

**NUMBER**

#19-68-15

**DATE**

July 17, 2019

**OF INTEREST TO**

County Social Service Directors  
Social Services Supervisors and  
Staff

Tribal Social Services Directors,  
Supervisors, and Staff in  
American Indian Child Welfare  
Initiatives: Leech Lake Band of  
Ojibwe and White Earth Nation

**ACTION/DUE DATE**

Please read information and  
prepare for implementation

**EXPIRATION DATE**

July 17, 2021

## Guidance for the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

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**TOPIC**

Local social service agency responsibilities for implementing  
NYTD requirements.

**PURPOSE**

Provide county and tribal agencies with information, training and tools  
for implementing NYTD; instructions on how to use the Social Service  
Information System (SSIS) to enter independent living services data, plus  
survey and contact information for 17-year-old youth in foster care.  
Implementation of a new financial incentive, paid from Chafee funds.

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**SIGNED**

NIKKI FARAGO  
Assistant Commissioner  
Children and Family Services Administration

**TERMINOLOGY NOTICE**

The terminology used to describe people we serve has changed over  
time. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the  
use of "People First" language.

## I. Introduction

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Youth who are in foster care as they attain age 18 are challenged to survive in an adult world, often without the support of a permanent family. These youth have disrupted childhoods, and may feel disenfranchised from the system that has been providing foster care and associated services. Once on their own, foster care youth often experience lack of adequate housing, medical care, financial support and a supportive family.

NYTD requires a survey of these youth at age 17, to be followed by second and third surveys at ages 19 and 21. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (department) is seeking county and tribal agency assistance by participating in the NYTD baseline survey with these youth at age 17, documenting services, survey and contact information in SSIS. County and tribal agency participation in meeting NYTD requirements will inform the department of the effectiveness of Minnesota's transition resources, and provide a basis for continuous quality improvement in the Chafee/STAY (Successful Transition to Adulthood for Youth) program.

This will be the fourth cohort of foster youth to be surveyed. The first cohort turned 17 between Oct. 1, 2010 and Sept. 30, 2011. Local social service agencies were successful in exceeding the federal threshold on obtaining survey information, thus avoiding a fiscal penalty. However, the second cohort (those turning 17 between Oct. 1, 2013 and Sept. 30, 2014) was not as successful. Due to surveys not being completed in a timely manner (within 45 days after a youth's 17th birthday), Minnesota was penalized 1.25% of Chafee funds (approximately \$23,000). This fiscal penalty was passed on to county agencies deemed to have not met the federal standard. The third cohort (those turning 17 between Oct. 1, 2016 and Sept. 30, 2017) met the federal threshold. Department staff are hoping that Minnesota will meet the federal threshold for cohort four, which begins Oct. 1, 2019, avoiding another fiscal penalty, which could be up to 5% of Chafee funds (approximately \$135,000).

Minnesota was successful in completing follow-up surveys with the 19- and 21-year-olds in cohort one, which concluded on Sept. 30, 2015, and cohort two, which concluded on Sept. 30, 2018. Follow-up surveys with the 19-year-olds in cohort three is currently underway. Follow-up survey work is conducted by The Improve Group, under contract with the department.

Due to recent struggles with engaging youth in follow-up surveys, a financial incentive of \$10 will be implemented at the time of the 17-year-old youth survey. This should be paid out of Chafee/STAY funds by the local county or tribal agency administering the survey. It is also important to inform youth of the follow-up surveys, and the need for them to complete those surveys if they choose to participate in the 17-year-old youth survey. This new financial incentive is in addition to \$35 at the time of the 19-year-old youth survey, and \$50 at the time of the 21-year-old youth survey provided by the Improve Group. There are potential financial incentives for youth updating their contact information and keeping in touch with The Improve Group.

