

## New York State Data Brief for the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Cohort 3 Report

### Background

#### ***What is NYTD?***

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) is a nationwide data collection system overseen by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (ACF) that gathers information on youth aging out of foster care and their experiences across six life domains: educational attainment, financial self-sufficiency, access to health insurance and vital documents, positive connections with adults, experience with homelessness, and other situations that could place youth at risk.

#### ***Who participates?***

NYTD participation begins with a baseline survey administered to youth in foster care within 45 days of their 17th birthday. Youth who complete a baseline survey are then followed over time and re-surveyed at age 19 and again at age 21, regardless of their foster care status at follow-up. In New York State, youth have the option of remaining in foster care up to age 21, but can choose to exit at any point past age 18. Youth can decline to participate in the survey at any time or may be unable to locate for the follow-up for a variety of reasons (e.g., incarceration, death).

#### ***What can we learn from NYTD data?***

NYTD data provides insight into how older youth fare as they enter early adulthood and transition out of the foster care system. While states have the flexibility to add survey items, states must use questions set forth by ACF for each of the core domains listed above. Uniform data collection makes it possible to compare youth outcomes across states and to establish national trends.

As shown in Figure 1, a new cohort of 17-year-old youth is selected every three years, and then followed over a four-year period. By collecting information across successive cohorts of youth at multiple ages, NYTD data also sheds light on how changes in social policies and/or environmental circumstances may differentially impact groups of youth coming of age at different points of time.

## Cohort 3 Outcomes

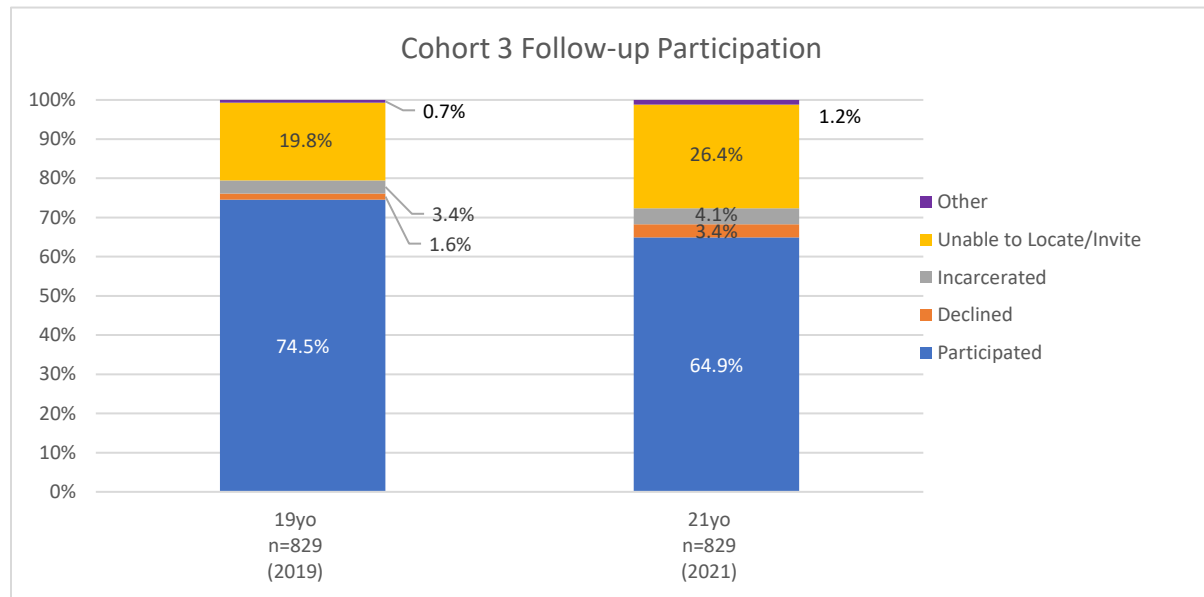
This data brief summarizes the findings for NYS NYTD Cohort 3. Youth included in this cohort were in foster care and turned 17 in Federal Fiscal Year 2017 (10/1/2016 through 9/30/2017) and completed their third and final survey in 2021 at the age of 21.

