportion among all population subgroups.

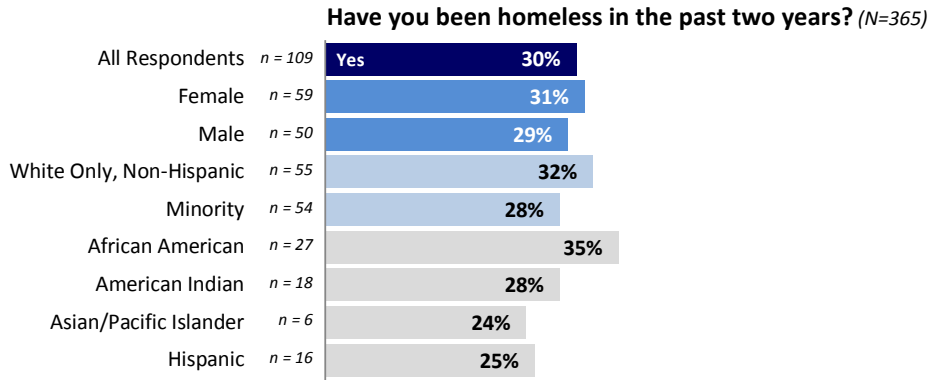
³ Note that homelessness may be more prevalent among youth who were not able to be located for the survey. In addition, youth being housed in transitional housing (such as through the state’s Independent Youth Housing Program) may report to be in their own apartment even though they would be considered “homeless” under both state and federal statute.

73 percent of the respondents can stay where they are living for as long as they want to, similar proportions of females and males, and of non-Hispanic whites and minority youth as a whole.

- Notably, only 61 percent of African American youth can stay where they are living for as long as they want to.

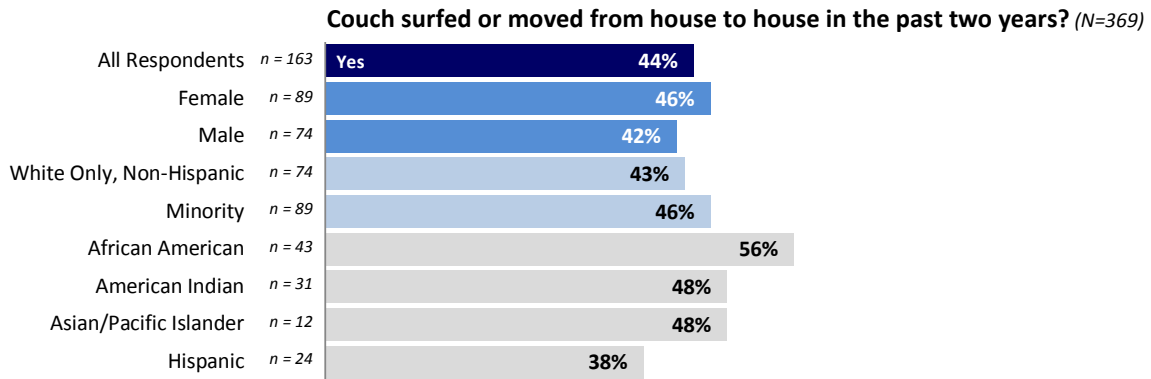
30 percent of the 19-year olds were homeless at some point during the past two years.

- The proportion who were ever homeless is fairly similar across the demographic groups, except that a higher proportion of African American youth report homelessness (35 percent).
- The proportion of youth reporting homelessness increased by 67 percent since the youth were 17 years old (from 19 percent to 30 percent).



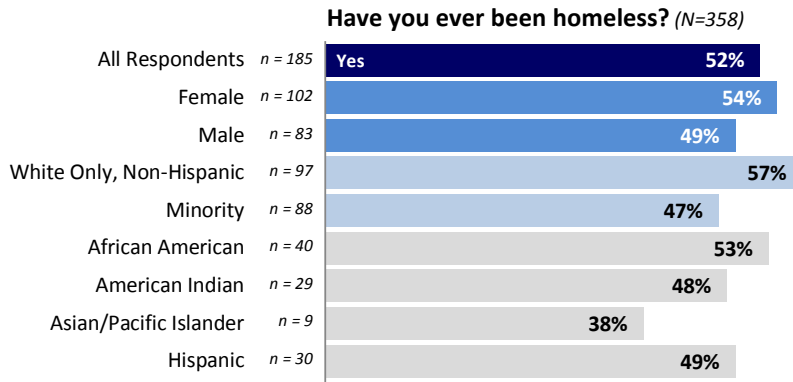
44 percent of the 19-year olds couch surfed or moved from house to house because they didn't have a permanent place to stay during the past two years.

