

Tips for Using and Supplementing NYTD Data and the NYTD Dashboard

NYTD Data

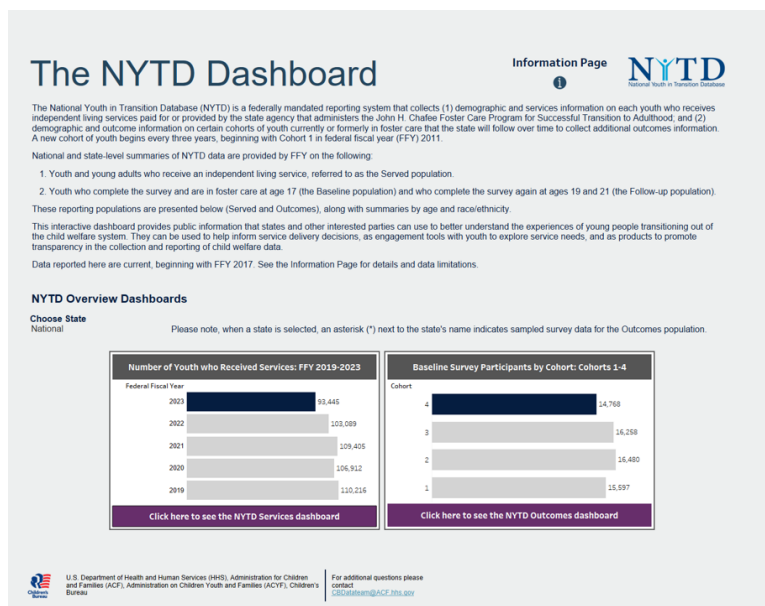
The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) is a federally-mandated reporting system that collects (1) demographic and services information on each youth who receives independent living services paid for or provided by the state agency that administers the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (the Chafee Program); and (2) demographic and outcome information on certain cohorts of youth currently or formerly in foster care that the state will follow over time to collect additional outcome information. A new cohort of youth begins every 3 years beginning with Cohort 1 in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2011 (45 CFR § 1356.85).

This NYTD in Practice resource provides information on (1) the NYTD dashboard created by the Children's Bureau, (2) how states can use their NYTD data, and (3) how states can supplement their NYTD data.

NYTD Dashboard

The NYTD dashboard¹ displays NYTD data by federal fiscal year, which spans October 1 through September 30. It covers two populations: (1) youth and young adults who receive an independent living service (the served population), and (2) youth who complete the survey and are in foster care at age 17 (the baseline population), and who complete the survey again at ages 19 and 21 (the follow-up population).

The NYTD dashboard provides national and state-level summaries of NYTD services and outcomes data. NYTD services data includes details on independent living services and demographic information including sex, age, race and ethnicity, education level, and foster care status, as well as the number of services received and the types of services provided. NYTD outcomes data report survey-based outcomes of young people at ages 17, 19, and 21, including reasons for non-participation in the survey, the characteristics of respondents, and survey outcomes by age and foster care status.²



¹ For a guide to exploring and interpreting the NYTD dashboard, see [NYTD Data Series for Young People: Part 2—Exploring and Understanding NYTD Data](#).

² Children's Bureau. (2023). *NYTD Technical Assistance Brief #14*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. [Technical Assistance Brief NYTD Survey Questions | The Administration for Children and Families \(hhs.gov\)](#)

The NYTD dashboard is interactive, featuring filters for displaying NYTD data at the state and national levels and drilling down to certain characteristics, navigational buttons for accessing data notes and an information page, and tooltips that provide additional information when you hover over a data visualization. It offers publicly accessible data that can be used by all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and other interested parties to gain deeper insights into the experiences of young people transitioning out of the child welfare system. The NYTD dashboard is designed to help inform delivery decisions, provide engagement tools for youth to explore service needs, and promote transparency in the collection and reporting of child welfare data.

To view the NYTD dashboard, please visit <https://acf.gov/cb/data-research/data-and-statistics-nytd>.

