

March 3, 2023

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 23-27

This All County Letter is being issued by the Department to provide guidance on administering the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) survey for the 17-year-old population of the fifth cohort. The NYTD survey is a federal survey designed to measure independent living services delivered to youth, beginning with a baseline population at age 17, followed by two subsequent surveys at ages 19 and 21.



KIM JOHNSON
DIRECTOR

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
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GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

March 3, 2023

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 23-27

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

SUBJECT: **NATIONAL YOUTH IN TRANSITION DATABASE SURVEY: 17-YEAR-OLD FOLLOW-UP POPULATION OF THE FIFTH COHORT**

REFERENCE: [ALL COUNTY LETTERS 22-30, 21-10, 19-109, 18-126, 17-103, 16-81, 15-79, 14-69, 13-84, 12-52, 11-27, AND 08-31;](#)
[COUNTY FISCAL LETTERS 09/10-19 AND 00/01-46;](#)
[ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-07-10; WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE SECTION 10609.4; 45 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS PART 92 AND SECTION 1356.83](#)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to provide updated information and direction regarding the 17-year-old population from the fifth cohort of the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) survey. This survey is for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023 that runs from October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023. The fifth cohort consists of all youth in foster care turning 17 years-of-age during this timeframe. Those youth who participate in the NYTD survey at age 17, as part of the fifth cohort, will be surveyed again as 19-year-olds in FFY 2025 and again at age 21 in FFY 2027.

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 each baseline population that have participated in their first NYTD survey 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 A within this ACL.

States are also required to submit data twice a year regarding ILP 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. The ILP 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 NYTD [ACL 16-81](#) for more information about this requirement.

LEGISLATION REGARDING NYTD

The [WIC Section 10609.4](#) requires counties to:

- Ensure timely and accurate data entry in CWS/CMS for all youth receiving any ILP services.
- Ensure that eligible foster care youth continue to receive information about, and are provided with an opportunity to complete, the NYTD survey.
- Provide information to the youth about the NYTD survey 60 days prior to their 17th birthday.
- Within 45 days following the youth in foster care turning 17 years-of-age, ensure that each youth has an opportunity to complete the NYTD survey as required by federal law.
- Provide 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 who are part of the fifth cohort. As part of the county's efforts to establish engagement 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 prior to their 17th birthday. For example, if the youth turns 17 on October 15th, the advance information would need to be provided at any time between August 16th and October 14th. The beginning dates of the two review periods for FFY 2023 are October 1, 2022, and April 1, 2023¹.

Placement data for youth who have recently entered foster care and are reaching their 17th birthday must be entered in a timely manner into the CWS/CMS for youth to have access to the survey.

Counties should actively collaborate with Tribes regarding NYTD preparation, so that eligible Tribal youth can be made aware of and engaged with the survey process. Examples of collaboration may include working with Tribes to initiate NYTD outreach, establishing a joint effort on the NYTD survey process, and allowing Tribes to support their youth taking the survey.

Counties are encouraged, when determining the methods of providing information in advance, to see and use this opportunity to effectively practice engagement behaviors to involve participants authentically in the survey process, whether using phone calls, text messages, postcards, letters or emails, and social media (Note: youth confidentiality must be ensured if using social media messaging). Contact with the youth can be made by any 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 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 advanced notice requirement.

Counties are encouraged to identify survey-eligible youth, prior to the youths' 17th birthday in order to plan how those youth will be given information about NYTD. Counties may utilize the "Time to NYTD Survey for 17-Year-Olds" report located in SafeMeasures® under "In Placement" or "Probation Menu," if applicable. This report will generate a list of youth who will be turning 17 each month. Social workers and probation officers may utilize these SafeMeasures® reports to plan discussions of the survey and incentives during their

¹ As of the publishing of this ACL the first review period has begun and information regarding NYTD should be shared as soon as possible. In addition, counties were made aware of this requirement via email in October 2022.

monthly visits with youth. The 'NYTD' section in SafeMeasures® also includes the following NYTD survey reports:

- Transitional Independent Living Program Services
- NYTD Survey Completion
- NYTD Full Data Elements
- My NYTD Cases
- My Unit NYTD Cases

For those counties who do not have regular access to SafeMeasures®, please contact support@safemeasures.org to submit a request to access the NYTD report. Probation departments interested in accessing SafeMeasures® reports, may contact support@safemeasures.org to submit a request to have a free account created to view the NYTD report.

In addition to reports in SafeMeasures®, a BusinessObjects report that identifies youth soon to turn 17-years-old, is available. Counties may receive additional assistance on SafeMeasures® and/or Business Objects, by contacting the county's Single Point of Contact.