- The proportion of youth couch surfing is the highest among African American youth (56 percent) and the lowest among Hispanic youth (38 percent).
- The proportion increased by 19 percent since when the youth were 17 years old (from 37 percent to 44 percent).



52 percent of the youth experienced homelessness in their lifetime.

- The proportion of the youth who experienced homelessness in their lifetime is the highest among non-Hispanic white youth (57 percent), followed by African American youth (53 percent).



4 percent of the 19-year olds were homeless and 2 percent were couch-surfing at the time of the survey.

- The proportion is twice as high for African American youth (11 percent) than for other groups.

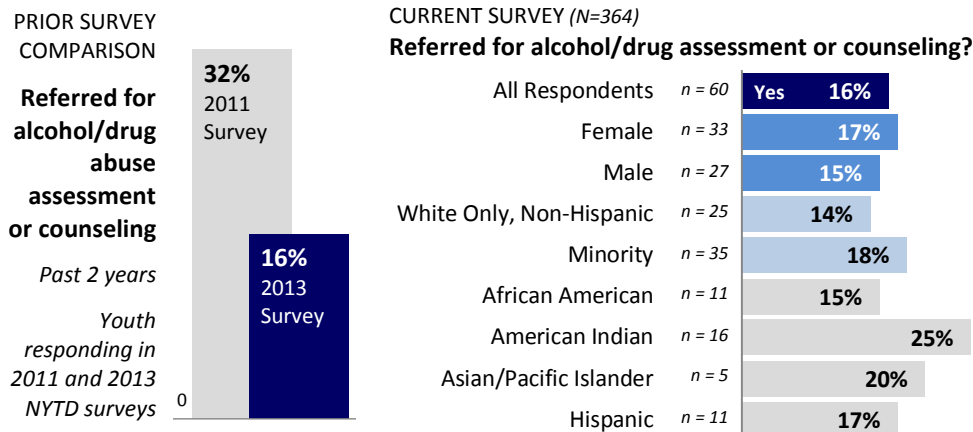
6. RISKY BEHAVIORS (past two years)

SUMMARY

- ▶ 16 percent of the 19-year olds report having been referred for substance abuse assessment or treatment.
- ▶ Based on self-reported survey responses, 27 percent of the youth have been arrested, 18 percent have been convicted of a crime, and 22 percent have been incarcerated.
- ▶ 10 percent of the youth report giving birth or fathering children, almost all out of wedlock.
- ▶ The proportion of the youth reporting risky behaviors other than out-of-wedlock births declined by almost half among the youth who responded in both years.

16 percent of the 19-year olds have been referred (or self-referred) for assessment or treatment for alcohol or other drug abuse problems in the past two years.

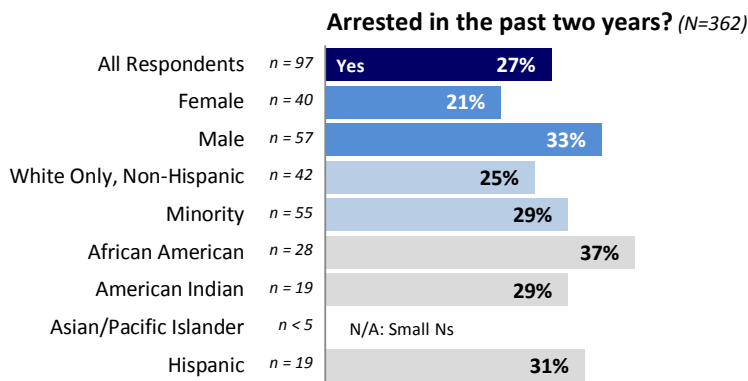
- A higher proportion of minority youth as a whole than non-Hispanic white youth report a self-referral (18 percent and 14 percent, respectively). More American Indian youth self-referred (25 percent); fewer African American youth self-referred (15 percent).
- A combination of underreporting, more limited access to treatment, and having dropped out of the survey may be contributing to this 50 percent decline since the youth were surveyed two years ago.



The proportion of the youth surveyed in both FFY 2011 and FFY 2013 that reported involvement with the criminal justice system declined significantly.

