Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

Foster Youth Strategic Initiative

2015 EVALUATION REPORT

PREPARED FOR:

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

October 29, 2015

PREPARED BY:

Westat

Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College

and

University of California Los Angeles Luskin School of Public Affairs

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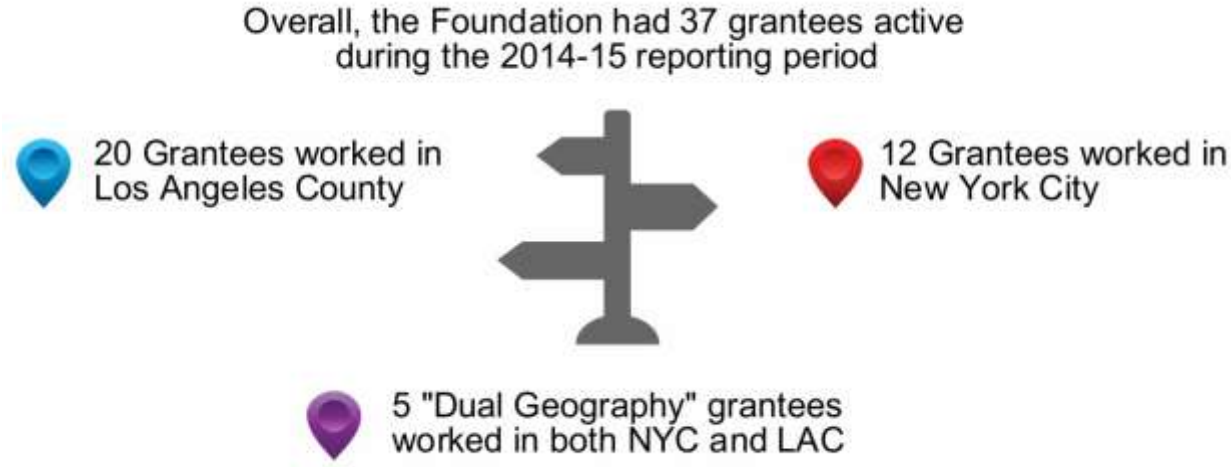
Overview

The Conrad N. Hilton Foster Youth Strategic Initiative (FYSI) grew out of an extensive research and synthesis process that included the perspectives of a wide variety of stakeholders. Ultimately, the process helped the Foundation better understand the challenges facing transition-age youth (TAY) and identify successful models for change; this work became the foundation for FYSI. In February 2012, the Board of Directors approved FYSI. The FYSI launched in March 2012; the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) component (or evaluation) began in March 2013.

To address the myriad issues facing TAY, those in care and transitioning out of care, the Foundation provides grants to organizations and entities with the potential to meet the three overarching goals of FYSI: (1) to increase **TAY self-sufficiency**, (2) to **strengthen and increase cross-system collaboration** and promote **systems change**, and (3) to develop and disseminate **new knowledge** about the needs of TAY and effective strategies for meeting those needs. As of June 2015, the Foundation has awarded $32,772,500 to 39 grantees as part of FYSI.



The Evaluation

In 2013, Westat joined with two subcontractors, the University of California, Los Angeles Luskin School of Public Affairs, and the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College, to lead the MEL component of the FYSI in Los Angeles County (LAC) and New York City (NYC). The primary goal of the MEL is to

inform the Foundation, its grantees and other stakeholders about salient learnings and accomplishments throughout implementation of the initiative.

The FYSI is built on a theory of change that proposes that funding a strategic, three-component initiative (self-sufficiency services, systems change, and new knowledge development) will increase the likelihood of improving outcomes for TAY in LAC and NYC. The evaluation is not a program evaluation; that is, it is not designed to measure program outcomes at the grantee level. Instead, it is focused on the overall strategy and its ability to influence change in key youth, systems change, and knowledge sharing and leveraged funding goals. Key goals are presented here; those shown in **green** are the focus of this report.

YOUTH GOALS
Education: Postsecondary outcomes improved for 50% of TAY
Vulnerable Youth: Improved long-term outcomes for 50% of **parenting foster youth**
Vulnerable Youth: Improved long-term outcomes for 50% of **crossover youth**
Caregivers: Capacity improved for caregivers of 90% of TAY.
SYSTEMS CHANGE GOALS
Create/strengthen cross-sector coordinated efforts
Annual convenings of organizations and agencies supporting TAY
Advocacy resulting in positive and enforced policy for improving outcomes for TAY in target geographies
FUNDING & KNOWLEDGE SHARING GOALS
Research base around programs to improve TAY outcomes is expanded and shared at local and national levels
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation funding leverages **$20M in private funding** in alignment with our goals

The evaluation team continues to implement a multi-method approach to answer these four research questions:

1. Are TAY in LAC/NYC on a better path to success?
2. What impact did the Hilton Foster Youth Initiative have on the grantees' programs?
3. What changes have occurred in LAC/NYC in collaboration and alignment of systems serving TAY? How did the Initiative contribute to these changes?
4. What impacts did the knowledge grantees have on policy, practice, and research innovations?

This report covers findings from (1) grantee progress reports and data collection forms, (2) caregiver agency personnel interviews, and (3) the social network analysis survey. It also presents progress toward developing a set of caregiver competencies to be used by the Foundation, its grantees, and the child welfare community to understand and measure caregiver competence, and covers recent policy and systems reform efforts that have occurred in LAC and NYC and that are aligned with FYSI goals.

Grantee Investments and Results

Based on progress reports, which grantees complete and submit as part of the evaluation, grantees[1] continue to make progress towards *their* stated goals and objectives, with all on track to meet them by the time the initiative ends, if they have not already.

[1] Grantees refers to those grantees who submitted data during the reporting period.

- **TAY self-sufficiency grantees** have directly supported more than 14,000 youth with information, advocacy, and services, with an emphasis on education and employment.
- **Systems change grantees** continue their efforts to initiate and support policies, systems alignment, and interagency collaboration to enhance services for TAY and caregivers. Grantees have conducted more than 100 trainings for almost 2500 individuals, and have held seven policy and community forums and countless meetings to help various stakeholders understand and implement child welfare policies.
- **New knowledge grantees** continue to focus on building knowledge exchange and learning agendas and disseminating research findings. They have hosted meetings to share lessons learned and best practices, conducted surveys with caseworkers and TAY, analyzed data on foster youth characteristics and outcomes, and presented research findings to more than 1200 individuals representing a variety of audiences (e.g., attorneys, social workers, caregivers, and school personnel).

Caregiver Competencies

Because of the critical role caregivers play in assisting TAY to successfully transition into young adulthood and self-sufficiency, it is important to understand what constitutes effective caregiving. Caregiver agency interviews were conducted as a first step in developing a set of caregiver competencies. To further inform the development of competencies, interview findings were supplemented with a review of the current literature on caregivers, including best

practices; consultation with experts in NYC; and a review of the work being conducted around caregivers by Foundation grantees. Based on the findings from these information sources, the evaluation team developed a draft set of TAY caregiver competencies, grounded in the principles of cultural competence and family engagement, around these seven domains:

1. Basic Foster Parenting Knowledge
2. Communication with Youth
3. Assessment and Individualized Planning
4. Relationship to Family and Community
5. Supporting Educational and Career Success for Youth
6. Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Youth
7. Supporting Crossover Youth

These competencies will be further refined with input from the Foundation and grantees and ultimately be used by them to understand and measure caregiver competence.

Policy and Systems Reform

As part of the FYSI plan, the Foundation chose to fund grantees in LAC and NYC for several reasons, one of which was their readiness for policy and system reform. Both LAC and NYC continue their efforts to affect policy change and systems reform.

LAC. Since the 2012 passage of AB 12 Fostering Connections to Success Act, LAC has implemented several important changes, including creating a single, unified child protection agency and opting into the Approved Relative Caregiver Funding Option Program, which equalizes payments to relative and nonrelative caregivers; ensuring the appropriate implementation of CA's new Local Control Funding Formula; and under the Continuum of Care Reform, making recommendations regarding child welfare rates, group care placements, and training for staff working with traumatized or abused youth.

In addition to AB 12, other recent legislation designed to improve outcomes for foster children has been introduced or passed, including:

- **AB 2454.** Addresses the needs of youth who had originally exited the dependency system through legal guardianship or adoption before 18, but for whom these arrangements failed after turning 18 but before turning 21. The bill allows these youth to reenter foster care as non-minor dependents under AB 12. (August 2014)

- **SB 1023.** Expands resources such as mental health support, tutoring, housing assistance, and an allowance for books to former foster youth at community college campuses through the Extended Opportunities Programs and Services Program (EOPS). (September 2014)
- **AB 388**. To reduce crossover, addresses excessive delinquency filings in group home settings for minor behaviors by allowing for tracking of law enforcement calls from group homes and review of facilities with inappropriate or excessive use of law enforcement assistance. (September 2014)
- **AB 2668.** Provides parenting non-minor dependents living in a Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP), with the support of an identified responsible adult under a "Shared Responsibility Plan, access to additional funding to support their child." (September 2014)
- **AB 595.** Amended to ensure that former foster youth continue to have priority enrollment in community colleges.(April 2015)

NYC. NYC has also made progress in this arena. ACS and NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation announced an intra-city agreement to improve mental health services for justice-involved youth, and the Center for Youth Employment opened in May 2015 to offer job and mentoring opportunities to NYC youth, with a special emphasis on shelter and foster youth. Several other NYC child-welfare focused were also launched, including

- ACS launched **Home Away from Home** and **Be the Reason**, two large efforts focused on recruiting and maintaining competent caregivers to foster and adopt youth in the child welfare system.
- ACS convened its **first conference on well-being** and received $3.75 million in federal grants to further juvenile justice and child welfare work
- **Foster Youth College Success Initiative.** Received $1.5 million in state funds to provide concrete supports for foster youth to succeed in college. (May 2015)

Administrative data show that, in both NYC and LAC, the number of TAY choosing to remain in the child welfare system continues to increase. This steady increase is due to policy changes in both jurisdictions. And while these policy changes are intended to improve outcomes for TAY, there are still issues that require further attention. For example, TAY continue to experience some level of placement instability; however, both jurisdictions continue efforts to understand

which placement types work best for foster youth to stabilize placements for them.

Systems Change through Cross-sector Coordination

Social network analysis (SNA) was implemented to assess the "reach" of the FYSI in building new and strengthening existing relationships between grantees and non-grantee organizations and agencies. Social network analysis uncovered several important findings, namely:

- Organizations are clearly working together in a large, interconnected, **network of collaborative relationships**.
- The network is **not completely connected** – there is at least one very small group of organizations working together apart from the rest of the network.
- There are several organizations acting as **"gatekeepers."** These are the organizations that branch out from the "core" and link the other parts of the network to the larger network. In SNA, gatekeepers serve as **intermediaries or bridges** between portions of the network and play an important role in maintaining the network structure; without them, the network falls apart.
- The **overall number** of partner organizations and **connections between and among them** increased after FYSI implementation; this demonstrates the role FYSI has played in forging connections between grantee and non-grantee agencies and organizations over time.

These findings suggest that LAC and NYC grantees are connected to each other and identified partner agencies, but in some cases, are connected in different ways. The next step in the SNA, which is scheduled to take place in fall 2015, will use quantitative metrics (e.g., density, centrality, and subgroup characteristics) to tell us more about the functional aspects of the network and help parse out some of the reasons for the differences across jurisdictions.

Shared Knowledge and Leveraged Funding

As part of the evaluation, data are collected on leveraged funding and dissemination activities for a specified period of time; for this report, data were reported for activities conducted from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015. Leveraged funding data provides the Foundation with a quantitative measure by which to assess the impact of FYSI funding on grantee organizations. Data on dissemination activities are reported for five areas: 1) presentations, 2)

publications in the press, print or online, 3) media citations of Foundation-related work, 4) multimedia products developed, and 5) curricula, created or revised. Findings show that grantees excel in these areas:

- Grantees continue building and disseminating new knowledge, conducting 258 presentations, producing 73 publications, and reporting 692 media citations.
- Grantees have leveraged $8,340,394 in private funding and $1,754,618 in public funding to support their work. Taken together, private funds leveraged in the previous and current year of the initiative is $21 million, already more than the $20 million goal. With one year left in the initiative, grantees will continue to exceed the $20 million goal.

Recommendations

As noted throughout this report, in recent years, there has been considerable movement at both the policy and program level around issues affecting TAY and foster care youth. Much of this change has been initiated by Foundation grantees. Policies and programs have been developed that are now being implemented and much needed modifications are being made to programs to better meet the needs of TAY and foster youth. But there comes a time when we must understand the effects of such changes so that we can be confident they are producing the outcomes we expect. To this end, we recommend the child welfare field turn its attention to research and evaluation that can help us understand what is working for TAY and what is not. Specifically, we recommend the Foundation and child welfare community continue to:

- Promote evaluation and research focused on understanding the effects of policy and programmatic changes and advancements on youth outcomes; such research would go a long way in helping the field understand how best to meet the needs of TAY and other foster youth

- Encourage efforts to build an infrastructure for educational data that can be used in research and evaluation to better understand educational outcomes for TAY and other foster youth

- Support grantees and others to build and disseminate new knowledge to inform the field and contribute to the evidence base about what works to support TAY to successfully transition out of the child welfare system and into productive and successful lives.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Conrad N. Hilton Foster Youth Strategic Initiative

The Conrad N. Hilton Foster Youth Strategic Initiative (FYSI) grew out of an extensive research and synthesis process that included the perspectives of a wide variety of stakeholders. Ultimately, the process helped the Foundation better understand the challenges facing transition age youth (TAY) and identify successful models for change; this work became the foundation for FYSI. In February 2012, the Board of Directors approved FYSI. The FYSI launched in March 2012; the evaluation began in March 2013.

THE FYSI VISION

> Youth who are transitioning out of foster care are on the path to success, are able to live self-sufficiently, and have the interpersonal connections they need to thrive.

The FYSI is focused on TAY, 16-24 years old, from two regions with large child welfare (and foster care) populations: Los Angeles County (LAC) and New York City (NYC). The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation chose to focus its efforts in LAC and NYC due to the

strong commitment of the public child welfare and supporting agencies to issues affecting TAY and their readiness for policy and system reform and opportunities to leverage funding.

Within the general TAY population, the Foundation chose to focus further on two special needs subgroups: pregnant and parenting teens and crossover youth (those with concurrent child welfare and juvenile justice involvement). The FYSI also aims to increase the pool of available TAY caregivers through education and outreach and the capacity of those caregivers to effectively parent via targeted resources.

1.2 Evaluation of the Foster Youth Strategic Initiative

In 2013, Westat joined with two subcontractors, the University of California, Los Angeles Luskin School of Public Affairs, and the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College, to lead the Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) component of the FYSI in LAC and NYC. The primary goal of the MEL is to inform the Foundation, its grantees, and other stakeholders about salient learnings and accomplishments throughout implementation of the initiative.

The FYSI is built on a theory of change that proposes that funding a strategic, three-component initiative (self-sufficiency services, systems change, and new knowledge development) will increase the likelihood of improving outcomes for TAY in LAC and NYC. The evaluation is not a program evaluation; that is, it is not designed to measure program outcomes at the grantee level. Instead, it is focused on the overall strategy and its ability to influence change in key youth, systems change, and knowledge and funding sharing goals.

Key goals are presented in Table 1.1; those shown in **green** are the focus of this report.

Table 1.1. Initiative Goals

YOUTH
Education: Postsecondary outcomes improved for 50% of TAY
Vulnerable Youth: Improved long-term outcomes for 50% of **parenting foster youth**
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SYSTEMS CHANGE
Create/strengthen cross-sector coordinated efforts
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FUNDING & KNOWLEDGE SHARING
Research base around programs to improve TAY outcomes is expanded and shared at local and national levels
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation funding leverages **$20M in private funding** in alignment with our goals

Westat submitted an initial evaluation plan to the Foundation in November 2013 and a revised version in November 2014. The revised plan was developed in response to the Foundation's request for Westat to reassess the existing evaluation plan and priorities and make suggestions for changes. Specifically, the new plan is focused on three priority areas: (1) **assessing cross-sector coordination and collaboration** to examine the reach of FYSI in building new and strengthening existing relationships between FYSI grantees and non-grantee organizations and agencies; (2) updating the **administrative data** plan to include public (or mostly public) data sources to directly address FYSI research questions; and (3) **refocusing the caregiver plan** around developing a set of caregiver competencies that could be used first by Foundation

grantees and, eventually, by the broader child welfare community to understand and measure caregiver competence. In addition to focusing on these priority areas, the team agreed to revise data collection forms to reduce duplication and burden on grantees and refocus its questions and items on information aligned with the revised evaluation plan.

The evaluation team continues to implement a multi-method approach to answer these four research questions:

1. Are TAY in LAC/NYC on a better path to success?
2. What impact did the Hilton Foster Youth Initiative have on the grantees' programs?
3. What changes have occurred in LAC/NYC in collaboration and alignment of systems serving TAY? How did the Initiative contribute to these changes?
4. What impacts did the knowledge grantees have on policy, practice, and research innovations?

1.3 Context for FYSI

As context for the FYSI, and specifically, the grantees' work, the next section provides information on the number of transition age youth in foster care in LAC and NYC. These numbers demonstrate the continuing need for efforts targeted at TAY to increase their opportunities for stable placements while in care and success when transitioning out of care.

1.3.1 Number of Transition Age Youth in Foster Care

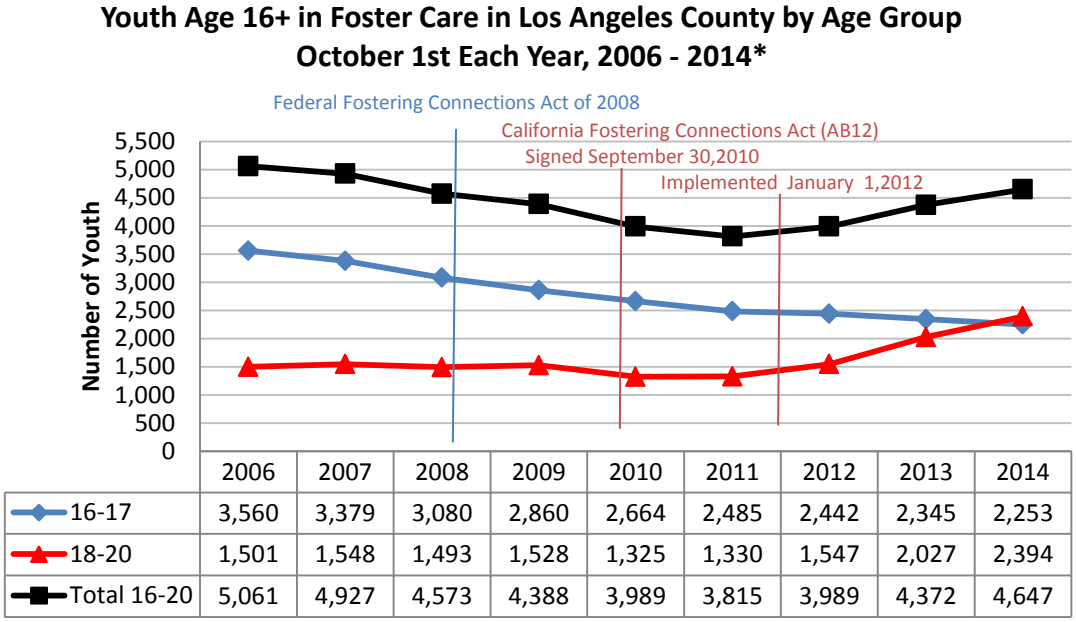
TAY in LAC. Since the implementation of federal and state legislation to support TAY to remain in foster care until the age of 21, there has been a notable increase in the number of transition age youth served in LAC and NYC. Specifically, the number of youth ages 18 and older has increased[2], as would be expected as many youth opt to stay in foster care or return to foster care for services. The FYSI strives to be

[2] This report provides descriptive data. Statements about increases, decreases, or changes do not imply statistically significant changes, as no statistical tests were performed. Rather, these terms simply refer to trends descriptively.

responsive to the needs of youth and help improve outcomes for this growing population of transition age youth.

The *California Fostering Connections to Success Act* (AB12) was signed in September 2010, extending foster care provisions to better support foster youth who opt to participate in extended foster care. Following the implementation of AB12 the number of TAY in LAC increased, from 3,815 in 2011 to 4,647 in 2014, reversing a steady decline between 2006 to 2011 (Figure 1.1). The increase occurred exclusively within the population of youth age 18 and older, as the number of youth exiting to emancipation declined (Figure 1.2) and some youth age 18 and older began re-entering care voluntarily (Needell, et al., 2015). By October 2014 52% (n=2,394) of the 4,647 TAY were youth age 18 and older.

