

# Measuring Progress in Postsecondary Education: Lessons Learned from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's Foster Youth Strategic Initiative

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Research indicates that postsecondary educational attainment is associated with increased earnings later in life and is a key factor in the achievement of self-sufficiency among youth as they transition to adulthood—including among youth with foster care experience.<sup>i</sup> Many young people with foster care experience, however, face significant challenges engaging in postsecondary education from enrollment through completion. Several research studies demonstrate that, relative to their peers, youth with foster care experience:

1. Enroll in college at lower rates<sup>ii</sup>
2. Are more likely to be enrolled in school part-time and attend two-year college/vocational school<sup>iii</sup>
3. Complete two- and four-year degrees at lower rates.<sup>iv</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted educational pathways for all students, but this is especially so for traditionally underserved students, including youth with foster care experience. Stakeholders have little data to describe the effects of COVID-19 on youth engaged in postsecondary education, although anecdotal evidence points to possibly devastating consequences on youths' educational attainment.<sup>v</sup> Policymakers, agency leaders, and funders need better data about youths' postsecondary educational experiences to understand the effectiveness of policies, programs and funding intended to support youths' educational attainment and, ultimately, their paths to self-sufficiency. Although research studies have shed light on the educational trajectories of youth with foster care experience, the child welfare field lacks comprehensive information describing youths' postsecondary experiences and outcomes.<sup>vi</sup> Incomplete data and analysis limits stakeholders' ability to understand barriers and facilitators to postsecondary success, assess policy and program effectiveness, and develop informed solutions. Stakeholders face challenges identifying youth with foster care experience in key datasets and sharing information across systems. These challenges hamper their efforts to track and measure youth progress and to identify opportunities to engage and support youth.

As part of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's Foster Youth Strategic Initiative, Child Trends conducted literature and document reviews, interviews, focus groups, and meetings<sup>vii</sup> to explore postsecondary initiatives for youth with foster care experience in New York City (NYC) and Los Angeles County (LA). Although not an exhaustive description, our analysis describes key opportunities and challenges in the collection, analysis, and use of data that describes youths' postsecondary experiences.

## Defining postsecondary education

For the purposes of this brief, postsecondary education includes two- and four-year degree programs, career and technical education, and other employment training certificate programs.

Stakeholders in LA and NYC operate in different contexts and are at different stages in their efforts to improve information about youths' postsecondary experiences. Yet their efforts point to four common, emerging strategies. These strategies can help policymakers, agency leaders, and funders elsewhere in the nation develop better information about the postsecondary trajectories of youth with foster care experience and, ultimately, make more informed decisions about how to help youth achieve their educational goals:

1. Coordinate across youth-serving public systems to link data and identify critical gaps in data and information.
2. Develop methods to identify all youth with foster care experience as they enroll and engage in postsecondary education.
3. Develop common measures so progress accurately translates across programs and systems.
4. Incorporate information about employment training and certification in the definition of postsecondary education experience.

Through this brief, we describe the use of each of these strategies in NYC and LA. We discuss stakeholders' descriptions of lessons learned, including the advances, accomplishments, and ongoing opportunities for improvement in information about the postsecondary experiences of youth with foster care experience. We conclude with implications for stakeholders across the country—including policymakers, agency leaders, and funders—who are working to improve postsecondary outcomes for this important group of youth.

### **Hilton Foundation's Foster Youth Strategic Initiative**

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's Foster Youth Strategic Initiative aims to support older youth in foster care to become self-sufficient, thriving adults. The Initiative strives to improve education and employment outcomes for transition age foster youth ages 16-24 in LA and NYC. In 2018-2019, 17 grantees in LA and NYC were working on initiatives and goals directly related to youths' access to, advancement within, and/or completion of postsecondary education.

As Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Partner for the Initiative, Child Trends facilitates continuous learning, supports the incorporation of evaluation findings as the Initiative progresses, and disseminates key lessons with other jurisdictions across the country to strengthen the field.