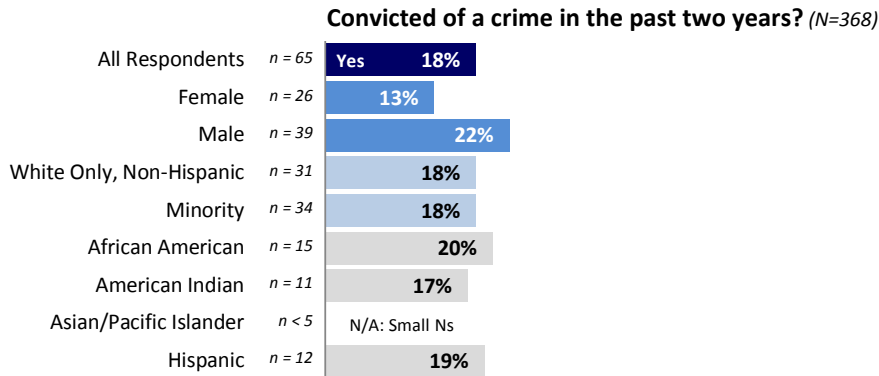
27 percent report having been arrested in the past two years compared to 47 percent two years ago.

- More males report being arrested than females (33 percent vs. 21 percent).
- More African American youth report being arrested (37 percent) than other racial or ethnic groups.



18 percent of the surveyed youth report having been convicted of a crime in the past two years compared to 35 percent two years ago.

- The proportion of males (22 percent) with convictions is higher than females (13 percent).
- The proportions arrested are the same for minority youth as a whole and non-Hispanic white youth (18 percent).



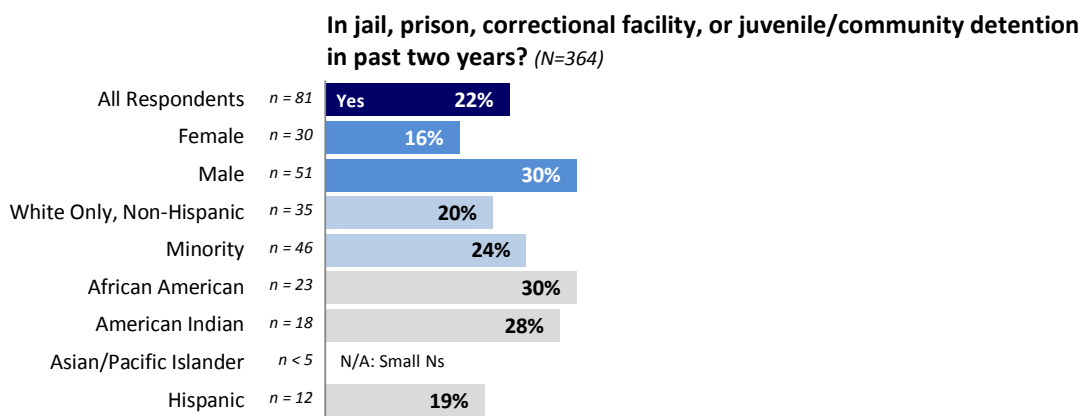
Among the youth with convictions, 42 percent report being convicted of violent crimes, 37 percent report being convicted for property crimes, 20 percent for drug-related crimes and 9 percent for other crimes.

- Among African American youth with convictions, 60 percent were convicted of violent crimes, which is higher than those in other population subgroups.
- Among American Indian youth with convictions, 55 percent were convicted of property crimes, which is higher than those in other population subgroups.

22 percent of the surveyed youth report being put in jail, prison, a correctional facility, or a juvenile or community detention facility in the past two years compared to 40 percent two years ago.

- The proportion of males (30 percent) incarcerated was twice as high as females (16 percent).
- A higher proportion of minority youth as a whole than non-Hispanic white youth report having been incarcerated (24 percent and 20 percent, respectively).

- African American youth had the highest overall incarceration rate (30 percent) followed by American Indian youth (28 percent).



10 percent of the surveyed youth report giving birth or fathering children in the past two years, the proportion 3 times higher for females (15 percent) than for males (5 percent).

- Minority youth were twice as likely as non-Hispanic white youth to report becoming a parent (13 percent and 7 percent, respectively). American Indian youth had the highest rates of reported parenting (18 percent) followed by Hispanic youth (16 percent).
- Almost all births were out of wedlock.

