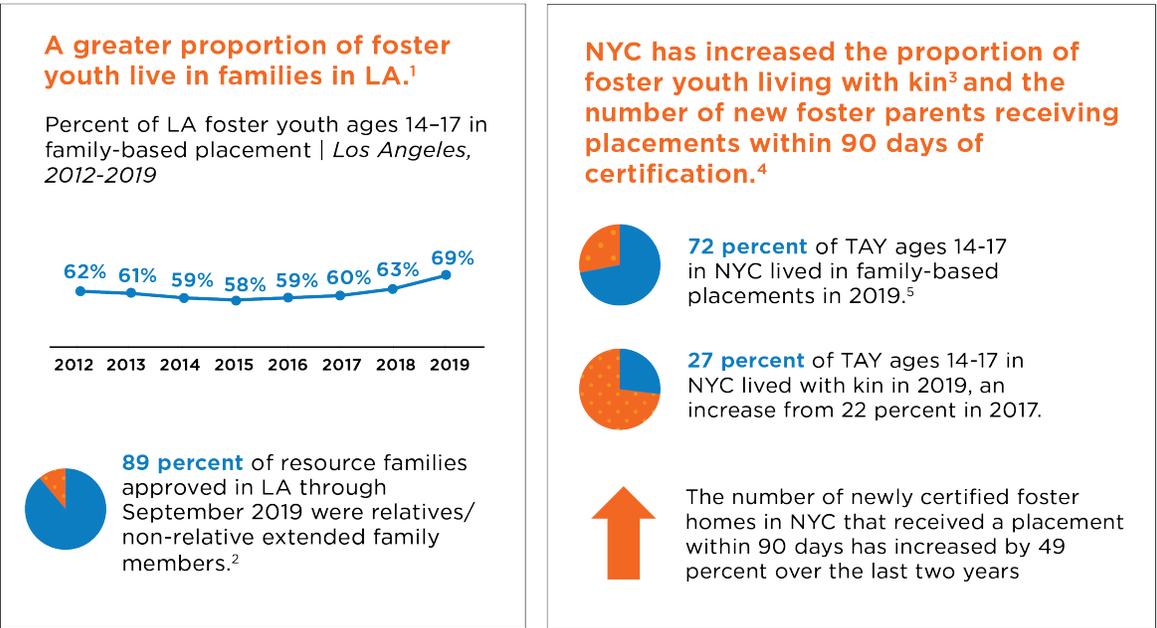


Foster Youth Strategic Initiative: 2019 Snapshot

Placement: Accomplishments and next steps

Placing foster youth in supportive and nurturing family foster homes allows them to form close and stable relationships with adults who support their health and education, and their transition to adulthood. The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's Foster Youth Strategic Initiative funds efforts to strengthen caregiver supports and prioritize placement with families.



¹ Among foster youth in care on July 1st of each year. Family-based placements include pre-adoptive, relative/non-relative extended family members (NREFM), foster, FFA, guardian-dependent, and guardian-independent, and trial home visit. Analyses include all agency types. Source: Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., ..., Morris, N. (2019). CCWIP reports. Retrieved from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

² County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, email correspondence (February 26, 2020).

³ New York State's CCRS and CNNX database as of October 30, 2019 provided by New York City Administration for Children's Services.

⁴ November Monthly Status Report. *Fiscal Year 2020 Progress Toward Blueprint Priorities*. Presentation at Administration for Children's Services Quarterly Foster Care Directors Meeting. Data Source: New York State's CCRS and CNNX database.

⁵ As of July 1, 2019. New York State's CCRS and CNNX database as of October 30, 2019 provided by New York City Administration for Children's Services.

Supporting caregivers

Recruitment and retention of caregivers for foster TAY remains a priority in LA and NYC. Public investments in LA include \$5 million to increase the reach of the FosteringHome.org recruitment campaign, managed by [Raise a Child](#), and an expansion of [Foster More's](#) Story of My Life digital foster parent recruitment campaign. As LA continues to build out its recruitment and retention efforts, advocates raised the importance of considering the placement experiences and needs of subgroups of foster youth, including young men of color and youth with intensive health and behavioral needs.

Through policy advocacy and program delivery, grantees work to ensure caregivers have the **financial and programmatic supports** they need. Through the work of the [Alliance for Children's Rights \(Alliance\)](#) and other advocates, the 2019-2020 **California** budget included the Emergency Caregiver Program, which financially supports caregivers during the foster home approval process. LA grantees continue to support the development of the state's foster care rate system to ensure financial supports are tied to a child's level of need. The importance of adequately funding caregivers is also an issue in NYC. Beyond financial resources, [Children's Village](#) supports caregivers through its Families Support Teens (FaST) program, which provides community and home-based support and training on topics such as preventing and de-escalating crises and helping teens improve their coping strategies, and School Success, which provides caregivers with training on advocating for youth and navigating city agencies. In **California**, legislation co-sponsored by [Children Now](#) established the new Family Urgent Response System (FURS), which will support placement stability by providing foster families and youth direct access to a statewide hotline and a county in-person mobile response team. Grantees in LA continue to support caregivers through training and provider capacity building (e.g., [John Burton Advocates for Youth](#) and [LA Reproductive Health Equity Project](#)) and a toolkit for caregivers (developed by the Step Up Coalition, which is spearheaded by the [Alliance](#)) which will be translated into Spanish in 2020 to reach more caregivers.

Prioritizing family placement

New and ongoing **policy efforts** continue to strengthen LA and NYC's commitment to family-based placements. [Public Counsel](#) and the [Children's Law Center](#) in LA continue to support implementation of Continuum of Care Reform, working collaborative with the child welfare agency to provide feedback and address implementation challenges. Positive changes include substantial reductions in the time to caregiver approval in LA,⁶ and expanded state investments in caregivers (an estimated \$880 million over the last three years). Several stakeholders, including [Children's Village](#) in NYC, successfully supported a \$3 million state investment to reduce residential care. [Children's Village](#) serves as a national leader on these issues as a member of the Children Need Amazing Parents (CHAMPS) Initiative.

Spotlight: Home Away from Home embeds effective recruitment and retention strategies across NYC provider agencies.

The Initiative's support of [Home Away from Home](#), a data-driven technical assistance partnership to strengthen foster parent recruitment and retention, has garnered national attention. Other jurisdictions are eager to learn about NYC's strategies for advancing foster and kinship care, and the child welfare agency will provide coaching, workshops, and convenings for all provider agencies on these strategies. A key lesson learned from this work is that foster families for teenagers are developed, not recruited – more experienced caregivers are more likely to have cared for a teenager, and provider agencies have found success “converting” existing foster homes to care for teens.¹

¹ Ross, T., Gerber, L., & Pang, Y.C. (2019). *Home Away from Home: Lessons for building a one family, one home foster care system*. Brooklyn, NY: Action Research Partners.

⁶ Time to approval dropped to a median of 107 days families approved in the second quarter of 2019, compared to 231 days for families approved in the first quarter of 2018. Source: CWS/CMS data obtained from the California Department of Social Services Continuum of Care Reform Dashboard.

As both jurisdictions work to reduce congregate care, stakeholders and grantees are focused on supporting youth stepping down from congregate care settings into families in **LA** and supporting placement stability for foster youth with significant behavioral health needs in **NYC**. In **LA**, advocates point to the need for Short Term Residential Treatment Programs (STRTPs) to better engage families as youth prepare to transition from these congregate care settings into family placements. More data are needed to understand youths' subsequent experiences and placement stability. Advocates and stakeholders in **LA** and **NYC** identified the need to better support foster youth with significant behavioral health needs in safe and stable placements.