# Strategies to Strengthen Postsecondary Data for Youth with Foster Care Experience

## I. Coordinate across multiple systems to link data.

Numerous public systems play important roles in supporting youth along their educational trajectories to self-sufficiency, including secondary school districts, postsecondary institutions, and workforce development systems. For youth with foster care experience, the child welfare system plays a critical role as well. Each of these systems maintains its own data on youth served (See Figure 1).

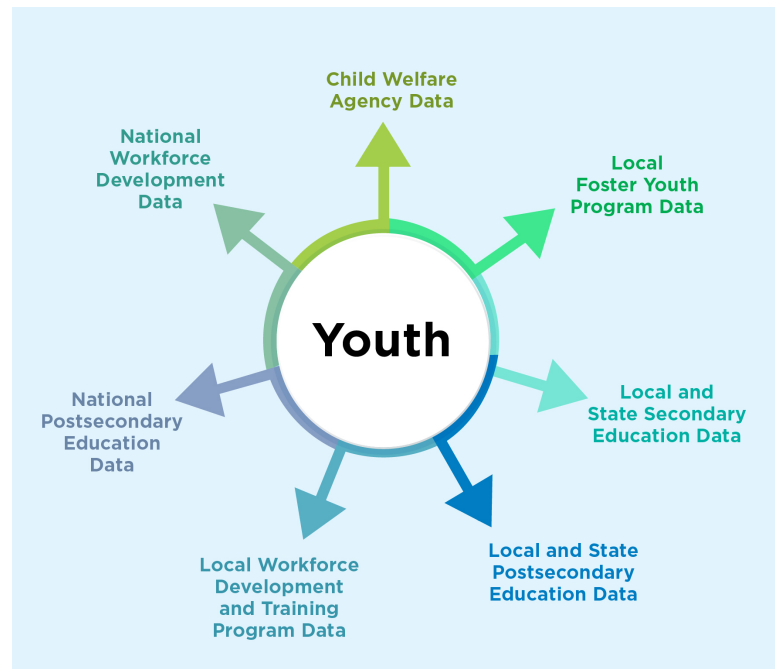
Research has indicated that outcomes for youth with foster care experience improve when information is shared across youth-serving systems.<sup>viii</sup> Sharing information across systems allows stakeholders to generate a more complete picture of youths' experiences and outcomes. Coordinating across systems allows stakeholders to:

1. Assess which services and supports are most beneficial to postsecondary completion
2. Understand the factors associated with postsecondary success
3. Help youth connect to services in a more streamlined way
4. Identify and work collaboratively to fill data gaps

Without coordinated data across multiple systems, stakeholders have a limited understanding of the ways in which youth with foster care experience engage in educational and employment training programs, their service needs, and their outcomes.

Stakeholders must navigate a variety of legal, privacy, financial, and logistical considerations as public systems coordinate to share and link data. Stakeholders in LA and NYC find that the sensitive nature of the data and legal and regulatory requirements often lead to restrictive data sharing agreements across public agencies, which may limit the partners engaged, the type of information shared, and the ways in which the data can be used. In one example, a data sharing agreement between a university and public agency allows for the information to be used for research purposes only; the data cannot be used to identify and connect youth with available, campus-based supports. As LA and NYC navigate these complexities, they have employed the strategies outlined in Figure 2 below to coordinate across systems to link data.





Figure 1. Sources of data on foster youths' postsecondary experiences and outcomes



### Youth experience

Youth focus group participants recommended that programs work together and make automatic connections to resources across systems. Youth said they feel they must prove themselves and their eligibility each time they reach out for resources through new programs and systems. Some youth said they may stop reaching out for help for fear of rejection. Other youth never learn about available resources and drop out without supports.