7. HEALTH COVERAGE AND CARE

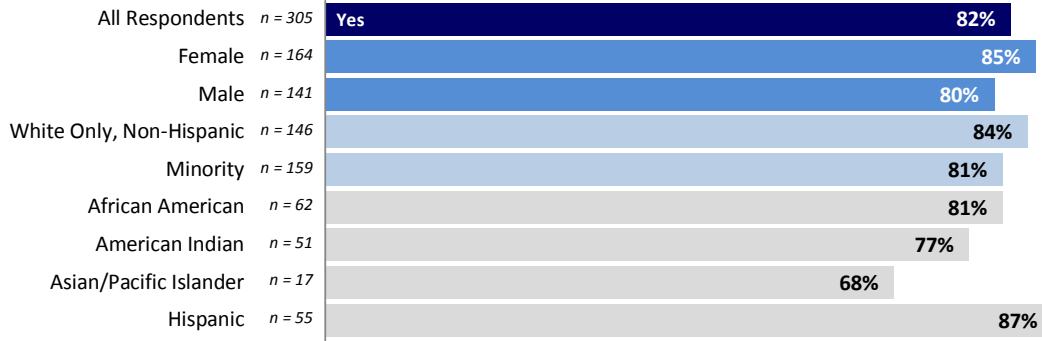
SUMMARY

- ▶ 82 percent of the 19-year olds report having medical insurance coverage; 77 percent report being on Medicaid.
- ▶ 2 percent of the youth report that they are in treatment for substance abuse, compared to 10 percent when the youth were 17 years old.
- ▶ 15 percent of the youth report receiving counseling for a psychological or emotional problem, compared to 45 percent when the youth were 17 years old.

82 percent of the surveyed youth report having medical insurance coverage: the Medicaid-to-21 coverage, another health insurance, or both.

- A larger proportion of females have medical coverage than males (85 percent and 80 percent, respectively).
- A slightly larger proportion of non-Hispanic white youth have medical coverage than minority youth (84 percent and 81 percent, respectively).
- Among minority youth, more Hispanic youth have coverage (87 percent), while fewer Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian youth report having coverage (68 percent and 77 percent, respectively).
- The level of reported coverage is lower than in the first survey of the youth when they were 17 years old (reported 91 percent, factual 100 percent).

Have health care coverage or health insurance other than Medicaid? (N=370)



77 percent of the surveyed youth are on Medicaid and 10 percent report having some other health insurance.

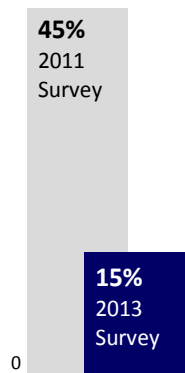
- Notably fewer Asian/Pacific Islander youth report having Medicaid coverage (60 percent) and have the highest rate of other health coverage (16 percent).
- Of the 58 youth who responded to the question about sources of other health insurance coverage, 33 percent named their parents’ insurance, 10 percent named state’s children’s health insurance program (SCHIP), 7 percent had it through their employer, 2 percent said they purchased it themselves, 22 percent chose “other” sources, and 24 percent said they did not know what the source was.
- Of the 28 to 35 youth who answered questions about their non-Medicaid insurance, 88 percent said it included coverage for medical services, 45 percent for mental health services, 93 percent for prescription drugs, and 66 percent for dental services.

Only 2 percent of the 19-year olds report receiving treatment for an alcohol or substance abuse problem, compared to 10 percent two years ago.



- 10 percent of the youth surveyed both in 2011 and 2013 received alcohol/drug treatment two years ago. A combination of underreporting and more limited access to treatment may be among reasons for this significant decline.

15 percent of the surveyed youth report receiving counseling for a psychological or emotional problem, compared to 45 percent two years ago.



- 45 percent of the youth surveyed both in 2011 and 2013 received mental health treatment two years ago.
- Underreporting, limited access and health coverage all may be related to the small proportion reporting treatment.
- More male and non-Hispanic white respondents (17 percent and 19 percent, respectively) than female and ethnic minority respondents (14 percent and 12 percent, respectively) report receiving mental health counseling.

