

# NYTD Review Stakeholder Interview Guide

## Introduction

The purpose of stakeholder interviews is to collect information that describes the state's National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) implementation and ongoing efforts from a variety of perspectives. During the onsite visit, the federal team interviews professionals and supportive adults who provide services to youth transitioning out of foster care, actively work on NYTD data collection, or share a stake in promoting positive outcomes for young people, including:

- State caseworkers
- NYTD survey administrators
- Contracted service providers
- Independent living program staff
- Foster parents
- Tribal representatives
- Juvenile justice agency staff
- Judges and/or other court staff
- Court-appointed special advocates (CASAs)
- Young people

Interviews are conducted by pairs or a small group of federal team members and should last between 45 and 60 minutes. This stakeholder interview guide lists core questions in four areas, but these are not intended to be an exhaustive list of questions and it is not necessary to ask every question. Rather, the federal review coordinator specifies or recommends the questions the federal team will ask selected stakeholders to help understand the state's NYTD implementation process.

- Supporting and serving youth in transition (**Item 1**);
- Collecting data on youth in transition (**Item 2**);
- Analyzing and using data to advance policy and practice serving youth (**Item 3**); and
- Engaging young people in program improvement efforts (**Item 4**).

NYTD is an important opportunity to engage youth as partners in data collection, analysis, and dissemination. Engaging and sustaining youth creates a pathway for states to strengthen the skills of their workforces and accomplish key program goals for transition-aged youth. Youth are interviewed during a focus group by trained NYTD Reviewers who are part of the federal review team. This focus group explores the perspectives young people have about a state's independent living program, NYTD data collection effort, and efforts to use data to improve services for other young people. There is a separate guide for use during this focus group.

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## Structure of Stakeholder Interviews

**Introduce** federal team members and ask stakeholders to introduce themselves. Facilitate introductions of all team members in the room or on the phone.

**Read the opening script** to introduce the purpose of the interview and to describe the NYTD Review process and how their feedback will be incorporated into the federal review team’s findings (see below).

**Review the questions in the stakeholder interview guide.** The team does not have to ask the questions verbatim or use all of them. Team members are encouraged to ask follow-up questions

to clarify responses or to collect additional contextual information consistent with the purpose of each question.

**Provide the state’s data snapshot** to the stakeholders as it will be referenced as part of the Item 3 discussion.

**Provide a closing script.** Thank the stakeholders for participating at the conclusion of the interview. Let them know that they can email the Children’s Bureau at [NYTDhelp@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:NYTDhelp@acf.hhs.gov) if they have additional thoughts or questions.

## Opening Script

“ The *National Youth in Transition Database*, also called ‘NYTD,’ is a federal reporting system that collects information from states on the services and outcomes of youth transitioning out of foster care. The *NYTD Review* is a comprehensive evaluation of the state’s approach to collecting and reporting data on these youth in transition. The Children’s Bureau, of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, conducts the review. There are no financial penalties at stake.

As part of the review, we examine the state’s child welfare information system and conduct a case record review. We also conduct interviews with individuals like you to learn more about how your state supports transitioning youth and how it collects data that can be used to evaluate those supports. While we want to discuss your understanding of the state’s work with young people, this interview is not an assessment of you. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers. We will be taking notes and incorporating your feedback into our findings, but your name will not be used. This interview will last 45 to 60 minutes. Do you have any questions before we begin?



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## State Child Welfare Agency Leaders and Other Staff Stakeholder Interview Group

Child welfare managers and supervisors provide leadership and direction for the programs that serve children and families. A critical role of their leadership is to oversee a quality assurance system that evaluates the effectiveness of services.

### Item 1: Supporting and serving youth in transition

- 1.1. Please describe your role in supporting or serving youth transitioning from foster care in your state.
- 1.2. How does your agency collaborate with other state agencies, community organizations, or other stakeholders to serve transitioning youth and make sure youth are getting the services they need?
- 1.3. How does your agency identify the strengths and needs of its service delivery system and evaluate the quality of services it provides?
- 1.4. Are there specific services youth need that they are not getting?
- 1.5. Do you think there are barriers in your state related to delivering services to youth with unique needs (for example, Tribal youth, youth adjudicated delinquent, pregnant or parenting youth)?

### Item 2: Collecting data on youth in transition

- 2.1. How are staff trained regarding their responsibilities to collect case management data on youth in transition? Do these staff

receive NYTD-specific training? If so, how often?

