

NATIONAL YOUTH IN TRANSITION DATABASE
(NYTD)

NYTD SERVICES FILE

USER'S GUIDE

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SERVICES FILE

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ABSTRACT

The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) was initiated in an effort to improve outcomes for youth in foster care who are likely to reach their 18th birthday without having found a permanent home. The program provides funding to states to develop and administer programs designed to help ease the transition from foster care to independence.

The law that created CFCIP also required states to develop 1) a system for tracking the services provided through CFCIP, and 2) a method for collecting outcome measures so that the effectiveness of the program can be assessed.

These two components together form the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). The files contain data from all 50 states, as well as from the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

The Services component contains cross-sectional information on the services provided by states under CFCIP and the youth who receive those services. Data are submitted by the states every 6 months on a continuing basis.

The Outcomes component contains the results of surveys conducted with youth to examine certain well-being, financial, and educational outcomes as they get older. The Outcomes File is available from NDACAN as a separate dataset. See our web site for details on the Outcomes File.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SOURCE

Authors should acknowledge the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect and the Children's Bureau when they publish manuscripts that use data provided by the Archive. Users of these data are urged to follow some adaptation of the statement below.

The data used in this publication were made available by the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, and have been used with permission. Data from the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) were originally collected by the states and provided to the Children's Bureau. Funding for the project was provided by the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The collector of the original data, the funder, the Archive, Cornell University and their agents or employees bear no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations presented here.

PUBLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENT

In accordance with the *Terms of Use Agreement* for these datasets, users of these data are required to provide citations for any published work or report based wholly or in part on these data with the Archive. To obtain the Terms of Use Agreement for the NYTD Services File, go to: <https://www.ndacan.acf.hhs.gov/datasets/request-dataset.cfm>

OVERVIEW OF NYTD

PURPOSE

The optimal outcome for children in foster care is permanency – a permanent home, either by reunification with the parents or adoption to a loving family. Some children, especially those who enter foster care when they are older, never find a permanent home. Each year, about 10% of children who exit foster care are discharged due to having reached the state’s age limit for eligibility. These children are at particular risk for negative outcomes. Emancipated foster care youth encounter homelessness, incarceration, poor educational outcomes, lack of health insurance, unemployment, unplanned parenthood, and poverty at much higher rates than other children.

In 1999, the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Act (42 USC § 677) was enacted. The goal of the Chafee Act is to support such youth by providing states with flexible funding for the design and administration of programs that will:

- (1) identify children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age and to help these children make the transition to self-sufficiency by providing services such as assistance in obtaining a high school diploma, career exploration, vocational training, job placement and retention, training in daily living skills, training in budgeting and financial management skills, substance abuse prevention, and preventive health activities (including smoking avoidance, nutrition education, and pregnancy prevention);
- (2) help children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age receive the education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment;
- (3) help children who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age prepare for and enter postsecondary training and education institutions;
- (4) provide personal and emotional support to children aging out of foster care, through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults;
- (5) provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster care recipients between 18 and 21 years of age to complement their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to assure that program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility for preparing for and then making the transition from adolescence to adulthood;
- (6) make available vouchers for education and training, including postsecondary training and education, to youths who have aged out of foster care; and
- (7) provide the services referred to in this subsection to children who, after attaining 16 years of age, have left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption.

The act also requires the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to collect two kinds of data:

- (1) Information about services and those who receive them, including “the number and characteristics of children receiving services”, and “the type and quantity of services being provided.”
- (2) Outcome data, including “measures of educational attainment, high school diploma, employment, avoidance of dependency, homelessness, nonmarital childbirth, incarceration, and high-risk behaviors.”

These two datasets together constitute the National Youth in Transition Database.

GEOGRAPHIC AREA

NYTD data come from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

NYTD FILES

There are two NYTD files, one of all youth who receive independent living services using funds provided through the Chaffee Act, and the other for the results of a periodic survey of youth who turn 17 in certain years, along with follow-up surveys at ages 19 and 21.

Data from both populations are collected by the states and submitted to the Children’s Bureau. Although there is some overlap, the two datasets differ in the number and identity of the cases they cover, and the variables they contain. The number of youth who receive services (Services Population) is much larger than the number eligible to take the Outcomes Survey (Outcomes Population). Only about 5% of those who received services are in the Outcomes Population.

CONFIDENTIALITY PROTECTIONS

Because the same youth may appear in NYTD and the AFCARS Foster Care file, and the files can be linked, the same confidentiality protections used in AFCARS are applied to the NYTD files. These are:

- The county FIPS code for the children from counties with fewer than 700 records in the AFCARS Foster Care file are recoded to 8 to indicate *not provided for reasons of confidentiality*. This adjustment applies to NYTD element #15, *LCLFIPSSV*, which appears only in the Services file.
- The child’s day of birth (DOB) is recoded to the 15th of the month. This adjustment applies to NYTD element #4, *DOB*.

THE SERVICES FILE

THE SERVICES POPULATION

NYTD requires that states report semi-annually on all youth who receive at least one independent living skills service paid for or provided by a Chafee funded county or agency, regardless of their foster care status and regardless of their age. This is the Services population. NYTD contains data on the following 14 independent living skills services:

- Independent living skills needs assessment
- Academic support
- Post-secondary academic support
- Career preparation
- Employment programs or vocational training
- Housing education and home management training
- Budget and financial management assistance
- Health education and risk management
- Family support and healthy marriage education
- Mentoring
- Supervised independent living
- Room and board financial assistance
- Education financial assistance
- Other financial assistance.

See the *NYTD Guide to the Data Elements* for detailed information about the variables relevant to the “Services” population.

DATA COLLECTION

Data on services provided are collected continuously as part of the administration of the program. For the Services population, data are reported to the Children’s Bureau at 6-month intervals. The “A” period covers the first 6 months of the fiscal year (October through March); the “B” period covers the second 6 months (April through September).

ANALYTIC CONSIDERATIONS

The Services file is longitudinal. It contains information on the services received by youth during fiscal year. A child will have a record in the file for each 6-month period during which they received services. The 6-month periods are denoted by the variable *RepDate*.

StFCID is the 2-character state postal code added as a prefix to *RecNumbr* -- the encrypted state child identifier. This variable is the child identifier common to the AFCARS family of datasets – the AFCARS Foster Care and Adoption Files, the NCANDS Child File, and the NYTD Services and Outcomes Files.

A *StFCID* is unique within a 6-month reporting period defined by *RepDate*. A *StFCID-RepDate* is unique in the entire longitudinal file.

In 2023, the Children’s Bureau found that the encryption algorithm for two states – Hawaii and Mississippi – was using a substitution character that could not be displayed in many computer programs. This problem was corrected by re-substituting displayable characters for those that were not able to be displayed. Corrections were made to all *StFCIDs* in the NYTD Files going back to FY2011, when the NYTD system began. The original, un-recoded value for *StFCID* is stored in the variable *StFCID_old*.

LINKING TO OTHER FILES.

The variable *StFCID* can be used to link a child across the following datasets archived by NDACAN:

- NYTD Outcomes File
- AFCARS Foster Care File
- AFCARS Adoption File
- NCANDS Child File

Contact NDACAN Support for further information regarding which states can be linked across which years.