



Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

Foster Youth Strategic Initiative

2014 EVALUATION REPORT

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December 15, 2014

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 evaluate the Foster Youth Strategic Initiative in Los Angeles County (LAC) and New York City (NYC). The Initiative grew out of an extensive research and synthesis process that helped the Foundation better understand challenges facing Transition-Age Youth (TAY), identify key levers and successful models for change, and incorporate the perspectives of a wide variety of stakeholders. The Initiative is built on a theory of change proposing that funding three components (TAY self-sufficiency services, systems change, and new knowledge) will synergize efforts in LAC and NYC around improving outcomes for TAY.

The Hilton Foundation provides grants to organizations and entities with the potential to actualize the Foster Youth Strategic Initiative's components. As of May 2014, grantmaking totaled \$23,917,033. Currently 19 grantees are funded to support TAY self-sufficiency through direct services; 11 funded grantees are focusing on systems change; and 6 grantees are generating new knowledge about TAY. From a regional, or site-level perspective, there are 16 grantees focused on changes for TAY in LAC; 9 grantees are focused on TAY in NYC; and 4 grantees (designated as dual geography) are focused on changes in both LAC and NYC.

The primary goal of the evaluation is to inform learning about TAY. In order to investigate a multi-faceted and strategically informed initiative, the evaluation is designed to be broader than a program evaluation. Over 3 years, the evaluation team will assess the value added by Hilton Foundation's investments in improving outcomes for TAY and will ground the data in national and regional contexts. A variety of data collection tools are being used to answer the overarching questions below.

Since the inception of the Initiative in 2012:

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?

The research questions measure the Initiative's progress in reaching its 5-year goals. Goals are identified for each area of the Initiative and include:

- **Youth Outcomes**
 - **Postsecondary outcomes improved for 50% of TAY in LAC and NYC;**
 - **Improved long-term outcomes for 50% of parenting foster youth and crossover youth in LAC and NYC; and**
 - **Capacity improved for caregivers of 90% of TAY in LAC and NYC.**
- **Systems Change**
 - **Create/strengthen cross-sector coordinated efforts;**
 - **Annual convenings of organizations and agencies supporting TAY; and**
 - **Advocacy resulting in positive and enforced policy for improving outcomes for TAY in LAC and NYC.**
- **Knowledge and Funding**
 - **Research base around programs to improve TAY outcomes is expanded and shared at local and national levels.**
 - **Hilton Foundation funding leverages \$20M in private funding in alignment with Initiative goals.**

The Year One Evaluation Report describes activities occurring and progress achieved from the inception of the Initiative through July 2014. Data collected through interviews with 19 grantees, focus groups with 21 TAY and 30 caregivers, submission of a semiannual data collection form (by 24 grantees), reports from 11 grantees, and additional existing documents informed assessment of progress.

Progress on Foster Youth Strategic Initiative Goals

In Table 1, progress in reaching goals is identified with one of three colors. Progress is based on the data available during the reporting period Year One of the evaluation. Areas highlighted in green indicate that the Foster Youth Strategic Initiative is on track to reach the goal within the 5-year implementation period. Areas highlighted in yellow indicate limited progress, and grey areas indicate that progress cannot be judged with available data.

Table 1. Progress on 5-Year Goals

Initiative Goals	Los Angeles County	New York City
YOUTH OUTCOMES		
Education: Postsecondary outcomes improved for 50% of TAY	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, focus groups, and grantee progress reports.</i>	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, focus groups, grantee progress reports, and PYA.</i>
Vulnerable Youth: Improved long-term outcomes for 50% of parenting foster youth	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews and progress reports.</i>	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, progress reports, and PYA.</i>
Vulnerable Youth: Improved long-term outcomes for 50% of crossover youth	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews and progress reports.</i>	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews and progress reports.</i>
Caregivers: Capacity improved for caregivers of 90% of TAY.	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, focus groups, and grantee progress reports.</i>	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, focus groups, and grantee progress reports.</i>
SYSTEMS CHANGE		
Create/strengthen cross-sector coordinated efforts	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, progress reports, and archival research.</i>	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, progress reports, and archival data.</i>
Annual convenings of organizations and agencies supporting TAY	<i>Data Sources: Grantee semi-annual data form and evaluation team attendance at convenings.</i>	<i>Data Sources: Grantee semi-annual data form and evaluation team attendance at convenings.</i>
Advocacy resulting in positive and enforced policy for improving outcomes for TAY in target geographies	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, progress reports, and archival research.</i>	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, progress reports, and archival data.</i>

Table 1. Progress on 5-Year Goals (continued)		
Initiative Goals	Los Angeles County	New York City
FUNDING & KNOWLEDGE SHARING		
Research base around programs to improve TAY outcomes is expanded and shared at local and national levels	<i>Data Sources: Grantee semi-annual data form, progress reports, and archival research.</i>	<i>Data Sources: Grantee semi-annual data form, progress reports, and archival data.</i>
Hilton Foundation funding leverages \$20M in private funding in alignment with our goals	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, progress reports, and direct inquiries.</i>	

Key

<i>Current Data Indicates On Track to Reach Goals</i>
<i>Current Data Indicates Limited Progress</i>
<i>Not Enough Region-Wide Data to Determine if Strategy Will Reach Desired Outcomes</i>

Youth Outcomes Summary

- Both regions show concentrated activity around improving postsecondary outcomes for TAY.
- Though less activity took place around crossover and parenting youth
 - Both regions had similar amount of activity for crossover youth
 - LAC reported more work on behalf of parenting youth.
- More knowledge is needed about developing caregiver’s capacity to support TAY self-sufficiency.
- One year is not sufficient to measure long-term youth outcomes.

The evaluation team used grantee-level data to assess the progress of youth outcomes in the Year One report. These data revealed that there is concentrated activity around improving postsecondary outcomes for TAY in both regions and relatively less activity around crossover and parenting youth. For example, the self-sufficiency grantees that submitted progress reports reviewed during the Year One evaluation period served over 3,200 youth. While efforts to improve outcomes for crossover youth are fairly even in both regions, there was more work reported in LAC on behalf of parenting youth.

There is not enough knowledge about developing caregiver’s capacity to support TAY’s achievement of self-sufficiency. First-year evaluation activities included asking caregivers about needed capacities and asking grantees about their direct and indirect services for caregivers.

Together these data indicated that caregivers need interpersonal skills such as patience and concrete supports such as training about educational opportunities and support groups. Though the data were rich, the first-year findings alone cannot significantly advance the state of knowledge.

Overall, long-term youth outcomes must be measured with site-specific and robust administrative data that clearly identify TAY, crossover youth, and parenting TAY and links identified youth to outcomes associated with Initiative goals. Further, the data must be extracted after sufficient time has passed to observe outcomes. One year is not sufficient for reporting progress on outcomes.

Systems Change Summary

- Initiative is on track to reach systems change goals in LAC, galvanized by AB 12 implementation.
- Though NYC did not need a policy change similar to AB 12 no other policy innovations were implemented on the same scale. NYC has made limited progress on systems change.

First-year findings indicate that the Initiative is on track to reach systems change goals in LAC within the 5-year implementation period. Implementation of AB 12 is galvanizing change in LAC. There is no singular and similar policy innovation driving change in NYC and that contributes to the limited progress on reaching cross-sector coordination and advocacy goals in NYC during the first year. Grantees in both regions are facilitating progress on the annual convenings goal, and the Initiative is on track in both regions to reach that goal.

Funding and Knowledge Sharing

- LAC grantees are on track to reach research and dissemination goals.
- NYC grantees are still in the process of data collection and analysis.
- The cross-site leveraging goal is likely to be met as grantees have already leveraged more than half the goal amount.

The Initiative is on track in LAC to reach the goal of expanding the research base on TAY and sharing findings on local and national levels. There is limited progress toward this goal in NYC because the grantees funded for region specific research are still in the midst of data collection and analysis. The Initiative's leveraging goal, \$20M in private funds, is cross site. The goal will likely be reached before the end of the 5-year Initiative as grantees have already leveraged over \$12M in the first 2 years of implementation.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Conrad N. Hilton Foster Youth Strategic Initiative

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

THE INITIATIVE'S 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 Initiative focuses on TAY, 16-24 years old, from two regions with large child welfare populations: Los Angeles County (LAC) and New York City (NYC). The Hilton Foundation also decided to focus its efforts in LAC and NYC due to strong commitment to issues affecting TAY,

readiness for policy and system reform, and opportunities to leverage funding. Within the general TAY population, the Foundation identified two subgroups for their need of special services: pregnant and parenting teens and crossover youth (those with concurrent child welfare and juvenile justice involvement). The Initiative also aims to enhance the tools available for caregivers of TAY, as well as enlarge the available pool of caregivers.

Foster Youth Initiative Grantees

The Hilton Foundation provides grants to organizations and entities with the potential to actualize the Foster Youth Initiative’s components, including increasing TAY’s self-sufficiency, strengthening systems collaboration, and developing and disseminating new knowledge. Grantees can receive funds to actualize one or more of these components. As of May 2014, grantmaking totaled \$24,805,000.

The Foundation has funded 19 grantees to support TAY self-sufficiency through direct services (displayed by geography in Table 2). Several grantees are working on improved educational and college readiness outcomes. Other grantees are working on improved career outcomes for TAY, providing support for and/or recruiting caregivers, and enhancing services for crossover, pregnant, and parenting youth. These grantees include the following:

Table 2. TAY Self-Sufficiency Grantees		
Los Angeles	New York	Dual Geography
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliance for Children’s Rights • Child Welfare Initiative • Coalition for Responsible Community Development • First Place for Youth • First Star • iFoster • Public Counsel • St. Anne’s Maternity House • United Friends of the Children • Youth Policy Institute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Aid Society • Children’s Village • Fedcap • FECS • Good Shepherd • Inwood House • New Yorkers for Children (ACS) • New York Foundling Hospital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Foster Youth Institute

The 11 grantees focusing on systems change are negotiating widespread collaboration, facilitating creation and implementation of consistent policies related to TAY, initiating and improving data sharing, and developing effective cross-system communications (see Table 3). This group of grantees includes the following:

Table 3. Systems Change Grantees		
Los Angeles	New York	Dual Geography
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliance for Children’s Rights • Anti-Recidivism Coalition • Children Now • Children’s Action Network • Coalition for Responsible Community Development • National Center for Youth Law (FosterEd) • Public Counsel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor’s Fund (CIDI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspen Institute • Georgetown CJJR • National Foster Youth Institute

The last set of grantees has and continues to develop new knowledge that is influential in policymaking, practice, and research (see Table 4). Through publication and dissemination of the knowledge grantees’ findings, the Initiative expects to see a targeted and informed leveraging of resources for TAY. The seven new knowledge grantees include:

Table 4. New Knowledge Grantees		
Los Angeles	New York	Dual Geography
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Chicago • University of Southern California • University of Pennsylvania 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor’s Fund (CIDI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspen Institute • Georgetown CJJR • Seattle Children’s Hospital

From a regional perspective, there are 17 grantees focused on changes for TAY in LAC, 9 grantees focused on TAY in NYC, and 4 grantees (designated as dual geography) focused on changes in both LAC and NYC (see Figures 1-3).

Figure 1. TAY Self-Sufficiency Grantees, March 2012–May 2014



Figure 2. Systems Change Grantees, March 2012–May 2014

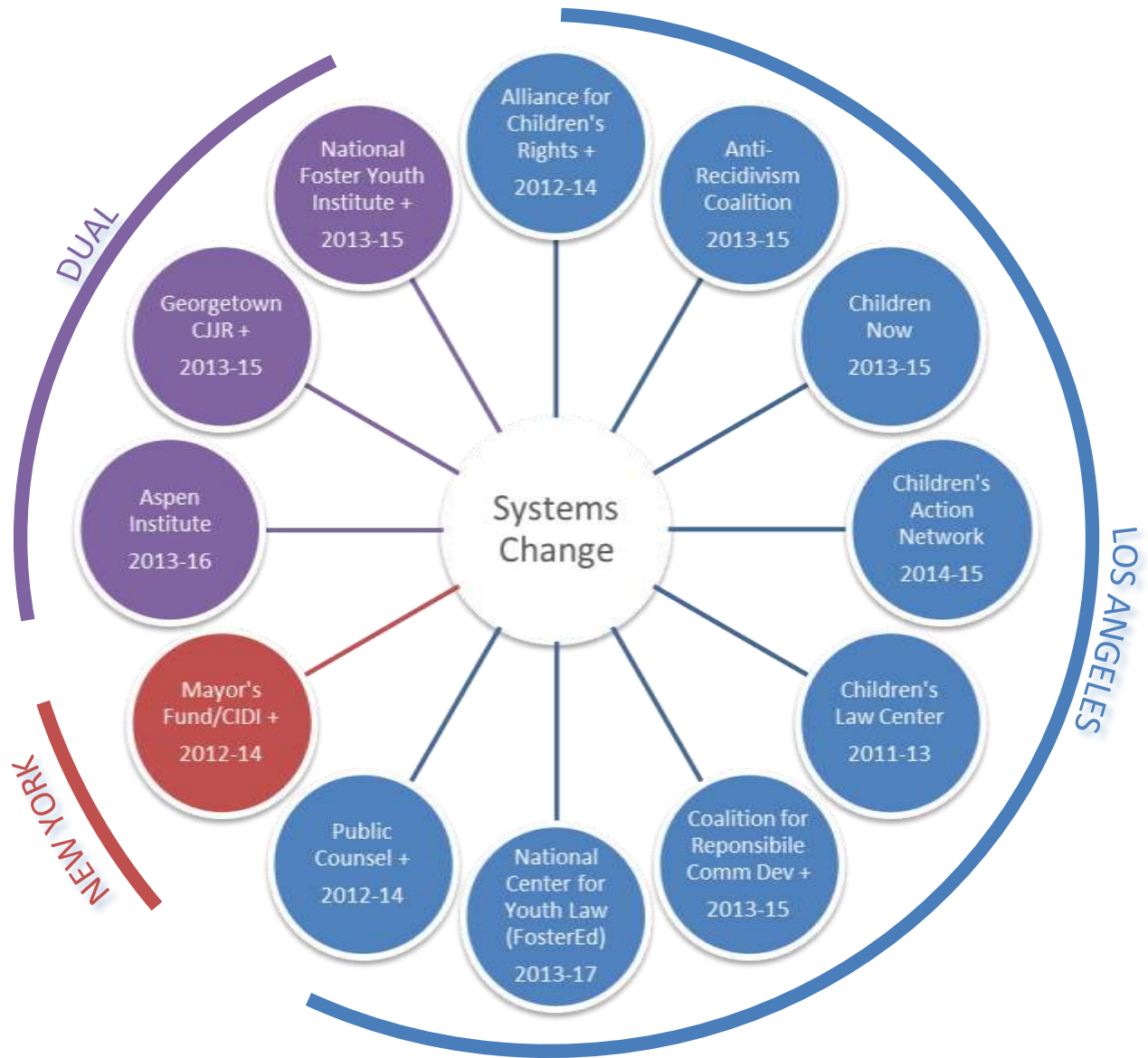
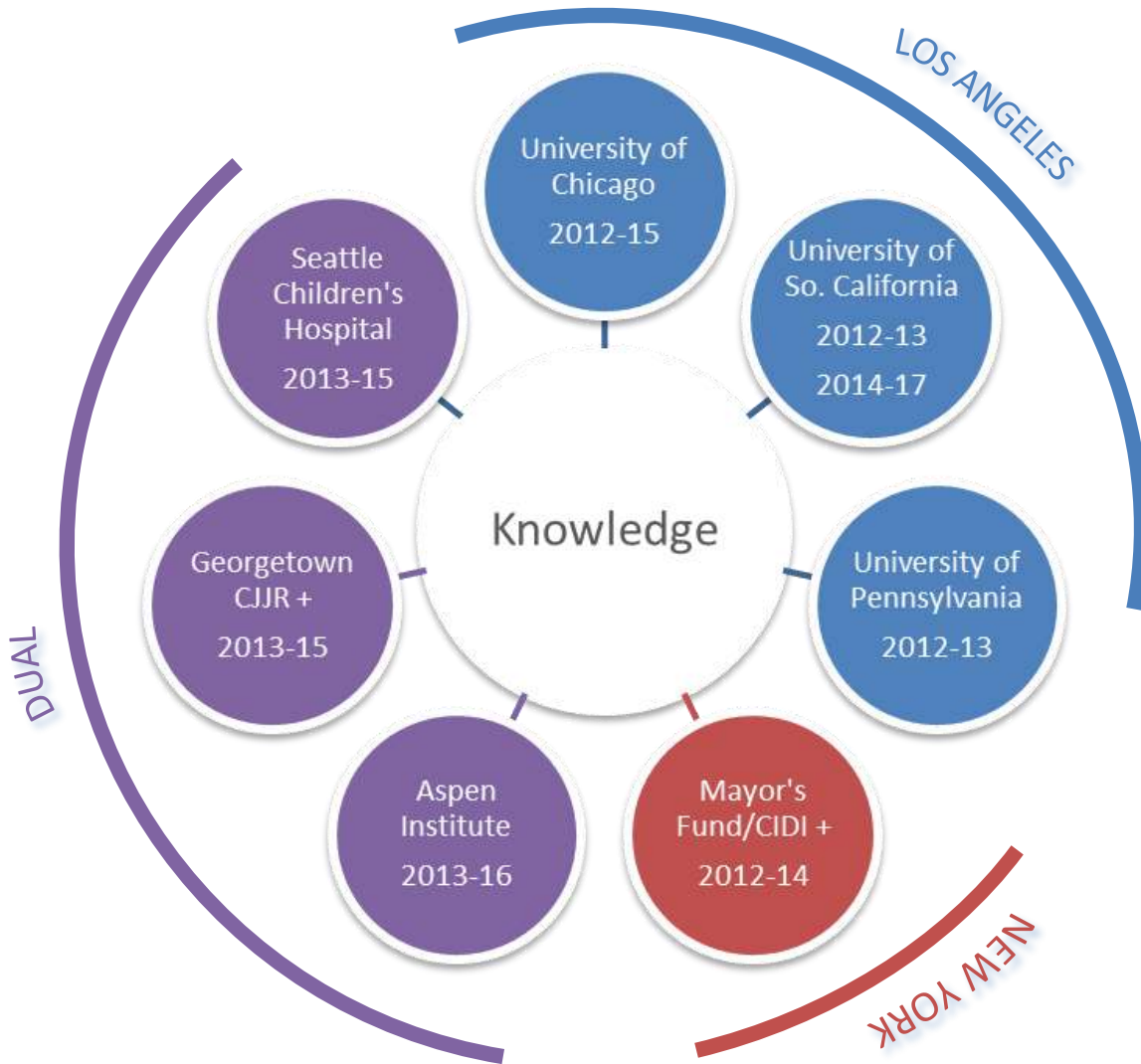


Figure 3. New Knowledge Grantees, March 2012–May 2014



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 evaluate the Foster Youth Strategic Initiative in LAC and NYC. The Initiative is built on a theory of change that proposes that funding three components (TAY self-sufficiency services, systems change, and new knowledge) will synergize efforts in LAC and NYC around improving outcomes for TAY. The primary goal of the evaluation is to inform learning about TAY.

In order to investigate a multi-faceted and strategically informed initiative, the evaluation must be broader than a program evaluation. The evaluation must incorporate the context (meaning community factors, policy landscape, and other context) in the assessment of the value added by Hilton Foundation’s investments in improving outcomes for TAY. The 3-year evaluation will use a variety of data collection tools to answer the questions below.

Since the Initiative began in 2012:

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?

The formative evaluation approach examines evidence about contextual influences, programmatic effects, system changes, knowledge dissemination, and the emerging impact of the Foster Youth Strategic Initiative components. Evaluation findings can then be used to guide further implementation. The formative evaluation design incorporates a case¹ study methodology. This is the strongest design for the following reasons:

- The evaluation will investigate complex contemporary phenomena within evolving real-life contexts, in which there likely will be “contamination” of the treatment by other non-Initiative activities and forces.

¹ “Case” refers to the two regions (LAC and NYC), not to client cases.

- The boundaries between the Foster Youth Strategic Initiative and its context are not clearly demarcated (some aspects of the Initiative will be part of the context and vice versa).
- Case studies provide a framework for triangulating multiple sources of evidence (administrative data, grantees' data and information, documents, interviews, focus groups) to answer the research questions.

1.3 Organization and Focus of Report

The first-year report features nine chapters.

- Chapter 2 details methodology used to answer the research questions, listing data collection sources and procedures and analysis techniques.
- Chapter 3 describes the social, economic, and political forces affecting TAY in LAC and NYC from 2012 to the present. The Initiative is being implemented within a dynamic and rich context in two major regions. Progress toward Initiative goals must be interpreted within this context.
- Chapters 4-6 discuss progress toward Initiative goals. Findings reported in these chapters correspond to overarching research questions and the sub-questions focused on process indicators that are answerable in this first year (see Table 5).
- Chapter 7 provides observations on the Initiative's overall impact in its first year by synthesizing progress on each of the Initiative's 5-year goals.

