



Research Report

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# Understanding the Landscape of Public Funding for Organizations Serving Transition- Age Foster Youth

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Published by the RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, Calif.

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## About This Report

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Youth in foster care face significant challenges as they transition to adulthood, and many rely on the services and support provided by nongovernmental organizations to meet their needs. While most services for transition-age youth (TAY) in foster care are provided by publicly funded government agencies, nongovernmental organizations typically rely on a mix of public and private funding. The public funding streams that are available to nongovernmental organizations are varied, overlapping, and complex, and they differ by geographic area. This creates significant barriers to locating, applying for, and managing these funding opportunities. The complexity also makes it difficult for private funders to determine where there are funding gaps and where best to target resources. Accessible and sustainable public funding for organizations that serve foster TAY is critical to providing necessary services and supports to foster TAY to help them make the transition to adulthood.

RAND conducted a study, funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, to identify and catalogue the available public funding streams, create a comprehensive online directory of these sources, and identify the barriers and facilitators to accessing them. To do this we undertook two main tasks. First, we conducted a landscape review of public funding sources for organizations that serve foster TAY. Second, we conducted a series of stakeholder interviews with foster TAY, their caregivers, and staff from organizations serving them.

The landscape review and stakeholder interviews both highlighted how the landscape of public funding appears to favor larger organizations that have the capacity to apply for and manage the sometimes-complex requirements of and relationships with public funding organizations. We also found a lack of alignment between the public funding that is available and the needs identified by foster youth, caregivers, and the organizations that serve them. Organizations that serve foster TAY and caregivers identified the need for funding for operational support (e.g., human resources, staffing, program evaluation, and grant management), and were enthusiastic about receiving technical assistance for identifying and applying for funding.

In addition to this report, we used the data abstracted during the landscape review to develop a web tool that can be used to search for public funding opportunities for organizations that serve foster TAY. Overall, our findings are a critical first step in identifying gaps in available services and funding in three major metropolitan areas: New York City, Los Angeles County, and metro Atlanta.

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## Acknowledgments

This project would not have been possible without the support and assistance of many people. We are grateful to the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for funding this work, and for the support and feedback we have received throughout the project from Eundria Hill, Officer, Learning and Evaluation; and Angela LoBue, Senior Program Officer, Foster Youth. We also want to thank the many stakeholders who shared their experiences and perspectives on the availability of funding, supports, and services for transition-age foster youth. We would also like to thank Rosa Maria Torres for her administrative assistance. Finally, we would like to thank our quality assurance reviewers for their review of this work.

## Key Findings

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- The significant organizational capacity required to identify, apply for, and manage funding opportunities is a barrier for organizations. Specific challenges included:
  - Significant gaps in the information available on funding websites
  - Complex eligibility requirements, matching and/or reimbursement plans (as opposed to up-front funding), and burdensome application processes
  - Limited availability of local public funding sources
  - Federal funding sources were the most plentiful but the most complex to acquire and manage
- We found a lack of alignment between the available public funding and the needs identified by foster youth, their caregivers, and the organizations that serve them.
- There is a lack of available data on the needs and preferences of foster youth. Organizations typically relied on their own data collection efforts to identify youth needs, further drawing on their already limited organizational capacity.
- There is a need for funding for operational support (e.g., human resources, staffing, program evaluation, and grant management).
- Using the data collected during the landscape review, we developed a web tool that can be used to search for public funding opportunities for organizations that serve foster youth. The web tool includes search filters by need category, geographic location, and target population.
- Recommended next steps for funders include:
  - centralizing information on funding opportunities to make them easier to find
  - conducting an assessment of the full funding landscape for organizations that serve foster TAY
  - exploring the possibility of providing technical assistance to organizations to apply for and manage public funding
  - making more funding available for the operational needs of organizations serving foster TAY
  - collecting and disseminating better data on foster youth needs and preferences.

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

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## Background

Approximately 19,000 youth age out of foster care every year in the United States.<sup>1</sup> In contrast to youth who are not in foster care, youth in foster care are more likely to lack vital support mechanisms and experience homelessness, financial insecurity, and worse health outcomes as they transition to adulthood.<sup>2</sup> These transition-age youth (TAY) who are exiting foster care face significant hurdles to accessing supports available that could help meet their ongoing needs and ease their transition. While a majority of services for foster youth are provided by government agencies, nongovernmental organizations also provide important services to this population. These organizations can turn to a variety of sources for funding, including private foundations, donations, and government grants. However, public funding streams for foster TAY are varied, overlapping, and complex, and differ by geography (i.e., cities, states, tribes, and territories). Differences in how various agencies define TAY age ranges and foster youth status further add to this complexity. There is no easy way for TAY and the nongovernmental organizations that serve them to navigate this fragmented public funding system. The complexity also makes it difficult for private funders to determine where there are funding gaps and where best to target resources. Sustainable public funding for organizations that serve foster TAY is critical to providing necessary services and supports to foster TAY to help them make the transition to adulthood.

RAND conducted a study to identify and catalogue these resources to create a comprehensive tool to identify public funding streams that serve foster TAY and the organizations that serve them and to identify the barriers and facilitators to accessing them. Our findings are a critical first step in identifying gaps in available services and funding in three major metropolitan areas: metro Atlanta, Los Angeles County, and New York City.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, *The AFCARS Report: Children's Bureau, Preliminary Estimates for FY 2021 as of June 28, 2022*, No. 29, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> K. R. Ahrens et al., "Health Outcomes in Young Adults from Foster Care and Economically Diverse Backgrounds," *Pediatrics*, Vol. 134, No. 6, 2014; J. Havlicek et al, "Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders among Foster Youth Transitioning to Adulthood: Past Research and Future Directions," *Child Youth Services Review*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 2013; A. S. Mares and M. Jordan, "Federal aftercare programs for transition-aged youth," *Children and Youth Services Review*, Vol. 34, No. 8, 2012; F. A. Tyrell and T. M. Yates, "A Growth Curve Analysis of Housing Quality among Transition-Aged Foster Youth," *Child & Youth Care Forum*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 2017.



## Research Aims

This study focuses on detailing the available public funding, and barriers and facilitators to accessing it, for foster TAY and the nongovernmental organizations that support them in metro Atlanta, Los Angeles County, and New York City. It answers three research questions:

### *What Funding Is Available for Organizations Serving Transition-Age Foster Youth in Metro Atlanta, Los Angeles County, and New York City?*

This study identifies the federal, state, and local funding sources available for services and supports to foster TAY and the organizations that serve them in each of the three geographic areas. Our analysis identifies different funding sources by category of need (e.g., food, housing, education, health care), type of assistance (e.g., grants, vouchers, cash assistance), eligibility criteria (e.g., age, foster youth status, income, education enrollment), amounts, and administering organizations.

### *How Is Funding for Transition-Age Foster Youth Utilized by Organizations in These Locations?*

We provide an overview of organizations that receive funding and how funding is utilized. We also provide an overview of the limited extant data sources that track foster TAY's enrollment in available publicly funded services, and their service needs and preferences.

### *What Gaps Exist in Funding or Services for Transition-Age Foster Youth in These Locations?*

Our analysis identifies foster TAY needs that may potentially be underfunded or insufficient.

This report details the methods of data collection and analysis used to address these questions and provides recommendations to improve the landscape of public funding for organizations that serve foster TAY. Ultimately, the goal is that with improved access to funding, organizations will be better equipped to provide necessary services and supports to youth as they leave foster care.

## Chapter 2. Methods

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To answer the three research questions outlined in Chapter 1, we conducted a landscape review of public funding sources for organizations that serve foster TAY and conducted a series of stakeholder interviews with foster TAY, their caregivers, and the staff of organizations that serve them. This study was approved by the RAND Human Subjects Protection Committee (study #2022-N0609).

### Landscape Review

#### *Data Collection*

To identify and map public funding streams for organizations working with foster TAY, ages 16–25, in metro Atlanta, Los Angeles County, and New York City, we conducted a targeted funding source search as well as a broad Google search using Boolean search terms. We reviewed websites and publicly available documents detailing public funding options for organizations working with foster TAY across a range of assistance needs. This project focused on public funding to help philanthropic funders identify potential gaps in the funding landscape. In addition, during our searches we identified existing datasets that could be used to better understand foster youth needs and preferences in future research and documented key information about those data sources.

The landscape review was conducted between December 2022 and May 2023, and covered funding sources that were available in the last five years (2018–2023). These primarily included federal, state, and local government websites and funding applications.

#### **Targeted Search**

We conducted targeted searches of websites of key agencies and organizations for each geographic location of interest. We generated a list of websites to review by searching for national and local organizations that worked to advocate or serve foster youth or provide youth services more broadly and by incorporating recommendations from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. During our search of these websites, we also employed a resource mining strategy in which we followed links and references from the sources on our list to other sources of funding.

We also reviewed ancillary publications detailing the structure and availability of federal funding for foster youth, including the following resources:

- Congressional Research Service, “Child Welfare: Purposes, Federal Programs, and Funding,” *In Focus*, No. IF10590, updated October 27, 2023.
- Congressional Research Service, *Child Welfare: An Overview of Federal Programs and Their Current Funding: July 16, 2014*, R43458, updated January 2, 2018.

- John Kelly, “A Complete Guide to the Family First Prevention Services Act,” *The Imprint*, February 2, 2018.
- D. Connelly and Rosinsky, K. *State Variation in Child Welfare Agency Use of Federal Funding Sources*, Child Trends, 2018.
- “NY, GA, and CA state-level child welfare spending reports,” webpage, Child Trends, undated.

## Expansive Search

We conducted an extensive online search for public funding opportunities for organizations serving foster TAY using the following search structure:

“[YOUTH]” AND “[FUNDING]” AND “[GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION]” AND “[NEED CATEGORY]”

This structure, which employs Boolean operators, enabled us to identify resources that refer to youth, funding, our geographic locations of interest, and the identified need categories. Appendix Table A1 identifies the specific search terms we used for each search term category in the search structure. Asterisks allow for the truncation of a word so that several word endings are included. For example, “fund\*” would return *fund, funders, funding, funded*, and the like.

A secondary search focused on identifying sources of funding for specific youth populations and organizations working with those populations. The search structure was as follows:

“[YOUTH]” AND “[FUNDING]” AND “[GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION]” AND “[POPULATION CATEGORY]”

where the population categories are

- race, ethnicity, racial minority, minority
- Native, Indigenous, tribal, tribe, reservation
- pregnant, parent\*
- military, veteran, service member, Armed Forces
- student, college, trade school, education, first generation
- sexual minority, gender minority, LGBTQ, LGBT
- disable\*, disabilit\*.

These target populations were identified in consultation with The Hilton Foundation and were refined based on the results of our targeted search. In particular, we used the more general term *race/ethnicity* to capture funding that differentiated between racial or ethnic groups because this was the terminology that appeared most often on the results of the targeted search. The exception was funding for organizations working with Native or Indigenous populations because public funding (particularly federal funding) typically specifically identifies tribes as eligible entities.

We utilized the Google search engine and catalogued and reviewed results returned through the first ten returned sites from each search (or fewer, depending on decreasing relevance). In addition to reviewing the top websites and resources identified from the search, we followed links or references to other sources of funding mentioned in the identified resources.

Our review abstracted the following information:

- funding source or organization
- program or grant name and description
- links to application pages
- organizational eligibility requirements
- geography (federal, state)
- funding amount and time period
- applicable need categories
- specific populations targeted by funding source.

### **Funding Utilization Search**

In addition to identifying the sources of public funding, we also gathered information about organizations that were administering the funds when we came upon that information in the searches described above. We also supplemented this with an additional search to identify more organizations using the public funding we found. To do this we conducted a targeted Google search, focusing on recent recipients of public funding for transition-age foster youth programming, particularly Chafee grants, in metro Atlanta, Los Angeles County, and New York City. The search string was as follows:

([transition-age\*] OR [transition age] OR [TAY] OR [young adult]) AND ([foster youth] OR [child welfare involved youth]) AND ([services] OR [programs]) AND [GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION]

where “GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION” was replaced with one of the geographies outlined in Table A1. We included organizations that serve youth, including but not necessarily exclusive to foster youth, of transition age. We excluded organizations that *only* serve foster youth younger than transition age (i.e., included organizations must at minimum serve foster youth of ages 16–25). We abstracted information about these administering organizations into an Excel spreadsheet.

### **Assessment of Data Sources**

The landscape review also included an assessment of available data sources that could be used in future research to better understand service awareness, utilization, and preferences among foster TAY. We reviewed data sources that were mentioned on websites identified during the targeted website and expansive online searches and gathered details about these data sources, including the population studied, sample design, key variables, data use requirements, data collection schedule, and date range of available data, among other factors.

### *Data Analysis*

The team abstracted data from the searched webpages and databases into a spreadsheet. This spreadsheet was developed through response to direct aims of the funding agency, collaboration by team members, and preliminary review of funding agency postings and resources. The resulting data abstraction workbook compiled key information about the funding opportunities,

including source, benefit amount, timeline, need category addressed by the funding, the funding method, and eligibility criteria to receive the funding. Characteristics of the funding itself include its permanency, its spend-down period, the application process, and additional enrollment caps or funding limits as applicable. Finally, these opportunities are categorized by their target recipient type (organizational or individual) and the funding type (grant, contract, other). Appendix Table D1 includes the full list of data points that were abstracted during the landscape review.

