



# CalYOUTH in the Loop

Creating feedback loops with Transition Age Youth From Foster Care



# Objectives

1. What is CalYOUTH in the Loop?
2. What communications methods did we test?
3. What worked best?
4. What did we learn about feedback loops?
5. What are the implications of the feedback on the survey?



# What is CalYOUTH in the Loop?

Three Year Research Project

Between Chapin Hall and i.e. communications, with a grant from the Fund for Shared Insight

Fund for Shared Insight is a funder collaborative making grants to improve philanthropy by promoting openness and sharing.

*Fund for*  
**Shared|Insight**

[www.FundForSharedInsight.org](http://www.FundForSharedInsight.org)



# What is CalYOUTH in the Loop?

## Creates a Feedback Loop

Between young people in foster care and policymakers and service providers

“Policymaking with Proximity”

## Shares and Solicits Responses on Selected Findings

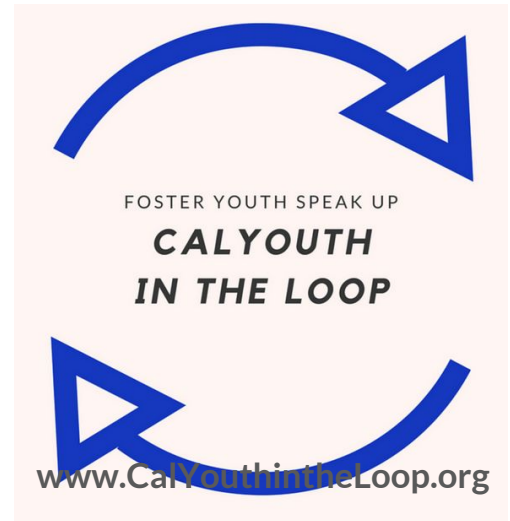
From the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood study

## Why?

Incorporate input to create policies and practices that best meet their needs

Increase engagement with young people

Identify best methods of communication for generating feedback



# Feedback Materials

## CalYOUTH in the Loop Website

### Speak Up on issues that matter to you

Complete one of the surveys below to enter to win a \$100 dollar gift card!


Participate in our survey and learn about the results of the CalYOUTH Study. Researchers asked 19-year-olds how foster care has affected their transition to adulthood in areas like health, relationships, education and employment. Click on the options below to see the results and provide your own feedback to improve extended foster care in California!



## CalYOUTH in the Loop Survey

CalYOUTH in the loop

Permanency and Housing

 OVER 20% OF YOUTH IN THE STUDY WERE NOT IN EXTENDED FOSTER CARE BECAUSE THEY EXITED CARE TO LEGAL PERMANENCY (REUNIFICATION, ADOPTION OR GUARDIANSHIP)

In your opinion, are reunification, adoption or guardianship better options than extended foster care

YES

NO

## Discontinued: Paper

Questionnaire for youth IN EXTENDED FOSTER CARE

CalYOUTH in the loop

Last year, researchers at the University of Chicago interviewed over 600 nineteen year old youth about their experience with the transition to adulthood. A majority of the youth were in extended foster care, but some were not.

We have included some of the most interesting results from the survey, and you'll get to learn more about how youth currently or formerly in foster care are doing in areas like education, relationships, health and housing. After we share the outcomes of the study, you'll be able to respond to some questions with your perspective and opinions.

Thank you for participating! All your answers will remain confidential. The data will be reported only in the aggregate and no individual youth identified.

\* Required

Tell us a bit about yourself

1. Age  
Mark only one oval.  
 16-17  
 18  
 19  
 20  
 21  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Gender  
Mark only one oval.  
 Male  
 Female  
 I identify as a different gender \_\_\_\_\_

3. If you identify as a different gender, please specify which in the space below.  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. City and state where you currently live \*  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. If a youth perspective recruiter asked you to take the survey, enter their name below?  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Are you currently in extended foster care?  
Mark only one oval.  
 yes  
 No - if not, please take survey for youth not in extended foster care.

## Methods: What worked best?

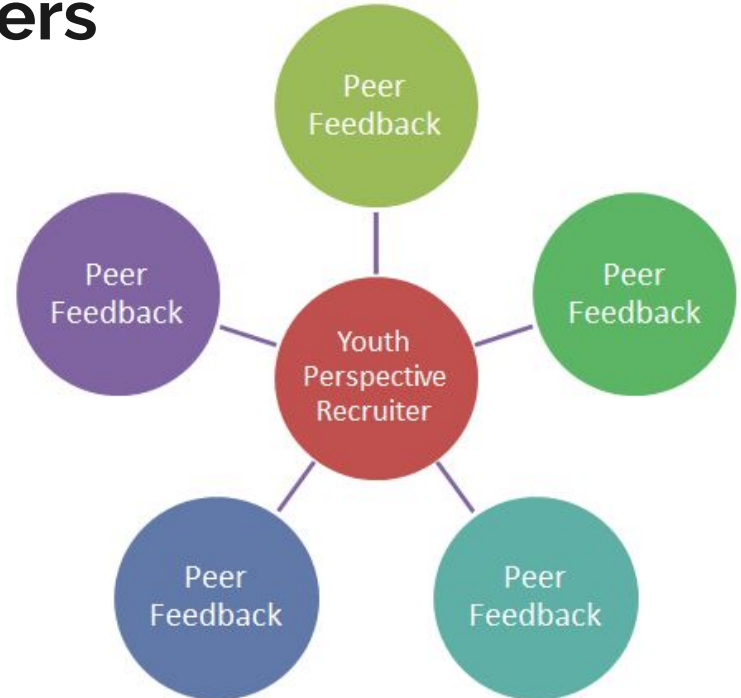
- Direct emails to youth
- Direct emails to service providers
- **Personal calls and emails with service providers**
- In-Person contact
- **Peer-to-peer outreach (Youth Perspective Recruiters)**