## II. Background

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The federal John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (the Chafee program) provides funding to and governs the program known as STAY in Minnesota. The Chafee program requires a client-specific data collection system to track independent living services provided to youth, and defined outcomes that measure each state's performance in preparing youth for successful transition to adulthood, from foster care to independent living. States received program instructions on the NYTD reporting requirements in 2008 with the stipulation that data reporting begin on Oct. 1, 2010. The law mandates reporting

of required information through the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), known as SSIS in Minnesota.

The majority of counties and a few tribal social service agencies receive STAY funding to carry out programs designed to prepare foster youth for transition to adulthood. If Minnesota is not successful in meeting NYTD requirements, federal regulations require the Administration of Children and Families to impose a fiscal penalty on the annual allotment of Chafee/STAY funds. Fiscal penalties to Minnesota's Chafee allocation could result in fewer funds for county and tribal agencies in subsequent years.

In an effort to customize federal NYTD regulations to Minnesota's efforts, the department has adopted the acronym MNYTD to reflect the Minnesota Youth in Transition Database. Hereafter, MNYTD represents Minnesota's procedures and processes to comply with federal policy.

### III. Target Populations

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For purposes of MNYTD, agencies have responsibility for the following youth:

**Served youth** – All youth, regardless of placement history, receiving an independent living service paid for or provided by an agency (whether with STAY funding or not). Services provided by foster parents, group home staff, or other contracted workers, also need to be recorded on an ongoing basis.

**Baseline youth** – All youth in placement on or within 45 days after their 17th birthday (but not before their 17th birthday), regardless of whether they received independent living services. This also means youth in voluntary placements, corrections youth in foster care, and youth who have temporarily run from placement. Youth are in the baseline population if they are in the care of another public agency and that agency receives Title IV-E foster care maintenance payments. States collect information on a new baseline of youth meeting the above criteria every three federal fiscal years.

**Follow-up youth at ages 19 and 21** – Youth who were in the baseline population of 17-year-olds in care and completed the MNYTD survey are asked to respond to the survey again at ages 19 and 21, regardless of whether they are still in care. The department contracts with a vendor, the Improve Group, to locate, communicate with, survey and administer incentives to these youth until they reach age 21. County and tribal agency staff may become aware of contact between The Improve Group and youth on their caseloads. The Improve Group may also contact agency staff in an attempt to locate these youth. Because The Improve Group is under contract with the department, county and tribal agency staff are allowed to share any information with them.

### IV. Agency Responsibilities

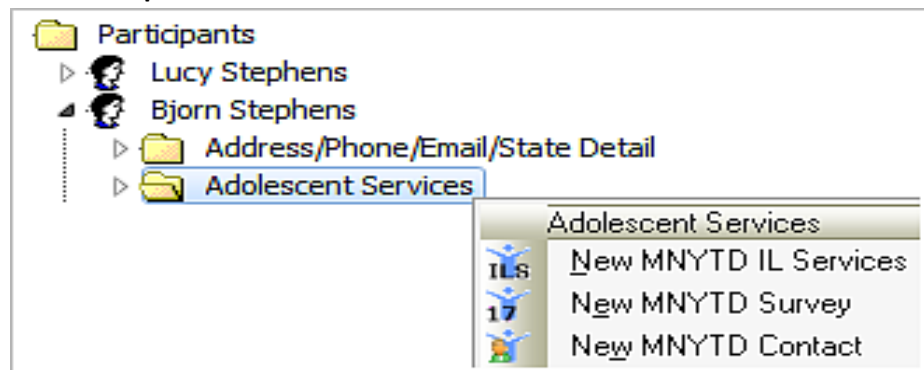
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#### A. Served Youth

MNYTD requires that any independent living services provided to transitional youth be entered in SSIS. Services may be quickly and easily entered on the IL Services screen. A new IL Services screen must be created for each federal reporting period. Blue context sensitive help text includes definitions of these services. This is on the same reporting schedule as the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).

Agency staff should be familiar with the MNYTD IL Services, Survey and Contact folders. To access these folders quickly, expand youth's Client node and right-click on the Adolescent Services folder to access the Action menu as shown in the screen shot below.