Table 5. Year One Research Questions

5-Year Goal	Research Questions	Data Sources
Context for Goals	1. Are TAY in LAC/NYC on a better path to success? 1d. ² What were the social, economic, and political forces that impacted foster youth and caregivers from 2012 to 2015?	Grantee interviews, TAY and caregiver focus groups, grantee documents and other archival data.
Youth Goals		
Education: Postsecondary outcomes improved for 50% of TAY in LAC and NYC	1. Are TAY in LAC/NYC on a better path to success? 1e. What was the impact of the Hilton Strategy on TAY’s self-sufficiency and interpersonal connections? 2. What impact did the Foster Youth Initiative have on grantees’ programs? 2b. What do the grantees’ findings show in terms of outcomes achieved for the TAY and caregivers they served? What difference did the Hilton TAY Strategy make in achieving the grantees’ desired outcomes? How did each grantee contribute to the overall TAY Strategy? 2d. Were the grantees able to continue their TAY-related programs after the Hilton funding ended?	Grantee interviews and TAY focus groups Grantee interviews, documents, and semiannual data
Vulnerable Youth: Improved long-term outcomes for 50% of parenting foster youth and crossover youth in LAC and NYC	2. What impact did the Foster Youth Initiative have on grantees’ programs? 2b. What do the grantees’ findings show in terms of outcomes achieved for the TAY and caregivers they served? What difference did the Hilton TAY Strategy make in achieving the grantees’ desired outcomes? How did each grantee contribute to the overall TAY Strategy?	Grantee interviews and documents
Caregivers: Capacity improved for caregivers of 90% of TAY in LAC and NYC	2. What impact did the Foster Youth Initiative have on grantees’ programs? 2c. What are the core competencies that caregivers need in caring for TAY? How did the grantees support and build those competencies?	Grantee interviews and caregiver focus groups

² Numbering refers to research questions as listed in the evaluation plan.

Table 5. Year One Research Questions (continued)

5-Year Goal	Research Questions	Data Sources
System Improvement Goals		
Create/strengthen cross-sector coordinated efforts	3. Since 2012, what changes have occurred in NYC/LAC in collaboration and alignment of systems serving TAY? How did the Hilton TAY Strategy contribute to these changes?	Grantee interviews and documents, and semiannual data
Annual convenings of organizations and agencies supporting TAY	3a. Have agencies serving TAY participated in any of the following? Who were the participants? What was the focus? What were the results? What were barriers and solutions? How did the changes contribute to the overall TAY Strategy?	
Advocacy resulting in positive and enforced policy for improving outcomes for TAY in LAC and NYC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint planning efforts • New and consistent agency specific policies and legislation for increasing services and support for TAY • New data-sharing plans or agreements • New or expanded avenues of communication with each other • Collaborative service provision • Joint trainings and professional development 3b. How did the Hilton TAY funding, support, and new knowledge create or enhance these changes? What other activities or events had a role in these changes?	

Table 5. Year One Research Questions (continued)

5-Year Goal	Research Questions	Data Sources
Knowledge Sharing and Funding Goals		
Research base around programs to improve TAY outcomes is expanded and shared at local and national levels	4. What impacts did the Hilton TAY knowledge grantees have on policy, practice, and research innovations? 4a. How were the Hilton findings distributed in NYC/LAC and nationally (format, venue, frequency)? 4c. How have policymakers, practitioners, and researchers in NYC/LAC used the knowledge produced by the Hilton TAY Strategy?	Grantee interviews and documents, and semiannual data
Hilton Foundation funding leverages \$20M in private funding in alignment with Initiative goals	4. What impacts did the Hilton TAY knowledge grantees have on policy, practice, and research innovations? 4b. Has the knowledge developed through the Hilton TAY Strategy led to leveraged funding for TAY?	Grantee interviews and documents



2. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

2.1 Administrative Data

Administrative data from Los Angeles County and New York City's child welfare systems provided a first estimate of the number and characteristics of youth targeted by the Initiative's youth goals. Data also showed the number of licensed and/or certified homes for TAY in 2014.

2.2 Youth and Caregiver Focus Groups

The TAY focus group data addressed the question: ***What was the impact of the Hilton Strategy on TAY's self-sufficiency (including secondary and postsecondary educational advancement and career goals) and interpersonal connections?*** Facilitators also asked youth about their unmet needs during the transition to adulthood.

TAY Focus Groups (April-June 2014)

- **Los Angeles:** 2 focus groups with TAY age 18+ either emancipated from foster care or dually involved in foster care and probation
- **New York City:** 2 focus groups with TAY age 18+ either still in care or emancipated and receiving Hilton-funded direct services

Caregiver focus group data addressed the questions: ***What are the core competencies that caregivers need in caring for TAY? How did the grantees support and build those competencies?*** In order to assess the alignment between youth and caregiver data, caregivers were asked to discuss what TAY need from caregivers in their efforts to reach self-sufficiency, and what help caregivers still needed in terms of support in caring for these older youth.

Caregiver Focus Groups (May-June 2014)

- 5 focus groups and 1 key informant interview with 30 caregivers who had fostered TAY from age 16 and older
 - 1 focus group in South Los Angeles with 9 relative caregivers
 - 1 focus group in North Los Angeles with 6 caregivers (some relatives)
 - Key informant interview in Long Beach with participant who had served as caregiver to over 40 teens
 - 3 focus groups hosted by Hilton grantees in New York City with 14 participants who had participated in grantee programs

The evaluation team audio-recorded focus groups with TAY and caregivers and grantee interviews, transcribed them verbatim, and coded the transcripts to glean major themes associated with the research questions.

2.3 Grantee Interviews

Grantee interviews addressed several research questions:

2b. What difference did the Hilton TAY Strategy make in achieving the grantees' desired outcomes?

2c. What are the core competencies that caregivers need in caring for TAY? How did the grantees support and build those competencies?

2d. Were the grantees able to continue their TAY-related programs after the Hilton funding ended?

3a. Have grantees participated in any joint planning efforts, policy change, data sharing plans, expanded avenues of communication, collaborative service provision, or joint trainings? If so what were the results? If not what were the barriers?

3b. How did the Hilton TAY funding, support, and new knowledge create or enhance systems change? What other activities or events had a role in these changes?

4a. How were the Hilton findings distributed in LAC/NYC and nationally (format, venue, frequency)?

4b. Has the knowledge developed through the Hilton TAY Strategy led to leveraged funding?

4c. How have policymakers, practitioners, and researchers in LAC/NYC used the knowledge produced by the Hilton TAY Strategy?

During February–April 2014, evaluation team members interviewed all of the grantees that received funding before July 1, 2013, during Year One of the Initiative (see Table 6). Team members conducted most of the interviews face to face, with the exception of four grantees that are not based in Los Angeles or New York.

The team conducted a total of 19 interviews:

- 9 in Los Angeles
- 5 in New York
- 2 dual geography by phone
- 3 knowledge grantees by phone

Major interview themes included activities targeting desired outcomes, connections/ collaborations between grantees working toward similar goals, and barriers to accomplishing change. Grantee interview questions varied by the component of the Initiative that grantees focused on (TAY self-sufficiency programs, systems alignment, and/or new knowledge). Note that grantees are not just engaging in activities related to their classification, for example; self-sufficiency grantees also engage in systems and advocacy activities and disseminate new knowledge as part of their work on behalf of TAY, and thus there is overlap in analysis and results.

Table 6. Grantees Included in Year One Interviews			
Grantees	TAY Self-Sufficiency*	Systems Alignment*	New Knowledge*
Los Angeles	Alliance for Children’s Rights Child Welfare Initiative First Place for Youth First Star Public Counsel United Friends of the Children	Alliance for Children’s Rights Child Welfare Initiative Children’s Law Center Public Counsel	University of Chicago University of Pennsylvania University of Southern California
New York	Children’s Aid Fedcap FECS Inwood House New Yorkers for Children/ACS	Mayor’s Fund/CIDI	Mayor’s Fund/CIDI
Dual Geography		Aspen Institute Georgetown	Aspen Institute Georgetown

*These are not mutually exclusive categories; several grantees are listed in multiple categories.

2.4 Semiannual Grantee Data Collection Form

The Semiannual Grantee Data Collection Form, or semiannual form, was designed to answer research questions 3a. and 4a.

3a. Have grantees participated in any joint planning efforts, policy change, data sharing plans, expanded avenues of communication, collaborative service provision, or joint trainings? If so what were the results? If not what were the barriers?

4a. How were the Hilton findings distributed in NYC/LAC and nationally (format & frequency)?

The semiannual form is a self-report tool, allowing for individualized approaches to information collection and allowing grantees to determine their pertinent activities. Data collection occurs every 6 months, and the study team expects data from subsequent waves of data collection to show changes over time in distribution and collaboration, alignment of systems, and outputs of key activities, both at the regional and individual grantee levels.

The evaluation team mailed the first semiannual form, covering the period from October 1, 2013, to March 31, 2014,³ to 26⁴ grantees on March 20, 2014. The evaluation team asked grantees to complete and return the form by April 30. The questionnaire packet included guidelines and definitions for key terms for each item (24) in the questionnaire. The team advised grantees to regard the semiannual questionnaire as a “snapshot in time” and that data one reporting period might look very different from another.

Semiannual data were aggregated upon receipt,⁵ and no statistical analysis was required for the level of data reported. The evaluation question of interest served as the guide for review of archival data. The team reviewed some pieces of data multiple times in addressing several questions.

³ Grantees whose funding began after October 1, 2013, were instructed to answer questions from the time of the award through March 31, 2014.

⁴ Two LAC grantees, the Anti-Recidivism Coalition and the Youth Policy Institute, were mailed forms but later excused from participation: their funding was too recent to yield meaningful data for this period. Two other grantees, the University of Pennsylvania/Dr. Dennis Culhane and the Children’s Law Center, finished their grant activities before the data collection period began, so were not included. Interviews from these two former grantees, however, captured information on some outputs, particularly dissemination.

⁵ Semiannual evaluation data collection is independent of the Hilton contract reporting process. Data are not triangulated against grantee contracts, progress reports to Hilton, or other grantee documents.

2.5 Document Review

Document review contributed to the following research questions:

1d. What were the social, economic, and political forces that impacted foster youth and caregivers from 2012 to 2015?

2b. What do the grantees' findings show in terms of outcomes achieved for the TAY and caregivers they served? How did each grantee contribute to the overall TAY Strategy?

3a. Have grantees participated in any joint planning efforts, policy change, data sharing plans, expanded avenues of communication, collaborative service provision, or joint trainings? If so what were the results? If not what were the barriers?

3b. How did the Hilton TAY funding, support, and new knowledge create or enhance these changes? What other activities or events had a role in these changes?

4a. How were the Hilton findings distributed in NYC/LAC and nationally (format, venue, frequency)? Who were the audiences? What were the results of these efforts? How did these efforts contribute to the overall TAY Strategy?

4b. Has the knowledge developed through the Hilton TAY Strategy led to leveraged funding for TAY?

4c. How have policymakers, practitioners, and researchers in NYC/LA used the knowledge produced by the Hilton TAY Strategy? Are there specific areas where Hilton products have been most influential?

The evaluation team reviewed archival, or preexisting data, documenting the context for TAY nationally and in the focal regions, detailing grantee progress toward stated objectives, and listing grantee activities. Sources included grantee progress reports, reports generated by TAY-serving systems (child welfare, education, justice) and stakeholders serving TAY, news reports, policy bulletins, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation publications, and legislation.



3. CONTEXT FOR PROGRESS ON GOALS

It is important to consider the context surrounding the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's Foster Youth Strategic Initiative both before and during implementation.

Context findings answer the research question:

What were the social, economic, and political forces that impacted foster youth and caregivers from 2012 to the present, including pregnant and parenting and crossover youth?

Although the number of children in foster care decreased nationally by 24% from 2002-12, there were still more than 500,000 children in care the year the Hilton Foundation launched the Initiative (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), 2013a). Concurrent with the decreases in the number of children and youth in foster care, the percentage of youth emancipating from care has increased (Freundlich, 2010). In 2012, an estimated 23,400 youth in the United States exited the system without a permanent family (U.S. DHHS, 2013b).

Emancipated youth have low rates of high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment (Courtney & Dworsky, 2006; Pecora et al., 2006). Longitudinal studies have found lower earnings and higher joblessness rates among emancipated youth compared to youth of a similar age range, even when controlling for socioeconomic status prior to age 18 (Goerge et al., 2002; Macomber et al., 2008). Of those who do manage to become employed, earnings are rarely high enough to raise them above the poverty threshold (Culhane et al., 2011; Dworsky, 2005).

To better address the considerable challenges that youth face as they age out of foster care, several pieces of national legislation have created new services and brought about changes to existing services for TAY.

- **Independent Living Programs**, originally legislated in 1986 but adapted in 1999 with the John H. Chafee Act, can include job readiness and retention and educational support services, nutrition and housekeeping skill building, and concrete services such as transitional housing (Freundlich, 2010; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 1999).
- In 2002, the **Educational and Training Vouchers program (ETV)** began providing resources (up to \$5,000/year for eligible youth) to meet the postsecondary and training needs of youth aging out of foster care (National Resource Center for Youth Development, 2013.)
- The **2008 *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act*** requires that case workers develop a plan for TAY as they prepare to leave foster care, including plans regarding housing, health insurance, connections with an adult, and employment or education (Courtney, Dworsky, & Napolitano, 2013; Freundlich, 2010). *Fostering Connections* also allows federal reimbursement for adoption, foster care, or guardianship assistance payments for youth up to age 21 so long as the youth is engaged in secondary, postsecondary, or vocational education; working at least 80 hours per month; or unable to work or participate in educational activities because of a medical condition (Geen, 2009).
- The ***Affordable Care Act (ACA)*** extends Medicaid coverage to former foster youth until the age of 26, regardless of their income (Emam & Golden, 2014). Moreover, ACA requires that transition plans for youth aging out of foster care and independent living programs include information on designating a medical power of attorney.
- The ***Foster Youth Higher Education Act (H.R. 2108)*** allows students to indicate on their Free Application for Federal Student Aid application that they are or were in the foster care system so that they may be eligible for federal program assistance.

In addition, efforts to address the needs of foster youth at risk of dual involvement in the juvenile justice system or leaving both systems as a young adult were addressed in legislation in the early 2000s. In 2002, amendments to the *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act* provided funding to efforts in preventing juvenile delinquency involvement among those who had been maltreated and added requirements that states better align the juvenile justice and child welfare systems, among other changes (Herz et al., 2012). The mentioned policies and services, along with a host of other geographically specific efforts, aim to improve outcomes for TAY.

3.1 Los Angeles County: Context for Change

Foster Care in Los Angeles County

California is home to the largest child welfare system in the United States. Services are administered by 58 counties and overseen and partially funded by the California Department of Social Services (Danielson & Lee, 2010).

LOS ANGELES YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

- **As of July 2012, there were 16,916 children in out-of-home care in Los Angeles (Center for Families, Children and the Courts, 2013)**
 - 33% of the state's foster care children
 - 926 were in congregate care (such as group homes)
 - 7,512 were in non-kin foster homes
- **There has been a shortage of foster homes (Gutierrez, 2013)**
 - In 2013, there were 700 fewer state-licensed foster homes available than in 2009
 - This shortage has left many children lingering in holding facilities
- **Los Angeles has racial/ethnic disparities within the child welfare system (Center for Families, Children and the Courts, 2013) According to the California Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) report system:**
 - The total population under age 20 in LA in 2012 was: 62% Hispanic, 8% Black, 18% White and 12% "Other"
 - The population of children in foster care was: 53% Hispanic, 33% Black, 11% White and 3% "Other."

YOUTH AGING OUT OF CARE: A CRITICAL TARGET POPULATION

- **In 2012 ,there were 1,064 young people aging out of foster care every year in Los Angeles (Center for Families, Children and the Courts, 2013)**
- **In a study supported by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Dennis Culhane and colleagues (2011) described troubling outcomes in the population of youth aging out of foster care:**
 - 25% have been incarcerated by age 20
 - Only 10% complete a college degree
 - 65% leave care without a place to stay
 - Over 50% have no income in the 4 years post-emancipation
 - Those with income make only \$7,500/year on average

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors established the Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection in June 2013 in response to the deaths of several children known to and or in the care of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS; Los Angeles County Blue Ribbon Commission, 2014). The Commission's final report in April 2014 provided recommendations for improved services and oversight, including:

- better use of data
- lower caseloads
- equal funding for kinship caregivers
- an independent analysis of non-relative foster family recruitment efforts
- expansion of mental health services
- the establishment of a Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection (OCP) with authority to coordinate a unified child protection system.

Though TAY were not the focus of the report nor were they singled out in any recommendations, the Commission's work has increased the urgency for changing the experiences of foster youth in LAC and also creates fertile ground for systems change and uptake of new knowledge.

TAY Self-Sufficiency in Los Angeles County

The federal *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act* of 2008 pushed California along in providing foster care services to older youth (Courtney et al., 2013). While California law allowed for an extended dependency order up to age 21, this rarely occurred, and the lack of funding to do so had pitted counties against the courts for decades.

In September 2010, the *California Fostering Connections to Success Act*, or AB 12, was signed into law and then implemented in January 2012. Key advocates and sponsors for new state legislation included the County Welfare Directors Association, California Youth Connection, Service Employees International Union, Judicial Council, California Alliance for Child and Family Services, John Burton Foundation for Children Without Homes, Youth Law Center, Children's Law Center of California, and Alliance for Children's Rights (Courtney et al., 2013).

AB 12 made a number of important changes to the child welfare system for transition-age youth. Welfare benefits (CalWORKS) were extended to youth until age 20, and the legislation extended foster care up to age 21. The extended foster care provision included a number of housing options for young people, including staying with a foster family or relative, in a group home, in transitional housing, or in a Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) (Courtney et al., 2013). In order to be eligible to stay in extended foster care, young people have to be:

1. completing a GED, high school, or enrolled in college/vocational program at least half-time or employed at least 80 hours per month; or
2. participating in a program designed to remove barriers to employment; or
3. unable to participate in school or work due to a medical illness or condition (California Department of Social Services, 2011).

Table 7 provides information on the facility type for the out-of-home placements of youth ages 16+ in LAC as of April 30, 2014. Definitions of facility types follow the table. The facility type can provide some indication of the level of need of the youth. For example, a “group home” placement in California is the most restrictive out-of-home placement option for youth in foster care and this type of placement may indicate the need for additional emotional/behavioral supports; 14% of foster youth in LAC were in group home placements. Placement in “a small family home” is for youth who are mentally or developmentally disabled. Placement with relatives (“relative home” placement) is often viewed as the best option for youth who have to go into out-of-home placement; about 42% of the youth were in this type of placement. Supervised Independent Living Placements (SILPs) are popular for youth ages 18+; nearly 21% of the youth had this type of placement. It is not possible to present placements separately for foster and crossover youth in the LAC data. These data, provided by DCFS, were extracted from the CWS/CMS.

Table 7. Youth Age 16+, Placement Facility Type as of April 30, 2014, Los Angeles County	
Facility Type	Number (Percentage) of Youth Age 16+
Relative/Kinship Care	1,783 (42.4%)
Foster Home	925 (22.0%)
SILP	877 (20.9%)
Group Home/Residential Care	603 (14.4%)
Small Family Home	14 (0.3%)
Total	4,202 (100%)

Definition of Facility Types:

1. **Relative/Kinship Care** includes homes of relatives or extended relatives who are related to the youth by blood, adoption, or affinity within the fifth degree of kinship. It can also include the home of a non-related person known to the youth and deemed appropriate (and ordered) by the court.
2. **Foster Home** includes homes operated both by the agency (DCFS) and by private foster home provider agencies.
3. **Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP)** is an independent supervised setting for a non-minor dependent, in which the youth is living independently.
4. **Group Home/Residential Care** includes all non-detention facilities with 24-hour care in a group setting.
5. **Small Family Home** includes residential facilities that provide 24-hour care for a maximum of six foster children who have mental, developmental, or physical disabilities and who require special care and supervision because of their disabilities.

Education in Los Angeles County

In the past few years, philanthropic investment in the education of young people in or transitioning out of foster care has grown. Aside from financial aid for foster youth to pay for tuition, childcare, rent, and transportation for postsecondary education up to age 22, state and local public funds to support K-12 or postsecondary needs of foster youth are limited. Recently, in response to the federal *Uninterrupted Scholars Act* in January 2013, the California legislature has taken steps to improve information sharing between child welfare agencies and schools. Assembly Bill 1878, which is still in committee, calls for implementation of improvements to rules regarding information sharing in January 2016 (Lederer, 2014).

Additionally, one of the most significant changes to California's education system in 40 years, referred to as Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF or "local control"), was signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown in July 2013. In academic year 2013–14, implementation began for this new policy, which aims to provide more money to school districts with more high-need students and gives more control to school districts while holding them accountable for outcomes (FosterEd, 2014). The new law also includes foster youth as a subgroup and requires school districts to develop a plan to improve educational outcomes of this subgroup, which will be measured through the state's Academic Performance Index. The law also includes foster youth as one of the groups that will receive supplemental and concentration funding and requires the California Department of Education to regularly inform school districts which students are in foster care (FosterEd, 2013).

Employment in Los Angeles County

According to Culhane and colleagues (2011), less than half of youth aging out of the foster care system in LAC in 2002 or 2004 had earnings during the first 8 years out of care, and those who did earn money made an average of \$29,350 cumulatively in the first 4 years out of care. Only one-quarter of those leaving foster care were consistently employed in the first 4 years out of care. Overall, youth who were dually involved in foster care and probation fared the worst in terms of employment and earnings. These findings suggest that there is much work to be done to improve employment outcomes of TAY in Los Angeles.

Currently LAC provides *Workforce Investment Act*-funded youth programs, which are intended to help with workforce placement and attainment of a high school diploma, GED, or trade certificate or degree and to improve literacy. These programs are operated by seven Workforce Investment Boards that contract with nonprofit providers. These providers operate employment centers for youth to help with job search, placement, and other needs (Child Welfare Initiative, 2014). In addition, through federal *Chafee Act* funding, DCFS's Youth Development Services Division and the Probation Department provide employment resources to youth aging out of care. Youth in California who are considered to be "high risk," including those on probation or dually involved in foster care and probation, can receive assistance in

developing skills; case management; and work readiness, placement, and retention services (Child Welfare Initiative, 2014).