Tips for How States Can Use the NYTD Dashboard

States can use the NYTD dashboard to help determine how their efforts support young people as they transition out of foster care. The interactive dashboard is a conversation starter about young people's experiences based on the information that the state has reported to the Children's Bureau. Voices of young people and their families are critical to a well-functioning child welfare system,³ so states are strongly encouraged to ensure that these voices are central in all NYTD efforts. The following tips are important for states to consider when using the NYTD dashboard and NYTD data.

- States can use the NYTD dashboard to communicate valuable information about strengths and areas needing improvement with internal and external partners to inform change.⁴
 - » For example, review and share the NYTD dashboard with community partners (e.g., strategy or planning sessions, continuous quality improvement [CQI] efforts).
 - » For example, states can seek out peer-to-peer learning opportunities in which to review other states' NYTD data and share their own.
 - » For example, states can examine and share disaggregated data (e.g., by geography, race, ethnicity, and age) to highlight strengths and identify gaps requiring focused action.
- NYTD data can be used to establish a feedback loop to strengthen engagement with young people and families with child welfare experience and other community partners (e.g., youth advisory boards, child welfare workforce, and other community-based partners that provide services to young people).
 - » *For example, states can publicly share state-level NYTD data on their website for others to see and learn from and/or share in person (e.g., through focus groups).*
 - » *For example, states can ensure that young people recognize that their NYTD survey results are included in the NYTD data when communicating survey results and their implications. Further, states should continually ask young people how the data could be used to change policy, practice, or service provision.*

States should share data with young people and gather their input about how the data are presented, including the implications of the data. When showing a young person the NYTD dashboard, consider asking questions such as:

- To what extent are the data understandable?
- What strengths/challenges do you see represented in the data?
- How well does the NYTD data reflect your experiences or the experiences of those you know?
- How can we make this information more young-people friendly?

³ Children's Bureau. (2019). *Engaging, empowering, and utilizing family and youth voice in all aspects of child welfare to drive case planning and system improvement* (Information Memorandum 19-03). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/im1903.pdf>

⁴ For more information about using NYTD data to inform change, see [NYTD Data Series for Young People: Part 3—Using NYTD Data to Inform Change](#).

Tips for How States Can Supplement NYTD Data

States can supplement their NYTD data with additional data they already collect or have access to as part of CQI efforts.

- States can ask young people additional questions as part of the NYTD survey beyond those required by NYTD regulations.
 - » *For example, states can collect more information about their independent living journey and ask questions to capture updated or additional contact information. Example questions include “With which members of your biological family do you currently have a close relationship?” and “Have you ever received mental health counseling, therapy, or an assessment?”*
 - » *For example, states can reach out to young people to ask them what data points and service outcomes they are interested in learning more about. Gathering information from different groups of young people and partners may help capture more representative perspectives.*
- States can use and link other federal data to learn about additional outcomes that young people are experiencing.⁵
 - » *For example, the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) collects case-level information on children in foster care and those who have been adopted with title IV-E agency involvement and is used to produce national data summaries and trend charts, and state-by-state data.*
 - » *For example, the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) is a voluntary data collection system that gathers information from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico about reports of child abuse and neglect to produce state-specific data.*

States can better report data on young people by involving them in co-design efforts and having them at the center of all data. In collaboration with young people, states can use young-people-friendly language, images, colors, and short documents (e.g., infographics) with plain language (i.e., no jargon or acronyms, or explain acronyms if they are used) to tell the story.

Ensure data visualizations are accessible to people with disabilities (e.g., appropriate color contrast for the visually impaired) and information is available to a wide audience (e.g., translated into other languages). States can work with young people to use social media, text, and/or email to communicate about data.

Conclusion

The tips provided in this resource can help states use and disseminate data to support transparency about NYTD and NYTD-related outcomes and services. Reviewing your state’s NYTD data on the NYTD dashboard and supplementing it with easy-to-interpret visualizations of your own customizable data can help facilitate conversations about strengths and gaps in services. Interactive visualization tools are particularly engaging and are a young-people friendly method to present important NYTD-related data. In conclusion, states can use these tips to inform and enhance their process of routinely monitoring the experiences and outcomes of youth in care and young people formerly in care.

⁵ For more information about the Children’s Bureau program data, see [Data & Research | The Administration for Children and Families](#).



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