#### SSIS Participants Folder – Adolescent Services Subfolder – Action Menu



The screen below is the MNYTD Services screen which can be modified on an ongoing basis, and must be reviewed and completed for every six-month federal reporting period while an adolescent receives any independent living skills training (whether STAY funds are used or not). After selecting the reporting period and Independent Living Services Worker, check all that apply of the services that were provided during the reporting period. (Reporting periods are semesters of the federal fiscal year: October 1 – March 31 and April 1 – September 30.) Services may have been provided directly by foster parents or workers, or arranged or purchased by an agency. For every service checked, there should be a corresponding case note documenting the service provided.

#### SSIS Adolescent Services Screen

Federal Reporting Period:

IL Services Worker:

Services Provided

[Select all services provided during the federal reporting period:](#)

- ☐ Academic support
- ☐ Budget and financial management
- ☐ Career preparation
- ☐ Driver's education/public transportation use
- ☐ Employment program/vocational training
- ☐ Family support/healthy marriage education
- ☐ Financial assistance - educational/ETV
- ☐ Financial assistance - room and board
- ☐ Financial assistance - other
- ☐ Health education and risk prevention
- ☐ Housing education/home management trg
- ☐ Independent living needs assessment
- ☐ Mentoring
- ☐ Post-secondary educational support
- ☐ Supervised independent living
- ☐ Other

Other Description:

[Highest Education Level Completed:](#)

[Does the youth have a specialized education plan?:](#) ☐ Yes ☐ No

[Has the youth ever been adjudicated delinquent?:](#) ☐ Yes ☐ No

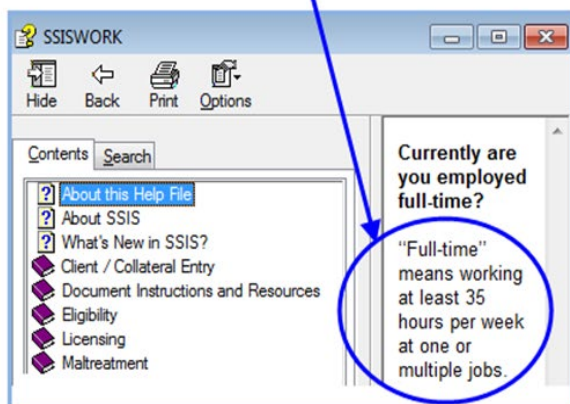
## B. Baseline Youth

Department staff understand that agency staff generally know when youth on their caseloads turn 17 years old. SSIS offers a search that lists all youth in placement who must be surveyed by unit and caseworker assigned. Agency staff can search by date ranges and can use the search filter to locate only youth currently in care. Data Cleanup also assists in identifying youth who are to be surveyed.

The screen below displays a portion of the MNYTD Baseline Survey. Survey responses are entered based on answers provided by youth, not the caseworker. Note available responses in the Reporting Status field. When the cursor is moved over a question on the MNYTD Survey the text displays in blue and is underlined. Clicking on the blue text displays help text, providing further definition to help answer each question. Enter youth's responses.

