



CDSS

WILL LIGHTBOURNE
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • www.cdss.ca.gov



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

October 10, 2014

ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) NO. 14-69

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
 ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS
 ALL INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM MANAGERS
 ALL INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM COORDINATORS
 ALL FOSTER CARE MANAGERS
 ALL TITLE IV-E AGREEMENT TRIBES
 ALL TRANSITIONAL HOUSING COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: NATIONAL YOUTH IN TRANSITION DATABASE (NYTD) SURVEY:
 21 YEAR-OLD FOLLOW-UP POPULATION OF THE FIRST COHORT

REFERENCE: ACL NO. 13-84, 12-52, 11-27, 08-31, 00-22, AND 99-96; COUNTY FISCAL LETTER (CFL) NO. 09/10-19 AND 00/01-46; ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-07-10; SENATE BILL (SB) 1013 (CHAPTER 35, STATUTES OF 2012); WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE (W&IC) SECTION 10609.4; 45 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS 1356.83

The purpose of this ACL is to provide updated information and direction regarding the follow-up survey of the 21 year-old population from the first cohort of the NYTD survey. This survey is for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2015 that begins October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015. The first cohort consists of all youth who participated in the survey at age 17 in FFY 2011 (October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2011), referred to as the baseline population. The 21 year-old follow-up population of the first cohort consists of these same youth, who are now turning age 21 during FFY 2015 (October 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015). This is the third and final survey of the first cohort. Tribes with Title IV-E Agreements (entered into pursuant to W&IC 10553.1) are only required to survey youth, if any, who were under tribal jurisdiction and were previously interviewed by the tribe at age 17 as part of the first cohort.

Counties must contact the first cohort youth to request that they complete the follow-up survey, during the same review period in which their 21st birthday falls. In FFY 2015,

the first review period for the 21 year-old follow-up population is October 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015. The second review period is April 1, 2015 to September 30, 2015.

BACKGROUND

Every six months, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) must collect and transmit to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) outcomes data for foster youth (the NYTD survey), which is intended to measure six outcomes: financial self-sufficiency; educational attainment; connections with adults; homelessness; high-risk behavior; and access to health insurance. In addition to the survey data, CDSS is required to transmit data extracted from the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) on the Independent Living Program (ILP) services provided to current and former foster youth. The primary goal of these activities is to obtain data that will help make informed decisions to improve service provision and outcomes for current and former foster care youth.

Federal rules require states to survey 17 year-old foster care youth within 45 days after their 17th birthday during designated review periods. Each group of 17 year-olds comprises a cohort and is referred to as the baseline population. The youth in the baseline population for each cohort are subsequently re-surveyed on or around their 19th and 21st birthdays; these are referred to as the follow-up populations. Every three years the cycle starts again with a new cohort of 17 year-olds. A timeline of the staggered reporting periods for the cohorts and follow-up populations is included as attachment C to ACL 11-27 which may be found at:

<http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/lettersnotices/entres/getinfo/acl/2011/11-27.pdf>

States are also required to submit data twice a year regarding independent living services provided to eligible current or former foster youth; this is referred to as the served population. The timeline for submission of this data is also included in the above-referenced attachment to ACL 11-27. The independent living services for which the data is collected are those provided to current and former foster youth related to a needs assessment; education; post-secondary education; career/job guidance; employment/vocational training; money management; consumer skills; time management; home management; housing options; health care; interpersonal/social skills; parenting skills; mentoring; and transitional housing. Please refer to ACL 11-27 for more information about this requirement.

LEGISLATION REGARDING NYTD AND THE 2011 CHILD WELFARE REALIGNMENT

The SB 1013 enacted many programmatic changes for realignment, including codifying county responsibilities regarding NYTD. In part, the bill amended W&IC section 10609.4 to require counties to do the following:

- Ensure timely and accurate data entry CWS/CMS for all youth receiving any independent living services.

