

WELCOME
TO THE
NDACAN
SUMMER
TRAINING
SERIES!

- Session 03: Overview of AFCARS and NYTD data
- July 31, 2019, 12pm.
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NDACAN SUMMER TRAINING SERIES

NDACAN SUMMER TRAINING SERIES SCHEDULE

- July 17th, 2019 - Introduction to NDACAN
- July 24th, 2019 - Overview of NCANDS Data
- **July 31st, 2019 - Overview of AFCARS and NYTD Data**
- August 7th, 2019 - Strategies for Managing Data
- August 14th, 2019 - Linking NCANDS, AFCARS, and NYTD Data
- August 21st, 2019 - Concluding Session

SESSION INTRODUCTION

Tammy White, NYTD Data Analyst

ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE ANALYSIS AND REPORTING SYSTEM (AFCARS)

WHAT IS AFCARS?

The **Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)** reflects case-level information on children who are under the placement and care responsibility of IV-E child welfare agencies. AFCARS also reflects case-level information on children who were adopted with title IV-E agency involvement.

The reporting of AFCARS data is mandated by Section 479 of the Social Security Act and federal regulations at 45 CFR 1355.40. Title IV-E agencies are the States, DC, PR, VI, and Tribes with an approved title IV-E plan. There currently is one Tribe submitting AFCARS data. This data is not yet available to the public.

Data collection began in October 1994 and the first six-month files were transmitted between April 1 and May 15, 1995.

WHAT INFORMATION IS REPORTED?

AFCARS includes demographic, removal, placement, and other case related information. Examples include:

- Date of birth of the child, caretakers of the child, and foster/adoptive parents.
- Race information (self-identified) on the child and foster parents.
- Date of first and recent removal, number of removals and discharge date.
- Date of placement, number of placements, and placement location.
- Case plan goals, TPR dates, and sources of federal financial support.

The data are submitted as a six-month file based on the Federal Fiscal Year.

COLLECTING AFCARS DATA

- States document information related to AFCARS and other information in their electronic case record systems.
- States compile the AFCARS data and send it to the Children's Bureau.
- Children's Bureau works with states to correct errors.

DATA QUALITY

As part of the Children's Bureau's overall vision for accurate and reliable data, assessment reviews were conducted on State agencies. These States had an AFCARS Improvement Plan (AIP) as a result of the review. Currently, nine states have closed their improvement plans.

One item in the AIP is Data Quality. Agencies are to address:

- How they routinely and consistently review and monitor the data for accuracy, including all levels of the agency – line workers, supervisors, and managers.
- How the agency uses the data.
- How a review of the data is incorporated into their own ongoing case reviews, etc.
- How the importance of data accuracy is incorporated into trainings.

DATA QUALITY

Agencies are encouraged to incorporate and address how they monitor data accuracy in the Child and Family Services Plan (CFSP), the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR), and the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). In order to minimize duplication of the same information in the AFCARS IP, agencies can site any of the above for their Data Quality Plan and elaborate in the AIP as needed.

If a State has elected to utilize funds allowed under the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) regulations, then they are to also have a data quality plan that is to address all aspects of the information documented in the system by the agency or outside agencies. This plan too is in conjunction with and coordinated with the above other documents that addresses data quality.

NATIONAL YOUTH IN TRANSITION DATABASE (NYTD)

WHAT IS NYTD?

The **National Youth in Transition Database** (NYTD) collects case-level information on young people to help us understand how (and how well) states prepare youth in the child welfare system for adulthood.

It is a federal data collection system mandated by the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee Program) (Section 477 of the Social Security Act, as amended by P.L. 115-123).

Data collection began in October 2010. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico report data to NYTD.

WHAT INFORMATION IS COLLECTED ?

States are required to use NYTD to collect data on youth and the services they receive. They are also required to survey youth preparing to exit foster care and youth who have left foster care.

Demographics like...

- Date of birth
- Sex
- Race and ethnicity
- Foster care status
- Tribal membership
- Delinquency
- Educational level

Services such as...

- Academic supports
- Career preparation
- Budgeting
- Mentoring
- Health education
- Housing education
- Financial assistance

Outcomes including...

- Financial self-sufficiency
- Educational attainment
- Homelessness
- High-risk behaviors
- Connections with adults
- Access to health insurance

Data Quality– Compliance

Data Collection occurs on a semi annual basis:

The NYTD regulation lists compliance standards to assess whether state data meet minimal standards for timeliness and quality (45 CFR 1356.85).

Once data compliance is assessed, states have an opportunity to resubmit a corrected file. States that do not meet data quality standards are assessed a penalty.

Data Quality– Onsite Reviews

Between 2014–2016, seven states conducted pilot reviews which led to the development of the current onsite NYTD review protocol. This is a chance for a federal team comprised of staff from the central office, regional program offices as well as young adult reviewers to work in partnership with states to assess their data collection efforts and program implementation.

Goals of the Review:

- Comprehensively evaluates states' policies and practices related to collecting and reporting timely, reliable and accurate data:
- Validating and verifying that the state's child welfare information system can collect, manage and report required data
- Assessing the state's survey methodology
- Exploring how states use NYTD data to evaluate the quality of services provided to youth in transition as part of a Continuous Quality Improvement framework.

