

# IOWA NYTD ANNUAL REPORT



COHORT 4 | 19 YEAR-OLDS  
FFY2022 SURVEY RESULTS





# Acknowledgements

This report was made possible by federal funding from the Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood. The Iowa Department of Human Rights (DHR) Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning, under contract with Iowa's Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), collects NYTD Outcomes data.

Special gratitude is extended to Iowa College Aide (Tristan Lynn), Aftercare (Joan Havel and Carol Behrer), and Transition Planning Specialists (Teresa Jacobs) who collaborated with NYTD to ensure as many youth as possible had the opportunity to complete the survey.

Final edits and reviews were completed by DHR and HHS. Both extend their appreciation to all coordinating efforts for this report.

Finally, a special thanks is extended to the youth who shared their experiences, and the NYTD Ambassadors who lent their expertise to increase the quality of this report. Without their contributions, this report would not be possible.



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# Report Background

In 1999, Public Law 106-169 established the Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (formerly the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program) at section 477 of the Social Security Act. This new law, that is nicknamed Chafee, provides states with flexible funding to carry out programs to support youth ages 14 and older in making the transition from foster care to self-sufficiency. Iowa has been able to use this funding for various programs and initiatives, including the Iowa Aftercare Services Network, Education and Training Vouchers and Iowa's foster care youth council, Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP).

The law also required the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to develop and ensure compliance of a data collection system to track two things: 1.) the independent living services states' provide to youth ages 14 and older, and 2.) demographic and outcome measures of youth aging out of foster care. This dataset became known as the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) and became active in FFY2011.

For NYTD Services in Iowa, Social Workers and Juvenile Court Officers report quarterly to Iowa HHS on independent living skills that were provided to youth on their caseload. For NYTD Outcomes, the Department of Human Rights, in contract with HHS, directly surveys older youth transitioning from foster care. A cohort of youth are surveyed on or around their 17th birthday and then again near their 19th and 21st birthdays.

The purpose of this report is two-fold.

1.) To uplift current outcome information on older youth in and transitioning from foster care and out-of-home placement

2.) To identify and center areas where youth serving agencies and service providers can continue effective transition work, while also pointing to service deficits which can be developed or enhanced in coming years.

# NYTD OUTCOMES



In 2016, HHS contracted with the Department of Human Rights (DHR) to survey youth, track data, and create annual reports. Specifically, DHR is contracted to collect and report outcomes information on youth who are or were in foster care or other out-of-home placement.

Iowa's current survey for 19-year olds includes 33 questions that collect demographic information and measure youth outcomes across six domains:



Financial  
Self-Sufficiency



Educational  
Attainment



Positive Connections  
with Adults



Experience with  
Homelessness



High-Risk  
Behavior



Access to  
Health Insurance

The survey data is collected directly from youth, not administrative records. Iowa offers three methods for completing the survey: phone, mail, or online. All survey responses are voluntary with youth having the option to decline a question, or the survey itself, at any time. Collected responses are confidential, and no individual youth are identified in this report or in any survey data analysis shared with provider agencies. Youth are compensated for completing the survey through a gift card or care package of their choice.

This report includes survey analysis from the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022 survey collection on 19 year-olds who took the survey at age 17. In FFY2020, 264 youth took the survey near their 17th birthday. A sample of those youth were surveyed again on or near their 19th birthday (102 youth total). Youth who did not take the survey on their 19th birthday are still eligible to take the survey on their 21st birthday.

This report includes an in-depth analysis of the 19 year-old responses collected in FFY2022 with comparison data from Iowa's first, second and third NYTD 19 year-old cohorts (FFY2013, FFY2016 and FFY2019). Data throughout is disaggregated by race. National comparison data was derived from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau. Cohort 3 (FFY2019) is used for national comparison data as national data results from FFY2022 are not yet available to states.

Overall, the following data provides a statewide glimpse of how young people are doing as they transition from foster care or out-of-home placement into adulthood.

There were 159 youth eligible to take the NYTD survey. Youth who were not eligible include those who were incarcerated, incapacitated or deceased. Of those eligible, 102 youth completed the survey. The following demographic analysis includes information about all eligible and participating youth.

**Figure 1. Participation Rate**

	Iowa %	Number of Iowa youth	National % (FFY2019)
Youth Participated	60%	102	73%
Unable to Locate/Invite	34%	57	20%
Youth Incarcerated	6%	11	2%
Other <sup>+</sup>	0%	0	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>170</b>	

\*Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

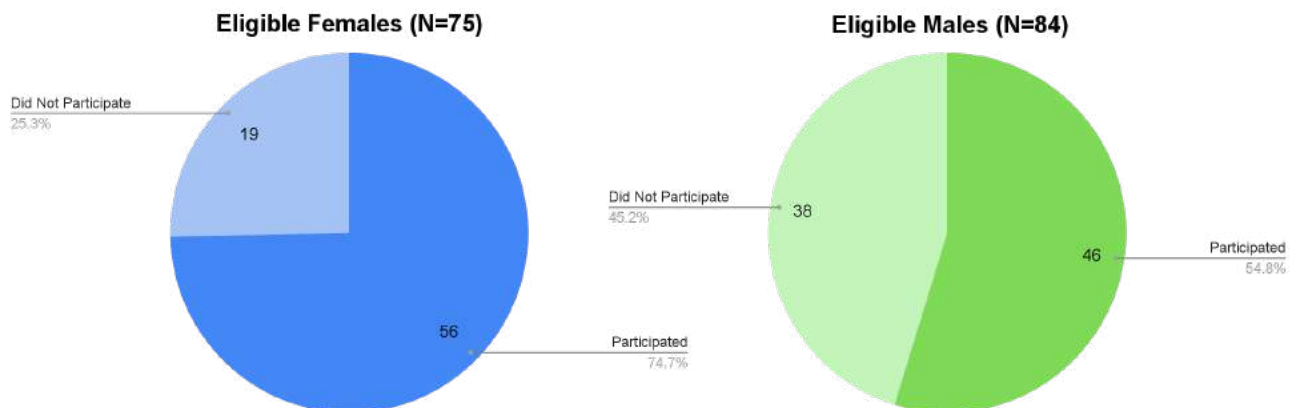
<sup>+</sup>Other includes: youth declined, parent declined, incapacitated, runaway/ missing, and death.

**Participation Rate Observations:**

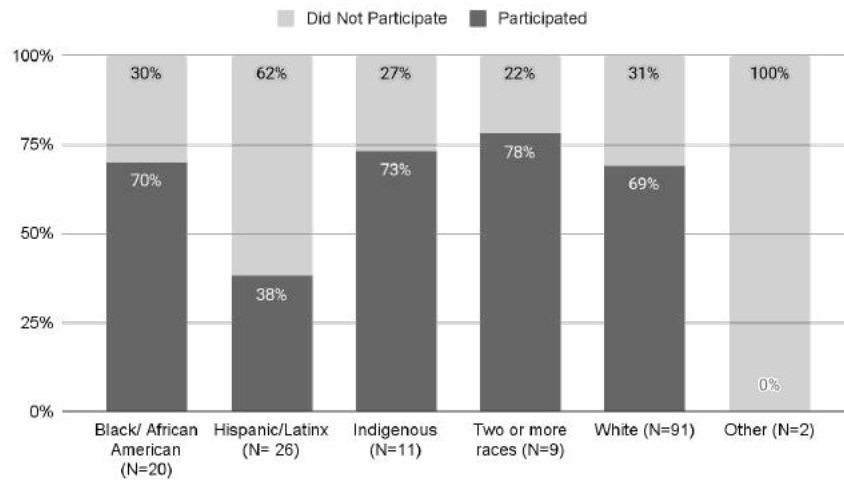
- In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022, there were 170 youth identified to take the survey. In the first year of NYTD data collection (FFY2013), there were 203 youth identified, a decrease of 17.7%.
- Of the youth eligible for the survey, 6% were incarcerated which is higher than the national average of 4%.
- All states are federally required to survey at least 60% of eligible youth. In FFY2022, Iowa surveyed 64% of eligible youth.