Figure 1.1. TAY in LAC

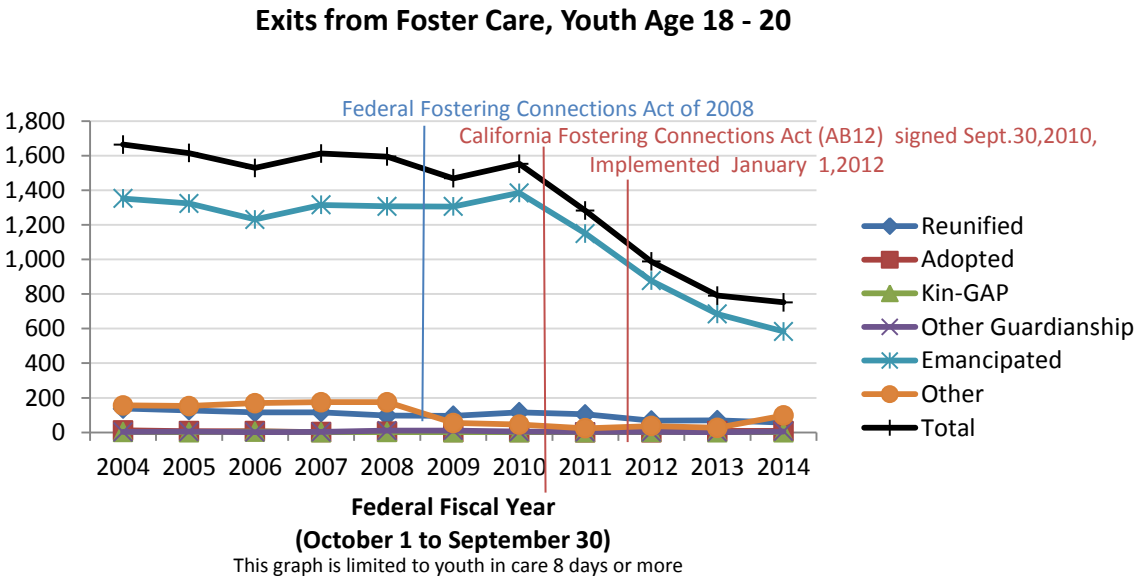


	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
16-17	3,560	3,379	3,080	2,860	2,664	2,485	2,442	2,345	2,253
18-20	1,501	1,548	1,493	1,528	1,325	1,330	1,547	2,027	2,394
Total 16-20	5,061	4,927	4,573	4,388	3,989	3,815	3,989	4,372	4,647

Source: CCWIP reports (Needell, et al., 2015).

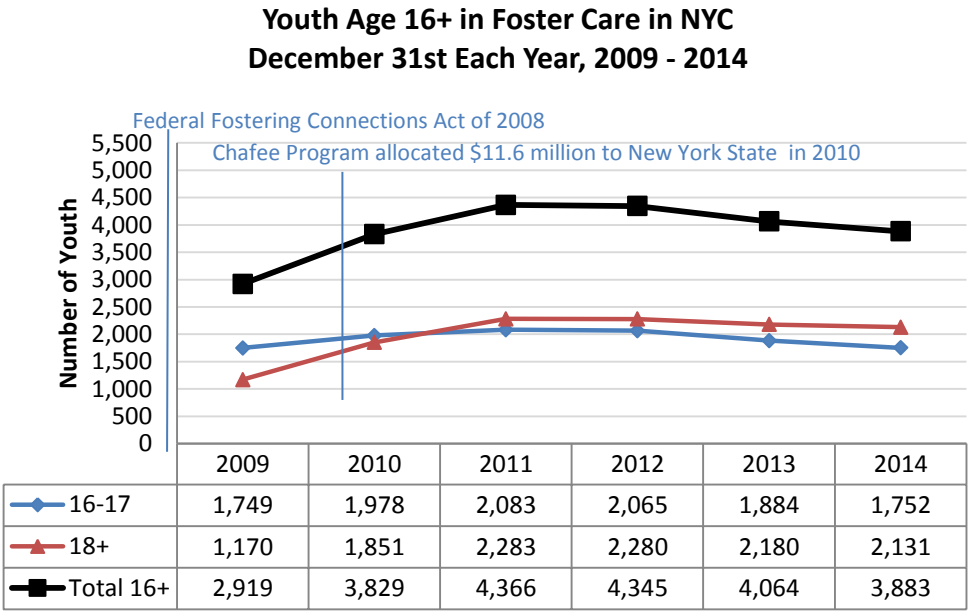
*Note - In point in time data, when examining age groups over time youth in one category may move to another category in subsequent years if they remain in care (e.g., some youth age 16-17 in 2011 are also in the 18-20 group in 2013).

Figure 1.2. TAY Exiting Foster Care in LAC, FFY 2004-2014



TAY in NYC. Following the 2010 Chafee Program[3] allocation of $11.6 million to New York State, the number of TAY in New York City increased from 2,919 in 2009 to 4,366 in 2011, with a moderate decline to 3,883 TAY by 2014 (Figure 1.3). During that time, the number of youth age 18 and older increased, while the number of 16-17 year old youth only fluctuated slightly. By the end of 2014, 55% (n=2,131) of the 3,883 TAY were youth age 18 and older.

Figure 1.3. TAY in New York City



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
16-17	1,749	1,978	2,083	2,065	1,884	1,752
18+	1,170	1,851	2,283	2,280	2,180	2,131
Total 16+	2,919	3,829	4,366	4,345	4,064	3,883

Data source: New York State's CONNECTIONS/CCRS database, as of March 2015, provided by NYC ACS.

As demonstrated in this section, both LAC and NYC experienced increases in the TAY population, primarily due to policy changes. And while allowing TAY to remain in care for longer periods of time reduces their risk of negative outcomes, both short- and long-term, jurisdictions need to remain focused on identifying and meeting the needs of this population to ensure their success in life. The next section shows the capacity of the FYSI to continue to support TAY as they remain in the system and then successfully transition out of it.

[3] The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) offers assistance to help current and former foster care youth achieve self-sufficiency. Grants are offered to States and Tribes who submit a plan to assist youth in a wide variety of areas designed to support a successful transition to adulthood.

1.3.2 FYSI Grantee Profiles

To address the myriad issues facing TAY, those in care and transitioning out of care, the Foundation provides grants to organizations and entities with the potential to meet the three overarching goals of FYSI: (1) to increase **TAY self-sufficiency**, (2) to strengthen and increase cross-system collaboration and promote **systems change**, and (3) to develop and disseminate **new knowledge** about the needs of TAY and effective strategies for meeting those needs. Grantees are allowed to apply for and receive funds to work in one or more of these areas.

As of June 2015, the Foundation has awarded $32,772,500 to 39 grantees as part of FYSI. Overall, there were 37 Foundation grantees active during this reporting period: 20 grantees are working in LAC, 12 grantees are working in NYC, and 5 grantees are considered “dual geography” as they are conducting work in both LAC and NYC. The following tables (1.2, 1.3, and 1.4) list the grantees by location and focus area.

Self-sufficiency grantees. Table 1.2 shows the 28 grantees funded to increase TAY self-sufficiency through the provision of direct services. Grantees in this pool are working in a variety of areas, including improving educational, college readiness and career outcomes for TAY; providing support for and recruiting caregivers; and enhancing services for crossover, pregnant, and parenting youth.

Table 1.2. TAY Self-Sufficiency Grantees

Los Angeles[4]	New York	Dual Geography
• Alliance for Children's Rights • Anti-Recidivism Coalition • Child Welfare Initiative • Coalition for Responsible Community Development • Community Coalition • John Burton Foundation • First Place for Youth • First Star • National Center for Youth Law (FosterEd) • iFoster • Pepperdine University • Public Counsel • Southern California Foster Family Agency • St. Anne's • United Friends of the Children • Youth Policy Institute	• Children's Aid Society • Children's Village • Fedcap • Federation Employment & Guidance Service (FEGS) • Good Shepherd Services • Graham-Windham • Inwood House • New Yorkers for Children (ACS) • New York Foundling Hospital • Research Foundation of CUNY • The Door – A Center of Alternatives, Inc.	• National Foster Youth Institute

[4] Unless otherwise noted, throughout this document, LAC grantees are represented in blue, NYC grantees are represented in red, and dual geography grantees are represented in purple.

Systems change grantees. Table 1.3 shows the 15 grantees funded to strengthen and increase cross-system collaboration and promote systems change. They are doing this by working across systems to: promote collaboration; facilitate the development and implementation of consistent TAY-related policies; initiate and improve data sharing; and develop such effective cross-system coordination methods as shared case management and referral systems.

Table 1.3. Systems Change Grantees

Los Angeles	New York	Dual Geography
• Alliance for Children's Rights • Anti-Recidivism Coalition • Children Now • Children's Action Network • Community Coalition • John Burton Foundation • National Center for Youth Law (FosterEd) • Public Counsel • University of Southern California • Youth Policy Institute	• Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence (CIDI) • Fedcap	• Aspen Institute • Georgetown Center for Juvenile Justice Reform • National Foster Youth Institute

Knowledge grantees. Table 1.4 shows the seven grantees funded to develop and disseminate new knowledge to affect changes in TAY policy, practice, and research. Through publication and dissemination of grantees' practice recommendations and research findings, FYSI expects to see a targeted and informed leveraging of resources for TAY via these grantees.

Table 1.4. New Knowledge Grantees

Los Angeles	New York	Dual Geography
• University of Chicago • University of Southern California	• Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence (CIDI)	• Aspen Institute • Center for Sustainable Journalism (Kennesaw State University) • Georgetown Center for Juvenile Justice Reform • Seattle Children's Hospital

1.4 Organization and Focus of Report

This report covers evaluation activities from January through May 2015. Specifically, it covers evaluation findings from: (1) grantee progress reports and data collection forms, (2) caregiver agency personnel interviews, and (3) the social network analysis survey. It also includes progress to date on the development of a set of caregiver competencies. The report comprises eight chapters, including this one. The remainder of the report is organized as follows:

Chapters 2-4

Progress toward FYSI goals:
Chapter 2. Increase caregiver capacity
Chapter 3. Initiate systems change and improvement
Chapter 4. Expand knowledge and leverage funds

Chapters 5-6

Conclusions and recommendations for moving forward

2. TRANSITION AGE YOUTH GOALS: BUILDING CAREGIVER CAPACITY

The FYSI is designed to address three primary youth goals[5]. One goal focuses on improving educational outcomes for TAY, while another focuses on improving outcomes for parenting and crossover TAY. These two goals were addressed in the Year 1 evaluation report and will be addressed again in the final evaluation report in Year 3. In Year 2, data collection efforts focused on the third youth goal: to improve the capacity of caregivers to care appropriately for TAY.

2.1 Data on TAY Placement Types

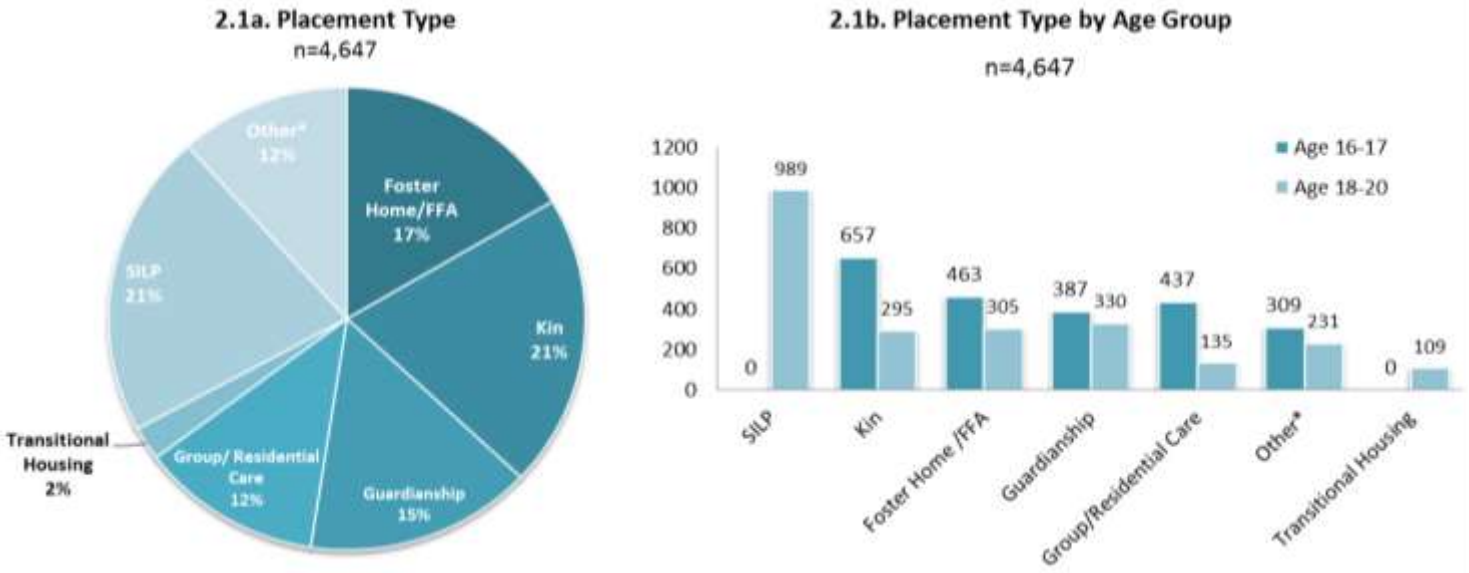
It is well known that providing stable placements with quality caregivers continues to be a challenge facing those who work with TAY. TAY continue to reside in (and move among) any number of placement settings, but are most often placed with kin or in foster homes. Because of the critical role caregivers play in assisting TAY to successfully transition into young adulthood and self-sufficiency, it is important to understand what constitutes effective caregiving. This chapter provides information on TAY placement types, including the number of TAY in kin and foster homes in LAC and NYC, and the evaluation team's work on developing a set of caregiver competencies, which are designed to be used by Foundation grantees to understand and eventually measure caregiver competence.

[5] In addition to youth goals, FYSI is also focused on three systems change and two funding and knowledge sharing goals, as outlined in Table 1.1 of this report.

2.1.1 TAY Placement Types[6]: Los Angeles County

In LAC, the extended foster care provision included a number of housing options for TAY, including staying: (1) with a foster family or relative, (2) in a group home, (3) in transitional housing, or (4) in a Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) (Courtney, Dworsky, & Napolitano, 2013). As of October 2014, the most common placement types for TAY are SILP and kin (relative) homes (Figure 2.1a), although there is considerable variation depending on the age of the TAY (Figure 2.1b). Younger TAY (age 16-17) most commonly lived with kin (n=657, 29%), but many were in foster homes (n=463, 21%), under guardianship[7] (n=387, 17%) or in group homes or residential care (n=437, 19%). Among youth age 18 and older, the largest group were in SILP (n=989, 41%), while most others lived in foster homes (n=305, 13%), under guardianship (n=387, 17%), or with kin (n=295, 12%).

Figure 2.1. LAC TAY Placements as of October 1, 2014



Data Source: CCWIP (Needell et al., 2015)
*Other includes pre-adopt homes, court-specified homes, non-FC, runaway, trial home visit, and other placement types.

[6] Definitions of placement types vary between LAC and NYC.

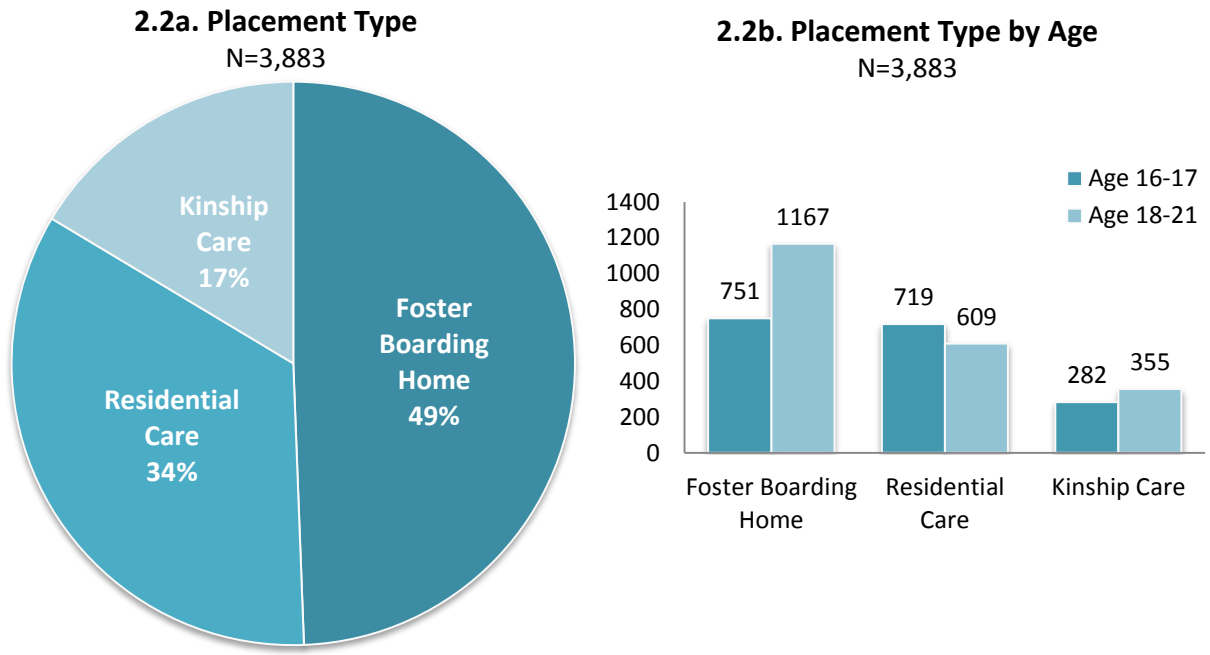
[7] Legal guardianship in CA is a court order that says someone who is not the child's parent is in charge of taking care of the child. Legal guardians have a lot of the same rights and responsibilities as parents. They can decide where the child lives and goes to school, and they can make decisions about the child's health care (http://www.courts.ca.gov/1206.htm).

2.1.2 TAY Placement Types: New York City

NYC classifies placements in just three categories: foster boarding home, kinship care, and residential care. Approximately half of TAY live in foster boarding homes (n=1,918, 49%), one third in residential care (n=1,328, 34%), and 17% (n=637) in kinship care (Figure 2.2a). Within these placement categories some youth are in the Therapeutic Program, including 24% (n=469) of the youth in foster boarding homes, 7% (n=44) in kinship homes, and 3 youth in residential care.

There was some variation in placement patterns depending on the youth's age (Figure 2.2b). Among younger TAY, the proportion living in foster boarding homes (n=751, 43%) and residential settings (n=719, 41%) was similar, with the remaining 16% of younger TAY living in kinship homes. Among older youth, the most common placement setting was foster boarding home (n=1,167, 55%), with fewer youth in residential care (n=609, 29%) and kinship care (n=355, 17%).

Figure 2.2. NYC TAY Placements, December 31, 2014



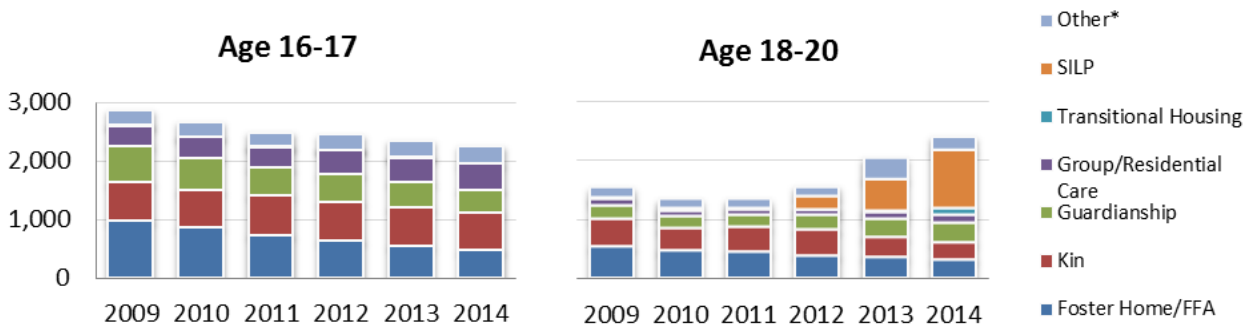
Data source: New York State's CONNECTIONS/CCRS database, as of March 2015, provided by NYC ACS

2.1.3 Trends in Placement Types Used Over Time: LAC

Placement type patterns have changed over time, primarily due to policy (and subsequent funding) changes intended to better serve older TAY. Placement patterns across years differed by age group; however, changes over time should be interpreted cautiously given the recent increase in the number of older youth remaining in care and policy changes to provide additional placement options.

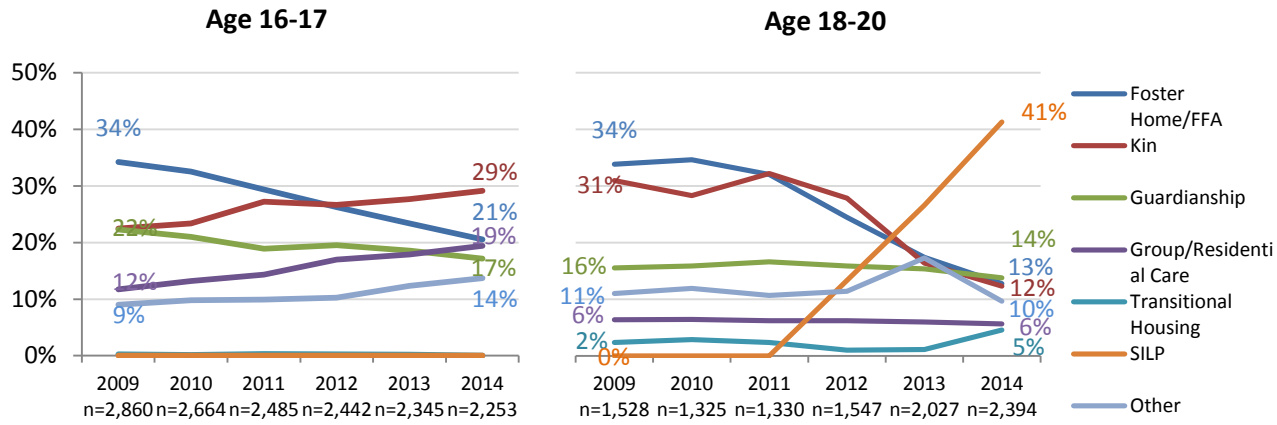
Placement patterns over time differed for younger and older TAY in LAC between 2009 and 2014, according to point in time data (Figures 2.3 and 2.4). Among younger TAY, **age 16-17,** there has been a downward trend in the number and proportion of youth placed in foster homes, from 979 (34%) in 2009 to 463 (21%) in 2014. There was also a reduction in the use of guardianship, from 637 (22%) in 2009 to 387 (17%) in 2014. There were small increases in the proportion of youth placed in group/residential care (12% to 19%, from 336 to 437) and with kin (22% to 29%, from 643 to 657).