ADMINISTERING THE SURVEY

Youth may take the survey on the internet, within 45 days, after their 17th birthday. The survey is available on CDSS's NYTD webpage by clicking on the [Take the California NYTD Survey for 17-Year-Olds](#) link. Login instructions are provided to enter the survey at this link (see NYTD Survey: Third Cohort All County Letter [ACL 16-81](#), page 5). After the 45 days have passed, neither the youth nor the social worker will be able to access the survey.

The Social worker or Probation officer is required to offer the youth the opportunity to take the survey in their offices and to ensure that group homes, the Short-Term Residential Treatment Program, and foster family agencies are also offering the youth the survey either by computer, smart phone, or hard copy. Alternative methods include the monthly caseworker visit while the youth is still in care (by bringing a hard copy of the survey or laptop to their monthly visit), or utilization of 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 a hard copy of the survey and then entering in the survey data online (email NYTDdata@dss.ca.gov for a hard copy of the survey). As the surveys vary for each age group, it is important that only the current version of the survey be used for this population.

For both the youth self-administering the survey, or county personnel filling in the survey with responses from the youth, 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. In the event a youth, social worker, or Probation officer is interrupted while entering NYTD survey data, they may contact NYTDdata@dss.ca.gov and have the survey reset. 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 and as soon as possible within the required time period in order to be acceptable and to allow the youth to receive the incentive. 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.

UTILIZING THE INTEGRATED CORE PRACTICE MODEL TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH IN TRANSITION DATABASE

On May 18, 2018, CDSS in conjunction with the Department of Health Care Services released “The California Integrated Core Practice Model (ICPM) for Children, Youth, and Families Guide” via [ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-21-18](#). This guide provides practical guidance and direction to support county child welfare, juvenile probation, and behavioral health agencies to improve delivery of timely, effective, and integrated services to children, youth, and families. The thoughtful and planned use of these practice elements, and the guiding principles which form their theoretical base, will help to further develop the NYTD data collection process. Utilizing ICPM methodology will enhance the quality of the NYTD survey data through better engagement of youth in survey participation, as well as the outcomes associated with ILP. While this letter contains ICPM derived guidance, the ICPM Guide itself is far more comprehensive in its practice content, and county staff are encouraged to consult it as part of their implementation of this guidance.

THE INTEGRATED CORE PRACTICE MODEL BEHAVIORS AND PRACTICES APPLICATION IN THE NATIONAL YOUTH IN TRANSITION DATABASE

The NYTD tracks and measures the outcomes of independent living services provided to youth. This means that ILP, along with social workers, Probation officers, Tribes, providers, and guardians, play an integral role in ensuring that current and former foster youth achieve self-sufficiency prior to and after exiting foster care. Through thoughtful implementation of ICPM, ILP and related services will be strengthened potentially improving outcomes for youth. In addition, use of the ICPM's practice behaviors will allow those delivering ILP services to be more effective in both delivery and documentation of ILP services to help improve NYTD data collection.

1. **Engagement-** Since NYTD measures the outcome of ILP services, and those services provide the foundation for self-sufficiency, it is important that youth are properly engaged. This means that a positive environment that supports relationship building, as

well as cultural engagement, should be utilized, so that youth can be properly educated on the expectations surrounding ILP services. The ICPM Practice Behaviors which may be most helpful in developing engagement include:

- Utilizing the Child and Family Team (CFT) to build relationships and trust concerning ILP expectations, while explaining the significance of the NYTD survey and how it may benefit the youth who are eligible to take it.
- Using the CFT meetings as an opportunity to involve important individuals within the youth's life, which may include members of the youth's Tribe if applicable, to be educated on and participate in the ILP service delivery process.
- Ensuring that the youth have their voice heard, and that their perspective along with those of relevant support individuals are taken into consideration during the needs assessment process and identify if eligible youth need assistance in taking the NYTD survey.
- Demonstrating active and authentic listening during ILP classes and one on one work, so that the content and topic can be well understood, and that any concerns the youth may have regarding these services or the NYTD survey may be addressed.

2. **Assessment-**The NYTD survey collects information about the outcomes of foster youth. In order to gain meaningful information from the youth so outcomes can be improved, the county social worker, tribal social worker, and/or probation officer, must be involved in the assessment process. Furthermore, the needs assessment also forms the foundation of ILP delivered services, which means youth's input is vital in order to ensure positive outcomes and self-sufficiency. The ICPM Practice Behaviors which may be most helpful in supporting assessment activity will include:

- Utilizing a CFT or meeting to explain the NYTD survey, followed by the needs assessment process, so that youth, their team members, and their individual support systems can be educated on the expectations associated with each assessment.
- Work to identify the youth's needs and strengths and any specific areas of concern, where the youth can benefit from additional resources that support ILP delivered services.