Figure 2. Examples of coordination across systems in LA and NYC

	<p><b>Include multiple state and local stakeholders in collaborative efforts.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In California, Cal-PASS Plus is a statewide clearinghouse that links data between the secondary education, postsecondary education, and workforce systems. Over 1,500 institutional partners voluntarily participate, allowing users to track postsecondary data for self-identified foster youth in community colleges and some four-year public and private colleges. Campus-based programs that serve foster youth can track outcomes specifically for the students they serve.</li><li>• California’s Child Welfare Council is legislatively mandated to annually report on recommendations to improve outcomes for children and youth in the child welfare system through increased collaboration among services administered by the multiple agencies. As part of this work, the Council’s Data Linkage and Information Sharing Committee brings together public and private partners quarterly to share innovative strategies and explore opportunities for expanding cross-system data linkages. The Committee prioritizes cross-system coordination and data tracking between the child welfare and education systems, including postsecondary education.</li></ul>
	<p><b>Start small and expand data sharing agreements over time.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In LA and NYC, stakeholders continually seek opportunities to build upon and strengthen existing data sharing agreements to improve foster youths’ connections to available resources, share information among systems to enhance foster youth engagement and outcomes, and build knowledge among stakeholders. For example, the Children’s Data Network’s initial “proof of concept” data linkage across programs in the California Health and Human Services Agency has evolved to include new data sharing agreements with additional stakeholder agencies.</li></ul>
	<p><b>Link local and state data to national datasets to paint a more robust picture of youth.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The California Department of Education links state child welfare and education data with postsecondary data from the National Student Clearinghouse,<sup>ix</sup> allowing California to identify foster youth who enroll in postsecondary education within 12 months of high school graduation. This aggregated information is then made publicly available through the state’s Dataquest system.</li></ul>
	<p><b>Invest in research partnerships to answer specific research and policy questions.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NYC’s Center for Innovation for Data Intelligence (CIDI) in the Office of the Mayor conducts research projects across city agencies. CIDI links administrative child welfare, education, postsecondary, employment, criminal justice, and public benefits data to better understand the experiences of transition age foster youth.</li><li>• As part of the CalYOUTH study,<sup>x</sup> researchers established replicable methods to link data across multiple systems (including child welfare, postsecondary, and employment).</li></ul>



### Leverage existing data tools to track foster youth outcomes.

- The California Webgrants system within the California Student Aid Commission tracks data describing financial aid application completion for high school seniors. Foster Youth Services Coordinating Programs at the County Offices of Education have access to Webgrants to match program participants to youths' data in the Webgrants system. As a result, programs can track participants' completion of financial aid applications.

## Considerations for LA and NYC

Stakeholders in both jurisdictions have opportunities to build on their initial cross-system coordination efforts. For example, state and local public agencies can leverage the work of existing research partnerships by replicating processes to link data at scale and assure ongoing linkages at the conclusion of research projects.

There are also opportunities to convene child welfare agency partners to promote linkages between child welfare data and education and postsecondary data. Advocates and researchers identified two such opportunities in California—linking child welfare data with (1) Cal-PASS Plus data and (2) the new statewide data infrastructure being developed under the California Cradle-to-Career Data System Act (2019), which will connect education, financial aid, workforce, and social service data. Linking child welfare data to these existing efforts would provide a more comprehensive understanding of youths' experiences, enable stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of recent policy changes, and support ongoing efforts to improve programs and systems. For example, recent policy in California mandates that all foster youth over age 16 have access to individual support to complete college applications. Assessing the effectiveness of this policy requires placement history data from child welfare agencies to identify youth who were in care after this policy was enacted; these data can then be linked to postsecondary data to examine enrollment trends.

In both LA and NYC, stakeholders continue to face challenges navigating the complex legal requirements designed to protect youth privacy. Public agency stakeholders may need additional guidance/clarification on what information sharing is legally permissible based on federal legislation such as the Uninterrupted Scholars Act<sup>xi</sup> and state statute and regulations.

## II. Develop methods to identify all youth with foster care experience as they enroll and engage in postsecondary education.

To understand the postsecondary experiences of youth with foster care experience and develop informed solutions to enhance their outcomes, stakeholders must be able to identify foster youth in their postsecondary data.