Reporting Population	FFY17	FFY18	FFY19	FFY20	FFY21
Baseline 17	Cohort 3 (wave 1)				
Follow-up 19			Cohort 3 (wave 2)		
Follow-up 21					Cohort 3 (wave 3)

## Participant Demographics

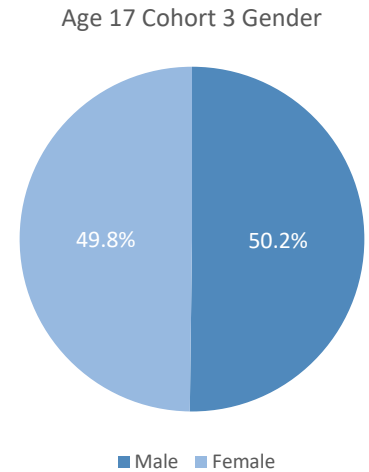
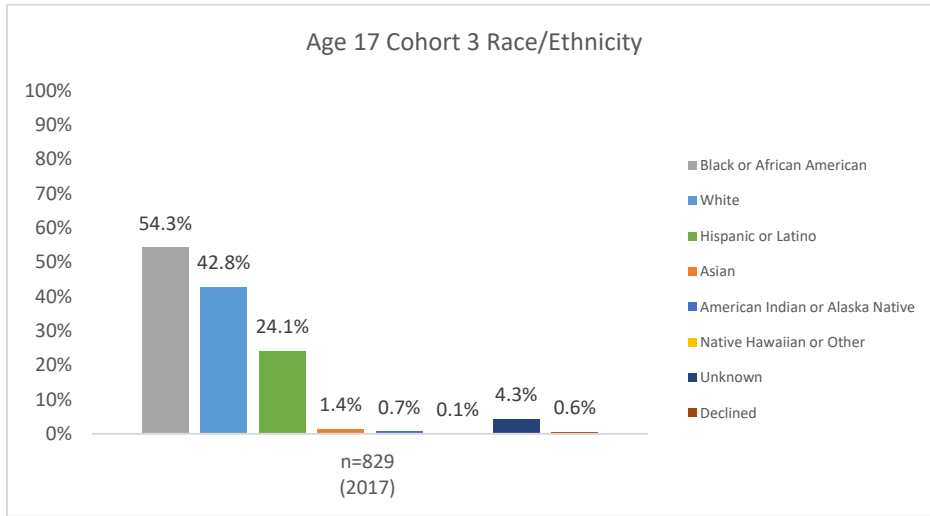
Eight hundred and twenty-nine (829) youth were identified to be tracked for the NYTD survey for cohort 3. Of these youth, 75% (n=618) participated in the survey at age 19, and 65% (n=538) participated at age 21.

### Participation By Survey Wave



\*\*"Other" includes youth who were unable to participate due to being incapacitated, being a runaway, parent declined, or youth was deceased.

## Gender, Ethnicity, and Racial Distributions

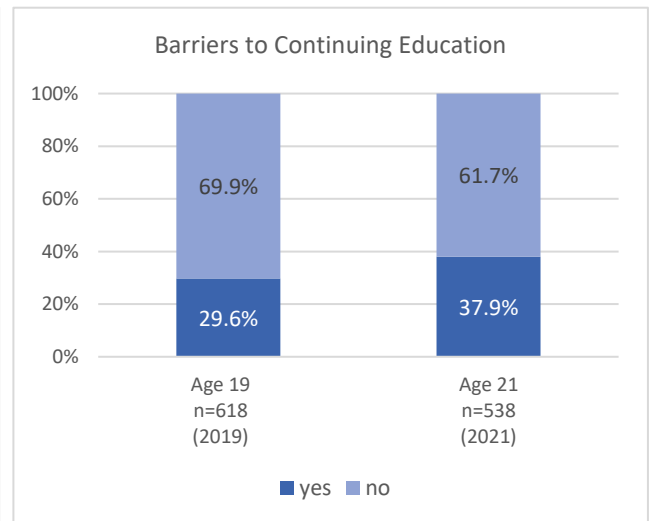
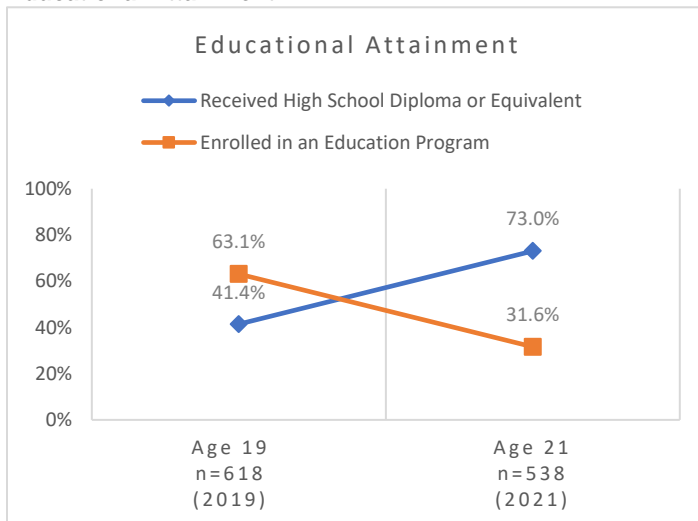


Gender, ethnicity, and racial distributions were relatively stable throughout the three survey waves. Race categories are not mutually exclusive and therefore exceed 100% (a youth with multiple races will be counted for each race). At age 17, survey participants equally identified as either male or female — the federal questionnaire does not collect gender identity categories outside of the male/female binary. Fifty-four percent (54%) identified as Black and 43% as white. The distribution is reflective of what we observe in the foster care population.