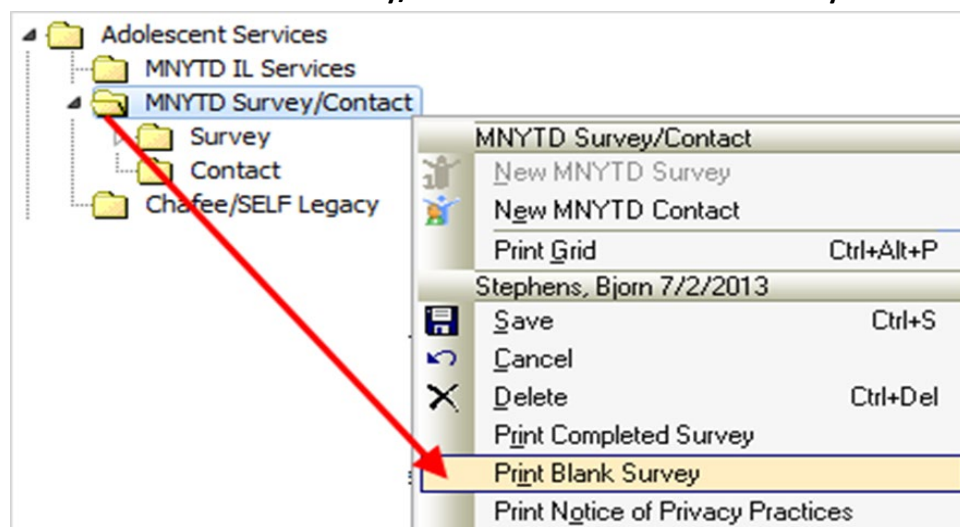
### SSIS MNYTD Survey Screen

Population: <input type="text" value="Baseline 17 year old"/>		Sample Follow-up: <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
<b>Survey Status</b>			
Reporting Status:	<div> <div>0</div> <div>       Youth participated        Youth declined        Parent declined        Youth incapacitated        Incarcerated        Runaway/missing        Unable to locate/invite        Death     </div> </div>		
Collection Date: <input type="text" value="7/2/2013"/>	Survey Entry Date: <input type="text" value="7/2/2013"/>		
<b>Employment</b>			
Currently are you employed full-time?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Unanswered
Currently are you employed part-time?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Unanswered
In the past year, did you complete an apprenticeship, internship, or other on-the-job training, either paid or unpaid?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	Unanswered
<b>Financial Support</b>			
Currently are you receiving social security payments (Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), or dependents' payments)?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Decline <input checked="" type="radio"/> Unanswered
Currently are you using a scholarship, grant, stipend, student loan, voucher, or other type of educational financial aid to cover any educational expenses?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Decline <input checked="" type="radio"/> Unanswered
Currently are you receiving any periodic and/or significant financial resources or support from another source not previously indicated and excluding paid employment?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Decline <input checked="" type="radio"/> Unanswered
<b>Education</b>			
What is the highest educational degree or certification that you have received?:	<input type="text"/>		
Currently are you enrolled in and attending high school, GED classes, post-high school vocational training, or college?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Decline <input checked="" type="radio"/> Unanswered



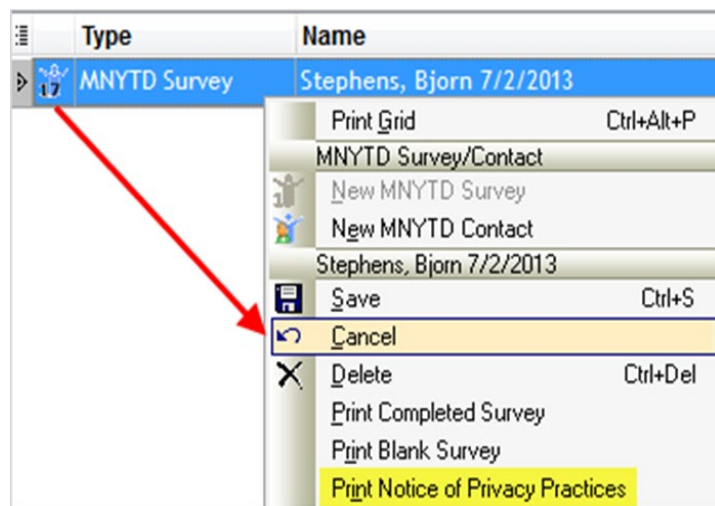
Surveys must be completed in entirety before being saved in SSIS. It is recommended that caseworkers print a blank MNYTD Survey first to complete with youth and then enter their responses in SSIS. Blank MNYTD Surveys are available by first opening a new MNYTD Survey and right-clicking on the Contact/Survey folder. Select Print Blank Survey from the Action menu. Note that caseworkers may also select Print Completed Survey and Print Notice of Privacy Practices from this location. The Notice of Privacy Practices and Blank Survey are also available from Tools – General Reports.