- Ensure that eligible foster care youth continue to receive information about, and are provided with an opportunity to complete, the NYTD survey by doing the following:
 - Providing information to the youth about the NYTD survey within 60 days prior to the date the current or former foster youth is required to be offered the survey (this corresponds to the beginning date of each of the two review periods).
 - Contacting the youth who completed the survey at age 17 in order to request before their 19th and 21st birthday that they complete the follow-up survey.
 - Providing opportunities for current and former eligible foster youth to take the NYTD survey online at child welfare services and probation offices.

Preparation for the Survey

County child welfare agencies, probation departments, and Title IV-E agreement tribes are required to provide the information about the survey to those youth eligible to take it. This information should include how to access the survey, where to take it, and how to collect the incentive payment. Counties have the discretion to determine how this information is provided; however, the information about the survey must be provided to the youth within 60 days from the beginning of the review period in which he or she is eligible to take the survey. The beginning dates of the two review periods for FFY 2015 are October 1, 2014 and April 1, 2015.

Methods of providing information in advance include phone calls, text messages, postcards, letters, or emails. Contact with the youth can be made by any county or tribal representative including the county social worker, ILP worker, Title IV-E agreement tribal social worker, ILP coordinator, or probation officer. Documentation of the efforts made to inform youth about the NYTD survey is provided to survey-eligible youth in advance should be maintained to verify compliance. The documentation may include a copy of the notice sent to the youth inserted in the youth's electronic or hard copy case file, or any other method the county chooses to document the advance notice requirement.

The follow-up population of 21 years-olds is a defined group of youth who participated in the survey at age 17. Therefore, counties will not need to run SafeMeasures or Business Objects' reports to determine who is eligible to take the survey. Counties will receive a spreadsheet list of their 21 year-old follow-up population close to October 1, 2014, for the first review period and prior to April 1, 2015, for the second review period from CDSS' Child Welfare Data Analysis Bureau. Counties should familiarize themselves with their list of youth at the beginning of the review period and strategize how to survey the most youth.

Who May Take the Survey: 21 Year-Old Follow-Up Population

The survey process for the 21 year-old follow-up population is similar to the 19 year-old survey process described in ACL 12-52. A youth whose birthdate falls within the review period can take the survey any time WITHIN that review period. Youth who will turn 21 during the first six-month review period of October 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015, can take the survey anytime during the period, but only during this time. The same is true for a youth who will turn 21 during the second six-month review period between April 1, 2015, and September 30, 2015. For example, if the youth's birthdate is October 1st, he or she would have the period from October 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015, to take the survey. Conversely, if the youth's birthdate is March 31st, he or she may take the survey anytime from October 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015. It is the same for youth whose birthdate falls in the second review period between April 1, 2015 and September 30, 2015; they may take the survey anytime between April 1, 2015 and September 30, 2015. If the youth's birthdate is at the END of the review period, they may still take the survey anytime during the review period, including before their actual birthday. This is different from the 17 year-old baseline population survey in which youth were only eligible to take the survey within 45 days after their birthday.

It is important to note that all 21 year-olds who participated in the survey at age 17 (In FFY 2011) are eligible to take the survey again even if they did not take it at age 19. If a youth did not take the survey at age 19 because they declined, were incarcerated, incapacitated, or unable to be located, the youth would still need to be given information about and offered the survey at age 21.

Administering the Survey

Youth may take the survey on the Internet within the six-month review period in which their birthdate falls. The survey is available on the CDSS NYTD webpage (<http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/PG2981.htm>) by clicking on the Take the California NYTD Survey link. Login instructions are provided to enter the survey at this link (see ACL 13-84, page 5.). The CDSS recommends that survey data not be entered on a smart phone.

The social worker or probation officer is required to offer the youth the opportunity to take the survey on computers in their offices and to ensure that group homes and foster family agencies are also offering the youth the survey. Alternative methods would be to utilize the monthly caseworker visit while the youth is still in care before their 21st birthdate by bringing a hard copy of the survey or laptop to their monthly visit, or to utilize a computer in the foster home to facilitate the survey completion.