The abstraction process was primarily conducted by two members of the research team, who received input from the full research team as needed to resolve questions and discrepancies (JR and EB). These researchers completed all information for each funding opportunity based on the abstraction sheet. In the case of uncertainty about the best way to capture necessary information for a given opportunity, the researchers met with each other and then the full RAND team for peer debriefing sessions and came to consensus on the most clear and valid solution. A codebook for the fields captured in the data abstraction workbook was also drafted and updated throughout the process. The codebook ensured clarity and consistency for all fields captured, including funding source and description, geography, need category, funding amount and time period, and populations served. Upon completion of the abstraction, a review of the spreadsheet for accuracy, completeness, consistency, and clarity was conducted by the team.

Additionally, we identified three program exemplars for each geographic location to provide brief illustrative descriptions of the types of services and supports being provided by organizations (see Appendix C). The program overviews describe organizations that receive funding from some of the sources we identified through the landscape review, including information about all of their funding sources, who they serve (i.e., number of youth, age ranges, specific populations), the programs they offer, and other notable aspects of their work.

## Interviews

### *Data Collection*

RAND conducted semi-structured interviews with experts and stakeholders to identify barriers and facilitators to accessing funding and services for foster TAY. Interview participants included representatives from organizations supporting foster youth, foster TAY, and foster caregivers.

First, we conducted a set of interviews with representatives from organizations supporting foster youth. We identified potential organizations based on a website review of key organizations supporting foster youth in metro Atlanta, Los Angeles County, and New York City. We reviewed an initial list of organizations with the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation to identify priority organizations. Organizations that directly served foster TAY were prioritized over those that act predominantly as advocacy organizations. In addition, the Hilton Foundation

preferred we exclude some organizations that were participating in other ongoing survey work they had underway so as to not burden those organizations. We sent emails to leadership at the identified organizations inviting them to participate in discussions.

To identify foster TAY and foster caregivers we asked the organizations that we spoke with in the first set of interviews to connect us with youth and caregivers in their networks. For foster TAY, we asked organizations to identify volunteers between the ages of 18 and 25 who might be willing to speak with us.

All interviews were conducted virtually using the ZoomGov platform. Each interview was led by one researcher with a notetaker present. Representatives from organizations serving foster youth were asked about current sources of funding, methods for identifying funding, and barriers and facilitators to accessing and utilizing funding. Youth were asked about their awareness of services, barriers and facilitators to accessing services, and service needs and preferences. Caregivers were asked about approaches to navigating the foster care system and barriers to accessing services for youth and caregivers. Interview protocols can be found in Appendix B.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Foster TAY and caregivers were given a \$50 Amazon gift card for participating in the study.

### *Data Analysis*

We uploaded interview transcripts into Dedoose, a web application for analyzing qualitative data. The interview lead developed an initial codebook based on the interview guides and experiences conducting the interviews. This codebook was then applied to three transcripts (i.e., one organization interview, one foster TAY interview, and one caregiver interview) by the interview lead and a second member of the research team. After initial coding, the two coders discussed the codebook, made revisions, and came to a consensus on the finalized codebook. The remaining transcripts were divided and coded independently by the lead interviewer and a second member of the research team. Subthemes that focused on specific aspects of a larger theme were added throughout coding as they emerged. Upon completion, the two coders met to discuss coding, review questions, and resolve coding disagreements.

## Chapter 3. Results

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### Landscape Review

#### *Challenges Identifying Funding Sources*

Overall, the targeted website searches produced the majority of the funding sources we found. The expansive searches did return some further unique sources, but primarily produced redundant or out-of-date sources. Of note, particularly for funding sources serving foster TAY in New York City, reference mining was a critical component of the search strategy. However, many reports and state or city agency websites hosted dead links, creating a challenge in tracking down the most updated information for the referenced funding source. This challenge was particularly relevant to links to application pages, which are often archived or deleted after application dates have passed, and funding details, which often change over time.

Certain need categories and specific populations were difficult to find. For example, funding sources supporting housing for foster TAY were plentiful, but were often lacking in full descriptions of the limitations of the funding, so it was difficult to determine if those funding sources also covered other supports, such as utilities or furniture purchases. Targeted searches for public funding for sexual and gender minority foster TAY elicited funding sources for homeless LGBTQ+ youth, but not LGBTQ+ foster TAY specifically.

Specific funding amounts were often challenging to find. In many cases, the funding amount for a particular year (potentially more than five years ago) was obtainable, but recency was not consistent across funding sources. Similarly, enrollment caps or funding limits were not often found. Financial details for funding sources, including maximum and minimum funding amounts available, funding period, and funding permanency, are subject to change in response to legislative actions and budget allocations. Ensuring accurate information could require analyzing multiple sources, including cross-referencing the text of relevant legislation over several years.

#### *Availability and Gaps in Funding*

Results from our landscape review identified 70 public funding sources available to organizations that serve foster TAY in the three geographic areas of interest. These included 58 federal sources, four sources each for California and New York, and three for Georgia. Of the state-specific sources, three of the New York sources were specific to New York City, and one of the California sources was specific to Los Angeles County. The rest were available statewide. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) provided the most sources of funding ( $n = 20$ ).

Funding amounts varied widely depending on the source, scope, and grant period. The smallest amount of funding was \$25,000 and the largest was \$20 million. Information about minimum and maximum funding amounts was often difficult to determine, and many sources (particularly federal sources) relied on complex formulas to determine funding amounts. Fewer than half of the sources listed any specific dollar amount. Some provided a fixed grant amount; some required a percentage of matched funds; and others provided post hoc reimbursement. When a funding amount was listed, grant periods also varied widely, making comparisons difficult.

**Table 1. Public Funding Sources Specific to Foster Youth, by Location**

<b>Public funding source by state/federal source</b>	<b>Public funding sources identified</b>	<b>Public funding sources specific to foster youth</b>
<b>Federal</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>26</b>
HHS	26	20
U.S. Department of Education	14	0
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	5	0
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	4	3
U.S. Department of Agriculture	4	0
U.S. Department of Labor	2	2
U.S. Department of Justice	2	1
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services	1	0
Health Resources and Services Administration	1	0
<b>California</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
California Department of Education	1	1
California Department of Social Services	1	1
Los Angeles County	1	1
California Health and Human Services Agency	1	0
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
Georgia Department of Human Services	3	1
<b>New York</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
City of New York	3	1
New York State	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>33</b>

Approximately half of the 70 sources were specifically earmarked for services and supports for foster youth ( $n = 33$ ; see Table 1). The other sources were typically available for all youth or other subsets of youth of which foster youth may be a part. All of the California funding sources we found were specific to foster youth; two of the four New York sources were specific to foster



youth; and one of Georgia’s three sources was for foster youth. Note that we say *youth* here because these sources provided funding to organizations serving a range of ages of children and youth (and their caregivers) involved in the foster care system. All included sources served at least some portion of the TAY age range, if not the entire range, or parents/caregivers of foster youth.

There were more funding sources for organizations supporting foster parents and caregivers than any other foster TAY-specific funding sources ( $n = 16$ ), and every state had at least one funding source for this need (Table 2). There were 12 different sources of funding each for family reunification and for job training and employment supports, ten for education, and eight for housing. Funding sources for other needs were less common. Notably, there were no foster youth-specific public sources of funding for crisis intervention, furniture purchases, health insurance, utilities, sexual health or family planning, or access to technology (phone, internet).

**Table 2. Availability of Funding by Service and Support Type**

<b>Service/support type</b>	<b>Federal sources</b>	<b>California sources</b>	<b>Georgia sources</b>	<b>New York sources</b>	<b>Total</b>
Foster parents and caregivers	13	1	1	1	<b>16</b>
Family reunification and assistance	10	1	1	0	<b>12</b>
Job training and employment support	10	1	0	1	<b>12</b>
Education	8	1	0	1	<b>10</b>
Housing	7	1	0	0	<b>8</b>
Case management	4	2	0	1	<b>7</b>
Independent living coaching and support	4	1	0	1	<b>6</b>
Cash assistance	4	1	0	0	<b>5</b>
Legal services	2	1	0	0	<b>3</b>
Mental health care	1	1	0	1	<b>3</b>
Physical health care	2	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
Food access	2	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
Mentoring	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Substance use disorders	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Crisis intervention	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Furniture	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Health insurance	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Utilities	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Sexual health and/or family planning	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Technology access	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Other	10	3	0	2	<b>15</b>

When we reviewed public funding sources for specific target populations, we found that 18, primarily federal, sources specifically identified funding for organizations serving Native/Indigenous foster youth (Table 3). Very few funding sources specifically named any other target population. There were no public funding sources for organizations providing support to foster youth who were commercially sexually exploited, sexual or gender minorities, or veterans and/or military family members.

**Table 3. Availability of Funding Sources for Specific Target Populations**

<b>Target populations</b>	<b>Federal</b>	<b>California</b>	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>Total</b>
Native/Indigenous	17	1	0	0	<b>18</b>
Pregnant/Parenting youth	2	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
Student	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Disability Community	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Racial/Ethnic Minority	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Serious Mental Illness	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Commercially and Sexually Exploited Children	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Sexual/Gender Minority	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Military/Veteran Family	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
No specific populations identified	9	3	1	2	<b>14</b>

NOTE: Some sources identified more than one population of interest. Total sample size = 33.

### *Funding Time Periods*

The sources of funding that we identified had a range of funding time periods, from six months to five years, and the most common funding time period was one year. We did not find any funding sources specific to coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) in our search. Because of this, we included a series of questions in our semi-structured interview protocol with organizations supporting foster youth about COVID-19-related funding and whether there are any gaps that have been brought on by the end of any COVID-19-specific funding.

### *Data on Foster Youth Needs and Preferences*

Through the landscape review, we identified 16 data sources (see Table 4) that include information about foster youth. These data sources ranged in the comprehensiveness of data on foster youth they provided. Several federal surveys (i.e., the Current Population Survey, the National Health Interview Survey, and the American Housing Survey) allow for the identification of households with a foster child but do not gather details about the foster child themselves. Similarly, the Survey of Income and Program Participation includes a question about receipt of foster care payments. The American Community Survey, however, includes a series of

questions for each member of the household that would allow for the identification of key social and demographic characteristics of foster youth and the families they are living with.

There were a number of national databases managed by the Children's Bureau under the Administration for Family and Children within HHS that provide state-level snapshots of administrative data reported to the federal government by state and local agencies. These include the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, Independent Living Services Data, the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, and the National Youth in Transition Database. The Children's Bureau also conducts the Youth Outcomes Survey, which surveys cohorts of youth at ages 17, 19, and 21.

The final national data source we identified was the Child Welfare Financing Survey conducted by Child Trends. This survey is a biennial national survey of child welfare agencies and provides information on federal, state, and local expenditures on child welfare services.

We also found six data sources specific to the state of California, four of which were based on administrative data and two of which were surveys. The University of California–Berkeley, in collaboration with the California Department of Social Services, produces the California Child Welfare Indicators Project, which includes dashboards of a range of metrics relating to foster youth. The California Department of Health Care Services also releases data regularly on the number of former foster youth enrolled in Medi-Cal (the state's Medicaid program), a dashboard on the services used by children and youth in foster care, and data on the behavioral health services used by foster youth (the Katie A. Specialty Mental Health Datasets). The University of Chicago, in collaboration with the California Department of Social Services and the California County Welfare Directors Association, conducted the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Survey. This survey was conducted as part of an evaluation from 2012 to 2022 of the impact of the California Fostering Connections to Success Act. Through the survey, data on TAY, child welfare workers, and government programs were collected. The final data source specific to California is ongoing work being conducted by the RAND Corporation with funding from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. The FOSTER UNITY study has two components. In the first component, RAND has collected survey data on more than 400 TAY experiencing either housing instability or homelessness in Los Angeles County. Respondents were asked a set of questions about demographics; the history and nature of housing instability/homelessness; the incidence and nature of foster care involvement; and their history of health outcomes, substance use, employment, and education. In the second component of the study, RAND is enrolling 25 TAY with recent foster care involvement who, after an initial baseline interview, will be followed on a monthly basis for over a year.

Only one data source specific to New York was identified through our search, and this included a survey conducted by the New York City Administration for Children's Services. The survey gathers information from youth, ages 13 and older, who had been in foster care for at least 90 days at the time of the survey; it seeks to identify any unmet needs they may have and to hear about their experiences related to education, employment, health care, and family situation.