- 2.2. How do you know whether data collected on youth in transition are accurate and of good quality? How are agency leaders/supervisors involved in ensuring the quality of data collected on youth in transition?
- 2.3. Has your agency encountered any of the following challenges and barriers when collecting data on youth in transition?
  - Burdensome data collection protocols (for example, lengthy data collection forms, duplicative data entry);
  - Unclear policies regarding how and when NYTD data are to be collected;
  - Lack of training regarding NYTD data collection;
  - Confusion about whether a service or support “counts” as a service reportable to NYTD;
  - Confusion about whether a service “fits” into one of the NYTD categories;
  - Surveying a high percentage of youth;
  - Surveying youth timely;
  - Collecting high-quality survey information from youth (for example, logically consistent answers, using only the provided response options).

**Item 3: Analyzing and using data to advance policy and practice serving youth**

- 3.1. Looking at the state’s data snapshot [reference data snapshot handout], are there any data points that surprise you?
- 3.2. How do the data compare or contrast with your knowledge or assumptions about services in your state?
- 3.3. How is the state using NYTD data to inform program practice, policy and priorities? How do you think this information could be used to improve services in your state?
- 3.4. How does the state incorporate NYTD data into its CQI system? Consider how the state implements the following, consistent with ACYF-CB-IM-12-07:

- Monitoring the quality of data collected and used across the child welfare agency;
- Conducting ongoing case reviews on youth transitioning from foster care;
- Analyzing data to determine the state’s progress on selected performance measures for older youth programs; and
- Disseminating feedback to stakeholders to help drive change within the agency to better serve transitioning youth.

**Item 4: Engaging young people in program improvement efforts**

- 4.1. How are young people engaged in the process of using data to make improvements to the programs and systems that serve youth in this state?

# Community-Based Independent Living Service Providers

## Stakeholder Interview Group

Many states partner or contract with community-based organizations to deliver independent living services to youth transitioning out of foster care. A key purpose of the stakeholder interview is to understand the various ways in which these providers deliver quality, tailored services to meet the needs of youth in their local communities.

### Item 1: Supporting and serving youth in transition

- 1.1. Please describe your role in supporting or serving youth transitioning from foster care.
- 1.2. What specific services or supports do you provide to youth?
- 1.3. How do you collaborate with the state child welfare agency and other stakeholders to serve transitioning youth and make sure youth are getting the services they need from providers?
- 1.4. Are there specific services youth need that they are not getting?
- 1.5. Do you think there are barriers in your state related to delivering services to youth with unique needs (for example, Tribal youth, youth adjudicated delinquent, pregnant or parenting youth)? If “Yes”, what are these barriers?
- 1.6. Are there particular populations of youth who have a difficult time accessing the services they need to live independently?

### Item 2: Collecting data on youth in transition

- 2.1. What do you know about the state’s NYTD data collection efforts?
- 2.2. How is your organization involved in the state’s NYTD data collection efforts?

### Item 3: Analyzing and using data to advance policy and practice serving youth

- 3.1. Looking at the state’s data snapshot [reference data snapshot handout], are there any data points that surprise you?
- 3.2. How do the data compare/contrast to your knowledge or assumptions about services in your state?
- 3.3. How do you think this information could be used to improve services in your state?
- 3.4. How are young people engaged in the process of using data to make improvements to the programs and systems that serve youth in this state?

### Item 4: Engaging young people in program improvement efforts

- 4.1. Looking at the state’s data snapshot [reference data snapshot handout], are there any data points that surprise you?

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## Case Workers/Case Managers Stakeholder Interview Group

Child welfare case workers and case managers assist in conducting needs assessments, transition planning, and the delivery of a variety of services to youth in foster care. They also may provide independent living services directly to youth, including young people who have left foster care. A key purpose of this stakeholder interview is to understand the variety of ways in which these case workers and case managers provide case management services and assist in providing quality tailored independent living services to meet the needs of young people.

### Item 1: Supporting and serving youth in transition

- 1.1. Please describe your role in supporting or serving youth transitioning from foster care.
- 1.2. How are you involved in assessing the independent living needs of, and supporting transition planning for, young people?
- 1.3. How do you collaborate with providers and other supportive adults to make sure youth are getting the services they need?
- 1.4. What specific services or supports do you provide to youth? Do you consider your work with young people part of the “independent living program”?
- 1.5. Are there specific services these youth need that they are not getting?

- 1.6. Are there particular populations of youth who have a difficult time accessing the services they need to live independently (for example, Tribal youth, youth adjudicated delinquent, pregnant or parenting youth)? If “Yes,” what are these barriers?

### Item 2: Collecting data on youth in transition

- 2.1. Please describe how you use the state’s child welfare information system to input data on your case management practice, including your role in inputting data on independent living services provided to youth?
- 2.2. What sort of training did you receive about NYTD? Did you receive training regarding how the child welfare information system is to be used to manage data for NYTD? Did you receive training regarding how the NYTD survey is to be administered to youth?
- 2.3. How do you work with service providers and placement providers to document the delivery or receipt of services and supports they provide to young people?
- 2.4. Do you ever have any difficulty determining which service category “fits” the activity or support a youth received? Are the service definitions easy to find, understand, and use?
- 2.5. Please describe how you invite and survey youth for NYTD [applicable only if caseworkers administer the survey in the state].

