

2025 CEW Youth Report

The Voices Behind The Numbers

February 25, 2025

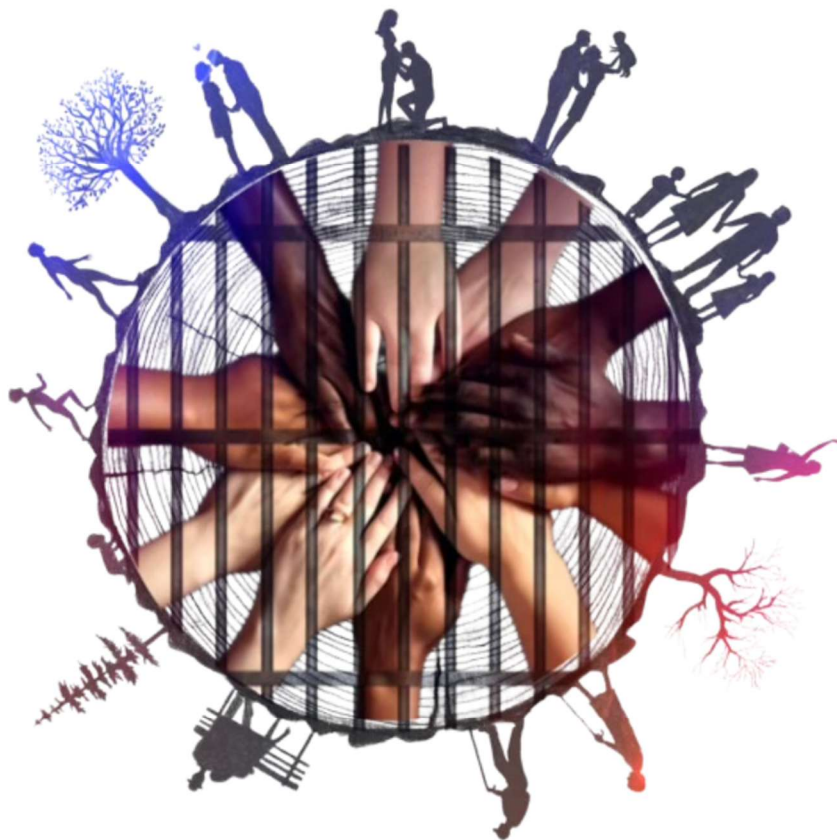


Image by Trysten Littleton

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The goal of the Community Expertise Workgroup (CEW) is to ensure that young people and families can inform and impact the decisions that are made about their daily lives. The young people that CEW work with daily have expressed frustration: “You all ask us questions, we answer, and nothing changes. You do not come back either.” The work of the CEW is to fight that trend.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In 2014, the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) was established to address issues within Connecticut's youth legal system. **The JJPOC was tasked with developing goals for reform, evaluating outcomes within the youth legal system, assessing quality and disparities regarding variety of programs in community supervision, congregate care, diversion, behavioral health, and recommending changes in statutes.**

The JJPOC has organized itself into specialized workgroups and subgroups to efficiently address its mandated tasks within the youth legal system. These workgroups are attended by various stakeholders within each field, such as leaders of nonprofit organizations, state legislators, and departmental leaders within state agencies. **To ensure the voices of youth and families impacted by these policies were included, the JJPOC created the CEW in 2019.**

The CEW operates on a "nothing about us without us" principle, in that no policy should be determined without the full and direct participation of members of the group impacted by the policy. Additionally, it incorporates a model of assisting the individuals involved in their program in gaining the skills, knowledge, and capabilities to participate in system-level decision-making processes and the work of JJPOC.

COMMUNITY EXPERTISE WORKGROUP

The CEW consists of community-based organizations, and in 2024-2025 includes 5 organizations:

Connecticut Justice Alliance

Next Level Empowerment

Center for Children's Advocacy

Love146

Our Piece of the Pie

which all provide a voice for those impacted by the work of this Committee. The CEW connects young people and community members to the JJPOC.

The organizations involved in the CEW align on several critical priorities, including:

- Removing youth from the Department of Correction (DOC)
- Investing in mental health supports,
- Raising the minimum age of arrest.
- Supporting families of incarcerated youth
- Improving conditions of confinement
- Expanding and investing in diversion and re-entry services
- Addressing root issues to divert children away from the legal system
- Organizing to transform youth justice policies and practices

Implementing effective restorative justice statewide as a best practice for all juvenile matters.

Recent goals of the CEW include raise the minimum age of arrest, appoint youth to vacant JJPOC member seats, build leadership pathways for impacted youth, families, and community members, and engage with incarcerated youth to assist them in participating with the JJPOC.



PURPOSE OF REPORT

On an annual basis, the JJPOC drafts an annual system metrics report detailing the quantitative metrics on youth involved in the youth legal system.¹ This data is helpful but not sufficient for understanding the surrounding circumstances and experiences

¹ See Complete Annual System Trends Slide Deck Here: [JJPOC-Annual-System-Trends-2024-Final.pdf](#)

of youth within and their pathways to the youth legal system. The annual system trends report fails to capture youth feedback and suggestions for system improvement. In response to this gap, the CEW sought to give a human voice behind the numbers, aiming to provide narratives and insight into the needs, challenges, struggles, opportunities, and hopes experienced by the youth within Connecticut's communities.

Consequently, members of the CEW developed surveys asking youth questions regarding their hopes and dreams, barriers and challenges, sense of safety and security, and available resources and services. The survey also explored experiences within the youth legal and child welfare systems and ability to successfully transition into adulthood. Two surveys were conducted: one administered to youth across the state that the CEW organizations were closest to, and a second survey was administered by Next Level Empowerment directly aimed at New Haven Youth.

While this initial report focused on youth in urban centers, the impact of the juvenile justice system extends to young people in suburban and rural communities as well. For example, between 2019-2023, over 178 youth were referred to the juvenile justice system from Wallingford; 234 from Windsor; 271 from Vernon; and so on. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of youth experiences across Connecticut, future reports will expand surveys and community conversations to include areas not currently represented.

This report introduces a human element to the data, displaying a vital insight into what services and resources youth most want and need in addressing the challenges they are presently facing. Furthermore, it should assist in guiding conversations of the JJPOC, state legislators, and our municipalities.



Statewide Survey Results and Analysis

Methods: Love146, Center for Children’s Advocacy, Our Piece of the Pie, and Connecticut Justice Alliance directly administered surveys to a sample of 139 youth in Connecticut. The results were later compiled and analyzed by TYJI, separating the answers within the surveys into several core themes.

The statewide survey had 6 questions:

1. What do you want for yourself as you transition to adulthood?
2. What do you anticipate will be some of the biggest challenges in adulthood?
3. What resources or services were/are most helpful during the transition into adulthood?
4. What additional resources or services do you wish existed in your community to help your transition?
5. If you have been involved in either the juvenile justice or foster system/child welfare system, how has your involvement impacted your ability transition to adulthood?
6. On a 1-5 Scale, how optimistic are you in achieving your goals?