**Table 4. Data Sources with Information About Foster Youth**

<b>Data source</b>	<b>Managing organization</b>	<b>Data collection method</b>	<b>Geographic areas</b>	<b>Topic areas included</b>
<i>National</i>				
Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System <sup>a</sup>	Children’s Bureau, HHS	Administrative data	National	Demographic characteristics of youth Foster and adoption outcomes
National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System <sup>b</sup>	Children’s Bureau, HHS	Administrative data	National	Demographic characteristics of youth
National Youth in Transition Database—Independent Living Services Data <sup>c</sup>	Children’s Bureau, HHS	Administrative data	National	Demographic characteristics of youth Services used
American Community Survey <sup>d</sup>	U.S. Census Bureau	Survey	National	Demographic characteristics of youth
American Housing Survey <sup>e</sup>	U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	Survey	National	Families with foster children
Child Welfare Financing Survey <sup>f</sup>	Child Trends	Survey	National	Awareness of service availability
Current Population Survey <sup>g</sup>	U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics	Survey	National	Families with foster children
National Health Interview Survey <sup>h</sup>	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	Survey	National	Families with foster children
National Youth in Transition Database—Youth Outcomes Survey <sup>c</sup>	Children’s Bureau, HHS	Survey	National	Demographic characteristics of youth Health outcomes Social outcomes Foster and adoption outcomes
Survey of Income and Program Participation <sup>i</sup>	U.S. Census Bureau	Survey	National	Receipt of foster care payments
<i>California</i>				
California Child Welfare Indicators Project <sup>j</sup>	University of California–Berkeley and California Department of Social Services	Administrative data	California	Demographic characteristics of youth Foster and adoption outcomes
Former Foster Youth in Medi-Cal <sup>k</sup>	California Department of Health Care Services	Administrative data	California	Services used
Katie A. Specialty Mental Health Datasets <sup>l</sup>	California Department of Health Care Services	Administrative data	California	Services used
Performance Dashboard Children and Youth in Foster Care <sup>m</sup>	California Department of Health Care Services	Administrative data	California	Services used
California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Survey <sup>n</sup>	University of Chicago, California Department of Social Services, and	Survey	California	Services used Foster and adoption outcomes

Data source	Managing organization	Data collection method	Geographic areas	Topic areas included
FOSTER UNITY <sup>o</sup>	California County Welfare Directors Association RAND Corporation	Survey	California	Demographic characteristics of youth Health outcomes Social outcomes Foster and adoption outcomes
<i>New York</i>				
Foster Care Youth Experience Survey <sup>p</sup>	New York City Administration for Children's Services	Survey	New York City	Demographic characteristics of youth Awareness of service availability Services used Service preferences

**SOURCES:**

- <sup>a</sup> Administration for Children and Families, "Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)," webpage, updated May 30, 2023.
- <sup>b</sup> Administration for Children and Families, "National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS)," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, June 16, 2023.
- <sup>c</sup> Administration for Children and Families, "Data and Statistics: NYTD," webpage, undated.
- <sup>d</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "American Community Survey (ACS)," webpage, last updated October 25, 2023.
- <sup>e</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "About: The American Housing Survey (AHS)," webpage, last updated November 19, 2021.
- <sup>f</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "Current Population Survey (CPS)," webpage, last updated October 20, 2023.
- <sup>g</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "National Health Interview Survey," webpage, last updated November 9, 2023.
- <sup>h</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)," webpage, last updated October 5, 2023.
- <sup>i</sup> K. Rosinsky, M. Fischer, and M. Haas, *Child Welfare Financing Survey SFY2020*, Child Trends, May 22, 2023.
- <sup>j</sup> California Child Welfare Indicators Project, "Data and technical assistance to promote child welfare system improvement," webpage, undated.
- <sup>k</sup> California Department of Health Care Services, "Former Foster Youth Enrolled in Medi-Cal by Month," last updated May 31, 2023.
- <sup>l</sup> California Department of Health Care Services, "Katie A. Specialty Mental Health Datasets," last updated September 6, 2023.
- <sup>m</sup> California Child Welfare Indicators Project, "Performance Dashboard Children and Youth in Foster Care," last updated November 4, 2022.
- <sup>n</sup> Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, *Research Collection: The California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study (CalYOUTH)*, 2021.
- <sup>o</sup> This project, funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, is ongoing; results are expected starting in 2024.
- <sup>p</sup> NYC Children, "Foster Care Youth Experience Surveys," webpage, undated.

Importantly, we did not find any data sources specific to Georgia. Additionally, a limited number of data sources gather information about the service awareness and preferences of youth. There were also few sources at any geographic level that include health and social outcomes of foster youth. Addressing these gaps could be the focus of future research.

## Interviews

We completed nine interviews with staff from organizations serving foster TAY, nine interviews with foster TAY, and five interviews with TAY caregivers. In total, we contacted 46 interviewees, scheduled 25 interviews, and completed 22 interviews (Table 5). We spoke with

two organizations, three youth, and four caregivers in Atlanta; four organizations, two youth, and one caregiver in Los Angeles County; and three organizations and four youth in New York City.

**Table 5. Interview Recruitment and Completion**

Interview type	Contacted	Scheduled	Completed	Geographic location	Interview months	Average time (minutes)
Organization	14	9	9	Atlanta: 2 Los Angeles: 4 New York City: 3	June and July 2023	41
Youth	18	11	9	Atlanta: 3 Los Angeles: 2 New York City: 4	August–October 2023	22
Caregiver	14	5	5	Atlanta: 4 Los Angeles: 1 New York City: 0	August and September 2023	32

### *Organizations Serving Transition-Age Foster Youth*

We spoke with representatives from nine organizations serving foster TAY. Interviewees were most commonly executive directors, program managers, or finance and grants administrators. Client volume ranged from 150 to 3,200 foster TAY per year, with organizations serving an average of approximately 1,100 foster TAY per year.

### Services and Funding Sources

Of the nine organizations we spoke with, most served both foster youth and their caregivers ( $n = 7$ ); two organizations served youth only. Services provided included housing ( $n = 4$ ), case management ( $n = 4$ ), provider/caregiver training ( $n = 4$ ), mentoring ( $n = 3$ ), material goods and financial support ( $n = 3$ ), and policy and advocacy work ( $n = 3$ ). Other services mentioned include career and life skills support, education support, mental health care, placement support, family reunification, transportation, food, and urgent response.

Five of the nine organizations utilized at least some public funding, two of whom reported that they receive funding primarily through public sources. One of these organizations secured a large public grant and therefore said that it did not need to seek other external funding. The other cited limited staff capacity for grant applications and meeting reporting requirements as a challenge in foundation funding:

We wouldn't have been able to manage the requirements that some grants require, [specifically] the reporting requirements. I'd love to be able to expand our service array for young people and seek grant opportunities that could help us do that a bit more.

The remaining three organizations described using a mix of private and public funding streams.

Four organizations reported receiving funding primarily from private sources, such as foundations and private donors. These organizations gave several reasons for engaging with

private funding sources rather than government funding, including staff capacity to find and apply for federal funding, continuously shifting priorities in the public funding space, and arduous restrictions placed on how government funding can be used. As one organization representative said, “I think it’s just that it’s a behemoth, right? And I’m a one-man show. When you’re a small agency, it’s a one-person department each. I’m the only person doing development. . . . I have a capacity issue.” Another representative explained,

A lot of times federal funding will shift priorities. And our model is built on this idea of consistency and . . . community. And so, leaning on community foundations and individual donors puts a lot more of the ownership on the folks who are in communities with young folks. . . . I think, traditionally, when we’ve engaged in government funding, the restrictions on the use of that funding becomes a limitation. And I also think because there is a lot of distance between the government and the organizations that they’re funding, maintaining the relationship is a little more challenging.

Organizations most often identified new sources of funding through networking and word of mouth:

A lot of times it’s also referrals, meaning that we’ll have folks that we partner with who might say, “Hey, we’re exploring this grant. Would you like to collaborate on it?” or, “This is not something that’s up our alley, but we know it’s something that you do. Have you looked at this? Have you considered this?” That’s how we get a lot of our opportunities.

Other organizations relied on board members to lead funding efforts, hired external consultants, or searched foundation and government websites for requests for proposals.

### Barriers and Facilitators to Applying for and Receiving Funding

The most commonly reported barrier to finding both public and philanthropic funding was funder priorities; they either did not align with the mission of the organization or constantly shift based on funding cycle. One organization representative described this by saying, “I think we’re subject to trends in the philanthropy sector and new strategic directions that foundations may go in based on change of leadership or a new strategic plan.”

Staff capacity was the most commonly cited barrier to applying for funding, along with proposal timelines and reporting requirements. Explained one organization representative,

The amount of time and energy it takes to identify a prospective funder and then understand and interface with their current funding priorities to ensure that there’s fit, and then additionally to see if there is room in their portfolio for a particular program that we’re pitching or whatever, is basically high-energy input and low-result output. And so we have not necessarily been able to dedicate a lot of staff time to exploring these new funding opportunities, just because we don’t really have the bandwidth and they tend not to yield the best results because they are kind of shot-in-the-dark approaches.

Organizations were very positive about the idea of receiving technical assistance for identifying and applying for funding—particularly those that noted staff capacity as a barrier to

applying for funding. Said one organization representative, “To the extent that somebody’s providing technical assistance with more targeted approaches or particular strategies, I think that would be useful.” Another mentioned the idea of receiving support beyond just finding and applying for funding:

I would say the other thing that would be valuable beyond just the funding of grants and getting technical assistance in the application process would also be [support] on the back end. The reporting, the maintaining the relationship with the foundation, and also ensuring that the foundation has a high level of understanding about what the needs are within communities would also be very valuable.

### Gaps in Available Funding

Organizations noted money for core operational support as a major gap in available funding. Organizations had difficulty locating funding sources for staffing and operating expenses, explaining that funders often seemed focused on “the next big thing.” Explained one representative, “So many people want you to always start something new. . . . And it’s, like, but the program we’re doing works and we just need to be able to pay our staff, right?”

Most organizations reported receiving some COVID-19-specific funding, primarily in the form of material goods or cash for direct distribution to youth. Organizations noted that this funding was largely considered emergency funding and had been discontinued, often leaving a gap. Explained one representative,

There were grants available during the pandemic from funders that were interested in [giving] us money to grant out to foster youth . . . who were unable to make rent, who lost their jobs, who had an unexpected medical bill they couldn’t pay. That funding was incredibly valuable and transformative for the youth that we serve, and that funding has almost completely disappeared now that the pandemic is over. Which yes, of course, it is over, but a lot of these needs have continued, and I think it’s been more difficult for organizations like ours to advocate for those needs, given that it’s not necessarily front of mind of funders anymore.

### Gathering Information on Foster Youth Needs and Preferences

Organization representatives did not have strong awareness of data sources documenting the awareness, utilization, and preferences of foster youth. Explained one representative, “I get it ad hoc, you know, something might come across my desk or it might be an email, but not a regular, like, I know I’m gonna go here and read.” Instead, organizations relied on internal youth advisory boards, surveys and focus groups, and informal check-ins to gather information on the needs and preferences of the populations they serve. As one representative described, “We have our youth advisory board. They meet weekly, we can get feedback from them. We do youth surveys and a lot of anecdotal kind feedback from members directly to staff.” Other ways of collecting information on youth and caregiver needs included attending conferences, speaking with school staff, consulting with funders, and conducting support groups.



## Organizational Priorities

The most commonly cited organizational priority over the next three to five years was expanding programming, particularly in housing and mental health care. One representative said,

The first part is, how do we expand our services to better meet the changing needs of the youth that we serve? . . . Housing keeps coming up in these surveys as an area of great need. We currently don't have any programming around housing. How can we build partnerships with housing organizations . . . to get our youth connected with their housing, or how do we work with housing agencies in the city to advocate for foster youth . . . and building that into a public policy framework?

Another described exploring ways to expand mental health programming for foster youth:

For mental health, we're trying to figure out the best way to do this. We are probably gonna pilot a few different things. . . . I think we might have to do some in-house and some external, community-based. So that's something that we really want to look into.

In addition to expanding programming, several organizations also noted increasing staff hiring, improving retention, developing new funding streams, and strengthening program evaluation as organizational priorities going forward. Alignment of organizational priorities and available funding was mixed; some priorities, such as expansion of housing and mental health care programs, were well aligned, while others, such as operations and staffing, were not. One representative said,

I think for housing they're very aligned. For infrastructure, creating a positive work environment—those are really tough. It's really tough to find something beyond just a capacity building grant [which] tend to be fairly small and very specific. . . . But staff retention is of the utmost importance, and really tough to do when you can't fund your finance or HR [human resources] departments.

## *Transition-Age Foster Youth*

We interviewed a total of nine foster TAY, ranging in age from 20 to 25 years old.

### Finding and Accessing Supports and Services

The foster TAY that we spoke with reported varying experiences with locating and accessing services. Most who found success stressed the importance of finding a helper or advocate to help navigate systems. Advocates could be caseworkers, program managers, attorneys, social workers, caregivers, or any trusted adult. One youth described a positive experience with an organization serving youth involved in the foster care system:

Any time I have a question, I just go straight to [Organization X] and I'm like, okay, this is my question. How do I do this? How do I come about this? Where do I find the resources that I need? And if they don't have the answer, they point me in the direction of the answer to get it solved. So I would say [Organization X] has been like my older sister, older brother, like, just pointing me in the right direction. So it's been amazing to have them in my life.