2.6. How are you involved in locating youth who have left foster care but need to take the survey? How do you typically reach them (for example, by phone, email, social media, or in person)? What has been the biggest barrier to getting youth to participate in the survey?

### **Item 3: Analyzing and using data to advance policy and practice serving youth**

- 3.1. Looking at the state's data snapshot [reference data snapshot handout], are there any data points that surprise you?
- 3.2. How do the data compare or contrast with your knowledge or assumptions about services in your state?

3.3. How do you think this information could be used to improve services in your state?

3.4. How are young people engaged in the process of using data to make improvements to the programs and systems that serve youth in this state?

### **Item 4: Engaging young people in program improvement efforts**

- 4.1. How are young people engaged in the process of using data to make improvements to the programs and systems that serve youth in this state?

## Foster Parents or Other Placement Providers Stakeholder Interview Group

Placement providers such as foster family homes and group homes play a unique role in helping youth acquire the skills they need to live independently while they still reside with supportive adults. Because they often develop lasting relationships with youth, placement providers also may be great partners in assisting the state to engage youth in the NYTD survey.

### Item 1: Supporting and serving youth in transition

- 1.1. Please describe your role in supporting or serving youth transitioning from foster care in your state.
- 1.2. What specific services or support do you provide to youth? Do you provide experiential learning opportunities for the youth (for example, help with budgeting, learning how to drive, applying for jobs, cooking, laundry)?
- 1.3. How do you collaborate with other stakeholders (for example, the state child welfare agency, court, service providers) to serve transitioning youth?
- 1.4. Are there independent living services you have sought for the youth and for which the agency paid?
- 1.5. Are there specific services youth need that they are not getting in your state?
- 1.6. Are there particular populations of youth who have a difficult time accessing the services they need to live independently in your state?

### Item 2: Collecting data on youth in transition

- 2.1. What do you know about the state's NYTD data collection efforts?

- 2.2. How do you share information with the state child welfare agency regarding your work with youth to develop independent living skills? Did you receive any training regarding what NYTD is or how data are to be collected?
- 2.3. Is there work you do that you know is reported in the state's NYTD data submission?
- 2.4. Do you ever assist the state in locating and engaging youth for the NYTD survey?

### Item 3: Analyzing and using data to advance policy and practice serving youth

- 3.1. Looking at the state's data snapshot [reference data snapshot handout], are there any data points that surprise you?
- 3.2. How do the data compare or contrast with your knowledge or assumptions about services in your state? About the outcomes of youth in your state?
- 3.3. How do you think this information could be used to improve services in your state?
- 3.4. How are young people engaged in the process of using data to make improvements to the programs and systems that serve youth in this state?

### Item 4: Engaging young people in program improvement efforts

- 4.1. What do you know about how young people are engaged in the process of using data to make improvements to the programs and systems that serve youth in this state?

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## Judges and Court Partners Stakeholder Interview Group

Courts play a crucial role in setting and monitoring child welfare goals, including outcomes related to permanency and well-being. As a new source of data on permanency and well-being, NYTD may help courts establish and monitor well-being measures to evaluate their own performance in meeting these goals.

### Item 1: Supporting and serving youth in transition

- 1.1. Please describe your role in supporting or serving youth transitioning from foster care in your state.
- 1.2. What can courts do to support collaboration with other child-serving organizations to support youth who have been adjudicated delinquent and who also are in foster care and/or receiving independent living services?
- 1.3. In your experience, are there services youth need that they are not able to get from the state child welfare agency? From community organizations?

### Item 2: Collecting data on youth in transition

- 2.1. Are you familiar with NYTD and the work underway in your state to collect NYTD data?
- 2.2. Have you been engaged in the state's NYTD implementation in any way?
- 2.3. How do you think courts can support states in collecting NYTD data?

### Item 3: Analyzing and using data to advance policy and practice serving youth

- 3.1. How can agencies and courts best work together to analyze the state's NYTD data and then take action to improve the well-being of their older youth?
- 3.2. What do you think of the state's data on youth adjudicated delinquent and youth who report being incarcerated [[reference data snapshot handout](#)]?
- 3.3. Have the data been reported back to you in a way that is useful to you? Are the data being used in any way to inform casework practice, policy, or other areas of your work?
- 3.4. Have your state's NYTD data changed or confirmed the way you think about independent living services, outcomes, and permanency for youth in transition?

### Item 4: Engaging young people in program improvement efforts

- 4.1. How are young people engaged in the process of using data to make improvements to the programs and systems that serve youth in this state?