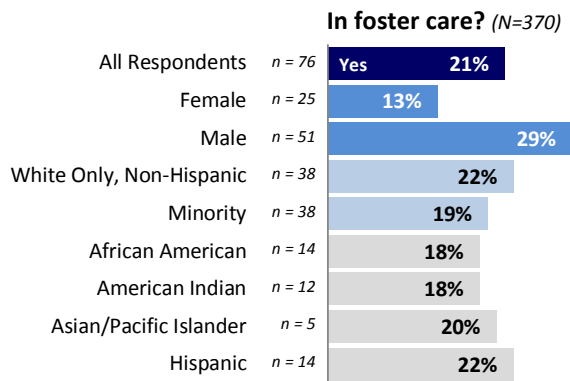
8. TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE

SUMMARY

- ▶ One in five youth report being in foster care, twice as many males as females.⁴
- ▶ 57 percent of the youth have been involved in the development of their Independent Living Plan (ILP).
- ▶ The ILPs have adequately addressed the youth's needs in education or training (58 percent), stable housing (55 percent), health care (53 percent), developing relationships with potential sources of support (50 to 54 percent), and employment (41 percent).

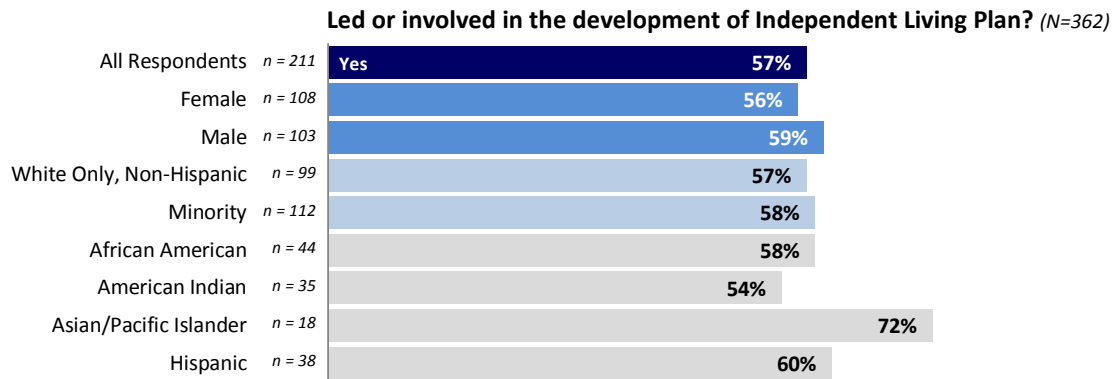
21 percent of the surveyed youth report being in foster care (Extended Foster Care), a substantially higher proportion of males (29 percent) than females (13 percent).⁵

- Differences among racial/ethnic groups are fairly small.



57 percent of the surveyed youth report that they have been very or somewhat involved in the development of their Independent Living Plan (ILP).

- There are few differences among the population subgroups, except for more Asian/Pacific Islander youth (72 percent) who report being involved in ILP development.



⁴ Four categories of foster youth are eligible for Extended Foster Care when they turn 18 years old: the youth who are (a) enrolled in a secondary education program or an equivalency program such as GED; (b) enrolled and participating in a postsecondary academic or vocational program, or have applied to such programs; (c) participating in a program designed to promote employment or remove barriers to employment; or (d) engaged in employment for 80 hours or more per month (RCW 13.34.267, online at <http://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?Cite=13.34.267>).

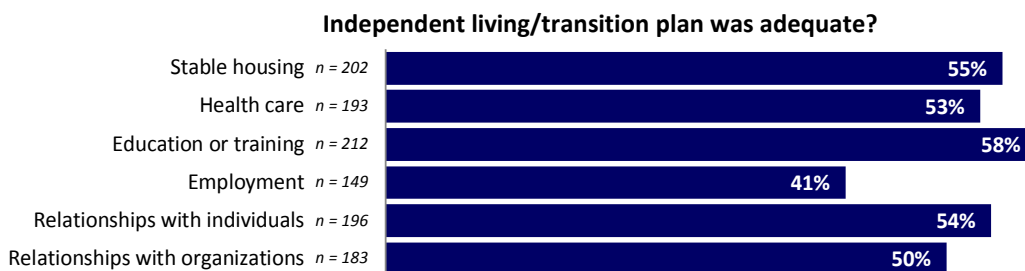
⁵ 21 percent of the youth said they were in foster care while 78 percent said they were not and 1 percent did not know if they still were.

71 percent of the youth who exited foster care had obtained their Social Security Card by that time.

- 67 percent reported having their Birth Certificate, 47 percent had proof of immunization, 22 percent had their Driver’s license, and 4 percent had proof of citizenship or residency at the time they exited foster care. 63 percent reported that they had “other state identification.”

