

	<b>OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES BULLETIN</b>		
	<b>COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA * DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE</b>		
	<b>NUMBER:</b> 3130-10-03	<b>ISSUE DATE:</b> August 9, 2010	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> Immediately
<b>SUBJECT:</b> Implementation of 45 CFR Part 1356 Chafee National Youth in Transition Database Part 1		<b>BY:</b>  <b>Richard J. Gold</b> <b>Deputy Secretary for Children, Youth and Families</b>	

**SCOPE:**

County Children and Youth Social Service Agencies (CCYA)  
Private Children and Youth Social Service Agencies  
County Chief Probation Officers  
County Children and Youth Fiscal Officers

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide clarification and direction to both public and private children and youth agencies, as well as to Juvenile Probation Offices (JPO), regarding the implementation of the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD).

**BACKGROUND:**

The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (FCIA) (P. L. 106-169) was signed into law by President Clinton on December 14, 1999. This law established the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) at section 477 of the Social Security Act. The FCIA provides states with greater funding and flexibility to carry out programs to assist youth in making the transition from foster care to self-sufficiency. The FCIA requires the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to develop and implement a data collection system to perform two functions: 1) track the independent living services states provide to youth; and, 2) develop outcome measures that may be used to assess state performance in operating their independent living programs. This

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data collection system is hereafter referred to as NYTD. The law also requires that ACF impose a penalty, in an amount that ranges from one to five percent of a state's annual allotment, on any state that fails to comply with the reporting requirements. ACF has required that the data collection process begin Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2011, or October 1, 2010.

### **DISCUSSION:**

NYTD requires data collection on three separate and distinct populations: the Served Population, the Baseline Population, and the Follow up Population.

- The Served Population consists of any youth receiving at least one independent living service paid for or provided by the state agency.
- The Baseline Population consists of all youth in foster care as defined by 45 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1355.20 any time between their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday and the 45 days following their birthday.
- The Follow-up Population for Pennsylvania (PA) consists of a sample of the Baseline Population when they turn 19 and again at 21 years old.

Each population will report on questions that were enumerated in Federal Regulations. In addition, the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) has selected additional questions developed by a national workgroup which will be included in the Baseline survey. These 18 additional questions are intended to provide OCYF, and county children and youth agency (CCYA) Independent Living (IL) programs, and private providers, with more information related to youth than was asked in the federally required questions.

ACF has required that states collect both the Baseline Population data and the Served Population data beginning October 1, 2010. OCYF has decided to implement the NYTD requirements in stages due to the logistics of collecting the data without a statewide data collection system. The first stage is capturing the Baseline Population data which is discussed in detail below. Information regarding the Served and Follow up Populations will be provided at a later date. In order to comply with Federal Regulations, PA will begin collecting data on our Baseline Population on October 1, 2010.

The initial data collection of the Baseline Population will occur for FFY 2011, October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011. A new Baseline Population will be surveyed every three years following the initial reporting period, i.e. FFY 2014, FFY 2017, FFY 2020, etc. The follow up of the Baseline Population will occur at two and four years after each Baseline Population collection. Thus, the youth in the Baseline Population for the reporting period of FFY 2011 will be surveyed again in FFY 2013 (age 19) and FFY 2015 (age 21). OCYF intends to collect the follow up surveys on schedule.

OCYF is utilizing the services of Hornby Zeller Associates, Inc (HZA) to create a web-based tool, PA NYTD, to collect the Baseline survey results. The website address is: [www.getNYTD.org](http://www.getNYTD.org). This web tool will be operational for the October 1, 2010 implementation date. OCYF will be responsible to coordinate with HZA to develop and maintain this tool, and to submit a semiannual data extraction report to ACF. In addition, OCYF and the Child Welfare Training Program (CWTP) will monitor survey completion to ensure that data are submitted timely and accurately. OCYF, HZA, and CWTP will also be providing training and technical assistance.

The CCYAs will be responsible to identify youth who meet the Baseline Population criteria, and to provide the youth with access to the survey and/or to help administer the survey. The CCYAs will also be responsible to monitor that youth have completed the survey and report the status of any youth who did not complete the survey (i.e. declined participation, is a runaway/missing, incarcerated, etc.). A minimum of one CCYA staff person must be selected to be a PA NYTD web tool user. CCYA may have as many users as they deem necessary. PA NYTD users will have access to the web tool and will be responsible to register youth and will receive reminder emails when the surveys need to be completed.

While youth participation in this survey is voluntary, youth will be strongly urged to participate so that OCYF can gather outcome information to better serve the needs of future youth in care. The CCYAs are required to collect and report certain demographic information from all youth in the Baseline Population regardless of the youth's participation in the survey.