Crossover Youth in Los Angeles County

One group receiving growing attention is crossover youth, or youth who are involved in some degree in both child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Research has shown that these youth generally need more intensive services and supports than youth without involvement in both systems (Herz et al., 2012). Overall, youth who have been maltreated are more likely than non-maltreated youth to engage in delinquent behavior and become involved in the juvenile justice system. When they reach young adulthood, crossover youth also struggle more to find consistent employment than those who were in foster care only and have higher rates of public services use, lower educational attainment, and likelihood of experiencing at least one night in jail than those that were in foster care or probation (Courtney et al., 2011). Crossover youth's struggle with employment was also cited in the landscape research conducted by Culhane and colleagues (2011). Given greater awareness of these challenges of crossover youth, there is great momentum around collaborative approaches and system alignment, particularly between the systems of child welfare, juvenile justice, and the judiciary and improved identification of youth before they cross over to the delinquency system.

Pregnant and Parenting Teens in Los Angeles County

Another vulnerable sub-group of TAY is pregnant and parenting teens in foster care. While the teenage pregnancy rate nationally has declined significantly in recent decades, the rate of teen pregnancies among young people in foster care has not declined at the same rate (Svoboda, Shaw, Barth, & Bright, 2012). As of January 2014, there were 293 parenting dependents in Los Angeles County (John Burton Foundation, 2014).

A Hilton grantee, Dr. Emily Putnam Hornstein, led a groundbreaking data linkage project that generated new knowledge about pregnant and parenting teens in California (Putnam-Hornstein, Cederbaum, King, & Needell, 2013). The researchers reported birth rates for child-welfare-involved mothers and tracked outcomes for mothers and their children. Examination of childbearing among females ($n=6,749$) in LAC foster care found that more than one in four teens had at least one child by the time they were 20 years old. Mothers' repeat birth history was also tracked; among the mothers in foster care who gave birth before they were 18 ($n=777$) more than 1 in 3 had a second teen pregnancy before age 20.

To answer questions about maltreatment, researchers used a different population of 10,350 teen mothers. Forty-one percent of mothers had been the subject of a maltreatment allegation within the past 10 years. Investigations into their alleged maltreatment found that 19.7% were substantiated as victims. Within this population of teen mothers, 9.6% had been in foster care. Researchers also studied intergenerational maltreatment by examining the child protection histories of a population of teen mothers and the subsequent CPS involvement of their children

($n=24,767$). Findings indicated that children born to teen mothers who were victims of maltreatment were more than twice as likely to experience abuse and neglect during the first five years of life.

In recognition of the issues surrounding California pregnant and parenting teens, State Senator Leland Yee authored SB 528 in the summer of 2013. This bill, co-sponsored by the John Burton Foundation and three Hilton grantees (the Alliance for Children's Rights, Public Counsel, and the Children's Law Center) passed in September 2013. The new law mandates that the state track data about pregnant and parenting youth in foster care in California, which is intended to help inform better policy and planning around these youth. It also clarifies in the California Foster Youth Bill of Rights that these young people have a right to family planning information and services and comprehensive reproductive health.

3.2 New York City: Context for Change

Foster Care in New York City

In NYC, the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) is the government agency responsible for investigating reports of child abuse or neglect, including child welfare, juvenile justice services, child care, and Head Start. NYC has one of the most complex and diverse populations in the country. There are 1.7 million children in NYC, which is larger than the total population of all but four cities in the U.S., and 800 languages spoken, making it the most linguistically diverse area in the world (Bloomberg & Richter, 2013)

Currently, ACS provides preventive services to more than 22,000 families and has fewer than 14,000 children in foster care. Agencies with youth aging out of foster care are responsible for developing a permanency plan by choosing between the five different permanency planning goals that are laid out in the Adoption and Safe Families Act: (1) return to parent; (2) adoption; (3) custody or guardianship; (4) placement with a fit and willing relative; and (5) another planned permanent living arrangement with connection to a significant adult in the community, also known as "APPLA."

NEW YORK CITY'S DECREASING FOSTER CARE POPULATION

- The number of children in foster care in NYC has declined at an exceptional rate (Bloomberg & Richter, 2013)
 - 1997: more than 40,000 children in foster care
 - 2012: 12,577 children in foster care
 - Between 2010 and 2013 there was a:
 - 40.4% decrease in the number of new children admitted into foster care
 - 24.1% increase (8,492 to 10,540) in the number of families receiving preventive services (ACS, 2013).
- The number of abuse and neglect reports in NYC has also decreased
 - 2009: 59,249 reports
 - 2012: 55,436 reports.
- The percentage of children who return to foster care within a year of their reunification with family declined from 12.2% during the first 4 months of fiscal year 2011, to 9.4% during the first 4 months of fiscal year 2012.

ETHNIC/RACIAL AND GEOGRAPHIC DISPARITIES IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM PERSIST

- According to the New York State's Child Care Review Service, 38.9% of youth in foster care in New York City are African American; 18% are Latino; and 2.7% are White.
- Out of all boroughs, in 2012, Bronx had the greatest number of foster care placements (1,428) compared to Brooklyn (1,406), Manhattan (872), Queens (831), and Staten Island (219) (NYC Administration for Children's Services, 2013).

TAY Self-Sufficiency in New York City

In 2012, APPLA connected only 12% of TAY exiting care ($n=1,375$) with an adult resource (New York State Office of Child and Family Services, 2013). NYC's foster care system has undergone major changes over the past 10 years, and additional reforms are pending. Current reforms include clarification of past policies. To support a successful transition to adulthood, the Chafee Program allocated \$11,585,958 to New York State (NYS) in 2010. The amount was based on the proportion of children in Title IV-E-funded and state-funded foster care for the most recent year (U.S. DHHS, 2013). To complement Chafee efforts, Policy #2011/06 and Procedure #2011/02 were passed by ACS, which outline that foster care staff use critical case practice principles and a set of checklists to guide work transition plans for APPLA+ Youth Preparing for Adulthood and for Post Final Discharge Supervision (Saffaveh, 2012).

Foster Care Re-entry in New York City

Efforts have been made to clarify re-entry of TAY into the system. In 2013, legislation clarified the *New York Family Court Act* §1091 by allowing youth who are under the age of 21 who have been discharged from foster care to re-enter the foster care system regardless of the nature of the case which brought them into care (University of Chicago Law School, 2014). This proposal, still pending the Governor's signature, addresses whether re-entry applies only to youth who entered care pursuant to Article Ten of the *Family Court Act*, or if it is meant to include youth under delinquency and person in need of supervision (PINS)⁶ dockets as well.

Housing in New York City

Stable housing can be a struggle for TAY. To serve TAY housing needs, the ACS and the Office of Housing Policy and Development in cooperation with the NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA), has a Section 8 Priority Code (NYCHA, 2014). The program constitutes provision of Section 8 or public housing units to qualified current and former ACS Independent Living clients. Agencies are required to assist TAY in completing housing applications through the NYCHA and Section 8 (NYCHA, 2014; University of Chicago Law School, 2014). Since December 2002, more than 1,700 youth used this program (Child Welfare League of America, 2013). However, in 2013, federal cuts in funding resulted in NYCHA no longer accepting any new Section 8 voucher applications or processing existing vouchers (Community Service Society, 2013).

ACS has taken a number of steps to address housing issues, including referring TAY to other housing services such as NYCHA Public Housing. In addition, the ACS Housing Subsidy program pays a recurring monthly housing subsidy grant of \$300 per month toward TAY rent, directly to his/her landlord, for up to three years or until his/her 21st birthday (Housing for Vulnerable Families Coalition, 2014). The ACS has also worked with: (1) NYCHA to establish a priority code for youth transitioning from care to allow expedited means for them to secure housing in NYCHA apartments on an expedited basis, and (2) with the Office of Mental Health to secure supportive housing under NY/NY III for TAY, which does not require a mental health diagnosis. For those with mental illnesses, HIV/AIDS, and/or addiction issues, NYC Supportive Housing is available (University of Chicago Law School, 2014). However, apartment scarcity in NYC still affects youth leaving foster care.

Education in New York City

To improve educational opportunities, NYS has received \$2,645,540 of FFY 2013–14 Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) program allocation, which offers funds to current and former foster children for college or vocational programs (New York State Office of Children and Family

⁶ A person in need of supervision is "...a child under the age of 18 who the court has determined does not attend school, behaves in a way that is dangerous or out of control, or often disobeys his or her parents, guardians or other authorities," (New York City Bar Committee on Family Law & Family Court, 2012, pg. 15).

Services, 2013). The program is federally funded but state administered. To be eligible for these basic services, a youth must be under 18 years of age, or under 19 and a full-time student in a secondary school, or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training and is expected to complete the program before reaching 19. TAY must apply to ETVs before they reach age 21. In addition, the NYS Office of Children and Family Services has implemented regulations for housing for foster youth who attend college. If a foster youth attends college during school breaks, that youth may return to his or her previous foster home. During the break period, the foster home receives payment for the days that the youth was there. However, youth who do not have a foster home to return to are an issue that NYS is addressing.

Employment in New York City

To alleviate unemployment among foster youth, the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development's Out-of-School Youth Employment Programs provide vocational training. However, eligibility is restricted to citizens or legal immigrants who meet income requirements. ACS Policy 2013/05 Special Immigrant Juvenile Status and Immigration Status assists youth in permanency planning who may qualify for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status or other immigration benefits to be identified and referred to immigration legal service providers. Obtaining lawful permanent residency will not only assist youth in permanency planning but also assist them in becoming eligible for legal employment and financial aid in college.

Crossover Youth in New York City

In an effort to improve the outcomes of crossover TAY as well as other youth involved in the juvenile justice system, the NYC Detention Reform Plan (City of New York, 2011) aims to promote public safety and reduce recidivism, expand the range of alternatives-to-detention for additional youth who can safely be served in community-based alternatives, and bolster the child welfare system's response to juvenile delinquency by providing targeted solutions to youth with child welfare needs to prevent the need for detention. A common but under-discussed problem among these youth is the protection of rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth in NYC's foster care and juvenile justice systems. ACS Policy document 2012/01 aims to promote a safe and respectful environment for LGBTQ youth who are involved in the child welfare, detention, and juvenile systems.

Table 8 shows the number of foster and crossover youth in NYC by year. ACS supplied the data extracted from New York State's CONNECTIONS database.

Table 8. Number of Foster and Crossover Youth Age 16+ by Year, in NYC		
Date	Foster	Crossover*
12/31/2012	3,341	1,012
12/31/2013	3,191	906
4/30/2014	3,208	838

*Includes youth who were in foster care and also in detention at some point.

Tables 9 and 10 provide information on the facility type for the out-of-home placements of youth in NYC. Foster youth and crossover youth are shown separately. As previously discussed in the section on LAC, the facility type can give some indication of the level of need of the youth. For example, a “residential care” placement in New York is the most restrictive out-of-home placement option for youth in foster care. Placement with relatives, as with “kinship care,” is often viewed as the best option for youth who have to go into out-of-home placement. Note the differences between foster youth and crossover youth: 22% of foster youth are at the highest level of care, residential care, while 49% of crossover youth require that level of care. Also 23% of foster youth, but only 9% of crossover youth, are in kinship care. The NYC tables show youth’s placements as of April 30, 2014.

Table 9. Foster Youth Age 16+, Facility Type as of April 30, 2014, NYC	
Facility Type	Number (%) of Youth Age 16+
Foster Boarding Home	1,291 (54.5%)
Kinship Care	548 (23.1%)
Residential Care	529 (22.3%)
Total	2,368 (100.0%)

Table 10. Crossover Youth Age 16+, Facility Type as of April 30, 2014, NYC	
Facility Type	Number (%) of Youth age 16+
Foster Boarding Home	349 (41.6%)
Kinship Care	76 (9.1%)
Residential Care	413 (49.3%)
Total	838 (100.0%)

Pregnant and Parenting Teens in New York City

In its recently released *Guide to Working with Young Parents in Out of Home Care*, NYC ACS outlines plans, services, and programs available for young parents leaving foster care (2012). During the trial discharge period, the provider agency serves as a safety net for the parenting or pregnant teen. ACS specifies that a TAY parent being trial discharged to APPLA should have housing that is not a shelter with reasonable expectation that the housing will remain available for at least the first 12 months after discharge.

The youth's social worker (case planner) is required to ensure that: (1) the young parent has healthcare coverage for herself and her child when she leaves care, and (2) there is continuity of services for young parents who have a Child Care Subsidy or Head Start. While in foster care, the young mother and her children have foster care Medicaid and will be enrolled to transitional community Medicaid for an initial period of up to four 4 months. If a mother ages 18 through 21 and her child(ren) will not be covered by private insurance when discharged from foster care, she will receive community Medicaid after review of her and her child's documentation, contingent on NYS residence. If the young parent leaves foster care before 21 years of age, consistent with the federal Chafee Amendment, she automatically receives Medicaid. However, her child's eligibility is contingent on review of her income by NYC's public assistance agency, the Human Resources Administration.

To assist young parents transitioning out of care into their own housing, ACS and NYC Housing Authority enables all young people who will be discharged to themselves to receive the highest priority code of N-0 for public housing and Section 8 vouchers—but only when such vouchers are available. In addition, parenting and pregnant teens have access to respite care for their children during and after their own care. Resources such as the NY Foundling Crisis Nursery and Prospect Family Support Center assist young parents in case of an emergency where they need immediate childcare or respite.

Table 11 below shows the number of female foster youth in NYC who gave birth, 2011–13, as well as the rate per 1,000 teens in care. ACS supplied the data, which were extracted from their Preparing Youth for Adulthood (PYA) Initiative database. Note that the true incidence of teen childbearing among foster youth is likely higher than this, as the PYA data are voluntary and self-reported and likely to under-report childbearing. The table does not include male youth, as they almost never reported parenting information.

Table 11. Childbearing Among Female Youth in Foster Care, 2011–13, in NYC

CY	Number of Female Teens* in Care	Number (%) Who Gave Birth**	Birthrate Per 1,000 Teens in Care
2011	5,767	211 (3.7%)	36.6
2012	5,596	180 (3.2%)	32.2
2013	5,148	193 (3.7%)	37.5

*Includes female youth in care for at least one day during the year and reached age 11+ during the year.

**Includes youth whose child was born during the year and while the youth was in care, absent, or on Trial Discharge.

Foster Youth Outcomes in New York City

NYC’s ACS does collect data on youth preparing to transition from care through the PYA initiative. Table 12 presents PYA checklist data on outcomes for youth ages 17-21 in out-of-home placement in NYC during the period June 2013–June 2014. These checklists generally are completed every 6 months; the data in Table 12 are from the latest checklist completed for each youth.

Table 12. Outcomes for Youth Ages 17-21 in Out-of Home Placement in NYC, June 2013–June 2014

Outcome	Number of Case Reviews	Answer	Percentage
Youth is currently attending high school/GED	2,935	Graduated	25.1%
		Yes	48.5%
		No	26.3%
Youth is currently attending college	2,935	Graduated	1.7%
		Yes	12.1%
		No	86.3%
Youth is currently attending vocational/trade program	2,935	Graduated	3.9%
		Yes	5.2%
		No	90.9%
Youth is eligible to apply for ETV	2,935	Not in school	36.3%
		Yes	19.7%
		No	44.0%
Youth is currently working or in an internship	2,935	Yes	23.0%
		No	77.0%
Youth has permanent connection to adult	2,935	Yes	86.0%
		No	14.0%
Youth is pregnant	1,706	NA	7.9%
		Yes	3.8%
		No	88.3%

Table 12. Outcomes for Youth Ages 17-21 in Out-of Home Placement in NYC, June 2013–June 2014 (continued)

Outcome	Number of Case Reviews	Answer	Percentage
Youth is parenting	1,706	NA	13.7%
		Yes	19.3%
		No	67.0%

In addition, one of the Hilton grantees, CIDI, received funding to link and analyze data from child welfare, juvenile justice, corrections, cash assistance, food stamps, homeless shelter, school, hospital, and birth and death records data systems. In the progress report of October 2013, CIDI reported some outcomes on their sample of TAY. The sample consisted of 45,451 youth ages 13-21, who exited foster care and/or justice services during 2004–06. The analysis revealed the following:

- 77% of the sample were involved only with justice services; 17% were involved solely with foster care; and 5% were dually involved.
- The dually involved group had the highest proportion who received cash assistance (56%), received food stamp benefits (77%), stayed in homeless shelters (15%), was flagged for special education (27%), and had the most absences from school between 2006 and 2012 (43%).
- Although the dually involved group had the highest proportion who received cash assistance and food stamps, the amount of those benefits that they received was lower, on average, than the amounts received by the justice-only and foster care-only groups.

3.3 Cross-Site Learnings

As summarized in Table 13 below, the foster and crossover youth populations in LAC and NYC are comparable in size.

Table 13. Foster and Crossover Youth by Age, as of April 30, 2014, LAC and NYC

Site	Youth Ages 16-17	Youth Ages 18+	Total
LAC	2,059	2,143	4,202
NYC	1,878	2,168	4,046

Table 14 provides the racial/ethnic distribution of foster and crossover youth in LAC and NYC. It is not possible to present data separately for foster and crossover youth in the LAC data⁷. However, the data show that in both regions youth of color make up the majority of the population.

Table 14. Race/Ethnicity of Foster and Crossover Youth Ages 16+ as of April 30, 2014, LAC and NYC						
Race/Ethnicity	Los Angeles County		New York City			
	Foster & Crossover Youth		Foster Youth		Crossover Youth	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
African American/Black	1,621	38.6	1,785	55.6	562	67.1
Asian/Pacific	115	2.7	70	2.2	10	1.2
Hispanic	1,934	46.0	1,083	33.8	224	26.7
Other/unknown	31	0.7	152	4.7	28	3.3
White	501	11.9	118	3.7	14	1.7
ALL	4,202	100	3,208	100	838	100

Both regions are also working towards improving housing, educational, and employment outcomes for TAY.

In LAC, passage of AB 12 and its implementation starting in 2012 has greatly expanded **housing options and other supports for TAY**. Subsidies in NYC and ACS' work with other government partners focused on improved housing outcomes for TAY.

Both sites also have policies dedicated to improving **educational outcomes**, though the policies are unique in scope. California legislation provides prioritized funding for and increased attention on both primary and secondary school outcomes, while much of the efforts in NYC have been around improving postsecondary educational outcomes for TAY. NYC policy provides housing for TAY during college summer break, provided youth have a foster family available.

Employment services are available to TAY in both sites; LAC has both dedicated services for youth from the child welfare and/or probation systems as well as other employment assistance that is available to all young people. In comparison, youth from foster care in NYC have less dedicated services but can take part in a larger employment assistance system designed for all youth. However, to qualify for services in NYC youth must be legal residents.

The unique needs of **pregnant and parenting TAY** are underscored in LAC legislation requiring child welfare agencies to track pregnant and parenting TAY and provide them with reproductive health information. Housing again is a central component of services in NYC. Pregnant and parenting TAY receive priority access to housing, are provided with respite care, and receive Medicaid support. In California, new legislation has also improved TAY access to family planning

⁷ In the data provided by DCFS, the populations are combined.

information and services. TAY in both jurisdictions can also now access Medicaid until age 26 due to the *Affordable Care Act*.

Changes for **crossover youth** are gaining ground in LAC. Detention prevention and lower levels of care are service priorities for NYC crossover youth, along with provision of a respectful and safe service environment for LGBTQ crossover youth.



4. TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH GOALS

4.1 Improving Postsecondary Outcomes

One aspect of the Foster Youth Strategic Initiative’s theory of change is that, “Educational attainment enhances the well-being of foster youth, helps enable a successful transition to adulthood, and increases chances for personal fulfillment and economic self-sufficiency.” (FSG, 2012a, pg. 16).

The Foundation set a goal of improving postsecondary outcomes for 50% of TAY in LAC and NYC.

This goal includes academic and employment outcomes. The evaluation team evaluated progress toward improvement of postsecondary outcomes by answering the following research questions:

1. **Are TAY in NYC/LAC on a better path to success?**
 - 1e. **What was the impact of the Hilton Strategy on TAY’s self-sufficiency and interpersonal connections?**
2. **What impact did the Hilton TAY Strategy have on the grantees’ programs?**
 - 2b. **What difference did the Hilton TAY Strategy make in achieving the grantees’ desired outcomes?**

Data from grantee progress reports provide a sense of the grantee services targeting improved postsecondary outcomes. In LAC, the Child Welfare Initiative (CWI) connected 248 youth to job training programs, and United Friends of the Children served 400 youth through activities focused on educational stability and preparing for college. In NYC, Children’s Aid Society provided an Educational Advisor for 50 youth, tutoring to 46 youth, access to college tours/fairs to 18 youth, and SAT prep for 11 youth.⁸ Focus groups with TAY and interviews with grantees knowledgeable about postsecondary outcomes and whose work contributes to postsecondary outcomes provided data to answer the research questions.

LAC: Grantee Work Toward College and Career Readiness

In Los Angeles, 10 grantees (including one dual geography grantee) spoke directly about college and career readiness.

A majority of the Los Angeles grantees are working on college and career readiness through programs providing self-sufficiency services, working toward systems change, and generating new knowledge. For example, First Star and UFC offer intensive programs focusing on college admissions. UFC reported serving 400 students and retaining 97% of these students in grantee academic support programs . Over 400 foster youth and 100 caregivers attended the College Within Reach event hosted by UFC.⁹ The programs engage foster youth and their caregivers early on, often in middle school, with continuous support until they reach college.