# Youth Perspective Recruiters

## Peer to Peer Outreach Strategies

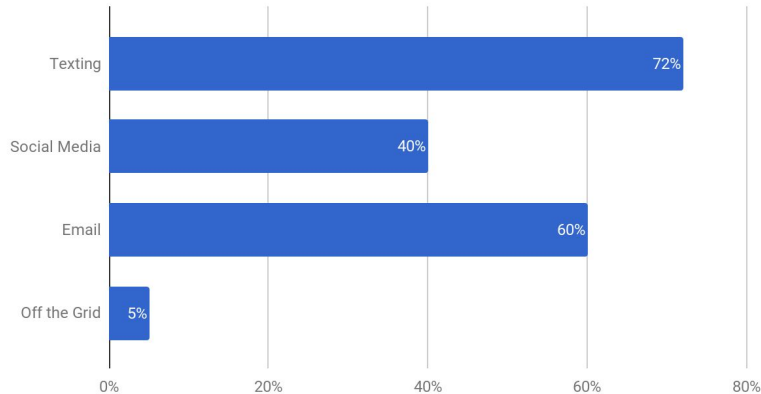
To encourage youth to share survey with their peers, CalYOUTH in the Loop created a Youth Perspective Recruiter (YPR) position. YPRs had to participate in a short orientation where they learned more about the CalYOUTH Transitions to Adulthood Study. Youth who participated in this activity were compensated with a stipend for recruiting at least 5 of their peers to take the survey.





# Preferred Communications Methods

Preferred Communications Methods



60%

Of respondents had access to reliable forms of communication “Always”

22%

Respondents who had access to reliable communications “Most of the Time”





# Feedback Loop Challenges

## Survey fatigue

- Youth and intermediaries are asked to respond to surveys or requests for feedback by many different parties for different purposes beyond their immediate self-interest (i.e. “long term policy change,” vs. immediate changes in their personal situation)

## Social media limitations

- Youth interact with the social media profiles that their social networks also interact with. For example: Popular brands and original creative content pages
- Our relatively small digital project struggled to gain traction on social media. Peer-to-peer outreach strategies and intermediary relationships were more effective.



# Important to Reward Feedback

## CALYOUTH IN THE LOOP LOOP IN. SPEAK UP. SHAPE FOSTER CARE.

### JOB POSTING

"Youth Perspective Recruiter"

#### Description

CalYOUTH in the Loop is looking for an enthusiastic advocate to amplify the perspectives of other TAY foster youth. You will be responsible for connecting with other youths between the ages of 18-24, who are currently or were formerly in foster care, and collecting their responses to a short survey accessible through the CalYOUTH in the Loop website (which can be filled out on a tablet or smart phone). The job would involve a special focus on reaching out to 19 year old youths.

#### Responsibilities

Reach out to your peers, youth ages 18-24, but especially 19 year olds, and collect responses to a short survey (5 minutes) which can be filled out on a smart phone, tablet, computer or even on paper!

Advocate the importance of including youth voice and perspectives.

Provide feedback on the reactions youth share when you ask them to participate in the survey. If they say yes, why? If they say no, why?

Connect with the CalYOUTH in the Loop coordinator on a weekly basis to discuss any challenges or successes in collecting surveys.


#### Compensation


You would be paid an initial stipend of \$100.00 for participation in a 30 minute phone orientation and making a commitment to collecting at least 5 surveys. After that, you would receive \$5.00 for each complete survey that you collect. Note: survey respondents will also be eligible for a monthly raffle worth \$100.

If you are interested in participating, please contact:

Lilia Granillo  
LGranillo@iecomm.org  
510-858-5448  
Text: 915-313-1584

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# Highlights and Insights

- College support organizations are trustworthy, tight-knit communities that encourage youth to provide feedback
- Youth Perspective Recruiters were previously involved in other advocacy organizations and were enthusiastic to develop skills related to elevating youth voice.
- Communicating with other peers about foster care was personally enriching for YPRs.
- YPR position created opportunities to develop youth agency and leadership.
- After orientation, YPRs could share information from the CaLYOUTH study in a more informal way, and spread knowledge of its results and effects, leading to greater familiarity with youth advocacy efforts and resources.

**Feedback loops in these contexts were not just “another survey” into the “feedback void.”**



## Responses to CalYOUTH Survey: Housing

28%

Of respondents experienced homelessness

Of those

54%

Experienced homelessness because they could not afford rent

17%

experienced homelessness because they felt their home/shelter was unsafe

14%

Experienced homelessness because of issues with housemates, roommates, or household members

91%

Those who experienced homelessness who indicated they **would have remained in extended foster care if they had known it reduced the likelihood of homelessness.**



# Responses to CalYOUTH Survey: Education

The CalYOUTH Study found that only 2 out of 5 youth were using a scholarship, fellowship, grant, stipend or student loan to help pay for schooling.

CalYOUTH in the Loop responses: youth believe these resources are underutilized because:

**65%**

No one talks to students in foster care about education after high school

**40%**

The forms are too complicated

**29%**

Don't trust the money will be there

**39%**

It's embarrassing to ask for money



# Implications

- Resources should be mobile-friendly
- Peer-to-peer communication networks can help dispel myths like “the money won’t be there,” but it requires “institutional” resources to fill in the details about eligibility, etc. “It takes a village”
- Feedback can inform important policy changes
  - FAFSA is widely underutilized
  - Responses to CalYOUTH study revealed difficulty accessing CalFresh
  - Housing is still a challenge even within extend foster care



## Questions, Comments?

**Do you have any questions we should explore during the 3rd wave of this feedback loop?**