Both LA and NYC lack consistent and comprehensive practices for identifying all youth with foster care experience within postsecondary information systems. Current identification practices include reliance on youth self-identification, which may lead to incomplete information. Many youth fear that self-disclosing their foster care experience will result in stigmatization or negative consequences. When youth better understand the potential risks and benefits of self-disclosure, they may be more willing to share this information. To protect youth privacy, this identifying information must be handled in accordance with federal and state privacy laws, and data should be reported at the aggregate level.

In the absence of data linkages between child welfare and postsecondary information systems, stakeholders in both jurisdictions use a variety of strategies to piece together this information, as described in Figure 3.

### Youth experience

Youth focus group participants described the importance of having someone sit down with them to explain the college application process, as well as benefits they could access by self-identifying their foster care experience. Participants' feared negative consequences for themselves or their children if they are labeled as current/former foster youth and often hesitated to disclose this information.

**Figure 3. Examples of methods for identifying and verifying foster care history for students in LA and NYC**

	<p><b>Include questions about history in foster care on college applications and enrollment forms so that schools have a record of whether youth have foster care experience.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Fostering Youth Success Alliance, a statewide advocacy coalition in New York, has successfully advocated for the State University of New York and several private colleges to include a question on college applications to identify students with current or past foster care experience.</li><li>• In California, all three postsecondary systems include a question on college applications about foster care involvement.</li></ul>
	<p><b>To increase the rate of youth who identify their status as having foster care experience on financial aid forms and college applications, teach youth about the purpose of self-identification and how their data will be protected.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In California, SB 12 (2017) requires child welfare agencies to identify an individual who will assist each youth in foster care with their college applications. AB 1567 (2017) requires community colleges and California State University campuses to notify foster youth about and provide instructions for students to access campus support programs and financial aid.</li><li>• Financial aid applications are one mechanism commonly used to identify foster youth in postsecondary datasets. John Burton Advocates for Youth in California organizes a statewide “FAFSA Challenge” to teach youth in foster care how to complete financial aid applications. This effort has included resources to help youth complete the FAFSA correctly, including ensuring that these students self-identify on the FAFSA. The Challenge resulted in an increase in the percentage of high school seniors in foster care in LA who completed financial aid applications.<sup>xii</sup></li></ul>



**Automate the process for verifying students' foster care experience through information exchanges between child welfare and financial aid agencies.**

- In California, SB 12 (2017) automates the process for verifying self-reported foster care history on financial aid forms via data shared between the state's financial aid and child welfare agencies. Prior to this information exchange, students held the burden of submitting documentation to verify their foster care history.

## Considerations for LA and NYC

The examples from NYC and LA provide a starting point for identifying youth with foster care experience by leveraging enrollment forms and existing school supports. However, many students report hesitancy to disclose their foster care experience, likely leading to underreporting and incomplete information. Information sharing across child welfare and postsecondary systems provides the most reliable information on students' foster care experience and the most comprehensive understanding of their postsecondary experiences and outcomes.

### III. Develop common measures so progress accurately translates across programs.

Indicators of postsecondary education persistence and completion often include course completion rates, credit accumulation, enrollment and retention across consecutive semesters, certificate completion, and attainment of two-year and/or four-year degrees. However, measures vary widely across local postsecondary education systems and programs, reflecting stakeholders' and program providers' individual information needs. The lack of consistent measures makes comparing data and findings across programs and locations difficult. Stakeholders in LA and NYC are building common measures through the approaches outlined in Figure 4.

**Figure 4.** Examples of approaches to develop common measures in LA and NYC



#### **Convene partners to build consensus on useful measures.**

- In NYC, the child welfare agency convenes a Higher Education Access and Success for Youth in Foster Care Work Group. The Group includes a range of child welfare and education stakeholders who identify opportunities to strengthen and align data collection and reporting.
- The Fair Futures Initiative in NYC engaged partners in a collaborative process to inform the development of a comprehensive web-based platform designed to track key postsecondary outcomes.
- In California, philanthropic partners participating in the California College Pathways initiative developed shared postsecondary process and outcome measures for grantee organizations serving foster youth to assess collective progress and streamline reporting requirements.