NYTD DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE

Reporting Population	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19
Information on youth receiving services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Information on youth outcomes (17-year-olds in foster care)	✓ Cohort 1			✓ Cohort 2			✓ Cohort 3		
Information on youth outcomes (At age 19)			✓ Cohort 1			✓ Cohort 2			✓ Cohort 3
Information on youth outcomes (At age 21)					✓ Cohort 1			✓ Cohort 2	

OUTCOMES REPORTING POPULATIONS

Baseline Population:

All youth in foster care who reach their 17th birthdays in FY 2011 or in every third fiscal year following FY 2011.

The cohort of youth eligible for follow up at ages 19 and 21 are a subset of these baseline youth.

FOLLOW-UP POPULATIONS

To be eligible for follow up at age 19*:

At age 17, the youth must have:

- participated in the survey within 45 days of turning age 17
- been in foster care at the time of taking the survey
- answered at least one survey question that was not ‘declined’ or ‘not applicable’

To be eligible for follow up at age 21*:

- in the follow-up population at age 19
- not reported to be deceased at age 19

*For states that opt to sample, only youth randomly chosen to be in the sample are included in the follow-up population

SAMPLING

Sampling frame: All youth who participated in the survey at age 17 (i.e., all youth eligible for follow-up at age 19)

Sample size: a simple random sample at a 90% confidence level plus 30% (attrition)

See 45 CFR 1356.84 (c), Appendix C; Technical Bulletin #5

SAMPLE STATES

Any state where a calculated sample size plus 30% would not be larger than the number of baseline youth is eligible to sample (roughly >85)

Cohort 1: 12 states (GA, IL, IN, IA, KY, LA, MA, OH, PA, TN, TX, WA)

Cohorts 2 & 3: 15 states (CO, GA, IL, IN, IA, KY, LA, MA, MD, MO, OH, PA, TN, TX, WA)

A “Natural” Next Step

If we think about child welfare services in three stages— prevention, intervention, and aftercare:

- For almost two decades, ACF has collected information on the response of public agencies to reports of child maltreatment (National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS)) and on experiences of children who have entered out of home care (foster care) —an example of an intervention to keep children safe (Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)).
- NYTD allows us to better understand experiences of youth as they leave foster care and/or as care is extended to age 21.
- A unique common identifier must be used for youth reported to NCANDS, AFCARS and NYTD, allowing us to analyze experiences of youth across the continuum of the child welfare service array.

AFCARS and NYTD

Unique Record Numbers allow us to link the two data sets

Demographic and characteristic profiles of youth who completed the NYTD survey
e.g., X% of young adults reporting having given birth to or fathered a child had 3 or more placements compared to Y% of youth who did not report having a child.

Longitudinal Analyses

What foster care experiences are associated with certain outcomes reported by youth on the NYTD survey?

e.g., Youth with lengths of stay in foster care greater than 24 months were less/more likely to report having been homeless than youth who had been in care less than 24 months.

OVERVIEW OF AFCARS AND NYTD FILES

Michael Dineen, NDACAN

CONFIDENTIALITY PROTECTIONS AFCARS

- The IDs (FIPS Codes) of counties with fewer than 1000 cases are recoded
- Child's DOB is recoded to the 15th
- All other dates are adjusted to preserve the time spans between dates

NDACAN ADDS NEW VARIABLES

- The two-character postal code for a state *St* (e.g. 'NY', 'CA', 'TX')
- Status flags (*InAtEnd*, *InAtStart*, *Entered*, *Exited*, *IsWaiting*, *AgedOut*, *IsTPR*)
- Child's age on certain dates (*AgeAtStart*, *AgeAtEnd*, *AgeAtLatRem*)
- Length of Stay at discharge or at the end of the fiscal year (*LatRemLOS*, *SettingLOS*, *PreviousLOS*, *LifeLOS*)
- Rural/Urban continuum code *RU13*
- Race variables. *Race* ignores Hispanic ethnicity; *RaceEthn* takes it into account
- *StFCID* is the combination of the state 2-char code (*St*) and the child's AFCARS ID (*RecNumbr*)

AFCARS VERSIONS

- States individually re-submit data to the Children's Bureau when it's corrected or updated; re-submissions may come from any year
- Re-submissions are compiled by the CB and included in the annual file download. CB sends data to NDACAN
- NDACAN makes the updated data available to users as a new version of AFCARS
- Users should always use the most recent version

WORKING WITH MULTIPLE YEARS OF AFCARS

- Years of the AFCARS files can be “stacked”
- When more than one year of the Foster Care File is used, there will be duplicated AFCARS IDs (StFCID)
- A child has a record for each year that they are in foster care.
- If resolving data to one row per child, keep the most recent year

THE NYTD FILES

- States submit one data file every six months (corresponds to the AFCARS reporting periods)
- For analysis purposes, two annual files are submitted to NDACAN:
 - The Outcomes File
 - The Services File

