

Sub-strategy 1a: Career Development

This snapshot accompanies Child Trends' [2022 Evaluation Report](#) for the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's [Foster Youth Initiative](#). It highlights a sample of the Foundation's grantees' efforts, key data points, and ongoing barriers to strengthening career pathways for foster youth in Los Angeles (LA) and New York City (NYC). Snapshots are available for each of the Initiative's sub-strategies focused on foster youth and caregivers.

Los Angeles

Highlights






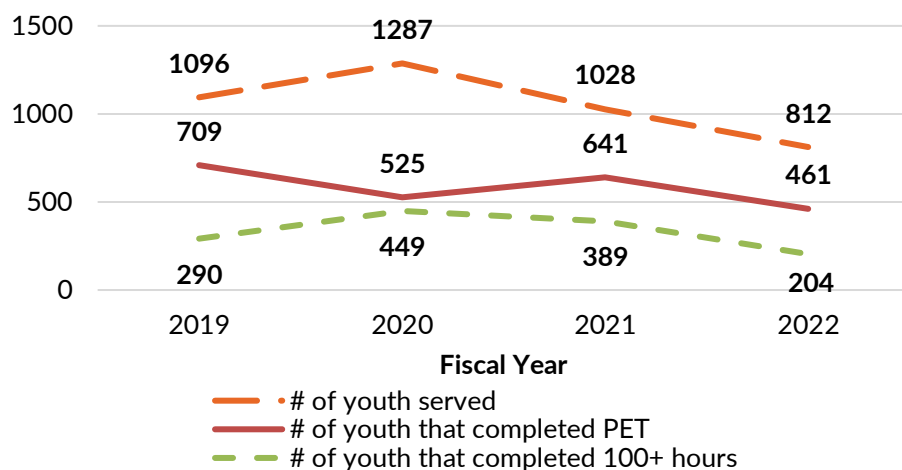
	<p>The Opportunity Youth Collaborative (OYC) continues to advance key systems reform efforts in LA and California, including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) waiver, which is now being replicated statewide to better support the career development goals of current/former foster youth.</p>
	<p>Through their programming, grantees directly support young people in achieving their employment goals. For example, the Coalition for Responsible Community Development operates a variety of programs (e.g., Summer Youth Employment, WIOA, workshops and trainings), and iFoster's TAY AmeriCorps program continues to hire foster youth as paid staff in workforce and postsecondary programs.</p>
	<p>Public workforce programs are more fully embedding youth voice into their work, as a result of advocacy by OYC, including through the creation of youth advisory boards at each Youth@Work Center. OYC's Young Leaders continue to play a central role in elevating young people's perspectives and recommendations.</p>
	<p>Grantees' career programming supports youth of color (e.g., Friends of the Children's Fostering Resilience Program supports Black youths' access to career pathways), parenting youth (e.g., First Place for Youth supports positive career outcomes for parenting youth in their housing programs), and victims of exploitation (e.g., Saving Innocence provides group programming on employment skills and financial literacy).</p>
	<p>Access to employment data linked across agencies is expected to increase as California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP) builds out its TAY Hub, which now reports data on whether young people have ever been employed and the number of quarters worked in the previous year. Grantees such as the Alliance for Children's Rights are also supporting the state to develop its Cradle to Career Database.</p>

Figure 1. Number of youth, ages 14-25, served by Public Workforce Development Boards, Los Angeles, FY 2019-2022



Young people's participation in public workforce training and programming fluctuated between 2018 and 2021 and decreased in 2022.

Source: LA County Department of Workforce, Development, Aging, and Community Services^{i,ii}

Barriers

Foster youth face significant barriers to achieving financial stability as they enter adulthood, and grantees reported that youth-serving systems, including workforce agencies, impose too many hurdles for youth trying to access services, or do not support young people who express interest in nontraditional career paths (e.g., entrepreneurship). Specific structural and programmatic barriers to joining the workforce were identified for the focal populations (e.g., childcare for parenting youth, financial considerations for youth who have experienced exploitation, and discrimination against youth of color and LGBTQ+ youth). COVID-19 implications are also still being navigated, such as fewer opportunities for foster youth to gain workforce experience and build skills, vaccination requirements having mixed effects on employment eligibility, and disruptions to the job market and postsecondary education which may impact career prospects and long-term goal setting.