Statewide Survey Demographic Metrics

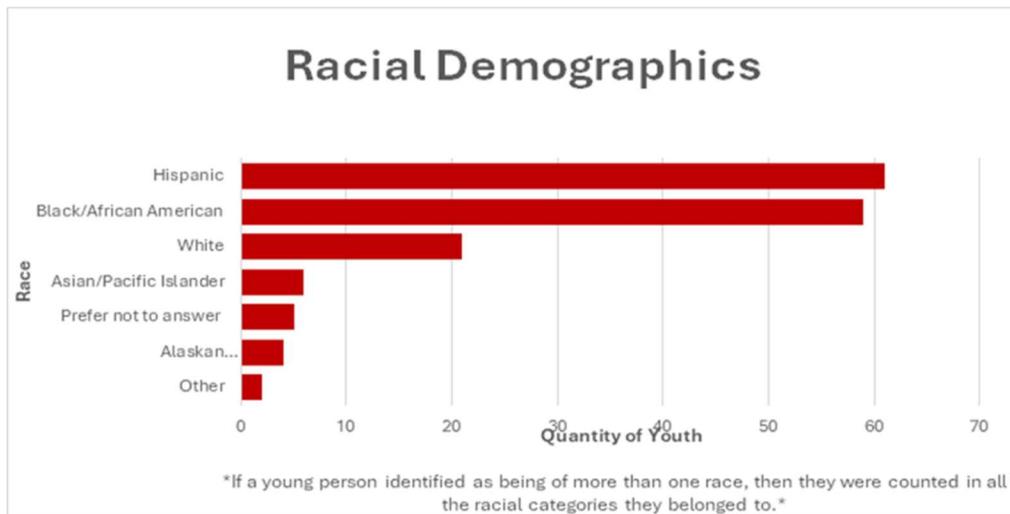


Figure 1. Racial Demographics of Surveyed Youth

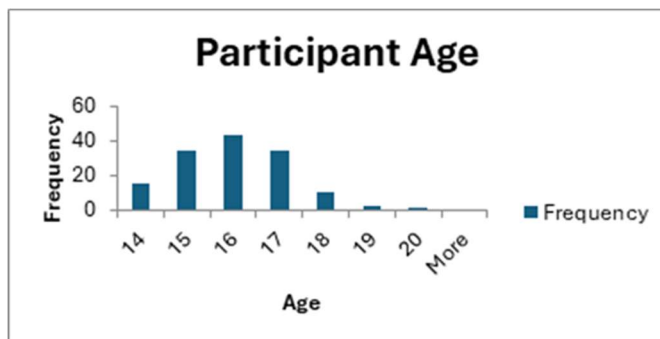


Figure 2. Age Distribution of Surveyed Youth

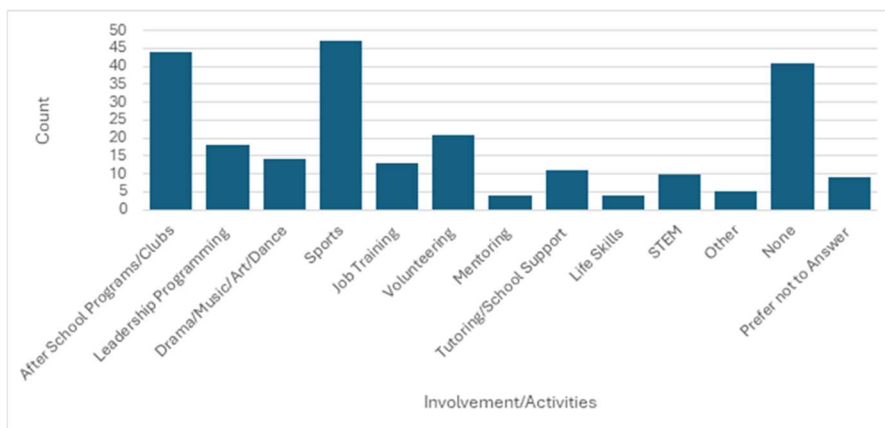


Figure 3. Participation in After-School Activities Reported by Youth

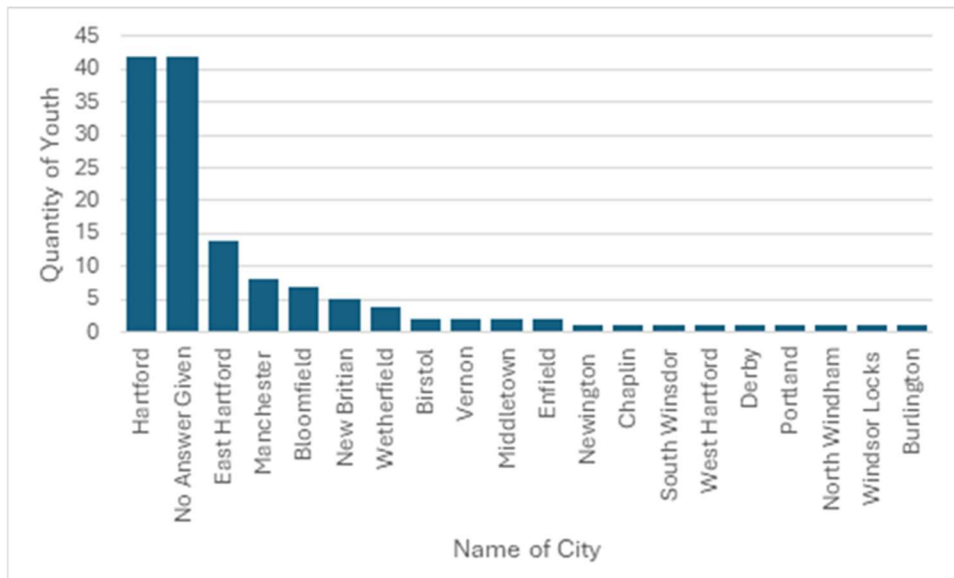


Figure 4. Youth's City of Origin

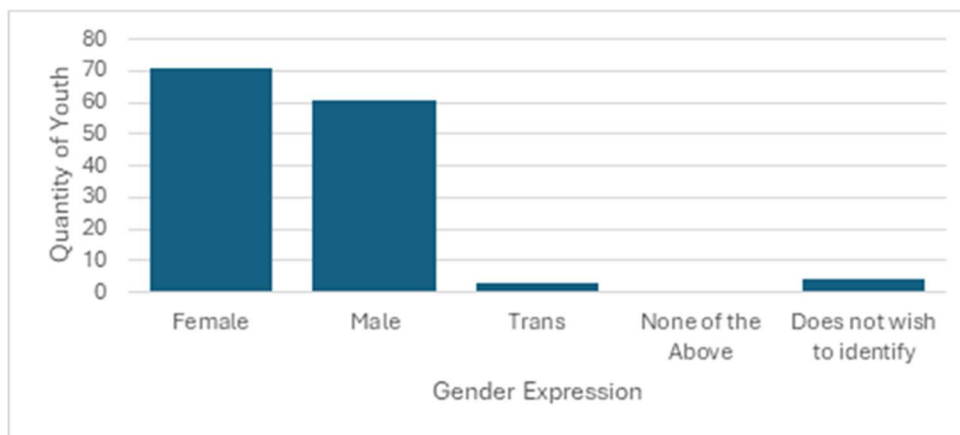


Figure 5. Youth's Gender Affiliation

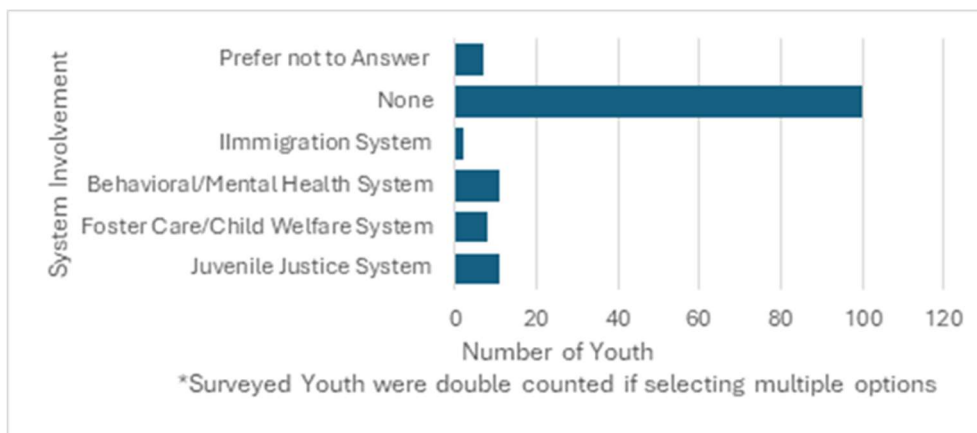


Figure 6. Youth's System Involvement

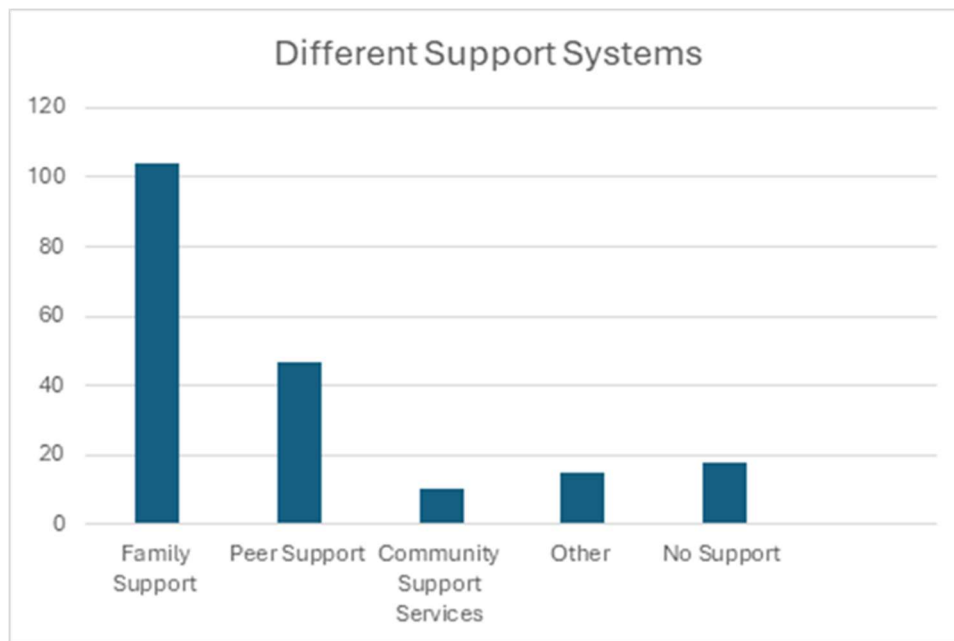
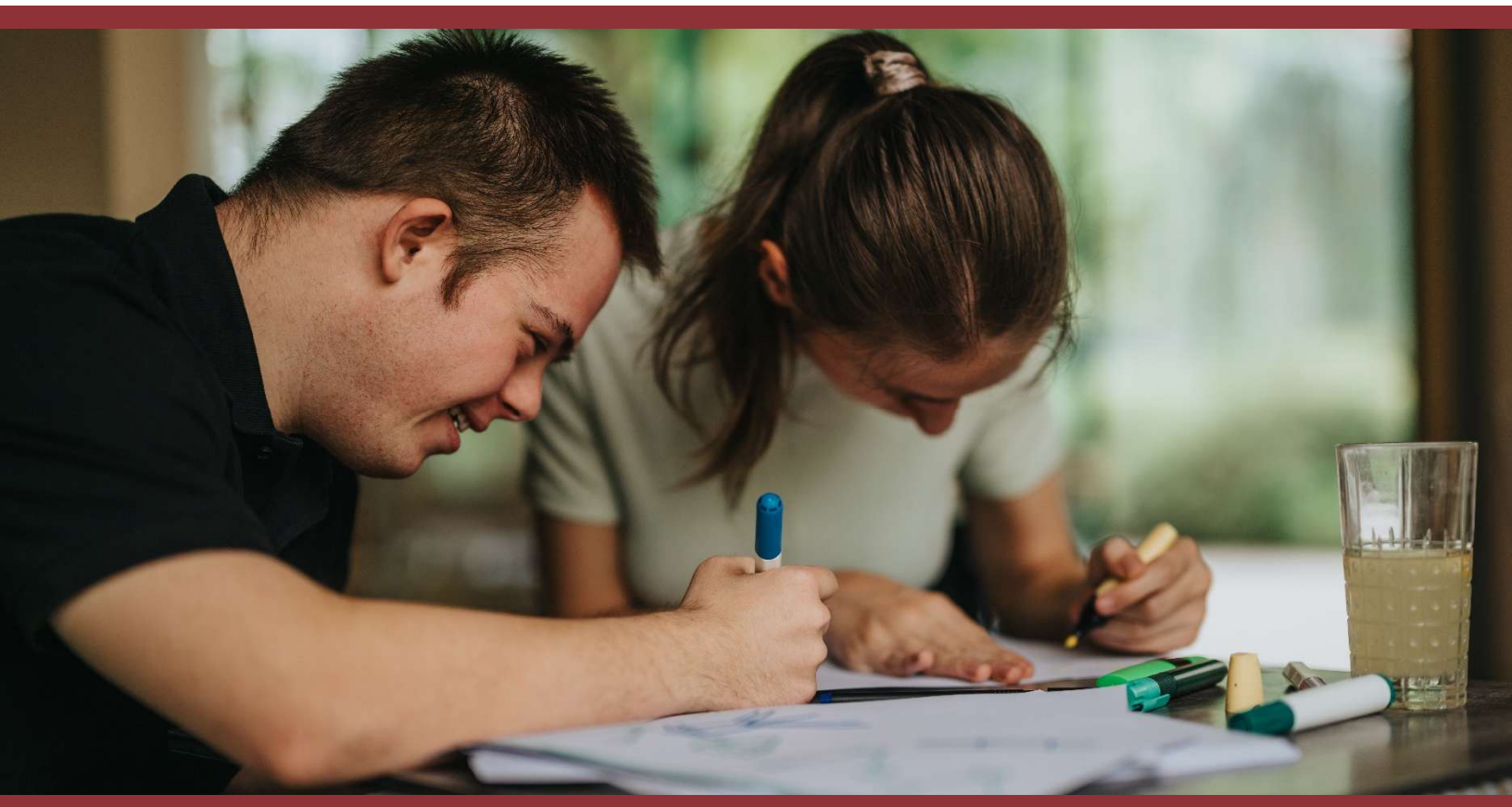


Figure 7. Support Systems Identified by Youth



Survey Question Responses

What do you want for yourself as you transition into adulthood?

