

CERTAINTY GRANT FUNDING | ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
December 2022

Progress Reporting: Section 602(d)(1) of the Transition Act requires agencies receiving Funding Certainty Grants to report on the use of these funds. Funding Certainty Grant recipients will be asked to provide program information and updates annually in the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) submitted beginning with the APSR due on June 30, 2021 and continuing through the last FFY in which these grants are expended. The Transition Act requires grantees to report:

A. How funds are used to implement each part of FFPSA, with a separate statement with respect to each such part

New York State deferred implementation of the FPPSA until October 1, 2021. As such, the certainty grant funds were not used to implement parts of FFPSA but rather were used to sustain successful initiatives previously funded as part of New York's IV-E Demonstration Project.

B. All programs, services, and operational costs to which the grant is put

Caseload Reduction: The largest expense throughout the IV-E Waiver Demonstration Funding and continuing with Certainty Grant funding is New York City's funding to its contracted foster care agencies to support and sustain reduced caseloads for foster care case planners. This intervention has supported both staffing and child placement stability and has expedited permanency for children in foster care. Reduced caseloads allow more time for comprehensive, individualized service assessments and permanency planning. Prior to ACS' implementation of the IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project, caseloads for foster care case planners averaged between 18-24 children.

Agencies receive support to maintain an average caseload of no more than 12 children, with additional support to promote supervisory ratios of one supervisor for every four case planners. An independent evaluation of the Waiver Demonstration Project by Chapin Hall found that the caseload reductions led to shorter stays in foster care – with a decline of nine (9) percent in the median length of stay in foster care. During this reporting period, providers were able to maintain caseloads at or below 12 per case planner for 72 percent of their case planning staff – turnover and vacancies, exceptionally challenging during this period because of the COVID-19 pandemic, impacted providers' ability to maintain lower caseloads for all staff.

Attachment and Bio-Behavioral Catch-Up (ABC): The ABC model provides dyadic in-home coaching for parents and caregivers of infants and toddlers, which promotes responsive and nurturing caregiving skills that leads to healthy childhood development and resilience with lasting impact on health and mental health outcomes. ABC has been the subject of multiple randomized control trials with child-welfare involved families and caregivers in multiple jurisdictions. The model is a manualized 10-session program delivered in the caregiver's home. Sessions are recorded to provide feedback to caregivers, conduct supervision of coaching staff and to monitor model fidelity. ABC has been implemented in New York City by Power of Two, a nonprofit organization since 2013.

Power of Two has progressively expanded the delivery of the infant and the toddler models in all five boroughs. Power of Two provides targeted parent coaching to foster parents caring for young children placed into foster care due to abuse or maltreatment, and to the caregivers of young

children reunified following a foster care placement, to strengthen and support nurturing caregiving skills.

During the Certainty Grant period, ACS expanded ABC beyond our regular family foster care programs to our treatment and special medical family foster care programs and mother/child residential programs and Power of Two began to expand service recruitment efforts to families involved in ACS' primary prevention programs. In FY20, 460 children were referred to ABC; in FY21, 580 children were referred; and in FY22, 349 children were referred. . ACS provides technical assistance to providers to address referral and engagement challenges. An independent evaluation of the Waiver Demonstration Project by Chapin Hall found that the ABC model improved parenting and sensitivity skills in participating caregivers – similar positive findings have been found in subsequent reviews, and Power of Two continues to conduct ongoing fidelity monitoring of its service provision.

C. The characteristics of the families and children served

Children and families served using Certainty Grant funding were children in New York City foster care, primarily family foster care.

As of December 2021, New York City had 7,111 children in foster care, as follows:

- The most likely placement for foster children is with a kinship caregiver – 3,040 or 43 percent of children in NYC foster care are in kinship placement
- An additional 35 percent, or 2,494 children, are in family foster boarding homes
- Nine percent of placements are in treatment family foster care, which provide additional therapeutic supports in family foster home settings
- New York City continues to limit its placements into residential/congregate settings. A total of 638 children, or 9 percent of children in foster care are in residential settings; most of these settings are certified as Qualified Residential Treatment Programs consistent with FFPSA requirements.
- Lastly, 226, or 3 percent of placements, are in special medical family foster homes.

Just under half (45 percent) of children entering foster care are children under the age of five (5). Children between the ages of 6-11 are an additional 26 percent of children entering foster care, and 30 percent are aged 12 or older – up to the age of 21.

Just over half (52 percent) of the children in 24-hour foster care in New York City are female. The majority of children in foster care are African American (53 percent), followed by Latinx children (36 percent). An additional five percent of the foster care population are white children, and two percent are Asian, with four percent of an other/unknown race or ethnicity.

For additional information on the characteristics of children in foster care in New York City, please refer to the monthly Flash report indicators, available via [this link](#),¹ and the annual Report on Youth in Foster Care, available via [this link](#).²

¹ <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/acs/about/flashindicators.page>

² <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/data-analysis/2021/ReportOnYouthInFC2021.pdf>

D. The amounts the agency uses for each FY to continue activities previously funded under a waiver provided under section 1130 of the Act

Table 1: Certainty Grant Expenditures, FFY2021

Description	FFY2021 YTD Post-Waiver Costs
Caseload Reduction – invoices paid in FFY2021	\$ 156,330
ABC/Power of Two (Fund for the City of New York)	\$ 2,653,123
Caseload Reduction	\$14,230,320
Total	\$17,039,773

E. The agency’s plan to transition the activities so that needed activities can be provided under the agency’s title IV-E plan, or, if expenditures for the activities would not be eligible for payment under title IV-E, the reason for it not being eligible and the funding sources the agency plans to use to cover the costs of needed activities

ACS is in the process of re-procuring its contracted foster care system and intends to continue to sustain funding the successful caseload reductions in its new contracts, with support from IV-E reimbursement where eligible.

All costs are eligible for IV-E reimbursement, but due to a low eligibility rate among NYC foster care placements and the capped foster care block grant, un-reimbursable costs will require supplemental funding from other sources, including City Tax Levy dollars.