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## Juvenile Justice Staff Stakeholder Interview Group

One of the key goals of NYTD was to begin identifying specific populations of youth with unique needs in transitioning to adulthood. Youth involved in the juvenile justice system constitute one such group.

### Item 1: Supporting and serving youth in transition

- 1.1. Please describe your role in supporting or serving youth transitioning from foster care in your state.
- 1.2. Do youth adjudicated delinquent often receive “independent living services” in your state?
- 1.3. If yes, who provides them and who coordinates this work?
- 1.4. What is your role in supporting independent living for youth adjudicated delinquent?
- 1.5. What are the common barriers your youth encounter to accessing the services they need to aid in the transition to an independent adulthood?

### Item 2: Collecting data on youth in transition

- 2.1. What do you think of the state’s data on youth adjudicated delinquent and youth who report being incarcerated [reference data snapshot handout]?
- 2.2. Do these data surprise you or do they align with what you know about youth in your state?

### Item 3: Analyzing and using data to advance policy and practice serving youth

- 3.1. Looking at the state’s data snapshot [reference data snapshot handout], are there any data points that surprise you?
- 3.2. Do you use the state administrative data in any manner?

### Item 4: Engaging young people in program improvement efforts

- 4.1. How are young people engaged in the process of using data to make improvements to the programs and systems that serve youth in this state?

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## Tribal Leadership, Providers, and Staff Stakeholder Interview Group

Another goal of NYTD is to understand how states collaborate with Tribes and Tribal social service agencies to ensure that Indian youth receive appropriate independent living services. By identifying youth who are members of or eligible for membership in a Tribe, we can develop new insights into the characteristics and services specific to Indian youth.

### Item 1: Supporting and serving youth in transition

- 1.1. Please describe your role in supporting or serving youth transitioning from foster care in your state.
- 1.2. How do you work with the state child welfare agency to ensure that Tribal youth receive the services and supports they need during the transition to adulthood?
- 1.3. Are there particular barriers preventing Tribal youth from accessing independent living services? If yes, please explain?

### Item 2: Collecting data on youth in transition

- 2.1. How are you involved in NYTD data collection? Do you collect or report data on youth who receive services? Do you assist with the NYTD survey?

### Item 3: Analyzing and using data to advance policy and practice serving youth

- 3.1. Looking at the state's data snapshot [reference data snapshot handout], are there any data points that surprise you?
- 3.2. Do you think the state has reported accurately the number of youth served in your state who are members of federally recognized Tribes?
- 3.3. Do you know how the state monitors and assesses its performance in delivering services to Tribal youth? How are you involved in these efforts?
- 3.4. Are you familiar with how the state uses NYTD data? You may have opinions or knowledge about how the state uses NYTD data or may have concerns about how Tribal youth are reflected in state data, for example.

### Item 4: Engaging young people in program improvement efforts

- 4.1. Are you familiar with how Tribal youth are engaged in the process of using data to make improvements to the programs and systems that serve youth in this state?

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## Other Individuals or Providers Working With Transition-Age Youth Stakeholder Interview Group

States may partner or contract with individuals or organizations that do not fall into one of the previous categories to deliver independent living services to youth transitioning out of foster care. A key purpose of the stakeholder interview is to understand the various ways in which these providers deliver quality, tailored services to meet the needs of youth in their local communities.

### Item 1: Supporting and serving youth in transition

- 1.1. Please describe your role in supporting or serving youth transitioning from foster care in your state.
- 1.2. How do you or your agency collaborate with other state agencies, community organizations, or other stakeholders to serve transitioning youth and make sure youth are getting the services they need?
- 1.3. How do you or your agency report the strengths and needs of services you provide to youth to the state?
- 1.4. Are there specific services youth need that they are not getting?
- 1.5. Do you think there are barriers in your state related to delivering services to youth with unique needs (for example, Tribal youth, youth adjudicated delinquent, pregnant or parenting youth)?

### Item 2: Collecting data on youth in transition

- 2.1. What do you know about the state's NYTD data collection efforts?
- 2.2. How are you or your organization involved in the state's NYTD data collection efforts?

### Item 3: Analyzing and using data to advance policy and practice serving youth

- 3.1. Looking at the state's data snapshot [reference data snapshot handout], are there any data points that surprise you?
- 3.2. How do the data compare/contrast to your knowledge or assumptions about services in your state?
- 3.3. How do you think this information could be used to improve services in your state?
- 3.4. [If applicable] How are young people engaged in the process of using data to make improvements to the programs and systems that serve youth in this state?

### Item 4: Engaging young people in program improvement efforts

- 4.1. [If applicable] What do you know about how young people are engaged in the process of using data to make improvements to the programs and systems that serve youth in this state?