**Figure 2. Eligible Youth by Sex (N=159)**

Information on the sex of participants is analyzed from HHS administrative records, which include "male" and "female" as options. This data does not reflect youth's self-reported gender identity.



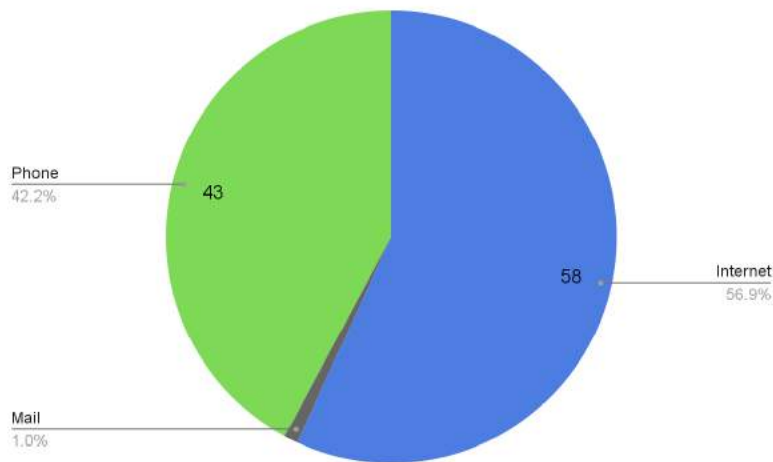
**Figure 3. Eligible Youth by Race (N=159)**



**Eligible Youth Observations (Race and Sex):**

- Females and youth who reported two or more races were the most likely to participate.
- Males and Latinx youth were least likely to participate in the NYTD survey.

**Figure 4. Participation Method (N=102)**



**Participation Method Observations:**

- The majority of participants chose to complete the survey via the internet.
- Youth were least likely to take the survey via mail.



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## Incentives

Youth who complete the Iowa NYTD survey receive an incentive for participating. Incentives are awarded to survey participants as a way to increase the survey participation rate, as well as to show appreciation to NYTD participants for sharing their experiences.

Iowa NYTD offers participants multiple options for their incentive. Gift cards from Amazon, Wal-Mart, Casey's General Store or Hy-Vee are provided to youth participants (see table below for denominations). Seventeen and nineteen year old participants are offered an additional gift card for providing names and contact information for individuals who will know how to contact them in two years to take the next survey.

**Figure 5. NYTD Gift Card Incentives**

<b>Age of Participant</b>	<b>Incentive</b>	<b>Additional incentive for future contact information</b>
17 year-olds	\$25 Gift Card	\$10 Gift Card
19 year-olds	\$25 Gift Card	\$25 Gift Card
21 year-olds	\$50 Gift Card	N/A

Youth may opt to receive a care package instead of a gift card. Youth may select to receive the NYTD Sports Package, the NYTD Arts Package or the NYTD Health and Wellness Package. The contents of the packages are approximately the same value as the gift card.



In an effort to maintain contact with youth in the off years, the NYTD Coordinator mails birthday cards to participating youth on their 18th and 20th birthdays. In the exchange, contact information is updated, and they are sent a \$10 gift card with their birthday card for doing so. This has been a successful strategy to maintain contact with survey participants, as well as keep their contact information as current as possible which has been helpful when surveying them again at age 19 and 21. In FFY2022, 86% of youth who were successfully contacted on their 18th birthday took the survey when they were 19.

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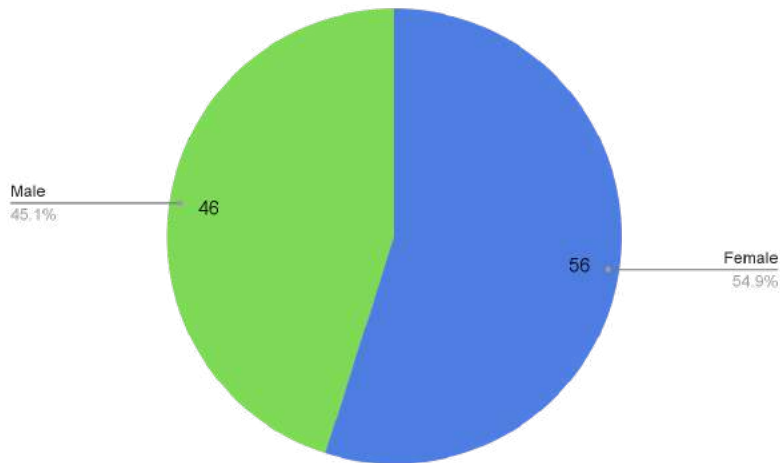
## Limitations of the survey

The NYTD baseline survey is administered to Iowa youth who have experienced at least one day of foster care within 45 days after their 17th birthday. The survey is confidential, and no individual youth are identified in this report or in any survey data analysis shared with provider agencies. Values are self-reported and are not verified using publicly available or other data. As with all surveys, the findings are subject to nonresponse bias that stems from youth choosing not to complete the survey. Findings are also subject to response bias from those who may over-report “socially desirable” answers and underreport or over-report negative feedback, which may lead to a deviation of answers from their true value. NYTD survey collection was never halted because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, COVID-19 did impact responses to some of the outcome areas for some youth. The long term effects of COVID-19 on NYTD outcome areas are still unknown.

## SURVEY PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Of the 152 youth eligible for the survey, 102 youth completed the survey. The following demographic analysis includes information about all participating youth.

**Figure 6. Participating Youth by Sex (N=102)**



**Figure 7. Participating Youth by FFY and Race (N=102)**

	FFY2013 (N=129)		FFY2016 (N=131)		FFY2019 (N=124)		FFY2022 (N=102)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Black/African American</b>	13	10%	27	21%	21	17%	14	14%
<b>Hispanic/Latino<sup>^</sup></b>	11	9%	10	8%	11	9%	10	10%
<b>Indigenous</b>	11	9%	5	4%	4	3%	8	8%
<b>White</b>	82	64%	82	63%	83	67%	63	62%
<b>Two or more races<sup>+</sup></b>	11	9%	7	5%	3	2%	7	7%
<b>Other<sup>**</sup></b>	1	<1%	0	0%	2	2%	0	0%

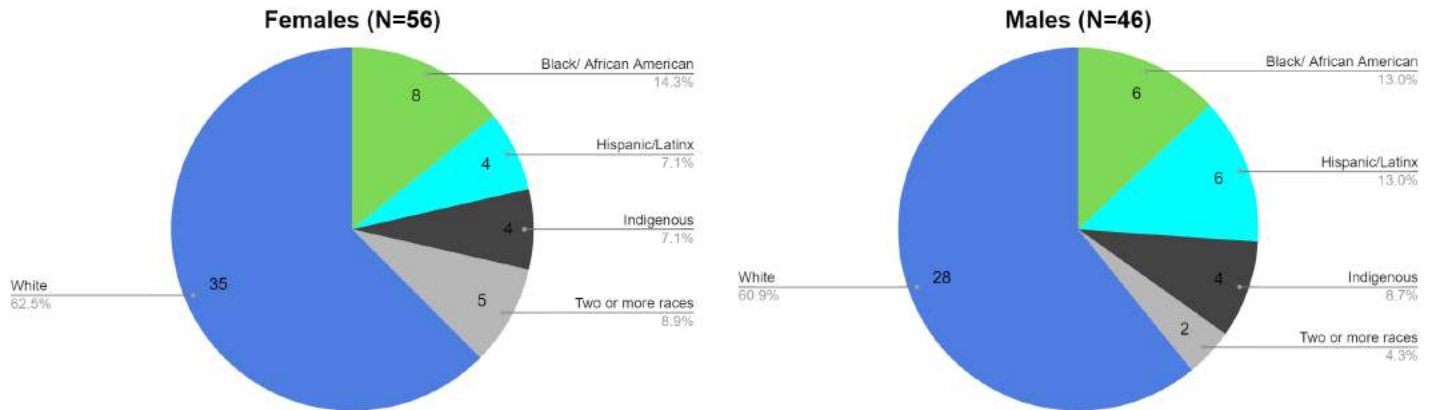
<sup>^</sup>If any race and Hispanic is selected, they are counted as Hispanic.