## How Are Youth Doing Regarding Educational Attainment?

Achieving a high school diploma or equivalent can be considered a minimal requirement for self-sufficiency and can assist in establishing a solid educational foundation that will prepare youth for future educational pursuits and career development. At age 19, almost two-thirds of surveyed youth were enrolled with an educational program, with 41% reporting that they had received a high school diploma or its equivalent. By age 21, only one-third of survey participants were enrolled in an educational program; however the percentage of those with a high school diploma or equivalent had increased to 73%.

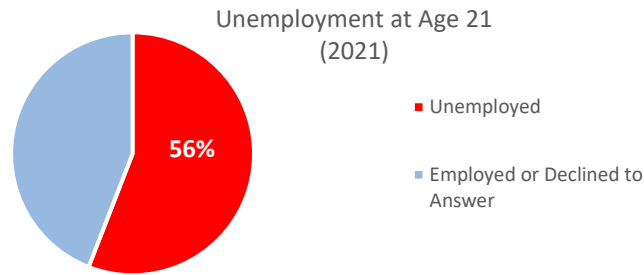
## Educational Attainment



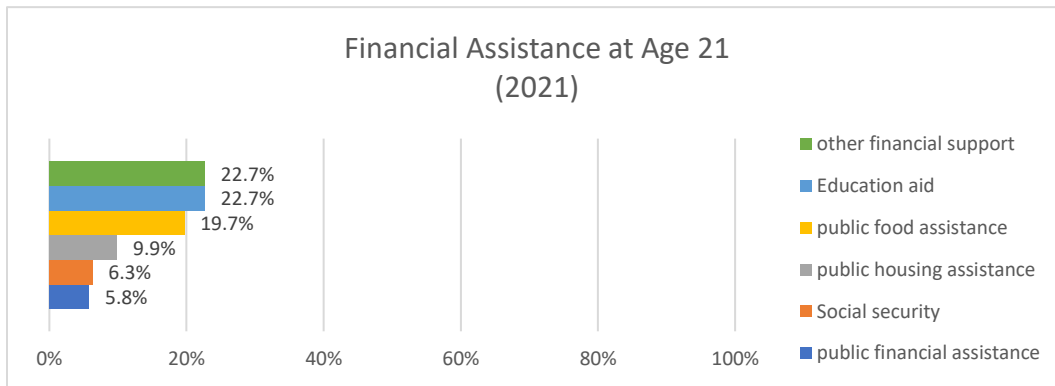
Approximately a third of youth at age 19 and 21 indicated that there were barriers preventing them from continuing their education. Of those youth that indicated they had barriers, the three most common reasons cited across 19- and 21-year-olds were being unable to pay for school, needing to work full time, and having academic difficulties.

### Youth's Financial Situation

Employment is an important metric for youth transitioning into adulthood and achieving self-sufficiency. At age 21, 43% of youth had either part-time or full-time employment. Over half (56%) reported having neither full-time nor part-time employment at age 21.

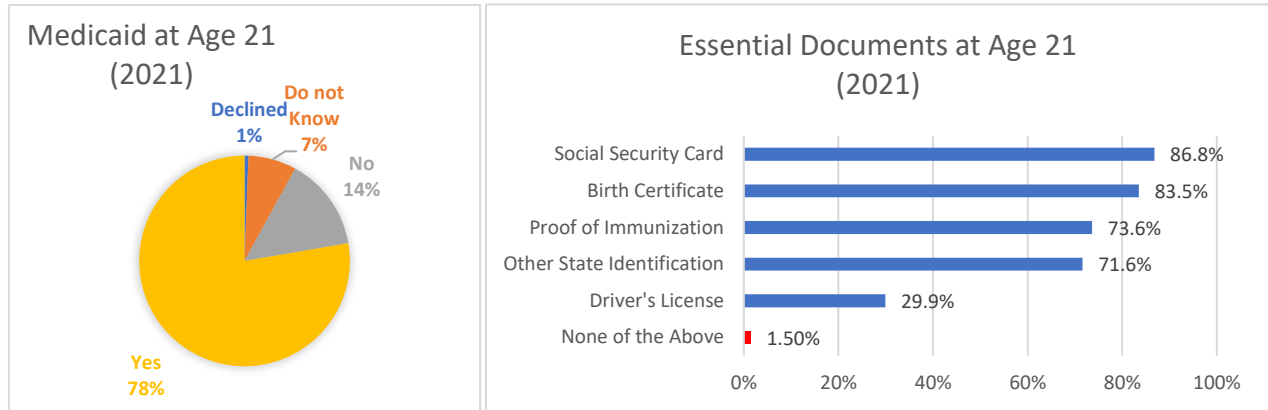


Surveyed youth at age 21 indicated other financial support (including payments from a spouse or family member, child support that the youth receives for themselves, or funds from a legal settlement), education aid, and public food assistance as the three most common categories of financial assistance.



