



CDSS

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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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 18, 2012

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 12-52

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

SUBJECT: NATIONAL YOUTH IN TRANSITION DATABASE (NYTD) DATA
 COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS: FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

REFERENCE: ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) NO. 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 (CFR) 1356.83

This ACL is to provide updated information and direction regarding survey outcomes reporting as required per the NYTD Final Rule that became effective on October 1, 2010.

BACKGROUND

Federal requirements mandate that states must collect and submit to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), outcomes data for foster youth by offering a survey to two reporting populations, the baseline population and the follow-up population. The baseline population includes all youth in foster care at age 17; the follow-up population includes youth turning 19- and 21-years-old and who participated in survey data collection as part of the baseline population at age 17.

The survey requirement is in addition to the ongoing requirement for states to submit semi-annual reports to ACF which identify Independent Living Program (ILP) delivered services provided to any dependent or ward of the court in foster care and ILP-eligible former foster youth.

The ACF will evaluate NYTD data file submissions for both the NYTD ILP delivered services and the survey responses to ensure data compliance standards are met. In the event data compliance standards are not achieved, penalties may be assessed in an amount that range from one to five percent of California's annual Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) funding, depending on the level of noncompliance.

Provisions contained in SB 1013 required the NYTD survey process to be developed in consultation with counties. The process outlined below is a result of those discussions.

SURVEY REQUIREMENTS

The only youth eligible to take this year's follow up NYTD survey are youth who are now 19 years old and who took the survey at age 17 while in foster care. These youth are to be asked to take the NYTD survey again during a six-month period (see below) during which the youth turns age 19 in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2013, commencing October, 1, 2012 through September 30, 2013. It is important to note that taking the NYTD survey is voluntary; no youth is required to participate.

It is critical to note the period in which youth may complete the survey. Specifically, youth who will turn 19 between October 1, 2012 and March 31, 2013, can take the survey anytime during the six-month period of October 1, 2012 and March 31, 2013, but only during this time.

Youth who will turn 19 between April 1, 2013 and September 30, 2013, can take the survey anytime during the six-month period of April 1, 2013 and September 30, 2013, but only during this time.

For example, a youth who turns 19 on March 31, 2013, can take the survey as early as October 1, 2012. However, that youth who turns 19 on March 31, 2013, may NOT complete the survey in April 1, 2013, as April is outside the period for this birthdate. Therefore, counties are advised to contact the youth as early as possible in the six-month period and not wait until the youth's 19th birthday is imminent.

Survey Process

New this year, **the survey will be conducted online only** and will be available at <http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/PG2981.htm> beginning October 1, 2012. In addition to providing NYTD survey access, this NYTD website will provide general information and a link about the survey and incentives.

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has provided counties with updated lists of the follow-up youth to be surveyed, including contact information (where available).

All survey-eligible youth must be informed by phone, mail or email of the opportunity to take the survey; contact with the youth can be made by any county representative including the county social worker, ILP worker, Title IV-E agreement tribal social worker, ILP Coordinator, or probation officer. Counties need to document contact with each survey-eligible youth and whether the youth participates in the survey. Additional information on this documentation requirement is provided in the *Survey Outcomes Determination* section below.

County child welfare agencies, and probation departments and Title IV-E agreement tribes are required to provide the survey-eligible youth with information about the survey: how to access the survey, where to take the survey, and how to collect the incentive payment. In consideration of individual county practice, counties have the discretion to determine how that information is provided. It is recommended that counties have staff available to answer questions from youth about the NYTD survey.

Counties are encouraged to make computer access available to youth at the child welfare or probation office, and to also provide information on any other locations where the 19-year-old participant may access a computer to take the online survey. In addition, youth can access the link to the survey via a Smart Phone. Youth who participate via Smart Phone will be unable to print a survey receipt; however, counties can verify participation via SafeMeasures[®].

Each survey-eligible 19-year-old participant should be given direct access to the survey, which requires verification of his or her identity. Verification requires that the youth enter the first and last letters of his or her first name, first and last letters of his or her last name, and date of birth. For example, John Smith would enter: J and N for his first name, and S and H for his last name, and his date of birth. Note that youth who are not eligible to take the survey will be unable to access to the survey and thus will not be able to claim the incentive.

The online survey recommends the youth print a survey receipt; the receipt serves as verification of survey participation and may be presented to the county of jurisdiction for payment of the \$75 incentive. The receipt indicates the youth's name, case identification number, and date of participation. Counties may use the receipt as an acknowledgement that the youth has completed the survey. Since some youth will not have access to a printer, in addition to verification by survey receipt, counties will know of a youth's participation via a SafeMeasures[®] report specific to the NYTD survey. The SafeMeasures[®] report will assist all county child welfare offices and probation departments by providing information about NYTD-eligible 19-year-old youth who need to be surveyed. Children's Research Center (CRC) has agreed to provide a secure, subscription-free web site, which lists by county those youth who have completed the survey. The same lists will be available within SafeMeasures[®] to all subscribing agencies. The site information will be limited to survey participation and not include other NYTD reports. The SafeMeasures[®] NYTD survey report will be refreshed three times per week throughout the survey period and can be accessed by counties to identify youth who completed the online survey. This report can be sorted by county of jurisdiction. The report can also be used as the official verification of a youth's participation in the NYTD survey and serve as a mechanism to trigger the incentive payment to the youth.

For non-subscribing agencies, a designated NYTD County Administrator needs to be identified. Counties should contact the NYTD@dss.ca.gov mailbox with the designee's information. An email address list will be created and forwarded to CRC. The designated County Administrator will then receive identification and a hyperlink to the NYTD survey provided by CRC.