If the youth prefers not to self-administer the survey, the social worker, probation officer or other county staff may verbally administer the survey to the youth on the telephone or in person by using the hard copy of the survey attached to the ACL and then enter in

the survey data by clicking on the same [Take the California NYTD Survey](#) link on the NYTD webpage and following the login instructions. As the surveys vary for each age group, it is important that only this version of the survey be used for this population.

For either the youth self-administering the survey, or county personnel filling in the survey for the youth, the CDSS recommends logging into the survey only when the survey data is ready to be entered in its entirety as there is not a stop and restart option. Under no circumstance may the social worker or probation officer take the survey in lieu of the youth. The survey results should be entered electronically as soon as possible or within the required time period in order to be acceptable and to allow the youth to receive the incentive. The CDSS recommends checking SafeMeasures' NYTD report frequently to see who has completed the survey in order to initiate further contact to those showing as not completed. Technical issues with SafeMeasures may be sent to support@safemeasures.org for assistance.

As this is the last survey for this cohort, it also would be beneficial to give youth information on how to access the federal NYTD ACF website so they could look for any upcoming published survey results of their cohort.

Additional Guidance for Locating and Surveying Out-of-Care Youth

Federal guidance is provided by the ACF in a technical assistance document that may be found at:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/practical_strategies_nytd.pdf

Counties reported being successful in locating youth in order to offer the NYTD survey by utilizing the following strategies:

- Contact with eligibility worker in the county to determine if youth are receiving Medi-Cal, CalFresh, child support, ILP, etc.
- Contact with biological relatives from information in the case file.
- Social media such as Facebook and Twitter.
- LexisNexis® Accurint® for Government. Accurint offers a search technology available by subscription that helps to locate people, and authenticate their identities.
- Letters to last known address.

Consideration of Special Needs Youth

Counties should ensure that survey-eligible youth with special needs or limited English proficiency are offered the NYTD survey and are accommodated according to their needs. Suggestions for accommodating youth with visual impairments, learning disabilities, cognitive disabilities, hearing impairments, speech impairments, physical disabilities and limited English proficiency are contained in the NYTD Technical Assistance Brief No. 4 and is available at:

http://www.nrccwdt.org/resources/nytd/docs/NYTD_TA_%20Brief_3_Surveying_Special_Populations.pdf

Incentives

Incentives are offered to the youth to increase participation rates. The CDSS and the NYTD Steering Committee recommend that youth in the 21 year-old follow-up population who participate in the survey receive a \$100 incentive payment. The NYTD Technical Assistance Brief No. 6 explains that participation rates are higher when incentives are used. For more information on the federal NYTD perspective of incentives, the brief is available at:

http://www.nrccwdt.org/resources/nytd/docs/NYTD_TA_Brief_6_Understanding_Incentives_081010.pdf

Incentives may be issued for youth who take the survey past their 21st birthday even though eligibility for ILP services ends at age 21. The CDSS has confirmed with the ACF that an incentive payment paid for with Chafee ILP funds for a youth who took the survey after their 21st birthday is allowable. Counties should share this information with their fiscal departments.

Informing the youth of the incentive payment should be clear in the advance notification process. While an incentive payment issued immediately after completion of the survey may be effective in motivating the youth, counties have various fiscal policies and may require incentives to be mailed only after verification of survey completion. Probation departments may contact the ILP coordinator in their counties to find out the process for incentive distribution.

As part of the advance notice to youth about the survey, counties should provide youth with specific instructions about claiming the incentive, such as whether the youth may collect it in person and where, or how to receive the incentive by mail. In addition, the survey includes a question inquiring as to youth's preference of receipt of incentive payment by mail or by picking it up at the county's offices.