Grantees’ knowledge-generation activities and products emphasize the importance of college and career readiness for TAY. Among the Hilton grantees, Dr. Dennis Culhane’s study showing poor long-term wage and educational outcomes among youth exiting foster care laid the groundwork for the importance of college- and career-readiness programs. One of the current grantees, CWI, is studying best practices in workforce development for TAY and, in particular, for crossover youth. Several grantees also expressed interest in Dr. Mark Courtney’s tracking of the educational and career outcomes of a cohort of youth who were in care when AB 12 was implemented.

The Hilton grantees are also collaborating with each other to effect change in regard to college and career readiness. Those focusing on TAY self-sufficiency services, for example, rely on each other as well as advocacy organizations to protect the educational rights of their clients. For example:

- First Star, Alliance, and Children’s Law Center (CLC) worked together on their education and legal partnership. As part of this collaboration the partners reviewed the educational records of youth in First Star’s program to identify credits lost due to school transfers and address undiagnosed mental health and special education needs.
- UFC and First Star serve some of the same students and work to coordinate services.

⁸ Data may not be mutually exclusive as youth can be in several programs.

⁹ Progress report data were not available from First Star at the time of the Year One report.

- First Place for Youth worked with Alliance, the Arch Diocese of Los Angeles, WorkSource centers, Jewish Vocational Services, and the Right Way Foundation to place youth in jobs and internships.

All of the grantees in this area credited the work of Dr. Culhane in driving their work and creating momentum in goal achievement through facilitating new grants and creation of new strategies. Several grantees spoke to the tiring but critical importance of collaboration in their work:

It's a wave of trying to do more connected, not siloed, to advance the goals. So it's a Catch 22. You spend a lot of time doing it, but hopefully it's toward the better.

LAC: Impact on College and Career Readiness

One of the most commonly discussed topics in both LAC TAY focus groups was the ongoing relationships that the young people had forged with grantee staff in high school and/or postsecondary educational programs. As a result of these relationships, participants accessed critical emotional and concrete support. Several youth mentioned the high value of the encouragement they received to try their hardest in school and troubleshoot when issues arose. The participants discussed the fact that for most of their lives, they perceived that adults did not care whether they succeeded in high school or went to college. However, through the grantee programs, many changed their minds about or re-committed to the goal of pursuing postsecondary education. The availability of a caring adult who wanted them to achieve academically and listened to them about their academic needs and desires was, in their eyes, of utmost importance.

...they actually like ask you ...what do you want to do after high school, what do you want to do—they help you...apply for colleges and give you choices on what they think I should apply to, or what I should do after high school.

This individualized counseling was important because it helped them figure out what path would best suit them for the future. In addition, many of these relationships with staff inspired young people to consider college for the first time, as illustrated by a conversation during one focus group between one participant and the facilitator:

Facilitator: So how have things changed for any of you, if at all, since participating in [grantee program]?

Respondent: Well, I actually want to go to college now.

Facilitator: Oh. So you didn't before?

Respondent: Yeah.

Facilitator: So how did that change?

Respondent: ...they actually want us to be something, and like back then I saw myself,... just doing bad things. I actually —it feels good knowing somebody cares about that.

Most of the young people reported that the staff motivated and encouraged them toward academic achievement, and for many, this required individualized tutoring available through the grantee organizations, along with identifying and advancing other skills that would help them get into college. Moreover, focus group participants also found college workshops on college options, financial aid, and related topics helpful and were inspired by the trips they took to see colleges in person.

Many participants described the college application process as daunting and complicated and found both group and one-on-one assistance useful. Assistance in locating scholarships was also useful, as many did not know what they were eligible for in terms of educational financial assistance. In addition, there were sometimes gaps in eligibility for government aid that the grantee organizations filled through their own resources.

A few of the focus group participants were already enrolled in community college and noted that grantee staff had connected them to the Guardian Scholars program¹⁰ at their campus, a referral that had been very helpful in navigating college life. The relationship between college services and grantee providers was thus necessary to providing educational support to these young people. Furthermore, focus group participants mentioned two Hilton-funded grantees

¹⁰ The Guardian Scholars program, launched in 1998 at California State University Fullerton and subsequently expanded to several California colleges, universities, and training programs, supports former foster youth in their pursuit of postsecondary education (including career training) through financial assistance (including aid for tuition and housing), and provision of academic and career supports (mentoring and advisement).
http://www.orangewoodfoundation.org/programs_scholars.asp

and the close relationship staff had when it came to supporting young people in their educational goals.

Participants in one of the focus groups also mentioned the importance of referrals to career services provided by several organizations in the area, including Hilton grantees. One participant mentioned that through a grantee organization, she connected with someone in the field of criminal justice and through that had learned the steps she needed to take to achieve her career goals. Two others discussed an event they would be attending soon to network with people in the entertainment industry who may be willing to mentor young people through internships.

LAC: College and Career Readiness Barriers and Unmet Needs

Despite being linked to grantee agencies, many of the TAY focus group participants expressed confusion about what they were eligible for beyond age 18. In one of the focus groups, young people ended up talking to one another multiple times, about what they had heard regarding eligibility for financial aid for college, housing programs, and AB 12 resources, and often disagreed on what the official rules were.

Grantees mentioned that lack of coordination between DCFS and the 85 LAC school districts allows TAY to fall through the cracks educationally. Despite best efforts, there are still barriers in enforcing the law around educational stability following a placement change. In addition, some school districts still do not adequately identify enrolled students who are foster youth. There are also some individual barriers to success. According to several self-sufficiency service providers, TAY's emotional, behavioral, and learning needs require intensive work—work that the grantees themselves are not always equipped to deliver; thus, collaboration with other organizations is critical. Finally, grantees discussed that caregivers need additional training and support to get youth through high school and into college (see also Caregiver section).

In the career readiness area, grantees identified that there are only a few workforce programs specifically designed for TAY. These youth often have difficulty juggling work and school, particularly if they are not stably housed when they emancipate. Moreover, former foster youth are not always aware of existing programs that can help them with career training. Regarding advocacy and systems change work, a few of the grantees are collaborating on the protection of foster youths' educational rights. This work includes ensuring educational personnel adhere to the guidelines of foster youths' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), monitoring youth's educational stability, or their right to remain in the school of origin after change in foster care placement, and guaranteeing that foster youth have opportunities to take college preparation courses. Grantees work with youth advocates and have established close connections with the systems, such as the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Los Angeles County Office of Education, and the Department of Children and Family Services, responsible for enforcing educational rights policies.

NYC: Impact on College and Career Readiness

Youth participating in focus groups stated that involvement with the grantee program furthered their high school education, and prepared them for secondary education options as well as job interviews and career goals. Respondents such as this one, acknowledged the support that they received for achieving their high school diplomas and General Education Development (GED) certificates through positive relationships and by providing stipends.

For me it was different because I am from Mexico and I had to work, but when I got to the agency, they supported me with everything. I went to high school and that gave me better support so I could focus on school.

Another youth reported, “When I was in high school, the \$40 [stipend] a month that I got was very helpful, ‘cause not all the time you get an allowance.” The experience that foster youth have had with their grantee agencies has positively affected their ability to further their education and career goals.

Youth aging out of foster care reported a range of career goals, including attending college for Criminal Justice and Anthropology, certification of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), obtaining a real estate licensure and pursuing a long-term goal of a Master in Engineering. The grantee organization they received services from provided career preparation activities, including job search assistance, internships, creating resumes, participating in mock interviews, and providing professional attire for interviews. As one respondent said,

A major part that helped me a lot was when I was going for my internship they had mock interviews before your job. They sent me to get clothes for the interview. I went to an interview a couple weeks ago and I had an outfit. I was already prepared and I knew what I wanted to say.

Youth reported that their individual counselors and their grantee agencies provided encouragement as well as concrete services to support them while pursuing their career goals. Another youth reflected on her experience stating,

I took advantage of foster care to the fullest extent. They helped me create my resume, get jobs, save up lots of money, and just be productive. I went to school more regularly and it helped me get back on the path.

Grantee agencies have created opportunities for youth to pursue their postsecondary education goals by providing funding for college. Several youth, as represented by the following quote from one participating youth, reported that their social workers and college advisors provided education about the college application process and encouragement to pursue their postsecondary education goals: “My social worker is the one that made me aware that I get extra money for going to college and things like that to look forward to.” Another young person had this reflection,

Well a number one success is I got into my dream school. And it's really important to me because they're paying for everything so I don't have to worry about working so much in college.

Through positive relationships with grantee staff supported by educational grants, foster youth are able to explore education options and pursue long-term career goals, although affording college tuition and housing is a primary concern for youth aging out of foster care. Several teens reported that receiving ETV, a federally funded, state-administered initiative to provide funding and support for postsecondary education, was beneficial to their experience. One of the aims of this funding is to reduce or eliminate the need for student loans. One youth reflected on her experience stating, “The ETV coordinator helped me with a situation, and she’s a support for me; she’s helping me manage my money.” Through the use of ETVs, and additional education grants, grantee programs are supporting the youths’ transition to self-sufficiency while they pursue further education and training needed to achieve their career goals.

In addition to academic funding, youth reported that their agencies were assisting them with the burden of finding housing as well as seeking internships and employment necessary for applying for housing through NYCHA. One respondent stated, “I’m going to start college soon so I don’t want to have to stress a major financial burden; knowing that my rent is only going to be \$150, I’m not going to be too worried about it.” Teaching youth how to manage their funds

as well as alleviating financial burdens while in school allow youth to focus on their education first and attain their degree.

The impact of grantee agencies extends beyond providing academic funding and encouragement. Agencies have assisted youth in obtaining documents necessary for permanent residency, education, and employment (i.e., birth certificate, driver's license, green card, and passport). In reflecting on an experience, one youth reported that,

If I was not part of this agency, I wouldn't have been in the place that I am right now. When I came here, I was illegal and they helped me to get my green card. They supported me to keep going to school because if they didn't, I was going to drop high school and go to work and then go back to Mexico.

Another young person reported, "They got me my passport, my license; they're getting me my real estate license, and I'm getting extra money for college." Through obtaining important identification documents, the grantee agencies have created opportunities for youth to pursue their education and seek employment to change their future. To further assist youth with transitioning to self-sufficiency, grantee agencies offer Independent Living Skill training programs that educate youth about home management skills, budgeting, and how to identify community resources. One of the youth acknowledged the benefits of the workshops and classes the agency offered that "teach you different situations about living on your own and they give you a stipend every time you go."

NYC: College and Career Readiness Barriers and Unmet Needs

Grantees noted foster youth engagement as an area of concern. Grantees explained that often youth lack understanding about the benefits of education and do not have a long-term vision of how education can help them in the future. Additionally, re-engagement of youth and helping them get back on track after unsuccessful educational attempts is challenging. Finally, grantees have continuously worked on building internal capacity by increasing staff members' knowledge around college and career readiness and changing staff members' perceptions of college opportunities for TAY.

While there are connections among the service providers, there are limited opportunities to network and share knowledge, especially with those outside of the child welfare organizations. FEGS, for example, not being a child welfare agency, reported being "outside of the circle" and not having access to networking opportunities that are normally available to foster agencies.

Grantees have begun to collect agency-level data on key indicators and track successes. However, barriers to continued data collection arise when youth leave the foster care system through reunification with their families or adoption. Also, deciding what the baseline is when tracking the outcomes can be confusing as youth enter services at different points and with different levels of needs and preparedness.

TAY focus group respondents also discussed barriers. Some expressed confusion and misinformation about eligibility for direct support and educational services (i.e., ETV) and other grants that are available to them. Additionally, two respondents reported they would benefit from additional funding for transportation costs to work and school. Only one respondent spoke about difficulty finding a job through grantee programs, while others expressed that their programs were supportive in seeking employment.

LAC: Interpersonal Connections and Self-Sufficiency Needs

In order to focus on college and career readiness, TAY need to draw on interpersonal connections. Grantees are an important source of these connections.

There were two main ways in which participants in the TAY focus groups improved their interpersonal connections through grantee organizations: (1) getting connected to a mentor or (2) having relationships with staff members who served as their “point person” when a crisis or other need came up. One of the groups spoke directly about mentor relationships that were critical to reaching their career goals. None of the participants mentioned relying on their adult mentor for emotional support or help other than with their career goals. However, staff members at grantee organizations seemed to be important to the young people for both emotional support and concrete help with specific needs. In one of the focus groups, a young man reported that he saw a certain staff member at the agency as a family member who supported him. Another young person explained a similar relationship:

Well, I mean, like having this support system, kind of like I basically feel... they're kind of rooting for you, I mean, like, in any way.... I've called (staff member) like late nights and he's answered my calls. Sometimes I'm going through a situation where I feel like no one can relate, and I feel like (staff member) ... - you know, (staff member) has been...the one that's...when something's been happening here, like, his persistence in...reaching me all the time.

Here, the participant describes the importance of the staff member's availability and persistence in getting her involved in activities. Other young people echoed these sentiments,

mentioning that the same staff member is always the first person they go when a problem arises.

While the questions in the focus group primarily asked about their experiences with the grantees in terms of educational and career goals, participants also mentioned that they received other vital assistance that helped them become more self-sufficient. Many mentioned receiving help with legal issues and learning how to prepare their taxes, pay bills, and develop other life skills, often through multiple Hilton-funded grantees.

In addition to the connections, TAY have other self-sufficiency needs. Youth were asked about unmet needs in order to inform recommendations and next steps. Several TAY focus group participants mentioned a need for legal assistance with adult criminal records, as most of the grantee organizations focus on assistance with juvenile records. Lastly, many mentioned the need for help learning to drive so that they would have easier mobility in Los Angeles (where public transportation can take multiple hours) and supportive housing that allowed a level of independence uncommon in transitional housing programs that they had encountered.

NYC: Interpersonal Connections and Self-Sufficiency Needs

Foster youth have created relationships with agency staff members who offer them support and guidance, including therapists, social workers, and caseworkers. TAY focus group participants complimented the program staff on being “very involved” accessible and easy to talk to. While recalling his/her experience with a caseworker one youth stated,

They're definitely more involved with you. I'm able to text them really quickly and they're really open in talking with me about any issues that I have. I feel like my caseworkers kind of lives at my house, so that's a good thing. Also, with the school visits they know my guidance counselor and they have a good relationship, so it's just a real partnership.

Youth shared that staff members provided emotional as well as informational support about job opportunities and education pathways. Several youth also mentioned that their involvement with individual and family therapy was beneficial to their experience in foster care. In fact, the impact of grantee staff extends beyond providing emotional support and educational opportunities to improving life outcomes for youth.

Respondents also discussed barriers that became apparent as youth considered their transitions to becoming self-sufficient. One respondent argued, “There are a lot of services that can be provided; they’re just not very good at telling you everything.” Others expressed concerns regarding the housing application process:

The housing is the most important part. Everybody’s worried about housing because they don’t tell you of anything else. There’s no other options but NYCHA or to go home.

Another respondent suggested that the grantee agencies provide a “list of things that they do have so I can help myself” regarding the housing process. Lastly, two respondents spoke about the challenges of working with a new staff member due to high rates of staff turnover at the foster care agency. “The only reason I say my agency and workers don’t do much is because it’s always a new person and they don’t know me.”

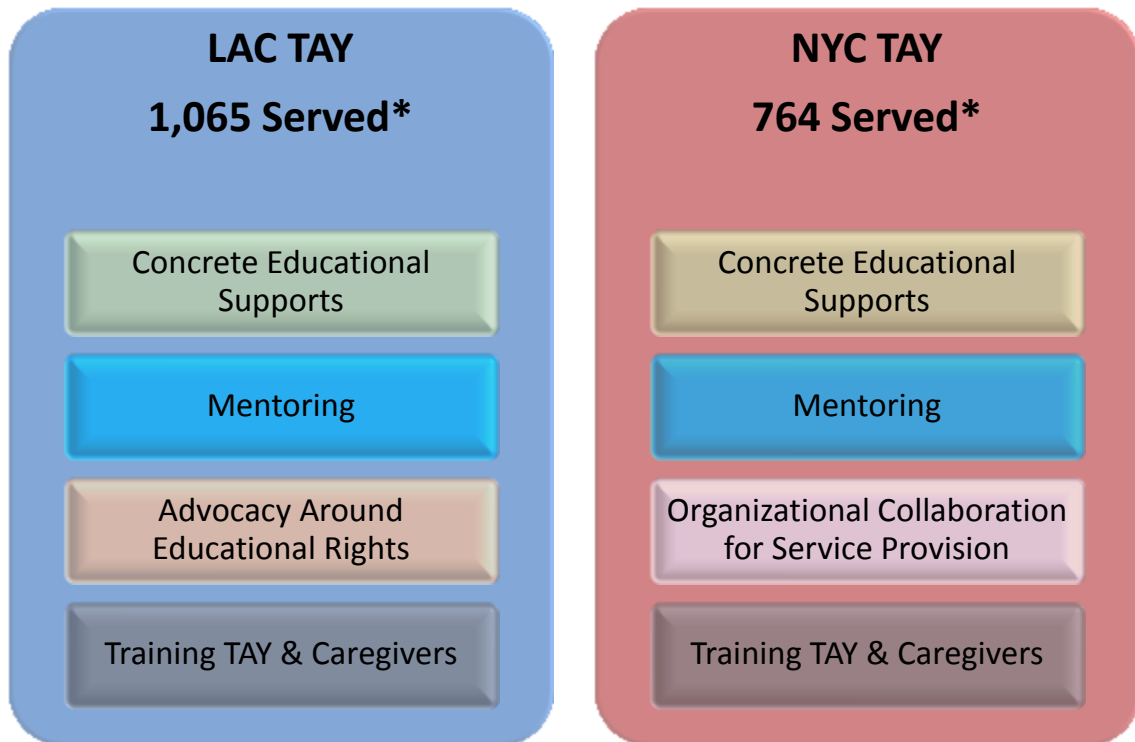
TAY provided their perspective on college and career readiness, how grantees contributed to that readiness, and what needs were still unmet. During interviews grantees also discussed their contributions to TAYs’ college and career readiness, as well as barriers affecting grantee work.

Improving Postsecondary Outcomes: Cross-Site Learnings

Getting foster youth to college requires intensive work with TAY, caregivers, and the system. Advocates, service providers, and school districts/educational governance organizations must collaborate in this intensive work in order to promote foster youths’ educational attainment, and they must use new knowledge to set baselines and track outcomes.

Overall, there is a great deal of activity and innovation in LAC and NYC around college and career readiness. ***Grantees are breaking down silos, aligning systems, and working with TAY and caregivers directly to produce better college and career outcomes*** (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. How Are Los Angeles and New York Grantees Cultivating College and Career Readiness?



*Persons Served 10/2013–3/2014 by Year 1 Grantees as Reported in Semiannual Data.

Both regions have active new models of engagement that are proving successful, particularly in education. Los Angeles appears to have more activities in the systems alignment arena around educational rights. New York, on the other hand, appears to be more intensively working with youth and caregivers around educational attainment.

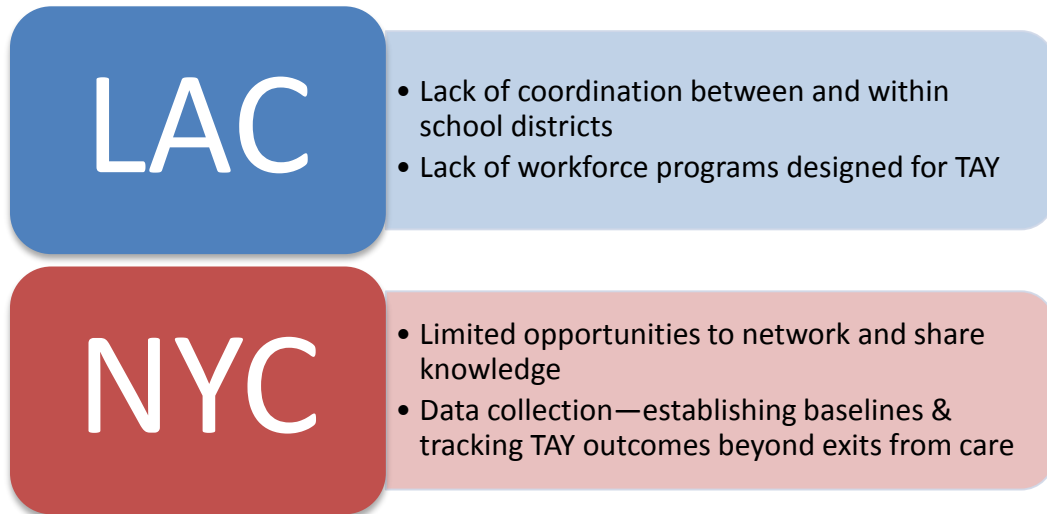
Grantees had an impact on TAY’s moving toward self-sufficiency through pursuit of college and career goals. TAY participating in focus groups spoke directly to the importance of networking, social support, and mentorship in achieving their college and career goals and the ways in which relationships with grantees provided access to supports.

- Cited services focused on preparation for all phases of education, high school, obtaining a GED, and preparing for and excelling in college. Career preparation services were also integral to increases in TAY’s self-sufficiency along with other supports, such as help obtaining legal documents and assistance with housing resources.
- TAYs’ relationships with grantee staff were a source of positive interpersonal connections. Despite the services and emotional support received, TAY expressed that

they needed more assistance with navigating services, especially services they would be eligible for as they got older.

There are also barriers to the work grantees conduct (see Figure 5). In both sites, issues around coordination, collaboration, and networking impede the work. LAC includes multiple school districts, and grantees discussed the lack of coordination within and between the school districts. NYC grantees expressed a desire for more networking opportunities. Other barriers included lack of workforce programs for TAY (in LAC) and difficulties with data collection once TAY exited care (in NYC).

Figure 5. Barriers to Work on College and Career Readiness



There is concentrated activity around improving postsecondary outcomes for TAY in LAC and NYC. Site-specific administrative data are required to evaluate the Initiative’s progress toward reaching postsecondary goals in the long term.