Between 40 and 60 percent of the youth report that their Independent Living Plan (ILP) was very or somewhat adequate in addressing their needs during their transition from foster care.

- The ILP was adequate with regard to stable housing (55 percent), health care (53 percent), education or training (58 percent), and developing relationships with individuals or organizations—potential sources of support (54 percent and 50 percent, respectively). Only 41 percent of the youth assess their plans as adequate in the area of employment.



The assessment the youth give to their Independent Living Plan (ILP) differs by plan category, gender, and race or ethnicity.

- Stable housing is one plan category with few differences among the youth: between 52 and 57 percent of the youth rate their plans as adequate in this regard. This compares to health care, which was rated as adequate by 49 to 68 percent of the respondents (a gap of 19 percentage points), and employment (33 to 50 percent of the respondents, a gap of 17 percentage points).
- A slightly higher proportion of females than males rate their ILPs as adequate in most categories.
- Non-Hispanic white youth and racial or ethnic minority youth as a whole rate their ILPs similarly, except for relationships with potentially useful organizations.
- Among minority youth, American Indian youth report the lowest levels of satisfaction with their ILPs while African American youth report fairly high levels of satisfaction.

9. YOUTH NO LONGER IN THE SURVEY

SUMMARY

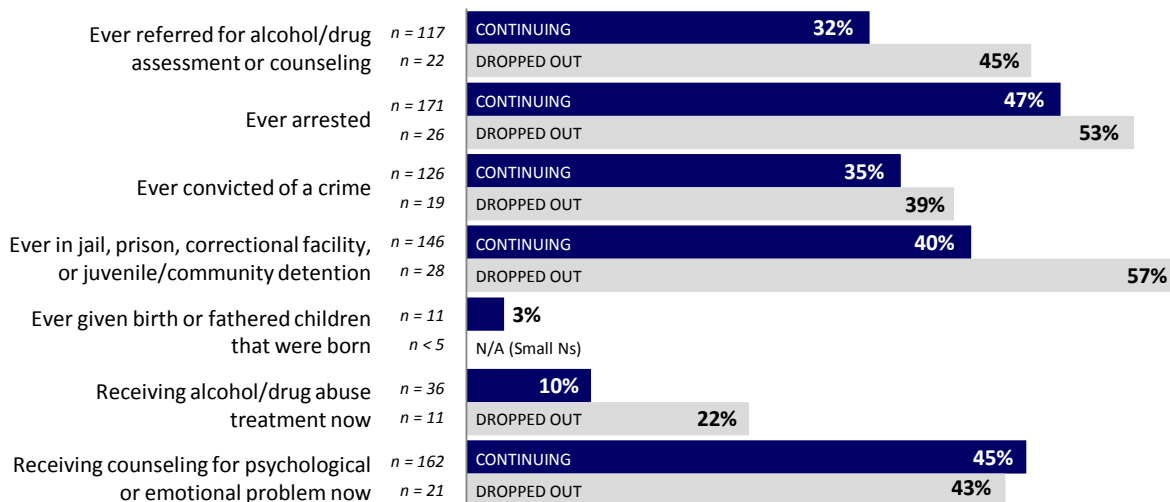
- ▶ 49 youth surveyed in FFY 2011 dropped out of the survey in FFY 2013, or 11.7 percent of those eligible to participate.
- ▶ The youth who dropped out of the survey were significantly more likely to have reported alcohol or substance abuse problems at the time of the FFY 2011 survey and in the years prior.
- ▶ The youth who dropped out of the survey were significantly more likely to have ever been in jail, prison, correctional facility, or juvenile/community detention.

There were 49 youth surveyed in FFY 2011 who dropped out of the survey in FFY 2013, or 11.7 percent of those eligible to participate. To better understand whether the youth continuing in the NYTD survey and the youth who dropped out are similar or different, we went back to the 2011 NYTD data and looked at the youth responses by survey dropout status.

The youth who dropped out of the 2013 survey reported higher levels of high-risk behavior for all but one risk factor we examined compared to the youth who completed the 2013 survey.

RESPONSES TO THE FFY 2011 SURVEY

Risk factors of youth continuing in the NYTD survey and youth who dropped out



Compared to the youth surveyed in both time periods, the youth who dropped out of the survey are:

- 2.7 times more likely to be receiving treatment for alcohol or substance abuse problems at the time of the 2011 survey ($p < 0.01$).
- 1.9 times more likely to have ever been in jail, prison, a correctional facility, or a juvenile/community detention in their lifetime ($p < 0.05$).
- 1.8 times more likely to have ever received referral or treatment for alcohol or substance abuse problems in their lifetime ($p < 0.1$).
- Nearly 3 times more likely to have given birth or fathered children ($p < 0.1$).

