

NATIONAL YOUTH IN TRANSITION DATABASE  
(NYTD)

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OUTCOMES FILE  
USER'S GUIDE

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NYTD OUTCOMES SURVEY  
FY2020 COHORT  
WAVE 1-2-3

*NDACAN DATASET #297*

*Revised March 20, 2025*



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NATIONAL YOUTH IN TRANSITION DATABASE  
(NYTD)

**NYTD OUTCOMES SURVEY  
FY2020 COHORT  
NDACAN DATASET #297**

***DATA PROVIDED BY***

CHILDREN'S BUREAU  
ADMINISTRATION ON CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES (HHS)  
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NATIONAL DATA ARCHIVE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

***USER'S GUIDE AND CODEBOOK WRITTEN BY***

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## ABSTRACT

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The John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (the Chafee Program)<sup>1</sup> was initiated in an effort to improve outcomes for youth in foster care who have or are likely to reach their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday without having found a permanent home. The program provides funding to states, territories, and tribes (hereafter simply referred to as “states”) to develop and administer programs designed to help ease the transition from foster care to independence.

The law requires states to develop: 1) a system for tracking the services provided through the Chafee Program, 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.

This User Guide is for the Outcomes component of NYTD. The Outcomes File contains the results of surveys conducted with youth to examine certain well-being, financial, and educational outcomes as they get older.

The Services component of NYTD contains cross-sectional information on the services provided by states under the Chafee Program and the youth who receive those services. Data are submitted by the states every 6 months on a continuing basis. The Services File is available from NDACAN as a separate dataset. See our website (<https://www.ndacan.acf.hhs.gov>) for more information on the Services File.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Law 106-169 established the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). Public Law 115-123 renamed the program the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood, and the program is now referenced as “the Chafee Program” instead of “CFCIP.”

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SOURCE

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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 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, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The collector of the original data, the funder, the Archive, Duke University, Cornell University, and their agents or employees bear no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations presented here.*

## PUBLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENT

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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.

# OVERVIEW OF NYTD

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## PURPOSE

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The optimal outcome for children in foster care is permanency – a permanent home, either by reunification with the parents, guardianship, or adoption. 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. While some young adults will enter adulthood successfully despite their history of foster care and lack of permanency, some of these youth are at particular risk for negative outcomes, including homelessness, incarceration, poor educational outcomes, lack of health insurance, unemployment, unplanned parenthood, and poverty at much higher rates than other youth.

The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (P.L. 106-169) created the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). In 2018, CFCIP was amended by the Family First Prevention Services Act (P.L. 115-123), and the program was renamed the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (the Chafee Program). The Chafee Program is authorized under Title IV-E, Section 477 of the Social Security Act (SSA), and is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

The goal of the Chafee Program is to provide states with flexible funding to provide independent living services to current and former foster care youth transitioning to adulthood. Possible services that may use Chafee funding are specified under the law, including but not limited to: education, employment, financial management, housing, emotional support, and assured connections to caring adults. The program is intended to serve youth who are likely to remain in foster care until age 18, youth who have left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption after the age of 16, and young adults ages 18 to 21 who have "aged out" of the foster care system.

The law requires HHS to collect two kinds of data from the states:

- (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, non-marital childbirth, incarceration, and high-risk behaviors.”

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

## GEOGRAPHIC AREA

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

## NYTD FILES

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There are two NYTD datasets: one dataset contains records for all youth who receive independent living services paid for or provided by the agency that administers the Chafee Program, and the other dataset has 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 sets of data 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 NYTD Outcomes Survey (Outcomes Population). Only 5% of those who received services are in the Outcomes Population.

## CONFIDENTIALITY PROTECTIONS

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Because the same youth, under the same encrypted identifier, 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 youth 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 youth's date of birth (DOB) is recoded to the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. This adjustment applies to NYTD element #4, *DOB*.