Claiming and Time Study

County Fiscal Letter 12/13-26 describes how costs associated with Incentives and administrative activities for the NYTD survey may be claimed. This fiscal letter is available at:

http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/lettersnotices/entres/getinfo/cfl/2012-13/12-13_26.pdf

Survey Outcome Determinations and Documentation

A “determination” must be made for each youth eligible to take the survey. The county child welfare agency, probation department, and Tribal IV-E agency are responsible for ensuring that a participation determination is completed for each youth in the 21 year-old follow-up population. A determination will identify one of the following survey outcomes:

- Participated – The youth participated in the survey either fully or partially. The completion of at least one question will result in a “participated” status.
- Declined – The youth was located successfully and was invited to participate, but the youth declined to participate. A written or verbal decline of the youth to the opportunity to take the survey will be counted as a “not participated” status.
- Incapacitated – The youth has a permanent or temporary mental or physical condition that prevents survey participation. This category may not be used for youth who can complete the survey with accommodations/assistance. An “incapacitated” status is exempt from calculation of the participation completion rate.
- Incarcerated – The youth is unable to participate because of his/her incarceration. If the youth completes the survey while incarcerated, the survey will count as a “participated” status. If the survey-eligible youth is unable to participate due to incarceration, an “incarcerated” determination is entered and will be exempted in the calculation of the participation completion rate.

An important point to remember is that counties must attempt to contact survey-eligible youth who were incarcerated to inform them of the survey before choosing the category “incarcerated” as a determination. The ACF has encouraged states to work with its correctional facilities to gain access to locked facilities in order to offer the survey to incarcerated youth. Without data from this population, California’s NYTD data may be inconclusive. In addition, some states are offering incarcerated youth incentives by depositing the funds in their grocery or commissary accounts.

- Runaway/missing – The youth is known to have run away or be missing from his/her foster care placement. This determination will be counted as a “not participated” status.

- Unable to Locate/Invite – Could not locate the youth or otherwise invite the youth's participation (for example, no current address or telephone number on file; no forwarding address available; mail was returned). This determination will be counted as a "not participated" status.
- Death – The youth died prior to participation. This determination is exempted from the calculation of the participation completion rate.

Note that these determination terms have been established as a federal survey requirement and must be entered verbatim. Do not use other terms. Also, a determination date will need to be provided, and this date must fall with the six-month review period in which the birthdate occurs.

The CDSS will collect these determinations of each youth not completing the survey by providing counties with a list of their 21 year-old follow-up population at the end of each six-month review period. Counties will enter in one of the appropriate determinations listed above for any youth that did not participate in the survey. These lists are to be returned to CDSS at CWSdata@dss.ca.gov. Additional guidance will be sent to counties via email from the Child Welfare Data Analysis Bureau and questions regarding the spreadsheet may be sent to CWSdata@dss.ca.gov.

Compliance with Federal Participation Requirements

The CDSS is required to send NYTD outcomes survey data with participation rates of at least 80 percent of youth in foster care and at least 60 percent of youth out of foster care to the ACF twice a year reflecting each review period. These participation rates are only specified in federal regulation for the follow-up populations.

The state received a penalty for the 2013A review period (October 2012-March 2013) for the first cohort's 19 year-old follow-up population for not meeting the participation rates in both the in-care youth and out-of-care youth categories. The 2013B review period (April 2013-September 2013) also incurred a penalty notice from ACF for not meeting the participation rate for the out-of-care category. However, subsequent to receiving this penalty notice from ACF, the CDSS reopened the survey for the 2013B review period and counties were able to locate and survey more youth whom they were unable to find previously. The CDSS submitted a corrected file for the additional out-of-care foster youth to the ACF and was found to have met the participation rate thereby avoiding the penalty for 2013B.

Regarding future penalties, Government Code section 30026.5(e)(3) provides that any monetary penalty that results from an administrative mandate is shared equally between the counties and the state. However, if the state determines that counties failed to perform the mandated requirement, counties could pay 100 percent of the penalty. It is conceivable that counties could pay a monetary penalty of either 50 percent or 100 percent for not complying with the federal NYTD requirements including

administering the NYTD Survey. The distribution methodology for any penalty will be determined in consultation with the County Welfare Directors Association.