Figure 2.3. LAC: Number of TAY by Placement Type and Age Group, October 1, 2009-2014



Data Source: CCWIP (Needell et al., 2015)
*****Other includes pre-adopt homes, court-specified homes, non-FC, runaway, trial home visit, and other.

Figure 2.4. LAC: Percent of TAY in Each Placement Type, October 1, 2009-2014



Data Source: CCWIP (Needell et al., 2015)
***Other includes pre-adopt homes, court-specified homes, non-FC, runaway, trial home visit, and other

Among youth **age 18 and older** in LAC, supervised independent living placements (SILPs) have become a common placement type for youth who have opted for extended foster care (Figures 2.3 and 2.4, in orange). SILPs became available in 2012 as part of the new extended foster care policy implementation, and by the end of that year, there were 206 (13%) foster youth living in SILPs. By 2014, **SILPs were the most frequently used placement type in this age group**, with 989 (41%) youth age 18 and older living in SILPs[8]. However, SILPS were the only available placement for this age group.

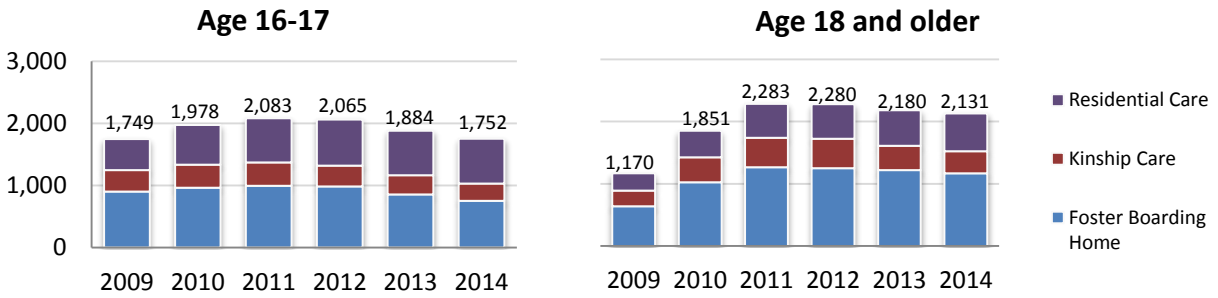
California's implementation of extended foster care also created another placement option, Transitional Housing Placement Program Plus Foster Care (THP+FC), expanding on prior limited use of transitional housing among youth in foster care and a THP Plus program to support former foster youth. By the end of 2014, there were 109 (5%) older youth in transitional housing, Concurrently, between 2009 and 2014 there was a downward trend in the proportion of youth in foster home placements (34% to 13%, from 517 to 305) and kin placements (31% to 12%, from 473 to 295). The proportion of youth in group or residential care has remained stable over time in this age group (6%), although the number has increased (from 97 to 135) as more youth age have opted into extended foster care.

[8] In this point in time data, we see a cumulative increase, as youth remained in SILPs across years and youth were newly placed in SILPs. The numbers will likely level off over time as the oldest youth age out of extended foster care.

2.1.4 Trends in Placement Types Used Over Time: NYC

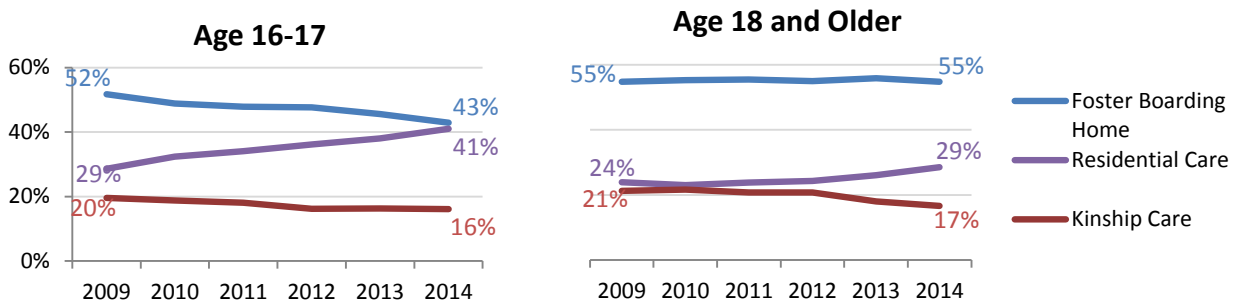
In NYC, placement patterns also differed for older and younger TAY between 2009 and 2014, according to point in time data (Figures 2.5 and 2.6). Among youth **age 16-17** there has been an upward trend in the use of residential care, from 29% in 2009 to 41% in 2014. During this same time, there has been a decline in the proportion of youth in foster boarding homes, from 52% to 43%. Both the upward trend in residential placements and the decline in youth in foster boarding homes are likely due to the lack of available foster homes in NYC. The proportion of youth in kinship care has also declined somewhat, from 20% to 16%.

Figure 2.5. NYC: Number of TAY by Placement Type, December 31, 2009-2014



Source: CCRS as of March 2015, provided by NYC ACS.

Figure 2.6. NYC: Percent of TAY in Each Placement Type, Dec. 31, 2009-2014



Data Source: CCRS as of March 2015, provided by NYC ACS.

Looking again at Figures 2.5 and 2.6, among youth **age 18 and older**, as the number of youth remaining in care increased the proportion of youth in foster boarding homes has remained steady over time, around 55%. The number of youth in kinship care has also increased as more youth opt to remain in foster care. **The number of youth in**

residential care, however, has more than doubled as youth opt to remain in care, although the proportion has increased a small amount, from 24% to 29%. This may be due, in part, to the 2011 ACS's decision to close SILPs, eliminating them as a placement option for youth. ACS's decision to close SILPs stemmed from its philosophy that young people in foster care are best served living with families (with relatives or in foster homes);[9] however, we can see here that the change, in fact, resulted in more youth living in group homes.

2.2 Progress on Goal to Build Caregiver Capacity

As noted in Section 1.2 of this report, in November 2014, evaluation priorities were realigned to include refocusing the caregiver plan around developing a set of caregiver competencies that could be used first by Foundation grantees and, eventually, by the broader child welfare community to understand and measure caregiver competence. To this end, the evaluation team implemented two activities: (1) conducted interviews with foster care service providers; and (2) developed an initial set of caregiver competencies. The evaluation team designed the interviews to inform the development of the caregiver competencies.

2.2.1 Service Provider Interviews

As a first step towards developing a set of caregiver competencies, the evaluation team conducted telephone interviews in February and March 2015 with 18 foster care agency representatives (e.g., executive directors, CEOs) and service providers; 9 in NYC and 9 in LAC.

The interviews were focused on identifying caregiver characteristics that support effective caregiving for older youth and addressed the following areas of interest: education; employment/career development; sexuality, responsible parenting; developing supportive relationships; health and safety; and financial literacy. The protocol also asked questions about ongoing supports for caregivers, both supports that agencies could provide and those they wished they could provide if they had adequate time, skills, and resources. Finally, the interviews were designed to gather information about the most common concerns service providers were hearing from the caregivers with whom they worked.

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[9] Hurley, K. (2011). NYC Closes Transitional Housing For Foster Teens. *Child Welfare, Childcare & Youth Services.*

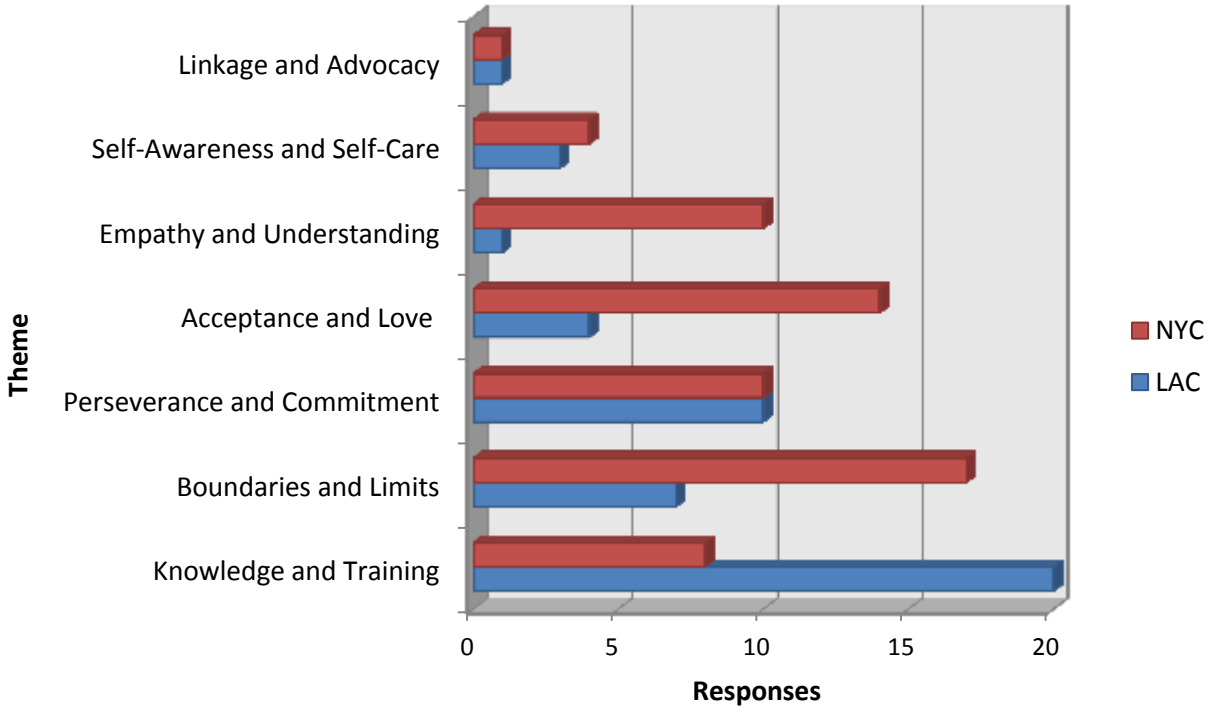
2.2.2 Interview Findings

The results of the content analysis are reported in this section, both by region and in the aggregate. Open-ended answers were coded and then collapsed into broader categories. It is important to note that the numbers in tables will not add to the total number of participants, as individuals could provide more than one answer to questions and answers were often coded multiple times, a common practice in qualitative analysis.

1. What are the most important characteristics of caregivers for older foster youth?

Participants mentioned many characteristics that caregivers need to successfully parent and supervise older foster youth in their care. After collapsing the items into several categories, the results are presented below. There were five most commonly discussed characteristics: knowledge and training; boundaries and limits; perseverance and commitment; acceptance and love, and empathy and understanding.

Figure 2.7 Most Important Characteristics of Caregivers for Older Foster Youth



Within the themes of knowledge and training, participants mentioned such qualities as knowledge of the system, training on various aspects of laws and foster care, and overall knowledge of child rearing. This idea was more strongly endorsed in LAC.

For this sample, boundaries and limits had to do with adequate supervision and discipline of older youth, including limits on curfew, peer association, and school attendance, among others. The NYC participants placed more emphasis on this cluster of attributes than those in LAC.

Perseverance and commitment spanned such ideas as sticking with the youth despite challenges, and being fully committed to that young person's success. Acceptance and love (also mentioned more frequently in NYC) included ideas such as unconditional regard and acceptance, and displaying affection. Although somewhat similar, empathy and understanding meant qualities of caregivers to display and communicate empathy and understand a youth's background, circumstances, and current issues.

Other characteristics mentioned by interviewees included self-awareness/self-care and linkage/advocacy. These two concepts were emphasized much more when discussing needs in specific domains in Question 3 (such as education or developing supportive relationships).

2. How do successful caregivers address the following domains: education, employment and career development, sexuality/responsible parenting, developing supportive relationships, health and safety, and financial literacy?

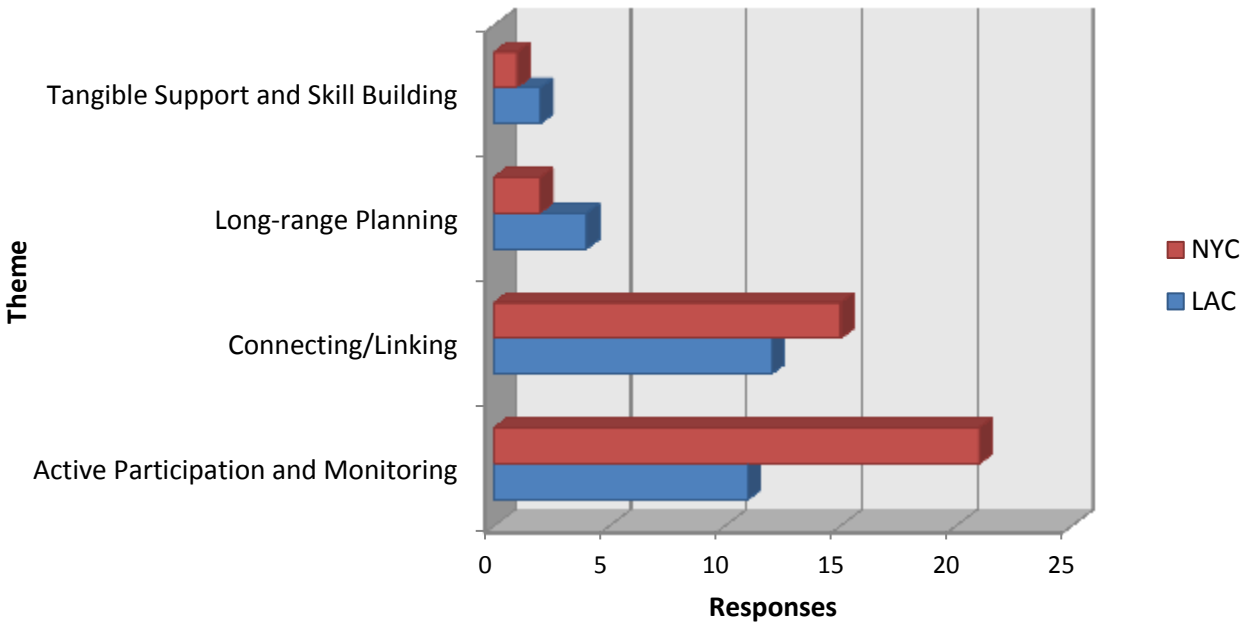
Each of these items is summarized separately below. While some of the main themes overlapped between questions, some were unique to each domain.[10]

[10] Throughout this section, the numbers in tables will not add to the total number of participants, as individuals could provide more than one answer to questions and answers were often coded multiple times, a common practice in qualitative analysis.

Education

In the area of education, there were two common themes: (1) active participation and monitoring, and (2) connecting and linking. Active participation and monitoring meant, for example, the caregiver being actively involved in the youth's educational environment, participating in and monitoring homework and grades, meeting with teachers and the IEP team, and providing ongoing encouragement. Connecting and linking meant actively connecting youth with resources, advice, mentors, tutors, and others to help them succeed. LAC participants placed about equal emphasis on active participation and connecting/linking. NYC participants' responses clustered into the theme of active participation and monitoring.

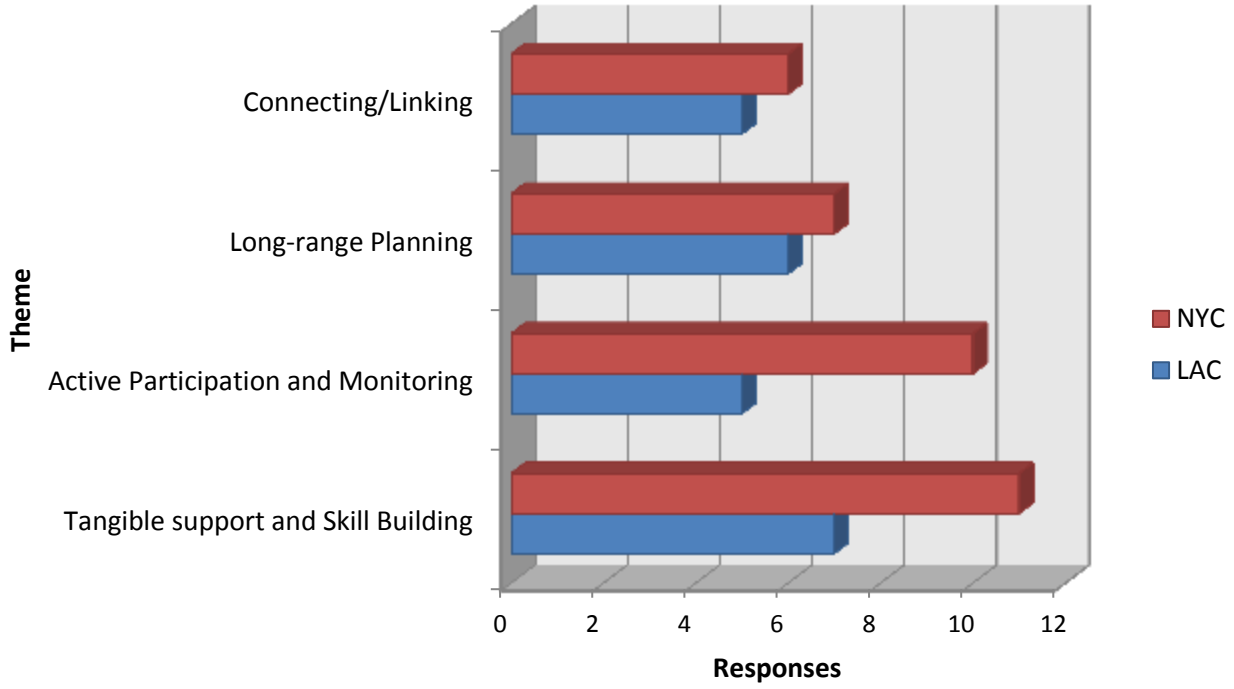
Figure 2.8 How Successful Caregivers Address Education



Employment and Career Development

In the area of employment, active participation and monitoring came up again as an important theme. However, for this item in particular, tangible support and skill building was the most dominant theme. This theme captured items such as providing job appropriate clothing, teaching youth how to interview or create a resume, and ensuring that they have marketable skills. For this item, long range planning (i.e., building toward a career path or helping cultivate interests) and connecting/linking to resources (such as job fairs, volunteer opportunities, or similar resources) were also important.

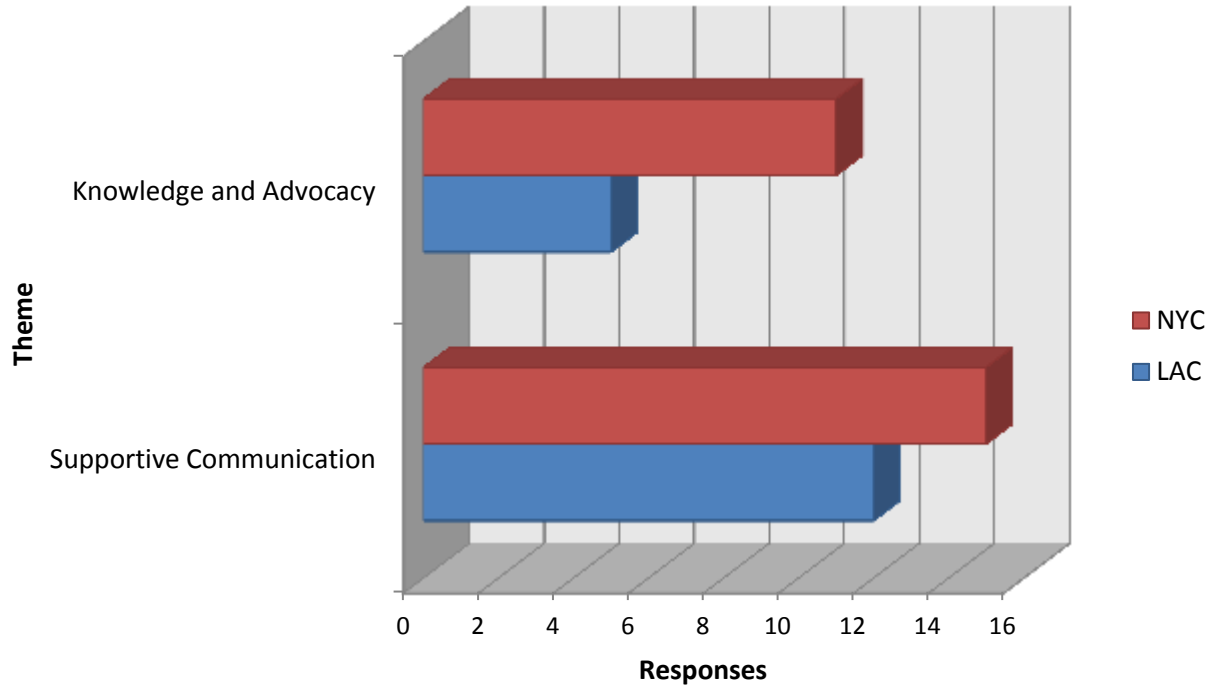
Figure 2.9. How Successful Caregivers Address Employment & Career Development



Sexuality and Responsible Parenting

Reponses to this item clustered around two main themes: (1) supportive communication, and (2) knowledge and advocacy. Examples of supportive communication included regular discussion of sexuality and birth control options, accepting and affirming youths' needs, and keeping lines of communication open at all times. Knowledge and advocacy referred to attendance at relevant trainings, understanding youths' sexual health rights, knowledge of issues that older foster youth may bring in regard to prior sexual abuse, and advocacy for preventative and sexual health care services. While there were more responses from NYC participants, responses were similar in content across the two jurisdictions.