# THE OUTCOMES FILE

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## COHORTS

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Starting with the 2011 federal fiscal year, and every three years thereafter, all youth who reach their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday in the fiscal year and are in foster care within the 45-day period following their birthday (45 CFR 1356.61(b)) are eligible for the NYTD Outcomes Survey. Youth who complete the survey are followed up 2 and 4 years later – at ages 19 and 21 – with the same survey. Below is the schedule for outcomes data collection through the year 2023:

Fiscal Year	Cohort	Wave	Data Collected
2011	2011	1	Baseline Outcomes Survey (Age 17 in FY2011)
2012	-		
2013	2011	2	Age 19 Follow-Up Survey
2014	2014	1	Baseline Outcomes Survey (Age 17 in FY2014)
2015	2011	3	Age 21 Follow-Up Survey
2016	2014	2	Age 19 Follow-Up Survey
2017	2017	1	Baseline Outcomes Survey (Age 17 in FY2017)
2018	2014	3	Age 21 Follow-Up Survey
2019	2017	2	Age 19 Follow-Up Survey
2020	2020	1	Baseline Outcomes Survey (Age 17 in FY2020)
2021	2017	3	Age 21 Follow-Up Survey
2022	2020	2	Age 19 Follow-Up Survey
2023	2023	1	Baseline Outcomes Survey (Age 17 in FY2023)
2024	2020	3	Age 21 Follow-Up Survey

## THE THREE WAVES

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### WAVE 1: BASELINE POPULATION AND COHORT

**Baseline Population.** All youth who turn 17 in foster care or who enter foster care within 45 days of their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday in a baseline year are in the baseline population. All youth in the baseline population are required to be contacted and asked to complete the NYTD Outcomes Survey. Demographic data for all baseline youth is recorded in the Wave 1 File, regardless of whether they respond to the survey. This allows comparison of demographics of responders to non-responders.

**Cohort.** The cohort is a subset of the baseline population. To be in the cohort, a youth must meet all the following conditions:

- a) Youth is in the baseline population;
- b) Youth is in foster care on the day of the survey;

- c) Youth participated in the survey (at least one non-missing, non-refusal response to Elements 37-58);
- d) Youth completed the survey within 45 days of her/his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.

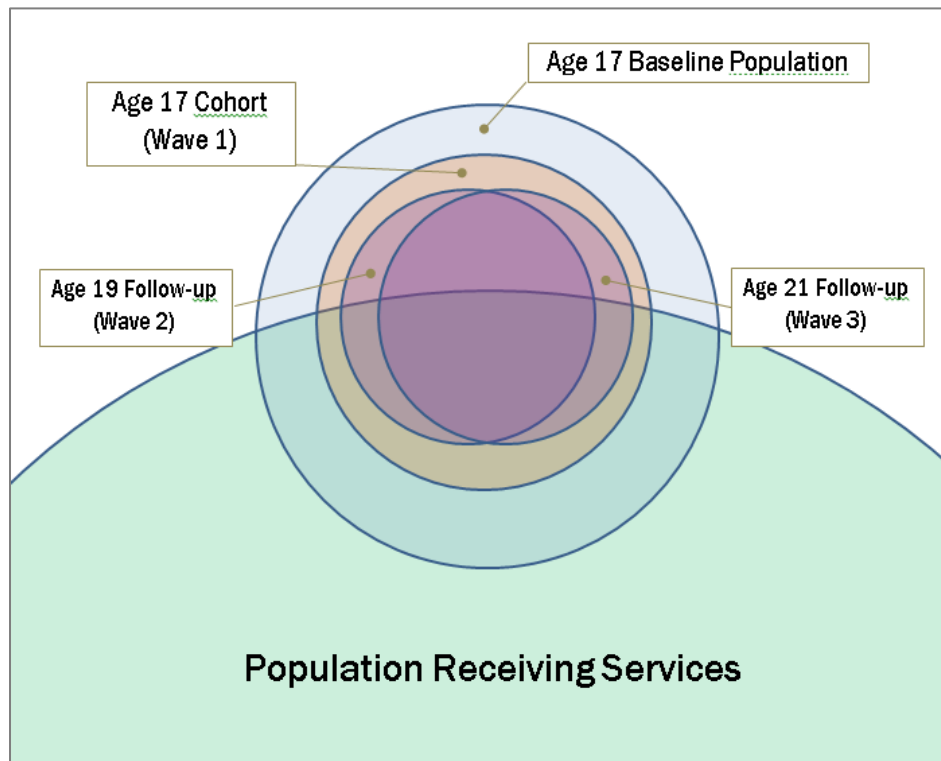
### WAVE 2: TWO-YEAR FOLLOW-UP

Most youth in the cohort, with the exception of those who are not in the sample (for states that sample), are eligible to take a follow-up survey during the 6-month reporting period that contains their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. For the FY2020 Cohort, this survey will be conducted in FY2022.

### WAVE 3: FOUR-YEAR FOLLOW-UP

Youth in the cohort are eligible to take a second follow-up survey during the 6-month reporting period that contains their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. For the FY2020 Cohort, this survey will be conducted in FY2024. The survey questions are the same for both follow-ups. Youth who were eligible for the Wave 2 Survey at age 19 are eligible for the Wave 3 Survey, even if they did not respond to the Wave 2 Survey.

