

Key Aging Out Statistics: A Compilation of Data and Sources

Total Number of Foster Youth Aging Out of Foster Care

	Source	Number of Youth Emancipated from Foster Care	URL
2017	<i>Data not available yet</i>		
2016	<i>Data not available yet</i>		
2015	Foster care statistics 2015	21,875	https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/foster/
2014	Child Welfare Outcomes 2010-2014: Report to Congress	22,000	https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cwo10_14.pdf#page=17
2013	Child Welfare Outcomes 2010-2013: Report to Congress	23,000	https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cwo10_13.pdf#page=15
2012	Child Welfare Outcomes 2009-2012: Report to Congress	23,000	https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cwo09_12.pdf#page=15
2011	Child Welfare Outcomes 2008-2011: Report to Congress	26,000	https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cwo08_11.pdf#page=15
2010	Child Welfare Outcomes 2007-2010: Report to Congress	27,000	https://archive.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cwo07-10/cwo07-10.pdf
2009	Child Welfare Outcomes 2006-2009: Report to Congress	28,000	https://archive.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cwo06-09/cwo06-09.pdf
2008	Data not available		
2007	Child Welfare Outcomes 2004-2007: Report to Congress	27,000	https://archive.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cwo04-07/cwo04-07.pdf

NOTE: With the opioid addiction epidemic forcing more youth into foster care in the last couple of years, we may find the number of youth aging out will increase again starting in 2016. Ultimately, the data will tell us if this is the case.

Source	Supporting Young People Transitioning from Foster Care: Findings from a National Survey
Year Published	2013
Source Organization	Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative
URL	http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/JCYOI-CostAvoidance-2013.pdf
Study Sample or Focus	This Brief builds on and updates the 2009 Cutler report, The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth; While not all opportunity youth have a history of placement in foster care, and not all young people currently or formerly in foster care are opportunity youth, they share many characteristics and unfortunate outcomes, as well as comparable costs.
Total # Aging Out	Recent figures place the number of young people leaving the foster care system nationally at just over 26,000 per year. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012)
High School Degree or GED	Approximately 15,080 (58%) of the 26,000 young people leaving foster care each year will graduate high school by age 19; If instead this cohort of young people were to graduate at the national average, or 87 percent, then 22,262 would graduate.
Post-secondary Education	Very little research on postsecondary education completion rates for foster youth exists, but available data suggests that few among those who enroll in higher education institutions complete a degree.
Employment	N/A
Pregnancy	Like failing to graduate, unplanned and too-early pregnancies have cost impacts which start immediately and have life long impact for both the parents and their children.
Criminal Justice System Involvement	Cutler estimated that approximately 2,600 young people in each year's cohort (i.e., youth aging out of foster care) would have "serious and prolonged involvement in the criminal justice system."
Homelessness	The most costly bad outcomes come as a result of events, decisions and behaviors that occur within a very few years or even days, as homelessness and dropping out of school often happens immediately before or after leaving foster care.
Experience PTSD	N/A

Source	The Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth (Midwest Study)
Year Published	2011
Source Organization	Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago
URL	http://www.chapinhall.org/research/report/midwest-evaluation-adult-functioning-former-foster-youth
Study Sample or Focus	732 youth who aged out of care in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois; they were interviewed at the following ages: 17-18, 19, 21, 23-24, and 26
Total # Aging Out	Approximately 28,000 foster youth “age out” of care each year (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2011)
High School Degree or GED	83% of young women graduate from HS or earn a GED by age 26; 77% of young men graduate from HS or earn a GED by age 26
Post-secondary Education	18% of young women enroll in college; 11% of young women earn a college degree by age 26; 11% of young men enroll in college; 5% of young men earn a college degree by age 26
Employment	48% of young women were unemployed at age 26; 61% of young men were unemployed at age 26
Pregnancy	80% of young women reported being pregnant by age 26; 71% were pregnant by age 21; 33% were pregnant by age 17-18; 62% were pregnant more than once; 50% of young men in the study reported getting a girl pregnant (compared with 19% of the general population of men the same age)
Criminal Justice System Involvement	15%-20% of young women and 38%-41% of young men reported being arrested at some point between interviews at age 19, 21, 23/24, and 26; 6%-8% of young women and 19%-22% of young men reported being convicted at some point between interviews at age 19, 21, 23/24, and 26; 10%-17% of young women and 33%-40% of young men reported being incarcerated at some point between interviews at age 19, 21, 23/24, and 26
Homelessness	39% of youth reported having unstable housing (14.5% homeless and 24.5% couch surfing) at some point between interviews at age 19, 21, 23/24, and 26
Experience PTSD	Up to 66% of youth reported experiencing at least one symptom of PTSD