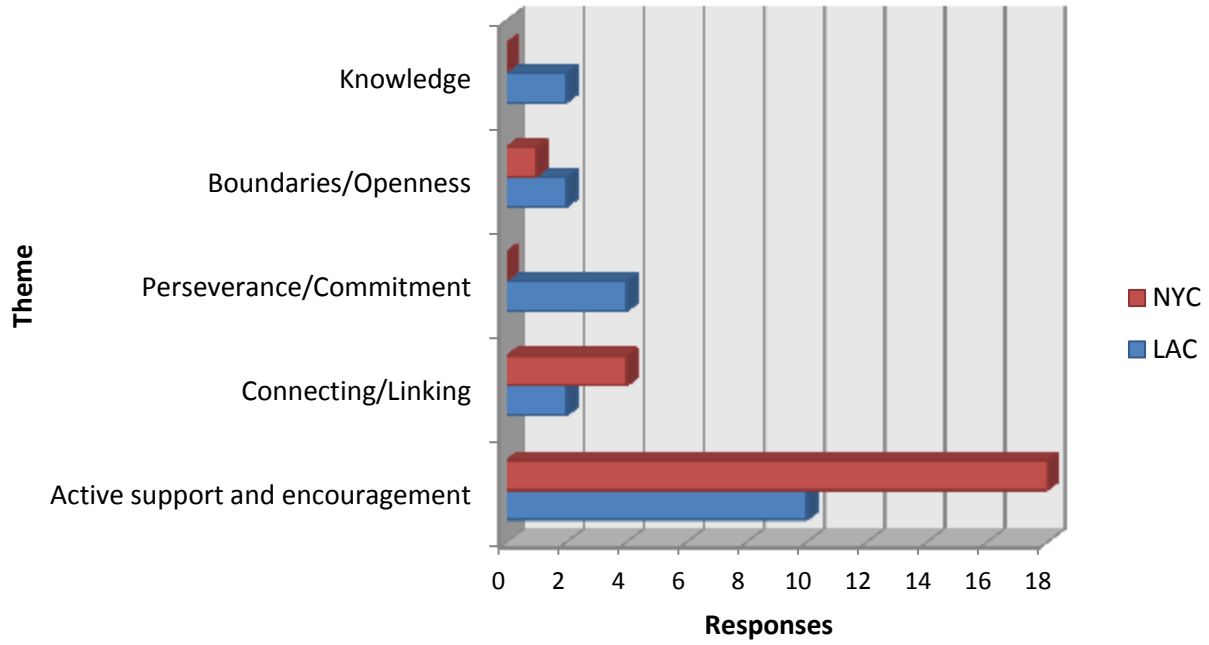
Figure 2.10. How Successful Caregivers Address Sexuality & Responsible Parenting



Developing Supportive Relationships

In the area of supportive relationships, the most common theme revolved around active support and encouragement of positive social relationships. This meant that the caregiver needed to be involved in helping the youth wisely choose and develop friends and mentors at school or through extracurricular activities, to meet the youths' friends, and to consider healthy versus unhealthy relationships. This also included discussing and supporting youth in their relationships with biological family members. LAC and NYC responses were similar in this area.

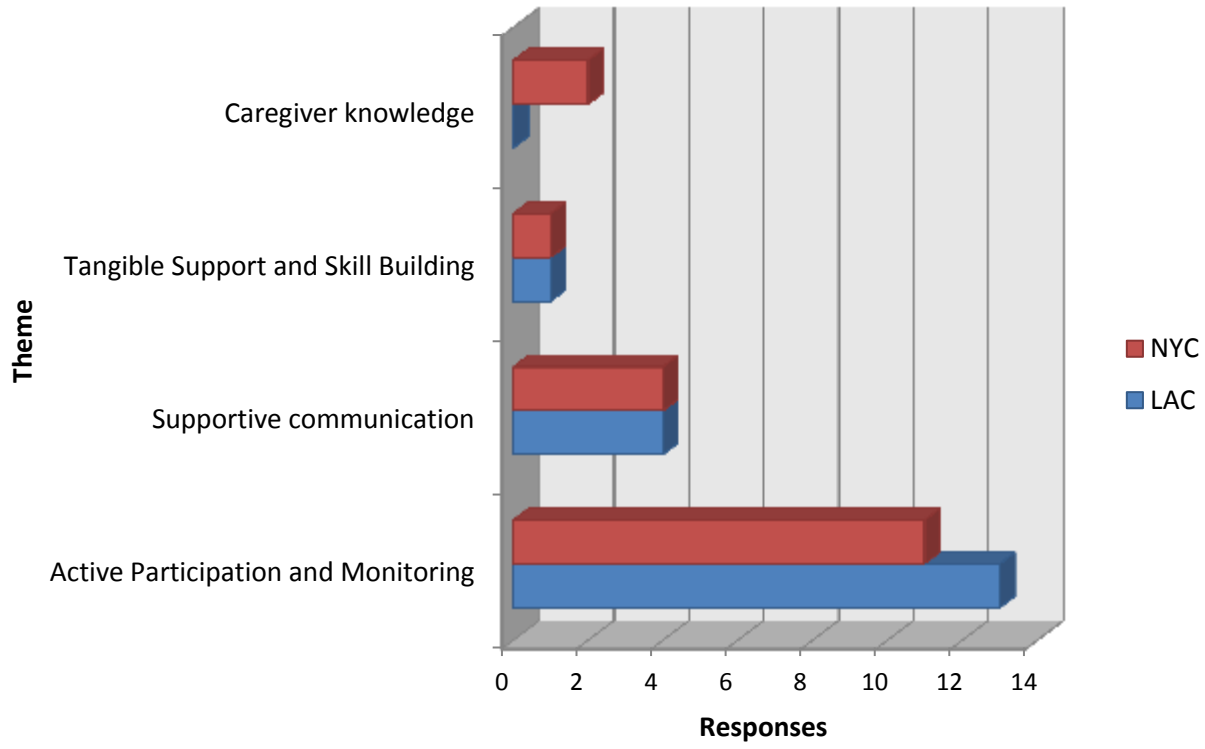
Figure 2.11. How Successful Caregivers Address Developing Supportive Relationships



Health and Safety

Participants overwhelmingly identified the theme of “active participation and monitoring” as key to ensuring the health and safety of older foster youth. In this regard, the best way to ensure the health of the youth is for the caregiver to know firsthand what activities the youth is engaged in (including drug and alcohol use or sexual behavior) and appropriately monitor those activities, including setting curfews and ensuring that youths’ medical needs are met. LAC and NYC responses were similar in this area.

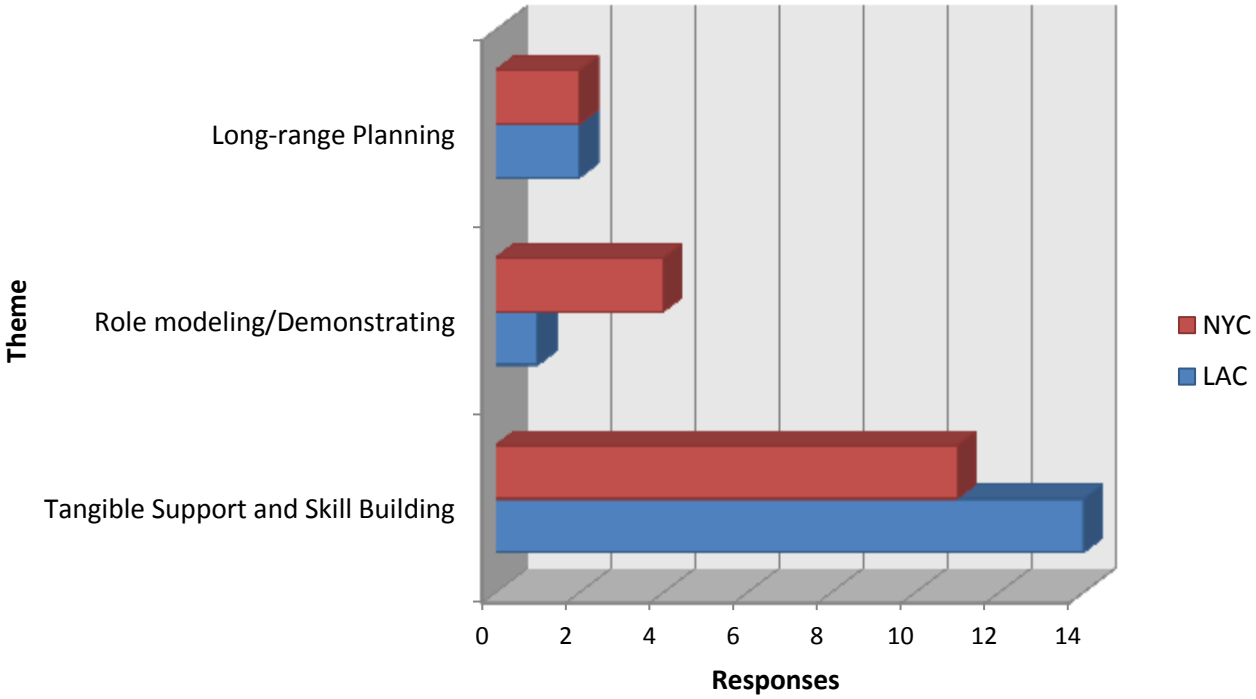
Figure 2.12. How Successful Caregivers Address Health & Safety



Financial Literacy

Similar to employment, the most important skills for caregivers in the area of financial literacy fell under tangible support and skills building. This meant that the caregiver is able to provide practical ways for youth to learn about such things as saving money, investing in the future, paying bills, and going to a bank. Other characteristics mentioned by interviewees included self-awareness/self-care and linkage/advocacy. These two concepts were emphasized much more when discussing needs in specific domains in Question 3 (such as education or developing supportive relationships). LAC and NYC responses were similar in this area.

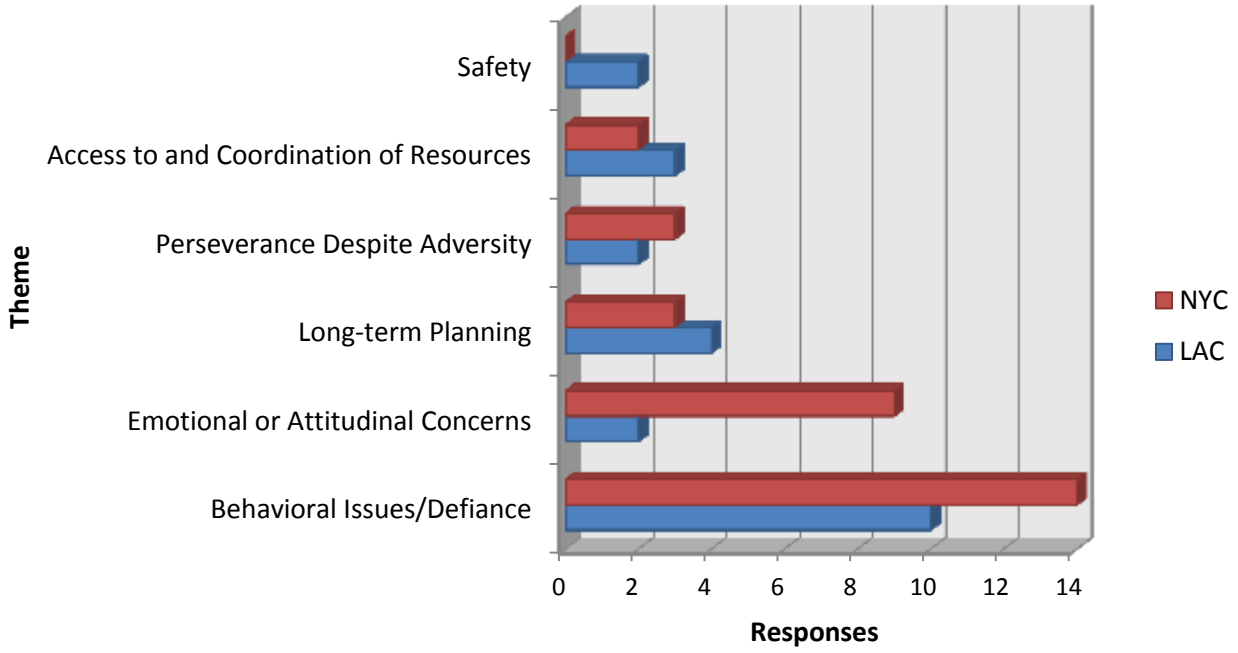
Figure 2.13. How Successful Caregivers Address Financial Literacy



3. What are some of the most common concern(s) that you have heard caregivers express in regard to caring for older foster youth?

As shown in the table below, the two most commonly mentioned themes for this question revolved around the types of behavioral and emotional challenges older foster youth often bring with them into care. These include running away, refusal to listen to foster parents (which fell under behavioral concerns) and depression or inability to be motivated (which fell under emotional concerns). NYC respondents placed more emphasis on emotional concerns than those in LAC. The other three themes (i.e., long term planning, perseverance, and access to resources) also received some support, but were not as prominent in the interview data.

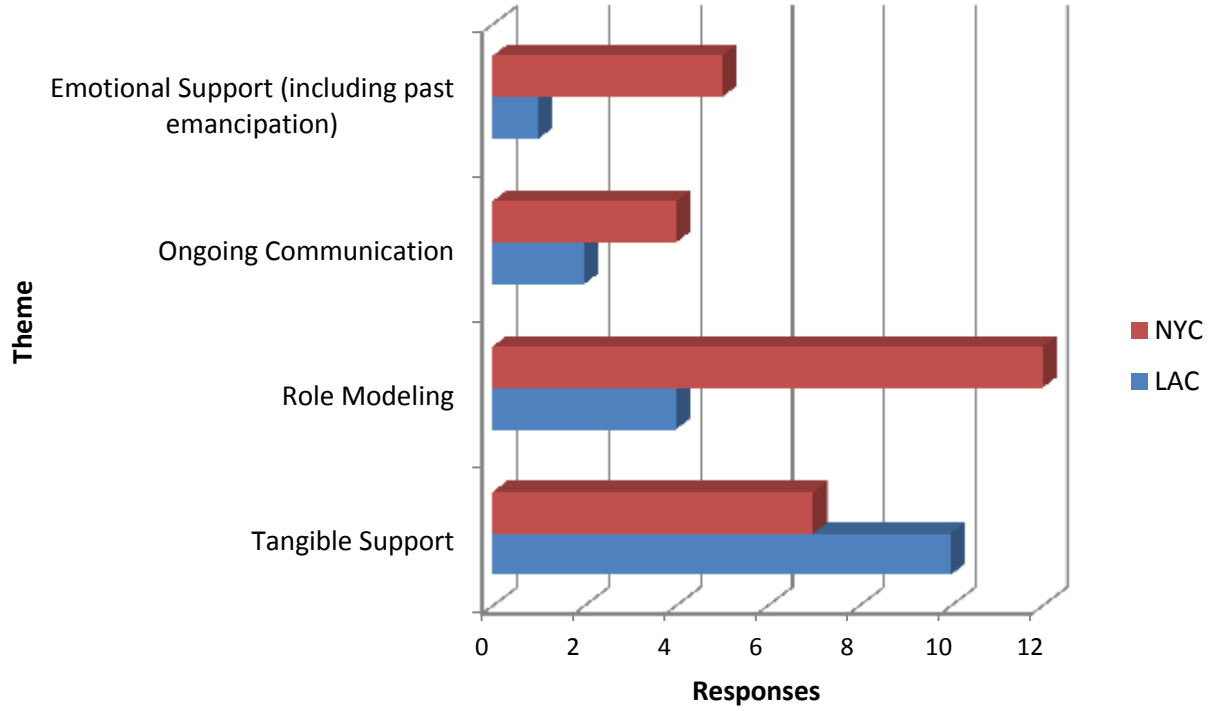
Figure 2.14. Common Caregiver Concerns about Caring for Older Foster Youth



4. What is the overall role of caregivers in preparing youth for self-sufficiency?

Participants identified two main roles for caregivers in preparing youth for self-sufficiency: (1) tangible supports (such as opening a checking account, applying for a job, or learning how to pay bills), and (2) role modeling. With regard to role modeling, caregivers themselves reported the need to set an example for youth for appropriate social and professional interaction. In this way, they made sure to show up to appointments on time and interact politely with teachers and other professionals. These two themes received about the same level of overall support, although the LAC participants more commonly favored tangible support, and the NYC participants more commonly mentioned role modeling.

Figure 2.15. Overall Role of Caregivers in Preparing Youth for Self-Sufficiency



[The caregiver] was really that supportive kind of foster parent that you really want to see. And she really worked with him. She got him at 16 and she really worked with him about finishing high school and staying out of trouble and staying on the right track and where was he going to go when he went off.

And he was very excited about his future and it was a huge turn around for this kid, from where he had been before when we first met him.

So the right caregiver can make such a big difference in a kid's life and really support that transition for them.

Examples of Successful Caregiving

During interviews, participants shared their experiences with caregivers with interviewers, all of which illustrate examples of positive and successful caregiving for TAY in foster care. Here are a few of these examples.

They've taken the kid back a number of times after he or she has messed up. They have not been—they have just continuously said

"I'm here and I still love you and we're going to continue to work this out. I'm not giving up on you."

Ultimately, that's what makes the difference with most of these kids. But I can't always get foster parents to be that willing to make that level of commitment.

I had one foster parent that—she was dealing with a foster youth who had higher needs. And he was also LGBTQ, he had identified himself as LGBTQ.... So the foster mom, even though it was something new to her, and to her kids, and to her family, she really was open about it and really helped this kid a lot. And his biological family did not accept him....

So she tried working with the birth parents, trying to educate the birth parents and help them understand their son.

So she built a great relationship with the biological family, with the foster youth, and also with the social worker, the foster agency, the school as well. She was really there advocating for the youth.

Examples of Successful Caregiving

So these former foster parents that are letting them rent the room for peanuts at their house [through extended foster care], and one of them, she happens to be a family child care provider so she only takes whatever subsidies the youth can get, and in between subsidies she watches [the youth's] daughter so she can go to school.

To me, that's the ongoing supportive relationships we're talking about.

I've seen where the former foster parent let them live there in quite a few situations. For the older youth in extended foster care, that's life saving; literally they would be living on the streets.

2.2.3 Integrated Competency Based Model for Caregivers Caring for Teens in Foster Care

As noted in Section 2.2.2, caregiver agency interviews were conducted as a first step in developing a set of caregiver competencies. To further inform the development of competencies, interview findings were supplemented with a review of the current literature on caregivers, including best practices; consultation with experts in NYC; and a review of the work being conducted around caregivers by Foundation grantees, especially Fedcap. Based on the findings from these information sources, the evaluation team developed a draft set of TAY caregiver competencies, grounded in the principles of cultural competence and family engagement, around these seven domains:

1. Basic Foster Parenting Knowledge
2. Communication with Youth
3. Assessment and Individualized Planning
4. Relationship to Family and Community
5. Supporting Educational and Career Success for Youth
6. Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Youth
7. Supporting Crossover Youth

The final three areas were explored because the FYSI is focused specifically on these three areas (i.e., youth educational and career success, pregnant and parenting youth, and crossover youth).

Knowing how best to train, assess, license and support TAY foster parents is best accomplished with a clear understanding of what it takes, specifically, to be a successful TAY foster parent. Thus, identifying a set of competencies to guide TAY foster parents is an important and timely endeavor.

These competencies were presented to the Foundation grantees at the Conrad N. Hilton Convening in New York on June 4, 2015. Grantees provided feedback after the presentation. This feedback was incorporated into the competencies presented here. As a work in progress, these will be refined with input from grantees, our Foundation partners, and community partners in LAC and NYC. The competencies will be presented in final form in the next evaluation report.

Basic Foster Parenting Knowledge

- Understands the **specific city, state, and federal programs and policies** that affect older youth in foster care.
- Understands the risks of foster youth being lured into trafficking and ways to address these risks.
- Knows and understands the **major themes of safety, permanency, and well-being** for older youth in foster care.
- Knows and understands the **principles of trauma-informed practice** with older youth, and the potential negative effects of abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse on the development of an older youth.
- Knows and understands the **principles and practices of youth development theory and emerging adulthood**, including physical, emotional, and social development.
- Knows and understands the **importance of building social capital** within family, school, community, and peers with older youth.
- Knows how to incorporate a **positive attitude toward differences** relating to language, culture, economics, gender roles, sexuality, religion, family structures, age, and physical/mental capacity.
- Knowledge of **self as a foster parent**, including professional ethics and boundaries, confidentiality, and professional development needs and opportunities
- Enjoys **being with and parenting** older youth.

Communication with Youth

- Respects and cares for all youth, develops trusting relationships, and maintains awareness of diversity and youth culture.
- Recognizes and addresses the **need for intervention** (e.g. drug or alcohol abuse, domestic abuse or violence, depression, or other concerns)
- Recognizing the importance of having **sexual health conversations** with youth.
- Is able to advocate for, motivate, and engage youth.
- Sets the tone for **"possibility thinking"** for youth in their care—understanding the background and experiences of the young person.
- Knows how to **improve the youth's self-esteem** by employing active listening skills and consistently delivering supportive and esteem building messages.

Assessment & Individualized Planning

- Ability to partner with staff in making a **strength-based assessment of the youth and his or her family**, including goals, interests, learning styles, academic skills, assets, skills for transitioning to adulthood
- Ability to **involve youth in their own planning process**, promoting realistic goal setting, informed choices, self-determination. Ability to help youth make and understand **informed financial and educational choices.**
- Knowledge of various **assessment tools and strategies** and ability to administer assessments (or make referrals, as needed).
- Ability to track progress and change plans as needed.

Relationship to Family & Community

- Knows and understands the importance of **actively engaging with the youth's family** to support permanency and lifetime connections.
- Knows how to positively **engage and build relationships with family members** or other significant persons involved in the youth's life.
- Knows the importance of connecting youth to community institutions, resources and supportive adults.
- Is able to engage youth in community service and leadership activities.
- Is able to **identify a range of community resources** (people, places, things, & financial assistance) that can assist youth in planning for their future.
- Knows how to create relationships and **network with other community agencies** that could offer services, supports, and opportunities for older youth.