FIGURE 1: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WAVES:



## DATA COLLECTION

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For the baseline survey, results 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), and the “B” period covers the second 6 months (April through September). The baseline survey is administered during the 45-day period following the youth’s 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. If a youth’s birthday occurs during the last 45 days of the “B” period, the state still has 45 days to collect the data. If the survey is administered after the end of the fiscal year, the data is reported along with the “A” period data for the following year. This means that the full complement of baseline data will not be complete until after the May 15<sup>th</sup> deadline (45 days after the end of the “A” period – March 31) for submission of the “A” period file for the following fiscal year.

## SAMPLING

For the baseline population, no random sampling is done. The eligible baseline population consists of *all* youth in foster care at any point during the 45-day period beginning on their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The cohort is a self-selected, non-probabilistic sample of youth in the baseline population. Because youth are not selected randomly, there is no guarantee that the cohort is representative of the baseline population (i.e., 17-year-old youth in foster care).

Once the cohort is selected, probabilistic sampling *may* be used to determine the two follow-up populations (at 19 and 21 years of age). Sampling is done once, and the same sample is used for both follow-up surveys.

**Sample States.** For the 2-year and 4-year follow-up surveys, states have the option of surveying a random sample of the Wave 1 Cohort. Sampling is done just once for both follow-ups. States that take this option have a value of 1 for the variable *SampleState*. Youth who are in the sample are denoted as such in the variable *InSample*. Only youth in the sample – and all those from non-sample states – are eligible for the ages 19 and 21 follow-up surveys.

States have the option of sampling the cohort for waves 2 & 3. As of wave 1, it is not yet known which states will choose to sample. This section will be updated when the information becomes known in subsequent waves.

The NYTD regulations specify the following regarding the sampling frame, sampling method, and sample size (45 CFR 1356.61(b)):

*(b) The State agency must select the follow-up sample using simple random sampling procedures based on random numbers generated by a computer program, unless ACF approves another sampling procedure. The sampling universe consists of youth in the baseline population consistent with 45 CFR 1356.81(b) who participated in the State agency's data collection at age 17.*

*(c) The sample size is based on the number of youth in the baseline population who participated in the State agency's data collection at age 17.*

*(1) If the number of youth in the baseline population who participated in the outcome data collection at age 17 is 5,000 or less, the State agency must calculate the sample size using the formula in appendix C of this part, with the Finite Population Correction (FPC). The State agency must increase the resulting number by 30 percent to allow for attrition, but the sample size may not be larger than the number of youth who participated in data collection at age 17.*

*(2) If the number of youth in the baseline population who participated in the outcome data collection at age 17 is greater than 5,000, the State agency must calculate the sample size using the formula in appendix C of this part, without the FPC. The State agency must increase the resulting number by 30 percent to allow for attrition, but the sample size must not be larger than the number of youth who participated in data collection at age 17.*

Appendix C, referenced above, can be found as on-line document [Appendix C to Part 1356 - Calculating Sample Size for NYTD Follow-Up Populations](https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/45/appendix-C_to_part_1356) on the Cornell Law School website ([https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/45/appendix-C\\_to\\_part\\_1356](https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/45/appendix-C_to_part_1356)).

If no state has more than 5000 youth in their cohort, the Finite Population Correction (FPC) – described above and in Appendix C – will apply.

## SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

Under NYTD rules, states have the discretion to choose the methods used to administer the Outcomes Survey to youth (e.g., in person, online, or over the phone), provided that the survey is administered to the person directly. No one can answer for the youth, nor can data from other sources be used to answer questions. Participation in the survey is voluntary on the part of the youth.

## RESPONSE RATES

**Response Rates for Wave 1.** For Wave 1, there is only one way of computing the response rate.

### Wave 1:

- *Denominator* is the number of youth in the baseline population (*Baseline = 1 AND Wave = 1*).
- *Numerator* is the number of youth who responded to the survey, and who met all other Cohort 2020 inclusion criteria (*FY20Cohort = 1 AND Wave = 1*).

For the 2020 Cohort, there were 21,430 youth in the Baseline Population. Of these, 14,796 responded and met all the inclusion criteria. The overall response rate, then, was  $14,796/21,430 = .690$ , or 69.0%.

**Response Rates for Waves 2 and 3.** For Waves 2 and 3, there are two ways of computing the response rate. The difference is in the denominator.