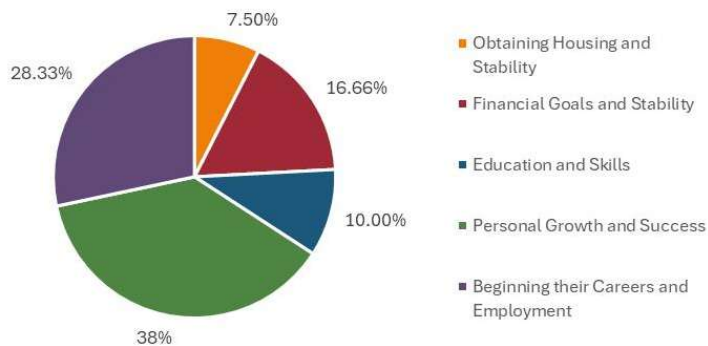


Figure 8. Key Aspirations of Youth During the Transition to Adulthood.

These responses demonstrate that youth in Connecticut have ambitions and strive for financial security and meaningful lives. There is a need to ensure that the state has systems and sufficient resources invested into services and support that can support youth achieve these admirable goals.

As I transition to adulthood, I want...

“Clear understanding of my opportunities”

“A college degree and attaining success”

“Meaningful employment and well-paying salary”



“To be better, happier and wealthier”

“To never give up”

“To make it out alive”

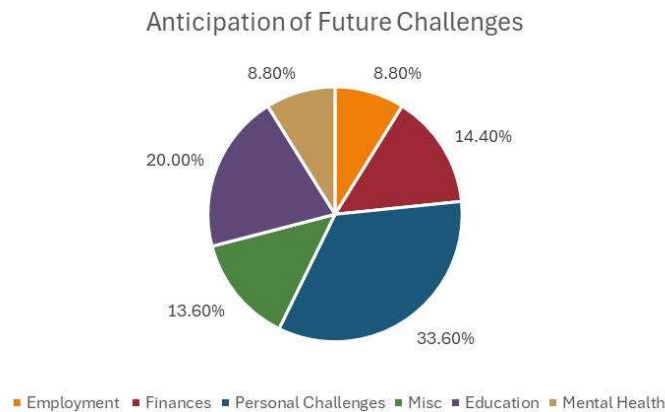


Figure 9. Anticipated Challenges in Adulthood Identified by Youth

Youth identified a range of interconnected challenges, from personal development, financial security, education and mental wellbeing.

Approximately, one third of the responses noted personal challenges, which were broadly defined as handling responsibility, interpersonal relationships, and consistency/motivation, among others. A substantial portion of the responses also related to financial security, with youth expressing concern about obtaining money, becoming financially stable, and acquiring essential resources such as transportation and housing. Relatedly, youth identified challenges in pursuing education, citing struggles in high school, or anticipated difficulties in overcoming barriers to gain college admission and succeeding academically. A similar number of

“There are no residential programs to help me with my struggle with addiction.”

youth expressed concern about securing permanent and fulfilling employment. While a smaller number identified mental health, the largest portion of answers pertaining to mental health noted managing stress, emotions, and anger. As with the first question, identified challenges can help inform policies and where additional attention and resources may need to be allocated to address some of these perceived challenges youth have identified.

“My home environment is bad . . . We need more rec centers and safe spaces that gives us options. Being locked up is miserable”

The most common support services and resources that youth reported as supporting their transition into adulthood were social support networks. This response encompassed both formal support networks, such as therapy, but more commonly, informal support networks, such as family and peer support. Another common response featured education and employment, as youth noted that obtaining a job or attending school assists them with transitioning into adulthood. Youth also recognized and identified the role they play in supporting their own transition, with one of the youth highlighting that “persistence and not giving enough” being an important attribute to maintain.

*“Support from friends,
school and family.”*



What resources or services are most helpful during the transition into adulthood?

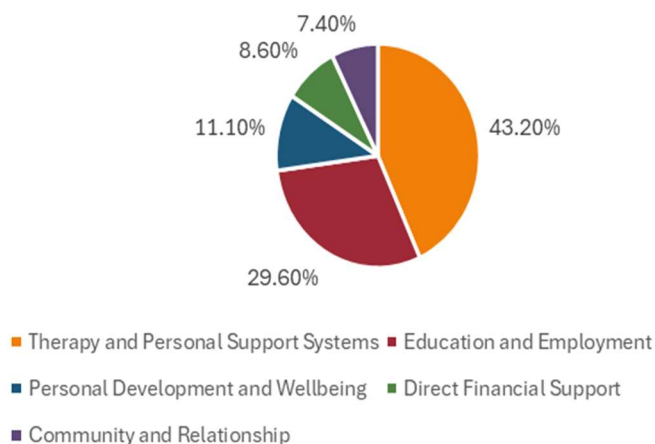


Figure 10. Resources Identified by Youth To Be Helpful

“Girls need more safe spaces and supportive places.”

Unlike the prior questions, only 61 of the 139 youth who were surveyed shared information on the additional resources and supports they wish existed in their communities to help with their transition to adulthood. Despite the lower response rate, the responses revealed trends that highlight potentially significant gaps in resources within communities most in need. Identified additional resources and service needs fell into 4 categories: 1) education and employment, 2) community, therapy, and emotional support, 3) personal development and wellbeing, and 4) financial support.

What additional resources or services do you wish existed in your community to help your transition?

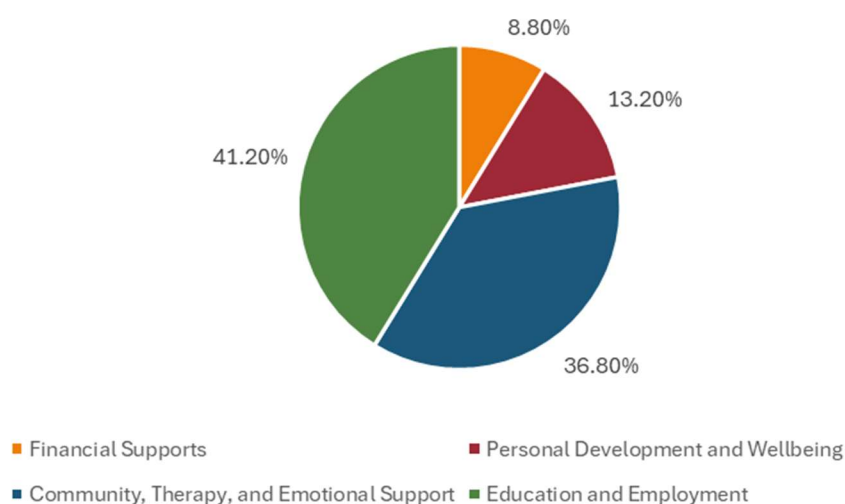


Figure 11. Desired Community Resources to Support Transitioning to Adulthood

The youth identified additional resources and service needs fell into 4 categories:

- 1) Education and employment**
- 2) Community, therapy, and emotional support**
- 3) Personal development and wellbeing**
- 4) Financial supports**



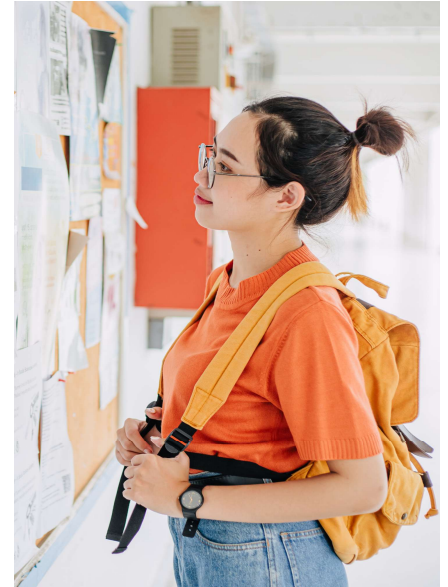
The most common answer to this question highlighted issues with obtaining sufficient educational support in conjunction with finding a meaningful job after graduating from high school or college. Specifically, youth want assistance gaining employable skills or additional vocational training. A little over a third of youth wanted additional assistance from their formal and informal support systems, such as increased access to a wider variety of therapeutic options or more ways in which they could connect with their community. Youth also expressed a desire for more support so that they could engage in greater personal development, such as

developing increased confidence and persistence. Finally, some youth identified that increased financial support and direct cash assistance would be helpful as they transition into adulthood.

“More relatable educators”

“Easier access to entering trade-based career paths”

“Driving education class at schools”



When youth were asked about the impact of involvement in the juvenile justice or child welfare system on their transition to adulthood, a notable theme in the answers included youth reporting that system involvement resulted in them acquiring more independence but also that their involvement resulted in them also experiencing additional trauma.