<sup>+</sup>If more than one race is selected, they are counted two or more races.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Other includes Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Unable to Determine/Decline due to sample having 6 or fewer youth in each category

\*Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

**Figure 8. Participants by Race and Sex (N=102)**



**Participation Observations:**

- More females than males participated in the NYTD survey.
- Hispanic youth comprised 18.2% of survey participants, an increase from FFY2017 (14.6%).
- Black/African American youth comprised 16.7% of survey participants, a decrease from FFY2017 (18%).



# SURVEY RESULTS



## A. Financial Self-Sufficiency

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

**Figure 9. Financial Self-Sufficiency by Federal Fiscal Year**

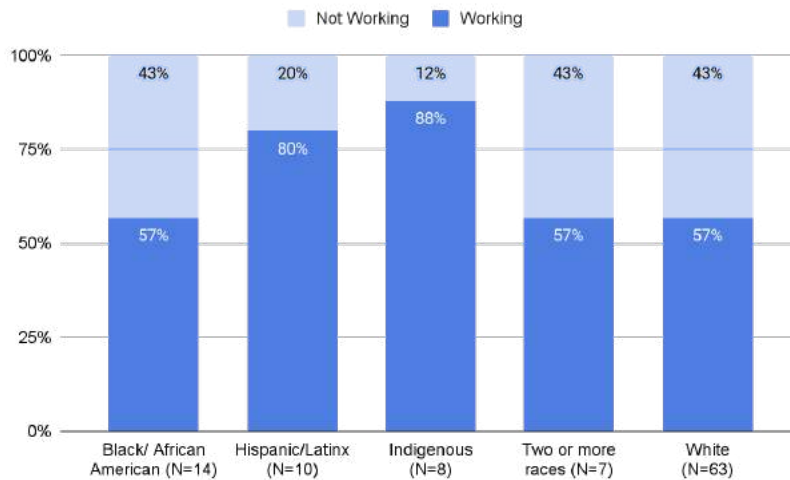
	<b>FFY2013</b> (N=129)	<b>FFY2016</b> (N=131)	<b>FFY2019</b> (N=124)	<b>FFY2022</b> (N=102)	<b>National</b> (FFY2019)
<b>Currently working, any</b>	40% (N=52)	51% (N=67)	62% (N=77)	<b>62%</b> (N=63)	--*
<b>Currently working, full-time</b>	18% (N=23)	21% (N=28)	30% (N=37)	<b>37%</b> (N=38)	19%
<b>Currently working, part-time</b>	25% (N=32)	31% (N=41)	32% (N=40)	<b>25%</b> (N=25)	27%
<b>Receiving employment-related skills training</b>	35% (N=45)	22% (N=29)	15% (N=19)	<b>32%</b> (N=33)	29%
<b>Currently receiving Social Security payments</b>	22% (N=28)	11% (N=15)	15% (N=19)	<b>17%</b> (N=17)	10%
<b>Currently receiving educational financial aid</b>	18% (N=23)	15% (N=19)	16% (N=20)	<b>18%</b> (N=18)	21%
<b>Currently receiving food assistance</b>	39% (N=50)	31% (N=40)	21% (N=26)	<b>27%</b> (N=27)	20%
<b>Currently receiving housing assistance from government</b>	7% (N=9)	6% (N=8)	6% (N=8)	<b>14%</b> (N=14)	5%
<b>Currently receiving significant financial resources not included above</b>	16% (N=20)	20% (N=26)	18% (N=22)	<b>18%</b> (N=18)	16%

\*Data not available

### **Financial Sufficiency Observations:**

- Iowa youth are employed full-time at almost twice the national NYTD rate (37% in Iowa, 19% nationally).
- Nearly 62% of Iowa youth are employed, which has consistently increased since FFY2012.
- In FFY2022, the percentage of youth receiving housing assistance is at an all-time high of 14% and is higher than the national NYTD rate.
- The number of youth receiving employment-related skills training is higher than the national average and increased from FFY2019.

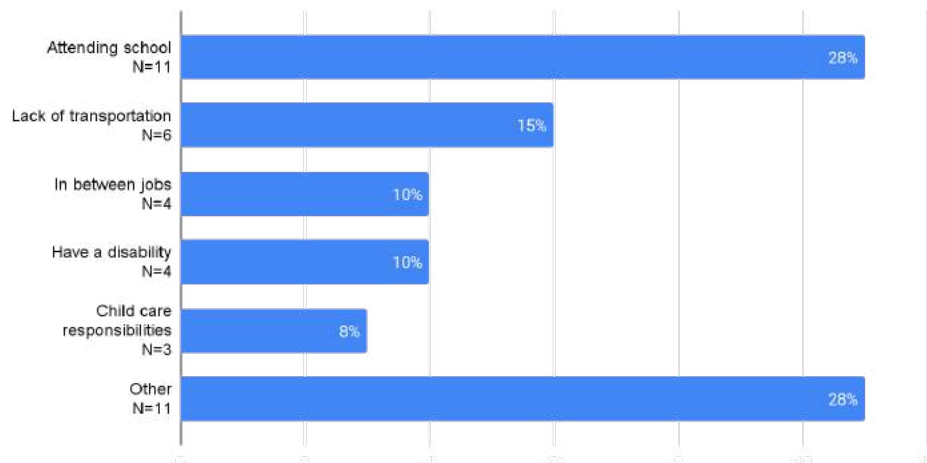
**Figure 10. Youth Working Part- or Full-Time by Race**



**Youth Working Observations (Race):**

- Indigenous and Hispanic youth had the highest rates of employment. Of all Indigenous youth who took the survey, 88% reported work. Of all Hispanic youth who took the survey, 80% reported working.

**Figure 11. Reasons Youth Reported Not Working (N=39)**

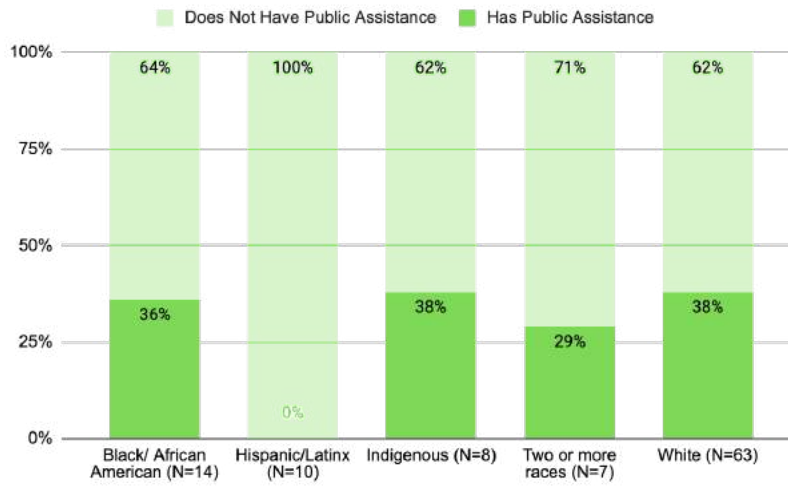


\*Other included the following reasons: (note: all responses are N=1; three participants did not specify) "In a toxic relationship that ruined a lot of good things" "Living with grandparents who have cancer" "Played in my face" "Pregnant" "Social anxiety" "Too busy" "Lack of available jobs" "Not able to hold a job because I would lose my housing"

**Reasons for Not Working Observations:**

- The leading reason for youth not being employed was 'attending school.'
- 15% of youth identified transportation as a barrier to obtaining employment.