### **POLICY AND PROCEDURES:**

#### **Baseline Population**

The Baseline Population consists of all youth in foster care, as defined by 45 CFR 1355.20, at any time between their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday and the 45 days following their birthday, and who turn 17 within the FFY of each applicable reporting year. A youth does not have to be in foster care on his/her 17<sup>th</sup> birthday to be included but must be in care at some point within the 45 days following his/her birthday.

In practice, in order to determine who is included in the NYTD baseline population, CCYA must first determine if the youth:

1. Had his/her 17<sup>th</sup> birthday during a FFY in which baseline data are required to be collected (i.e., a youth in the first NYTD Baseline cohort must have a 17<sup>th</sup> birthday on or between October 1, 2010 and September 30, 2011); **and**
2. Was in foster care on his or her 17<sup>th</sup> birthday; **or**
3. Entered foster care between his or her 17<sup>th</sup> birthday and 45 days after this date.

For example:

- A youth who turns age 17 on September 30, 2010 and enters foster care on October 1, 2010 is not part of the Baseline Population because the youth turned age 17 before the beginning of a federal reporting period in which baseline data are required to be collected (October 1, 2010).
- A youth who turns age 17 on October 15, 2010 and enters foster care on December 10, 2010 is not part of the Baseline Population because the youth entered foster care more than 45 days after turning age 17.
- A youth who turns age 17 while in foster care on October 1, 2011 is not part of the Baseline Population because the youth turned age 17 during a FFY in which baseline data are not required to be collected.
- A youth turns age 17 on September 30, 2011 and enters foster care on October 5, 2011. The survey must be collected by November 14, 2011 because they entered care during a FFY in which Baseline data are required to be collected.

Foster Care is defined as 24-hour substitute care for all youth placed away from their parent(s) or guardian(s) and for whom the CCYA has placement and care responsibility. Foster care settings include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Non-relative foster homes;
- Kinship foster homes (whether or not payments are being made to the caregiver);
- Group homes;
- Emergency shelters;
- Residential facilities (in PA this includes non-accredited units of Residential Treatment Facilities (RTF));
- Child care institutions (public facilities with less than 25 beds or private facilities with any number of beds); and
- Pre-adoptive homes.

Foster care does not include the following:

- Youth who are in their own homes under the responsibility of the CCYA, including, *for the purpose of the NYTD only*, those home on trial visits;
- Youth Development Centers/Youth Forestry Camps;
- Detention centers (or facilities that are primarily for the detention of children who are adjudicated delinquent);
- Secure residential facilities;
- Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (accredited-PRTF); and
- Hospitals (general hospitals or free standing psychiatric hospitals).

Also included in the Baseline Population are youth who have run away from foster care, and youth receiving Title IV-E foster care maintenance payments in the placement and care of another public agency (i.e. JPO). All youth in the Baseline Population will also be reported in the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS); however, not all youth reported in AFCARS will be in the Baseline Population, i.e. youth on trial home visits, or youth not meeting the age requirement.

### Identification

The CCYAs are solely responsible for identifying youth who meet the above criteria. CCYA must establish policy and procedures on how they plan to identify these youth. OCYF and CWTP can provide technical assistance to counties who do not have a system or process in place to help determine the best way to identify the youth.

### Registration

All youth who have been identified as part of the Baseline Population must be registered in PA NYTD by a county's PA NYTD user(s). CCYA will have three options on how to register youth as part of the Baseline Population:

- Individual registration on the PA NYTD web tool;
- Bulk registration on the PA NYTD web tool; or
- By calling the PA NYTD Helpdesk: 1-800-436-4105.

The information needed to register youth includes the following:

- Name;
- Record/AFCARS number;
- Date of Birth;
- Sex;
- Race; and
- Ethnicity.

The above items are required data elements that must be submitted to the PA NYTD whether or not the youth participates in the survey.

The CCYAs may register a youth as part of the Baseline Population prior to the youth's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. However, if the youth leaves care prior to his/her birthday, he/she will be excluded from the population. In addition, the survey cannot be completed prior to a youth's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. After registration, the CCYA will receive a unique login that will be provided to the youth to allow access to the survey online.

### Time frame

ACF has determined that the time frame for completing the survey is the same 45 day span from the youth's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday to the 45<sup>th</sup> day following the birthday. The

survey must be completed for all youth in the Baseline Population who turn 17 within the FFY reporting period, even if the 45 days following falls outside of the FFY.

For example:

- A youth living at home turns 17 on January 1, 2011 (age 17 years, 0 days). On February 1 (age 17 years, 31 days) the youth enters foster care and meets the definition of the Baseline Population. The survey must then be completed by February 15 (age 17 years, 45 days).
- A youth enters foster care on January 1, 2011. On February 1, he/she turns 17 (age 17 years, 0 days) and is still in foster care, and meets the definition of the Baseline Population. The survey must be completed by March 18 (age 17 years, 45 days).