4.2 Improving Outcomes for Pregnant and Parenting Foster Youth

Within the population of TAY are subpopulations of youth who are particularly vulnerable to poor outcomes. The Hilton Foundation saw an opportunity to improve outcomes for pregnant and parenting TAY, a vulnerable subpopulation, through the Foster Youth Strategic Initiative.

The Foundation set a goal of improving outcomes for 50% of parenting TAY in LAC and NYC.

The evaluation team evaluated progress toward improvement of outcomes for pregnant and parenting youth by answering the following research questions:

2. What impact did the Hilton TAY Strategy have on the grantees' programs?

2b. What difference did the Hilton TAY Strategy make in achieving the grantees' desired outcomes?

Interviews with grantees knowledgeable about parenting youth outcomes and whose work contributes to outcomes provided data to answer the research questions. Fewer grantees are conducting activities informing and targeting outcomes for parenting foster youth as compared to the number of grantees focusing on postsecondary outcomes. At the time of the report, only two grantees had progress data on outputs available; their data are included in text below.

LAC: Grantee Work Toward Improving Outcomes for Pregnant and Parenting TAY

In Los Angeles, five grantees spoke about pregnant and parenting teens. Activities revolved around three major topics: new knowledge, the implementation of a practice model for pregnant and parenting teens, and policy changes.

The exclusively Hilton-funded report, *California's Most Vulnerable Parents*, was produced by Dr. Emily Putnam-Hornstein and her colleagues at the University of Southern California and University of California, Berkeley. The featured research used an innovative link between vital statistics and child welfare data to identify rates of pregnancy, parenting, and repeat births among young mothers in foster care and rates of maltreatment experienced by the mothers and their children.

Major Findings from *California's Most Vulnerable Parents*

- Among 6,749 young women in foster care, more than 1 in 4 had at least one child before they were 20 years old
- Among the mothers in foster care who gave birth before age 18 ($n=777$), more than 1 in 3 had a second pregnancy before age 20
- 41% of teen mothers ($n=10,350$) had been the subject of a maltreatment allegation within the past 10 years
 - 19.7% were substantiated as victims

This report received major attention from the media as well as the local and national child welfare and public health communities. Many grantees mentioned how influential this report will be for their future work.

Several grantees including Public Counsel, Alliance for Children's Rights, and Children's Law Center collaborated (both before and as a result of Hilton funding) with DCFS to implement a

practice model with pregnant foster youth known as the PPT (pregnant and parenting teen) conference. This model brings pregnant or parenting foster youth into a conference with multiple stakeholders. The purpose of the conference is to plan for a healthy pregnancy and birth and longer term parenting issues such as housing, employment, and childcare. As a result of Hilton funding, PPT conference capacity expanded significantly, reaching more youth and incorporating peer advocates. Staff with specialized expertise on pregnant and parenting youth participated in 30 PPT conferences. Forty-three percent of conference clients had improved housing outcomes through moves to safe and stable housing, and 63% of clients were linked to a caring adult who would provide ongoing support. This group of grantees also worked with DCFS to establish an MOU with nurse-family partnership services so that pregnant youth in the system have access to a healthcare representative knowledgeable about prenatal care. Several grantees have effected policy change through their joint advocacy for State Bill 528 (SB 528), the “Foster Care Bill of Rights.” SB 528 included provisions for foster youths’ access to reproductive health care and collection of accurate data on pregnant and parenting teens in foster care. Grantees also involved foster youth in lobbying for this bill. This was a cohesive group effort, which one grantee described as follows:

If I was going to name the one long-term change that gives me the most hope for the future of child welfare? Is that the people involved in the systems have organized and created political solidarity among themselves.

In working to improve the outcomes for pregnant and parenting teens, there are several important connections across the components of the Strategic Initiative (knowledge, services, and systems change). Dr. Putnam-Hornstein’s research has provided grantees with the concrete knowledge to advocate for more funding and call stakeholders attention to this population. Grantees anticipate that this report will add credibility to prevention efforts around cycles of maltreatment, adolescent pregnancy, and repeat DCFS involvement as well as reveal the importance of access to reproductive healthcare. In addition, several grantees work together with DCFS and a countywide planning group to implement and to monitor the PPT model as it is brought to scale countywide.

When speaking of barriers, grantees suggested that housing placements for pregnant and parenting TAY are very limited and often come with conditions that the women may not be able to follow. In addition, there is little attention to the needs of TAY fathers either in policy work, systems work, or direct services. Last, while groups (through research and continued advocacy) are beginning to get a handle on the scope of the problem and the needs of these women, there is work to be done in developing interventions to help these women avoid repeat births and gain the skills needed to succeed in the workforce. The addition of St. Anne’s

and the Los Angeles Youth Network as grantees will likely be able to address some of these gaps.

NYC: Grantee Work Toward Improving Outcomes for Pregnant and Parenting TAY

In New York, three grantees discussed pregnant and parenting teens.

Hilton funding supported several service-provision activities. For example, Hilton funding supported the implementation of new models of care such as enhanced mental health services and the sanctuary program. It provided an opportunity for agencies contracted with ACS for service provision to train their staff on mental health, trauma, and vicarious trauma. Both Inwood House and New Yorkers for Children/ACS were able to employ an educational consultant to examine young mothers' and fathers' educational aspirations and encourage them to seek postsecondary education as well as encourage overall literacy (for both mothers and children).

Through trainings in partnership with the New Yorkers for Children and Ackerman Institute in New York, the ACS Teen Specialist Unit (TSU) and provider agencies were able to strengthen their skill set and enhance their work with pregnant and parenting teens. Training was provided on the use of empowering and strengths-based tools that facilitated improved placement stability in foster homes, increased young parents' child-rearing skills, and raised teens' vocational awareness and educational achievement.

Grantees described a policy innovation related to pregnant and parenting youth. The Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) has formed the Pregnant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care National Peer Network. The Network includes four jurisdictions, one of which is NYC, and ACS was the city agency representing the NYC jurisdiction. As a result of this collaborative, CSSP produced *Pregnant and Parenting Youth in Foster Care: A Guide to Service Improvements*, a report that offered detailed recommendations. The former ACS Commissioner codified the recommendations through authorization of the Pregnant and Parenting Policy. This policy was a significant step forward in the provision of comprehensive services for the population.

Due to an absence of research on pregnant and parenting TAY focused on NYC, east coast grantees particularly appreciate the Hilton-funded project on *California's Most Vulnerable Children* that Dr. Emily Putnam-Hornstein and colleagues produced. The research has informed practice in NYC with respect to cycles of maltreatment and adolescent pregnancy and has raised awareness of issues experienced by this population. Representatives from Inwood House and New Yorkers for Children confirmed that annual Hilton Foundation convenings have helped them to connect with other grantees and exchange knowledge about pregnant and parenting teen issues.

Recent policy changes in New York, such as the closing of group homes and other residential facilities, generated new challenges for on-the-ground practice. Currently, teens go to foster

homes and communities without the services needed to address their needs. Grantees attributed additional challenges to shifts in the population, such as more volatile teenage populations, pregnant girls coming to services at late stages of pregnancy, and young women having more than one child. Grantees also discussed the challenges associated with permanency planning for these teens: “permanency planning does not apply to this population; getting them out in six 6 months is not always possible.” One grantee stated:

Foster parents find themselves out of their league. They don't know what to do. They throw up their hands. They give the child back and that cycle of being returned like a damaged lamp continues for that child.

Finally, lack of local research on pregnant and parenting teens and their needs, lack of attention to TAY fathers, and lack of knowledge on relevant interventions are of great concern.

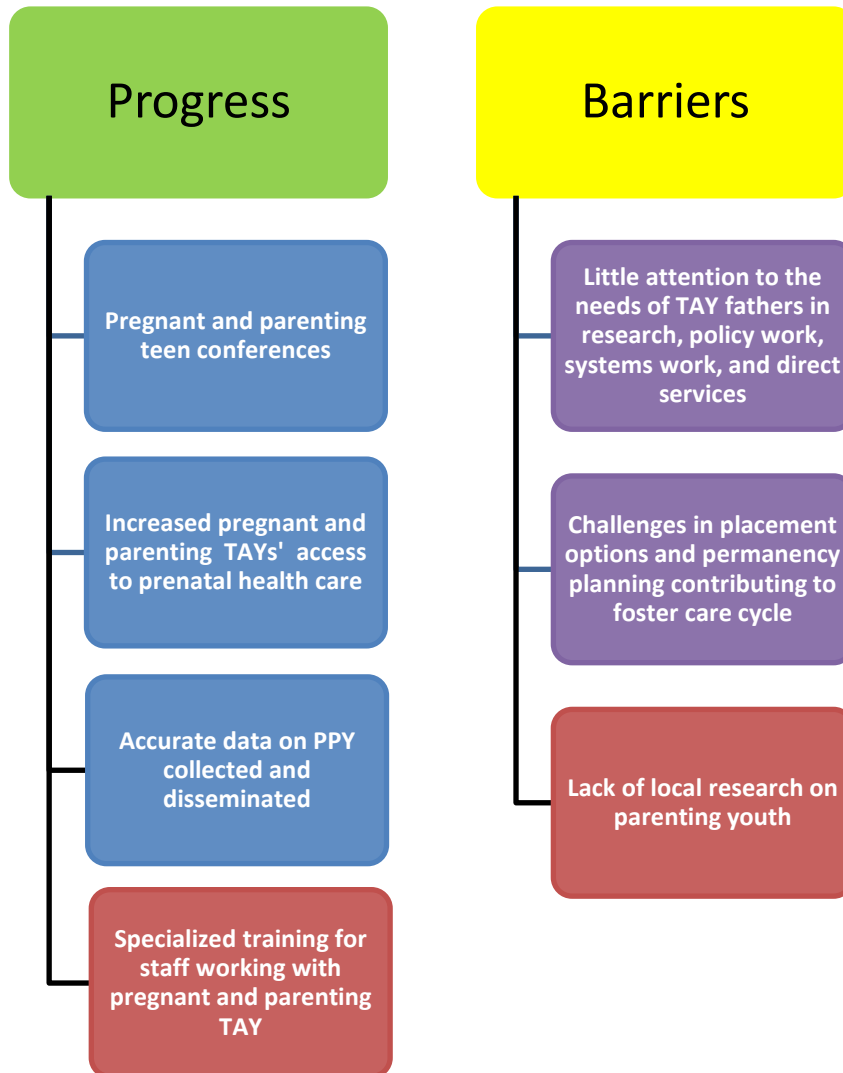
Improving Outcomes for Parenting Foster Youth: Cross-Site Findings

Grantees in both LAC and NYC are working toward collaborative, multi-sector services for pregnant and parenting TAY. Though the regions face different sets of barriers, three cross-site themes were identified (see Figure 6):

- Accurate data on pregnant and parenting TAY (and their children) can facilitate prevention and intervention efforts.
- There is an overall lack of attention to TAY fathers.
- Placement options for pregnant and parenting TAY are limited, posing challenges for service delivery and stability.

Work on behalf of parenting youth in LAC and NYC is stimulating change. Site-specific administrative data are required to evaluate the Initiative's progress toward reaching parenting youth goals in the long term.

Figure 6. Progress and Barriers: Parenting Youth Outcomes in LAC and NYC



4.3 Improving Outcomes for Crossover Foster Youth

Crossover youth, another subpopulation of TAY particularly vulnerable to poor outcomes, are also a focus of the Initiative. The term crossover refers to these youth's concurrent child welfare and juvenile justice involvement.

The Foundation set a goal of improving outcomes for 50% of crossover youth in LAC and NYC.

The evaluation team assessed progress toward improvement of outcomes for crossover youth by answering the following research questions:

2. What impact did the Hilton TAY Strategy have on the grantees' programs?

2b. What difference did the Hilton TAY Strategy make in achieving the grantees' desired outcomes?

Interviews with grantees knowledgeable about crossover youth outcomes and whose work contributes to outcomes provided data to answer the research questions. At the time of the report, only two grantees had progress data on outputs, and the data are included in text below. Eight grantees have been engaged in work toward better identifying, serving, and reducing the population of the crossover youth dually involved with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

LAC: Grantee Work Toward Improving Outcomes for Crossover Youth

In Los Angeles, seven grantees (including two dual geography grantees) spoke directly about crossover youth.

In Los Angeles, grantees noted several major activities in the crossover youth area that resulted from Hilton funding, including the expansion of the Multi-Disciplinary Team Model (MDT) countywide to represent 241.1 youth¹¹ at hearings and a reduction in crossover rates as a result of the MDTs. While MDTs were piloted in one courthouse prior to Hilton involvement, funding in the crossover youth area has helped to expand the implementation of the MDTs countywide. Public Counsel and Alliance participated in the MDTs at three courthouses to make recommendations and advocate for the educational needs of crossover youth and connect

¹¹ The Welfare and Institution Code Section 241.1 allows probation and child welfare departments to work with a presiding juvenile court judge to decide if a youth meets the criteria to be considered dependent and considered as a ward of the juvenile court. When the criteria are met, such cases are termed dual-status cases (Saeteurn & Swain, 2009).

crossover youth with resources. Thirteen youth participated in MDTs. Alliance also provided legal advocacy services to 62 youth.¹²

The work of Georgetown University's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR) promises to help monitor and track crossover rates, which have fallen dramatically since the implementation of the MDT process. Through a subcontract with Georgetown University, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) Children's Research Center is evaluating the Delinquency Prevention Pilot (DPP) screening/assessment tool and related case management practices. In September 2013, it was discovered that the DPP was not being implemented as originally designed. At that time, the DPP team drafted a plan for re-launching the DPP in January 2014 and created a timeline that would allow for evaluation of a smaller cohort of youth following the re-launch. The DPP has been re-launched in the initial four pilot offices.

Hilton funding has also resulted in increased opportunities to involve crossover youth in workforce training programs, particularly through the local Workforce Investment Bureaus (WIB). CWI is in the process of finalizing a MOU with DCFS, Probation, CSS, and the LA County WIB, that will give CWI authority to identify and evaluate barriers to youth employment and job training, to make recommendations to senior LAC leadership, to implement a coordinated youth referral system between providers and public agencies, and to establish best practices in case planning, data reporting and tracking, and cross-systems staff training. CWI is already included within a MOU with the South Bay WIB to provide evaluation and implementation support for the Bridge to Work Program for foster and probation youth. The work of the Aspen Institute in Los Angeles will further build the workforce training and referral network in Los Angeles.

LAC Crossover Youth Work: Connections and Collaborations

There are several connections and collaborations between LAC and dual-geography grantees across components of the Strategic Initiative (knowledge, services, and systems change) that contribute to the work being done in the crossover youth area.

CJJR held the Crossover Youth Research Roundtable February 6-7, 2014, in Redondo Beach, CA. The group of about 30 prominent researchers and practitioners discussed the status of research on crossover youth and potential research questions that if explored in a meaningful manner would help advance the knowledge base around crossover youth and lead to better policies and practices designed to serve them. CJJR is currently developing a formal meeting brief that will serve as an ongoing research agenda and guide to future funders for the crossover youth area.

¹² Some services are provided through a partnership among grantee organizations. It is possible that the number of crossover youth cited as served by individual grantees includes numbers served through the partnership.

I think [being able to conduct the Research Round Table] was huge in terms of invigorating a group of 30 researchers... who are now going back with ideas.... I think there was a real, a really powerful energy in the room, and that wouldn't have happened without the Hilton funding. There is just no venue for that to occur.

Much of the momentum activating service and systems changes was fueled by the knowledge disseminated in 2010, by Dr. Dennis Culhane and his colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania in their report on the earnings, educational attainment, and other outcomes (i.e., mental health, criminal justice involvement) of crossover youth in LAC compared to probation youth only and foster youth. This study, funded by the Hilton Foundation, found that the 241.1 crossover youth had the worst outcomes in nearly all domains. The report has fueled much of the current momentum in Los Angeles toward service and systems change for crossover youth and also contributed to increased media and public attention to this underserved population.

Hilton funded Dr. Culhane to conduct four follow-up studies, two of which focus on the crossover youth population. These studies were completed in 2013 and examined use of LAC-funded services (jail, health, mental health and substance abuse services).

Major findings from the 2013 Crossover Youth follow-up studies

- 18- to 22-year-old youth with one of three offending trajectories (low risk for offending, increased risk for offending, and decreased risk for offending those with increasing and decreasing risks were more likely to use county-funded substance abuse treatment services (Byrne et al., 2013a).
- Confirming findings from the 2010 crossover youth studied in 2013, in comparison to youth involved only in the child welfare system or only in the juvenile justice system, crossover youth had lower earnings and these youth used county-funded services more intensively, resulting in higher service costs (Byrne et al., 2013b).
- One of the follow-up studies examined differences between youth that had a 241.1 hearing and youth that did not. In this study, both types of youth were found to use similar amounts of county-funded services following their exits from care (Byrne et al., 2013c).

Several grantees, including Public Counsel, Alliance for Children's Rights and Children's Law Center, worked together (both before and through Hilton funding) on the implementation of the MDT pilot and procedures as well as outcomes evaluation tracking. The grantees who work directly with crossover youth to represent them at hearings bring their knowledge of on-the-ground issues to DCFS and countywide workgroups in order to help solve some of the lapses in

communication between systems. CJJR initially received funding from Hilton to provide technical assistance related to crossover youth in Los Angeles with a focus on permanency, transition planning, and sustainability; however, the workgroup disbanded before the Hilton funding could be used. Instead, CJJR received approval from Hilton to use that funding to support the Children’s Law Center in their crossover youth work.

LAC Crossover Youth Work: Major Barriers

One of the major barriers remaining was the need to improve communication between DCFS and probation. Cross-sector collaboration requires a new way of operating and managing information. As one interviewee stated:

...many of these agencies work from silos, and so their data systems are built within silos.... And when you’re doing multisystem work, ultimately there has to be a way to follow that youth through various data systems.

Both DCFS and probation also need further information and training on workforce/employment training and resources; workforce development programs also need more training and support on the needs and challenges of crossover youth. Services also need to be better tailored to the needs of the individual youth, particularly in defining which youth are “work ready.”

Another barrier mentioned was that DCFS has not made transition planning a priority for case workers and supervisors, leading to challenges in developing TILPs for crossover youth. Grantees also suggested that bringing a pilot program countywide, such as the MDT model, can result in diffusion of the model so that it weakens the impact. It is important to continue to monitor the success of the model as it gains traction and becomes routine. Finally, several grantees mentioned that the county needs to articulate and follow a protocol regarding victims of human trafficking. While there has been some movement in policy and practice to treat those prosecuted as victims of crime and not as “criminals,” more work needs to be done in this area.

NYC: Grantee Work Toward Improving Outcomes for Crossover Youth

In New York, three grantees (including two dual geography grantees) commented on the crossover youth topic.

Georgetown and CIDI have initiated systems change work on crossover youth issues through joint policy groups. Key leaders from across NYC attended CJJR’s Multi-System Integration Certificate Program, a week-long training focused on the coordination and implementation of

evidence-based practices for crossover youth. As a follow-up to the Multi-System Integration Certificate Program, an information sharing workgroup formed. This group completed a survey of all of the laws and other provisions in the state of New York and NYC that pertain to information sharing and completed a matrix of all existing MOUs between the various youth-serving agencies. New consent and re-disclosure forms were developed for information to be legally shared on crossover cases. In addition, leadership teams from the Bronx and Brooklyn developed capstone projects to focus on the development of their local process to improve outcomes for crossover youth; the two teams will carry out these projects over the coming year. Simultaneously, CIDI's efforts in collecting data from multiple systems have generated interest and awareness among the multiple agencies involved: "people became more interested in what's happening across systems" and "it wasn't a single agency responsibility per se."

The Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM) protocol for NYC outlines the process for identifying dually involved youth and the overall case management practices for crossover youth. Already implemented in other jurisdictions across the country, the CYPM includes an evaluation component that supports the tracking and dissemination of data on crossover youth. The program strives to share information and lessons learned across sites nationwide to make everyone aware of the accomplishments as well as the benefits of generating the data. CJJR initially launched the NYC CYPM in the Bronx in 2012; the Hilton Foundation grant has enabled CJJR to further build the capacity of the Bronx program prior to implementation and expand the CYPM to Brooklyn. At the time of their interview, CJJR was fine-tuning the Brooklyn model to account for differences in local practice, e.g., the way the court is structured in Brooklyn. Although Brooklyn is still in the initial stages of implementation, the grantee reports a consistent high turnout at the Brooklyn site meetings, with the participating stakeholders exhibiting tremendous energy and interest even through the "tedious" fine-tuning work.

NYC Crossover Youth Work: Connections and Collaborations

The knowledge disseminated by Dr. Dennis Culhane and colleagues' study on crossover youth outcomes in Los Angeles informed the work being done by CIDI in the crossover youth area. Hilton has funded CIDI to replicate this study by compiling and analyzing crossover youth data from 12 state and local agencies. This project has brought systems together to collaborate on identifying youth in multiple systems. A joint policy group of experts from all of the health and human services agencies has formed to review and collaborate on the research. Connections with the Department of Education have also been forming.

NYC Crossover Youth Work: Major Barriers

Respondents mentioned a number of barriers. One of them was lack of system flexibility that made data sharing difficult. Data sharing requires building trust and shifting the culture of organizations (e.g., trust issues come up between the Prosecutor's Office and the Public Defender's Office). "Flexibility" also referred to implementing innovative activities and

programs with young people (e.g., looking at alternative types of services, extracurricular activities, or other “normal” teenage activities that systems-involved youth generally do not have the opportunity to be involved in). As one grantee mentioned:

Administrative flexibility in this work is crucial for this population and allowing system leaders to be able to pull their resources so that they can actually follow this population as they move from different places, or just need to access different supports. It's not the young people that are disconnected, it's the systems that disconnect them.