New York City

Highlights

	<p>With expanded city investments advocated for by young people and grantees, Fair Futures will now provide youth up to age 26 with one-on-one coaching to achieve their career goals.</p>
	<p>Grantees provide a wide range of career development programming including career readiness training, one-on-one coaching and workshops, internship placements, and career training programs. For example, The Door's services range from work readiness training to credential programs that lead to employment, and Graham Windham supports foster youth working toward a living wage career by providing scaffolded experiences, internships, and individualized supports.</p>




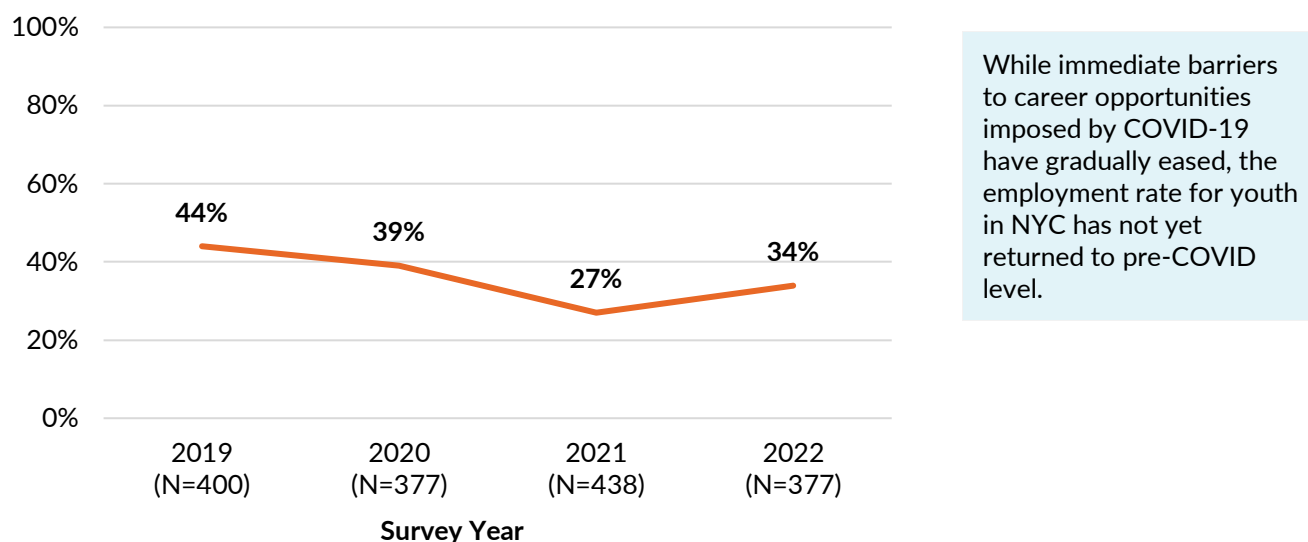
	<p>Grantees and public agencies engage young people to advise on programs and policies (e.g., through Fair Futures and on organizational decision-making bodies such as The Door's Youth Council), with a variety of leadership development skill-building opportunities for youth incorporated (e.g., trainings developed by Good Shepherd Services and JCCA).</p>
	<p>Some grantees' programming targets the Initiative's focal populations. For example, The Door and City Living are piloting approaches to support parenting youth, and JCCA has tailored its Fair Futures services to serve youth of color and LGBTQ+ youth.</p>
	<p>Using participatory research methods, Children's Defense Fund-NYC (CDF-NYC) is evaluating the effects of a cash transfer pilot project on outcomes, including employment.</p>

Figure 2. Percent of youth in care, ages 18-20, with a job or paid internship, New York City, 2019-2022



Source: NYC Administration for Children's Services' Youth Experience Survey^{iii,iv}

Barriers

Positive progress related to career development in NYC is impeded by several factors, including but not limited to the effects of COVID-19, lack of funding for and inaccessibility of career training programs (e.g., cosmetology training), and barriers to sharing data across systems and providers. While many immediate barriers to career opportunities imposed by COVID-19 (e.g., offices being closed inhibiting young people's ability to obtain copies of their documents/IDs needed for employment) have eased, employment rates for foster youth have not returned to pre-pandemic levels. In addition, though vocational programs often support youth in gaining the skills and experience needed for their career goals, financial support to fund career pathways and entrepreneurship has not increased at the same pace as financial aid for college. Grantees report that logistical challenges like lack of access to affordable, high-quality child care or distrust of child care due in part to oversurveillance by ACS in low-income communities and families of color create barriers to career pathways that especially impact parenting youth of color.

Endnotes

ⁱ Totals represent foster youth served by the LA County Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS) through Youth@Work, including Work Based Learning (WBL) and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Foster youth status based on demographic, not funding source. Source: LA WDACS. Workforce Development Programs Youth@Work Program: Participant Performance Report FY 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022. Email Correspondence. FY2022 data were received after we completed our qualitative data collection activities. We include this data for reference and will discuss with grantees, stakeholders, and Advisory Board members in 2023.

ⁱⁱ PET defined as 'personal enrichment training'.

ⁱⁱⁱ NYC Administration for Children's Services' Foster Care Youth Experience Survey (FY 2019-FY 2022).

<https://www.nyc.gov/site/acs/about/FosterCareYouthExperienceSurvey.page>

^{iv} Percent of youth in 24-hour foster care for at least 90 days between ages 18-20 who responded to NYC Administration for Children's Services' Foster Care Youth Experience Survey and reported having a job or paid internship.