Conversely, multiple youth mentioned that they did not have reliable advocates. Caseworkers and social workers could be unresponsive, unknowledgeable, or have extremely high turnover rates. One youth explained,

One of the reasons that I feel like I wasn't getting help there was because it's like every month—and really, no joke, every month—I would have a different social worker. I've had probably in my whole life, like, 30 different social workers, you know, caseworkers. It shouldn't be that high.

Some mentioned that they felt uncomfortable asking for help when they needed it, afraid it would reflect badly on their ability to be an independent adult or a parent. One youth said, “My biggest issue was reaching out for help. I felt like if I reached out for help, people would think that . . . I must not know what I'm doing, and honestly, it's just like, nobody knows what they're doing, really.”

### Needed Supports and Services

Foster TAY expressed a variety of needs specific to transitioning out of the foster care system. The most commonly cited need across interviews was life skills support and education. Youth expressed feeling unprepared for life as an adult and desired more direct mentoring and education about practical life skills. One youth said, “There's a lot that I feel like I could have been better prepared for, had I known. . . . I feel like that was probably the hardest with transitioning. It's just not knowing a lot of things, like life skills stuff.” Another youth echoed this sentiment:

They don't teach you how to navigate adulthood because when you're living in care . . . they don't really let you experience life on its own. It's basically, like, “Oh, we will cover your expenses. We'll make sure you have a roof where you have food in the fridge, clothes on your back, just like the basics.” But they don't teach us like, “Oh, you're gonna have to budget a certain amount for food, clothing, diapers, wipes,” you know.

Other transition-related needs included support with education, help finding housing, more reliable case management, and direct financial support and material goods. Across interviews, youth expressed that their greatest need was direct cash assistance, but this seemed difficult to obtain. Said one youth, “Everyone's, like, we will support former foster youth up until they turn 26. But they don't help us with, like, the stipends and the monetary support we need. So it doesn't make sense.” Another observed that even when they receive financial support, there can be many strings attached:

[Organizations] can be very rigid about [financial assistance]. Like, the way they give you their money, or the people they allow their money to go to. For instance, if you're a college-age youth, they do a stipend. But they only do that stipend if you're under 23. And they only do that stipend if you take so many credit hours and you have to go every single semester, including summer, full-time, which means 12 or more credit hours. I don't know if you've taken four classes during

the summer, but you can't do anything else. It's hard to work. . . . So they definitely make things harder for no reason.

Education and career support were also mentioned as current needs. Youth desired more consistent mentorship and support when it came to pursuing higher education or finding employment. Said one youth, "Career readiness . . . I guess, like, having someone that you can talk to, to break down your career goals and having them check in with you, making sure that you're checking off your to do list or meeting your goals." Another described the difficulties of attending school full-time:

If it was up to me, I would just focus on my education, but I have to work. . . . I feel like some people are able to do that, like their parents support them. It sounds like a fairy tale to me. But a lot of people that I know are in school, their parents support them, you know, they don't have to work full time. . . . I did that last year, I was going to school full-time and working full-time, and yeah, it's possible, but I was miserable. I was like, I wish I could just focus all my attention on school so I can get better grades.

Youth also mentioned mental health care as a current need but described challenges in accessing care. Some had trouble finding mental health care providers they connected with or who provided high-quality care. One youth described restrictions placed on care by the foster care agency:

The agency did provide us with a therapist if we needed one, but I wasn't really comfortable with the people that they provided. And when I tried to seek outside help, like, not associated with the agency, they wouldn't allow me to. . . . I was just, like, I'm not comfortable speaking about myself to a doctor that you guys provided.

### Ways to Improve Access to Supports and Services

When asked what they would change to make services easier to access for TAY, youth cited more informed and responsive caseworkers, centralized and updated resources and information, and more support with practical life skills. One youth said, "I think having life skills trainings in place during the start of high school, having programs in place that guide us and enable us to learn about these things starting from an earlier age." Another said,

I would change the responses. By that I mean, when you call someone and then they don't answer and you need something right there and then, and then . . . they don't call you back, you call them, leave them a message, and then they don't call you until, like, the next month. I would also change the websites, like, the links. The reason I say that is because sometimes when we click on a website, it's either not updated or it's not useful because it's so old.

### *Caregivers of Transition-Age Foster Youth*

We interviewed five caregivers of foster TAY, four of whom were based in Atlanta and one in Los Angeles.

## Finding and Accessing Supports and Services

TAY caregivers described a wide range of programs and services they currently utilize related to their role as caregivers, including mental health care; Medicaid; the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; material goods donations (e.g., clothing, diapers); direct cash assistance through state per diems; and respite/volunteer support. Said one caregiver,

We use behavioral aide services for children who come into our home but need a little help with the transition process. . . . We've found that it helps to have that buffer in between, to get kids comfortable with the routine of being in our home, as well as us getting comfortable with them.

Another caregiver said,

The best program, and maybe one of the reasons why I stick to fostering in the state of [state X], is that the insurance is very good. Everybody uses a group right now which is kind of a part of Medicaid. Through the years I have got some contact information, so I know a couple of people who are kind of in charge of a couple of the counties, and she knows me very well. If I have an issue with the insurance not covering a medicine, . . . I email her or I'll call her. She calls me right away. Sometimes if I'm in a pharmacy, she will talk to the pharmacy.

TAY caregivers described finding the services they need in a variety of ways. Some spoke with other caregivers, others worked with their foster agencies and caseworkers, and some used Google and social media. One caregiver explained,

Before the pandemic, it was easier because . . . you have all these other foster parents you connect with. But since then, they [the agency] share with you but it's not like they teach you, "This is what you do, this is how you do it." You just kind of learn or you reach out to somebody that's been doing it. If somebody said that they've been doing this for a long time, I mean, that's the way I do it. I will reach out to them and say, "Hey, you know about this. How do I go about doing this?" And then the person will probably say, "Well, I don't know, but maybe I can find somebody who can help you."

## Needed Supports and Services

Mental health care was the most needed service reported by TAY caregivers. This included both mental health care for the children in their care and mental health care for themselves. Caregivers said it was difficult to locate mental health services and, even when they existed, they were difficult to access or of low quality. Said one caregiver, "One of my kids this last year really needed some extra therapy resources, and it was just really hard and time consuming to find something for her." Another caregiver said, "They have foster care support groups [for caregivers]. I felt like it was just a complaining session . . . I really need a counseling session. I don't need a support group session." One caregiver also described facing significant bureaucratic obstacles to accessing mental health care:

Mental health can be very challenging when you cross county boundaries. So mental health [coverage] takes about two months to kick in when you cross a county boundary in [X state]. And in that two months, anything can happen and it does happen. . . . So one county has to release them. Once that county releases them, then the other county has to pick it up. Once that county picks it up, then it has to go through a bunch of hands for it to be processed.

Other service needs that TAY caregivers described included transportation, material goods donations, direct cash assistance, and more direct support from foster agencies. One caregiver said, “We are a one driver household, and . . . this one foster youth has five appointments every week. And some of them can last two to three hours and I don’t know until it’s done. So, if I had transportation, I could probably feed my family a little bit better.” Another caregiver spoke about desiring more support from their state foster agency:

My resource worker that I had previously was pretty good . . . but since she left in February, I have not had any communication with my resource worker for my home. So, typically, [you have] a resource worker that is supposed to check in once a month and come visit once a quarter. So [my resource worker] left, and I have not had a check-in. . . . I felt the resource worker was really the only person that checked on the foster parent and, like I said, that was a very low touch point. But I think you get a little bit more support with private agencies in that regard than you do with the state or the county.

Caregivers felt that TAY needed mentorship, housing, and life skills training to support a successful transition out of the foster care system. Said one caregiver, “I really think they need more mentor-type relationships instead of case manager relationships.” Another caregiver echoed this, saying,

In that 17 to 23 age group, they need a lot of support, and not necessarily a foster home but a place that they can call their own and receive assistance, like, transitional housing for youth coming out of foster care. More of those types of programs where there’s more support rather than managing or parenting. I mean, they probably do need some parenting too, but they have been controlled in foster care for years and not had a say and control over their life. So, more helping relationships rather than parenting, managing relationships, I think is what youth need to successfully transition.

### Challenges in Finding Supports and Services

TAY caregivers reported limited availability of services and supports, issues with accessing available services, difficulties navigating bureaucracy, and fragmentation between organizations serving foster youth as the greatest challenges to finding services. One caregiver said, “I can get six different answers from six different people. The deputy director says one thing, the county director says another. The regional assistant says one thing, the caseworker says another. And you’re like, why is this not clear?” Another caregiver described a lack of support in a difficult situation:

I remember years ago I had a child that had a lot of challenges. . . . I remember when he came in, he told me how he’s always being rejected, and I promised him

that I wasn't gonna do that to him. And it's something that I would feel bad about for the rest of my life. . . . I feel like I was given this child and I was not given the resources I needed. I kept asking for stuff. And the sad part was, all the stuff they were hearing from me, it was not new. The reason why he was moved [from home to home] was because he was dealing with the same issue. So instead of passing the child around, why don't you provide me the resources that I needed?

TAY caregivers described numerous challenges in accessing services and supports for themselves and their foster youth but stressed the importance of persistence and advocacy. Said one caregiver, "We don't care who we offend or who we piss off. We're getting what we need for this kid." Another explained,

Be persistent. And sometimes I get mad and I'm, like, you know what, I'm not even gonna bother with this. But then, like, I know what I'm doing this for a reason, and it's not about me and me being upset because this agency or this contact is not getting back to me and [instead I] kind of take a step back and say, Okay, I'm doing this for this reason, which is because I want to do for this child. So I'm going to have to just put my pride aside.

## Chapter 4. Discussion and Recommendations

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### Discussion

#### *Challenges Identifying, Applying for, and Securing Funding*

Data from both the landscape review and stakeholder interviews highlighted the challenges faced in securing public funding to serve foster TAY. As researchers with many tools at our disposal, we encountered significant challenges finding correct, current, and accessible information regarding public funding opportunities. There were significant gaps in the information provided, many dead links and dead ends, and we expended significant effort to thoroughly comb through the available information to produce results in which we had confidence. Organization staff raised these same concerns during interviews, and noted the significant capacity required to even identify, let alone apply for or manage, public funding opportunities. The majority of the funding sources we identified were federal, which typically come with complex eligibility requirements, matching and/or reimbursement plans as opposed to up-front funding, and burdensome application processes. They often have complex and taxing reporting requirements as well. The landscape of public funding appears to favor larger organizations that have the capacity to apply for and manage the sometimes-complex requirements and relationships with public funding organizations.

#### *Challenges Identifying Data on Transition-Age Youth Needs*

Organization representatives that we spoke with did not have strong awareness of data sources documenting the awareness, service utilization, and preferences of foster youth. Staff typically relied on their own data collection to identify what youth wanted or needed, even while noting their limited capacity to take on these kinds of tasks. This was unsurprising given that our review of data sources during the landscape review identified few data collection attempts to document the needs and preferences of foster youth, including none that were specific to Georgia.

#### *The Mismatch Between Public Funding Opportunities and Foster Transition-Age Youth Needs*

There is a lack of alignment between the public funding that is available and the needs identified by foster youth, caregivers, and the organizations that serve them. There are numerous public funding opportunities for overseeing foster-caregiver relationships, family reunification assistance, and job training and employment support. In contrast, there are fewer public funding opportunities for mentoring, cash assistance, mental health care, material goods (e.g., furniture),

transportation, and life skill support—all priority needs identified by foster TAY, caregivers, and organizations that serve foster TAY. It was noted by staff at organizations that serve foster TAY that during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, more funding was available for things like cash assistance and material goods, but in recent years this funding has dissipated leaving a significant gap. Organizations that serve foster TAY also identified the need for funding for operational support (e.g., human resources, staffing, program evaluation, and grant management), an area that appears overlooked in public funding. Organizations we spoke with were enthusiastic about receiving technical assistance for identifying and applying for funding.

### *Public Funding Web Tool*

Using the data collected during the landscape review, we developed a web tool that can be used to search for public funding opportunities for organizations that serve foster youth. The web tool includes search filters by need category, geographic location, and target population. Appendix D provides additional information about the tool, including instructions for hosting and updating the tool.

## Recommendations for Next Steps for Funders

1. **Centralize information on funding opportunities to make them easier to find.** A first step toward this goal would be to identify an organization that can manage the process of periodically updating the database and the web tool for funding sources that was developed as part of this project. We do not recommend conducting an expansive Boolean search to update the information, as this was a less effective method of identifying funding opportunities; rather, we recommend conducting targeted searches of the listed agencies and organizations to identify updates to funding opportunities. Additionally, staff tasked with keeping the tool up to date could sign up for email alerts from existing funders to maintain awareness of the funding available. Appendix D provides the technical requirements for hosting and updating the web tool we developed, as well as the codebook for updating information in the database.
2. **Conduct an assessment of the full funding landscape for organizations that serve foster TAY.** This would include assessing private and philanthropic funding sources in addition to public funding. A thorough analysis could include a longitudinal assessment of how policies shaped funding availability and how priorities (public and philanthropic) changed over time. Assessing all sources of funding would help to better identify gaps and overlap in funding availability.
3. **Explore the possibility of providing technical assistance to organizations to apply for and manage public funding.** Organization staff in our interviews were enthusiastic about this as a possibility. Future work should continue to flesh out the specifics of what types of technical assistance would be most useful to staff, including ways to encourage



and facilitate collaboration between organizations to leverage each other's strengths, while not further taxing their already limited staff capacity. Technical assistance could also consider leveraging recent advancements in artificial intelligence to streamline and expedite grant writing.