#### **Align measures across programs and systems.**

- Cal-PASS Plus' "Foster Youth Dashboard" reports common measures across postsecondary institutions. During a recent redesign of the Dashboard, stakeholders prioritized measures that help assess progress toward goals, such as financial aid receipt during the first year of college and average student GPA.



#### Use common measures as defined in national datasets.

- The CalYOUTH study used data from two national datasets: National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data to measure postsecondary persistence and completion, and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data for institutional information. The NSC data repository provides common national measures of postsecondary enrollment and completion through broad outcome measures such as annual persistence and retention (NSC Research Center, 2019). IPEDS reports common measures of degree completion and financial aid receipt, among other measures.

## Considerations for LA and NYC

Stakeholders in NYC and LA implement a variety of strategies to create or adopt common definitions of key measures. However, strategies such as relying on national datasets for measures do not suit stakeholder needs in their entirety. The NSC data do not (1) identify students with foster care experience, (2) provide detailed measures of postsecondary progress (for example, GPA), or (3) capture completion of career training and certificate programs delivered outside of participating postsecondary institutions. IPEDS collects and reports only aggregate data for postsecondary institutions. In the absence of comprehensive national measures, LA and NYC continue to employ collaborative approaches to identify and refine shared measures of a range of postsecondary outcomes in their communities.

As stakeholders work in partnership to develop shared measures, it will be important to engage key decision makers in the child welfare and postsecondary systems to ensure that their recommendations translate into concrete action steps with the support of system leaders.

## IV. Incorporate employment training and certification in the definition of postsecondary education experience.

Youth engage in a variety of pathways to achieve their education and career goals. In addition to two- and four-year degree programs, youth participate in a broad range of vocational, certification, and/or employment training programs. These include as non-degree Career and Technical Education (CTE) certification programs within vocational schools and community colleges, training programs operated through workforce development systems, and others. Programs are typically created as part of stackable, portable credentialing processes that frequently require high school credentials and ongoing academic coursework.<sup>xiii</sup> Stakeholders in LA and NYC are working to strengthen the connections between youth with foster care experience and employment training resources in their communities.

### Youth experience

Youth focus group participants reported participating in a wide range of employment training and certificate programs that reflect their varied interests.




Research indicates that youth with foster care experience who participate in employment training and certificate programs have a greater likelihood of program completion by age 21, as defined by attainment of a certificate or license, in comparison to youth who enroll in two- and four-year degree programs.<sup>xiv</sup> Despite these findings, employment training and certification program data are not routinely included in data collection, analysis, and reporting about youths' postsecondary educational experiences and outcomes. Without information describing employment training and certification, stakeholders may draw inaccurate conclusions about the extent of youth participation in the full range of postsecondary options.

Incorporating data about employment training and certification programs in analysis of youths' postsecondary educational trajectories is a complex endeavor. Information systems containing employment training and certification data are not aligned across secondary, postsecondary, and



workforce systems (New Skills for Youth Initiative, 2019). Processes for identifying foster youth who participate are not unified and measures to track program data are not cohesive.<sup>xv</sup>

**Figure 5.** Examples of approaches to incorporate employment training and certification data in LA and NYC

	<p><b>Leverage national datasets as a starting point.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The CalYOUTH study analyzed NSC data to describe youth participation in and completion of certification programs. The analysis draws attention to the need for better data about certification to enhance understanding of foster youths' postsecondary educational trajectories.</li></ul>
	<p><b>Measure enrollment, progress, and outcome data for youth with foster care experience who participate in workforce development programs.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Foster youth are connected to workforce development services in LA through a new universal referral process. To monitor engagement, public agency partners collect data on youth enrollment, training completion, and participation in 100 or more hours of workforce development system services.</li></ul>
	<p><b>Incorporate measurement of CTE participation into existing data systems.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Cal-PASS Plus system includes a data point designed to measure participation in CTE programs through the community college system by measuring the number and proportion of students who successfully complete nine or more career education units. The system also reports on how many students earn both credit and non-credit certificates.</li></ul>

## Considerations for LA and NYC

Stakeholders and researchers in LA are using new and existing data to better understand foster youth participation in employment training and certification programs. However, the national datasets used to assess outcomes (i.e., NSC, IPEDS, and workforce development system data<sup>xvi</sup>) do not often include sufficient information to assess opportunities for improvement. For example, data systems do not include information about whether students have foster care experience nor do they include measures of youth progress, such as minimum credit hours or progression through stackable certificates (Miller et al., 2016). NYC and LA stakeholders involved in efforts to enhance information about the postsecondary education trajectories of youth with foster care experience should continue to explore opportunities to incorporate data that describe youths' progress and outcomes in employment training and certification programs.