Supporting Educational & Career Success for Youth

- Knows how to **help newly placed youth adjust** to attending a new school, including reducing fears and anxieties in new school situations.
- Knows how to help or obtain help when a youth in care who is behind in school or having difficulty with specific school subjects.
- Knows and understands the **range of educational and vocational programs and schools** available to youth, selecting the best school option for an individual young person.
- Knows how to **engage the system in the youth's educational development**, attends parent/teacher conferences, and maintains contact and a relationship with the youth's school, guidance counselor, and teachers. Consistently reviews report cards and progress notes and provides support for enrollment in extracurricular activities.
- Knows and understands the **rights of youth in care** for due process, equal treatment, and privacy in regards to discipline.
- Knows how to work with school staff to address the causes of, and develop a **plan to solve school-related problems**.
- Knows signs that school program personnel may be **stereotyping a youth from a caregiving/adoptive home**, or singling out the youth for various types of discrimination.
- Is able to **advocate for youth in academic settings** (e.g., ensuring that youth academic records are rapidly transferred to the new school, maintaining consistent communication with the teachers and school guidance counselors, academic support when a youth is significantly behind, and an understanding of credits required for high school graduation.)
- Knows how to **support the young person's involvement in school activities**, including transportation and caregiver involvement.
- Knows and understands the importance of developing good working relationships with school administrators and staff members.
- Knows and understands the importance of **school policies and procedures**.

Higher Education

- Is able to consistently communicate the value of college and the relationship between education and financial and professional success. Is able to tie career choices back to high school educational requirements-so that a young person understands the pathway to reach career goals.
- Is able to effectively explore with the young person post-secondary options, including college tours, application processes, and financial aid.
- Knows and understands resources for college students who have learning disabilities.
- Is able to help the youth cope with the stresses of post-secondary school and encourage continued education.
- Knows how to help youth follow up on college related events, application deadlines, and identify college options based on youth's educational status.
- Stays connected with school's guidance office to apply for waivers, standardized test taking preparation help, and researches deadlines for submitting applications for identified colleges.
- Signs up for college visits and attends open houses for list of colleges identified by the youth with the assistance of the school's guidance office. Follows instructions for submitting financial aid forms and other necessary application documents.
- Monitors youth's daily notifications or messages regarding the college application process and stays informed of the process.
- Knows and understands how to work with school guidance counselor to identify post-secondary placements based on youth's educational ability and level of socialization.
- Works with social worker to apply to placements, attends open houses and visits programs to find a good fit based on youth's educational ability and needs.
- Continuously emphasizes the need for post-secondary education and the impact on future goals and financial status. Encourages achievement and consistently provides emotional support and helps to clear roadblocks and tackle obstacles.

Supporting Pregnant & Parenting Youth

- Knows how to help a pregnant young woman make **informed decisions**.
- Knows and understands the **range of issues** facing pregnant and parenting adolescents; including social and emotional health, stress and coping, medical care, legal issues, and planning for independent living.
- Knows and understands local resources for pregnant and parenting adolescents to **plan for financial support, legal, and medical services**.
- Know and understands that despite being sexually active or having a child, some youth may still **struggle with basic knowledge of their body.**
- Understands and is sensitive to the fact that **having a child may be a trauma trigger for youth**, as they raise a child while being separated from their own parents and struggle with the notion of what it means to be a "good" parent.
- Knows and understands the importance of **including the father** in planning and as part of the team.
- Knows and understands the **unique supportive role of caregivers** needed by pregnant or parenting adolescents and can create opportunities for **praise and acknowledgment** for what they are doing well.
- Knows and understands the various ways caregivers can support teen mothers and fathers **during and immediately after the birth of the baby**.
- Knows and understands the local processes to establish paternity, receive youth support, and register with the Putative Father Registry.
- Knows and understands the state law and foster care rules about their pregnant or parenting teen's **rights regarding education**, including advocating with school personnel.
- Knows and understands the caregiver's role in helping parenting adolescents **develop attachment and maintain a family bond** with the youth.
- Knows how to **model and teach parenting skills** in infant/youth care, discipline, and youth safety to adolescent parents in caregiving homes.
- Knows how to use **problem-solving and mediation strategies** to help an adolescent parent develop good relations with the other parent.
- Is able to support an adolescent's **independence in caring for the baby or youth**, while modeling and mentoring appropriate caregiving skills.

Supporting Crossover Youth

- Knows and understands the special needs of young adults who have a history of juvenile justice involvement, violence, and/or gang involvement.
- Knows how to help the youth keep track of appointment, court dates in addition to keeping records of the contact information for the youth's lawyers, probation officers etc.
- Is able to identify and acknowledges the youth's anxieties and worries about Court outcomes. Provides continuing emotional support regardless of outcomes.
- Knows how to help the youth prepare for court dates/events both concretely (clothing, appearance etc.) and with pro-societal behaviors (attitude, manners, etc.)
- Know how to assist a youth in evaluating how services can support their growth to independence using a probation specific scenario.
- Knows how to develop a plan that supports pro-societal behavior and increasing independence over their extended time in foster care.
- Is able to communicate to youth regarding the consequences of high risk behaviors (e.g. drinking, drug use, failing to pay financial obligations, sexual behavior, gang involvement, and possible criminal behavior.
- Is able to develop a plan to continue the youths' progress in attaining pro-societal behavior.
- Knows how to support the growth in the youth's probation officer relationship to one of consultation.
- Knows and understands the unique needs of youth coming from the foster care/juvenile justice experience.
- Knows and understands how the juvenile and adult court systems work.
- Is able to advocate for crossover youth to continue to receive foster care benefits, when needed.

3. SYSTEMS CHANGE GOALS

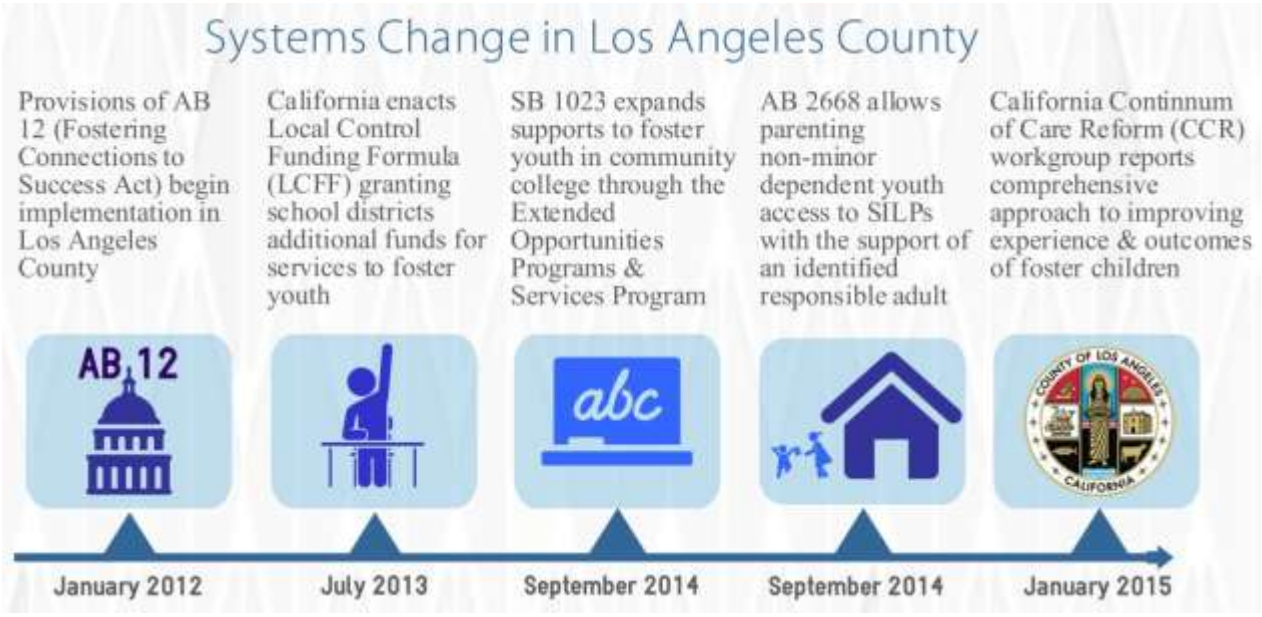
3.1 Policy and Systems Reform

As part of the FYSI plan, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation chose to fund grantees in LAC and NYC for several reasons, one of which was readiness for policy and system reform. This section provides an update on key changes in each jurisdiction with regard to policy and systems reform and the implications for each on FYSI goals and outcomes.

3.1.1 Policy and Systems Reform in LAC

One of the most important recent changes in child welfare policy in California was the state's adoption of the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, which among other provisions amends Title IV-E to extend the age of federal foster care reimbursement from age 18 to 21. California opted into the program through the 2010 California Fostering Connections to Success Act (AB12) and the state began implementation of the law's provisions in January 2012. Between 2012 and 2014, there was a large increase in the number of youth who opted to stay in foster care beyond 18, from 2,448 to 5,941 (Kelly, 2014); many of these youth are in kin placements. In 2015, advocates and legislators have taken steps to address issues with implementation or gaps in eligibility. Bills are currently being considered for issues including extending foster care to those youth who had been inadvertently excluded.

Figure 3.1. Timeline of Recent Systems Change in Los Angeles County



During year two of the FYSI, child welfare system governance in LAC experienced several important changes. In June 2014, the Board of Supervisors voted to create a transition team to guide the development of the new Office of Child Protection (OCP) and hire an interim director (Fostering Media Connections, 2015; Loudenback, 2015; Renick, 2015). The team met until March 2015, at which time they hired Fesia Davenport, the former chief deputy director of DCFS, as the new interim director of OCP (Loudenback, 2015).

Partly in response AB12 (e.g., the number of youth remaining in relative care placements), in September 2014 the county opted into state funding to increase payments to relative foster caregivers. Prior to June 2014, California was the last state in the U.S. to pay non-relative caregivers more than kin caregivers. In Los Angeles, this meant that many relative caregivers received less than half the financial support of non-kin caregivers. In June 2014, Governor Jerry Brown passed the 2014-2015 California state budget[11], which included $30 million for counties to pay kin caregivers equally to non-kin caregivers. In response, the county opted into the Approved Relative Caregiver Funding Option program, which began in January 2015. These changes will increase the financial resources available to kin caregivers, many of whom are providing care for TAY.

[11] http://kids-alliance.org/galleries/funding-for-foster-children-in-relative-care-in-ca-budget/

Efforts to close gaps in access to AB 12 services also took place this year. In particular, advocates worked with Assembly Member Quirk-Silva to sponsor AB 2454[12]. This bill, which passed in August 2014, addresses the needs of youth who had originally exited the dependency system through legal guardianship or adoption before 18, but for whom these arrangements failed after turning 18. The bill allows these youth to reenter foster care as non-minor dependents under AB 12.

In addition, a number of policy and systems changes occurred to improve educational outcomes among current and former foster youth. In particular, advocates worked to ensure that provisions of California's new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) are implemented effectively for the special target subpopulation of foster youth in the state's school districts. In particular, advocates worked to:

- Create consistency and alignment between populations served by the LCFF and the state's Foster Youth Services program
- Create a clearer definition of foster youth in the state's education code
- Introduce legislation (with Assembly member Mark Stone) to ensure that youth receive partial high school credit when they transfer schools
- Highlight interventions for foster youth in various school districts
- Evaluate foster youth performance through the Academic Performance Index (API) and the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)

Also in the area of education, SB 1023 expands supports to foster youth at community college campuses through the Extended Opportunities Programs and Services Program (EOPS), which was approved by Governor Brown in September 2014. This legislation expands resources such as mental health support, tutoring, housing assistance, and an allowance for books to former foster youth. While the proposal was not included in the FY 2014-2015 state budget, it was eventually funded at $15 million for FY2015-2016 (Akhter, 2015). In addition, AB 595 was amended to ensure that former foster youth have priority enrollment in community colleges.

Work on other important policy reforms, such as the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) progressed this year. The California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) collaboration with other county departments and stakeholders, such as the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) resulted in completion of the CCR report[13]. This report made recommendations regarding child welfare rates, group care placements,

[12] http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140AB2454

[13] http://www.cdss.ca.gov/cdssweb/entres/pdf/CCR_LegislativeReport.pdf

and training for staff working with children and youth who have experienced trauma and abuse.

Further, with the passage of AB 388, the state is addressing excessive delinquency filings in group home settings for minor behaviors. In an effort to reduce crossover from the dependency to the delinquency system, this legislation allows for tracking of law enforcement calls from group homes and review of facilities with inappropriate or excessive use of law enforcement assistance (Youth Law Center, 2014). Advocates also pushed for a reduction in dependency attorney caseloads through a $33 million budget increase[14], and though there was support for the increase, this initiative was postponed until next year[15].

Efforts to prevent pregnancies and improve outcomes among pregnant and parenting foster youth included AB 2668, which, among other things, provides parenting non-minor dependents living in a Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) access to additional funding to support their child, with the support of an identified responsible adult under a "Shared Responsibility Plan" (We Are Ohana Foundation, 2014). In combination, the efforts described here demonstrate California's continued commitment to children and youth in the child welfare system, particularly TAY.

3.1.2 Policy and Systems Reform in NYC

During year two of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's FYSI, the child welfare system in NYC has heralded a number of new initiatives. The NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) has continued its focus on prioritizing prevention services with the need to move beyond safety and permanency planning to a broader framework that also emphasizes well-being (ACS, October 27, 2014a). As such, Commissioner Carrion hosted the first ACS Well-Being Conference in October 2014 to foster discussion and collaboration among key stakeholders and practitioners in child welfare (ACS, 2014). During the conference, Commissioner Carrion called on stakeholders to consider key questions facing the community in achieving well-being, realign systems to focus on outcomes, improve data collection and analysis, and engage providers and foster families in a new well-being model. Because well-being is an outcome targeted towards child-welfare involved youth of all ages, including TAY, we might expect improvements in well-being in TAY as a result of these changes. In addition, ACS introduced a new safety campaign, *New York City Kids are Our Kids,* addressing the need to tackle issues

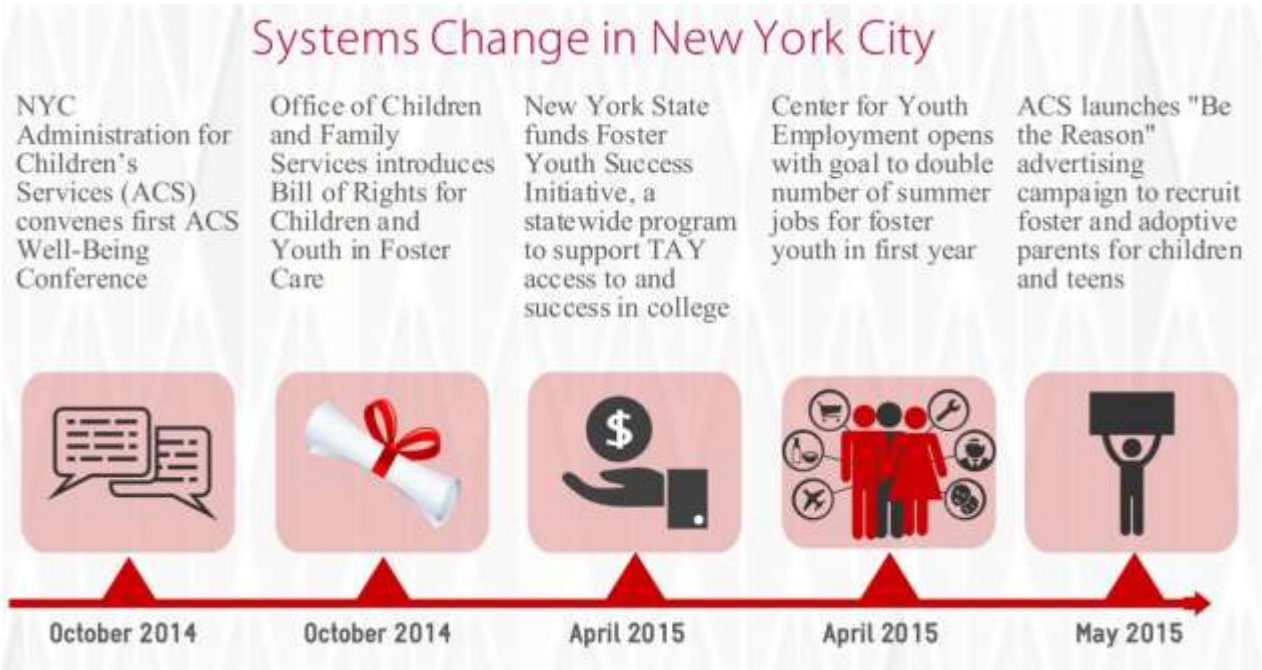
[14] http://ridley-thomas.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/33-1M-for-foster-children-legal-representation-FINAL-Final-3.pdf

[15] http://www.childrennow.org/files/3214/2567/6747/CN-Budget-Analysis-Jan2015.pdf

collaboratively, with communities and families seen as critical assets (ACS, October 27, 2014b).

ACS has also recently placed special emphasis on collaborating with the juvenile justice system. In October 2014, ACS and NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) announced the implementation of an intra-city agreement to improve mental health services for youth in the juvenile justice system (ACS, October 31, 2014). As an important step in ACS' efforts to enhance mental health services for youth in the juvenile justice system, Bellevue Hospital will now provide psychiatric and psychological care to youth in secure and non-secure detention. Furthermore, ACS was the recipient of two federal grants totaling $3.75 million (ACS, October 8, 2014). The first is a 2-year grant from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to implement a Juvenile Reentry Demonstration Program, with the aim of reducing recidivism among justice involved youth. For the second grant, ACS will partner with the non-profit, Center for Court Innovation, to develop a strengths-based community reentry and continuum of aftercare services for youth returning home from detention. Finally, ACS, in partnership with Montefiore Medical Center, received a 5-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to build a regional partnership program to improve child welfare outcomes among substance abusing families. As TAY are represented in many of the populations targeted for these programs and services, it is expected that many TAY will benefit directly from them.

Figure 3.2. Timeline of Recent Systems Change in New York City



January 2015 brought a monumental event for NYC youth in foster care as NYC's Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) introduced a 'Bill of Rights' for Children and Youth in Foster Care by explicitly listing their rights to safe, nurturing, and healthy environments (New York State Office of Children and Family Services, 2015). This document gives foster youth, including TAY, the ability to advocate for their own needs, including their own permanency goals.

In yet another initiative focused on foster parents and youth, ACS initiated Home Away from Home, an approach to re-designing NYC's Recruitment, Retention & Support of Foster and Adoptive Parents. Designed using outside consultants, during its early stages, this project will build on the analyses ACS has been conducting as part of the "No Time to Wait" project, which is exploring adoption and permanency outcomes. Home Away from Home will be focused on establishing a competent pool of family caregivers (as opposed to group homes) designed to help ACS achieve a wide variety of goals related to foster home caregivers. In May 2015, ACS also launched a city-wide advertising campaign called "Be the Reason" to recruit foster and adoptive parents from among a diverse audience of New Yorkers. Each ad features compelling messages about the impact of foster and adoptive parents on children's and teenagers' lives. The ads are appearing on subway cars and will be placed in select newspapers. Results from these projects may set ACS in new directions regarding caregiver outcomes and, in doing so, improve outcomes for TAY.

Two other major events occurred in May 2015. In the first, Mayor de Blasio announced the creation of the Center for Youth Employment[16], which will coordinate and expand efforts to connect NYC's young people to opportunities for career exposure, summer jobs, skill-building programs, and supportive mentors. The Center, supported by an initial raise of $3.2 million from the city's business and philanthropic community, aims to substantially increase employer engagement and partnership opportunities with a goal of connecting 100,000 young New Yorkers ages 14 – 24 to summer jobs, mentorships, and internships each year by 2020; this includes an immediate goal for 2015 to double the number of summer jobs for NYC's most vulnerable youth – those in shelters or foster care – to 2,000.

Equally exciting is the Foster Youth College Success Initiative,[17] which allocates $1.5 million to the 2015-2016 New York State budget to provide support for youth in foster care in their efforts to succeed in college. This support will fill funding gaps often faced by TAY that disrupt their schooling, forcing them to drop out of school for a semester or

[16] http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/289-15

[17] http://www.fysany.org/state-budget-includes-15-million-fostering-youth-success-initiative

altogether. It will also provide critical supports, such as housing during breaks, financial aid counseling, and other related services. By removing barriers to success, the State of New York hopes to increase the college graduation rate of foster care youth.

Finally, in yet another major step towards improving educational outcomes for TAY, in April 2015 the City University's CUNY Start program received a four-year $2.5 million grant to serve young people coming out of foster care who have remedial needs and want to pursue associate degrees at CUNY. As part of the grant, CUNY Start will establish strategic partnerships with foster care agencies and ACS to create a pipeline for 325 TAY into and through CUNY Start and the University's acclaimed Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP).

3.2 Systems Change through Cross-Sector Coordination: FYSI Social Network Analysis

The FYSI was designed under the assumption that system reform is a critical part of improving outcomes for TAY. For example, increasing collaboration and building infrastructure for data and referral sharing across key TAY serving systems— child welfare, juvenile justice, education, and health—are key steps toward improving the means by which TAY are identified, referred for services, and treated. To this end, one of FYSI's system improvement goals is to create and strengthen cross-sector coordinated efforts. In Year 1, the evaluation team assessed this goal via grantee interviews. Interview findings confirmed that grantees were experiencing some level of success with this goal.

For this report, the evaluation team again examined this issue (i.e., what changes in collaboration and systems alignment have occurred in those LAC/NYC grantees serving TAY?), but in a more quantitative way, through social network analysis (SNA). The analysis was designed to assess the "reach" of the FYSI in building new and strengthening existing relationships between grantees and non-grantee organizations and agencies.