**Figure 12. Access to Housing and/ or Food Assistance by Race**



**Access to Housing and/ or Food Assistance Observations (Race):**

- Indigenous and White youth were most likely to access assistance.
- No Hispanic youth reported receiving assistance.



## B. Education

Achieving a high school or equivalency diploma (HiSET in Iowa) can be considered a minimal requirement for self-sufficiency and can assist in establishing a solid educational foundation. The NYTD survey asks young people their current enrollment status and highest educational certification received.

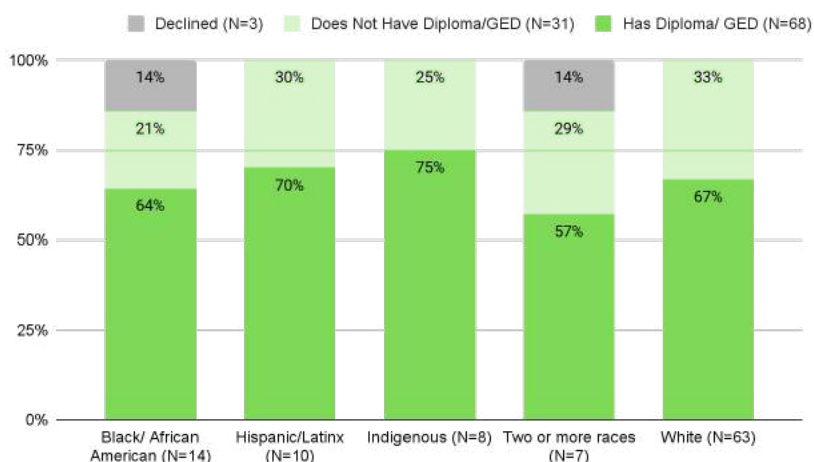
**Figure 13. Education by Federal Fiscal Year**

	FFY2013 (N=129)	FFY2016 (N=131)	FFY2019 (N=124)	FFY2022 (N=102)	National (FFY2019)
<b>Obtained high school or equivalency diploma</b>	73% (N=94)	77% (N=101)	68% (N=84)	67% (N=68)	60%
<b>Currently enrolled in high school, GED classes, post-secondary classes or college</b>	45% (N=58)	35% (N=46)	37% (N=46)	40% (N=41)	48%
<b>Received vocational certificate/license, associate's or bachelor's degree, or higher</b>	<1% (N=1)	<1% (N=1)	<1% (N=1)	2% (N=2)	1%

### Education Observations:

- The number of youth who obtained a high school or equivalency diploma by age 19 slightly decreased from 68% to 67% in FFY2022. However, this remains higher than the national average of 60%.
- While the number and percentage of youth enrolled in some sort of education decreased, the number and percentage of youth working increased.

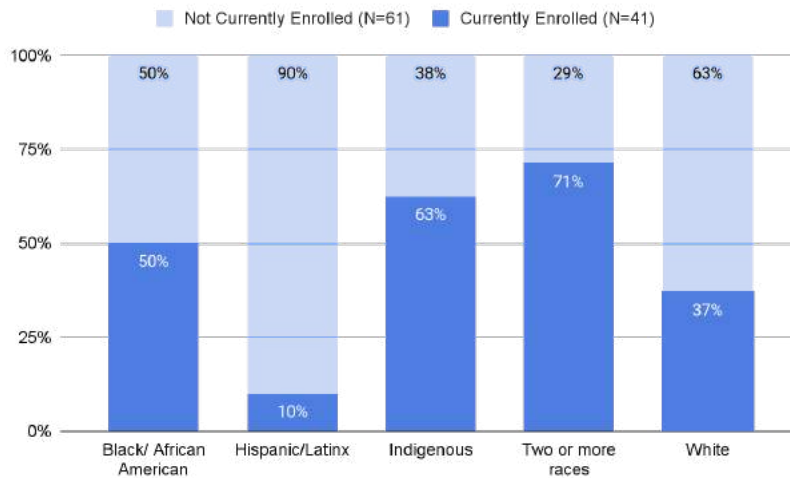
**Figure 14. High School or Equivalency Diploma Status by Race**



### High School or Equivalency Diploma Status Observations (Race):

- Indigenous youth were most likely to report having a high school or equivalency diploma. Youth representing two or more races were the least likely.
- Two out of every three White youth reported having a high school or equivalency diploma.

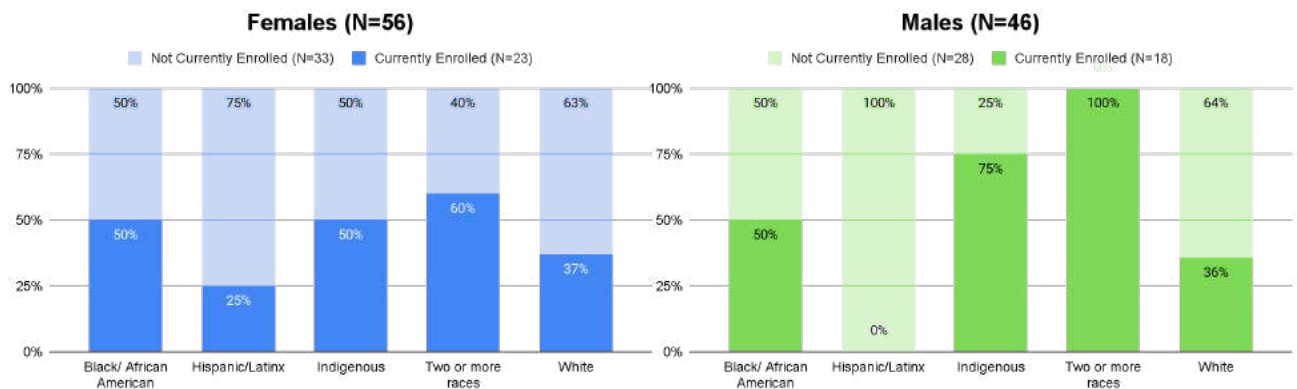
**Figure 15. Enrollment by Race**



**Enrollment Observations (Race):**

- Youth representing two or more races were the most likely to be enrolled in some sort of education at age 19. Hispanic youth were the least likely.
- Hispanic youth were the most likely to report employment and the least likely to report school enrollment.

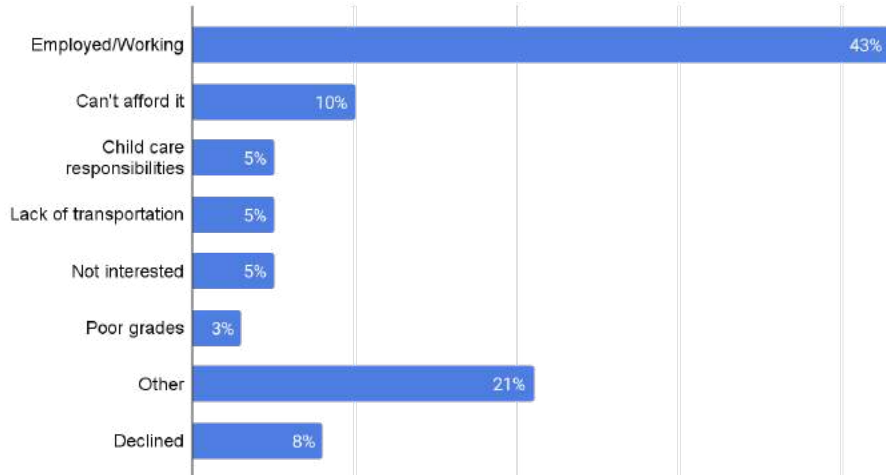
**Figure 16. Enrollment by Race and Sex**



**Enrollment Observations (Race and Sex):**

- All males representing two or more races reported being enrolled in some sort of education at age 19.
- No Hispanic males reported enrollment, while 1 in 4 Hispanic females reported enrollment.
- One in two Black males and females reported enrollment.