"It has impacted me tremendously; it makes me feel less than my peers"

"I have been in the foster system, and it has impacted my transition to adulthood by making me practically start my childhood over"

"It made me more independent"

"I have been in the foster system, and it has impacted my transition to adulthood by making me practically start my childhood over"

"Felt like I couldn't be too much of a kid so I've been forced to mature too early and sometimes I could be childish"

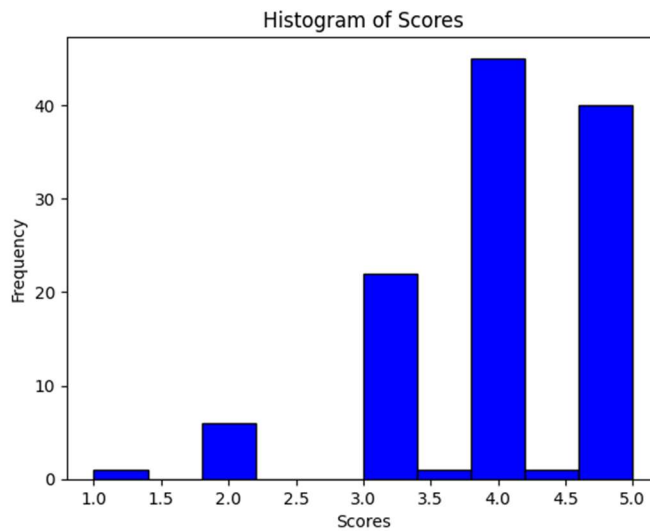


Figure 12. Level of Hope for Achieving Future Ambitions (1-5) Scale

On a scale between 1-5 (with 1 being low and 5 being high), what hope do you have that you will be able to achieve your future ambitions?

The survey question asked youth to subjectively assess their hope for achieving their future ambitions on a scale between 1-5 (1 as the lowest result, and 5 as the highest). Despite the wide range of answers, a noticeable majority of sampled youth (74.4%) are at least moderately optimistic (scores ranging between 4-5) in successfully obtaining their future aspirations.



Youth, who were surveyed maintain a positive outlook on their ability to achieve their future aspirations.

Spotlight on New Haven: Survey Results and Analysis

Methods and Purpose: Next Level Empowerment Program (NLEP) administered a similar (although not identical) survey to its served constituency. The NLEP was founded to assist formerly incarcerated individuals with accessing diversionary services and resources that would reduce recidivism rates and create a clearer path for reintegrating within their communities. The program currently offers a men's reentry support group, a helpline employing formerly incarcerated individuals, and a community transitional housing program. To assess service demand in New Haven, the NLEP administered a survey with 87 youth (both justice and non-justice involved). The survey primarily aimed to engage youth specifically within New Haven County, as this is where their organizational programs and services are currently concentrated.

The results were subsequently compiled and analyzed by TYJI, separating the answers within the surveys into several core themes highlighting core characteristics of the responses.



Along with demographic information, the NLEP survey specifically posed 4 questions to sampled population:

1. What do you like to do in your free time?
2. What are your aspirations?
3. What are the top three things you and/or your community need at this time?
4. What could NLEP or other programs/services do to support you and/or your community better?