However, despite these systemic barriers, the grantees have found a great deal of cooperation and enthusiasm among both city and state agencies in New York. One grantee described “unprecedented inter-agency cooperation” in sharing data once the agencies understood the goals of the project. A recent change in ACS leadership, which might have posed a challenge to CJJR’s work, ended up demonstrating the support for the CYPM in New York. After outreach and briefings from CJJR, both new ACS leaders have endorsed the efforts of their predecessors on the CYPM.

In addition, more work needs to be done in engaging community mental health providers; youth probation officers; youth caseworkers; and vocational/educational, behavioral health, and developmental disabilities specialists. Grantees suggested that cultivating youth as leaders should be encouraged. Crossover youth have complex needs that require all involved parties to be at the table for successful case planning.

Improving Outcomes for Crossover Youth: Cross-Site Findings

Both Los Angeles and New York are working on systems alignment to reduce crossover rates, improve services, integrate data systems, and expand workforce training opportunities for crossover youth. Systems alignment and strong partnerships between systems and agencies (child welfare, juvenile justice/probation, workforce services, educational system) are crucial to prevent foster youth from crossing over into the juvenile justice system and to identify and serve existing crossover youth.

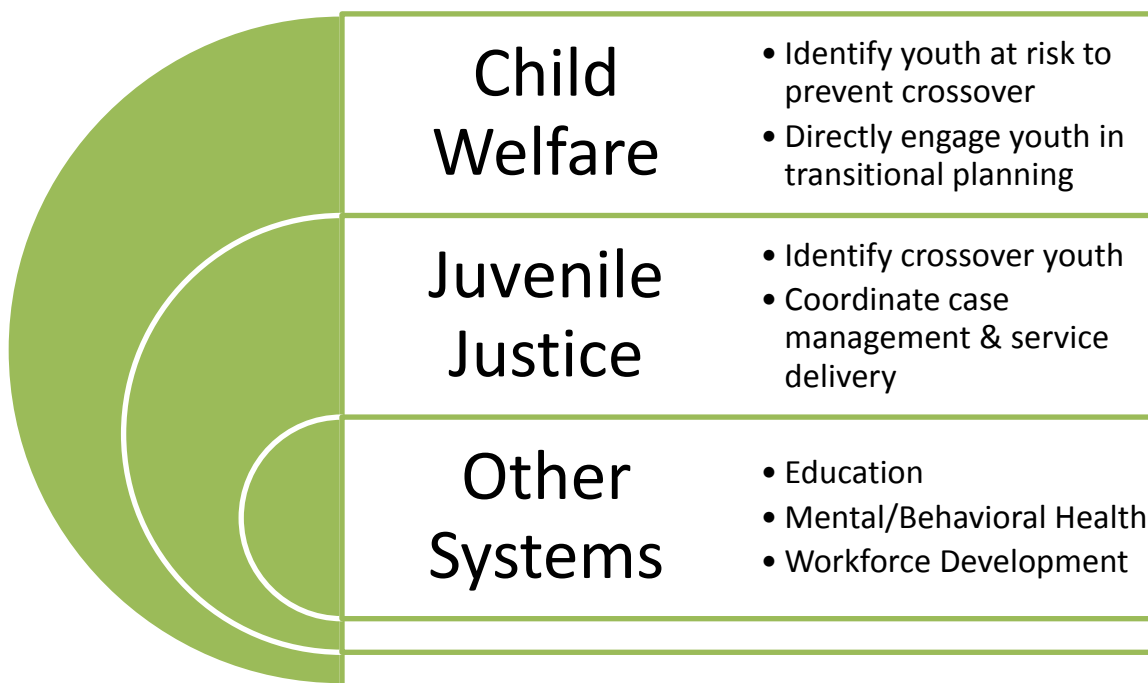
Grantees in both locations mentioned the need to involve crossover youth and their caregivers directly in their own goal and service planning. While grantee work focused mainly on transition planning, grantees emphasized the importance of developing youth engagement much earlier in their case planning to empower and motivate youth. This may apply to preventing foster care

youth from crossing over into juvenile justice as well as achieving better outcomes for crossover youth transitioning into adulthood.

The Crossover Youth Research Roundtable brought together experts to discuss best practices and create a nationwide research agenda for further critical questions. The research agenda may guide future funding decisions and lead to further new knowledge to inform both systems change and direct practice for crossover or potential crossover youth.

Projects across both sites make clear that present and future innovations in the crossover youth area require ongoing monitoring, data sharing, and committed partnerships between all involved systems and the youth themselves (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Requirements for Continued Progress on Outcomes for Crossover Youth



Efforts to improve outcomes for crossover youth in LAC and NYC are promising. Site-specific administrative data are required to evaluate the Initiative’s progress toward reaching crossover youth goals in the long term.

4.4 Building Caregiver Capacity

In the Conrad N. Hilton Children and Youth in Foster Care Strategy, the Foundation concluded that “providing a stable placement with quality caregivers is critical for TAY well-being (page 7, 2012b).” The plan proposed activities to “increase caregiver capacity to support older youth, and their ability to transition to self-sufficiency”(page 25).

This priority is reflected in the Initiative’s 5-year goal to improve caregiver capacity to support older youth for 90% of caregivers in the two locations.

The following data help to frame the Initiative goal. In LAC, 1,828 foster homes are licensed or certified¹³ to care for teenagers (308 licensed and 1,520 certified). In NYC, 4,505 foster homes are licensed to care for teenagers¹⁴. Note that these homes might not just provide care to teens, but could possibly care for children over a span of ages (e.g., 0-17), and the licensing and certification data give no indication of how many homes are actually being *used* for teens. The number of foster homes licensed/certified varies widely between the two regions, yet when those data are viewed in the context of the number of youth placed in foster homes,¹⁵ the ratios reveal similar patterns in LAC and NYC (see Table 15).

Table 15. LAC and NYC Ratio of Foster Homes Licensed/Certified for Youth to Placed Youth

Site	Foster Homes Available	Youth Placed in Foster Homes	Ratio of Homes to Youth
LAC	1,828	607	3.01 homes/youth
NYC	4,505	1,640	2.75 homes/youth

As discussed in the evaluation plan, the evaluation team identified an information gap on caregiver competencies regarding older foster youth. The literature is vast regarding older foster care youth and achieving self-sufficiency, but lacking in the caregiver’s role in and preparation for transition planning with older foster youth. Thus the evaluation team focused first-year data collection on identifying needed caregiver capacities and asked:

2. Are TAY in NYC/LAC on a better path to success?

2c. What are the core competencies that caregivers need in caring for TAY? How did the grantees support and build those competencies?

Hilton funded several grantees in the first evaluation period that targeted TAY caregivers and provided specialized training for these caregivers. This aspect of the Strategy is breaking new ground because available caregiver-training programs are often tailored to those responsible

¹³ Licensed homes are homes that are licensed directly by the state. Certified homes are foster homes that are certified by the foster care agency. The state licenses the foster care agency (i.e., the agency is the holder of the license), and the foster care agency certifies the foster home. Data is for youth 13 years of age and older, and is as of 8/31/2014.

¹⁴ As of 6/19/2014

¹⁵ Excludes relative/kin placements and group care settings.

for younger foster youth. As a result, caregivers of TAY frequently lack the skills needed to promote TAY self-sufficiency.

Nine out of the 24 grantees (3 in LAC and 6 in NYC) represented in the semiannual data collection reported offering services directly to caregivers. The number of caregivers served ranged from 5 to 351 and averaged 128 caregivers per program. Grantees also listed the number of trainings for caregivers and the number of caregivers who attended the trainings. Nine of 13 direct service grantees (69%) reported providing caregiver trainings (see Table 16); the number of trainings ranged from 1 to 49, and the total number of attendees ranged from 4 to 250, for an average of 8 trainings attended by 63 caregivers.

Table 16. Caregiver Trainings and Attendance		
Number of Caregiver Trainings and Attendees	Trainings	Attended
Total Across Regions	100	813
Total for LAC	10	324
Total for NYC	90	489

Grantees were also asked about recruitment of caregivers for participation in their Hilton-funded services. The active recruitment of caregivers proved to be a much smaller service area for Hilton grantees, with only six grantees responding to this item (see Table 17). The number of caregivers recruited by these grantees ranges from a handful (5) to 250 caregivers.

Table 17. Caregivers Recruited for Services	
Number of caregivers recruited for program	Caregivers recruited
Total Across Regions	415
Total for LAC	94
Total for NYC	324

In addition to reporting on the number of caregivers served, grantees discussed their work with caregivers and the role of caregivers in systems change during their interviews.

LAC: Grantee Work Toward Building Caregiver Capacity

In Los Angeles, two grantees spoke about working directly with caregivers, and two spoke indirectly about working with caregivers through their work with TAY.

In the first year, the major innovations in this area centered on the systems change work of one grantee, CWI. CWI is working on best practices for recruitment and training of caregivers through foster family agencies, particularly treatment foster care providers. It is working to shift agencies away from traditional recruitment and trying to develop a network of foster parents to

recruit others capable of caring for older youth. CWI released a publication describing these best practices, which was disseminated to policymakers and program representatives.

CWI is also working on best practices for training caregivers for the hardest-to-place youth, such as those with mental and physical disabilities. Caregiver training is an area that needs further understanding and elaboration in Los Angeles because of the number of different types of providers and varying quality in caregiver training.

Grantees suggested that their systems change activities try to include caregivers because caregivers also need a voice in systems and advocacy processes. Moreover, several grantees (such as those that offered trainings to caregivers) are forging connections between practice and systems change through their direct work with caregivers around TAY educational goals and caregiver education about youths' rights and responsibilities under the AB 12 policy.

Due to the limited number of caregiver programs funded before July 1, 2013, connections between knowledge, services, and systems change concerning caregivers are in progress. Funding for Seattle Children's Hospital and Children Now as additional grantees will help to augment what is currently happening "on the ground" in regard to collaboration for caregiver recruitment and training.

In speaking of barriers, several grantees identified that there is a shortage of caregivers for older foster youth, particularly those who have special needs such as learning disabilities, mental illnesses, or involvement with the juvenile justice system. Grantees also identified that the advocacy process often leaves caregivers out, so that their voices are not always heard, and their needs remain unknown. Moreover, with the abundance of recent attention to child deaths in the DCFS system, there is less room for policymakers and others to pay attention to the needs of caregivers of these older youth, including those who are in kinship care.

NYC: Grantee Work Toward Building Caregiver Capacity

In New York, interviewed representatives from two grantee organizations spoke about the caregivers.

A major activity as a result of Hilton funding was Fedcap's implementation of the PrepNOW! *Helping Youth in Foster Care Go to College and Graduate*, a curriculum and personalized coaching approach for caregivers. Both the curriculum and its delivery systems are designed to enhance caregivers' motivation and capacity to prepare youth in their care for entry into and graduation from college as well as self-sufficiency. This program emphasizes creating a college-going culture in homes, identifying foster parents' important role in education early on (i.e., during foster parent recruitment sessions), messaging this in a way that foster parents hear it, and providing ongoing support and mentoring through Re-Service (55+-year-old individuals who want to give back socially). PrepNOW! has helped child welfare service providers re-design their foster parent curricula to stress the importance of educational

attainment. Overall, this work has contributed to building capacity and systemic understanding of caregiver support for youth education in New York.

Fedcap has partnered with ACS in reaching out to child welfare service providers and engaging them in promoting education by enhancing their foster parent curriculum and training. A number of child welfare organizations (some of which are Hilton grantees) have partnered with Fedcap in this initiative to communicate the need to try to think differently about the role of foster parents. The Department of Education is now more engaged in providing information to caregivers on educational opportunities, scholarships, and financial aid that is available to children in the foster care system.

Grantees expressed that working with caregivers and promoting education for foster youth has been challenging due to caregivers' beliefs about higher education, which could be slow to change. Many caregivers did not go to college themselves; neither did their own children. As some caregivers stated:

"...we don't get paid for this"

"I didn't go to college and I'm fine;"

"I can't send my own kids to college and you expect me to talk about going to college with the kids in my home?"

During focus groups, caregivers discussed key ingredients for supporting youth self-sufficiency, and these discussions as well as caregiver's ideas about competencies needed when caring for older youth provide further insight on the recruitment and training needs of TAY caregivers. Caregivers also identified how current services fulfilled their needs and what needs were unfulfilled. Unfulfilled needs, in particular, may limit caregivers' ability to be involved as advocates and champions for success.

Caregiver Beliefs About What Youth Need To Reach Self-Sufficiency

Los Angeles

Caregivers in the Los Angeles focus groups provided their thoughts on what TAY need to attain self-sufficiency, including learning basic skills for independence (e.g., budgeting, counting money, or reading a clock) and having a strong mentor who could guide them in navigating life after foster care. Caregivers emphasized the importance of strong communication with the

youth in their care; for example, helping youth to understand what would happen when they turned 18 (or 21 in some cases) and where they should go for support.

In one case, a caregiver relayed a story about a young man in her care with a developmental disability who would soon be turning 21. She believed that it was important to have a communication plan in place well before a youth needs to leave her care. She and the social worker together had spoken to him multiple times about the changes that would be occurring and who would be his “point person” to address his special needs.

Another example of preparing youth included teaching them decision-making skills. Caregivers noted that they did not always agree with a young person’s decisions, but youth needed to learn that their own decisions carry consequences. Caregivers also felt that youth needed a concrete skill if they did not plan to go to college and that they should start learning that skill while still in high school.

New York City

New York respondents discussed the necessary ingredients for a foster youth to achieve self-sufficiency. They reported that general knowledge of life skills, ability to manage one’s own care, and financial aptitude, such as effectively budgeting one’s money, were paramount. As one caregiver described,

To me it’s making sure they stand on they own. They become independent, they know how to count money, they know how to handle their money, they know how to do bank accounts.

Another emphasized:

If you’re not gonna save a third of your income, you’re not gonna make it. You’re gonna be among the statistics. You’re gonna be a part of that group who end up homeless within the first year of beina on their own out of care.

Some participants were therapeutic foster parents, caring for foster children with specific mental health and/or medical needs. For these respondents, self-sufficiency included managing

appointments and medical care. A respondent noted, “making sure she takes care of her appointments...making sure, number one, taking her medicine” is crucial, “‘cause if she don’t take her medication then she immediately goes into crisis.” Caregivers monitor therapeutic foster youth are more closely, and caregivers expressed concern for their youth’s ability to move into independent management of medical needs.

Beyond the specific competencies necessary for independence, caregivers pointed out that TAY need to develop a sense of responsibility. Caregivers stressed that commitment to maintaining employment and/or education along with financial health was critical for youth aging out. Another caregiver declared, “...school, you should have a job, and you should have a savings account,” and another stated, “...at 18 you should have a job. It doesn’t have to be full time, but you need to learn how to bring in your own money.” Caregivers saw education as vital to employment. A caregiver summarized, “There’s no job...you’re not gonna be able to support yourself on a high school diploma. So you need to be in school.”

Caregivers indicated that in order for TAY to be self-sufficient, those in charge had to be candid about their circumstances.

When they hit 15, I think this is when the agencies need to tell them ‘now this is when you need to get serious. ‘Cause in three more years you’re gonna age out and it’s gonna be a different situation for you. Stop making them a victim. Somebody need to grab them and say ‘Listen, this is what’s gonna go on in life and this is what’s gonna go on in society.’

Lastly, the support provided by both caregivers and the agency emerged as fundamental for TAY self-sufficiency. Mentoring, emotional support, and concrete services were each believed to be critical factors. Respondents expressed the significance of agency support, as “they’ve been helping in getting them educational grants...,” but expressed concern that “where they need to help more is in getting them housing before they age out.” Other services such as college preparation programs were also noted as necessary for the youth to move toward independence. Additionally, caregivers reflected on the unique, intangible support they provide. One noted that generally, “with my guidance and support, they could become productive members of society.” Another echoed collective sentiments:

They need structure, they need guidance, they need love. They need a sense of belonging....Especially the youth that's been in multiple homes...it's like they need to be some place where they know like, 'ok, no matter what I do, this person's not gonna put me out.

This value of unconditional love and understanding is further illustrated in discussion of caregivers' core competencies.

Core Competencies Needed in Caring for Older Foster Youth

Los Angeles

The types of competencies Los Angeles caregivers believed they needed to support youth in their transition out of foster care fell into two main categories: (1) attitudes/beliefs that caregivers need to have when caring for older foster youth and (2) actions/behaviors that caregivers need to take with older foster youth. In terms of attitudes/ beliefs, caregivers often came back to the importance of keeping expectations of youth high and yet remaining practical about the youths' abilities or desires for the future. While some caregivers try to "drill into" the youth in their care that they are going to go to college and encourage them to keep their grades up, others believe that the young person may need to start working on an alternative path, particularly for youth with disabilities. For example, one caregiver talked about the need to be realistic about the needs and abilities of the young person and support him/her in finding a path of success:

Once they understand that no matter what they do, you're not leaving...You know, we're going to work through this. Whatever it is, we're going to work through it. So once they feel that, once they're convinced of that, then you can start to work with them [on developing skills for self-sufficiency].

In this quote, the caregiver suggests that she has to adapt her expectations and desires for each youth according to the youth's own abilities and interests. Along these same lines, another caregiver said, "I'll push her for her dreams and then give her the reality." As discussed in the previous section, caregivers also noted that youth needed to be encouraged to develop a skill, such as data entry, if they were not planning to go to college. They believed that having a marketable skill would help the youth transition to adulthood more easily because they would

more likely attain stable employment. Overall, caregivers believed they needed to keep their expectations for youth high but also reasonable.

When asked what they believed youth needed to be self-sufficient, one of the more experienced caregivers mentioned that before an older foster youth can work on self-sufficiency, he or she must feel safe and emotionally supported by his/her caregiver. Therefore, she tries to provide an atmosphere in which foster youth in her care can work through problems and feel unconditionally loved. She noted,

I mean, if a child, you know, if he struggled just getting out of high school, I mean, if he really struggled, then you can't expect him to...be accepted at, you know, a top ten university. I mean, you have to be realistic, but then there is nothing wrong with a community college.... You start there and see how that progresses. You can get...your training there. And if not that, then a trade school. You know, just what is it that you'd like to do? Do you like to work on cars? Then...you go to that particular type of trade school...as opposed to trying to get into college.

This caregiver believes that one of the core competencies of caregiving for older youth is being able to provide a stable platform from which youth can “launch.” Without this stable base, youth may struggle to support themselves after leaving care. Caregivers noted that at this point, they can start taking small steps to prepare youth for independence. Examples included taking youth shopping with them, giving youth their own shelf in the refrigerator, and helping them practice counting money. One caregiver explained her process with one young man who came to her when he was 16:

I've showed him how to save his money. He has two bank accounts. He works. He works at [name of restaurant], which is in [location], and he rides the public transportation. No assistance from anyone. He's very self-sufficient. I take him shopping but I, I'm with him, but yet I'm not with him. I give him the money, I'm in the store, but I'm not right there with him, but I'm observing him. But I let him do his own shopping.

Caregivers also stressed the importance of being able to identify and cultivate a young person's strengths. For one caregiver, this meant talking to a young man who was interested in video

games and encouraging him to think about ways he could make this hobby a career by becoming a video game developer. Inherent in this discussion was a message to the young man that his hobby was an opportunity for a possible career. Caregivers must always be aware of opportunities to build self-efficacy of youth by encouraging them to explore interests and supporting them in their efforts to build this skill or interest further.

Caregivers also emphasized the importance of being able to understand and advocate for youth's needs, particularly in a very complex network of organizations, agencies, and policies. Multiple caregivers framed this issue of advocacy in the context of psychiatric medications. In one focus group, many of the caregivers described their experiences working with doctors, school personnel, and social workers to either take youth off medications or find alternative medications. One caregiver talked about the difficulty of communicating between multiple providers while advocating for the youth in her care. She explained that she had to be able to attend meetings, keep track of the various appointments, and also push back when doctors or social workers wanted to take steps she didn't agree with. Here, caregivers are discussing the need for caregivers for older youth, particularly those with health or behavioral problems, to be willing and able to stay motivated and engaged with a complicated system of support for these youth. In order to do this, mentioned some caregivers, they need to be taught how to advocate for their needs as caregivers and provided more information about what benefits and services the youth are eligible for so that they can work alongside the youth to ensure adequate support.

New York City

The caregivers who were interviewed in New York discussed a sense of safety, security, and family as vital to establishing an environment in which youth may thrive. The role of caregivers is fundamental to the young persons' ability to achieve self-sufficiency. One caregiver said, "to stay together like family, to support them....To follow rules...to protect each other." In addition, within such an atmosphere, respondents also characterized themselves as teachers and mentors, who encourage their foster youth to develop necessary life skills. "You gotta teach them how to cook...how to handle finances...like opening a bank account."

In addition to teaching skills, caregivers felt that their own expectations had a strong influence on TAY in their care. Caregivers discussed their expectations regarding education and employment, and it became clear that each envisioned high, but reasonable goals for their foster youth. For example, one caregiver shared that "the way I raise my own kids, is like, education and work...." Caregivers reported a variety of methods for encouraging educational and vocational productivity, such as providing an incentive to encourage a strong work ethic and financial independence:

I expect my youth to maintain employment at 18, and maintain it until they age out and have a nice fat bank account. I even tell my youth I will match your dollar. But I'm not gonna match your dollar a month before you graduate.

Most caregivers did not see a GED or high school diploma as sufficient for ensuring future success, but rather set their sights on college for the youth in their care. Caregivers, such as the one quoted below, shared their genuine belief that, despite their hardships, an ongoing commitment to education would allow the youth in their care to overcome adversity.