### Completing the Survey

Youth will receive the unique login from the CCYA holding care and responsibility to access the online PA NYTD. Youth will have from the registration date until they turn 17 years, 46 days to complete the survey. When a youth logs onto PA NYTD ([www.getNYTD.org](http://www.getNYTD.org)), he/she will first be given the option to complete the survey in English or Spanish. If a youth needs additional assistance to complete the survey, CCYA should schedule an appointment to help the youth, within the 45 day time frame. The PA NYTD Helpdesk (1-800-436-4105)\_staff will also be available to provide assistance to youth in completing the survey. Youth who do not have internet access will be able to complete a paper version of the survey and submit it to HZA within the 45 day time frame. (The paper survey must be completed by the youth by the 45<sup>th</sup> day following the youth's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday; however, it must be postmarked no later than the 46<sup>th</sup> day). Once the youth starts the online survey, he/she will not be able to save his/her progress, meaning the youth will be unable to exit and return to complete it at a later date. Youth should allow a minimum of 15-20 minutes to complete the entire survey. CCYA staff who will be assisting the youth to complete the survey should allow additional time as needed, depending on the youth's reading and comprehension level.

The paper survey will be returned in a self addressed/prepaid postage envelopes (provided by HZA) to:

Hornby Zeller Associates, Inc  
373 Broadway  
South Portland, Maine 04106-9944

### Tracking completion

Youth who were registered in the PA NYTD will be tracked for the survey completion. Reminders will be emailed weekly to the CCYA with a list of youth who have turned 17 years, 15 days and have not completed the survey. Notices will also be

sent when the youth turn 17 years, 30 days and have not completed the survey. CCYA should contact these youth to remind them to complete the survey or offer assistance as needed. Once the youth turns 17 years and 46 days the web survey will be closed and they will not be able to complete it.

All youth in the Baseline Population must have an Outcomes Reporting Status in the PA NYTD. There are eight possible outcomes as follows:

- Youth Participated;
- Youth Declined;
- Parent Declined;
- Youth Incapacitated;
- Youth Incarcerated;
- Runaway/Missing;
- Unable to Locate/Invite; and
- Death.

Any youth who answers any question in the survey (except for answers of “Declined”) and either submits it online or mails in the form will automatically be marked as Youth Participated. CCYA will be responsible to assign the Outcomes Reporting Status to all other records after the 45<sup>th</sup> day.

#### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Question: If a youth is registered in error (i.e. because of an incorrect date of birth included in the youth’s record) and the youth survey is collected and/or submitted to the PA NYTD web tool, can the youth later be removed from the Baseline Population?

Answer: Yes. CCYA should contact the PA NYTD Helpdesk (1-800-436-4105) to request the youth be removed if it is determined that the youth did not meet the criteria to be included in the Baseline Population.

Question: Do CCYA need to ask youth to report race or ethnicity if the data have already been reported in the youth’s record?

Answer: No. If a youth’s race and ethnicity information is already available, CCYA do not need to collect the data again. However, when a youth completes the survey, they will have the option of correcting/changing their race and ethnicity.

Question: If a youth in foster care asks the CCYA not to contact him/her in the future, should the CCYA persist in attempting to engage that youth in the outcomes survey and possibly the Follow-up Population?

Answer: CCYA are reminded that a youth’s participation in the youth outcomes survey is voluntary and refusal to participate should involve no penalty to the youth. CCYA are strongly encouraged to seek and obtain informed consent from a youth, including

offering an easily understood explanation of the purposes of the survey, the expected duration of the youth's participation, a description of the procedures to be followed and the voluntary nature of participation. OCYF, HZA and CWTP will provide training on engaging the youth including a video guide for youth on the importance of participating in the survey to improve the foster care system and the outcomes for youth.

Question: If the CCYA attempt to collect outcomes data for a youth in the Baseline Population within 45 days of the youth's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday, but are not able to do so before the youth exits foster care, then should the CCYA exclude the youth's record from the PA NYTD web tool registration completely? If not, what if any other information should be provided on that youth for NYTD data reporting purposes?

Answer: CCYA must not exclude the registration of the youth. The CCYA must still report information as required for the registration and the Outcomes Reporting Status.

Question: What is the penalty for submitting data gathered on these youth after the 45 days? Should CCYA still submit surveys gathered from youth in the Baseline Population after 45 days from their 17<sup>th</sup> birthdays?

Answer: CCYA are required to collect outcomes data from youth in the Baseline Population within 45 days of the youth's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. If CCYA are unable to collect outcomes data on a youth in the Baseline Population within 45 days of the youth's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday, the State could incur a penalty. CCYA are encouraged to submit outcomes data collected from youth in the Baseline Population after the 45 day timeframe following the youth's 17<sup>th</sup> birthday provided that the following criteria are met:

- The youth is still in foster care;
- The youth is still age 17; and
- The data is collected in time to be submitted for the report period immediately following the FFY reporting period (i.e. for FFY 2011 it needs to be reported prior to November 15, 2011).