Social network analysis is used to analyze networks of relationships of any type (e.g., friendships, collaborations) and at any level (e.g., individual, organizational). It has two main purposes (or steps): (1) to create meaningful, data-based graphic representations of networks; and (2) to quantitatively describe and assess networks. The first step was undertaken in the spring of 2015. The step one findings are presented in the Results section, below. The second step will be conducted in fall 2015, with findings presented in a subsequent report.

3.2.1 SNA Methods

In collaboration with a Westat social network analyst, the evaluation team developed the Grantee Social Network Analysis Survey (Appendix 3) to measure the relationships grantees have created or strengthened through their involvement with the FYSI. The survey was designed to capture the nature and scope of grantees relationships with up to five organizations. Specifically, grantees were asked to identify up to five organizational partners that their institution collaborated with most often to meet the goals of their FYSI grant. They were then asked to answer seven questions about each organization to further define the nature of their relationship with each organization. Twenty-six of the 30 grantees invited to complete the survey did so, returning completed surveys via email.

3.2.2 SNA Results

The FYSI Network

To begin to understand the FYSI network, we refer to Figure 3.3, which displays the network without labels or coding. Based on this figure only, we can conclude a few important points about the FYSI network:

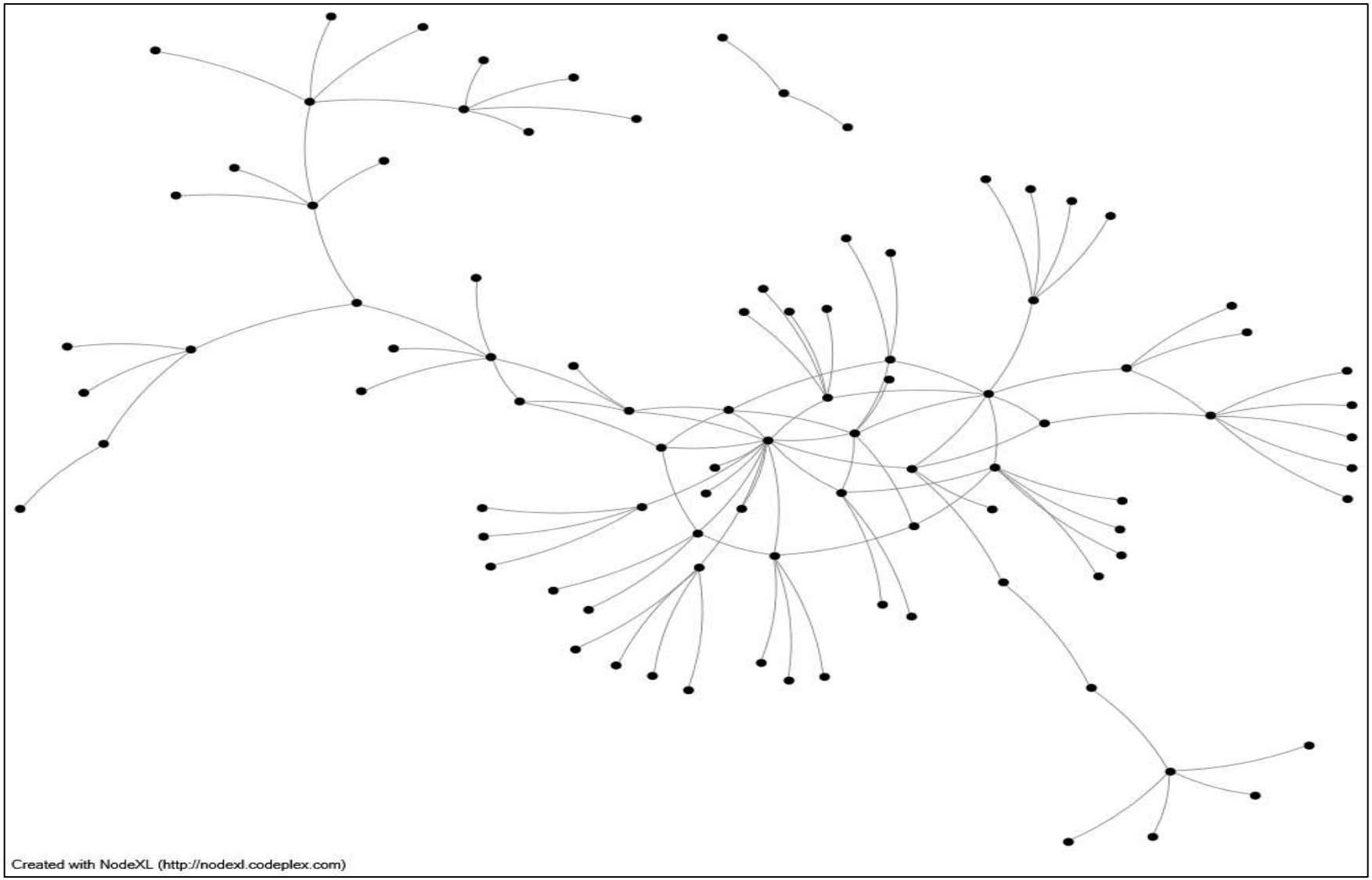
- First, organizations are clearly working together in a large, interconnected, **network of collaborative relationships**.

- Second, the network is **not completely connected** – there is at least one very small group of organizations working together apart from the rest of the network, as shown by the three "dots" at the top of the network.

- Third, there appears to be a **large, central core to the network**, whereby a sub-set of organizations are interconnected (see the set of interconnected dots in the middle of the network). This core could be key to facilitating more connections between it and those organizations on the periphery of the network.

- Finally, there are several organizations acting as **"gatekeepers."** These are the organizations that branch out from the "core" and link the other parts of the network to the larger network. In SNA, gatekeepers serve as **intermediaries or bridges** between portions of the network and play an important role in maintaining the network structure; without them, the network falls apart.

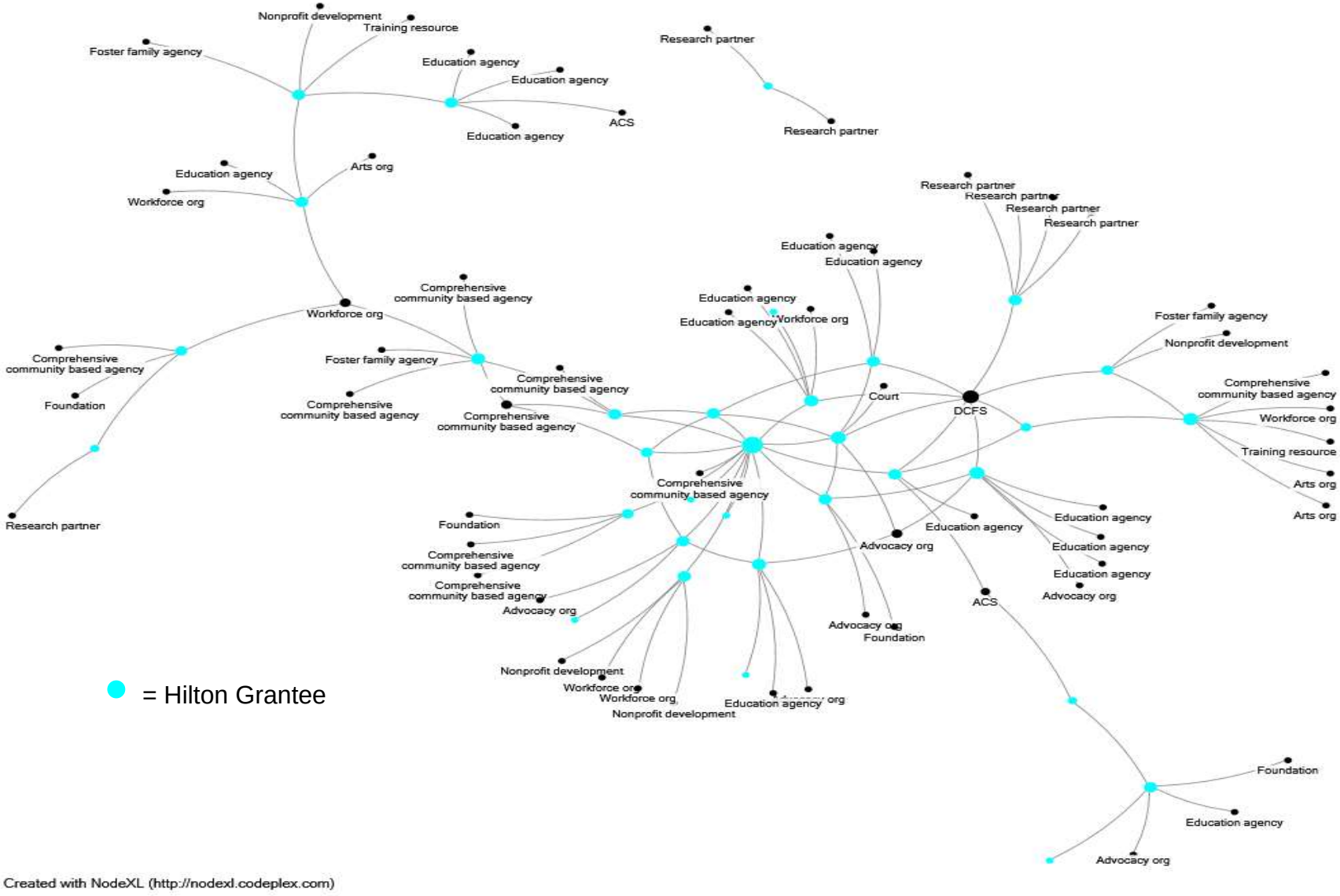
Figure 3.3. The FYSI Network



To protect the anonymity of the organizations in the network, the evaluation team created 14 organizational categories, and then coded grantee and partner organizations accordingly. Figure 3.4 shows the network with organizational categories.

Adding this information to the graph reveals additional information about the network. First, notice the size of the dots. The larger dots are indicative of those organizations with more connections than those with smaller dots. Most of the larger dots are occupied by Foundation grantees. Next, note that the “core” of the network is predominantly made up of Foundation grantees. Finally, many of the gatekeepers in the network are also Foundation grantees. Taken together, this information illustrates the significant roles of grantees in the network. While this is to be expected, to some extent, given the grantees are the ones that completed the survey, the fact that so many grantees identified other grantees as key partners highlights their importance to each other.

Figure 3.4. The FYSI Network (coded by organization type)



FYSI Network over Time

One survey question asked respondents to indicate if their organization had worked with identified partner agencies before the FYSI began. Responses to this question create a retrospective baseline network of connections. That is, connections can be examined both before and after an agency's involvement with FYSI.

Figure 3.5 (before) and 3.5a (after) graphically display organizational connections both before and after the FYSI was implemented. Comparing the two figures reveals that the overall number of partner organizations and connections between and among them increased after FYSI implementation. More importantly, prior to the FYSI, there are more small groups of organizations that are separated from the larger network. This information graphically displays the role the FYSI has played in forging connections between grantee and non-grantee agencies and organizations over time.

Figure 3.5. Connections before FYSI Implementation

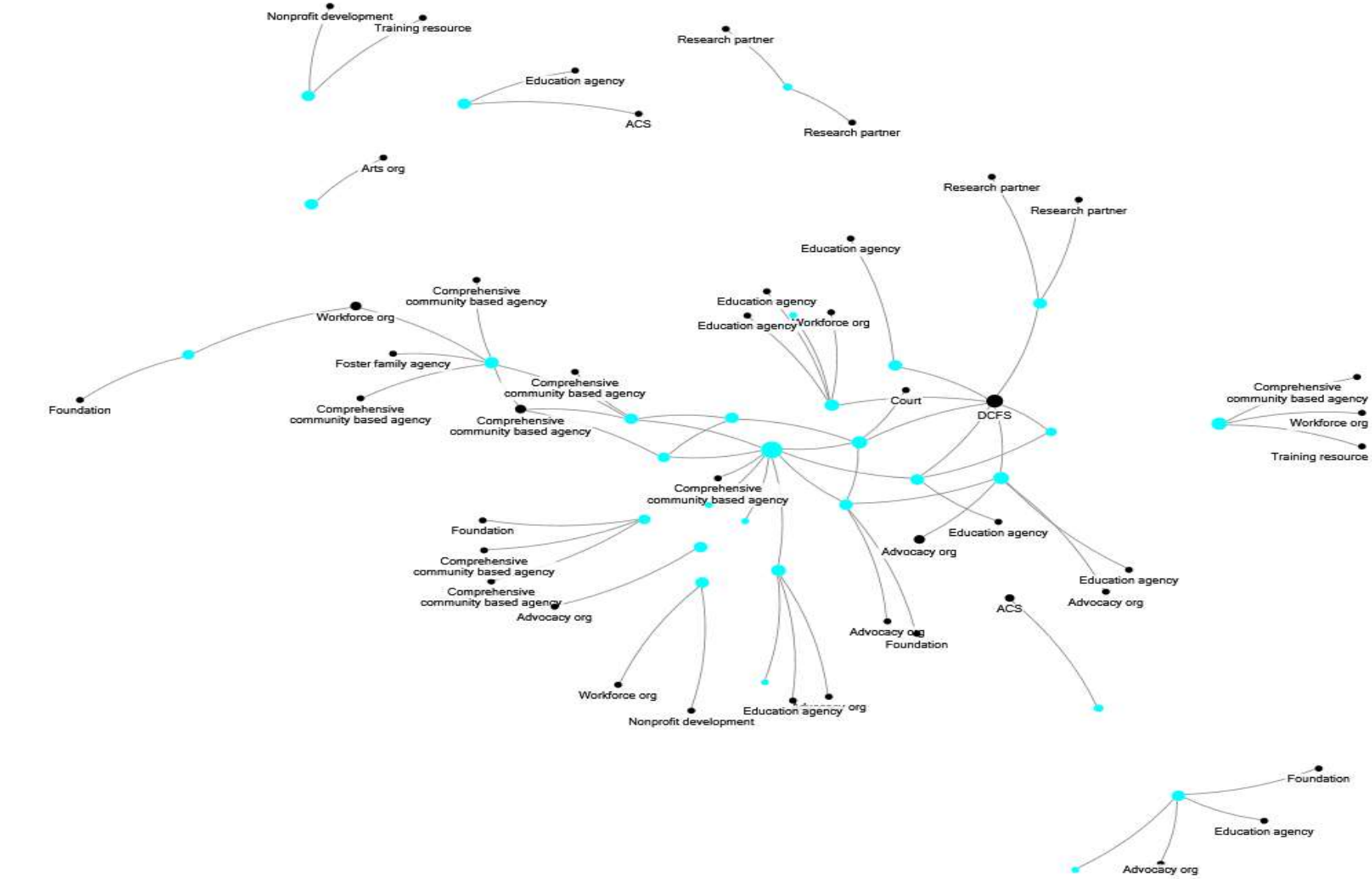
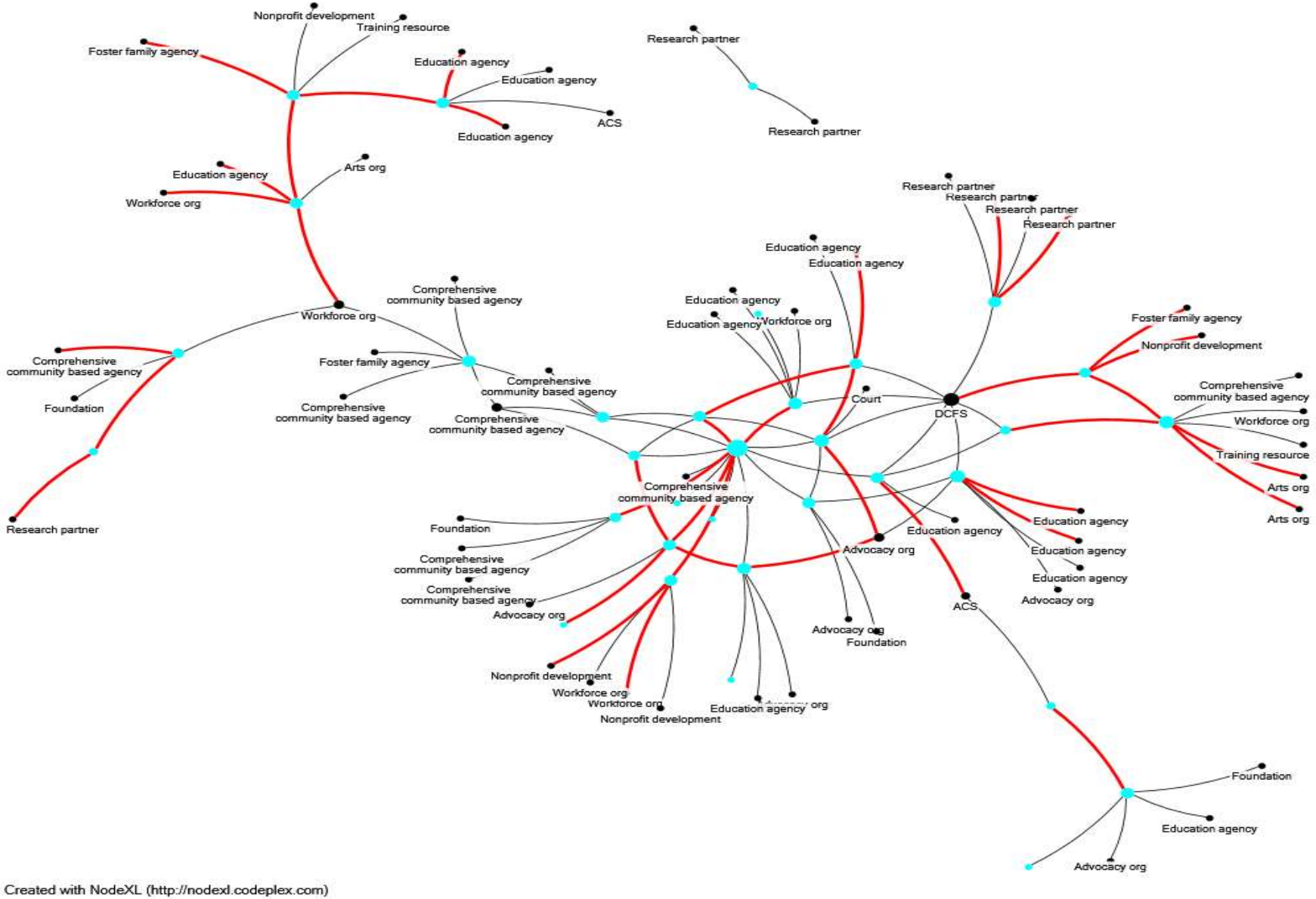


Figure 3.5a. Connections after FYSI Implementation



The Network by Region

As noted previously, FYSI grantees are primarily located in LAC or NYC, although 5 grantees operate in both locales. Figure 3.6 shows organizations' by geography and color[18]. As shown, the core of the network comprises mostly LAC grantees.

In Figures 3.7 and 3.8, the overall network has been disaggregated based on geographic location to create two networks: one for LAC and another for NYC (dual geography organizations appear in both graphs). The LAC network shows that, overall, there are more connections among LAC organizations, particularly Foundation grantees; these connections frequently overlap to create a tight core of organizations. On the other hand, the NYC network comprises five separate groups of organizations of varying size. This finding suggests that LAC and NYC grantees are connected in different ways to each other and identified partner agencies. The next step in the SNA is expected to help parse out some of the reasons for these differences.

[18] Blue indicates NYC organizations; orange shows LAC organizations; and purple indicates the "dual geography" organizations.