I think education is important because it's a way out of poverty. It's a way to get out of the tunnel that you're in. So I stress it, I encourage it, and most of the teens that age out from me end up going to college.

Participants also shared that they played an important role in nurturing appropriate behavior. As one respondent stated,

I feel like all children need structure and discipline....If you don't teach them how to act a certain way, how you expect them to grow up in society and conquer what they need to conquer the world?

Additionally, caregivers noted that being able to teach responsibility was an important competency, and respondents described various strategies for encouraging responsibility in their foster youth. One caregiver walked her foster youth through the process of obtaining legal documentation.

I make them request they birth certificate and Social Security Card from the agency. I get them a file folder because your important papers need to be kept together. Some of them you can't tell them, you have to actually hold their hand and walk them through it. Which is fine, but you have to actually do it.

Caregivers emphasized the importance of nurturing and loving foster youth unconditionally and in the same way that biological children are nurtured and loved despite any difficulties caregivers faced in the foster parenting role. One respondent shared, “We build the bond to let them know, that wherever you’re needed, we’re there for you. Knock on the door; the door’s open.” And another stated:

I think as a foster parent it's your role...the same way you would do it with your child, you need to do it with them. And if you can't do it for them, then you shouldn't be a foster parent.

A therapeutic foster parent, one who cared for some of the system’s most troubled children, shared,

They need protection and love....My love is unconditional for them.... I don't take anything...personal, because I know they feel...part of my family. I can do nothing else.

Participants were keenly aware of the differential treatment foster youth often face because of hardships endured and underscored the importance for parents to counteract such biases.

....When you come in my home,...we become family. I give you all the tools that you need to be successful in life....Say for instance you have hardship or you go through something...then I have your back to embrace you and help you move forward. It's not a handicap in my home.

Participants had clearly come to integrate the role of a foster parent into their personal identities; an aspect of their lives that was certain and unchanging. Youth would come and go, and their doors would remain open.

These children here are not done....If we sign up and this is a job...we [are]parents. We have a job 24 hours 7 days a week. I think if you sign up for this, I think you should take pride in what you [are] doing.

Support Received and Needed Among Caregivers for Older Foster Youth

Los Angeles

In addition to learning how to advocate for older youth in their home, caregivers identified other supports they had received or needed in order to adequately prepare youth for eventual independence. The most commonly mentioned issue was that of confusion and/or lack of information about how to handle specific circumstances that arise with the TAY in their care, especially those who had experienced trauma. One caregiver talked about the importance of support groups for caregivers so that they could receive emotional support as well as concrete ideas for situations that might occur:

Caregiver A: So, they [the youth] have been either abused, neglected, um, born with uh drugs in their system, have, uh, issues of abandonment and bonding and attachment, all kinds of issues they don't know how to deal with and it leaves us in a place of... Caregiver B: of bewilderment.

Caregiver A: (laughs) Yeah, sometimes we just don't know what to do, so this, this, we talk it out and uh, get a lot of good advice, mostly people are so non-judgmental. You can just come here and really vent. That helps, too, um just listen. People just listen very well and don't, uh, give their opinions. Just offer help.

Support groups for caregivers, led by a trained or peer facilitator, can be an important part of ensuring that caregivers' needs are addressed. While they provide emotional support when needed, they also serve as an important source of information. One caregiver highlighted this resource, saying "I mean, we've helped each other through IEPs, medical stuff, how to get medical insurance." Another mentioned that in support groups they had to clarify how to help youth over 18 who were still in their care. They mentioned that sometimes youth who have complex health or mental health needs do not understand how to access services, and yet the caregiver is in some circumstances not allowed to access information because of health information laws. Overall, caregivers stressed the importance of support in navigating multiple systems such as health, mental health, child welfare, and education.

New York City

Caregivers highlighted their relationships with one another, workshops on specific topics, opportunities for respite, collaboration with agencies (such as the grantees where the focus groups took place), and self-advocacy skills as necessary supports. Many respondents expressed a desire to discuss issues they faced caring for older foster youth. Peer support was identified as an important source of support where, "...we help each other by venting; discussing different issues...." However, not all participants had such relationships. Respondents also expressed that while they informally supported one another, they lacked the opportunity to come together in a formal setting for sharing and support. As one caregiver described, "What's missing? The support with the foster parents. ...the only time we get to express ourselves is [during] a group class, like a training." Participants expressed a desire for the agency to facilitate recurring support groups for caregivers. One caregiver spoke about a specific model of support provided by another agency, as an ideal:

I think every agency should be required to have a FPA...A Foster Parent Association....it's ran similar to that of a PTA with a school, but there's people who are elected to represent the parents...they have group sessions once a month and they discuss...issues and they bring it back to the agency.

In addition to peer support, respondents also identified workshops and training as key to developing their competencies as caregivers. Workshops and trainings were largely voluntary, except for those required for therapeutic foster parents, but caregivers recognized the need to attend and learn how to improve the care they provide.

Caregivers also desired respite. They felt their competencies would be enhanced if they had a break from the demands and emotional fatigue associated with caregiving. Some respondents found opportunities to rest when supplemental agencies took their youth on outings. One parent shared how she gets some of the benefits of respite during home visits with workers:

...when the social therapist comes every week it's like if I'm frustrated, she's there to talk to me, she's there to talk to her [foster youth]. And sometimes she [the foster child] opts not to come so it's like then it's just me and her and then the services is all just for me....And it helps a lot, because it gives you someplace to vent and you know, so you don't get frustrated and turn that around on the child.

Lastly, both focus groups highlighted a critical need for better communication and support with workers from the foster care agency supervising youth in their care. Some parents shared instances where this was possible, and others shared frustration with their struggle to do so: "Sometimes they work with you, and then sometimes I feel like they work against you." Respondents highlighted their unique and intimate knowledge of their foster youth, on the front line as caregiver, and stressed the need for the agency to incorporate this expertise into their own vision of the work.

I think us working together as a whole helped...is helping the kid. And me putting my input and what I feel cause I'm the one with the child 24/7.

Others, who had not encountered this collaborative outlook expressed frustration,

If you open someone's home to be a foster parent, you should let them parent the children. Give the help if it's asked or needed, but don't over step it. I think there's a lot of that with...not all caseworkers, only some.

In considering their expectations for the agency to most effectively provide support, some respondents shared experiences where they felt challenged by inconsistencies between themselves and the workers.

What I expect from the agency...I don't expect them to come in and tell me how to discipline my children or how to treat them....I treat kids according to their age and behavior. It has nothing to do with the fact that they're a foster child.

It was evident that collaboration was not enough, but also consistency and trust between agency and foster parent. While some participants evidenced such reciprocal relationships and others were without, the value of this mutuality was consistently reflected as essential for caregivers of older youth. Respondents did consider the factors that may contribute to these experiences with workers:

I think it's just that now, they have a lot of young people...you haven't been in the field that long, so even though you a social worker, the foster parent might know a little bit more than you do at the time....But the social workers that I have worked with...they...learn stuff from the foster parents as well.

Progress Toward Improving Capacity for Caregivers: Cross-Site Findings

The grantees funded to support caregivers in New York have a strong presence and connections, whereas the Los Angeles landscape around caregiver support and training is in a more nascent stage of development. Some of the newer grantee activities in Los Angeles, such as Children Now and Seattle Children's Hospital, will help to fill the gaps in caregiver

knowledge, advocacy, and training in Years Two and Three of the Initiative, and Children’s Action Network FosterMore campaign aims to improve caregiver recruitment, through increasing awareness around the needs of TAY. New York has made strides in developing creative ways to reach and train caregivers, which may also provide models for Los Angeles. Overall, two cross-site themes emerged:

- Rethinking recruitment and training of caregivers for older foster youth; and
- Involving caregivers as advocates and champions for success.

When discussing core competencies needed for raising TAY, caregivers stated that high but reasonable expectations were critical. Caregivers felt that they should use interpersonal skills, nurturing, and unconditional love to create a safe home environment for TAY. In LAC and NYC focus groups, respondents shared that they needed collaborative relationships with agencies, and agency staff needed to respect caregivers’ expertise during interactions (see Figure 8). Other mentioned avenues used for fulfilling needs were workshops, support groups, and opportunities for respite. However, these supports were unevenly provided and continue to be an area where improvements can be made.

Figure 8. What Caregivers Need to Provide for TAY





5. SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT GOALS

The Hilton Foundation recognized the critical role that child welfare, justice, education, and health systems have in improving TAY outcomes (FSG, 2012).

Foster Youth Strategic Initiative grantees are funded to provide targeted and comprehensive approaches to aligning these systems and furthering Initiative goals, including:

- Creation and strengthening of cross-sector coordinated efforts
- Advocacy resulting in policy for improved outcomes
- Annual convenings of organizations and agencies supporting TAY

The evaluation team assessed progress toward goal achievement by answering the following research questions:

3. **Since 2012, what changes have occurred in LAC/NYC in collaboration and alignment of systems serving TAY? How did the Hilton TAY Strategic Initiative contribute to these changes?**

3a. Have agencies serving TAY participated in any of the following? Who were the participants? What was the focus? What were the results? What were barriers and solutions? How did the changes contribute to the overall TAY Strategy?

- **Joint planning efforts;**
- **New and consistent policies for increasing services and support for TAY;**
- **New data-sharing plans or agreements;**
- **New or expanded avenues of communication with each other;**
- **Collaborative service provision; and**
- **Joint trainings and professional development.**

3b. How did the Hilton TAY funding, support, and new knowledge create or enhance these changes? What other activities or events had a role in these changes?

Data from grantee interviews and progress reports and the semiannual data form answer the research questions. Progress on cross-sector coordination and advocacy is reported together because of the connected nature of the work that changes systems and brings them into alignment through shared policies, practices, and outcomes. Various forums, such as meetings or convenings, and collaborative service provision provide the environment for alignment work. Participation in such forums is reported in Section 5.2.

5.1 Systems Change Through Cross-Sector Coordination and Advocacy

Los Angeles

All of the Los Angeles grantees (including dual geography) spoke either directly or indirectly about the importance of policy and systems change strategies, particularly focused around AB 12.

AB12 Implementation: Continuing Strategies for Change

Major policy and systems change strategies in LAC revolve around implementation of AB 12, the 2010 California state law extending foster care to age 21. Implementation required systems alignment and reform on a centralized level, and the Hilton Foundation and its grantees are all major players in AB 12 activities. For example, several grantees, including the Alliance for Children’s Rights, Public Counsel, and Children’s Law Center, were pioneers in writing, passing, and implementing AB 12. Moreover, these grantees have remained active in working out the kinks of implementation in conjunction with the county and the state. Some of that work

involves making sure youth can re-enter foster care. Of the grantees providing self-sufficiency services for the 18- to 21-year-old group, several are working on educating TAY, caregivers, and stakeholders on the nuances of the policy and TAY's rights under the policy. Dr. Mark Courtney's research will provide the first look at implementation and outcomes for youth affected by AB 12 in LAC and in California.

AB12 Implementation: Connections and Collaborations

There are a number of connections around AB 12 implementation. Several grantees, including those mentioned above along with First Place for Youth and CWI have worked together for many years through the AB 12 steering committee, the leadership of which the Hilton Foundation partially funds. The AB 12 steering committee, led by the Alliance for Children's Rights and the Children's Law Center, includes key staff from DCFS, Juvenile Probation, and other attorneys and community providers. Key achievements of the steering committee thus far have included refinement of the re-entry process for youth, creating parity in services and supports for non-minor dependents and emancipated youth, removing barriers to one of the new housing options under AB 12 (SILPs), clarifying eligibility for TAY with disabilities, and addressing ongoing needs throughout the implementation of AB 12 in the county through close working relationships between key partners.

Other grantees mentioned how AB 12 illustrates the reciprocal relationship between policy and practice: practice drove the policy change. Practitioners and advocates saw the need for extended foster care and brought that "need" to state legislators' attention. The policy shifted on-the-ground work with DCFS social workers, who are now required to provide extended services to the 18- to 21-year-old population. Grantees are facilitating policy implementation. Public Counsel, Alliance for Children's Rights, and Children's Law Center provide AB 12 training for staff from DCFS, group homes, and foster family agencies during which they share available and specially created resources. The grantees also provide continued consultation after training. In regard to the relationship between practice and systems change, one grantee stated:

What we are seeing happening are the problems (with AB 12), and we try to utilize that in forming advocacy at a systemic level. And I think it makes a big difference....I think folks like us are able to really see—to be able to inform them...actually, that's not what's working out. Actually, you're saying that you can access this, but they're not. So I think that's really the essential part of our advocacy.

AB12 Implementation: Barriers

Remaining implementation barriers include identifying and improving housing resources for hard-to-place youth (pregnant and parenting teens, crossover youth, and those with a mental or physical disability) and linkages and referrals to therapeutic plus placements that are designated for AB 12 youth. Helping youth become self-sufficient by the age of 21 is challenging. Several grantees stated that they have room in their programs to serve transitioning youth, but DCFS is slow to refer eligible youth to these services as they are working out their own hurdles in implementing the legislation.

New York City

In New York, seven grantees spoke about policy and systems change strategies (including two dual geography grantees).

While there are no major policy and systems changes in New York comparable to those revolving around the implementation of AB 12 in Los Angeles, other policies are affecting areas important to the Foster Youth Initiative.

As mentioned in the section on postsecondary outcomes, there is state-level policy work that has implications for NYC, and the work should facilitate changes in the area of TAY's college access. Previous attempts to affect city-level policy have not been successful, but collaboration is growing. Implementation of Georgetown's Crossover Youth Practice Model is facilitating the coordination of multiple sectors through leadership training. Leadership teams from the Bronx and Brooklyn participated in the Multi-System Integration Certificate Program for Public Sector Leaders and submitted capstone project proposals.

NYC Systems Connections and Collaborations

Grantees were hopeful that the new city administration would promote opportunities for collaboration.

I think we're at the starting point with some of the collaboratives to be able to share what we've learned, and I think we'd like to have the opportunity to take the data that we have and our practices that we've learned about and share that knowledge with other folks. I don't think we've gotten to the place. With the change of city administration, I'm hoping that there will be an opportunity to do some of that, but I think it hasn't gotten to that point quite yet.

Grantees discussed the ways in which they anticipate the on-the-ground practice to affect systems change. An initial step is to collect data that “tell a story” and to think, “how we use data to drive the kinds of policies that we want to see in place.” Their recent efforts have focused on systematically collecting process and outcome data documenting, “...how this intervention really impacts young people’s future lives.”

NYC Systems Barriers

Grantees cited key barriers to policy and systems change, including the absence of providers in systems change activities. Providers have the on the ground knowledge of what is and what is not working and need this knowledge to ensure that policy and systems change strategies are realistic while moving forward. Additionally, providers hold the details about what policies need to include.

5.2 Forums for Systems Change

A total of 13 grantee programs (54.2%) represented in the semiannual data are involved in systems change (indirect services), including indirect service-only grantees (7) together with programs that offer both indirect and direct services (6). The evaluation team wanted to learn more about the main forums or meetings that grantees can initiate and/or attend for alignment purposes, including the number of meetings and who can attend those meetings, e.g., government policymakers, TAY service providers, TAY, Hilton grantees.

Table 18 displays responses for 12 grantees who reported meetings attended for systems alignment purposes (between October 1, 2013–March 31, 2014). Although grantees might conduct meetings at great distances electronically, Hilton’s interest in systems alignment places a practical emphasis on local networks. Consequently, we think it is useful to look at these data by region. As noted earlier in this section, there are currently no New York grantees solely involved in systems alignment and advocacy. The New York grantees in this table are TAY self-sufficiency (direct service) providers who also doing systems change work. Right-hand columns show the percentage of meetings in which government policymakers, TAY service providers, TAY, and/or other Hilton grantees attended.

Table 18. System Alignment Meetings					
Number of Meetings Attended for System Alignment Purposes and Percent Attended by Policymakers, TAY Service Providers, TAY, Other Hilton Grantees	Mtgs.	Percent of Meetings Participated			
		Gov’t Policy-makers	TAY Service Providers	TAY	Other Hilton Grantees
Los Angeles County	608	51	68	27	42
New York City	38	15	65	16	22
Dual Geography	136	100	75	67	0
Grand Total	782	55	69	37	21

Testimonies are influential ways of sharing of knowledge that may contribute to policy change. For purpose of the data collection, “testimony” was defined as “a written or spoken statement conveying facts or evidence in support of a program, policy, or position that is given to another body, such as a governing committee or politicians, on a particular TAY issue related to Hilton funding.” Systems and advocacy grantees were asked about the number of testimonies provided.

Half (7) of the grantees providing indirect services reported providing one or more testimony during the reporting period, for a total of 58 testimonies (see Table 19).

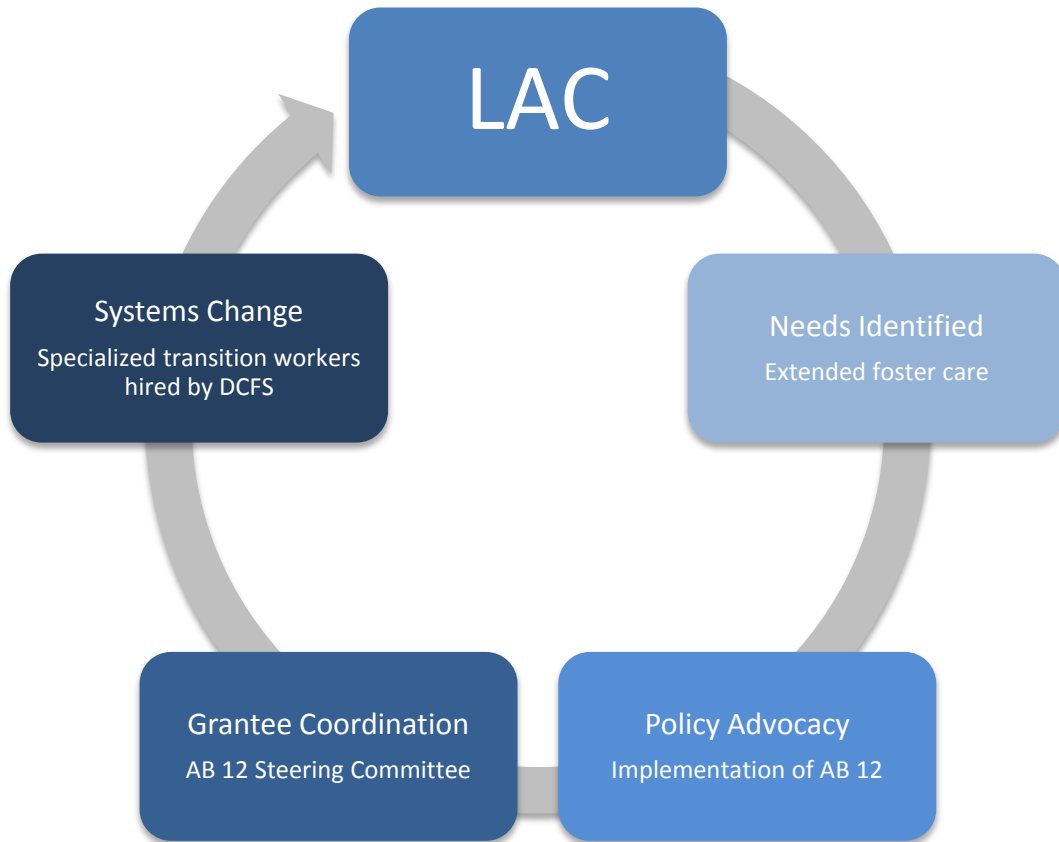
Table 19. Testimonies Provided by Grantees	
Number of Testimonies Provided	Testimonies
Los Angeles County	38
New York City	20
Total	58

During interviews, seven NYC grantees spoke about the importance of Hilton convenings in systems as a forum for systems change. Grantees believe that the Hilton convenings have been very helpful in bringing stakeholders together around policy and systems change. They were hopeful that the new city administration would also promote similar opportunities for collaboration.

Systems Change Goals: Cross-Site Findings

In both contexts, the interplay between state- and local-level activities affect systems change, with AB 12 central to changes in LAC and educational policy driving multi-level efforts in NYC. AB 12 work provides an excellent example of the systems change cycle the Initiative was designed to support (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. AB 12 Systems Change Cycle



From a regional perspective, there are more LAC grantees than NYC grantees involved in systems alignment and advocacy activities (see Figure 10). The Foster Youth Strategic Initiative is on track to reach systems change goals in LAC within the 5-year implementation period. In NYC, the Initiative is on track to reach the goal of annual convenings, but current data indicate limited progress on reaching cross-sector coordination and advocacy goals.

Figure 10. System Changes in LAC and NYC

Increase Transitional Independent Living Plan & Agreement (TILP)

- In September 2013, **CWI and its Court Lab partners** (including the **Children's Law Center**) implemented *Enhanced Transitional Planning* within a courtroom in the Los Angeles County Juvenile Court. *Planning* emphasizes the importance of TILPs and how to improve them. Prior to implementation, 51% of youth had a TILP. As of October 2013, 99% had a TILP or had a court order requesting a TILP.

Practice & Policy Implications of Research Disseminated

- **Dr. Putnam-Hornstein** and colleagues' research on parenting TAY was translated into practice and policy implications. The implications were disseminated in a John Burton Foundation publication (Lemley, 2013).

Co-sponsorship of SB 528

- **Alliance, Children's Law Center, and Public Counsel**, along with the John Burton Foundation, co-sponsored SB 528, a bill that expands access to subsidized child care, requires collection of data on the number of parenting foster youth, and clarifies the right of foster youth to receive age-appropriate, medically accurate reproductive health education and services. Governor Brown signed SB 528 into law Sept. 23, 2013.

Pregnant & Parenting Teen Conferences

- **Alliance, Children's Law Center, and Public Counsel** work with DCFS and a countywide planning group to implement and monitor the Pregnant and Parenting Teen Conferences model as it is brought to scale countywide.