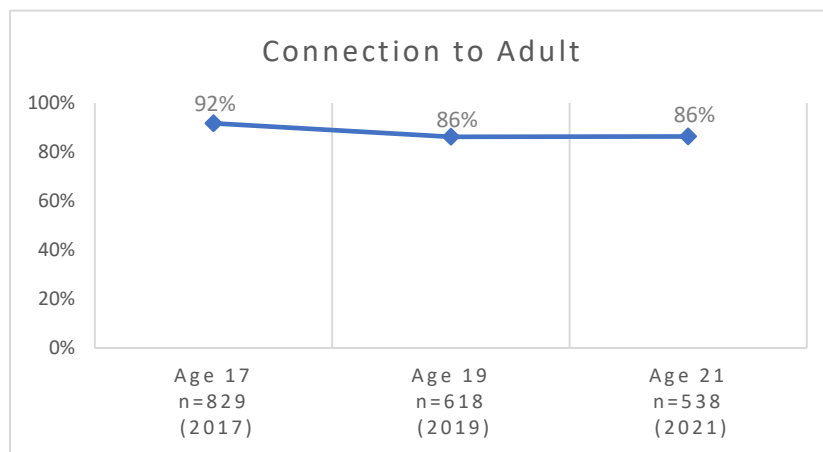
### Access to Health Insurance and Important Documents

All youth in foster care are categorically eligible for Medicaid, and all youth who exited foster care at or after 18 are eligible for Medicaid until they are 26. However, 14% indicated they did not have Medicaid at 21, and 7% indicated that they did not know if they had Medicaid, suggesting that there is a lack of clarity for youth leaving care regarding their Medicaid eligibility. More than 10% of youth at age 21 indicated that they did not have their Social Security Card.



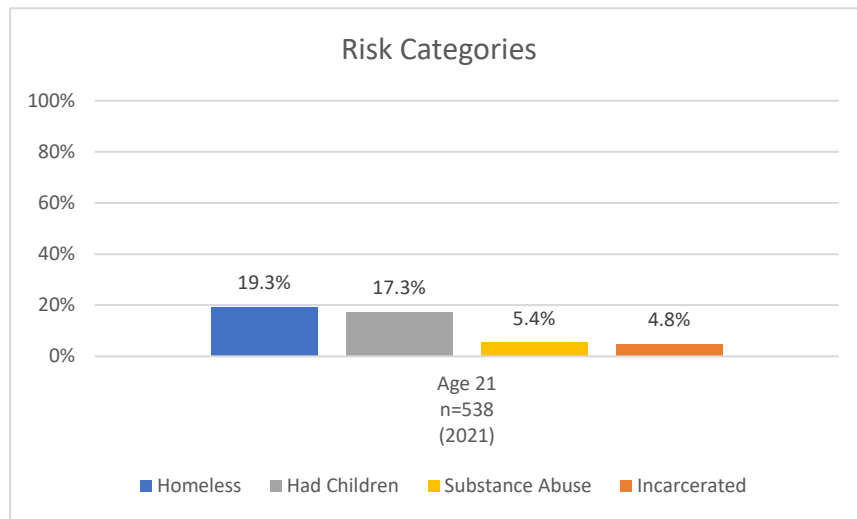
### Do Our Youth Have Adult Support?

Establishing a positive, consistent, and lasting relationship with at least one adult is a critical component in ensuring that youth make a successful transition from foster care to adulthood. The NYTD survey asks whether the youth knows at least one adult who they can go to for advice or guidance when there is a decision to make or a problem to solve, or for companionship when celebrating personal achievements. The adult must be easily accessible to the youth, either by telephone or in person, and the definition excludes spouses, partners, boyfriends/girlfriends and current caseworkers. Connection to an adult was high at all survey points.



### Do Our Youth Evidence Any Risks?

The NYTD survey collects information on four key outcomes as identified by ACF (homelessness, substance use, incarceration, and early transitions to parenthood) that have been associated with hindering successful transitions to adulthood. At age 21, 19% of survey respondents reported experiencing homelessness in the last two years. A notable percentage of youth had also transitioned to parenthood (17%), and approximately 5% had experienced incarceration or referral for substance use services.



### Concluding Statements

While some outcomes show that New York State youth leaving care after age 17 are experiencing areas of success, there is much work to be done for youth to have a full range of support and opportunities. More detailed data may be available by county or cohort and can be sought by contacting [koyuki.nakamura@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:koyuki.nakamura@ocfs.ny.gov).