VARIABLES ADDED BY NDACAN: THE OUTCOMES FILE

- *Wave*: 1 (age 17); 2 (age 19); 3 (age 21)
- *StFCID*: The linking variable ($St + RecNumbr$)
- *St*: the two-character postal code for a state
- *Responded*: there was a meaningful answer to at least one survey question

VARIABLES ADDED BY NDACAN: THE SERVICES FILE

- *StFCID*: The linking variable ($St + RecNumbr$)
- *St*: the two-character postal code for a state
- *FY*: The federal fiscal year of the data
- *Race* ignores Hispanic ethnicity
- *RaceEthn* includes Hispanic ethnicity
- *AgeMP*: Youth's age at the midpoint of the reporting period
- *Cohort*: Youth is in one of the Outcomes cohorts

CONFIDENTIALITY PROTECTIONS

- Counties identified in the Foster Care File are identified in NYTD
- Dates of birth are set to the 15th of the month

NYTD DATASETS

Services:

FY 2011 – 2018: Roughly 100,000 young adults have received independent living services each year

Outcomes:

FY2011 Cohort (FY 2011, 2013, 2015):

- 29,565 eligible; 53% participated
- 11,712 eligible; 67% participated
- 11,675 eligible; 60% participated

FY2014 Cohort (FY 2014, 2016, 2018):

- 23,780 eligible; 69% participated
- 12,310 eligible; 72% participated
- 12,273 eligible; 64% participated

FY 2017 Cohort (FY 2017, 2019, 2021)

- 24,458 eligible; 67% participated

Outcomes Files-- Weighting

Weighting for Non-Response

- Subgroups that are over-represented among respondents need less weight; those that are under-represented need more weight
- Subgroups can have any characteristic that is known for both respondents and non-respondents
- Usually with surveys, only a few characteristics of non-respondents are known

NYTD data have weights that correct for any potential non-response bias

- Variables included Sex, Race, and Hispanic Ethnicity
- 32 variables from AFCARS were used in the weighting at Wave 1
- 42 variables were used at Wave 2 and Wave 3

Data users have reported (and results have shown) that weighted and unweighted results are very similar

WORKING WITH MULTIPLE YEARS OF NYTD

Services:

- Each year has two reporting periods, so a youth may appear up to twice each year
- Researchers usually summarize the data

Outcomes

- NDACAN provides the Outcomes data in “long” format
- For some analyses, users will have to re-structure the data to “wide” format

RESOURCES

More information about AFCARS:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/reporting-systems/afcars>

AFCARS

The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) collects case-level information from state and tribal title IV-E agencies on all children in foster care and those who have been adopted with title IV-E agency involvement. Examples of data reported in AFCARS include demographic information on the foster child as well as the foster and adoptive parents, the number of removal episodes a child has experienced, the number of placements in the current removal episode, and the current placement setting. Title IV-E agencies are required to submit the AFCARS data twice a year based on two 6-month reporting periods.

[**About AFCARS**](#) - General information about AFCARS.

[**AFCARS Policy Guidance and Resources**](#) - Policy issuances related to AFCARS as well as other resources, such as the Technical Bulletins.

[**AFCARS Assessment Review**](#) - Current information on AFCARS Assessment Reviews, including final reports.

[**Guide to an AFCARS Assessment Review**](#) - Guidance for title IV-E agency child welfare program and technology staff regarding the AFCARS Assessment Review process.

[**AFCARS Notice of Proposed Rulemaking**](#)[**Visit disclaimer page**](#) - A NPRM was published in the Federal Register on April 19, 2019 that proposes to streamline the information required to be reported in the December 2016 final rule. Find additional information on [**What's New in Laws and Policies**](#).

[**Listen**](#)

RESOURCES

More information about NYTD: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/reporting-systems/nytd>

NYTD

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) collects information on youth in foster care, including sex, race, ethnicity, date of birth, and foster care status. It also collects information about the outcomes of those youth who have aged out of foster care. States began collecting data in 2010, and the first data set was submitted in May 2011.

Our [Q&A](#) summarizes responses to questions posed by states regarding implementation of the National Youth in Transition Database.

[About NYTD](#) - General information about NYTD

[Federal Guidance on NYTD](#) - Policy issuances and other guidance related to NYTD, including questions and answers

[NYTD Reviews](#) - Current information on NYTD Reviews, including review schedules, review procedures and final reports

[NYTD Data Briefs](#) - Summarizes findings from State NYTD data submissions compiled by the Children's Bureau

[NYTD Data Review Utility \(NDRU\)](#) - Desktop application available to States for checking data file compliance and quality prior to transmitting files to the federal NYTD system

[NYTD Services and Outcomes Reports](#) - Information on key elements from State NYTD data submissions compiled by the Children's Bureau

[Other NYTD Resources](#) - Contains technical assistance documents related to NYTD

[Introduction to the National Youth in Transition Database Video Series](#) - Provides an overview of NYTD and the NYTD Review

QUESTIONS?

TAMMY WHITE (ACYF)

MICHAEL DINEEN (NDACAN)

NEXT WEEK...

August 7th, 2019

Data Management

Presenter: Frank Edwards, Ph.D.