Co-sponsorship of AB 787

- **Alliance and Children's Law Center**, along with other project partners, co-sponsored AB 787. AB 787 legislates changes ensuring TAY receive the maximum benefit of the AB 12 provisions. AB 787 was signed into law on Oct. 2, 2013.

Hiring AB 12 Workers

- **Alliance, Children's Law Center, and Public Counsel** worked with DCFS to hire specialized AB 12 workers when AB 12 shifted on the ground social work practice.

Nurse-family Services MOU

- **Alliance, Children's Law Center, and Public Counsel** worked with DCFS to establish a MOU with nurse-family partnership services, facilitating access to prenatal care for pregnant and parenting youth.

Consent & re-disclosure forms developed for CYPM

- **Georgetown**, in its implementation of the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM) convened a NYC-based information sharing workgroup to review laws and provisions guiding disclosure in crossover cases. The workgroup developed new consent and re-disclosure forms allowing for legal sharing of information on crossover cases.



6. FUNDING AND KNOWLEDGE-SHARING GOALS

6.1 Expanding the Transition-Age Youth Research Base

The third component of the Foster Youth Strategic Initiative is the development of knowledge to inform improvements in TAY outcomes.

The knowledge goal is to expand and share (locally and nationally) the research base during the Initiative's 5-year implementation period.

The evaluation team assessed progress toward goal achievement by answering the following research questions:

4. What impacts did the Hilton TAY knowledge grantees have on policy, practice, and research innovations?

4a. How were the Hilton findings distributed in LAC and NYC and nationally (format, venue, frequency)?

4c. How have policymakers, practitioners, and researchers in LAC and NYC used the knowledge produced by the Hilton TAY Strategy?

New Knowledge Activities

The smallest grantee subgroup reporting semiannual data ($n=4$ grantees) comprises grantees exclusively involved in research or new knowledge generation. Of these four, two knowledge grantees reported active research studies directly related to their Hilton funding for this period of data collection, together with four grantees also involved in direct and/or indirect services.

The team asked grantees for the sample size or number of grantees enrolled within the reporting period, as well as overall (see Table 20). The number of studies was collected, as well as the number of subjects who had completed the research study. A subject was defined to have “completed” a study *“if they have consented to take part and their active participation has ended.”*

Sample size or number of subjects enrolled in research study	Number Enrolled 10/1/2013 – 3/31/2014	Number of Studies	Number Enrolled Overall	Number of Subjects Who Completed Study
Los Angeles County	1,280	5	1,280	235
New York City	45,451	1	45,451	45,451
Dual Geography	35	1	35	0
Total	46,766	7	46,737	45,686

The semiannual form asked grantees about the number of new data sources shared or developed, as well as the number of data-sharing agreements developed in this reporting period (see Table 21). A “data source” was defined as *“an agency, system or person that provides information (quantitative or qualitative) used in a research study.”* A data source would be considered “new” if *“acquired for the first time or created by merging older sources into a new, unified source.”* A “data sharing agreement” was defined as *“a formal statement specifying the steps in, and requirements for, providing data.”*

Table 21. New Data Sources and Data Sharing Agreements

Number of New Data Sources Shared or Developed Number of Data Sharing Agreements Developed	New Data Sources	Data Sharing
Los Angeles County	15	6
New York City	13	1
Dual Geography	3	6
Total	31	13

Distribution of Findings

The majority of Hilton grantees are involved in a variety of dissemination activities (see Tables 22 and 23). These activities can range from a “tweet” to composed curricula. A number of grantees had to consult their calendars and other colleagues to arrive at a representative number, particularly for citations in the media. Media citations reported may be an undercount.

Items on dissemination activities ask about six areas of activity:

- Presentations, defined as conferences, teleconferences, webinars or webcasts;
- Publications, defined as white papers, bulletins, issue briefs, and peer-reviewed articles;
- Citations in media, defined as news articles, websites, Facebook, Twitter, journal articles, and other publications;
- Multimedia products developed, defined as podcasts and videos;
- Curricula, defined as created or revised to incorporate materials related to Hilton-funded activities; and
- MOU, defined as a formal agreement between two or more parties.

Table 22. Grantee Dissemination Activities: Presentations, Publications, and Media Citations

Dissemination Activities	Presentations	Publications	Cited in Media
Los Angeles County	139	44	50
New York City	20	1	4
Dual Geography	29	0	3
Total	188	45	57

Table 23. Grantee Dissemination Activities: Multimedia Products, Curricula, and MOUs

Dissemination Activities	Multimedia Products Developed*	Number of Curricula	MOUs Developed
Los Angeles County	7	43	19
New York City	14	108	15
Dual Geography	0	1	0
Total	21	152	34

Use of Initiative Knowledge

As mentioned in previous sections of this report, the knowledge generated by Culhane and colleagues along with research conducted by Putnam-Hornstein and colleagues has been well disseminated and widely used by stakeholders and other grantees. Culhane and colleagues' 2011 research first informed the development of the Foster Youth Strategic Initiative, and after its distribution, the research provided other Hilton grantees and policymakers with critical information on outcomes. Findings reached local and national audiences through website distribution (University of Pennsylvania, Conrad N. Hilton, Los Angeles County, NYTD, Council of State Governments, and Foster Youth Alliance).

Dr. Putnam Hornstein and colleagues' research on parenting TAY was translated into a practice and policy implications publication by the John Burton Foundation (Lemley, 2013). An

influential body of stakeholders, The California Child Welfare Council, invited Dr. Putnam Hornstein and co-author Dr. Needell to present findings for their consideration. The Council is an advisory body charged with aligning agencies and systems serving foster children and youth and monitoring organizational and system responsiveness to the needs of foster children and youth.¹⁶ Another LAC grantee produced a publication that led to additional interest in and support for its work with caregivers.

CWI published *Extraordinary Foster Parents in Los Angeles County: Child Welfare Initiative's Implementation of Best Practices in Recruiting and Retaining New Therapeutic Foster Parents* and distributed it through several channels, including its website and mailing list of more than 3,100 persons. The report served as a platform for the introduction of CWI's Therapeutic Foster Care Initiative. Georgetown Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, a grantee focused on both LAC and NYC, is also contributing to development of knowledge.

Georgetown convened the Crossover Youth Research Roundtable in February of 2014. Though the event occurred in California, it included researchers and practitioners from across the country. Attendees developed a set of research questions that will expand the knowledge base focused on crossover youth. Georgetown will create a formal research agenda based on the proposed questions.

Expanding and Sharing the Research Base on TAY: Cross-Site Findings

During Year One, LAC grantees, particularly Drs. Culhane and Putnam-Hornstein, drove the progress on expanding the research base. Dr. Putnam Hornstein and colleagues' research continues receive local and national attention through its various distribution channels (see Figure 11).

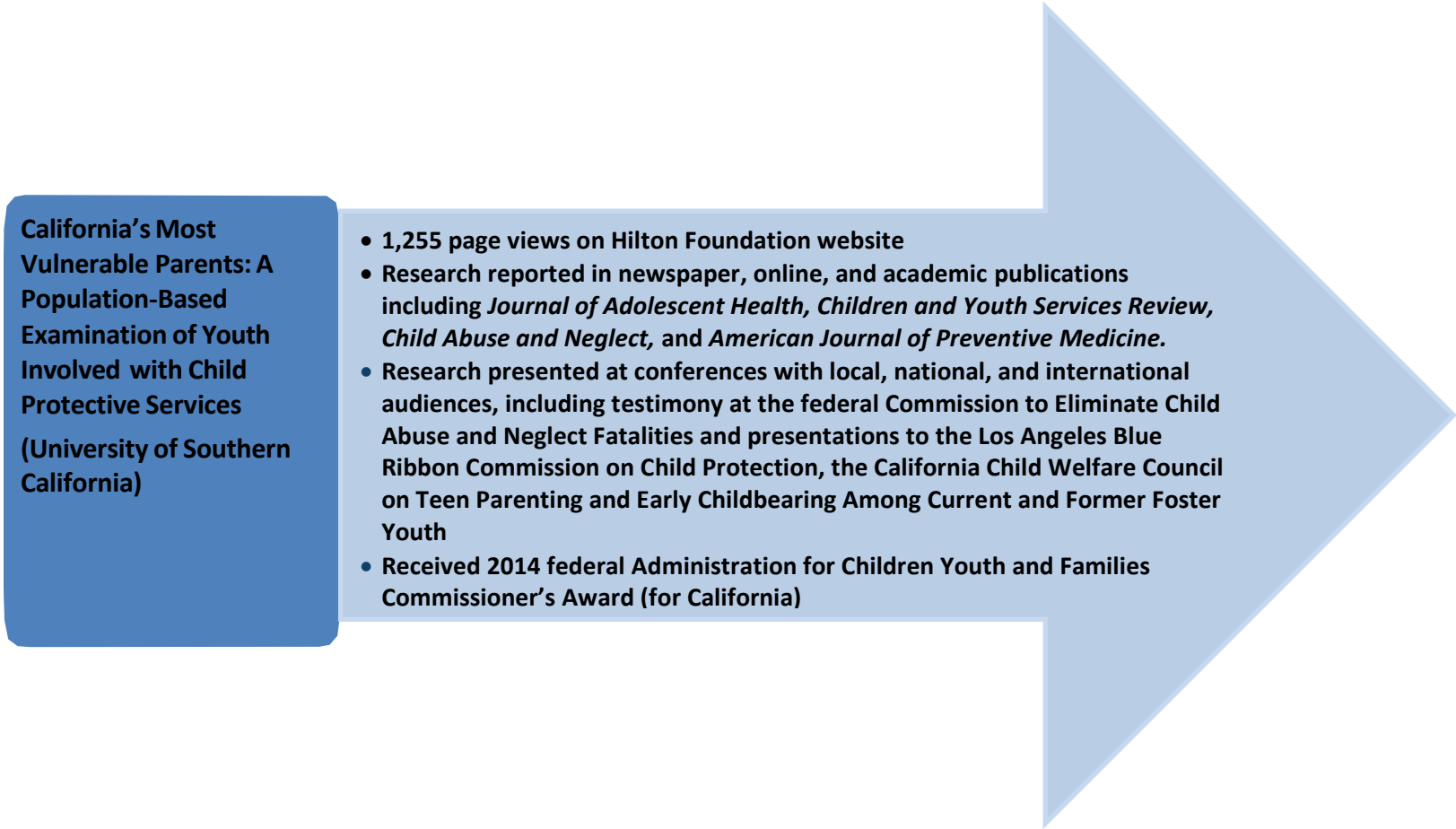
The Initiative is on track in LAC to reach the goal of expanding and sharing the research base within the 5-year implementation period. During the next years of their funding, dual geography and NYC grantees will contribute to the east coast research base through dissemination of Crossover Youth Practice Model findings in Brooklyn and the Bronx and knowledge generated by CIDI. Since those findings are not yet available current NYC data indicate limited progress toward reaching the research base goal in that region.

¹⁶ Created through the *Child Welfare Leadership and Accountability Act* of 2006 (Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 16540 – 16545), the Council includes representatives from state and county departments, service providers, former foster youth, foster parents, and advocates for foster children and youth. The Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency co-chairs the Council <http://www.chhs.ca.gov/Pages/CChildWelfareCouncil.aspx>.

Figure 11. Distribution of Findings

A notable example comes from the dissemination of research conducted by Dr. Emily Putnam Hornstein, University of Southern California.

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6.2 Progress on Goal to Leverage \$20 M in Private Funding

All of the Conrad N. Hilton Strategic Initiatives have a leveraged funding goal.

The Foster Youth Strategic Initiative's goal states that across both regions, grantees will leverage \$20M in private funding in alignment with the Initiative's postsecondary, vulnerable youth, systems change, and knowledge goals.

The evaluation team assessed progress toward goal achievement by answering the following research questions:

4. What impacts did the Hilton TAY knowledge grantees have on policy, practice, and research innovations?

4b. Has the knowledge developed through the Hilton TAY Strategy led to leveraged funding for TAY?

The team answered these questions with a cross-site perspective and used data from grantee interviews and documents.

Los Angeles and New York City

Most grantees have been able to use the Hilton foundation funding to leverage additional support for their efforts and to increase their organizational capacity. This includes leveraging both public and private funds. One Los Angeles grantee stated:

I think we now have a real capacity and a real appetite for deep work in the whole state of California thanks in large part to the first grant we got related to California, which was Hilton's grant.

And another commented:

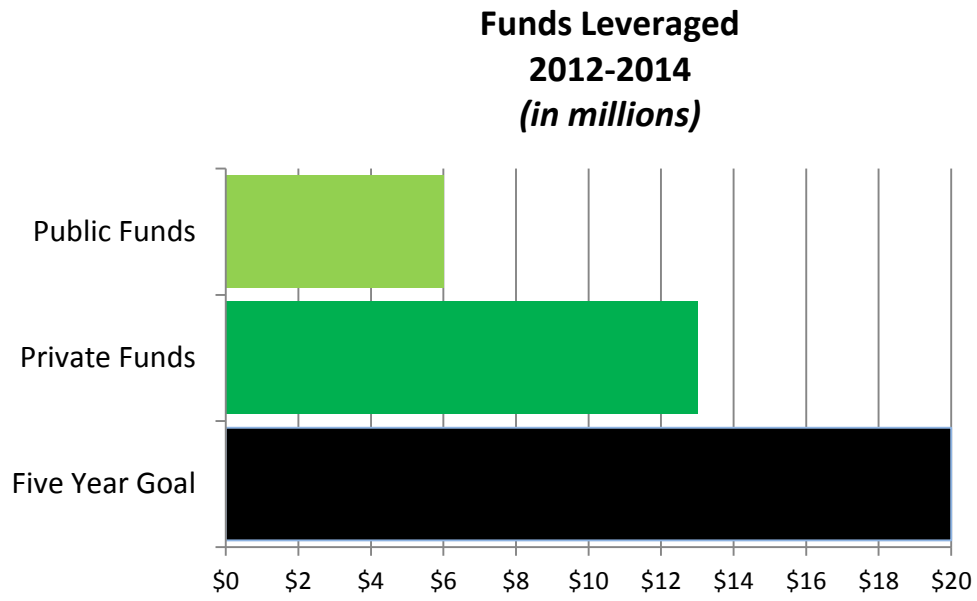
The way that's attracting foundation support works, there are a lot of components to it...it's almost like resume building, and being able to have the support of a foundation like the Hilton Foundation that has undertaken a strategic initiative like this, it provides other foundations a way to understand that our work has been rigorous enough to meet the requirements of the Hilton Foundation, and it comes with an indication that the work is worthwhile and worth funding, so that there's very much a qualitative assessment that comes with that. That allows us to carry it forward to other foundations, and that's really critical.

Another example of leveraged funding was grantees' ability to carry on with their work after funding ended. Representatives from three grantees were interviewed near the end of their funding period or after funding had recently ended, Children's Law Center, First Place for Youth, and University of Southern California. All three had prospects for additional funding¹⁷ as a result of the initial Hilton investment in their work, including continued partnership with other Hilton grantees, investments from other foundations, and applying for continued Hilton funding.

Progress toward leveraging \$20M in private funds was also measured by grantees' report of additional financial support. During the first two years of implementation, 28 grantees leveraged an impressive \$12,836,357 in private funds and six grantees leveraged \$6,053,471 in public funds (see Figure 12). The Initiative is on track to reach the cross-site leveraging goal within the 5-year implementation period.

¹⁷ Prospects included continued partnership with other Hilton grantees and applying for continued Hilton funding.

Figure 12. Funds Leveraged 2012–14





7. CONCLUSION

In the evaluation of the Hilton Foundation Foster Youth Initiative, we use a multiple case study design that examines individual cases in order to learn what they tell us about the phenomenon they are part of (Stake, 2006). In other words, **what do LAC and NYC data tell us about the Hilton Foundation Foster Youth Initiative? How do their complexity, similarities, and situational uniqueness help our understanding of the Initiative?**

At this early juncture in the evaluation, some key issues have emerged that help us understand the Initiative. Already we have learned that:

- In both sites, the Hilton Foundation (through its grantmaking, networking, and focus on use of data) has stimulated strong interest in services, system reform, and new knowledge to support TAY. Interviewees consistently reported that receiving a Hilton Foundation grant established or enhanced local perceptions about the importance of strengthening supports for TAY and their caregivers. Hilton grantmaking has created, overall, greater momentum in both LAC and NYC for addressing the needs of TAY.

- In both sites, Hilton Foundation funding has allowed grantees to expand organizational capacity, improve cross-system communication, and leverage additional funding from public and private sources. The flexibility of the Hilton funding encouraged innovation and expansion of services. It is notable that these effects reportedly occurred so soon in the life of the Initiative.
- In both sites, the Initiative is breaking new ground in understanding what caregivers of older youth need. Caregivers expressed a need for training and support in identifying appropriate educational/vocational pathways for youth in their care and setting high but reasonable expectations for the youth. In addition, they need help in working with the many systems that touch TAY's lives before and after leaving care. In upcoming data collection activities, we will probe further into what resources are available for caregivers and how the Initiative can assist agencies in both LAC and NYC in better addressing these needs.
- The Hilton Foundation Foster Youth Strategic Initiative Senior Program Officer has forged strong ties with child welfare leaders, which has further strengthened the Initiative in both regions
- In LAC, the implementation of AB 12 created a focus on the needs of older TAY and realigning systems so that the ground was being prepared even before the Initiative began. As an important piece of the context, we will continue to investigate the influence of AB 12 on what the Initiative is able to achieve in LAC as compared to NYC.

It is in the nature of data to raise further questions, to prompt evaluators to look deeper, while maintaining the understanding that current data provide a snapshot of the first year of the Foster Youth Strategic Initiative's progress toward intended goals (see Table 24). In assessing progress of youth outcomes in Year One, the evaluation team assessed grantee-level data. These data revealed that there is concentrated activity around improving postsecondary outcomes for TAY in both regions and relatively less activity around crossover and parenting youth. While efforts to improve outcomes for crossover youth are fairly even in both regions, there was more work reported in LAC on behalf of parenting youth.

There is not enough knowledge about developing caregiver's capacity to support TAY's achievement of self-sufficiency. First-year evaluation activities included asking caregivers about needed capacities and asking grantees about their direct and indirect services for caregivers. Together these data indicated that caregivers need interpersonal skills such as patience and concrete supports such as training about educational opportunities and support groups. Though the data were rich, the first-year findings alone cannot significantly advance the state of knowledge. Caregiver competency is an area of the Initiative requiring further discussion.

Table 24. Progress on 5-Year Goals

Initiative Goals	Los Angeles County	New York City
YOUTH OUTCOMES		
Education: Postsecondary outcomes improved for 50% of TAY.	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, focus groups, and grantee progress reports.</i>	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, focus groups, grantee progress reports, and PYA.</i>
Vulnerable Youth: Improved long-term outcomes for 50% of parenting foster youth .	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews and progress reports.</i>	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, progress reports, and PYA.</i>
Vulnerable Youth: Improved long-term outcomes for 50% of crossover youth .	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews and progress reports.</i>	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews and progress reports.</i>
Caregivers: Capacity improved for caregivers of 90% of TAY.	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, focus groups, and grantee progress reports.</i>	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, focus groups, and grantee progress reports.</i>
SYSTEMS CHANGE		
Create/strengthen cross-sector coordinated efforts	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, progress reports, and archival research.</i>	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, progress reports, and archival research.</i>
Annual convenings of organizations and agencies supporting TAY.	<i>Data Sources: Grantee semi-annual data form and evaluation team attendance at convenings.</i>	<i>Data Sources: Grantee semi-annual data form and evaluation team attendance at convenings.</i>
Advocacy resulting in positive and enforced policy for improving outcomes for TAY in target geographies.	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, progress reports, and archival research.</i>	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, progress reports, and archival research.</i>
FUNDING & KNOWLEDGE SHARING		
Research base around programs to improve TAY outcomes is expanded and shared at local and national levels.	<i>Data Sources: Grantee semi-annual data form, progress reports, and archival research.</i>	<i>Data Sources: Grantee semi-annual data form, progress reports, and archival research.</i>
Hilton Foundation funding leverages \$20M in private funding in alignment with our goals.	<i>Data Sources: Grantee interviews, progress reports, and direct inquiries.</i>	

Key

<i>Current Data Indicates On Track to Reach Goals</i>
<i>Current Data Indicates Limited Progress</i>
<i>Not Enough Region-Wide Data to Determine if Strategy Will Reach Desired Outcomes</i>

Overall, long-term youth outcomes must be measured with site-specific and robust administrative data that clearly identify TAY, crossover youth, and parenting TAY and link identified youth to outcomes associated with Initiative goals. Further, the data must be extracted after sufficient time has passed to observe outcomes. One year is not sufficient for reporting progress on outcomes.

First-year findings indicate that the Initiative is on track to reach systems change goals in LAC within the 5-year implementation period. As discussed in the preceding part of this chapter, AB 12 is galvanizing change in LAC. There is no singular and similar policy innovation driving change in NYC and that has contributed to the limited progress on reaching cross-sector coordination and advocacy goals in NYC during the first year. Grantees in both regions are facilitating progress on the annual convenings goal, and the Initiative is on track in both regions to reach that goal.

LAC grantees are again contributing to the Initiative's progress in the area of expanding the research base on TAY and sharing findings on local and national levels. The Initiative is on track in LAC to reach this goal. There is limited progress toward this goal in NYC because the grantees funded for region-specific research are still in the midst of data collection and analysis. The Initiative's leveraging goal, \$20M in private funds, is cross-site. The goal will likely be reached before the end of the 5-year Initiative as grantees have already leveraged over \$12M in the first two years of implementation.

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