#### SSIS Tree View – MNYTD Survey/Contact Folder – Print Blank Survey



Right-click on the Survey node in the Tree View or in the grid (shown below) and select Cancel to exit the survey after printing a blank MNYTD Survey.

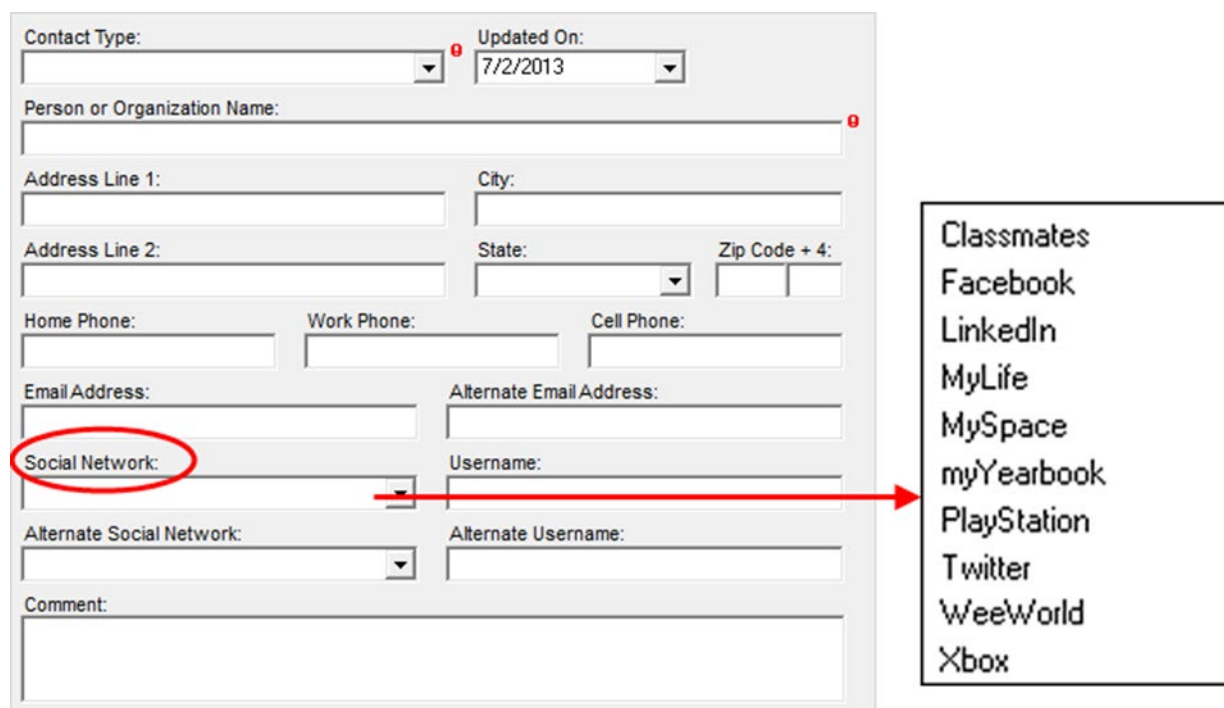
#### SSIS Grid – Action Menu – Cancel MNYTD Survey



The next screen is the MNYTD Contact Screen. Contact information provided by youth is important because it is used to locate them at ages 19 and 21 for the follow-up surveys. Encourage youth to provide as many contacts as possible and as much information regarding each as is known. Select Action – New Contact to continue to enter additional contacts in SSIS. Note the Social Network field. The drop-down menu suggests potential contacts through several common social networks.