3. **Teaming-** Establishing a supportive team will not only ensure that youth receive ILP services that fit their needs and developmental level but will create an active network that will support and guide the youth following care. In addition, the team environment will help explain the purpose of the NYTD survey, which will aid in an improved NYTD survey process and may improve participation rates. The ICPM practices and

behaviors that support teaming throughout the ILP program and NYTD process might include:

- Actively facilitate the sharing of ILP and NYTD related information to all approved parties, so that youth can best be supported in achieving their goals.
- Develop and modify plans, while assigning specific goals to the team to ensure that the youth have the support to overcome ILP and NYTD survey taking challenges.
- Communicate on a consistent basis, while creating opportunities for the youth and team support networks to share their family history and goals, so that ILP delivered services can be appropriately modified to ensure better outcomes, while preparing eligible youth to take the NYTD survey.

4. **Initial service planning and delivery**-This will provide an opportunity to establish a plan regarding how ILP services should be delivered to best fit the needs of the youth. Service planning should begin with engaging the youth and be an ongoing conversation to ensure youth's participation in services and their understanding of their future goals and how that relates to their outcomes. The ICPM practices and behaviors that support planning and delivery within ILP and NYTD engagement:

- Engage the youth and their team support network in ongoing discussions regarding their ILP service delivery progress, challenges, and goals. Help prepare eligible youth for the NYTD survey.
- Provide youth alternative resources and assistance to help achieve ILP delivery goals and to better understand the NYTD survey process.
- Create opportunities for youth to share ideas, create their own goals and work with them to incorporate that information into their ILP plans when appropriate.
- Engage in culturally sensitive collaboration, services, and supports that address youth, their team, and family members' unique underlying needs regarding ILP and the NYTD survey.

5. **Monitoring and Adapting**-In order to ensure a smooth NYTD survey process, and an increase in ILP positive outcomes, it is important to consistently monitor the youth's ILP related progress. In addition, if the youth is having challenges either meeting ILP goals or taking the NYTD survey, staff should be encouraged to formulate a plan that adapts to the youth's needs. The ICPM practices and behaviors that are useful within ILP and the NYTD survey process include:

- If progress has not been made, assure the youth and family challenges are addressed by the teaming and service delivery process and that adjustments can be made to the plan to help them be successful. In addition, if a Tribal youth is experiencing challenges regarding NYTD and ILP, the county should be working in

partnership with the youth's Tribe to develop a solution. This demonstrates problem solving and creative alternatives. This is a skill for the youth to develop. It also demonstrates to the youth that they are supported. All of this encourages the youth to meet their ILP goals and feel better prepared to take the survey.

- Offer to convene a CFT meeting to mobilize the team's resources in amending the service plan, address new needs or eliminate barriers to better fit ILP delivered services to the needs of the youth.
- Follow up on identified behavior health needs and/or educational needs, in order to eliminate any barriers that may hinder the youth's ability to achieve their ILP goals or to take the NYTD survey. Monitor services for effectiveness.

6. **Transition**-The purpose of ILP delivered services are to ensure that youth feel prepared and have the proper support in place to prepare them to leave foster care. The goal is that that they can successfully experience self-sufficiency and independence. It is vital that necessary structures are put in place in order to support a smooth, intentional transition from care to self-sufficiency and independence. The ICPM practices and behaviors that support ILP transition include:

- Inquire about the consistency and effectiveness of any ILP delivered services or NYTD methodology utilized to encourage youth participation in the NYTD survey and ensure better ILP outcomes.
- Offer resources and supports to assure access to those interventions if needed. Consider natural and community-based support systems that will be intact after the youth leaves care.
- Coordinate with the youth, and their support system, to help find solutions and provide on-going community-based and culturally relevant supports, after the child welfare agency is no longer involved so that the youth can continue to strive for independence. This may include collaborating with community and Tribal partners to establish culturally relevant and trauma informed services pertaining to ILP. Examples of this include forming and sustaining partnerships in the areas of NYTD training, coaching, and feedback forums.
- Identify if other types of transition services are needed in order to ensure that the youth feels fully capable to live independently once ILP services are terminated.

CONSIDERATION FOR SPECIAL NEEDS YOUTH

Counties should ensure that survey-eligible youth with special needs or limited English proficiency are offered the NYTD survey. It is important for counties to include youth with a diagnosed disability reported in the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System in order to prevent a bias in the survey. Reviewing administrative data and the

records of youth in the baseline population would be helpful to determine accommodation needs ahead of time.

Counties may also query caseworkers as to whether they believe an accommodation is required in order for the youth to complete the survey. Counties may find that querying caseworkers is the most cost-effective means of establishing the size of its special needs populations and identifying which youth need accommodations.

Counties need to accommodate youth with visual impairments, learning disabilities, cognitive disabilities, hearing impairments, speech impairments, physical disabilities, and limited English proficiency. A Spanish survey is available upon request, by contacting NYTDdata@dss.ca.gov. Youth who are incapacitated, such as those with a severe mental or physical disability that prevents them from answering the survey questions, are not required to be surveyed.