**Figure 17. Reasons for No School Enrollment (N=61)**



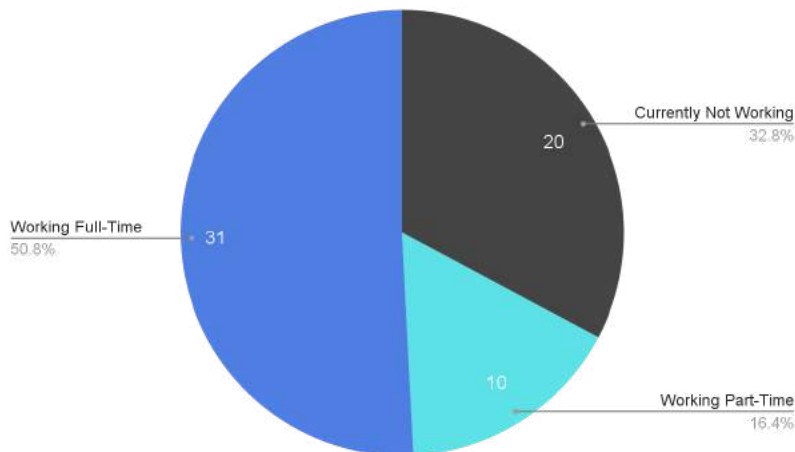
\*Other includes the following reasons: (note: all responses are N=1; one participant did not specify)

“Currently homeless” “Don’t enjoy online school” “Haven’t decided on a major” “In a placement” “In military” “Just graduated”  
“Lack of support” “Mental health. Dad and grandma have a lot of problems” “Missed a lot of high school due to placement moves”  
“Not a good time” “Waiting to get into my apprenticeship” “Want to save money”

**Reasons for No School Enrollment Observations:**

- Having employment was the leading reason why youth aren’t currently enrolled.
- The second leading reason was because of cost.

**Figure 18. Youth Not Enrolled In School by Employment Status (N=61)**



**Youth Not Enrolled by Employment Status Observations:**

- About 33% of youth (1 in 3) who took the NYTD survey are disconnected from school and work, meaning they are neither enrolled in school or employed.
- Half of the youth who are not enrolled in education are working full-time.

## C. Positive Connections with Adults

Establishing and maintaining a positive, consistent and lasting relationship with at least one adult is a critical component in ensuring youth make a successful transition from foster care to adulthood. The NYTD survey asks youth whether there is currently at least one adult in their life, other than their caseworker, to whom they can go for advice or emotional support.

**Figure 19. Positive Connections with Adults by Federal Fiscal Year**

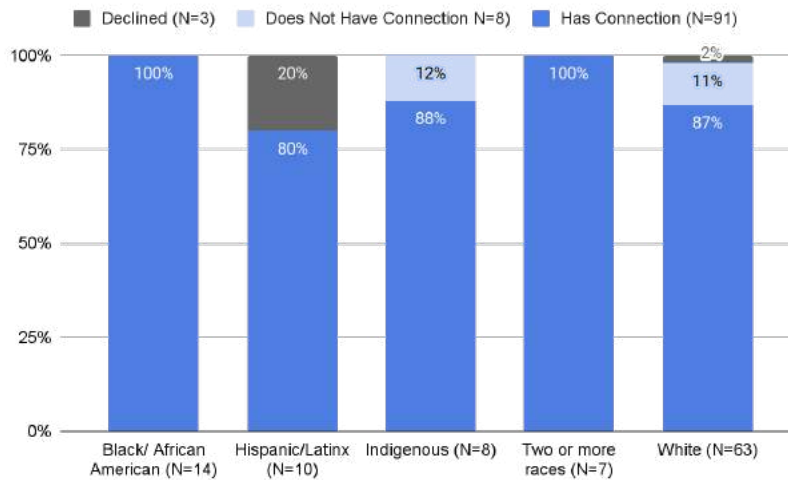
	FFY2013 (N=129)	FFY2016 (N=131)	FFY2019 (N=124)	FFY2022 (N=102)	National (FFY2019)
<b>Currently has at least one adult to go to for support</b>	92% (N=119)	96% (N=126)	95% (N=118)	89% (N=91)	89%
<b>Knew their caring adult before foster care*</b>	--*	--*	--*	64% (N=65)	--*
<b>A biological family member is their supportive adult*</b>	--*	--*	--*	54% (N=55)	--*
<b>Has close relationship to 1 or more biological family members*</b>	--*	--*	--*	86% (N=88)	--*
<b>Has close relationship to 3 or more biological family members*</b>	--*	--*	--*	47% (N=48)	--*
<b>Has accessed Aftercare services</b>	--*	--*	--*	42% (N=43)	--*
<b>Has been legally adopted</b>	--*	--*	--*	26% (N=27)	--*

\*This is a NYTD Plus question that is not required to be asked nor reported to the federal government. The questions were implemented into the 17 year-old survey in FFY2017 and into the 19 year-old survey in FFY2022.

### **Positive Connections with Adults Observations:**

- 89% of youth have at least one adult to go to for support. This is the lowest percentage since FFY2013.
- At age 17, 96% of youth in the same cohort reported having at least one adult to go to for support.
- One in two youth reported that their caring adult was a biological family member.
- 47% have a close relationship to three or more family members. At age 17, 38% of youth in the same cohort reported having close relationships to three or more family members.
- One in four youth who spent their 17th birthday in foster care have a past history of a legal adoption.

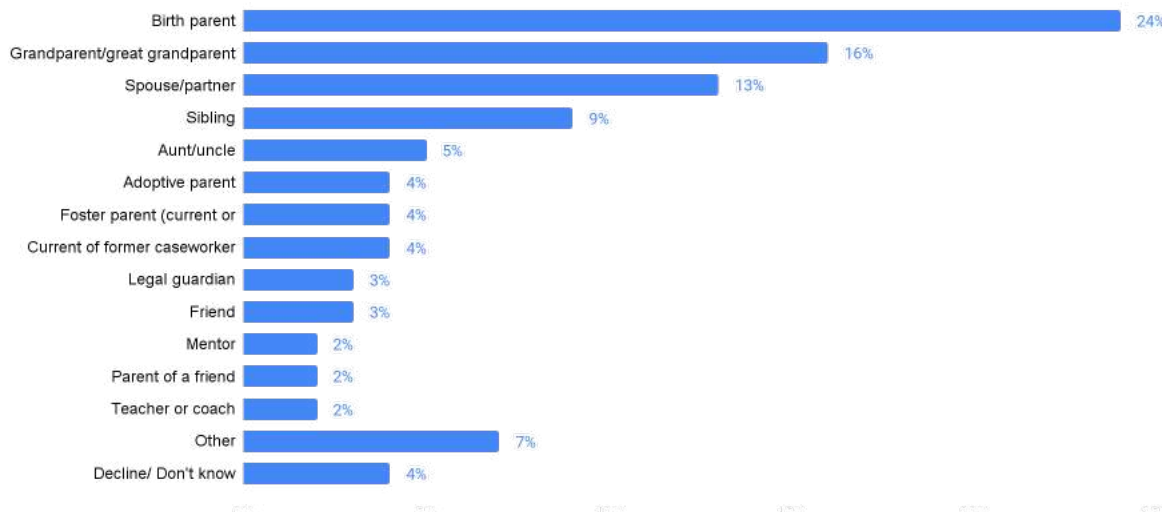
**Figure 20. Positive Connection to at Least One Adult by Race**



**Positive Connections with Adults Observations (Race):**

- 100% of Black youth and youth representing two or more races reported having a supportive adult.
- Hispanic youth were the least likely to report having a supportive adult.