Source	Casey Family Programs: Foster Care by the Numbers
Year Published	2010
Source Organization	Casey Family Programs
URL	http://www.fostercareandeducation.org/portals/0/dmx/2013%5C07%5Cfile_20130719_111354_oStS_0.pdf
Study Sample or Focus	This is a collection of statistics related to foster care from different studies.
Total # Aging Out	Children exiting foster care who had been in care for one year or more: 53%; Children exiting foster care who had been in care for three years or more: 17%; Number of youth who emancipated from foster care during 2008 fiscal year: 29,500
High School Degree or GED	Alumni who completed high school: 74%
Post-secondary Education	Youth emancipating from foster care who plan to attend college: 70%; Alumni who completed a bachelor's degree: 3-11%
Employment	Alumni who were employed at age 21: 52%
Pregnancy	N/A
Criminal Justice System Involvement	N/A
Homelessness	Alumni who became homeless for one day or more after emancipating from foster care: 22%
Experience PTSD	Alumni of foster care who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder: 25%

Source	Improving Family Foster Care: Findings from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study
Year Published	2005
Source Organization	Research Services at Casey Family Programs
URL	https://www.casey.org/media/AlumniStudies_NW_Report_FR.pdf
Study Sample or Focus	Interviews with 479 alumni who were placed in family foster care with Casey Family Programs or a state agency in Oregon or Washington between 1988 and 1998.
Total # Aging Out	N/A
High School Degree or GED	High school completion rates via a diploma or GED credential were high (89.1% among those 25 years and older); Foster care alumni obtained a GED credential instead of a high school diploma at a rate nearly six times (28.5%) the rate of the general population (5%)
Post-secondary Education	Completion rates for postsecondary education were low: 16.1% earned a vocational degree, while 1.8% earned a bachelor degree: 1.8%
Employment	The employment rate among the alumni who were eligible for work was 80.1%, which was substantially lower than the national average of 95% for those age 20 to 34
Pregnancy	N/A
Criminal Justice System Involvement	Includes information about the alumni family situation before or during foster care. Substance abuse (64.6% of mothers and 45.1% of fathers) and criminal justice problems (35.0% of mothers and 36.7% of fathers) made up the highest proportion of parent problems
Homelessness	More than one in five alumni (22.2%) experienced homelessness for one day or more within a year of leaving foster care. These rates are all higher than national statistics for the general population, of which approximately 1% is homeless at least once during a year
Experience PTSD	Incidence of PTSD within the previous 12 months was significantly higher among alumni (25.2%) than among the general U.S. population (4.0%)

Source	Assessing the Effects of Foster Care: Early Results from the Casey National Alumni Study
Year Published	2003
Source Organization	Research Services at Casey Family Programs
URL	https://www.casey.org/media/AlumniStudy_US_Report_Full.pdf
Study Sample or Focus	The study sample included 1,609 foster care "Casey alumni" served by the 23 Casey Field offices in operation in 1998.
Total # Aging Out	N/A
High School Degree or GED	The high school completion rate at any age during or after care was 86% (including those who obtained a GED - 69.7% graduated high school while 18.2% earned a GED). If we just include Casey alumni ages 25 and older, the rate increases to 87.8%. A higher proportion (18.6%) of Casey alumni, however, completed high school via a GED certificate than the general population; Note, however, that other estimates of general population high school completion rates vary between 70-80%. Current reality may actually be closer to 75% because the completion statistics are sometimes overstated because they underestimate dropouts, and because they exclude military personnel, prisoners and institutionalized populations.
Post-secondary Education	43.7% enrolled in college; 10.8% earned a BA degree or higher (compared to 24.4% in the general population); 16.1% were currently in school at the time of the study; Significantly more female Casey alumni obtained their high school diploma, were attending college, and were in school at the time of the interview.
Employment	88% of the alumni ages 25 to 34 who were eligible for work were working at the time of the interview. This employment rate is slightly lower than the national average. A little over 12% of the alumni were receiving public assistance at the time of the interview - This rate is lower than what Casey Family Services found in their long-term follow-up study: 26%.
Pregnancy	We cannot directly compute the birth rate, due to missing data. We do know, however, that the case records for 6.1% of the young women who became pregnant had no mention of a live birth, while 17.2% of the female alumni had at least one live birth while in care. Thus, we estimate that the birth rate for teen mothers in this sample is at least 17.2% (compared with 8.2% in the general population).
Criminal Justice System Involvement	Approximately 2-3% of foster youth were incarcerated upon discharge from foster care.
Homelessness	22% of alumni were were homeless for one or more nights at any time within a year after being officially discharged from foster care. Almost 1 out of 5 (19.4%) were homeless for the first time ever, for a week or more after leaving foster care. The percentage of those who owned a home (27%) is much lower than the 67% of Americans who owned their own home in 2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
Experience PTSD	Substantial numbers of foster care alumni suffer from disproportionate rates of some mental health problems such as major depression, drug dependence, panic disorder, bulimia (an eating disorder), and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).