Figure 3.6. FYSI by Geography

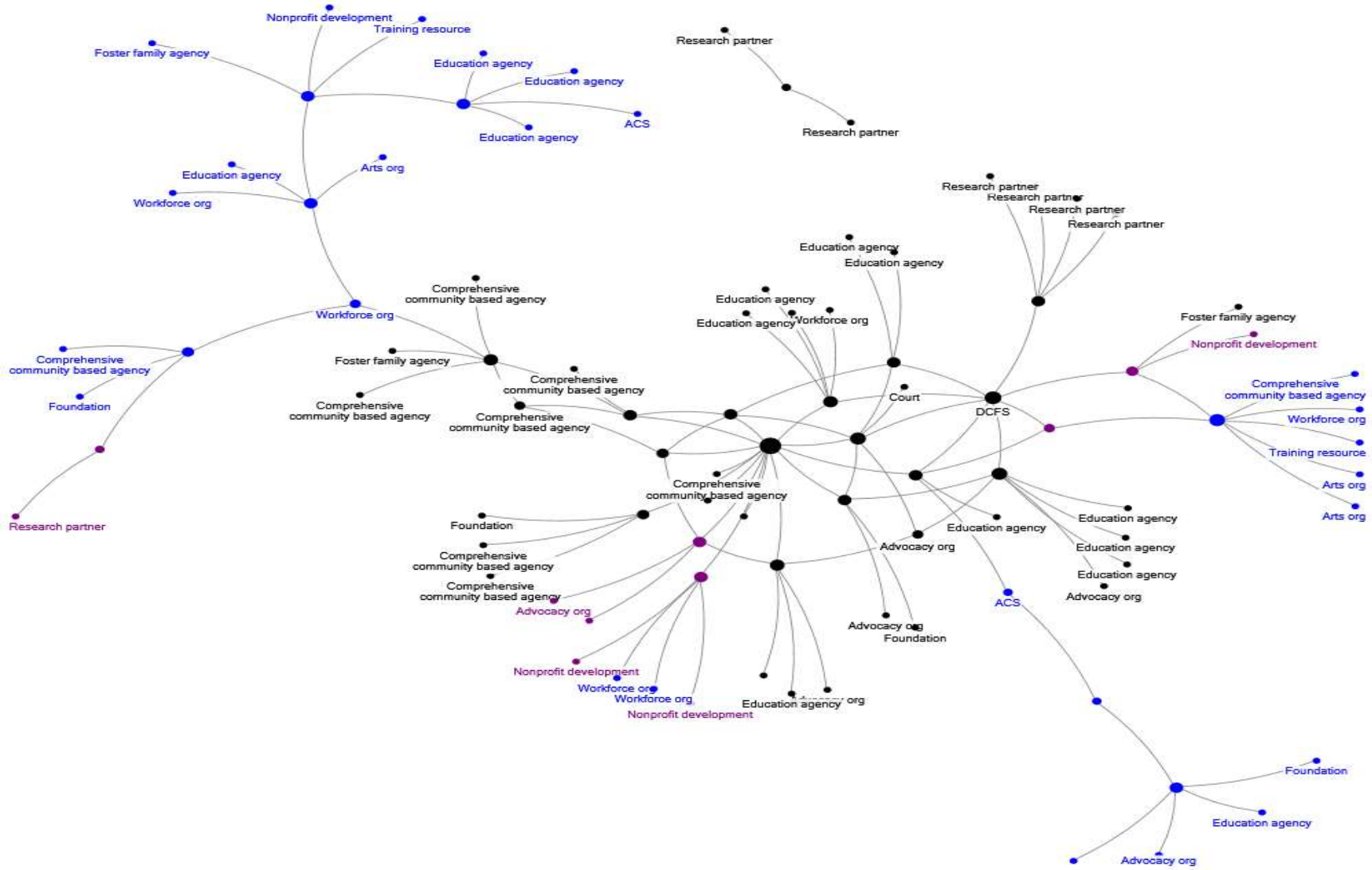


Figure 3.7. Los Angeles Network

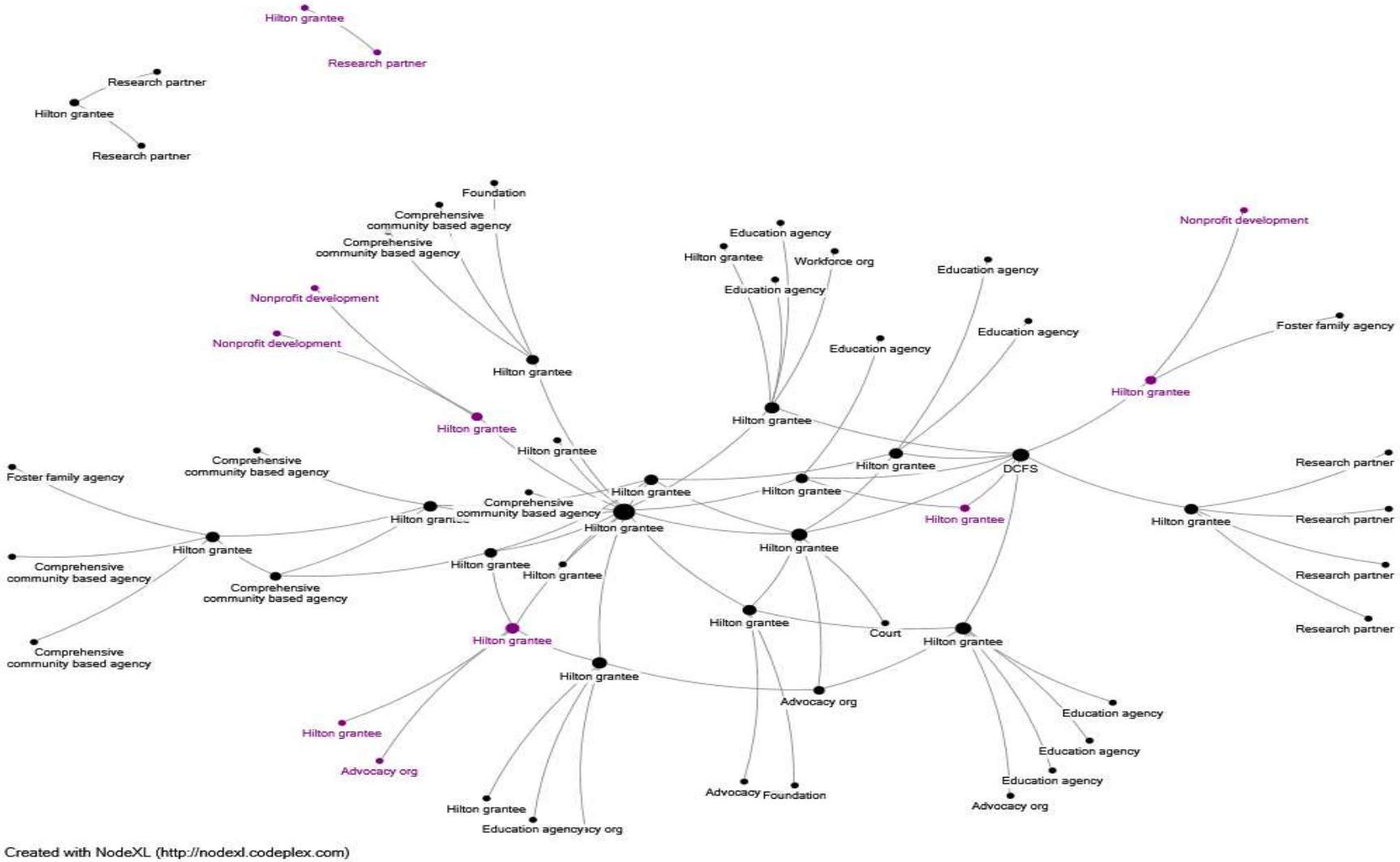
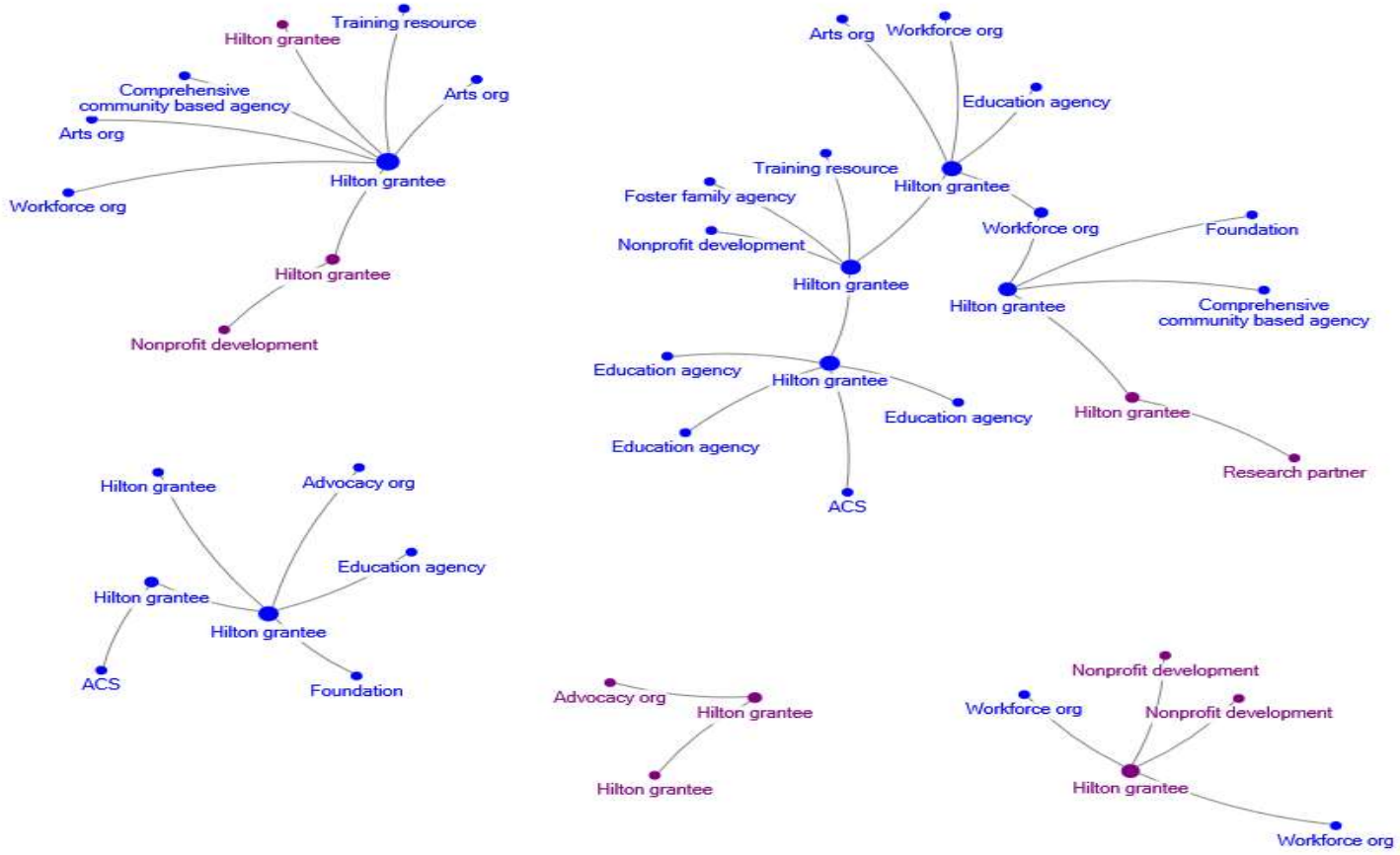


Figure 3.8. New York Network



Created with NodeXL (http://nodexl.codeplex.com)

Taken together, these network graphs demonstrate connectivity and collaboration between Foundation grantees, and between grantees and partner organizations. The structure of the network suggests a centralized core (located in LA) with connections to other organizations (located in NY), bridged via “gatekeepers.” This structure may serve as the foundation from which new and expanding connections are made, particularly with regard to the “core” organizations. These core organizations may be well-positioned to create additional connections to other parts of the network. This assumption, as well as the others made here, will be explored more fully in the second step of the SNA, scheduled to take place in fall 2015. At that time, such quantitative metrics as density (e.g., overall number of connections), centrality (e.g., which organizations are most “central” to the network), and subgroup characteristics (e.g., how connections are clustered) will tell us more about the functional aspects of the network.

4. FUNDING AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING GOALS

4.1 The 2015 Grantee Data Collection Form (GDCF)

The Grantee Data Collection Form (GDCF) gathers data on funding and dissemination activities for a one year period, from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015. As one of several evaluative tools, the GDCF was redesigned in 2015 to include leveraged funding and to expand on dissemination activities in five areas: 1) presentations, 2) publications in the press, print or online, 3) media citations of Foundation-related work, 4) multimedia products developed, and 5) curricula, created or revised. Data collected with this instrument represents an attempt to both quantify and catalog activities and outputs that may be overlooked and not captured elsewhere.

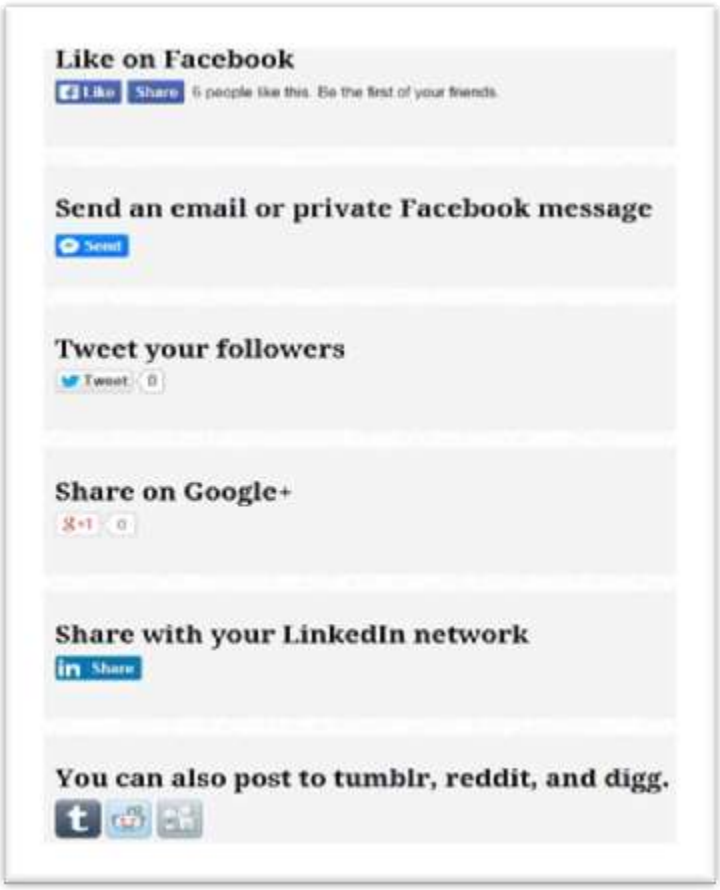
The inclusion of leveraged funding data in the GDCF provides the Foundation with a quantitative measure by which to assess the impact of FYSI funding on the supported organizations. Data on dissemination activities, first collected in 2014, help to illustrate a broad picture of how Foundation grantees communicate, interact, advocate, and ultimately tell their stories. Both leveraged funding and dissemination activities reflect the reach and impact of Foundation support to FYSI grantees, and both funding and dissemination can be seen as indicators of grantee efforts to strengthen collaboration across systems.

4.2 Sharing Knowledge and Strengthening Networks: Dissemination Activities

Influencing others, promoting systems collaboration, and encouraging alignment requires the generation and sharing of ideas, knowledge, and experience through a variety of forms and avenues. Relationships are the foundation of any collaborative effort, and grantees recognize that an important part of their work is to advocate and to engage with others, actively moving within a network of interconnected systems. No one who works with TAY works alone.

All Foundation grantees are involved in a variety of dissemination activities. These activities can range from authoring a peer-reviewed research article to spontaneous "tweeting" on Twitter. In fact, the types and forms of information disseminated are as numerous and varied as the avenues through which information is passed or exchanged. In 2014, when the evaluation team first attempted to gauge the level of information dissemination among grantees, we focused on counts and, where appropriate, the audience composition.

The 2015 GDCF attempted, for the first time, to collect titles of presentations, publications, multimedia products, and curricula, as well media citations. These supplements to raw counts have resulted in a rich catalog of information, providing insights into dissemination activities that give new meaning to numbers. Notably, Foundation grantees are using innovative approaches to dissemination, routinely employing new and emerging media to communicate their missions and stories.



e-Reach

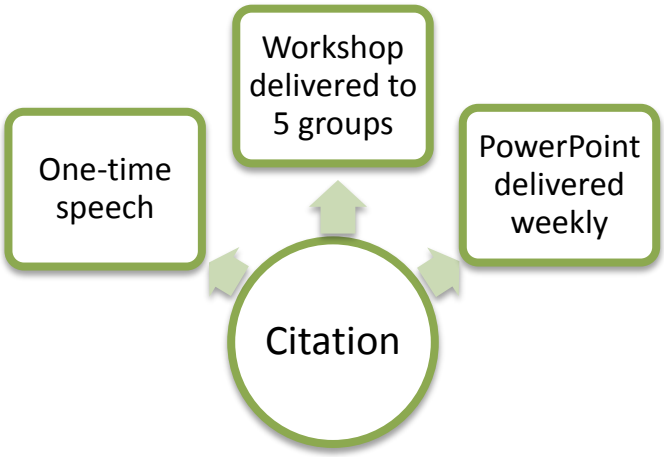
It is an understatement to say the internet has revolutionized the way the world communicates, and this is no less true for grantees and the network of systems within which they interact. The ease with which a report or op-ed or entire manual can be posted and viewed online, then downloaded, transferred electronically or shared – all by a simple click of a button - makes it all but impossible to track and calculate the reach and viewership of a given publication or online post. Few users have attempted that calculus and fewer still have the tools or knowledge to do so. Consequently, we are often left with an incomplete picture of a publication's exposure.

4.2.1 Presentations

Presentation was defined *to "include conferences, teleconferences, webinars, or webcasts related to [Foundation] funding."* Grantees further interpreted presentation to include workshops, seminars, keynote addresses, and participation on panels and roundtables.

All grantees reported at least one presentation related to their Foundation funding within the one-year reporting period for a **total of 258 presentations**. Responses ranged from one presentation (for four grantees) to a high of 48, with an average of 9.9 presentations reported.

A closer look at presentation titles cited by grantees reveals the challenge in interpreting these numbers or comparing one grantee against another. One citation may represent a single presentation – such as a keynote speech – presented once at one event, or it may represent a cluster of presentations – such as a workshop – given at a single event, or it may represent a single prepared presentation given at more than one event or occasion. In one entry cited by the Alliance for Children's Rights, "Know Your Rights" was described as 54 legal workshops/ presentations presented to 785 youth. Similarly, the Coalition for Responsible Community Development created a PowerPoint presentation "to showcase the Foundation's program and to highlight the organization's strengths in supporting foster youth's academic, college, and career pathways." The PowerPoint was shown when the CRCD hosted the Opportunity Youth Collaborative meeting, and continues to be presented weekly during orientations and when the youth advocate recruits for the program.



Audience composition. The audience composition for the presentations cited (see graphic, below) displays the reach of the grantees as they interact and engage with a wide spectrum of public and private sector stakeholders and potential supporters. Reported audience composition ranged from the nonprofit sector to every level of government and included TAY, formerly incarcerated youth, foster parents, adoptive parents, caregivers, members of the US Congress, the White House, educators, philanthropists, frontline staff, policymakers, court officers, lawmakers, the general public, employment counselors, advocates, funders, foundation heads, investors, backbone agencies,

attorneys, researchers, program administrators and providers. The collective size of the audience for the presentations cited is, conservatively, well over 8,000 people.

4.2.2 New Publications

Publications were defined to *"include white papers, bulletins, issue briefs, pamphlets, and peer-to-peer reviewed articles that reference activities related to your [Foundation] funding."* Grantees further interpreted publications to include manuals, annual reports, flyers, blog postings and, in one instance, a video.

A total of 20 grantees, or 76.9%, reported one or more new publications in press, print, or posted online for the reporting period for a **total of 73 new publications**. Among those reporting at least one new publication, 15 grantees reported between 1-4 publications produced, and five reported 5 or more, with one grantee reporting 16 publications.

4.2.3 Foundation-related work cited in media

Media was defined to *"include news article, websites, Facebook, Twitter, journal articles, and other publications."* Grantees further interpreted media to include the radio, television, press releases, and email "blasts."

Eighteen grantees, or 69.2% of grantees, reported 1 or more times Foundation-related work was cited in the media, with a **total of 692 media citations**. Among those reporting one or more, half were able to list (the maximum requested) three citations.

4.2.4 Multimedia products developed

Multimedia products were defined to *"include podcasts and videos related to your Foundation funding."* Grantees further interpreted multimedia products to include apps and website animation.

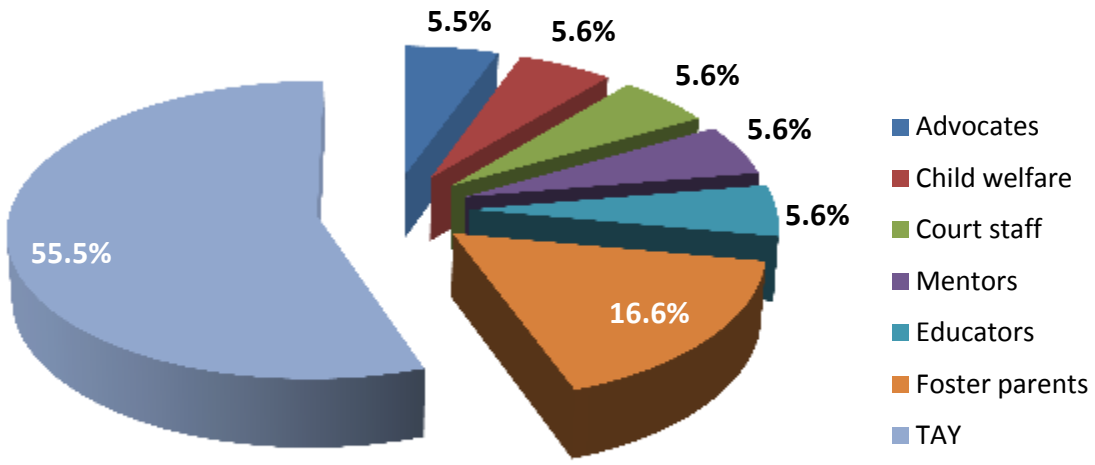
A total of 11 grantees, or 42.3%, reported **87 multimedia products** developed within the data collection period.

4.2.5 Curricula, created or revised

A **curriculum** was defined as *"a specialized course of study, either print or electronic."*

Seventeen grantees, or 65.3%, reported a total of **78 curricula** created or revised for the reporting period. Audience composition reported by grantees divided into seven categories: TAY, foster parents, child welfare, court staff, mentors, educators, and advocates. TAY accounted for 55.5% of the new and revised curricula audience.

Figure 4.1 Audience Composition for Curricula Development



4.3 Research Grantees

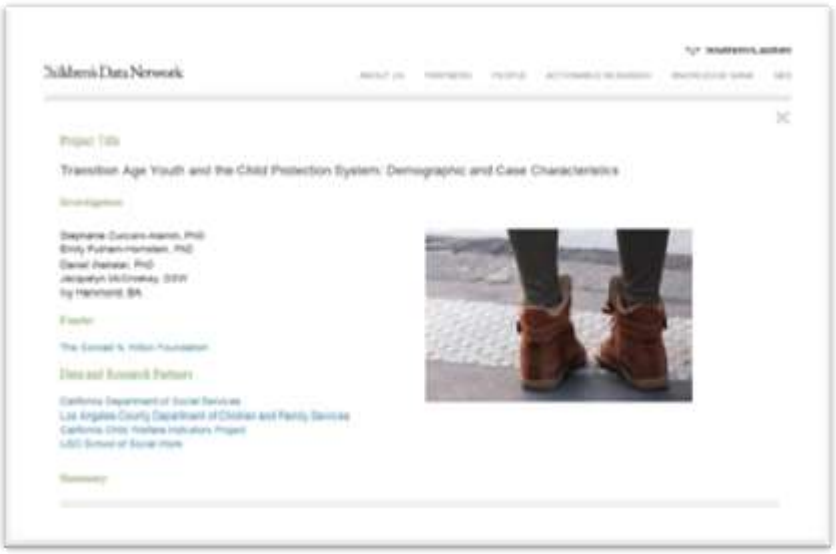
FYSI research grantee numbers for the reporting period show robust dissemination of their work with respect to presentations, publications, and Foundation-related citations in the media. The three research grantees reported a total of **44 presentations, 17 publications, and 457 citations in the media**.