Counties are encouraged to review the SafeMeasures[®] report of youth who have completed the survey on a frequent basis and to issue incentives once the youth has been listed as eligible (partially or fully completed the survey) to collect the \$75 incentive. Counties do not need to wait for the youth to turn in his or her survey receipt in order to issue the incentive payment. In addition to the SafeMeasures[®] report, periodically throughout the survey period CDSS will provide counties with a list of updated youth contact information to facilitate payment of the incentive. The goal is to achieve the highest possible participation rate of NYTD clients by enabling counties to promptly issue and distribute the incentive payment.

All FFY 2013 NYTD data collected via the online survey is strictly confidential and housed by CDSS.

Youth Participation Incentives

The Chafee Foster Care Independent Living Program–Foster Care Independence Act authorizes incentive payments to youth for participating in the NYTD survey. An incentive of a \$75 gift card or other form of payment is available to youth who complete all or a portion of this follow-up survey during the six-month period that he or she turns age 19. Youth may present or send his or her survey receipt to the county of jurisdiction to collect the incentive. The receipt can then be verified by the county list of youth who participated in the survey provided in the SafeMeasures® NYTD survey report.

As part of the information to youth about the survey, counties should provide youth with specific instructions about claiming the incentive; whether to collect it in person and where that would be, or by mail and the mailing address. Counties may want to create an opportunity to provide ILP services by scheduling an appointment for the youth to collect his or her incentive payment in person and to verify contact information. Please remember these youth will need to be resurveyed at age 21.

Survey Outcome Determinations

Based on the result of contacting the youth to take the survey, a “determination” must be made for each youth. The county and tribal child welfare agency or probation department having last jurisdiction of the youth is responsible for ensuring that a participation determination is completed for each youth in the follow-up population. A determination establishes one of the following statuses for survey outcomes:

- Participated - the youth participated in the survey either fully or partially.
- Declined - the youth was located successfully and was invited to participate, but the youth declined to participate.
- Incapacitated - The youth has a permanent or temporary mental or physical condition that prevents survey participation.
- Incarcerated - The youth is unable to participate because of his or her incarceration.
- 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.)
- Death - the youth died prior to participation.

Note that these determination terms have been established as a federal survey requirement and must be entered verbatim—do not use other terms.

For those eligible youth who do not participate in the survey, counties must record at the end of each of the two six-month periods, a date and determination made for each youth. The determination must be recorded and submitted to CDSS at the end of each six-month period. For tracking, it is suggested that counties add a column to the list already sent, labeled "Determination," consistent with the type described above. These lists are to be returned to CDSS via email to CWSdata@dss.ca.gov within 15 days from the end of each six-month period. Additional guidance will be sent to counties via email.

An important point to remember is that counties must attempt to contact incarcerated youth to inform them of the survey before choosing the category "incarcerated" as a determination.

Survey-eligible youth currently living in another state or who have been adopted should also be contacted and offered an opportunity to take the survey. If a youth's name has changed since taking the survey at 17, the youth should be informed to use his or her previous name (at age 17) to take the online survey.

This same group of youth will need to be contacted again at the next follow up survey at age 21 (the only exception will be if the youth was determined to be deceased). At the time of making contacts by phone, visit, etc., counties are advised to get updated youth contact information from the youth directly if possible (in case the youth takes the survey but does not enter updated contact information). It is suggested that the updated contact information be recorded on the list provided by CDSS (add a column titled "Updated Contact Information"). Providing updated data will be helpful for the follow-up survey of youth at age 21.

Youth Contacts

County and Title IV-E agreement tribes, child welfare workers, ILP coordinators, and probation officers are to use the lists distributed by CDSS in July 2012 to contact youth who are reaching age 19 between October 1, 2012 and September 30, 2013, at least 60 days prior to their 19th birthday, and advise when he or she is to take the survey. However, efforts should be made to contact youth as early as possible in the six-month period within which his/her birthday falls.

Counties are to use the youth contact information that exists in its most current and updated format in the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System case records. However, where more up-to-date contact information is needed, counties may want to work with their eligibility units to determine if survey-eligible youth are affiliated with other assistance programs and, where appropriate, make contact with those entities for additional youth contact information.

Many county ILP Coordinators have created social media *Facebook* and *Twitter* pages for ILP. Counties and tribes may want to use those resources to reach the targeted survey population; below is sample language.

If you took the NYTD Survey when you were 17-years-old, now that you will be 19, its time to take it again. Click on the following link: <http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/PG2981.htm> and enter the required information. If you're not sure about your eligibility to take the survey, call 1-877-IAM NYTD (1-877 426-6983) or email NYTD@dss.ca.gov for assistance or more information. This year you will receive \$75 (gift card or other form of payment) for your participation in the survey.

COUNTY REIMBURSEMENT

Claiming instructions for NYTD survey costs and incentive payments will be included in a forthcoming County Fiscal Letter. Questions about claiming these costs should be directed to fiscal.systems@dss.ca.gov.

SURVEY COMPLIANCE/PENALTIES

California must survey 80 percent of youth in care and 60 percent of youth who have opted out of care. There must be a determination and a date that corresponds to the six-month survey period of the birthdate for each survey-eligible youth who are 19.

If the surveys are not completed as outlined above, the state can be penalized between one and five percent of its annual CFCIP allotment for each six-month reporting period, depending on which standard is not achieved.

Thank you for your assistance with the administration of this important survey. If you have questions, please contact the Foster Care Support Services Bureau at (916) 651-7465, or by email to NYTD@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

GREGORY E. ROSE
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division