New Haven Survey Demographic Metrics

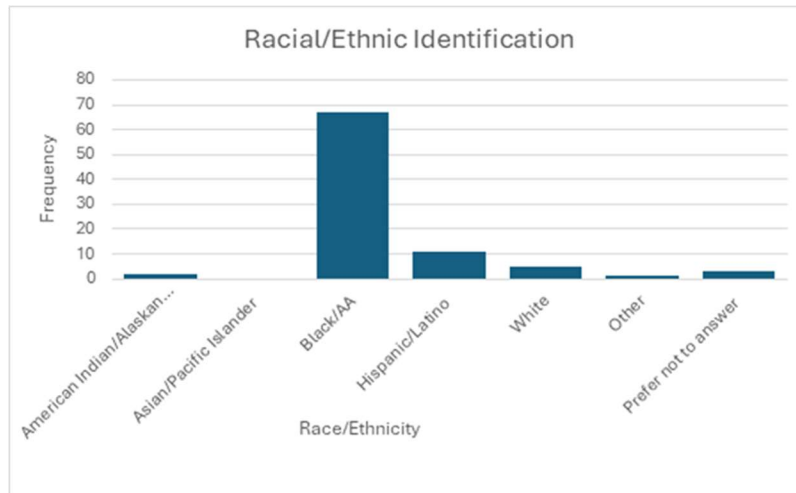


Figure 13. Racial Demographics of NLEP Youth Surveyed

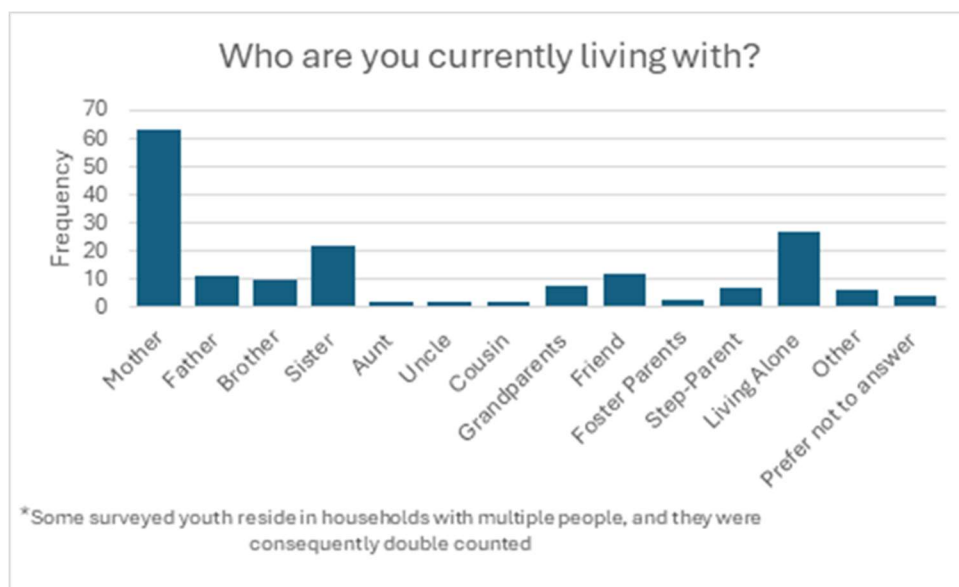


Figure 14. Current Living Arrangements of NLEP Youth Surveyed

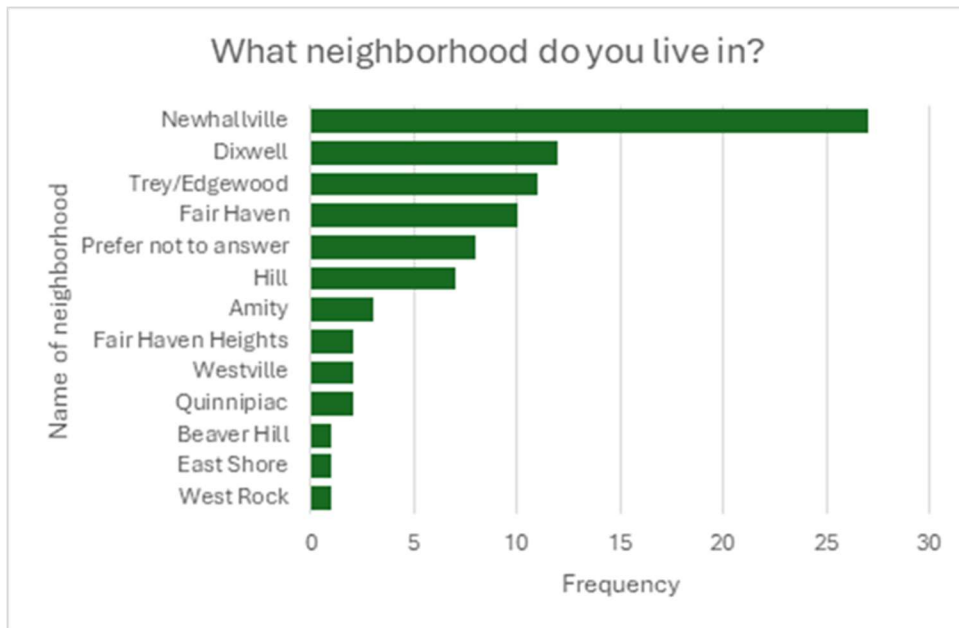


Figure 15. Neighborhood Residence of NLEP Youth Surveyed

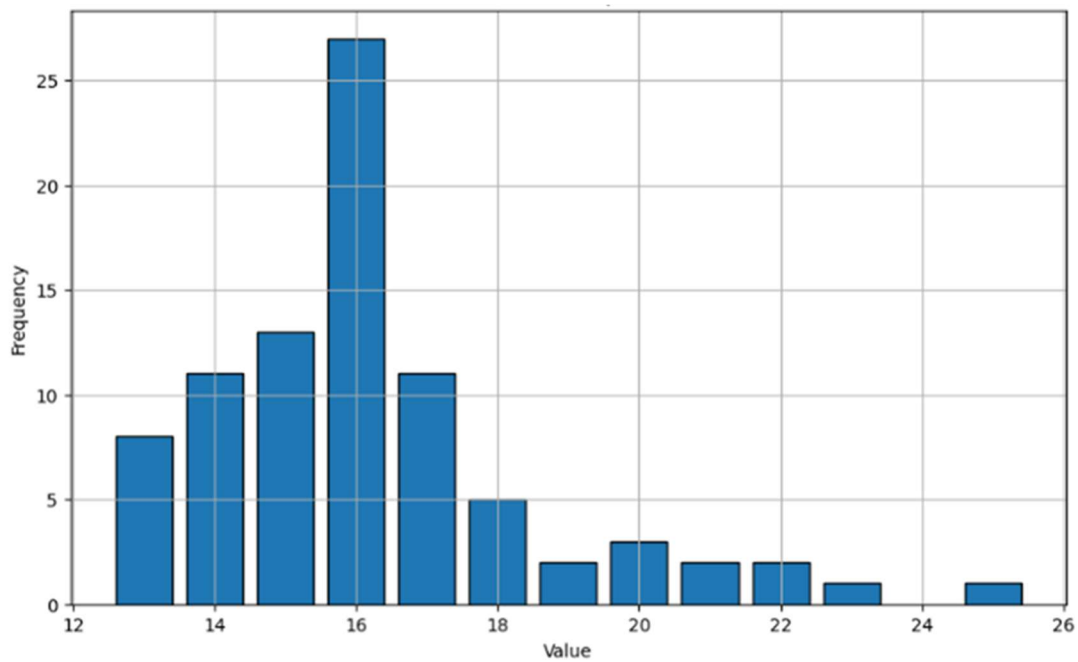


Figure 16. Age Distribution of NLEP Youth Surveyed

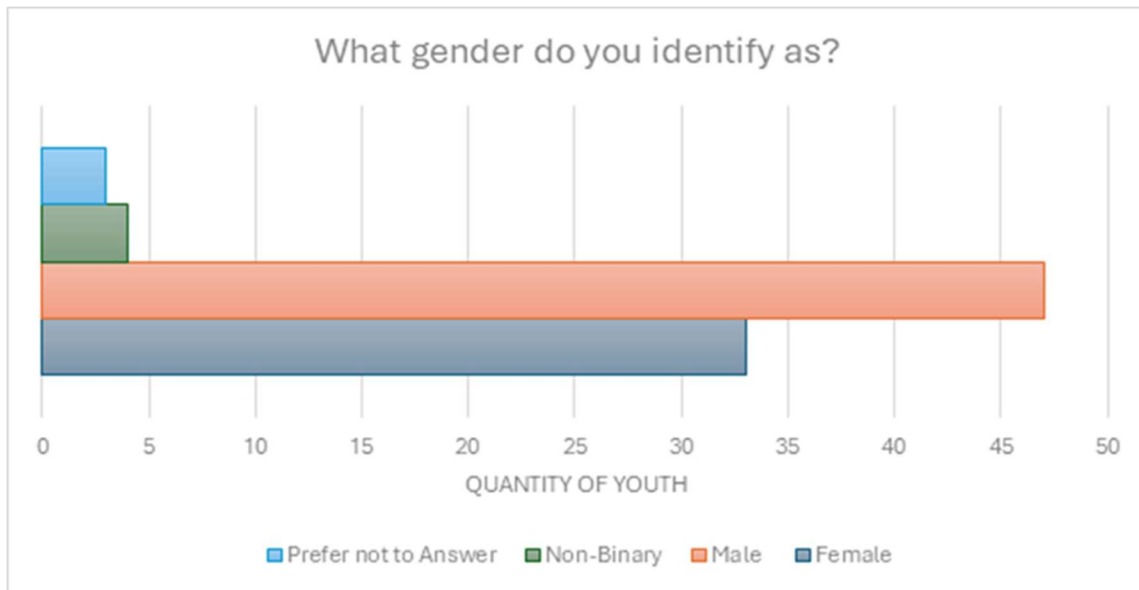


Figure 17. Gender Identity of NLEP Youth Surveyed

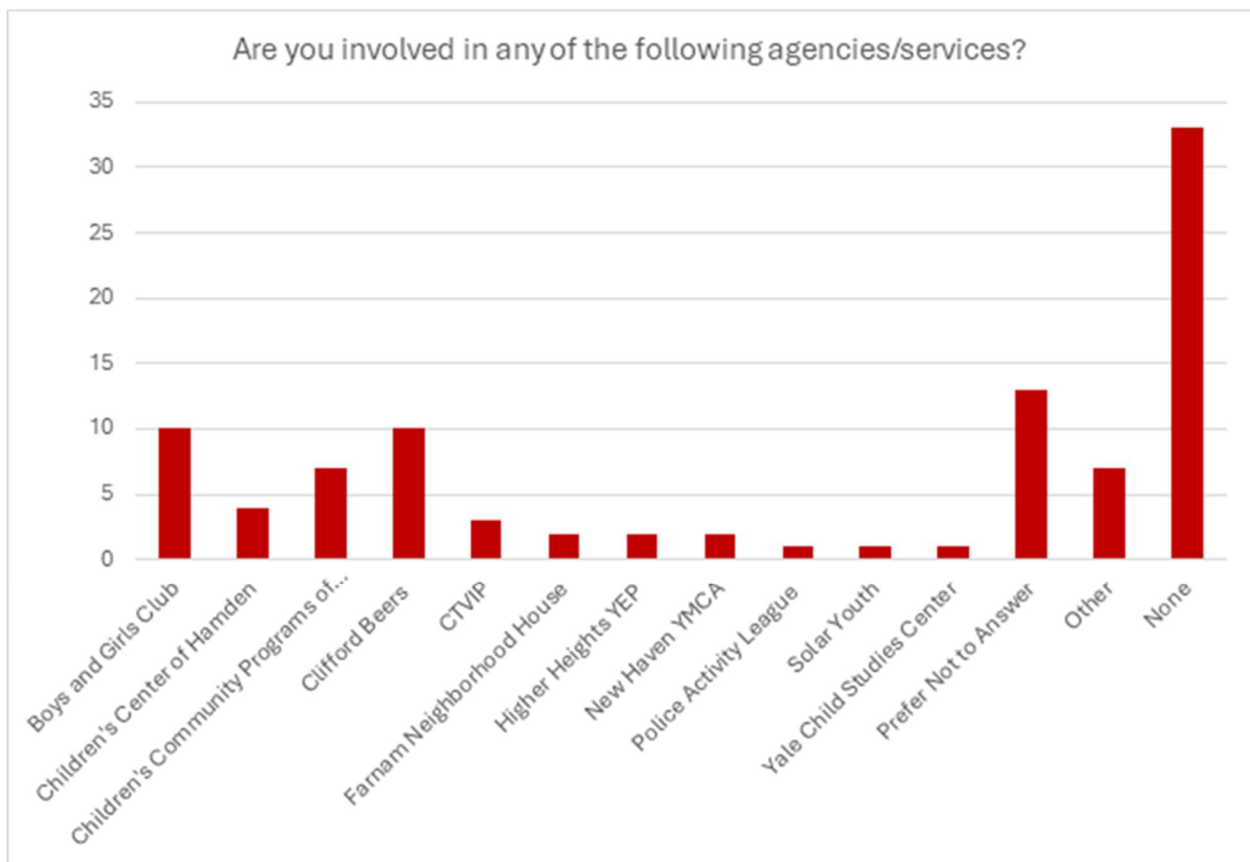


Figure 18. Agency Involvement of NLEP Youth Surveyed

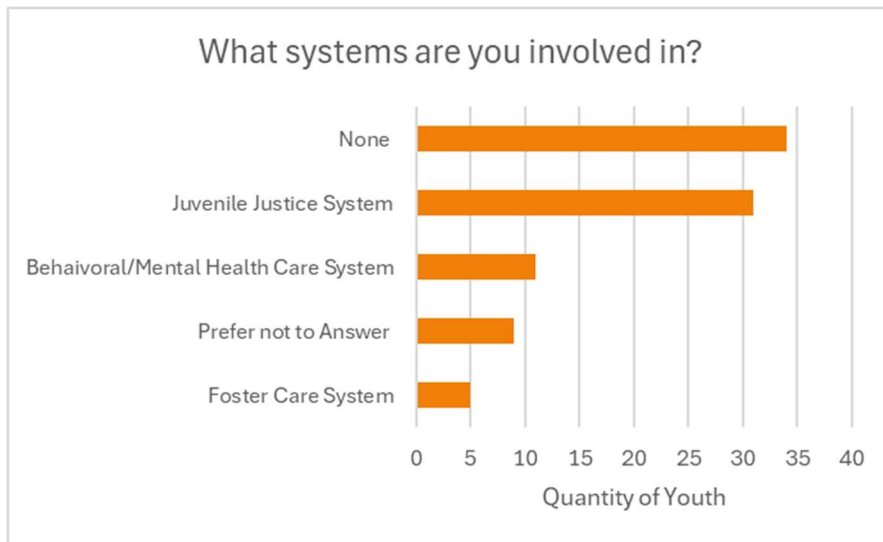


Figure 19. System Involvement of NLEP Youth Surveyed

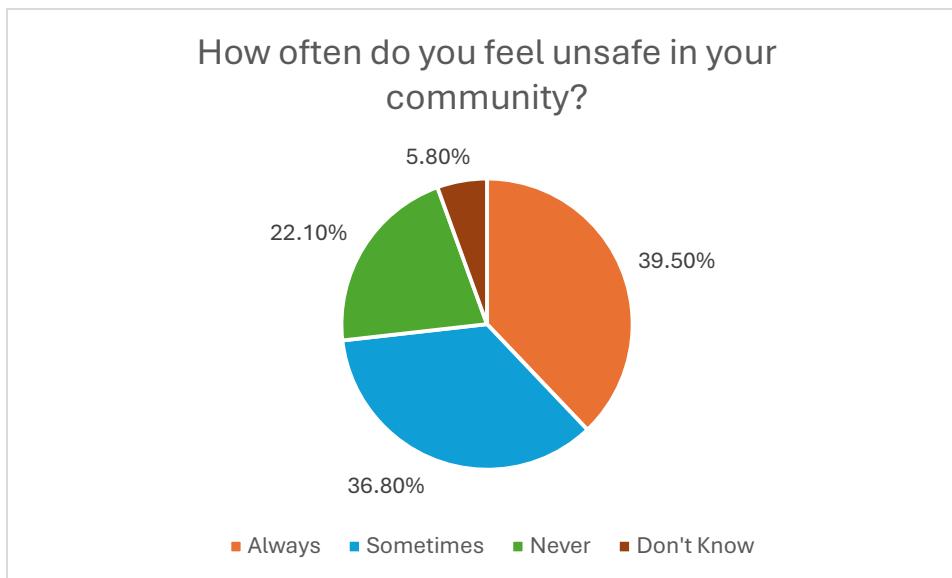


Figure 20. NLEP Youth Responses on Feeling Unsafe in Their Community

Survey Question Responses

Youth were asked about their free time to gauge the current interest level of different hobbies they may want to participate in during their leisure time. A total of 87 youth participated, providing 114 unique responses, with some youth listing multiple hobbies. 114 responses fell into 5 categories: 1) creative/artistic pursuits, 2) sports/activities, 3) other, 4) leisure, and 5) and socialization.