**Figure 21. Connection to Adult Description**

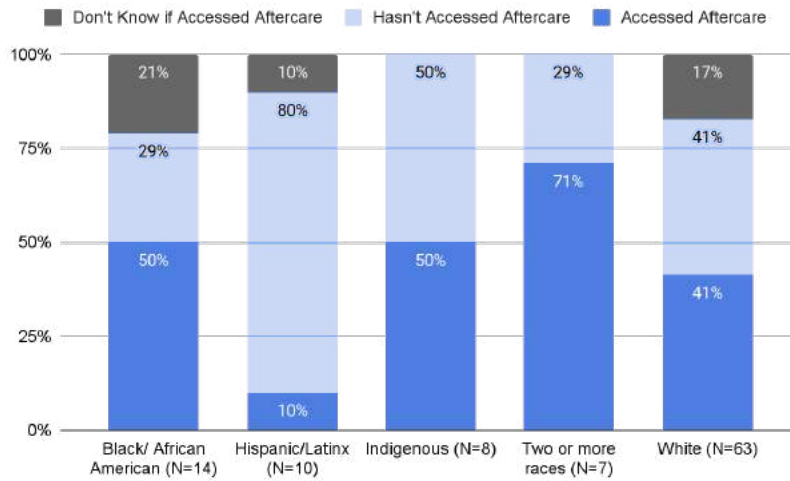


\*Other includes the following reasons: (note: all responses are N=1) “Cousin” “Parental figure/ not my guardian legally” “None” “Officer whom rescued me from my abusive home 11 year ago” “Step-father” “Friend’s older sister” “Weird new parent”

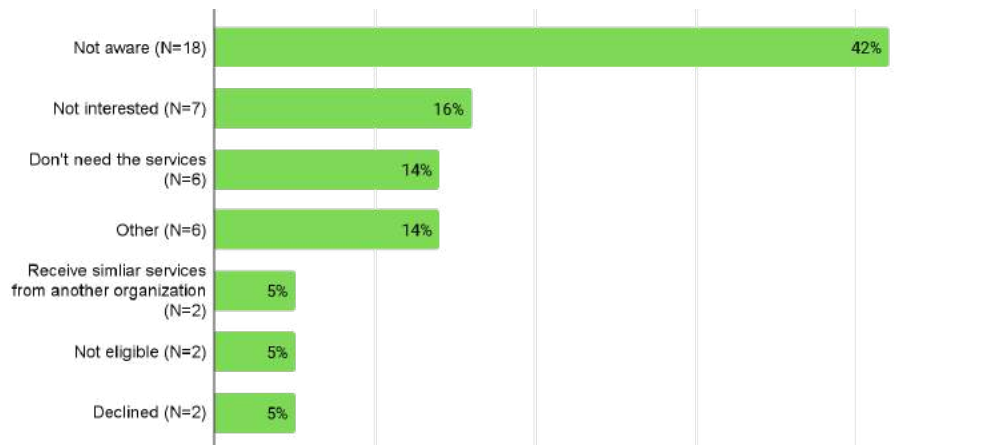
**Adult Description Observations:**

- One in four youth identifies a biological parent as their caring adult.
- Of the top 5 adult descriptors, biological connections make up 4 out of the 5.
- Over half of youth (54%) reported a biological family member as their caring adult.

**Figure 22. Access to Aftercare/PAL by Race**



**Figure 23. Reasons for Not Accessing Aftercare/PAL (N=43)**

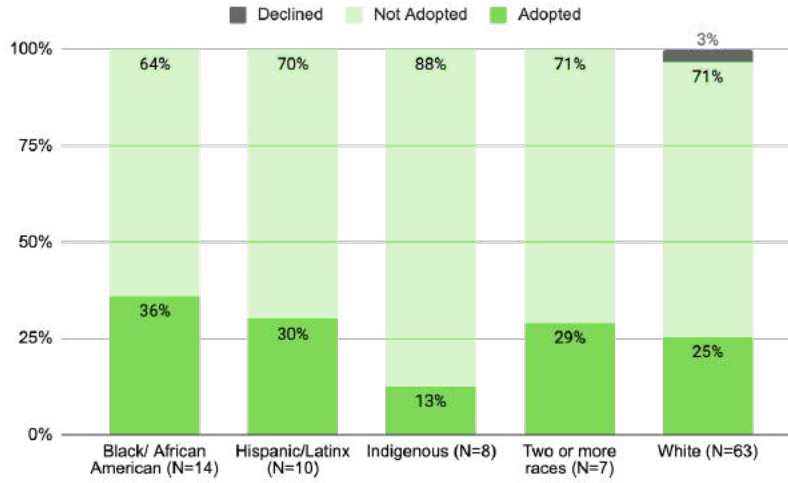


\*Other includes the following reasons: (note: all responses are N=1) "They declined to offer me assistance." "The lady was very close with my biological family." "I haven't gotten around to doing the paperwork." "I was told I could either go home or get aftercare. I chose to go home." "Went into military."

**Aftercare Observations:**

- Youth reporting two or more races were the most likely to access Aftercare services.
- Latinx youth were the least likely. Of those Latinx youth who reported not accessing Aftercare, 75% reported it was because they were not aware of the services.
- The leading reason why youth didn't access Aftercare services was because they weren't aware of them.

**Figure 24. Legal Adoption by Race**



**Legal Adoption Observations (Race):**

- One in three Black/ African American youth who spent their 17th birthday in foster care had a past legal adoption.

## D. Homelessness

Having a safe, stable and affordable place to live can protect against a number of negative outcomes. Young people who leave foster care unprepared to live on their own are at risk for becoming homeless soon after discharge.

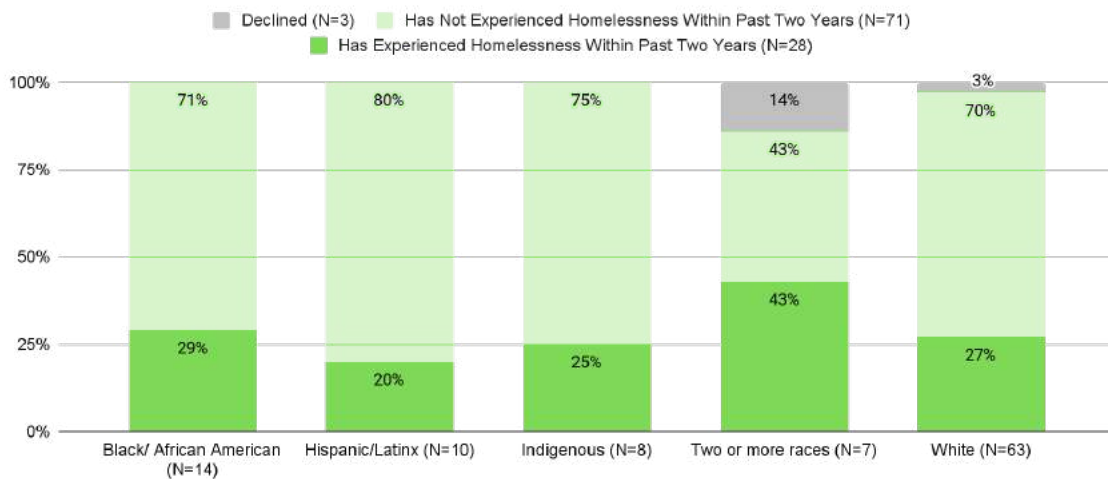
**Figure 25. Experience with Homelessness by Federal Fiscal Year**

	FFY2013 (N=129)	FFY2016 (N=131)	FFY2019 (N=124)	FFY2022 (N=102)	National (FFY2019)
<b>Homeless within past two years</b>	25% (N=32)	23% (N=30)	22% (N=27)	27% (N=28)	21%

### Homelessness Observations:

- The percentage of youth experiencing homelessness within the past two years is at its highest point ever recorded for the NYTD survey.
- 27% of youth reported ever experiencing homelessness, which is higher than the national average of 21%.

**Figure 26. Homelessness Within Two Years by Race**



### Homelessness Observations (Race):

- Youth representing two or more races were the most likely to report experiencing homelessness.
- Hispanic youth were the least likely to experience homelessness.