### SSIS MNYTD Contact Screen – Social Network Field Selections

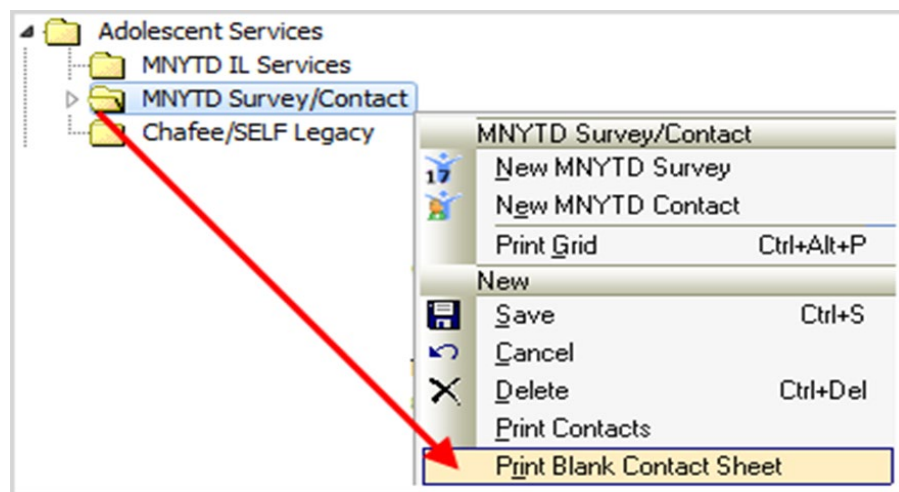


The screenshot shows the SSIS MNYTD Contact Screen. The 'Social Network' dropdown is circled in red. A red arrow points from this dropdown to a list of social media options:

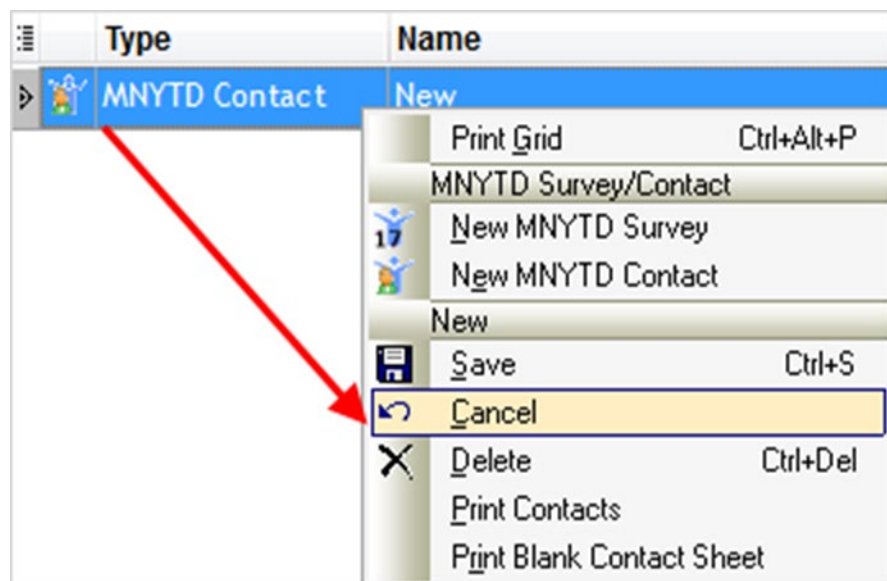
- Classmates
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- MyLife
- MySpace
- myYearbook
- PlayStation
- Twitter
- WeeWorld
- Xbox

The screen below demonstrates how to print a Blank Contact Sheet, which is also available from Tools – General Reports.

### SSIS MNYTD Survey/Contact Folder – Print Blank Contact Sheet



Right-click on the Survey node in the Tree View or in the grid (shown on the next page) and select Cancel to exit the contact after printing a blank MNYTD Contact Sheet.