Ongoing Technical Assistance

A steering committee of the CDSS and counties will be meeting throughout FFY 2015 to resolve any issues that may arise during the surveying of the 21 year-old follow-up population of the first cohort. If there are any data or technical questions or concerns, please send an email to CWSdata@dss.ca.gov; otherwise, please send an email to the NYTD policy box at NYTD@dss.ca.gov or call 1-877-IAM-NYTD (1-877-426-6983).

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

GREGORY E. ROSE
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division

Attachment



QUESTIONS FOR THE CALIFORNIA NYTD SURVEY: 21 YEAR OLDS FOLLOW UP POPULATION IN FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2015 (OCTOBER 1, 2014 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2015)

IF YOU HAVE PROBLEMS ENTERING THE DATA OR GET LOCKED OUT WHILE ENTERING THE DATA, PLEASE CONTACT CWSDATA@DSS.CA.GOV

First and Last letter of first name (*Michael = ML or Mary = MY*)

First and Last letter of last name (*Smith = SH or Garcia-Marquez = MZ*)

Enter the date of birth (01/01/1996)

1. Currently are you employed full-time?

“Full-time” means working at least 35 hours per week at one or multiple jobs.

- Yes
- No
- Declined

2. Currently are you employed part-time?

“Part-time” means working at least 1-34 hours per week at one or multiple jobs.

- Yes
- No
- Declined

3. In the past year, did you complete an apprenticeship, internship, or other on-the-job training, either paid or unpaid?

This means apprenticeships, internships, or other on-the-job trainings, either paid or unpaid, that helped you to acquire employment-related skills (which can include specific trade skills such as carpentry or auto mechanics, or office skills such as word processing or use of office equipment).

- Yes
- No
- Declined

4. Currently, are you receiving social security payments (Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), or dependents’ payments)?

These are payments from the government to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter of a person with a disability. You may be receiving these payments because of a parent or guardian’s disability, rather than your own.

- Yes
- No
- Declined

5. Currently, are you using a scholarship, grant, stipend, student loan, voucher, or other type of educational financial aid to cover any educational expenses?

Scholarships, grants, and stipends are funds awarded for spending on expenses related to gaining an education. “Student loan” means a government-guaranteed low-interest loan for students in post-secondary education.

- Yes
- No

- Declined

6. Currently are you receiving any periodic and/or significant financial resources or support from another source not previously indicated and excluding paid employment?

This means periodic and/or significant financial support from a spouse or family member (biological, foster or adoptive), child support that you receive or funds from a legal settlement. This does not include occasional gifts such as birthday or graduation checks or small donations of food or personal items, child care subsidies, child support for your child, or other financial help that does not benefit you directly in supporting yourself.

- Yes
- No
- Declined

7. What is the highest educational degree or certification that you have received?

“Vocational certificate” means a document stating that you have received education or training that qualifies you for a particular job, e.g., auto mechanics or cosmetology. “Vocational license” means a document that indicates that the State or local government recognizes you as a qualified professional in a particular trade or business. An Associate’s degree is generally a two-year degree from a community college, and a Bachelor’s degree is a four-year degree from a college or university. “Higher degree” indicates a graduate degree, such as a Masters or Doctorate degree. “None of the above” means you have not received any of the above educational certifications.

- High school diploma/GED
- Vocational certificate
- Vocational license
- Associate’s degree (e.g., A.A.)
- Bachelor’s degree (e.g., B.A. or B.S.)
- Higher degree
- None of the above
- Declined

8. Currently are you enrolled in and attending high school, GED classes, post-high school vocational training, or college?

This means both enrolled in and attending high school, GED classes, or postsecondary vocational training or college. You are still considered enrolled in and attending school if you are enrolled in and attending a school that is currently out of session (e.g., Spring break, summer vacation, etc.).

- Yes
- No
- Declined

9. Currently is there at least one adult in your life, other than your caseworker, to whom you can go for advice or emotional support?