4. **Make more funding available for the operational needs of organizations serving foster TAY.** Funding agencies and organizations should seek to provide funding that is both stable year over year (i.e., avoid shifting priorities where possible) and to include funding for organization operational costs.
5. **Collect and disseminate better data on youth needs and preferences.** While service utilization is routinely tracked by many federal agencies, there are limited data on what youth want and need, from the youth themselves. Additional efforts to collect data on foster youth needs and preferences and greater advertisement to increase awareness of existing data is needed.

## Study Limitations

This study provides a glimpse into a specific portion of the funding landscape for organizations serving foster TAY. It focuses only on public funding, and does not include philanthropic and private funding, which contribute significantly to the availability of services and supports for youth exiting foster care. Additionally, we used convenience sampling for interviews, and the final sample size was small across groups. It is possible that different takeaways would have emerged with a larger sample. More research, including longitudinal studies, is needed to fully understand the evolution and availability of funding from all sources.

While availability of funding is necessarily linked to availability of services and supports, our study does not include an in-depth analysis of the specific service and support needs of foster youth and caregivers in metro Atlanta, Los Angeles County, and New York City. Therefore, we do not make any recommendations on the need for funding specific direct services or supports. We note that there is a continuing need for data on the needs and preferences of foster TAY, and particularly those who are statistically more likely to age out of care (e.g., racial/ethnic and sexual and gender minority youth).

Similarly, because of its specific focus on funding availability, our study also does not collect data directly from staff involved in direct service provision, such as independent living skills staff. Future studies investigating the service needs of youth transitioning out of foster care should consider interviewing agency and organization staff who work directly with youth and families.

## Appendix A. Landscape Review Search Terms

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Table A1 summarizes the search terms we used for the landscape review Google searches.

**Table A1. Search Term Categories and Associated Search Terms.**

<b>Search term category</b>	<b>Search terms</b>
Youth	Young adult Youth Transition-age*
Funding	Fund* Grant Stipend Award Voucher Request for services Request for proposals Request for quotes
Geographic location	Atlanta ATL Georgia Los Angeles LA California CA New York NY Manhattan Brooklyn Queens Bronx Staten Island
<b>Need categories</b>	
Housing	Hous*
Health insurance	Health insurance Medicaid Medicare
Health care, including mental health care	Primary care Physical health Preventative care Mental health Counseling Sexual health Reproductive health
Food access	Nutrition Food
Job training and employment support	Employ* Job Career
Education	College

<b>Search term category</b>	<b>Search terms</b>
	University School Textbooks
Financial literacy	Financ* Money management
Legal assistance	Legal assistance Legal help Legal advoca*
Mentoring	Mentor
Technology access	Computer Internet Phone
Cash assistance	Cash Financial assistance
Family reunification and assistance	Reunification Family reuni*
Support for foster parents and caregivers	Foster parent* Foster caregiver* Resource parent* Resource famil* Kin caregiver* Nonrelative extended family member NREFM

## Appendix B. Interview Protocols

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### *Opening*

My name is [INSERT NAME OF INTERVIEWER] and I'm a researcher at the RAND Corporation, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization. This study was funded by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, and the purpose of the study is to identify and catalogue the public funding streams that serve foster youth and the agencies that serve them, with a particular focus on transition-age foster youth.

We sent you some information in advance of today's conversation about how we intend to use the information you share with us. Were you able to review those documents?

As a reminder, your participation in this discussion is voluntary, and you can decline to answer any specific question. The discussion should take no more than 60 minutes. If you need to take a break at any time, please let me know.

We will take notes and digitally record the meeting for accuracy and completeness. We will delete the recording after we finalize our notes.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

And may we begin recording?

### *Note to interviewers:*

If at any point the participant becomes upset during the interview,

1. Stop the interview immediately.
2. Acknowledge that the participant is upset and ask:
  - a. Do you have someone you can talk to or someone who helps you when you are upset?
3. Offer the 988 suicide prevention crisis line. Let them know the help line is available 24/7 by dialing 988.
4. Remind them that they can stop the interview at any time or not answer any questions they don't feel like answering.
5. Remind them that they will still receive the \$50 incentive gift card even if they stop the interview at any time.
6. Ask them if they would like to continue the interview. If they say no, thank them for their time and end the interview.

If a participant became upset at any point during an interview, even if they opted to continue the interview, immediately report this to the project co-leads after the interview ends.

## Organizations Serving Foster TAY

### *Background*

To begin, we have a few questions about your organization and the work that you do.

1. Could you tell me about your organization and your role there?
2. What populations do you serve? [e.g., foster youth, foster parents, etc.]
3. Approximately how many unique clients do you serve?
  - a. PROBE: Is this volume consistent across the year?
4. What types of services does your organization provide? [e.g., food or housing support, education support and job training resources, case management, physical health care services, family reunification, etc.]

### *Funding*

Next, we have some questions about funding.

5. What are the most common sources of funding for your organization? [e.g., private grants, federal funding sources, state or local government funding] [Try to get specific names of grants or grantmaking organizations]
  - a. IF PREDOMINANTLY ONE TYPE OF FUNDING SOURCE: Is there a reason why you are mostly funded by [INSERT FUNDING SOURCE]?
6. Tell me about recent funding you procured and how you were able to use it.
7. How do you identify new sources of funding for your organization?
  - a. Where do you look?
  - b. Reactive vs. targeted planning/need based?
8. What are some of the biggest barriers you encounter when applying for funding? [e.g., eligibility requirements, staff capacity, proposal timelines, lack of publicly available information, etc.]
  - a. PROBE: Are there other barriers you encounter? [Keep probing until they say that's all they can think of]
9. If an organization offered technical assistance to help support searching for and applying for funding, is this something you would be interested in?
  - a. Why/why not?
  - b. Do you know of any organizations or foundations that currently offer this form of assistance?
10. What major gaps do you see in the funding ecosystem for organizations serving foster youth?
  - a. PROBE: Are there other gaps you can think of? [Keep probing until they say that's all they can think of]

11. Are you aware of any sources of funding specifically related to the COVID-19 pandemic? Please describe.
  - a. Are those funding sources still available?
  - b. Do you see a need for continuation of that funding? [i.e., if the funding is discontinued, did it leave a gap? If it's still available, is it filling an important gap?]

### *Awareness, Utilization, and Preferences of Foster Youth*

The following questions focus on the needs and preferences of foster youth.

12. How do you gather information about the needs and preferences of the populations you serve? [e.g., conducting needs assessments, conducting surveys of your clients, utilizing existing survey data, something more informal?] → After they answer, probe on the other items listed in this example if they haven't brought them up
13. What data sources are you aware of that gather information on foster youth's awareness, utilization, and preferences regarding services and funding?
  - a. PROBE: Data gathered by private organizations? Federal agencies? State agencies? Local agencies?
14. What would you say are the major gaps in the services and resources currently offered to foster youth?

### *Organizational Priorities*

Our last set of questions focuses on your organizational priorities.

15. Looking forward over the next few years, what are your organization's top priorities?
16. How well do you feel your organizational priorities align with the available funding you have found?

### *Wrap-Up*

17. What advice might you have for other organizations serving foster youth as they seek funding?
18. Is there anything we did not discuss today that you would like to share?

### *Referral*

19. To conclude, we are planning to conduct interviews with foster youth as well as foster parents to learn more about the services and resources available to these groups. Would you be able to refer us to any of the foster youth or parents you work with who might be interested in participating in an interview?

# Transition-Age Youth Involved in the Foster Care System

## *Introduction*

1. To start, could you tell me a little bit about yourself?
  - a. Can you tell me your age and how you got involved with [INSERT REFERRING ORGANIZATION]?

## *Services and Supports*

Now we have some questions about the services available to youth like yourself who have experience in the foster care system.

2. How do you go about looking for help with things you need? For example, things like housing, education, transportation, mental health services, etc.
  - a. Who helps you get the things that you need? (e.g., people, organizations, websites, etc.) [Examples: Housing, education, food, transportation, mental and physical health care services, case management, mentoring and career support]
3. Have any of the services you've needed been difficult to find?
  - a. Why do you think it was hard to find help?
4. Have any of the services you've needed been easy to find?
  - a. What made this service easier to get than others?
5. Thinking about your transition out of the foster care system, what will be or what were the things you need(ed) most at that time?
6. What services could you most use right now?
7. What would you change to make it easier to get the things you need?

## *Wrap-Up*

8. What advice do you have for other people like yourself as they try to find the services that they need?
9. Is there anything we did not discuss today that you would like to share?

## Caregivers Involved in the Foster Care System

### *Introduction*

1. To start, could you tell me a little bit about yourself?
  - a. How long have you been a caregiver for foster youth and how did you come to be involved in the foster care system?

### *Services and Supports for Foster Families*

Now we have some questions about the services available to foster families.

2. Tell me about the services you currently use related to your role as a caregiver.  
*Prompt for: resources/support for you as the caregiver; resources/support for the foster youth you care for*  
Examples: Housing, education, food, transportation, mental and physical health care services, case management, mentoring and career support
  - a. What organizations do you get these services from?
3. How do you learn about resources available to you as a caregiver? (e.g., other caregivers, organizations, websites, etc.)
4. What additional support or resources could you most use?  
*Prompt for: resources/support for you as the caregiver; resources/support for the foster youth you care for*
  - a. Immediate needs? Longer-term needs?
5. What challenges do you face in finding resources and support as a caregiver?  
*Prompt for: resources/support for you as the caregiver; resources/support for the foster youth you care for*
  - a. Have any of the services you've needed been difficult to find?
  - b. Why do you think it was hard to find help?
6. Have any of the services you've needed been easy to find? What were they, and what made them easier to get than other services?  
*Prompt for: resources/support for you as the caregiver; resources/support for the foster youth you care for*
7. Thinking specifically about older foster youth, what do you see as the major challenges they face in terms of getting the things they need on their own?
8. What would you change to make it easier for foster families to get the services they need?

### *Wrap-Up*

9. What advice do you have for other foster families as they try to find the services that they need?
10. Is there anything we did not discuss today that you would like to share?



## Appendix C. Example Program Descriptions

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### Atlanta Angels

Mission statement: “The Atlanta Angels mission is to walk alongside children, youth, and families in the foster care community by offering consistent support through intentional giving, relationship building, and mentorship.”<sup>3</sup>

Target population: Atlanta Angels does not specify serving youth of a designated age range. The Dare to Dream mentorship program is tailored to ages 11–22.<sup>4</sup>

Sources of funding: Atlanta Angels’ funding comes from contributions, grants, and gifts.<sup>5</sup>

Geographic area served: Atlanta, Georgia.<sup>6</sup>

Organization size and scope: Atlanta Angels is a chapter of the National Angels organization, which serves foster families and the foster care community through intentional giving, relationship building, and mentorship.<sup>7</sup> Atlanta Angels operates out of a single organizational site in Alpharetta, Georgia.<sup>8</sup> Atlanta Angels’ website lists ten staff members and a board of directors with eight members.<sup>9</sup>

### *Programs*

*Love Box*: Individual volunteers or volunteer groups are matched with local foster families. Volunteers provide resources to support to families on a monthly basis such as gift cards, clothes, or meals, as well as offering to provide assistance through babysitting, tutoring or educational support, and lawn or housekeeping services, among others. Love Box aims to build long-term relationships with foster families and other members of their community in order to improve placement stability and reduce caregiver turnover.

*Dare to Dream*: Through the Dare to Dream program, Atlanta Angels offers one-to-one mentorship to youth in care, ages 11–22. Mentors are matched with youth to help navigate life challenges, such as driver’s license assistance, money management or budget planning, interview and resume skills, healthy habits, and more. Mentors and mentees meet every other week with

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<sup>3</sup> Atlanta Angels, “Our Mission,” webpage, undated.

<sup>4</sup> Atlanta Angels, “Dare to Dream Program,” webpage, undated.

<sup>5</sup> Candid-GuideStar, “Transformations by Atlanta Angels Inc,” webpage, undated.

<sup>6</sup> Atlanta Angels, “Our Mission.”

<sup>7</sup> Atlanta Angels, “Our Mission.”

<sup>8</sup> Atlanta Angels, “Our Mission.”

<sup>9</sup> Atlanta Angels, “Our Board,” webpage, undated.

the aim of establishing goals and building a long-term relationship. Mentors commit to the program for at least one year.

## City Living NY

Mission statement: “At City Living NY, our mission is to empower youth aging out of foster care to transition successfully into adulthood by providing concrete resources, tools, and support services. We work with our clients to overcome complex and varied challenges so that they have the same opportunities as any young adult on the road to independence. When foster care ends, our work begins.”<sup>10</sup>

Target population: Young adults, ages 21–26, in New York City (in New York, foster youth age out at age 21). All youth aging out of foster care in New York City are eligible for City Living NY’s programs, and they are referred to the organization from many different partners city-wide.<sup>11</sup>

Geographic area served: New York City, New York.