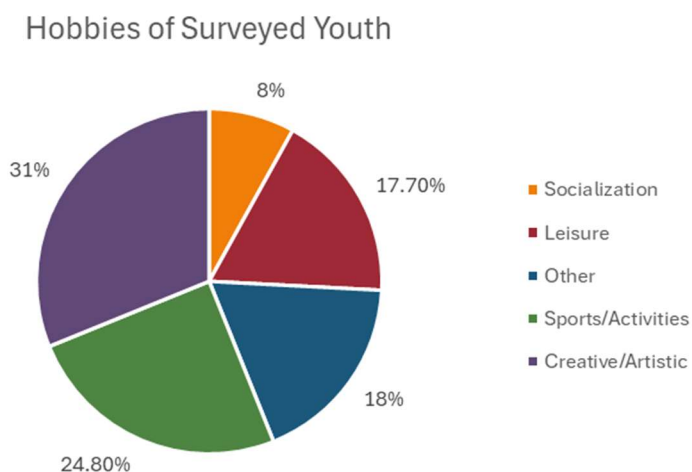


Figure 21. Desired Community Resources to Support Transitioning to Adulthood

The most common activity youth reported engaging with were creative and artistic activities, such as “rapping,” “putting on makeup,” and “drawing.” Sports were the second most popular category, with basketball being the most common choice. Many youth reported that “chilling” or “relaxing” were how they spent their free time, while a smaller number of youth provided answers related to socialization, such as “hanging out”. The remaining responses could not be placed into a single category, as the answers were too limited (e.g., driving) or too broad (e.g., everything) to place into one of the other designations.

“Play Basketball”

“Make Music”

“Help my mom with my little brother”

“Hang out with friends”

To gain a comprehensive understanding of youth perspectives, the survey also explored their aspirations for the future.

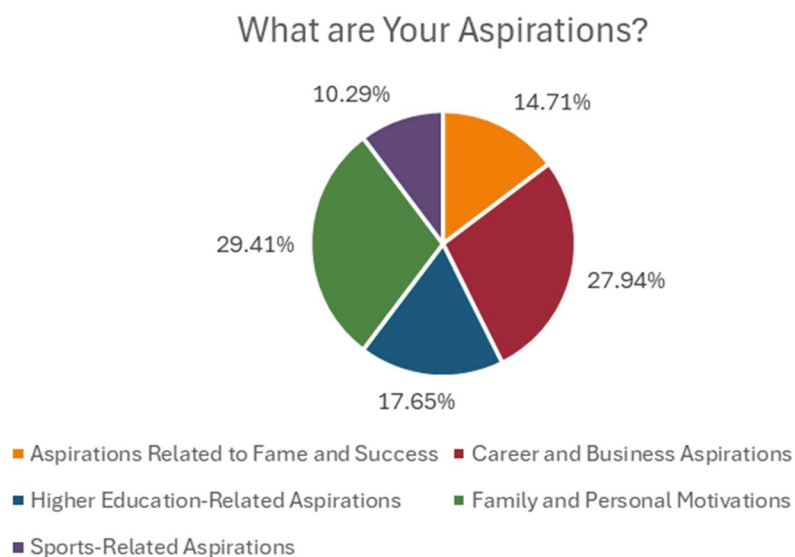


Figure 22. Aspirations Identified by NLEP Youth Survey

Of the 89 youth surveyed, 21 youth did not provide a response to this question.

Among the youth that did respond, they provided a diversity of answers that fell into 5 categories: 1) family and personal motivations, 2) career and business aspirations, 3) higher education-related aspirations, 4) aspirations related to fame and success, and 5) sports related aspirations.

Almost one-third of youth aspired to achieve financial and personal success within their lives. Another relatively common answer was pursuing ambitions relating to careers and business, as another third of youth highlighted certain career paths that they aspire to pursue after completing their education (e.g., working with hair, working in construction). Approximately, one-fifth of youth explicitly noted that they are interested in pursuing higher education after finishing high school, with some identifying specific career paths such as becoming a nurse or doctor, which require at least an associate degree. A smaller number of youth aspired to achieve success

“Support my family”

“Own my own business”

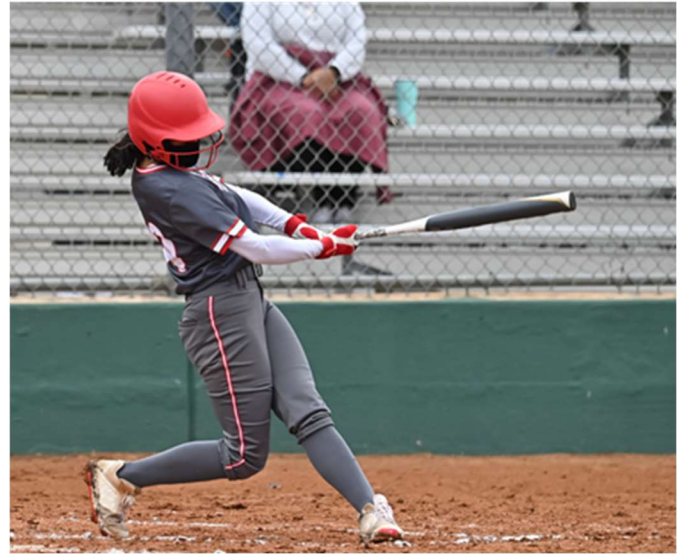
and fame in whatever career path they pursue or personal and financial success from going into sports, with basketball as the most popular choice.

"I want to work in construction"

"Go to college, for football and track"

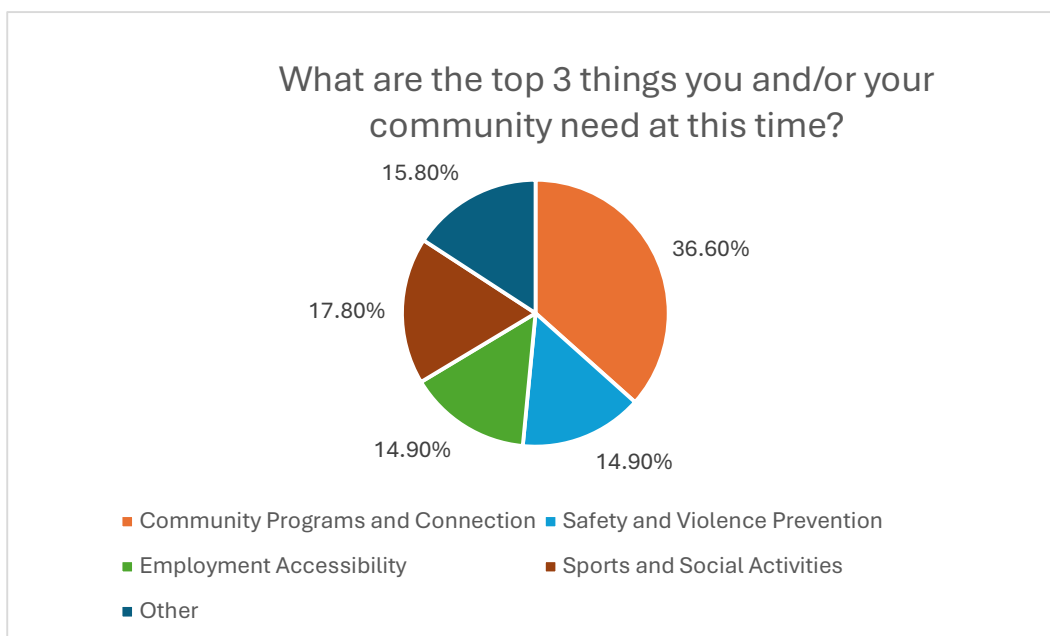
"Learn how to code"

"Make my parents proud of me, make it out of the hood"



When asked about the types of programs, services, or resources they wish existed in their communities, youth expressed a variety of needs. There were several key themes featured in the responses, such as 1) community programs and connection, 2) sports and social activities, 3) safety and violence prevention, 4) employment accessibility, and 5) other responses that could not be categorized.

Figure 23. Top 3 Community Needs Identified by NLEP Youth Survey



Over a third of youth highlighted a need for greater community connections and additional programming centered on youth, like having “more things for kids to do” or “youth centers.” Specifically, almost one-fifth sought greater access to sports and social activities accessible to teenagers, emphasizing access to open basketball courts. It is important to note that a fair number of youths reported that they do not feel safe in their community due to gun violence and a lack of protection, and additional services and programs to prevent violence and improve safety. A similar number of youth identified employment opportunities and job training programs as a need for their community. The remaining youth’ answers could not fit into another category, such as “additional housing” or “help.”



*“Something to do.
Somewhere safe”*



**39.50 % of youth reported feeling
unsafe in their community.**



“A place to feel safe when playing ball”

“Better living conditions for kids”

“Drug program for users”

“Community center”

“Activities for children”

“Mentor or leadership program”

What could NELP or other programs/services do you support you and/or your community better?

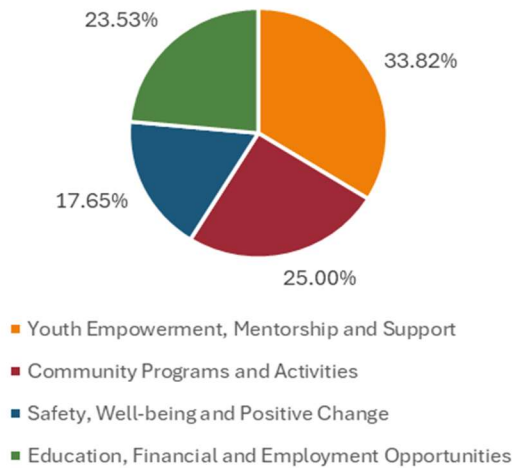


Figure 24. Top 3 Community Needs Identified by NELP Youth Survey

There were 68 responses to this following question, encompassing 1) Youth Empowerment, 2) Community Programs and Activities, 3) Education, Financial and Employment Opportunities, 4) Safety, Well-being, and Positive Change. 33.82% of answers highlighted the necessity for additional support in empowering youth and expanding mentorship. 25% of the responses noted the demand for finding more activities for children to do in their spare time. Slightly less than 23.53% of responses asked the NELP to assist with securing youth jobs, classes to develop their skillsets, and additional tutoring for school. Approximately 17.65% of answers mentioned that they felt unsafe in their communities and harrowingly noted that they wanted the “killing to stop” (multiple answers mentioned this verbatim).

“Give the children an opportunity to gain understanding of their future aspirations, and give them an opportunity to succeed, prosper, and feel secure”



Recommendations

The survey conducted among youth revealed profound challenges they face within their communities, including systemic poverty, exposure to violence, and lack of educational and recreational resources. These underlying issues contribute significantly to delinquent behavior among young individuals, who are often left with limited opportunities for personal and social development. Addressing delinquent behavior with punitive measures alone not only fails to tackle these root causes but also perpetuates a cycle of disadvantage and exclusion. Instead, it is imperative that we recognize the inherent potential within each young person and commit to substantial investments in community support, education, and mentorship programs that nurture their growth and development.