## Implications for the Field

Emerging strategies in LA and NYC to enhance data that describe the postsecondary educational experiences of youth with foster care experience require intentional collaboration across systems to coordinate efforts to link data, identify youth with foster care experience within data systems, measure youth postsecondary progress and outcomes, and build a more comprehensive understanding of the full range of postsecondary educational experiences. When considered together, these innovations offer important lessons for the field. As stakeholders manage the immediate effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth and look ahead to long-term recovery efforts, these strategies can strengthen the availability and use of data to support youths' postsecondary access and success.

***Cross-system collaboration is essential for a complete understanding of the postsecondary educational trajectories of youth with foster care experience.*** Efforts to coordinate data require strong cross-system partnerships that bring together many youth-serving systems to align processes and measures, link data, and use data to strengthen services and supports for foster youth. Partnerships between child welfare systems, public and private postsecondary institutions and systems, and workforce development systems (among others) will encourage a comprehensive picture of youths' various pathways to and through postsecondary education. Whenever possible, these partnerships should engage key decision makers by inviting them to participate in key meetings and/or discuss key issues and/or findings.

***Cross-system collaboration requires consideration of local and state contexts and incremental progress.*** Collaborations in LA and NYC that attempt to assess youths' educational trajectories are focused on similar goals to improve information and, ultimately, outcomes. The methods used to achieve these aims vary widely in scope and scale and across state and local contexts. Collaborations among child welfare, education, and employment training systems to enhance data and information require solutions appropriate to state and local contexts. These solutions address legal, privacy, financial, resource, and logistical contexts, as well as local needs, opportunities, and challenges. Leadership of successful cross-system collaborations keep an eye on long-term progress while developing thoughtful, manageable initiatives driven by local contexts.

***Public-private partnerships are promising pathways to building capacity for stronger data integration.*** Public and private partnerships play important roles in developing and implementing a shared agenda for data integration across systems. Partnerships can include policymakers, state agency leaders, researchers, funders, youth, and other advocates and stakeholders. Such partnerships can build capacity for better data and information through a variety of strategies. Partners such as policymakers and private funders can incentivize, develop, and participate in information-building initiatives. They can reinforce accountability within and across stakeholders through policy and funding requirements and adoption of agreed-upon measurement strategies. Furthermore, public-private research partnerships can continue to leverage the

### Paths to enhance information about the postsecondary educational experiences of youth with foster care experience

- **Create and nurture strong collaboration across agencies** that interact with youth, including the child welfare agency, secondary and postsecondary education systems, and systems that provide employment and training and certificate programs, including workforce development systems.
- **Assess and work within the local context**, including legal contexts; local practices in information sharing and privacy policies; available financial and other resources; and local needs, opportunities, and challenges.
- **Partner with policymakers, agency leaders, researchers, funders, and youth** to maximize resources and encourage sustainability.
- **Develop consensus across partners** around key measures and definitions to simplify data linkage and integration, enhance the quality of data and analysis, and build opportunities to strengthen policies and programs.

enhanced evaluative and technical capacities brought to bear by research partnerships to continue to develop integrated data systems.

**Planning and consensus building among stakeholders leads to successful initiatives to build measures of youths' postsecondary education.** Agreement among stakeholders on processes to identify youth with foster care experience—along with the most useful, relevant measures of youth progress—leads to simpler data integration, higher-quality data and analysis of results, and opportunities to strengthen policies and programs. Agreement on common processes and measures will enhance knowledge about the full range of opportunities and pathways in which youth engage to accomplish their postsecondary education goals

As Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning partner for the Hilton Foundation's Foster Youth Strategic Initiative, Child Trends will continue to monitor progress in LA and NYC toward improved data and information about the postsecondary experiences of youth with foster care experience, while lifting up key lessons learned and model strategies to advance the field.