Sources of funding: While the majority of funding comes from foundation and corporate contributions, other funding sources include government grants, individual contributions, and donated goods and services.<sup>12</sup>

Size and scope: Since its inception in November 2015 through 2022, City Living NY has served more than 160 youth, 82 percent of whom are female and 99 percent of whom are people of color.<sup>13</sup> City Living NY employs 12 staff, and the board consists of 13 directors.<sup>14</sup>

### *Programs*

*Home Goods Advocacy Program*: The Home Goods Advocacy Program helps youth aging out of foster care in New York City assess their home goods needs and then provides youth with the items they need. The program also conducts quarterly check-ins for housing stability and hosts monthly workshops and trainings for financial budgeting, nutrition, stress management, self-care, and a variety of other topics. Youth can access assistance through this program for up to two years, at which point they can transition to the alumni program (see below).<sup>15</sup>

*Comprehensive Services Program*: The Comprehensive Services Program provides a wide range of services for youth transitioning into independent living. This includes helping youth achieve employment and educational goals, first apartment setup, workshops to promote well-being and financial literacy, and referrals to off-site supportive services. Licensed social workers

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<sup>10</sup> City Living NY, *City Living NY 2021 Annual Report*, 2021.

<sup>11</sup> City Living NY, “About Us—City Living NY,” webpage, undated.

<sup>12</sup> ProPublica, “City Living NY: Full text of ‘Full Filing’ for fiscal year ending June 2022,” webpage, last updated September 14, 2023.

<sup>13</sup> City Living NY, 2021.

<sup>14</sup> City Living NY, “Alumni,” webpage, undated; ProPublica, “City Living NY,” 2023.

<sup>15</sup> City Living NY, “Home Goods Advocacy Program (HGA),” webpage, undated.

design a service plan based on each young person’s unique needs and aspirations. About 40 percent of the youth served by the Home Goods Advocacy Program opt into the Comprehensive Services Program as well. Youth can access assistance through the Comprehensive Services Program for up to three years, at which point they can transition to the Alumni Program (see below).<sup>16</sup>

*Alumni Program:* After young adults served by the Home Goods Advocacy Program and/or the Comprehensive Services Program transition to the Alumni Program, the majority stay in contact with their City Living NY social worker. Alumni are invited to workshops and other programs hosted by City Living NY, including holiday meals and community gatherings.<sup>17</sup>

*COVID-19 Emergency Fund:* City Living NY had a special fundraising effort for COVID-19 funds, committing 100 percent of these funds directly to youth. The COVID-19 Emergency Fund provided direct financial assistance to youth enrolled in City Living NY programs. Youth used these funds for a variety of needs, including to pay rent to avoid arrears accruing, to pay internet and phone bills, and to obtain laptops to remain in school for remote learning or to work from home as their jobs permitted. Additionally, these funds were used to send food, formula, and diaper deliveries via services such as Instacart to program-enrolled youth.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> City Living NY, “Comprehensive Services Program (CSP),” webpage, undated.

<sup>17</sup> City Living NY, “Alumni,” webpage, undated.

<sup>18</sup> City Living NY, *2021 Annual Report*, 2021.

## The Door

Mission statement: “The Door’s mission is to empower young people to reach their potential by providing comprehensive youth development services in a diverse and caring environment.”<sup>19</sup>

Target population: Young people, ages 12–24, in New York City (in New York, foster youth age out at age 21). Over two-thirds of youth served are 19 or older, 75 percent are Black or Hispanic, and 10 percent are involved in the foster care or juvenile justice systems.<sup>20</sup>

Sources of funding: In fiscal year (FY) 2022, about 40 percent of The Door’s funding came from foundation, corporate, and individual contributions; about 45 percent of revenue came from government grants at the federal, state, and local levels.<sup>21</sup>

Geographic area served: New York City, New York.

Size and scope: Two centers, one in Lower Manhattan, in SoHo; and one in the South Bronx. Between these two centers, and two supportive housing sites on Manhattan’s Lower East Side, The Door serves 11,000 youth annually.<sup>22</sup> It employs over 400 staff, and the board consists of eight officers and eight directors.<sup>23</sup>

### Programs

*Broome Street Academy*: The Broome Street Academy is a public charter high school co-located with The Door’s SoHo center, and it serves 300 students. Fifty percent of incoming ninth-grade seats are reserved for transitionally housed students, and enrollment priority is given to both students experiencing housing instability and students in foster care.<sup>24</sup>

*Advance & Earn Plus*: Located at the Bronx Youth Center, this 20-week high school equivalency program provides academic instruction four days a week to young people seeking a high school equivalency diploma. Eligibility is restricted to youth who have experience with foster care or who have received services through the New York City Family Assessment Program or a juvenile justice program. This program also features an internship component through which participants can earn up to \$375 weekly.<sup>25</sup>

*The Academy Program*: Focusing specifically on youth with foster care experience, The Academy provides paid five- or ten-week internships to youth in one of The Door’s high school

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<sup>19</sup> The Door, “About The Door,” webpage, undated.

<sup>20</sup> The Door, “Our Impact at a Glance,” webpage, undated.

<sup>21</sup> The Door, *Annual Report 2022*; ProPublica, “The Door A Center of Alternatives Inc: Full text of ‘Full Filing’ for fiscal year ending June 2022,” webpage, last updated September 14, 2023.

<sup>22</sup> The Door, “About The Door.”

<sup>23</sup> The Door, “Leadership & Board,” webpage, undated; ProPublica, 2023.

<sup>24</sup> The Door, *Annual Report 2022*.

<sup>25</sup> The Door, “High School Equivalency,” webpage, undated.

equivalency programs, through which participants can earn \$1,500 over the course of the internship. The Academy promotes job readiness and includes life skills workshops, case management, and access to individual and group mental health therapy.<sup>26</sup>

*Supportive Housing:* The Door operates two supportive housing programs on Manhattan's Lower East Side; one has 44 units for parenting youth and single young adults, and one has 55 units for single young adults aging out of foster care or who have experience with chronic homelessness. The Door also provides help with housing placement for youth aging out of foster care who do not reside in one of the two supportive housing facilities.<sup>27</sup>

*Leadership Training:* The Bronx Youth Center, which houses most of the programs focusing on foster youth, also hosts the Bronx Youth Council. This council develops leaders from among the foster youth served by The Door by providing skills-based training to support the Bronx Youth Center's events and activities.<sup>28</sup>

*Parenting Support:* The Door offers parenting foster TAY the Parenting Journey program. This 12-week experiential learning program coaches young parents to develop parenting skills and knowledge through hands-on activities. The program includes time to reflect on their own childhoods in relation to parenting. Other parenting supports offered by The Door include workshops outside the Parenting Journey program, referrals to partner organizations, and a stockpile of baby essentials such as diapers and wipes.<sup>29</sup>

*Other Programs:* Foster TAY also have access to The Door's many programs that do not require experience with foster care for eligibility. These include open-enrollment high school equivalency programs, art classes, college counseling and standardized test preparation, placement and enrollment assistance at City University of New York colleges, a variety of job training and internship programs, access to The Door's comprehensive health center, crisis intervention, fresh to-go meals and a food pantry, and free legal assistance.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> The Door, "Foster Care," webpage, undated.

<sup>27</sup> The Door, "Our Locations," webpage, undated.

<sup>28</sup> The Door, "Foster Care."

<sup>29</sup> The Door, "Foster Care."

<sup>30</sup> The Door, "Everyone is Welcome Here," webpage, undated.

## Fostering UNITY

Mission statement: “Fostering UNITY will improve outcomes for children in foster care through child-centered family strengthening programs, enhanced community partnerships, and intentional caregiver support.”<sup>31</sup>

Target population: Fostering UNITY serves 22,000 children currently in the Los Angeles County child welfare system and thousands of caregivers. Fostering UNITY is expanding services to serve all 58,000 child-welfare-involved families across California.<sup>32</sup>

Sources of funding: Fostering UNITY receives funding from contributions, gifts, in-kind donations, and program service revenue.<sup>33</sup>

Geographic area served: Los Angeles County, California.

Organization size and scope: The Fostering UNITY website lists seven staff members and a board of directors with nine members.<sup>34</sup> Fostering UNITY works out of one organization headquarters, as well as a corporate mailing address.<sup>35</sup>

### *Programs*

*C.A.R.E. Help Line:* Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the C.A.R.E. Help Line serves as an initial point of contact for caregivers / resource parents to seek support.<sup>36</sup>

*C.A.R.E. Service Specialists:* C.A.R.E. service specialists are experienced caregivers with peer mentor training. They support caregivers (with trauma-informed parent coaching) and expecting and parenting youth, as well as offering systems navigation, educational support, reunification, and more.<sup>37</sup>

*Coffee with Caregivers:* Fostering Unity hosts weekly virtual meetings to provide support and offer resource sharing.<sup>38</sup>

*Tomorrow’s About You (T.A.Y):* Youth, ages 12–21, are coached in life skills, financial literacy, and transitional planning. Mentoring is available in a group or one-on-one setting. Youth are eligible to receive financial incentives for reaching milestones in the program.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Fostering Unity, “About Us,” webpage, undated.

<sup>32</sup> Fostering Unity, “About Us.”

<sup>33</sup> Candid, “Fostering Unity,” webpage, undated.

<sup>34</sup> Fostering Unity, “Meet the Team,” webpage, undated.

<sup>35</sup> Fostering Unity, “Contact Us!” webpage, undated.

<sup>36</sup> Fostering Unity, “Our Programs: Caregiver and Youth Program Services,” webpage, undated.

<sup>37</sup> Fostering Unity, “Our Programs.”

<sup>38</sup> Fostering Unity, “Virtual Support Groups,” webpage, undated.

<sup>39</sup> Fostering Unity, “Virtual Support Groups.”

*La Hora de Charlar:* La Hora de Charlar is a weekly virtual support group tailored to Spanish-speaking caregivers to discuss their experiences with the foster care system, exchange tips, and share resources.<sup>40</sup>

*Empower Hour:* Empower Hour is a weekly support group tailored to caregivers with higher-need placements through the Placement Stability Team Program or the Therapeutic Shelter Home Program of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). Empower Hour focuses on common situations and experiences for families with higher-need placements to help caregivers feel prepared and supported, in turn improving placement stability. Individual support is also available.<sup>41</sup>

*Purposeful Placements:* Found in Fostering UNITY's supportive Facebook group, Powerful Placements aims to match the needs of youth with families best suited to meet them.<sup>42</sup>

*Shared Parenting for Permanence Project:* This program offers trauma-informed reunification support to both families of origin and resource families for children who currently have an active reunification plan. Support provided through this program includes strengths-based parenting training and in-home parent coaching to support reunification and develop an extended support system for the child.<sup>43</sup>

*Fostering UNITY Family Events:* Fostering UNITY hosts programs for families including the Easter EGGstravaganza, Fall on the Farm Pumpkin Patch, and the Winter Wonderland. These programs aim to build community among families and caregivers. At each event, donation centers are available to help provide necessities like food, diapers, and clothes to resource families.<sup>44</sup>

*Partnership Programs:* Fostering UNITY partners with Fostering Parenthood, the DCFS Placement Stabilization Team, CarePortal, the DCFS Therapeutic Shelter Home Program, and Foster and Kinship Care Education.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Fostering Unity, "Virtual Support Groups."

<sup>41</sup> Fostering Unity, "Virtual Support Groups."

<sup>42</sup> Fostering Unity, "Our Programs."

<sup>43</sup> Fostering Unity, "Our Programs."

<sup>44</sup> Fostering Unity, "Our Programs."

<sup>45</sup> Fostering Unity, "Partnership Programs," webpage, undated.



## The Georgia Resilient, Youth-Centered, Stable and Empowered, John H. Chafee Independent Living Program

Mission statement: “Our mission is to provide eligible youth with opportunities to successfully prepare for adulthood through appropriate referral resources and connections provided by community partners.”<sup>46</sup>

Target population: Georgia Resilient, Youth-Centered, Stable and Empowered (GA/RYSSE) serves youth, ages 14 to 26, who are currently in care or were previously in care for a minimum of six months in the Georgia child welfare system.<sup>47</sup>

Sources of funding: GA/RYSSE funding is allocated by the Georgia Division of Family & Children Services.<sup>48</sup>

Geographic area served: State of Georgia.<sup>49</sup>

Organization size and scope: GA/RYSSE covers 14 regions across Georgia with 17 independent living specialists.<sup>50</sup> The specialists are assigned by region, and each region may encompass multiple counties or one county.<sup>51</sup>

### *Programs*

*Housing Support*: Housing Support offers transitional living services (including assistance with basic household startup cost, rental and utility deposits, furniture and household items) and emergency assistance (rental assistance for up to two months, utility and rental deposits, food services, and coaching assistance). Post-secondary students may also seek housing assistance for room and board.<sup>52</sup>

*The National Youth in Transition Database*: The National Youth in Transition Database collects demographic information about youth in foster care and outcomes for youth who have aged out of care. Data collection began in 2010. Outcomes information is collected by survey.<sup>53</sup>

*HealthMatters*: GA/RYSSE offers health insurance assistance until the age of 26 to adults who have aged out of foster care or aged out of Chafee Independence Program Medicaid. Individuals

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<sup>46</sup> GA/RYSSE, “About: Our Mission,” webpage, undated.