Our youth are complex, developing individuals who require and deserve thoughtful, sustained investment to unlock their potential. Viewing them through a lens of punishment for delinquent acts overlooks the broader social context and fails to address the systemic issues at play. By focusing on the root causes, such as poverty and violence, and providing comprehensive support systems, we can steer these young minds towards becoming positive contributors to society.

The choice is clear: we can either invest in their future now, offering them the tools and opportunities to thrive, or risk relegating them to a life marked by missed opportunities and potential incarceration. As state actors and legislators, you hold the power to make decisions that will shape not only their futures, but the future of our communities and state.

1. Stop charging youth as adults. If you sentence someone under the age of 25 to more than 20 years, require a mandated look back at their sentence after 15 years served – give us the opportunity to demonstrate our change – we are just kids. Check back on us after 15 years and judge us for who we become and consider a second chance for us to come home and give back to our community.
2. Stop mandating programs! Stop investing in programs that are not what we need and mandated by a judge, facility, or probation – make programs available and optional and self-motivated involvement in the program will demonstrate which ones are making the impact. The more you mandate the more we resent.
3. We propose the development of a comprehensive regional youth program that addresses the multifaceted needs of young people in our area.

This program would focus on four key areas:

- a. Workforce Development: Providing young people with the skills and training necessary to succeed in the modern workforce is vital. We suggest implementing workshops, internships, and mentorship programs that connect youth with local businesses and organizations.
- b. Mental Health Services: The mental well-being of our youth is a priority. We recommend integrating mental health resources, including counseling and support groups, into the program to help young people navigate the challenges they face.
- c. Educational Opportunities: Access to quality education is essential for our future. We advocate for tutoring, after-school programs, and partnerships with local schools to ensure that all youth have the support they need to succeed academically.

d. Recreational Activities: Engaging in recreational activities is important for physical health and social development. We propose organizing sports leagues, arts programs, and community events that encourage teamwork and creativity.

4. Provide Connecticut children and teens with access to mental health/therapy/support services in the community. Ensure direct access to therapeutic support services in places that have high youth activity such as school-based health centers and community recreation centers. Emphasis on providing therapy to youth who have system involvement both during and after time is fulfilled.

5. Close Manson Youth Institute - utilize smaller therapeutic settings created to address the root issues of the youths' behaviors.

6. Prevention of police interventions through community recreation centers designed to engage youth and provide safe spaces and enrichment opportunities.

7. The cut off age for youth at age 18 is arbitrary and not backed by science – we should see all individuals under the age of 25 as youth.

8. Begin pilot programs in elementary and middle school – programs that do not begin until high school are missing the kids who did not make it that far.

9. Alternative community programs instead of jails, prisons, and detention centers for youth.

10. Create safe spaces to talk within a facility that is not speaking to a DOC or JBCSSD employed person or that has any requirement to report to them, so therapy can actually happen.

11. Stop perpetuating harm in state-funded facilities.

12. Stop suspending and expelling kids so immediately and especially for acts that occur and are unrelated to school! Why is taking away education the punishment – education is the antidote!

13. The state, especially for municipalities across the state who do not have the financial resources, need to invest heavily in the communities, schools, and services that youth are in and need because that investment will lead to a hefty and proud return.



Appendixes

Appendix A – Statewide youth data indicators

Appendix B – Coding of responses for statewide survey

Appendix C – Coding of responses for New Haven specific survey

Appendix A: Statewide Youth Data Indicators

There is a necessity to also contextualize the quality of life for Connecticut youth particularly as it relates to understanding their lives each day. Over the past few years, there have been several key snapshots and statistics that were compiled by an array of multiple state agencies, community serving non-profits, and national databases tracking rates of youth living in poverty, rates of single-family households, instances of gun violence/overdoses, and other notable contextual factors that are overrepresented in the youth legal system.

Overdose Data

- Multi-system involved youth are at risk of exposure to substance abuse and overdose deaths.
- In 2023, 34 youth in Connecticut (15-24) died of drug overdoses in accordance with CDC records.
 - Of this group, 24 were male, and 10 female.

Gun violence

- In 2023, according to OCA's annual report, 15 young people were victims of homicide (0-18)
- In 2023, according to OCA's annual report, 6 young people in Connecticut had death records indicating suicide as the cause of death.
- In accordance with the 2023-2024 OCA report, 7 young people under the age of 18 were killed due to gun violence.

Youth suspended or expelled from school.

- 7% of students are suspended at some point during the academic school year.
 - That number increases to 13.2% for African Americans and 9.5% for Hispanic/Latino Youth.
 - Boys are overrepresented as well, as 8.9% get suspended at some point during the academic year (relative to 5.1% for girls).
 - For children eligible for free/reduced meals, the number rises to 10.9%.

- There were 44,820 in-school Suspensions during the 2022-2023 academic year.
- There were 37,376 out-of-school Suspension during the 2022-2023 academic year.
 - 4,553 Youth were suspended between K-5
 - 12,749 Youth were suspended grades 6-8
 - 18,678 Highschool age youth were suspended
 - There was a stark increase in expulsion rates from 2018-2019 to 2022-2023, with a 31.4% increase the expulsion rates.
 - There were 753 youth between kindergarten and 2nd grade that were expelled in 2022-2023.

Youth living in poverty

- 78,320 CT youth live below the OPM defined poverty [line](#) (as of 2023)
 - 39% live below the [ALICE](#) Threshold.
 - Approximately 60% of Black/Hispanic (59%/58% respectively) live below the ALICE Threshold
 - 70% of individuals under 25 live under the ALICE Threshold, with 31% living in poverty.
 - 73% Single women with children are under the ALICE Threshold. (31% in poverty)

NEW HAVEN

- In [New](#) Haven specifically, 39% of female led households under 25 live in poverty
- In New Haven, 40% of youth 0-5 live in poverty,
- 69% of New Haven youth are considered low income.
- 23% of families with kids at home have experienced food insecurity within the last year.

Youth in DCF Care

- There have been [3,457 children in Foster Care as of 2022](#)
- There were [1,062 children waiting for adoption](#) as of 2022
- [41](#) youth as of January 2025 were in Manson charged as adults.

- 241 girls and boys were trafficked in 2021 according to the [DCF](#)
- It's estimated 62,000 Youth in Connecticut experienced parental arrest [annually](#)
- 26% in Connecticut, 62%! In Hartford – being raised in one adult households.
- 1,062 instances of bullying, 940 students with at least 1 bullying incident in [2023-2024](#)
- [54,000](#) Connecticut youths were diagnosed with Major Depressive from 2022-2023
- 21,000 Connecticut youths were diagnosed with substance use disorder in 2022-2023.
- 30,000 Connecticut youths experienced thoughts of suicide in 2022-2023
- 24,000 Connecticut youths that were diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder did not seek treatment in 2022-2023.
- [4,960](#) Connecticut Youth were involved in the Juvenile Justice System in 2023
 - Between 2019-2023 178 youth were referred to the juvenile justice system from Wallingford; 46 from East Hampton; 271 from Vernon; 27 from Lebanon; 529 from Norwich; 44 from Ellington; 234 from Windsor; 71 from Farmington; 12 from Brookfield; 15 from Lisbon; 46 from Cromwell; 30 from Tolland; 2,566 from New Haven; 1,822 from Hartford; 1,690 from New Britain; and 14 from Prospect.
- Estimated 950 Youth in CT identify as trans
- 22,000 youth in Connecticut identify as LGBTQ

Appendix B: Coding of Responses for Statewide Survey

CEW Qualitative Survey Summary

Q: What do you want for yourself as you transition to adulthood?

Categories of Answers	Individual Responses
1.Beginning Their Careers and Employment	• Stable Employment, living in their own property and managing finances • Obtaining employment with the DCF or working with kids • This individual wants a set career path • Employment • Employment with a good salary • Going to college and making an income • Employment • Going to college and making an income • Wants money and employment in medical field • To become a travel nurse • Finding a stable job • Finding a good job • Identifying a career path that they're interested in pursuing • Employment • Attending a prestigious university and acquiring a high paying position • Acquiring a college degree and attaining success • Stable Employment • Wants to obtain employment in medical field • Becoming an attorney • A well paying job • Wants to achieve success and smoothly identify supports • Finding a career they enjoy • Identifying a career path that they're interested in pursuing • Meaningful Employment and well paying salary • Meaningful Employment • Maintain a job and begin college • Finding a good job • Attending University and Focusing on their major • To become a nurse • A well paying job • Beginning their career

	• Acquire a job and graduate with good grades and living happily and wealthily • To begin their career • Going to college and making an income Total: 36 responses
2. Personal Growth and Success	• To better themselves and become a better person • To better themselves • Emotional management and avoiding potential career development issues due to mishandling emotions • Wants to see themselves make substantial progress and further their education to begin a STEM career • Guidance • A Better Life • Make money and be happy • To be better and also happier and wealthier • "To be the greatest" • To never give up • To better their community • Success • To achieve success • To be able to help themselves and achieve success • Becoming a successful student • Finding Good Friends • A smooth transition • Success • Consistency • "To make it out alive" • Family and God • To achieve their dream • To succeed in college • More freedom and self-reliance • Succeeding in their goals • To be responsible • A Successful Career • Support • A good future • Achieving Success • Good Life • To achieve success • More choices for their future • Working towards success and staying

	disciplined • To become successful • To have their own business • Achieving their dreams and doing things correctly • A clear understanding of their opportunities • Success in their pursuits • Happy Future • Good and a Happy Future • To Succeed • Becoming Successful in Financial, Mental, and Spiritual Matters • Success • A successful life Total: 45 Responses
3.Education and Skills	• Education and Employment • Finishing School • Achieve their academic goals • To study everything • More money, certification courses, a college degree and attaining success • To go to college • To succeed in college • To achieve success and attend college • Attending college • Attending college and becoming a real estate agent • Attending College • Attending University and Focusing on their major Total: 12 Responses