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<sup>i</sup> Individuals who have completed at least some college earn more annually and over their lifetime and are more likely to be employed and working full-time, compared to individuals with a high school diploma (Baum, 2014; Carnavale, Rose, & Cheah, 2011). Former foster youth are more likely to be employed and earn higher wages when they have completed at least some college (Okpych & Courtney, 2014).

<sup>ii</sup> The Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth (The Midwest Study) found that 30 percent of foster youth had *ever enrolled* in college by age 21, in comparison to 53 percent of youth in a nationally representative sample (Courtney et al., 2011). Of foster youth surveyed through the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CalYOUTH Study), 29 percent were *currently enrolled* in school at age 21, compared to 43 percent of youth nationally (Courtney et al., 2018).

<sup>iii</sup> Courtney et al., 2018

<sup>iv</sup> The Midwest Study found that 4 percent of foster youth completed a two-year degree by age 26, compared to 10 percent of youth nationally. Four percent of foster youth completed a four-year degree by age 26, compared to 36 percent of youth nationally (includes youth who completed at least one year of graduate school) (Courtney et al., 2011).

<sup>v</sup> Media coverage highlights the challenges youth with foster care experience face as they navigate high school, postsecondary education, and graduate studies during the pandemic (Chronicle of Social Change, 2020).

<sup>vi</sup> Depending on the research study design, several limitations may be present, such as samples representing only one geographic area or program, low response rates to surveys, and reliance on self-reported foster care history.

<sup>vii</sup> Information gathering activities from 2018 to 2019 included in-depth reviews of community and grantee documents and reports; interviews with researchers, advocates, and system administrators (n=72); two focus groups with foster youth (n=20); and three small group meetings with LA and NYC grantees.

<sup>viii</sup> For example, in a study of youth involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, Chuang & Wells (2010) found that when these systems shared data, youth were more likely to receive needed behavioral health care.

<sup>ix</sup> The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) is a national repository of enrollment, persistence, and completion data for students in two- and four-year institutions, as well as certificate programs. The NSC includes data on 97 percent of students attending Title IV degree-granting schools (schools that process federal financial aid) (NSC Research Center, 2019).

<sup>x</sup> The California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CalYOUTH) evaluates the impact of extending foster care to age 21 in California, using administrative data and information gathered from youth and caseworkers.

<sup>xi</sup> The Uninterrupted Scholars Act, signed into law in 2013, permits postsecondary institutions to disclose personally identifiable information to the child welfare agency legally responsible for students ages 18 and older in foster care (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

<sup>xii</sup> The percentage of high school seniors in foster care in LA completing the FAFSA increased from 33 percent in 2017-2018 to 61 percent in 2018-2019 (John Burton Advocates for Youth, 2019).

<sup>xiii</sup> Employment training and certification programs are often supported through The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) funds; Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Out of School Youth (WIOA OSY) funds; and other employment and training programs, including employment and training programs for youth with disabilities funded through vocational rehabilitation and other federal programs.

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<sup>xiv</sup> The CalYOUTH study found that, at age 21, five times as many foster youth complete a vocational/job training certificate or license than any type of college degree (21.6 percent, compared to 3.1 percent completing a two-year degree and 1.2 percent completing a four-year degree) (Courtney et al., 2018).

<sup>xv</sup> A national survey found that most state Career Technical Education (CTE) Directors report inconsistent definitions for measures across separate state data systems as a barrier to alignment in their collection and use of data to improve CTE programs (New Skills for Youth Initiative, 2019).

<sup>xvi</sup> The Workforce Integrated Performance System contains official performance reporting information for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Workforce Investment Act, Wagner-Peyser, Jobs for Veterans Act, National Farmworker Jobs Program, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and other programs funded by the Employment and Training Administration.