<sup>47</sup> GA/RYSSE, “FAQS,” webpage, undated.

<sup>48</sup> Georgia Department of Human Services, *Annual Report: State Fiscal Year 2022*.

<sup>49</sup> GA/RYSSE, “About Our Mission.”

<sup>50</sup> GA/RYSSE, “Locate a Specialist,” webpage, undated.

<sup>51</sup> GA/RYSSE, “Find Help Near You,” webpage, undated.

<sup>52</sup> GA/RYSSE, “Housing Support,” webpage, undated.

<sup>53</sup> GA/RYSSE, “NYTD: Am I eligible? How do I apply?” webpage, undated.

must have been in foster care and received benefits on their 18th birthday for eligibility, but there are no income or resource limits for eligibility.<sup>54</sup>

*Education:* Youth who have been in foster care for at least six months, including on their 14th birthday, are eligible for secondary or post-secondary education assistance with GA/RYSSE. Post-secondary education assistance includes educational related expenses (ages 21–25) and college/vocational related expenses (for youth up to age 21). Educational Training Vouchers are available for youth up to age 23.<sup>55</sup>

*Match Savings / Individual Development Account:* Current and former foster youth, ages 14–21, can establish an individual development account to achieve a financial goal. Youth complete financial literacy training and make an initial deposit to establish the account. If youth save \$1,000 before age 21, funds are matched through a public-private partnership with the Multi-Agency Alliance for Children.<sup>56</sup>

*Emergency Assistance:* Up to 90 days of emergency assistance is available to former foster youth between the ages of 18 and 21 in the form of a onetime payment, including emergency housing, food assistance, transportation, medical expenses, state identification, utility expenses, and deposits.<sup>57</sup>

*Credit Report Assistance:* All youth, ages 14 to 17, currently in care are eligible to receive a credit report each year within 90 days of their birthday. GA/RYSSE also offers one-on-one or group credit training for youth in care, as well as access to e-learning webinars and trainings.<sup>58</sup>

*Life Skills Training:* All youth eligible for the Independent Living Program may attend a series of workshops or trainings aimed at communication skills, education, personal and social engagement skills, and personal accountability.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> GA/RYSSE, “Health Insurance,” webpage, undated.

<sup>55</sup> GA/RYSSE, “Education,” webpage, undated.

<sup>56</sup> GA/RYSSE, “Match Savings/IDA,” webpage, undated.

<sup>57</sup> GA/RYSSE, “Emergency Assistance,” webpage, undated.

<sup>58</sup> GA/RYSSE, “Credit Report Assistance,” webpage, undated.

<sup>59</sup> GA/RYSSE, “Life-Skills Training,” webpage, undated.

## New York State Office of Children and Family Services, Division of Youth Development

Mission statement: “The Office of Children and Family Services serves New York’s public by promoting the safety, permanency and well-being of our children, families and communities. We will achieve results by setting and enforcing policies, building partnerships, and funding and providing quality services.”<sup>60</sup>

Target population: Older youth and young adults who are involved with or at risk of being involved with the child welfare and youth justice systems.<sup>61</sup>

Sources of funding: State taxes, federal grants.

Geographic area served: State of New York.

Size and scope: The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is led by an executive team of 12, one of whom manages the Division of Youth Development and Partnerships for Success.<sup>62</sup>

### *Programs*

*Chafee Funds Program*: The OCFS administers the Chafee Funds Program, which provides direct cash assistance to former foster youth, ages 18–23. Youth apply directly to the OCFS for funding.<sup>63</sup>

*Education and Training Voucher Program*: The Education and Training Voucher Program provides up to \$5,000 per year to current and former foster youth, up to age 23, for qualified educational or training expenses. Funding is limited and distributed on a first-come, first-served basis; foster youth must reapply each academic year beginning July 1. Funding is contingent upon continuing financial need and demonstrated progress in the youth’s chosen educational program.<sup>64</sup>

*Foster Club All-Star*: A leadership training and internship program, Foster Club All-Star provides an opportunity for two former foster youth per year to engage with peers and professionals across the country to improve outcomes for youth transitioning out of foster care. Selected youth receive a \$1,000 honorarium and cell phone / internet stipends in addition to a six-week summer training program.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> OCFS, “About OCFS,” webpage, undated.

<sup>61</sup> OCFS, “Youth Development,” webpage, undated.

<sup>62</sup> OCFS, “Executive Team,” webpage, undated.

<sup>63</sup> OCFS, “Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood,” webpage, undated.

<sup>64</sup> New York State, “New York State Education and Training Voucher Program,” webpage, undated.

<sup>65</sup> OCFS, “Foster Club All-Star,” webpage, undated.

*Foster Youth College Success Initiative:* In partnership with the New York State Education Department, the Foster Youth College Success Initiative provides financial assistance and support to foster youth to attend college. Youth must be residents of New York state, must have been in foster care after the age of 13, and must be enrolled at a State University of New York college, a City University of New York college, or a select independent and private college with a Higher Education Opportunities Program. Foster youth apply directly to the initiative, and funds are distributed directly to the youth’s school’s financial aid office.<sup>66</sup>

*Winter Housing:* Former foster youth who are resident students at a State University, City University, or private college with a HEOP program and are currently homeless or at risk of homelessness while dormitories are closed are eligible for low- or no-cost housing during the winter break between semesters. Youth make arrangements directly with their colleges, and the OCFS covers the cost of housing.<sup>67</sup>

*Youth Advisory Board:* Composed of up to 15 current or former foster youth, ages 18–24, the Youth Advisory Board provides feedback to the OCFS and helps shape state-level foster care policies and initiatives. Board members attend quarterly meetings in Albany, New York, and develop leadership and communication skills.

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<sup>66</sup> New York State Education Department, “Foster Youth College Success Initiative,” webpage, undated; OCFS, “Foster Youth College Success Initiative (FYCSI),” webpage, undated.

<sup>67</sup> OCFS, “Winter Housing,” webpage, undated.

## Peace4Kids

Mission statement: “Creating a safe community where youth in foster care thrive and form lasting connections.”<sup>68</sup>

Target population: Youth in foster care; programs serve youth, ages 4–24.<sup>69</sup> Los Angeles County’s foster system includes over 35,000 children, with Black youth disproportionately represented.<sup>70</sup> While Black youth make up nine percent of the Los Angeles County population, 30 percent of youth in foster care are Black.<sup>71</sup>

Sources of funding: Peace4Kids receives 95 percent of its funding from contributions and gifts and five percent from government grants.<sup>72</sup>

Geographic area served: South Los Angeles, California.<sup>73</sup>

Organization size and scope: Peace4Kids’ LinkedIn page lists 15 staff members.<sup>74</sup> Peace4Kids’ board of directors has 14 members, including four board members emeriti.<sup>75</sup> Peace4Kids has one organizational site, located in South Los Angeles.<sup>76</sup>

### Programs

*Saturday Core Program*: The Saturday Core Program, aimed at foster youth, ages 4–19, serves as the entry point into Peace4Kids and focuses on building long-term relationships. Staff and volunteers lead activities including creative and expressive arts, health and wellness, technology, and field trips. Age groups are rotated every two to three weeks.<sup>77</sup>

*Family Community Events*: Peace4Kids hosts family community events every other month for all youth and caregivers to celebrate youth and community.<sup>78</sup>

*Transitional Youth Services*: Peace4Kids’ “community mentoring” program supports young people as they transition into adulthood. A group of adult volunteers offer “just in time”

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<sup>68</sup> Peace4Kids, “Creating a Safe Community Where Youth in Foster Care Thrive and Form Lasting Connections,” webpage, undated.

<sup>69</sup> LinkedIn, “Peace 4 Kids in LinkedIn,” webpage, undated.

<sup>70</sup> Peace4Kids, “Understanding the Need for Peace4Kids,” webpage, undated.

<sup>71</sup> Peace4Kids, “Understanding the Need for Peace4Kids.”

<sup>72</sup> ProPublica, “Peace 4 Kids: Full text of ‘Full Filing’ for fiscal year ending June 2022,” webpage, last updated September 14, 2023.

<sup>73</sup> Peace4Kids, “Your Contributions of Time and Donations are Important,” webpage, undated.

<sup>74</sup> LinkedIn, “Peace 4 Kids in LinkedIn.”

<sup>75</sup> Peace4Kids, “Meet Our Board of Directors,” webpage, undated.

<sup>76</sup> Peace4Kids, “Contact Peace4Kids,” webpage, undated.

<sup>77</sup> Peace4Kids, “Our Programs,” webpage, undated.

<sup>78</sup> Peace4Kids, “Our Programs.”

mentoring to youth, offering assistance with challenges such as mental and physical health services, job and career support, transitional housing, and self-sufficiency counseling.<sup>79</sup>

*Leadership Program / Advocacy Movement:* Former foster youth in the Peace4Kids Leadership Program have engaged in advocacy by leading self-advocacy efforts, implementing large scale projects, and inspiring others to make meaningful change.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Peace4Kids, “Our Programs.”

<sup>80</sup> Peace4Kids, “Our Programs.”

## Safe Place for Youth

Mission statement: “The mission of Safe Place for Youth is to inspire, nurture, and empower the resilient human spirit of homeless and at-risk youth by providing immediate and lasting solutions, one young person at a time.”<sup>81</sup>

Target population: Safe Place for Youth (SPY) serves homeless youth in Los Angeles.<sup>82</sup> In the past year, SPY reports providing 1,000 individual youth with wraparound services.<sup>83</sup>

Sources of funding: In FY 2022, SPY received 47.7 percent of its revenue through government support, 22.2 percent through foundation support, 14.1 percent through subcontractor support, 4.7 percent through corporate support, 8.1 percent through individual support, 3.2 percent through in-kind support, and a remaining 1.8 percent through special events and miscellaneous funding sources.<sup>84</sup> SPY’s total revenue in FY 2022 amounted to \$8,841,924.<sup>85</sup>

Geographic area served: Los Angeles, California.<sup>86</sup>

Organization size and scope: SPY offers beds to transitional youth at five transitional housing sites and facility partnerships, including two sites with 20 beds through the Roots to Grow program, two sites with ten beds through the Nest program, and 54 beds at the A Bridge Home Venice transitional housing facility.<sup>87</sup> SPY also offers comprehensive supportive services five days a week at the Access Center in Venice.<sup>88</sup> Nearly 80 employees work with SPY.<sup>89</sup> SPY’s board of directors has 11 members.<sup>90</sup> On SPY’s LinkedIn page, 75 employees are listed.<sup>91</sup>

### *Programs*

*Case Management:* SPY’s Case Management team works with youth to develop individualized plans tailored to achieve stability through the three main aims of housing support, assisting pregnant and parenting youth, and pursuing family reunification. SPY leverages connections to emergency shelter, bridge housing, host homes, and permanent supportive housing to help youth find housing, as well as to providing move-in assistance and short-term

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<sup>81</sup> SPY, “Safe Place for Youth (SPY)—About Us,” webpage, undated.

<sup>82</sup> SPY, “Safe Place for Youth...,”

<sup>83</sup> SPY, “Safe Place for Youth...,”

<sup>84</sup> SPY, “Financials,” webpage, undated.

<sup>85</sup> SPY, “Financials.”

<sup>86</sup> SPY, “Safe Place for Youth...,”

<sup>87</sup> SPY, “SPY Housing Programs,” webpage, undated.

<sup>88</sup> SPY, “Access Center,” webpage, undated.

<sup>89</sup> SPY, “Safe Place for Youth...”

<sup>90</sup> SPY, “Board of Directors,” webpage, undated.

<sup>91</sup> LinkedIn, “Safe Place for Youth in LinkedIn,” webpage, undated.

rental subsidies through Rapid Re-Housing. SPY also works one-on-one with youth and their families to pursue family reunification opportunities.<sup>92</sup>

*Drop-In Services / Access Center:* The SPY Access Center in Venice, California, is open five days per week for drop-in services such as food and hygiene supplies, case management, health screenings, and more.<sup>93</sup>

*Education and Employment:* The SPY Education and Employment Program assists youth with job readiness, workforce development, youth internship programming, and pathways to college enrollment or vocational training.<sup>94</sup>

*Street Outreach:* SPY’s outreach team connects with unhoused youth five days a week in Los Angeles’s Westside region. Outreach staff build relationships with unhoused youth while providing hygiene kits and snacks and offer linkages to emergency shelter, mental health and medical care, and services at SPY’s Access Center.<sup>95</sup>

*Health and Wellness:* During Access Center hours, youth can access on-site services, including health screenings, information, clinics, and Medi-Cal registration assistance. SPY also partners with public and private agencies to provide connections to mental health services.<sup>96</sup>

*Advocacy:* SPY advocates for policy changes that address racial disparities, economic inequities, systemic issues, and housing shortages.<sup>97</sup>

*Housing:* SPY offers several interim housing programs, including Host Home Program (pairing unhoused youth with a community member with a spare room), Roots to Grow (transitional housing with Venice Community Housing), the Nest (transitional housing for pregnant and parenting youth), A Bridge Home Venice (transitional housing for TAY), Connect LA (a family reunification program), and the Journey Apartments (affordable supportive housing, with expected completion in 2024).<sup>98</sup>

*Youth Coordinated Entry System:* SPY serves as the Youth Coordinated Entry System lead agency for Service Planning Area 5, which covers Los Angeles’s Westside region.<sup>99</sup>

*Healing Arts:* The Healing Arts program encourages youth to express themselves creatively and operates alongside SPY’s Social Enterprise Program.<sup>100</sup>

*Community Garden:* The SPY Community Garden creates a sustainable food system across SPY’s Access Center and housing sites.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> SPY, “Case Management,” webpage, undated.