## E. High-Risk Behaviors

Transition-age youth who engage in high-risk behaviors are at an increased risk for a variety of negative outcomes. The Iowa NYTD survey collects information on four key outcomes that have been associated with successful transitions to adulthood among youth in foster care.

**Figure 27. High Risk Behaviors by Federal Fiscal Year**

	<b>FFY2013</b> (N=129)	<b>FFY2016</b> (N=131)	<b>FFY2019</b> (N=124)	<b>FFY2022</b> (N=102)	<b>National</b> (FFY2019)
<b>Ever received substance abuse assessment or counseling</b>	18% (N=23)	18% (N=24)	19% (N=23)	11% (N=11)	13%
<b>Ever received mental health counseling*</b>	--*	--*	58% (N=72)	64% (N=65)	--*
<b>Ever been incarcerated**</b>	24% (N=31)	24% (N=31)	27% (N=33)	20% (N=20)	17%
<b>Had children</b>	13% (N=17)	10% (N=13)	12% (N=15)	13% (N=13)	10%
<b>Ever given birth</b>	10% (N=13)	8% (N=11)	8% (N=10)	8% (N=8)	--*
<b>Ever fathered a child</b>	3% (N=4)	2% (N=2)	4% (N=5)	5% (N=5)	--*

\*This is a NYTD Plus question that is not required to be asked nor reported to the federal government. This question was implemented into the 19 year-old survey in FFY2019.

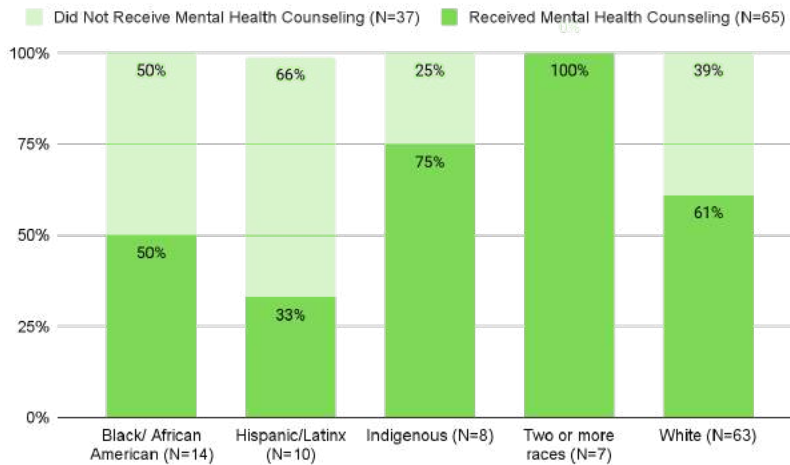
\*\*A youth is considered to be incarcerated if the youth was confined in a jail, prison, correctional facility or juvenile or community detention facility in connection with allegedly committing a crime (misdemeanor or felony).

+Data not available

### **High-Risk Behaviors Observations:**

- The percentage of youth reporting mental health counseling increased to 64% from 58% in FFY2019.
- The percentage of youth experiencing incarceration by age 19 decreased to 20%, the lowest point since FFY2013, but is higher than the national average of 17%.
- 13% of youth taking the NYTD survey reported having a child within the past two years, which is consistent with past years and higher than the national average of 10%.

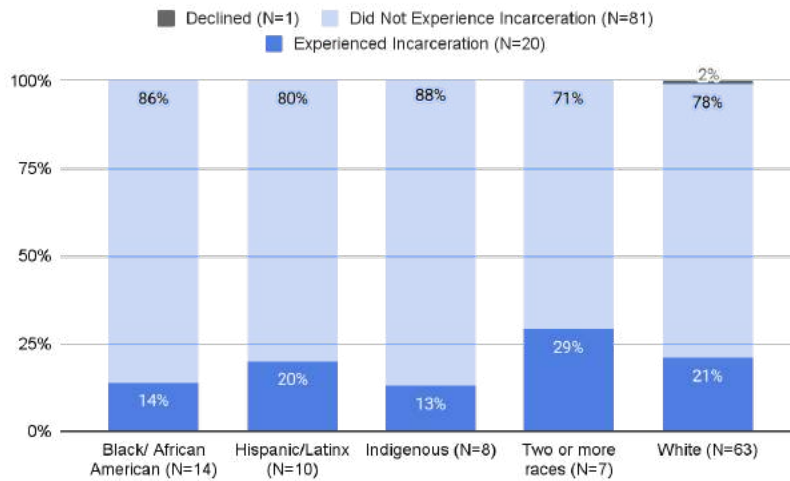
**Figure 28. Mental Health Counseling by Race**



**Mental Health Counseling Observations (Race):**

- 100% of youth representing two or more races reported receiving mental health counseling within the past two years.
- Hispanic youth were the least likely to receive mental health counseling.
- Three out of four Indigenous youth and one in two Black youth received mental health counseling.

**Figure 29. Incarceration Within Two Years by Race**



**Incarceration Observations (Race):**

- Youth representing two or more races were the most likely to experience incarceration within the past two years.
- Indigenous youth were the least likely to experience incarceration.

## F. Access to Health Insurance

Access to health care can help ensure that youth receive the prevention and treatment services they need to remain healthy. Youth in Title IV-E foster care are categorically eligible to receive Medicaid. Additionally, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act allows for certain eligible youth to be covered by Medicaid up to age 26. The NYTD survey asks youth whether they are receiving Medicaid or some other type of health insurance coverage.

**Figure 30. Access to Health Insurance by Federal Fiscal Year**

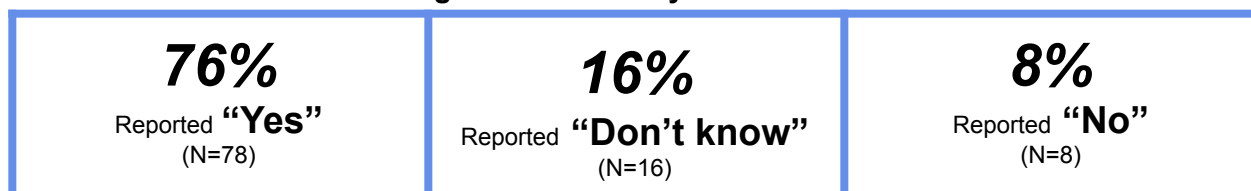
	<b>FFY2013</b> (N=129)	<b>FFY2016</b> (N=131)	<b>FFY2019</b> (N=124)	<b>FFY2022</b> (N=102)	<b>National</b> (FFY2019)
<b>Currently on Medicaid</b>	71% (N=91)	67% (N=88)	70% (N=87)	<b>76%</b> (N=78)	77%
<b>Currently have other health insurance</b>	13% (N=17)	11% (N=14)	19% (N=24)	<b>15%</b> (N=15)	13%
<b>Other health insurance covers medical services</b> (of those with other health insurance)	12% (N=15)	11% (N=14)	19% (N=23)	<b>73%</b> (N=11)	87%
<b>Other health insurance covers mental health services</b> (of those with other health insurance)	11% (N=14)	8% (N=11)	13% (N=16)	<b>53%</b> (N=8)	81%
<b>Other health insurance covers prescription drugs</b> (of those with other health insurance)	12% (N=16)	9% (N=12)	17% (N=21)	<b>73%</b> (N=11)	90%

\*Unable to access this federal data

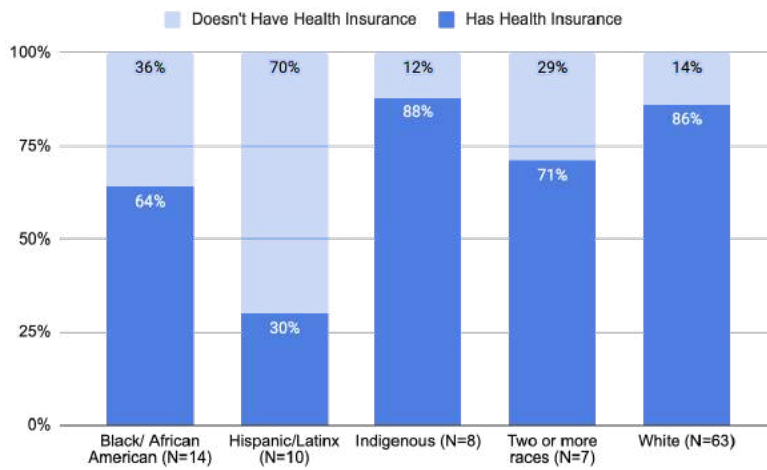
### **Access to Health Insurance Observations:**

- 76% of youth reported having Medicaid, the highest percentage in Iowa NYTD history.
- 15% of youth reported having other health insurance which is higher than the national average of 13%.