This refers to an adult who you can go to for advice or guidance when there is a decision to make or a problem to solve, or for companionship to share personal achievements. This includes, but is not limited to, adult relatives, parents, or foster parents. This does not include spouses, partners, boyfriends or girlfriends and current caseworkers. The adult must be easily accessible to you, either by telephone or in person.

- Yes
- No
- Declined

10. In the past two years, were you homeless at any time?

“Homeless” means that you had no regular or adequate place to live. This includes living in a car, or on the street, or staying in a homeless or other temporary shelter.

- Yes
- No
- Declined

11. In the past two years, did you refer yourself, or had someone else referred you for an alcohol or drug abuse assessment or counseling?

This includes either self-referring or being referred by a social worker, school staff, physician, mental health worker, foster parent, or other adult for an alcohol or drug abuse assessment or counseling. Alcohol or drug abuse assessment is a process designed to determine if you have a problem with alcohol or drug use.

- Yes
- No
- Declined

12. In the past two years, were you confined in a jail, prison, correctional facility, or juvenile or community detention facility, in connection with allegedly committing a crime?

This means that you were confined in a jail, prison, correctional facility, or juvenile or community detention facility, in connection with a crime (misdemeanor or felony), allegedly committed by you.

- Yes
- No
- Declined

13. In the past two years, did you give birth to or father any children that were born?

This means giving birth to or fathering at least one child that was born. If males do not know, answer "No."

- Yes
- No
- Declined

14. If you responded yes to the previous question, were you married to the child's other parent at the time each child was born?

This means that when the child was born you were married to the other parent of the child.

- Yes
- No
- Declined

15. Currently are you on Medi-Cal?

Medi-Cal is a health insurance program funded by the government.

- Yes

- No
- Don't know
- Declined

16. Currently do you have health insurance other than Medi-Cal?

“Health insurance” means having a third party pay for all or part of health care. You might have health insurance such as group coverage offered by employers or schools, or individual policies that cover Medi-Cal and/or mental health care and/or prescription drugs, or you might be covered under parents’ insurance. This also could include access to free health care through a college, Indian Tribe, or other source.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Declined

17. Does your health insurance include coverage for medical services?

This means that your health insurance covers at least some medical services or procedures.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Declined

18. Does your health insurance include coverage for mental health services?

This means that your health insurance covers at least some mental health services. This question is for only those who responded “yes” to having health insurance with medical coverage.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Declined

19. Does your health insurance include coverage for prescription drugs?

This means that your health insurance covers at least some prescription drugs. This question is for only those who responded “yes” to having health insurance with medical coverage.

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Declined

20. Currently are you receiving ongoing welfare payments (CalWORKS, general assistance, etc.) from the government to support your basic needs?

This refers to ongoing welfare payments from the government to support your basic needs. Do not consider payments or subsidies for specific purposes, such as unemployment insurance, child care subsidies, education assistance, food stamps or housing assistance in this category.

- Yes
- No
- Declined

21. Currently, are you receiving public food assistance?

Public food assistance includes food stamps (CalFresh), which are government-issued coupons or debit cards that recipients can use to buy eligible food at authorized stores. Public food assistance also includes assistance from the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program.

- Yes**
- No**
- Declined**

22. Currently are you receiving any sort of housing assistance from the government, such as living in public housing or receiving a housing voucher?

Public housing is rental housing provided by the government to keep rents affordable for eligible individuals and families, and a housing voucher allows participants to choose their own housing while the government pays a part of the housing costs. This does not include payments from the child welfare agency for room and board payments.

- Yes
- No
- Declined

23. How would you like to receive your incentive?

If you select *By mail* below, you must enter your mailing address.

- By Mail
- I will pick up at my local county office.

24. Street Number

25. Street Name

26. City:

27. State:

28. Zip Code:

29. To verify this is you, please enter the last 4 digits of your social security number. Leave this item blank if you do not know or if you are unsure.

THANK YOU FOR ASSISTING CALIFORNIA'S YOUTH BY TAKING THE SURVEY!

PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE YOUTH RECEIVES THE \$100 INCENTIVE PAYMENT TIMELY.