<sup>93</sup> SPY, “Access Center.”

<sup>94</sup> SPY, “Education and Employment,” webpage, undated.

<sup>95</sup> SPY, “Street Outreach,” webpage, undated.

<sup>96</sup> SPY, “Health and Wellness,” webpage, undated.

<sup>97</sup> SPY, “Advocacy and Policy,” webpage, undated.

<sup>98</sup> SPY, “SPY Housing Programs.”

<sup>99</sup> SPY, “Youth Coordinated Entry System (YCES) Lead,” webpage, undated.

<sup>100</sup> SPY, “Healing Arts,” webpage, undated.

<sup>101</sup> SPY, “SPY Garden Program,” webpage, undated.



## United Friends of the Children

Mission statement: “United Friends of the Children empowers current and former foster youth on their journey to self-sufficiency through service-enriched education and housing programs, advocacy, and consistent relationships with a community of people who care.”<sup>102</sup>

Target population: Current and former foster youth.<sup>103</sup> Of the youth served by United Friends of the Children, 49 percent are Hispanic, 32 percent are Black, eight percent are bi-racial or multi-racial, eight percent are white, two percent are Asian, and one percent are Native American.<sup>104</sup> The Pathways Program is tailored for youth, ages 18–24, and the Scholars Program is tailored for students in grades 6–12 and college students under the age of 24.<sup>105</sup>

Sources of funding: United Friends of the Children reported a revenue of \$10,824,842 during FY 2021. The organization reports revenue from several sources, including 31 percent from contributions from foundations, corporations, and individuals; 31 percent from government contracts; 11 percent from donated use of facilities; and five percent from special events. The remainder of funding comes from net investment return, contributed legal services, change in beneficial interest in assets held by others, forgiveness of Paycheck Protection Program loans, and other income.<sup>106</sup>

Geographic area served: Los Angeles, California.<sup>107</sup>

Organization size and scope: Each year, United Friends of the Children serves over 700 foster youth and families.<sup>108</sup> The organization’s board has 22 members, and 51 staff members can be found on the organization’s staff webpage.<sup>109</sup>

### *Programs*

*Pathways Program:* Pathways is an 18- to 36-month program for emancipated youth, ages 18–24, at risk of homelessness, and particularly former foster and probation youth. Within Pathways, youth have access to housing, case management, educational and career support, life skills and health education, mental health services, and support from Pathways alumni.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> United Friends of the Children, “About United Friends,” webpage, undated.

<sup>103</sup> United Friends of the Children, “About United Friends.”

<sup>104</sup> United Friends of the Children, “About United Friends.”

<sup>105</sup> United Friends of the Children, “Services,” webpage, undated.

<sup>106</sup> United Friends of the Children, “Financial Statements, Year Ended June 30, 2021,” 2022.

<sup>107</sup> United Friends of the Children, “Homepage,” webpage, undated.

<sup>108</sup> United Friends of the Children, “About United Friends.”

<sup>109</sup> United Friends of the Children, “Board & Staff,” webpage, undated.

<sup>110</sup> United Friends of the Children, “Services.”

*Scholars Program:* The Scholars Program serves foster youth in grades 6–12 with a Los Angeles County DCFS case or youth in kinship or legal guardian placements. The program also serves current college students who are current or former foster youth and eligible for an Independent Living Program and under the age of 24 at enrollment. The Scholars Program supports youth throughout their educational journey. Services under this program include college readiness workshops and tours, enrichment or persistence financial grants, tutoring, college application and financial aid assistance, career exploration and development, and individual coaching.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> United Friends of the Children, “Services.”

## Appendix D. Instructions for Updating the Funding Landscape Dataset and Web Tool

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### *Instructions for Updating the Dataset*

The dataset consists of an Excel spreadsheet, with columns labeled as shown in Table D1. We recommend updating the information in the spreadsheet by periodically reviewing the websites for each funding source and updating the data in the spreadsheet accordingly.

**Table D1. Data Abstraction Codebook**

<b>Column</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Opportunity ID</b>	Unique identification (ID) number assigned to the funding opportunity
<b>Date updated</b>	Date the funding source information was last updated
<b>Funding agency or organization</b>	Organization or agency from which the funding ultimately flows
<b>Department or division</b>	Administering department or program that disburses the funding, if applicable
<b>Program or grant name</b>	Name of the grant or opportunity
<b>Description</b>	Brief description of the funding opportunity
<b>Website</b>	Link to website where prospective grantee can find more information.
<b>Eligible organization type</b>	What types of organizations are eligible to apply for this funding
<b>Application process</b>	How the organization applies for this funding.
<b>Federal or state disbursement</b>	Funding is disbursed by federal or state (California, Georgia, or New York) government, if applicable.
<b>Minimum funding amount</b>	Note if a dollar value or percentage must be disbursed.
<b>Maximum funding amount</b>	Note if there is a dollar value or percentage cap/ceiling.
<b>Funding time period</b>	Referring to the period of time for which the funding is intended to cover (e.g., a one-year time period is intended to cover one year of services).
<b>Year last issued</b>	Most recent published date when funding was last issued.

**Foster youth–specific** Funding that is intended to primarily serve foster youth and their families or includes funding specifically for foster youth and their families.  
*Note:* A “yes” answer here does not necessarily mean the funding is restricted *only* to foster youth.

<b>Need categories</b>	Mark if the funding source highlights any of the following need categories
<b>Cash assistance</b>	Primarily direct cash payments to foster youth and their families; if requirements are attached (e.g., “this payment must be used for education”), mark the relevant need category instead.
<b>Case management</b>	Working with a social worker or case manager to coordinate goals, assess needs, and develop plans with actionable steps to improve quality of life. This includes regularly scheduled check-ins to maintain goals and troubleshoot difficulties. It also includes funding that is dedicated to case management activities with state child protective services, such as intake, assessment, and screening.
<b>Crisis intervention</b>	Crisis intervention is a short-term management technique designed to reduce potential permanent damage to an individual affected by a crisis.
<b>Education</b>	Assistance with educational needs such as college enrollment, high school equivalency or vocational programs, and finding scholarships or tuition assistance. Services that are provided in educational centers but do not pertain to education (such as programs that increase mental health resources in schools) should not be highlighted under this category. Services that increase education and awareness about a specific topic (such as nutrition education or health education) should not be highlighted under this category but under the designated need category.
<b>Family reunification</b>	Services explicitly aim to reunify youth with family members.
<b>Food access</b>	Increasing access to consistent, nutritious food through cash assistance dedicated to food purchases or programs that increase meal options.
<b>Foster parents and caregivers</b>	Services that directly benefit foster parents and caregivers.
<b>Furniture and household items</b>	Services that aim to provide or assist in providing home goods. This includes cash payments and in-kind donations.
<b>Health insurance</b>	Services that expand health care coverage to individuals who would otherwise be uninsured.
<b>Housing</b>	Helping youth find, secure, and maintain housing. This includes cash payments for security deposits or a first month’s rent. This does not include cash payments for water, power, or internet (“Utilities”). This does not include cash payments or in-kind donations for home goods, furniture, and other household items (“Furniture and household items”).
<b>Independent living coaching and support</b>	This includes workshops aimed at improving life skills for youth transitioning into independent living, such as financial literacy training, budgeting workshops, and cooking and nutrition assistance.

<b>Job training and employment support</b>	This includes assisting individuals in résumé writing, job searches, career counseling, and interview readiness. This also includes job training or internship programs for foster youth. This does not include funding for expanding the youth-serving workforce.
<b>Legal services</b>	Providing supportive legal services and legal assistance, including court assistance, emancipation services, and more.
<b>Mental health care</b>	This includes providing mental health care directly or providing referrals to mental health care providers.
<b>Mentoring</b>	Primarily services that provide or promote peer-to-peer support.
<b>Physical health care</b>	This includes providing physical health care directly or providing referrals to physical health care providers.
<b>Sexual health / family planning</b>	This includes providing sexual health care directly, family planning services, or access to contraceptives.
<b>Substance use disorder</b>	This includes providing substance use disorder treatment directly or providing referrals to substance use disorder treatment providers.
<b>Technology access</b>	Providing opportunities for technology usage to individuals, families, or communities that did not previously have access to technology. This includes phones and computers. This does not include wireless internet access (“Utilities”).
<b>Utilities</b>	Services that provide cash assistance to pay for utilities or expand access to utilities. Utilities refers to heat, electricity, water, and wireless internet service.
<b>Specific populations</b>	Mark if any of the following are highlighted in some specific way <i>Note:</i> The funding source may call out a number of these groups or may have an emphasis on providing funding for one of these groups but not <i>restrict</i> funding to <i>only</i> that group.
<b>Racial/ethnic minority</b>	Opportunities that refer to racial/ethnic minority populations, other than tribes (“Native/Indigenous”).
<b>Native/Indigenous</b>	Includes any federal funding sources that administer funding to tribes.
<b>Pregnant/parenting youth</b>	Opportunities that offer services to pregnant/parenting youth.
<b>Military/veteran family</b>	Opportunities that offer services to foster youth in the military or are veterans, or that offer services to family members of military members or veterans.
<b>Student / higher education</b>	Opportunities that offer services to students.
<b>Sexual/gender minority</b>	Opportunities that offer services to sexual/gender minority individuals.
<b>Serious mental illness</b>	Opportunities that offer services to individuals with serious mental illness, defined by the National Institute of Mental Health (2023) as “a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder resulting in serious functional impairment, which substantially interferes with

or limits one or more major life activities... excluding developmental and substance use disorders.”

<b>Disability community</b>	Opportunities that offer services to any individual with a disability. The Americans with Disability Act includes substance use as a type of disability.
<b>Commercially and sexually exploited children</b>	Opportunities that offer services to commercially and sexually exploited children.
<b>None</b>	None of the previous population categories is specifically noted.

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## *Programming Instructions*

### Technical Requirements

The data exploration tool/web application is built with JavaScript and React.

### Instructions for Hosting

Running the application locally:

- 1. Download the code repository:**
  - Obtain the React application code repository, either via direct download or using a version control tool like Git.
- 2. Install Node.js:**
  - If you don't have Node.js installed on your machine, download and install it from the official Node.js website.<sup>112</sup> This will also install **npm**, the Node.js package manager.
- 3. Install dependencies and run the app:**
  - Navigate to the directory where you have placed the React application.
  - Run the following commands: **npm install && npm run dev**.
    - This will install the necessary dependencies and start the local development server, allowing you to view the application in your web browser.

It is difficult to give detailed technical direction as to how the application should be deployed without knowing anything about the existing infrastructure of the organization that will be hosting it. If the organization's site is already built using React, integrating the application should be straightforward for the team or individual responsible for managing and hosting the website. They can either integrate the application directly into the site or serve it as a separate module, depending on the desired user experience. If the organization's site uses WordPress or another content management system, they will likely want to host the application on a subdomain of their existing site (i.e., instead of trying to integrate it directly into the WordPress

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<sup>112</sup> “Download Node.js,” homepage, undated.

content, you can host the React application on a subdomain—for example, `app.clientwebsite.com`).

### Instructions for Updating

The grant data are all stored on the front end. The source data are in an Excel file, but for it to be usable for the application, we need to convert it to JSON format. After making the updates to the data in the Excel file, save it and export as a CSV file.

Next, it has to be converted to a JSON object. There are several CSV to JSON converters, including CSV to JSON - CSVJSON.<sup>113</sup> This site will allow you to generate a JSON object (which can be used to overwrite the data in the `src/data/funding_dataset.js` exported constant) that will contain objects representing each grant—again, it is important to not modify the name of the `funding_dataset.js` file or the name of the exported constant, as this will break the import of the data.

Changes to the code should involve the data fields only, not the column headers. Since the column headers present in the Excel file are used in the mapping of data labels to variables and are used as indexes/keys in the table, changing the names here will break things.

*Conditional on the column headers not changing in the data file and the overall schema remaining the same, updates are relatively straightforward. Simply add the updated JS file containing the JSON object to the **funding-client/src/data/funding\_dataset.js** file.*

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<sup>113</sup> “CSV or TSV > JSON,” homepage, undated.

## Abbreviations

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COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
DCFS	Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services
FY	fiscal year
GA/RYSSE	Georgia Resilient, Youth-Centered, Stable and Empowered
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HR	human resources
ID	Identification
OCFS	New York State Office of Children and Family Services
SPY	Safe Place for Youth
TAY	transition-age youth



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