

# Foster Youth Strategic Initiative: 2019 Snapshot

## Focused interventions for expectant/parenting youth and crossover youth: Accomplishments and next steps

The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation’s Foster Youth Strategic Initiative supports interventions that support foster TAY in accessing reproductive/sexual health care for the prevention of unplanned pregnancy and provide supports and advocacy for foster TAY who are expectant or parenting and those involved in the juvenile justice system.

**The California Child Welfare Indicators Project reported new data on parenting youth in LA this year:**

**The percent of LA foster youth who are parents has remained steady at 4 percent**  
(332 youth in 2019).<sup>1</sup>

**NYC has experienced a dramatic decline in the number and percent of foster youth who are parents.<sup>2</sup>**

The number of parenting youth in NYC decreased from a high of 594 youth in 2014 to 243 youth in 2019.<sup>3</sup>

Year	Percentage
2012	8%
2013	10%
2014	12%
2015	12%
2016	12%
2017	10%
2018	8%
2019	6%

### Accessible reproductive health care

Ensuring foster TAY have access to reproductive health care remains a priority in LA and NYC, with a focus on expanding this access through **advancing innovative programs in NYC** and **strengthening systems and policy in LA**. In NYC, the **Adolescent Health Unit** at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) continues to conduct trainings about reproductive health best practices with foster care agency staff and coordinates school-based sexual and reproductive health services for youth. They established twelve new school-based health centers and eight new Connecting Adolescents to Comprehensive Health programs and have expanded their partnerships with foster care providers to

<sup>1</sup> Among children in foster care on July 1 of each year. Includes youth in foster care who are supervised under the child welfare system. Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W, ages 10 and older., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Chambers, J., Hammond, I., Sandoval, A., Benton, C., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Flamson, T., Hunt, J., Carpenter, W., Casillas, E., & Gonzalez, A. (2019). CCWIP reports. Retrieved from: [http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb\\_childwelfare](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare)

<sup>2</sup> New York State’s CCRS and CNNX database as of October 6, 2019 provided by New York City Administration for Children’s Services.

<sup>3</sup> New York State’s CCRS and CNNX database as of October 6, 2019 provided by New York City Administration for Children’s Services.

better link youth in foster care to these programs. Challenges persist in obtaining the information needed to ensure timely connection of foster youth to school-based health services.

## Tailored supports for expectant and parenting foster youth

In **California**, grantees continue to advance tailored supports for expectant and parenting youth in care by focusing on **policy implementation** and **advancing innovative programs**. Grantees and stakeholders continue to support the implementation of the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program, which provides emergency child care vouchers to parenting foster youth and foster parents in California. Additionally, grantees, including the **Alliance for Children's Rights** and **Public Counsel**, in coordination with the child welfare agency, staff Expectant and Parenting Youth (EPY) Conferences, which connect expectant and young parents to child care and other resources such as Nurse Family Partnership, a home visiting program. More resources are needed to ensure all eligible youth are able to take part in EPY conferences.

In **NYC**, affordable and accessible childcare is a challenge for expectant and parenting youth in care. The child welfare agency hopes to expand its partnership with Nurse Family Partnership, which is one avenue through which foster youth are connected to childcare resources. Stakeholders raised the need to continue strengthening data on expectant and parenting youth in care, especially fathers.

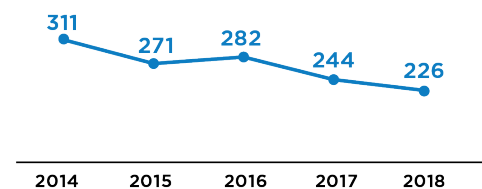
### Spotlight: Grantees and stakeholders partner to implement reproductive health policy

California legislation (SB 89) requires that caseworkers ensure youth receive comprehensive sexual education, overcome barriers to care and prevention of unplanned pregnancy services, know where to go for services, and are informed about their reproductive health rights. The **LA Reproductive Health Equity Project for Foster Youth (LA RHEP)** led by National Center for Youth Law brings together several grantees, public agency partners, and youth in a collective impact initiative toward these ends. **LA RHEP** supports state and local policy and public awareness campaigns; has developed trainings and fact sheets for caregivers, caseworkers, courts, and healthcare providers; and participates in the child welfare agency's Outcome Driven Advisory Team that meets regularly to guide SB 89 implementation.

## Tailored supports for crossover youth

### Crossover youth measures show decreases in LA:<sup>4</sup>

Number of referrals for 241.1 Multidisciplinary Team meetings for foster youth with a pending delinquency petition | Los Angeles, 2014-2018



### Crossover youth measures also show decreases in NYC:



The number of foster youth in NYC transferred to juvenile placement facilities has **decreased by more than half** from 58 transfers in 2013 to 20 in 2018.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> LA data reflect referrals to 241.1 Multidisciplinary Team meetings, not individual youth served. This count includes the number of referrals for meetings that are held for youth with an open foster care petition and a pending delinquency petition. Data prepared by Denise Herz, PhD, Cal State LA, January 21, 2020.

<sup>5</sup> New York State's CCRS and CNNX database as of October 6, 2019 provided by New York City Administration for Children's Services.

**Supporting policy implementation** and providing innovative **programmatic supports** tailored for crossover youth is a focus for both jurisdictions. **LA** stakeholders and grantees such as **Children’s Law Center (CLC)**, **Public Counsel**, and **Children’s Data Network** participate in a workgroup to ensure foster youth have full access to the delinquency prevention supports being developed by the Diversion Pilot Program, led by the LA County Office of Diversion and Reentry, Youth Development and Diversion. At the program level, **CLC** has integrated the Crossover Advocacy and Resource Effort (CARE) program into all of its teams. The CARE program aids crossover youth with transition planning including addressing issues such as housing, health and mental health, education, and family planning. A multi-disciplinary team protocol for crossover youth is being led by the Office of Child Protection and once approved, plans are to identify and resolve gaps and track how well youth are accessing supports.

**NYC** continues to implement Raise the Age, statewide legislation that increased the age at which youth are tried as adults to 17 in October 2018 and 18 in October 2019. The Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM), developed by former grantee Georgetown University, continues to guide practice, and stakeholders have developed a CYPM certificate program to build citywide knowledge through intensive training. The **Vera Institute** has begun developing a pilot intervention in congregate care placements designed to reduce juvenile justice involvement and better serve girls and LGBTQ and gender-nonconforming youth in foster care.

Opportunities remain to strengthen the systems serving crossover youth in both jurisdictions. Both **LA** and **NYC** face challenges in addressing equity issues facing youth in care. Concerns were raised that young people of color, particularly young men of color, experience unnecessary law enforcement involvement and are more likely to have their behaviors labeled as “aggressive,” relative to their peers. In **LA**, grantees also raised concerns about the disproportionate rate of school suspensions and disciplinary action for foster youth and the need for standardized, high-quality educational assessments for crossover youth. In **NYC**, stakeholders raised concerns that some youth placed temporarily at the Children’s Center, NYC’s pre-placement<sup>6</sup> facility, are crossing over into the juvenile justice system, and they are exploring related solutions, such as in-home supports. Further, NYC stakeholders identified the need for better data on crossover youth, specifically on the experiences and outcomes of youth after they crossover into the juvenile justice system.

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<sup>6</sup> Pre-placement refers to facilities where children who have been removed from their families live prior to being placed in a formal foster care setting.