Importantly, current research grantees presented their work before relevant audiences of influential stakeholders, including Federal and state officials, public and private child welfare providers, advocacy leaders, doctors, researchers and academics.

At the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration, Dr. Mark Courtney reported an active year, with nine presentations supporting eight publications of his Foundation-related project, CalYOUTH. Findings for CalYOUTH were disseminated in December 2014 to policymaker, philanthropy, media, and practitioner communities in collaboration with *i.e*. communications, LLC and on behalf of the California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership. This collaboration included the development of a study brief with key findings from the baseline youth survey posted on the Co-Investment Partnership's website, as well as a press release at the time that the initial youth survey findings were released. Other reports were posted on the website of Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, and dovetailed with numerous presentations to various audiences.

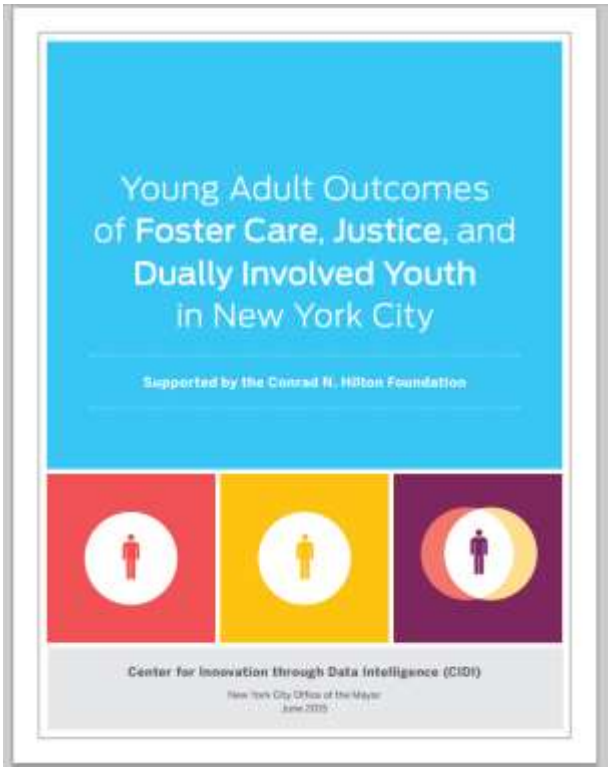
Dr. Courtney estimated 450 Foundation-related citations in the media for the reporting period.

In Los Angeles, Dr. Emily Putnam-Hornstein at the University of Southern California reported 30 presentations and five publications related to her Foundation-supported work at the Children's Data Network. Reports for the period include: Transition Age Youth and the Child Protection System: Demographic and Case Characteristics, Los Angeles; Cuccaro-Alamin, et al. (2015); and A population-based, longitudinal examination of intergenerational maltreatment among teen mothers. *American Journal of Epidemiology,* Putnam-Hornstein E, Cederbaum JA, King B, Lane AL, & Trickett P. (2015).



At the Seattle Children's Hospital, Dr. Kym R. Ahrens is developing the Heart-to-Heart curriculum: a training for foster caregivers to reduce teen pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections in foster youth. Plans for Heart-to-Heart have been presented, in Los Angeles, to members of the Los Angeles County Department of Child and Family Services Reproductive Health Workgroup (March 2014); via teleconference, to the Foster/Kinship Continuing Education Workgroup (September 2014); and in Dobbs Ferry, NY, to the Children's Village staff, (June 2015). She plans to pilot the curriculum with foster caregivers in New York and Los Angeles.

Research conducted by a past grantee, the Center for Innovation and Data Intelligence (CIDI), New York City Office of the Mayor, is initiating systems change. New York City's Administration for Children and Families issued two requests for proposals (RFPs) that incorporated CIDI's findings. The first RFP focuses on mental health services for detained youth, and the second focuses on services for pregnant and parenting youth and their children. The services aim to reduce risk factors documented in CIDI's research.



CIDI's Dr. Maryanne Schretzman and her staff are sharing findings from the Foundation funded report, Young Adult Outcomes of Foster Care, Justice, and Dually Involved Youth in New York City at two upcoming events. In September, they will participate in the Transition Age Youth Forum, convened by CSH, an organization focused on supportive housing solutions. CIDI's presentation will focus on the report's shelter utilization data. In November, Dr. Schretzman will present, "Moving Beyond Silos: A Holistic Perspective of Vulnerable Youth Outcomes Using Administrative Data," as part of a panel at the Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management conference. CIDI also plans to analyze additional data documenting the use of supportive housing by the report's target population. Outcomes from the new analyses will be shared with key stakeholders in the future.

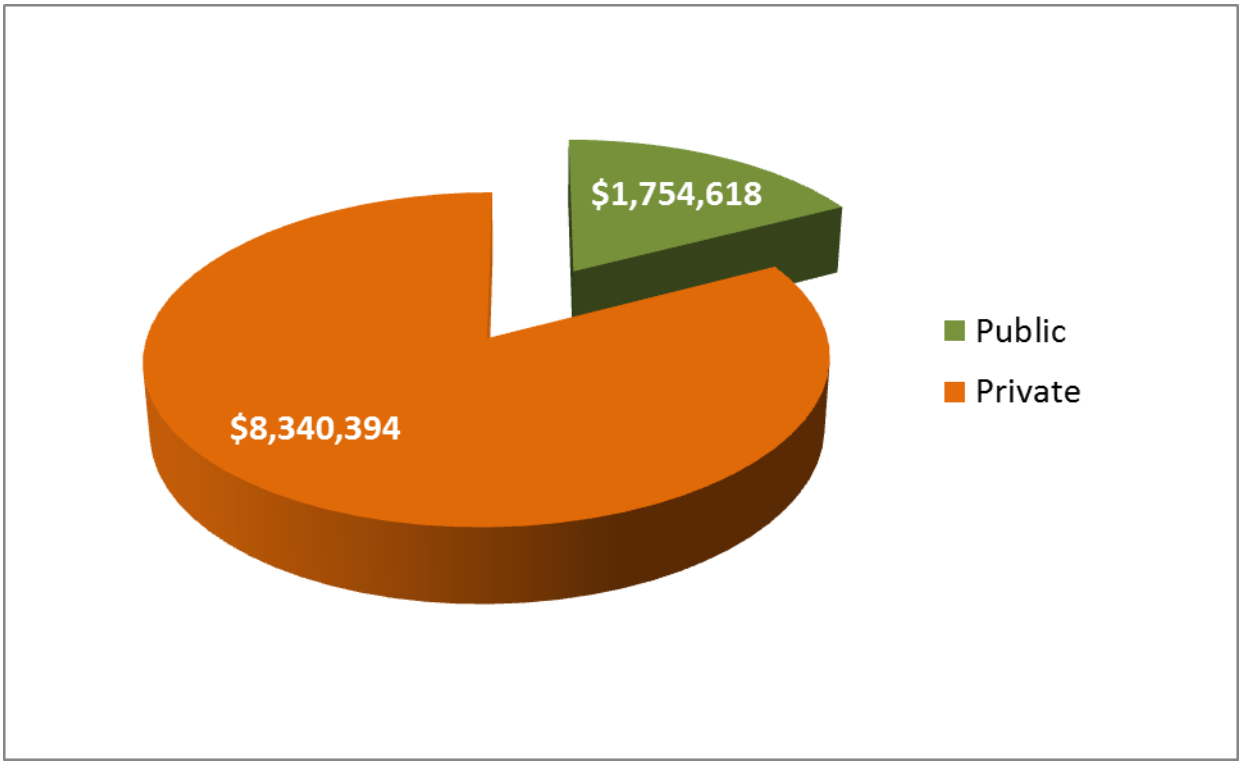
4.4 Progress on Goal to Leverage $20M in Private Funding

The impact of the FYSI can be measured in part by assessing the leveraged funds – private and public – which attach to FYSI-supported projects. Grantees were asked to list any leveraged funds, together with the source, for the reporting period and indicate the status as committed or received.

- Please list any committed or received funding (not projected) between April 1, 2014 – March 31, 2015 for your FYSI project.

Twenty-five grantees submitted details on private and public leveraged funding for the period, with a total of $10,095,012 in private funds both committed and received, from 66 unique funding sources. In the previous year, grantees reported leveraging $12.9 million in private funds. Since the start of FYSI, grantees have reported $21,176,751 in leveraged funding from private sources and $7,808,089 from public sources.

Figure 4.2. Public and Private Leveraged Funds, April 1, 2014 – March 31, 2015



5. CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Foster Youth Strategic Initiative is not a program evaluation; that is, it is not designed to measure program outcomes at the grantee level. Rather, it is focused on sharing learnings regarding the field and how the strategy has influenced change in key youth, systems change, and knowledge and funding goals.

This report covers evaluation activities from January through May 2015. Specifically, it covers findings from (1) grantee progress reports and data collection forms, (2) caregiver agency personnel interviews, and (3) the social network analysis survey. It also includes progress to date on the development of a set of caregiver competencies.

As noted, the evaluation is not focused on assessing program outcomes at the grantee level. Yet, it is important to document grantee achievements towards *their own* identified goals and objectives as their work is impacting TAY in LAC and NYC. Based on progress reports, which grantees complete and submit as part of the evaluation, grantees continue to make progress towards *their* stated goals and objectives, with all on track to meet them by the time the initiative ends, if they haven't already. Specifically,

- **TAY self-sufficiency grantees** have directly supported more than 14,000 youth with information, advocacy and services, with an emphasis on education and employment.
- **Systems change grantees** continue their efforts to initiate and support policies, systems alignment, and interagency collaboration to enhance services for TAY and caregivers. Grantees have conducted more than 100 trainings for almost 2500 individuals, and have held seven policy and community forums and

countless meetings to help various stakeholders understand and implement child welfare policies.

- **New knowledge grantees** continue to focus on building knowledge exchange and learning agendas and disseminating research findings. They have hosted meetings to share lessons learned and best practices, conducted surveys with caseworkers and TAY, analyzed data on foster youth characteristics and outcomes, and presented research findings to more than 1200 individuals representing a variety of audiences (e.g., attorneys, social workers, caregivers, and school personnel).

In addition, overall, grantees continue building and disseminating new knowledge, conducting 258 presentations, producing 73 publications, and reporting 692 media citations and, in this reporting period, have leveraged more than $8 million in private funding and $1 million in public funding to support their work.

Social network analysis uncovered both new and strengthened relationships between grantee and non-grantee organizations and agencies, thanks to FYSI. Findings also show that Hilton grantee connections, with each other and with partner agencies, have grown after FYSI implementation, with an increase in the overall number of partner agencies identified and connections between and among agencies and organizations.

Based on the lack of evidence-based caregiver competencies, and the importance of caregivers in the lives of TAY, learning the most effective ways for caregivers to improve the well-being of the youth in their care continues to be a priority. Based on findings from several information sources, including caregiver agency interviews; a review of the current literature on caregivers, including best practices; consultation with experts in NYC; and a review of the work being conducted around caregivers by Foundation grantees, we have developed an initial set of caregiver competencies. The competencies, grounded in the principles of cultural competence and family engagement, include these seven domains:

- Basic foster parenting knowledge
- Communication with youth
- Assessment and individualized planning
- Relationship to family and community
- Support for educational and career success for youth
- Support for pregnant and parenting youth
- Support for crossover youth

These competencies are a first step in helping us to better understand what caregivers need —both internally and externally—to effectively parent TAY towards successful outcomes.

Both LAC and NYC continue their efforts around policy and systems reform. Since the 2012 passage of AB 12 Fostering Connections to Success Act, LAC has implemented several important changes, including creating a single, unified child protection agency and opting into the Approved Relative Caregiver Funding Option Program, which equalizes payments to relative and nonrelative caregivers. In addition, advocates worked to ensure that the provisions under CA's new LCFF are being implemented effectively for the special subpopulation of foster youth in the state's school districts and, under CCR, stakeholders made recommendations regarding child welfare rates, group care placements, and training for staff working with traumatized or abused youth.

In addition to AB 12, other recent legislation designed to improve outcomes for foster children has been introduced or passed, including:

- **AB 2454.** Allows youth who had originally exited the dependency system through legal guardianship or adoption before 18 to reenter foster care as non-minor dependents under AB 12. (August 2014)

- **SB 1023.** Expands resources such as mental health support, tutoring, housing assistance, and an allowance for books to former foster youth at community college campuses through the Extended Opportunities Programs and Services Program (EOPS). (September 2014)

- **AB 388**. To reduce crossover, addresses excessive delinquency filings in group home settings for minor behaviors by allowing for tracking of law enforcement calls from group homes and review of facilities with inappropriate or excessive use of law enforcement assistance. (September 2014)

- **AB 2668.** Provides parenting non-minor dependents living in a Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP), with the support of an identified responsible adult under a "Shared Responsibility Plan, access to additional funding to support their child." (September 2014)

- **AB 595.** Amended to ensure that former foster youth continue to have priority enrollment in community colleges.(April 2015)

NYC has also made progress in this arena; ACS convened its first conference on well-being and received $3.75 million in federal grants to further juvenile justice and child welfare work, while ACS and NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation announced an intra-city agreement to improve mental health services for justice-involved youth. ACS also launched Home Away from Home and "Be the Reason," two large efforts focused on

recruiting and maintaining competent caregivers to foster and adopt youth in the child welfare system. Several other NYC efforts were focused on employment and educational outcomes, including the Center for Youth Employment, which is designed to offer job and mentoring opportunities to NYC youth, with a special emphasis on shelter and foster youth, and the Foster Youth Success Initiative, which will receive $1.5 million in state funds to provide concrete supports for foster youth to succeed in college.

Finally, administrative data show that, in both NYC and LAC, the number of TAY choosing to remain in the child welfare system continues to increase. This steady increase is due to policy changes in both jurisdictions. And while these policy changes were intended to improve TAY outcomes, there are issues that still require attention. For example, TAY still experience some level of placement instability. In LAC, where there are more than seven placement types for TAY, only 17% reside in foster homes and 20% with kin, whereas in NYC, where there are only three placement types, 49% of TAY reside in foster boarding homes and 17% with kin. In addition, both jurisdictions have experienced increases in the number of TAY in placements other than foster or kinship care from 2009 - 2014; LAC has seen a sharp increase in the use of SILPs, whereas in NYC, the number of youth in residential care has more than doubled. While this evidence confirms that more TAY are choosing to remain in the system, there are concerns about these placement types. In LAC, anecdotal information suggests that SILP youth do not receive the same level of case management or job and educational training as do youth in other types of placements, whereas, in NYC, the elimination of SILPs as a placement option is likely responsible, to some extent, to the large number of youth being placed in residential care. However, both jurisdictions continue to initiate efforts to stabilize placements for TAY. Most recently, as noted above, LAC opted into the Approved Relative Caregiver Funding Option Program which equalizes payments to relative and nonrelative caregivers and NYC launched several initiatives focused on foster youth, including the Bill of Rights for Children and Youth in Foster Care and the “Be the Reason” recruitment campaign targeted towards potential foster and adoptive parents for teens.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FYSI: MOVING FORWARD

The findings from this mid-year report demonstrate that the Foundation is well-positioned to meet its FYSI system change and funding and knowledge sharing goals.[19] Findings also show that grantees are on-track to meet their program and policy objectives. Grantees have made significant strides in providing services to TAY, and pregnant and parenting, and crossover youth, and continue to train caregivers, child welfare workers, judges, attorneys and advocates on TAY rights and policies. They have initiated and supported policy changes in LAC and NYC and continue to build and disseminate new knowledge regarding TAY and related issues. The findings also point to several specific recommendations the Foundation should consider as it continues to support the work of both the grantees and the evaluation team around the FYSI. These, and steps for how the evaluation team can assist the Foundation in its efforts, are presented in the following section.

6.1 Recommendations for FYSI

First, it is evident from the information gathered via the data collection forms and the findings from the social network analysis (SNA) that the **FYSI has created new and**

[19] Progress towards youth goals will be assessed in the coming year and reported in the final report.

strengthened existing cross-sector relationships among grantees, and grantees and their partner agencies. However, the SNA also revealed that some grantees remain somewhat disconnected from the larger network. We recommend that the Foundation take steps to better understand the functional aspects of the network so it can better support grantees to become a stronger, more cohesive group. To this end, the evaluation team will implement a second step in the social network analysis in fall 2015. At that time, such quantitative metrics as density (e.g., overall number of connections), centrality (e.g., which organizations are most "central" to the network), and subgroup characteristics (e.g., how connections are clustered) will tell the Foundation more about how grantees interact with each other and what role grantees play in developing and maintaining their social network. The Foundation can then use this information to determine how best to support grantees to continue to build their cross-sector networks.

Next, based on the importance of competent caregivers in the lives of TAY, there is a lot of movement in the caregiver field focused on **developing rigorous and measurable caregiver competencies**. Because one of the goals of the FYSI is to increase the capacity of caregivers to care appropriately for TAY, we recommend that the Foundation continue to support grantee activities around caregivers. In addition, as the evaluation team works to develop a set of caregiver competencies, we recommend that the Foundation continue to encourage the grantees and evaluation team to share and integrate their respective work, whenever possible. To support the Foundation in these efforts, the evaluation team plans to vet their set of competencies with the grantees and others in the child welfare research community to ensure the final list is measurable, well-informed, and has buy-in from a broad audience of relevant stakeholders.

Third, to continue to fully understand the impact of the grantees' work, we must have a solid context in which to interpret it, including **how systems are changing within each jurisdiction to address TAY needs**. As noted in this report, there are still more systems change grantees in LAC than there are in NYC, and NYC continues to have far more self-sufficiency grantees than it does systems change grantees. This means that NYC grantees are still more focused on improving services for TAY rather than on larger systems change, even though we know that, to be effective, changes in service delivery need to be accompanied by relevant systems change. To support NYC to initiate more systems change efforts, we recommend the Foundation fund more systems change grantees in NYC in the coming years. To support the Foundation to understand the impact of grantees' systems change efforts, the evaluation team will be working with the Foundation to identify methods to better document and track these efforts, over time.

Finally, **administrative data are critical to helping the Foundation understand the impact of the FYSI in LAC and NYC**; while there is no direct connection between grantees' work and administrative outcomes, trends can be assessed, over time, in such

indicators as TAY educational gains and reduced recidivism to see how outcomes change over the course of the FYSI. An important means for doing so is to continue to support the evaluation team to finalize and implement an administrative data plan. Administrative data, coupled with other evaluation findings, including those presented in this and future reports, will allow the Foundation to address each of the FYSI goals and fully understand the impact of the FYSI on the communities and youth it serves.

6.2 Recommendations for the Child Welfare Community: Lessons learned from LAC and NYC

As noted throughout this report, in recent years, there has been considerable movement at both the policy and program level around issues affecting TAY and foster care youth. Much of this change has been initiated by the Foundation grantees. Policies and programs have been developed that are now being implemented and much needed modifications are being made to programs to better meet the needs of TAY and foster youth. But there comes a time when we must stop implementing change and instead direct efforts towards understanding the effects of it. To this end, we recommend the child welfare field continue to conduct research and evaluation of recently implemented policies and programs so that we can determine what is working for TAY and what is not.

For example, as reported here, both LAC and NYC have seen interesting trends in TAY placement types. LAC has seen a large spike in SILP placements, whereas residential placements in NYC have doubled since 2009. While we realize some of these developments were precipitated by policy changes – such as the elimination of SILPs in NYC – we do not know what the implications are for them in relation to youth outcomes. Do CA youth placed in SILPs fare better or worse than youth in other placement types?[20] What kinds of outcomes do we see for NYC youth who are in residential care and how do they differ from youth in kin or foster care? Research focused on understanding the effects of these placement types on youth outcomes would go a long way in helping the field understand how best to meet the placement needs of TAY and other foster youth.

As discussed in this report, both jurisdictions have implemented policies and programs designed to improve educational opportunities for TAY. LAC has implemented LCFF to support foster youth in local school districts, and SB1023 and AB 595 provide much needed support services, resources, and priority enrollment for foster youth attending CA community colleges. NYC recently received state funds to implement its Foster Youth

[20] A recent publication documenting the placement experiences of TAY participating in the CalYOUTH study provides an early look at related outcomes (Napolitano and Courtney, 2014),

Success Initiative, while City University received a substantial grant for its Start Program, both of which are designed to support foster and former foster youth to succeed in college. We know that education improves outcomes for TAY and foster youth; but we are only beginning to understand how to engage and retain them in post-secondary educational settings. As such, it will be important that we understand how these efforts impact educational outcomes for TAY and foster youth. Unfortunately, educational data are often difficult to access and are frequently incomplete for such subpopulations as foster youth. In CA, for example, school districts do not have current, accurate data about the number and distribution of foster youth in their student populations;[21] this is a common problem that is not exclusive to CA school districts. In an effort to obtain reliable data on foster youth, the LCFF created a framework for collecting data on educational outcomes for foster youth and holds school districts accountable for reporting on them. These kinds of efforts will help build an infrastructure for educational data that can be used in research and evaluation to better understand student outcomes.

Finally, to be useful to the field, research and evaluation findings should continue to be disseminated and to audiences that can digest and use them for policy and program improvement. The Foundation continues to fund grantees specifically to build and disseminate new knowledge through research and supports all of its grantees to participate in a variety of dissemination activities. The continued support of these types of efforts from the Foundation and other funders, coupled with the dissemination of research and evaluation findings by those producing them, will both inform the field and contribute to the evidence base about what works to support TAY to successfully transition out of the child welfare system and into productive and successful lives.

[21] http://www.cfyetf.org/publications_15_2343787958.pdf

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