**SSIS Grid – Action Menu – Cancel****Agency Actions:**

When agency staff become aware that a youth on their caseload is turning 17 (or was in placement within 45 days after turning 17) complete the following steps:

1. Make an appointment with youth to complete the 22-item survey and MNYTD Contact Sheet. Staff should locate and familiarize themselves with the MNYTD Notice of Privacy Practices, Survey and Contact Sheet. Because federal law requires that all youth in foster care receive at least one face-to-face contact each month, department staff recommend that MNYTD forms be completed with youth at the monthly visit immediately following their 17th birthday. Completing this process provides an opportunity to revisit youth's independent living plan and engage in the important conversation about whether they plan to remain in or leave foster care.

Caseworkers may want to have youth come to their office to complete the survey, or those with remote SSIS access will be able to record the information directly in SSIS from the field. Staff without these capabilities may need to print the forms from SSIS or eDocs.

2. At a visit with youth, introduce the MNYTD Notice of Privacy Practices, explaining the purpose of the MNYTD survey process. Inform youth that they will receive a financial incentive of \$10 for participating. This can be in the form of cash or a gift card, and should be paid out of the agency's Chafee/STAY funding. Assure youth that their personal information and identity is protected while reporting to the federal government. Emphasize that their participation will help other youth in foster care by giving the department information about the circumstances of youth as they grow older and leave foster care. Inform youth that they may be selected to participate in a second and third MNYTD survey at ages 19 and 21, and that there will be financial incentives for their continued participation. Clarify with youth that they are willing to participate in all three of the surveys; this clarity can help remind youth about the survey when they are asked to complete it again at ages 19 and 21.



3. Engage youth in completing the 22-item survey. It is important that youth's full responses are recorded, regardless of opinions of caseworkers. Caseworkers may clarify questions but should not coach youth on answers, even if a worker knows that information a youth is providing is not accurate. "Decline" and "don't know" are valid responses to survey questions. Avoid the temptation to coach youth on questions if they indicate one of the above responses.
4. Once youth completes the survey, staff should complete the Survey Status box, indicating the appropriate response as follows:
  - **Youth participated.** Youth participated in the outcomes survey, either fully or partially.
  - **Youth declined.** Youth was invited but declined to participate.
  - **Parent declined.** Youth was invited to participate, but their parent or guardian declined to grant permission to participate in data collection. (This will not ordinarily apply for youth in care.)
  - **Incapacitated.** Youth has a permanent or temporary mental or physical condition that prevents participation in the survey.
  - **Incarcerated.** Youth is unable to participate because of incarceration.
  - **Runaway/missing.** Youth in foster care is known to have run away or is otherwise missing from their foster care placement.
  - **Unable to locate/invite.** The agency could not locate youth who is no longer in foster care.
  - **Death.** Youth died prior to participating in the survey.
5. It is essential that youth, together with their caseworker, foster parent and/or supportive adult, provide data on the MNYTD Contact Screen. Accurate and complete data entry is vital to locating youth who are selected for the follow-up survey.
6. Follow standard monthly upload procedures for sending SSIS data to the data repository. No new state reporting procedures are required of agencies. The department is responsible for assembling the statewide report and transmitting it to the federal level.

## V. MNYTD Training

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The MNYTD VPC training held in September 2016 can be viewed at the link below:

<https://knowledgenow.dhs.mn.gov/replay/showRecordingExternal.html?key=yErzn8J8Oqr7etr>

MNYTD training is designed to:

- Provide guidance on demographics and characteristics of youth eligible for independent living services and the baseline MNYTD survey
- Identify types of IL Services to report and who may provide these services
- Demonstrate completion of the MNYTD survey with youth in foster care at age 17
- Suggest methods for documenting MNYTD contact information for follow-up surveys

- Instruct SSIS navigation regarding MNYTD data entry, as well as the use of MNYTD searches.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory**

This information is available in accessible formats for people with disabilities by calling 651-431-4670 or by using your preferred relay service. For other information on disability rights and protections, contact the agency's ADA coordinator.