**Figure 31. Currently on Medicaid**



**Figure 32. Access to Health Insurance by Race**



**Access to Health Insurance Observations (Race):**

- Indigenous and White youth were the most likely to report access to health insurance.
- Hispanic youth were the least likely to report access to health insurance.

# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Iowa HHS and DHR believe and value authentic youth engagement, recognizing that youth are the experts of their own lives and are experts of the systems they have experienced. When partnering with youth- both on the case and system levels- we are able to get closer to creating the communities we all deserve. This section will highlight a variety of different youth engagement initiatives through the National Youth in Transition Database.

## NYTD Ambassadors

NYTD Ambassadors are young adults who have previously taken the NYTD survey and are between the ages of 17-26. They play a critical role ensuring the data collected on older youth in foster care is being done so in the most equitable, appropriate, and productive way. This partnership serves as an opportunity for young adults and state agencies to collaborate using survey data to inform, empower, and advance positive youth and community outcomes.

In 2021, the Iowa Department of Human Rights onboarded five NYTD Ambassadors into a NYTD Advisory Council, to partner on the collection, analysis and reporting of NYTD data in Iowa. In 2022, it was decided to better integrate Ambassadors by onboarding them as part-time state employees.

NYTD Ambassadors use their professional and lived expertise to analyze NYTD data, co-create clear data messages, provide recommendations on using the NYTD survey data to invoke system change, present the data to stakeholders, co-lead the Creative Expressions Contest and the Talking Wall project, and maintain connection and community with other NYTD youth.

# NYTD Creative Expressions Contest

The NYTD Creative Expressions Contest is an annual art contest that invites youth and young adults who have experienced foster care and/or juvenile justice to create a work of art that captures the given theme of the contest.

In 2022, the 6th Annual Creative Expressions Contest centered the theme "Trust Your Voice and Voice Your Truth," inspired by the Talking Wall project. A total of 118 young people submitted 126 pieces of art into the contest. Artwork was submitted by youth from across the state in a variety of settings including group care, shelter, Psychiatric Mental Institutions for Children, foster homes, detention, and youth who have aged out of the system. To date, 207 youth have participated in this contest.

Entries are judged using an evaluation rubric by a team of youth and young adults. Youth who place in the top 3 of the contest receive a gift card of their choice (\$100, \$60, and \$35 respectively) and a certificate. A Fan Favorite award (\$100 gift card and certificate) is awarded to the artist who earned the most votes from a public voting campaign. All other youth receive an art swag bag. The winners from this year are featured below.

Once all entries have been judged and awarded, the NYTD Coordinator identifies locations and opportunities for the art to be displayed in the community, if permission has been granted by the artist.



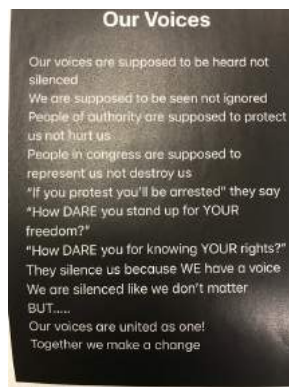
"GENERATIONAL PANDEMIC"  
BY TRINITY



"SET ME FREE"  
BY AALIYAH

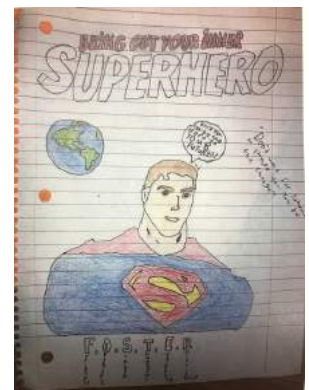


"OUR VOICES"  
BY SERENITY



FAN  
FAVORITE

"YOUR OWN HERO"  
BY DONOVAN



# The Talking Wall

In 2018, Iowa NYTD began hosting the Talking Wall in partnership with HHS, Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP) and Iowa's Juvenile Justice Advisory Council (JJAC). Through the Talking Wall, youth are empowered to lend their voices to the decision-making process by sharing their experiences and visions for change. This also provides decision-makers and professionals an opportunity to align their action to what youth are saying they need. Talking Wall responses are shared with youth advocates, stakeholders and state leaders.

Posters with 5 prompting questions are posted on walls that relate to state-level initiatives and workgroups. Youth are provided sticky notes to write down their ideas to post on each Talking Wall. This year's questions included:

- *What would you like to see happen to improve the foster care and/or juvenile justice system in Iowa?*
- *What would you like to see happen to improve the foster care and/or juvenile justice system in Iowa, specifically for youth of color and Indigenous youth?*
- *What would you like to see happen to improve the foster care and/or juvenile justice system in Iowa, specifically for girls and young women or LGBTQ+ youth?*
- *What do your or other youth need that you're not currently getting?*
- *What are the do's and don'ts of the people who work with you?*

In FFY2022, 40 organizations participated leading to 1,828 post-it notes uplifting the voices of 383 youth. More than 15 state-level stakeholder groups reviewed the Talking Wall data and hosted discussions on how to translate the ideas into actions. Outcomes of the Talking Wall include:

- Modified administrative rules to ensure youth of color have access to the hair and skin products they need while in out-of-home placement
- Modified administrative rules to ensure youth have access to the period products they need while in out-of-home placement
- Modified administrative rules to increase the clothing allowance for youth in foster care
- Pathway for youth in detention to work on their Hi-Set (currently being piloted in one detention center)
- Beginning the creation of a Juvenile Justice Bill of Rights
- A guide for youth, "What to do when your attorney isn't calling you back" made by State Public Defender's Office and DHR
- Creation of a Guide for Court for youth in child welfare
- Capacity building work around healing-centered engagement
- Inspired the Family and Youth Engagement Summit, that was even bigger this year than it was last year
- Development of a youth-created toolkit on how schools can partner with youth to address the school-to-prison pipeline
- Presented at over 40 state and national events/conferences/webinars

The FFY2023 Talking Wall report will be published in the Spring of 2023.

# CONSIDERATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

## Considerations

- Data in this report could benefit HHS, JCS, the JJAC and other stakeholder groups to address the high number of youth experiencing incarceration before age 19
- Data in this report could be analyzed to better understand the strengths and areas of opportunity for Iowa Aftercare Services
- Data in this report could be used to address the access Hispanic/ Latinx youth have to services, education and the NYTD survey itself
- Data in this report could benefit HHS, JCS and other stakeholder groups to address the high number of youth reporting disconnection from work and school at age 19

## Next Steps

- In January 2023, DHR and HHS will host a public release and discussion of this report
- The report will be shared with AMP, Iowa's Youth Justice Council, Iowa Aftercare Services, Iowa College Aide, Juvenile Court Services, HHS Leadership and other stakeholders
- Infographics will be developed for stakeholders and the general public
- Transition Planning Specialists, in their role as DHS transition planning champions, will review this report to identify areas of need and recommend casework practice changes accordingly
- Feedback on this report will be collected and used to improve the quality of future reports
- An update on this report, including community response, will be included in the 2023 Annual Performance and Services Report (APSR). The APSR is a child welfare/foster care report created annually by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, posted publicly, and provided to the U.S. Children's Bureau.





# LEARN MORE

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