In Method 1, the denominator goes back to the original population of youth who turned 17 in FY2020 – this is the population for which that the survey is hoping to measure the outcomes. That is, this is the population that the survey respondents are intended to represent.

In Method 2, the denominator is the cohort – the youth who responded to the survey at Wave 1, and were eligible for subsequent surveys. Any youth in the cohort from a state that didn't sample is eligible. For sample states, only youth in the sample are eligible. This response rate tells you the proportion of youth who responded among those who were eligible.

**Wave 2, Method 1:**

- *Denominator* is the number of youth in the baseline population (*Baseline = 1 AND Wave = 1*).
- *Numerator* is the number of youth at Wave 2 who were in the FY2020 Cohort, were eligible for the Wave 2 survey, and who participated in the survey (*FY20Cohort = 1 AND Wave = 2 AND Elig19 = 1 and OutcmRpt = 1*).

**Wave 2, Method 2:**

- *Denominator* is the number of youth who were in the FY2020 Cohort and were eligible for the Wave 2 survey (*FY20Cohort = 1 AND Wave = 2 AND Elig19=1*).
- *Numerator* is the number of youth at Wave 2 who were in the FY2020 Cohort, were eligible for the Wave 2 survey, and who participated in the survey (*FY20Cohort = 1 AND Wave = 2 AND Elig19 = 1 and OutcmRpt=1*).

**Wave 3, Method 1:**

- *Denominator* is the number of youth in the baseline population (*Baseline = 1 AND Wave = 1*).
- *Numerator* is the number of youth at Wave 3 who were in the FY2020 Cohort, were eligible for the Wave 3 survey, and who participated in the survey (*FY20Cohort = 1 AND Wave = 3 AND Elig21 = 1 and OutcmRpt=1*).

**Wave 3, Method 2:**

- *Denominator* is the number of youth who were in the FY2020 Cohort and were eligible for the Wave 3 survey (*FY20Cohort = 1 AND Wave = 3 AND Elig21=1*).

- *Numerator* is the number of youth at Wave 3 who were in the FY2020 Cohort, were eligible for the Wave 3 survey, and who participated in the survey (*FY20Cohort* = 1 AND *Wave* = 3 AND *Elig21* = 1 and *OutcmRpt*=1).

## DATA FILE INFORMATION

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NDACAN Dataset #297 contains results from Wave 1 of the NYTD Outcomes Survey for the FY2020 Cohort. The variable “Wave” distinguishes between the Waves. Wave 1 (Wave=1) includes all youth in the baseline population, regardless of whether or not they responded to the survey. Waves 2 and 3 are not yet completed, and will only include youth in the FY2020 Cohort who were eligible for the two-year and four-year follow-ups.

## ANALYTIC CONSIDERATIONS

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*RecNumbr* is the encrypted youth identifier. This ID is only guaranteed to be unique within a state, so *RecNumbr* must always be used in combination with the state ID when counting or otherwise analyzing particular youth.

To facilitate working with *St-RecNumbrs*, NDACAN added the derived variable ***StFCID*** to the dataset. *StFCID* is the concatenation of *St* and *RecNumbr*. For example, when *St* = “CA” and *RecNumbr* = “123456789012”, then *StFCID* would be “CA123456789012”.

A *StFCID* is unique within a Wave. A *StFCID-Wave* combination is unique in the entire file. The current file has only Wave 1 data.

Another advantage of using *StFCID* is that it is present in each of the four linkable files listed below, with the same name.

### LINKING TO OTHER FILES

The variable *RecNumbr* is an encrypted version of the youth’s unique identifier used by the state agency. The ID may go by different names in the various linkable files. These are:

- NYTD Outcomes File: *RecNumbr*
- AFCARS Foster Care File: *RecNumbr*
- AFCARS Adoption File: *RecNum* (for some states)
- NCANDS Child File: *AFCARSID*

The AFCARS youth identifier is encrypted for all these datasets, but is encrypted consistently across datasets, so it serves as an indicator of the same youth across datasets and across years. Be careful, however. These commonalities are generally reliable, but are not applicable to all states in all years. Contact NDACAN Support for further information regarding which states can be linked across specific years.

To facilitate linking data among this family of files, a common linking variable – “*StFCID*” has been added. It consists of concatenating the state’s 2-character postal code to the *ChildID*, resulting in a 14-character variable.

**SEE THE NYTD CODE BOOK FOR VARIABLE INFORMATION.**

Technical support for this dataset is provided by NDACAN. Send inquiries to [NDACANsupport@cornell.edu](mailto:NDACANsupport@cornell.edu).