INCENTIVES

Incentives are offered to the youth to increase participation rates, as research has indicated that response rates to surveys are increased when incentives are utilized. The CDSS recommends that youth in the 17-year-old follow-up population who participate in the survey receive a \$50 incentive payment.

Youth should be clearly informed about the incentive payment 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, as well as Tribes, 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 receiving the incentive payment by mail, or by picking it up at the county's offices.

SURVEY OUTCOME DETERMINATIONS AND DOCUMENTATION

A "determination" must be made for each youth who is 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 17-year-old baseline 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 declination of the opportunity to take the survey by the youth will be counted as “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. The baseline population *excludes* youth in facilities primarily for the detention of youth adjudicated delinquent.
- 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 “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 exactly. Do not use other terms. Also, a determination date must be provided, and this date must fall within 45 days of the youth’s birthdate. The CDSS will collect these determinations for each youth not completing the survey by providing counties with a list of their 17-year-old baseline population at the end of each six-month review period. Counties will enter in one of the appropriate determinations listed above for any youth who did not participate in the survey. These lists are to be returned to CDSS at NYTDdata@dss.ca.gov. Additional guidance will be sent to counties via email from the State and Federal Reporting Section and questions regarding the spreadsheet may be sent to NYTDdata@dss.ca.gov.

RETAINING OF COMPLETED SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

The record retention provisions at [45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 92](#) apply to NYTD and require that counties retain all data collected for NYTD, including the hard copies of the surveys, for three years following the submission of the financial Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) report. The CFCIP report is submitted one year and three

months following the end of the survey period (the December 30 following the end of the FFY in September). For example, the FFY 2023 ends September 30, 2022, and the CFCIP report is submitted on December 30, 2023. Thus, the NYTD data collected for the 17-year-old survey of the fifth cohort would need to be retained until December 30, 2026.

Also, per [45 CFR Part 92.42\(b\)\(2\)](#), the record retention period may be extended if “any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit or other action involving the records” has been started before the expiration of the retention period. These actions include any scheduled NYTD Assessment Reviews. If the state is notified by ACF of such an action, CDSS will notify counties and the records must be retained until completion of the action and resolution of all issues which arise from it or until the end of the regular retention period, whichever is later.

ONGOING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A steering committee of CDSS and counties will meet as needed throughout FFY 2023 to resolve any issues that may arise during the surveying of the 17-year-old population of the fifth cohort.

If there are any data or technical questions or concerns, please send an email to NYTDdata@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

ANGIE SCHWARTZ
Deputy Director
Children and Family Services Division

Attachment

NYTD Survey Cohorts and Reporting

*Survey data collection within 45 days following the youth's birthday.

**Survey data collection within the reporting period of the youth's birthday.

Submission Date to ACF by CDSS	Reporting Period	ILP Services Data	ILP Services and Survey Data Age 17*	ILP Services and Survey Data Age 19**	ILP Services and Survey Data Age 21**
15-May-20	Oct 1, 2019 - Mar 31, 2020	X	Cohort 4		
14-Nov-20	Apr 1, 2020 - Sep 30, 2020	X	Cohort 4		
15-May-21	Oct 1, 2020 - Mar 31, 2021	X			Cohort 3
14-Nov-21	Apr 1, 2021 - Sep 30, 2021	X			Cohort 3
15-May-22	Oct 1, 2021 - Mar 31, 2022	X		Cohort 4	
14-Nov-22	Apr 1, 2022 - Sep 30, 2022	X		Cohort 4	
15-May-23	Oct 1, 2022 - Mar 31, 2023	X	Cohort 5		
14-Nov-23	Apr 1, 2023 - Sep 30, 2023	X	Cohort 5		
15-May-24	Oct 1, 2023 - Mar 31, 2024	X			Cohort 4
14-Nov-24	Apr 1, 2024 - Sep 30, 2024	X			Cohort 4
15-May-25	Oct 1, 2024 - Mar 31, 2025	X		Cohort 5	
14-Nov-25	Apr 1, 2025 - Sep 30, 2025	X		Cohort 5	
15-May-26	Oct 1, 2025 - Mar 31, 2026	X	Cohort 6		
14-Nov-26	Apr 1, 2026 - Sep 30, 2026	X	Cohort 6		
15-May-27	Oct 1, 2026 - Mar 31, 2027	X			Cohort 5
14-Nov-27	Apr 1, 2027 - Sep 30, 2027	X			Cohort 5
15-May-28	Oct 1, 2027 - Mar 31, 2028	X		Cohort 6	
14-Nov-28	Apr 1, 2028 - Sep 30, 2028	X		Cohort 6	