The remaining differences are not statistically significant. Still, it is interesting to note that receiving counseling for psychological or emotional problem at the time of the 2011 survey is associated with continuing to participate in the survey.

DISCUSSION

This report presents a broad overview of risk factors and outcomes reported by current and former foster youth when they turned 19 years old. Several findings call for additional analyses.

- Youth's emancipation from foster care has coincided with a sharp decline in self-reported access to behavioral health treatment in 2013. This finding suggests that the youth still in foster care may be more likely to receive behavioral health treatment than the emancipated youth. Future analyses should explicitly take into account the foster care status of the respondents. Staying in foster care past the age of emancipation may initiate a different life trajectory for youth.
- The 19-year olds report a markedly lower level of involvement with the criminal justice system than when they were two years younger. Further analyses linking youth responses with administrative data may help shed light on this outcome.
- One in five youth eligible to participate in the first NYTD survey in 2011 were not interviewed in 2013 because they declined to participate, were runaways, missing with whereabouts unknown, were incarcerated or experienced other negative events.⁶ As the preliminary analysis indicates, these youth are likely to have more serious risk factors than those participating in both surveys. The absence of these youth from the 2013 survey may explain the lower level of self-reported involvement with the criminal justice system.

⁶ Out of 456 foster youth eligible to participate in the first NYTD survey in FFY2011, 37 youth had not been reached at that time. Additionally, 49 youth could not be reached or refused to participate in the follow up survey in FFY 2013. These 86 youth constitute 18.9 percent of the initial cohort.

NATIONAL YOUTH IN TRANSITION DATABASE (NYTD) SURVEY

The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (P.L. 106–169) required the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to develop and implement a data collection system to perform two functions: (1) track the independent living services States provide to youth transitioning from foster care; and (2) develop outcome measures that may be used to assess State performance in operating their independent living programs.³

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) survey collects data about the wellbeing of foster youth at 17, 19, and 21 years of age as the youth transition from foster care to independence. The focus of the survey is on youth’s financial self-sufficiency, experience with homelessness, educational attainment, positive connections with adults, high-risk behavior, and access to health insurance.⁴

The RDA Management Information and Survey Research staff conducted the survey from October 2012 through November 2013 (Federal Fiscal Year 2013). The youth eligible to participate in the survey were the 419 participants of the first NYTD survey in FFY 2011, who were 17 years old at that time. The youth were contacted by the survey team within 45 days of their 19th birthday. The table below describes participation by the youth.

Total eligible youth 19 years old	419
Unable to locate/invite	24
Youth declined	10
Youth incarcerated	8
Youth incapacitated	4
Death	2
Not in sample	1
Youth participated	370
Survey Response Rate	88.3%

GENDER AND RACE-ETHNICITY DATA

Individual youth responses were linked to information about client demographic characteristics (gender, race/ethnicity) from DSHS Client Services Database (CSDB) maintained by DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division. CSDB race/ethnicity data is based on DSHS clients’ self report. Clients can report more than one race. The current set of reporting categories are Non-Hispanic White (one race only), Any Minority, African-American, Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Hispanic. A category labeled “other race” is collected as well, but it is not considered meaningful across DSHS data systems. Since the vast majority of clients reporting “other race” also choose another race category, this category was not included in analyses. The report presents data for Non-Hispanic White (one race only), Any Minority, African-American, American Indian, Asian or Pacific Islander, and Hispanic categories.

TECHNICAL TABLES

A full set of tables providing responses to all NYTD survey questions tabulated by gender and race/ethnicity is provided as a technical appendix to this report.

³ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. “About NYTD.” http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/systems/nytd/about_nytd.htm.

⁴ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. “National Youth in Transition Database Data Brief #4: Comparing Outcomes Reported by Young People at Ages 17 and 19 in NYTD Cohort 1” (December 2014). <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/data-briefs>.

Copies of this paper may be obtained at <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/SESA/research-and-data-analysis> or by calling DSHS’ Research and Data Analysis Division at 360.902.0701. Please request REPORT NUMBER 7.107

RDA CONTACT: Irina V. Sharkova, PhD, 360.902.0743