4. Financial Goals and Stability	• Money and stable living conditions • Money and own business and car • Money • Equality and Wealth • More money and certification courses and college credits • Financial Management • Money • Having a stable income that pays well • Wants to achieve financial success • Financial Independence • Financial Stability • Financial Security • Money • Money • Financial Stability • Money • Financial Stable • Financial Stability • Money • Wealth Total: 12 Responses
5. Housing and Stability	• Living in their own house or apartment • Living in the suburbs • A Large House and Money • Creating long-term plans • Mental Stability • Less stress and stability • "A clear path and security" • Living a sustainable and independent life • Happy and healthy and financially stable Total: 9 Responses

Q: Anticipation of Biggest Challenges in Adulthood

Categories of Answers	Individual Responses
1. Mental Health	• Mental/physical health issues, anxiety, pressure and adolescence • Mental Wellbeing • Stress

	• Anxiety and Emotional Mismanagement • Anxiety and Emotional Mismanagement • Managing adversity and self confidence • Stress • Stress Management • Handling Stress • Anxiety and Emotional Mismanagement • Peers and Stress Total: 11 Responses
2. Personal Challenges	• Relationship with parents and responsibilities • Handling more responsibilities • Death of a loved one • Unexpected challenges • Making tough decisions • Commitment • Bad Choices, Sacrifices and Decision Making • Being Bilingual • Decision-Making and Preparation • Self-Sufficiency • adulting • The thought of failure • Interpersonal Communication • Academic Pressure • Fear of uncertainty • Fear for their future • Doesn't perceive challenges ahead • Reality • Transitioning and Change • Anger • New Things • Motivation • Self-Conflict • Managing a job and doing what they love • Negatives associated with army services • Having enough money and living a good life • Relationship with themselves and peers • Having to rely on themselves • Being able to ask for help • Controlling Emotions • Consistency

	• Dealing with no support • Finding what they really want for themselves • Forgetting and not Understanding • Consistency and Procrastination Issues • Time Management Skills • Being Responsible • Being Responsible • Unlearning bad habits • Consistency • Staying confident • Believing in themselves Total: 42 Responses
3.Misc	• Stability • Obtaining a house or apartment • Communication skills • Getting older • Finding a studio • Doing things on their own • "Haters" • Amount of work and things to do • Not enough time to be young • "Not of age" • Moving Out • Finding a house • Acquiring Transportation • Being Black • Everything • Inadequate Funding • "Haters" Total: 17 Responses
4. Education	• Home situation. juvenile court, finding employment, and educational issues • Still hasn't graduated from school • School • Challenges of graduating school and adulthood • School • Does not like High School • Having sufficient funds for college • College • Academics • Deciding on what to study in college

	• College • Finishing High School • Financial Independence and Attending College • School • School • School • School • School work • School • Money and educational opportunities and unemployment • Moving out and College • Being Independent and Moving and Going to College • Academic Pressure • Adjustment to College Life • Homework/Staying Busy Total: 25 Responses
5. Finances	• Financial management and setting boundaries • Lack of money • Financial management and setting boundaries • Money • Money • Obtaining money • Finances • Making money • Enough money • Money and Jobs • Money and Food • Money • Learning about finances • Money • Finances • Paying their own expenses • Obtaining a stable income • Paying for themselves Total: 18 Responses
6. Employment	• Finding employment • Stability and employment • Finding a job • Finding an enjoyable job

	• Finding a well-paying job • Finding a "real" job • Maintaining Employment • Finding a Job and Transportation • Jobs • Finding a good job and handling responsibilities • Challenges of applying for employment Total: 11 Responses
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Q: What resources or services are most helpful during transition into adulthood?

Categories of Answers	Individual Responses
1. Therapy and Support Systems	Organizing themselves Therapy Love 146 + IICAPS Therapy Love 146 + IICAPS Roca and Love 146 Love 146 Love 146 and IICAPS Peer Support OPP Mom and OA OPP Asking for help OPP Our Piece of the Pie

	Mom Their counselor and college study teacher Their friends Having a support system Support from friends, school, and family Support Systems Trusting in God Counselors Guidance Counselor Support from relatives and friends Their best friends Their community Their parents and teachers Counselors Friends/Community Personal Time Their Parents Their Guidance Counselor Therapy and Friends Parents Support from their boyfriend Talking about their problems Total: 37 responses
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2. Education and Employment	Employment Life Skills Online School College and Certification Courses Sports and Leadership Programs School Their studies Education and mentors they have met School Financial and Transportation Support Mentorship Schools School Computer Access Attending school School Opportunities Advanced College Classes Friends and Administration School More online options Research skills School Organization Finance Class in School Job Training, Work, Learning, Life Skills IOP Jobs Maintaining Employment Total: 27 responses
3. Community and Relationships	Friends and Family An online positive community and friends/family Good community, especially at church Their community Their best friends Social Media People People Friends and Family Their Father Sister Friends and Administration Support from their boyfriend The internet Total: 14 responses

4. Personal Development and Wellbeing	Motivation from friends Persistence and not giving up Confidence Working out and running for wellbeing Decision Making Having their own time and keeping themselves organized Dressing Up Confidence Having their own time and keeping themselves organized Personal Time Talking about their problems Total: 11 responses
5. Resources and Financial Support	Money Money Money, employment, and a house/apartment Money Financial and Transportation Support Money Money Givers Total: 7 responses
6. Miscellaneous	Doesn't know any No answer given Not focused on obtaining services Unsure Unsure No answer given Nothing as of this point Nothing No answer given Nothing No answer given Nothing NADA Total: 13 responses

Q: What additional resources or services do you wish existed in your community to help your transition?

Categories of Answers	Individual Responses
1. Therapy and Emotional Support	Therapy Additional Support Promotion of moral behavior OPP Teen health advisors Emotional Support Emotional Support for adults and kids More Counseling Opportunities Support from their boyfriend Talking about their problems More programs like OPP but in South Hartford Our Piece of the Pie Total: 12 responses

2. Education and Employment	Financial Literacy Easier access to entering trade-based career paths Further Employment Job Placement Tools More relatable educators Better schools Driving Education class at schools Additional Classes Teaching children more about the law Training for the "real world" including learning how to pay bills and basic financial planning More after school resources More clubs in the community More Opportunities/More Help Something practical to teach about finances A Better Education System More available opportunities The availability of more scholarships and grants Permits for a 15-year-old so they could learn to drive Career Counseling More mentors and tutoring Classes that can better prepare them for transition More mentors and opportunities More classes for their major Better Resources A class in school that assists students apply to jobs Better Job Opportunities Opportunities to improve social skills More jobs for teens A program to assist in finding jobs Classes regarding adulthood Program to assist in acquiring jobs Assistance to acquire jobs Total: 32 responses
3. Community and Social Support	Community Activities An online positive community and friends/family Good community, especially at church Their community Their best friends

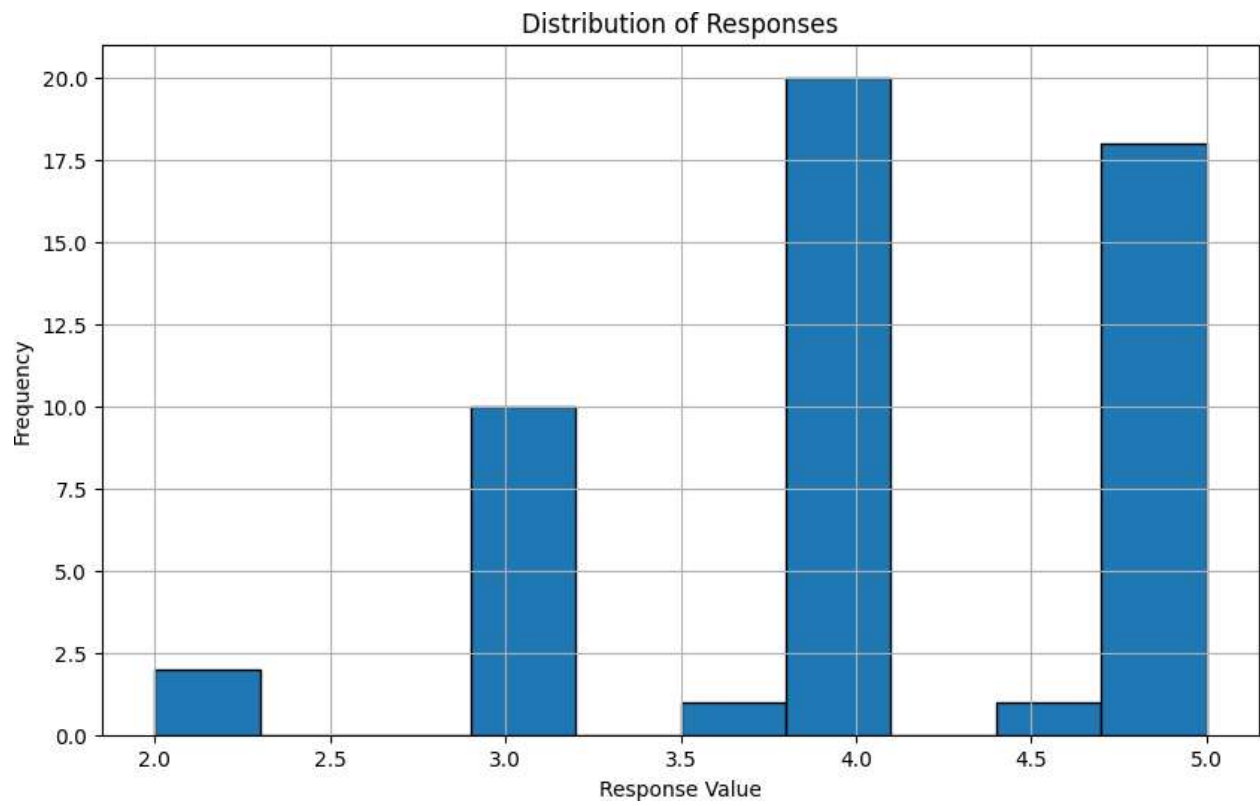
	Social Media People Friends and Family Their Father Sister Friends and Administration Community Support Acceptance and Calm Community More support from adults in their life More positivity Having more friends More family support and understanding Total: 17 responses
4. Personal Development and Wellbeing	Motivation from friends Persistence and not giving up Confidence Working out and running for wellbeing Decision Making Having their own time and keeping themselves organized Dressing Up Confidence Personal Time Preparation Total: 10 responses
5. Resources and Financial Support	Money More programs that offer money Money, employment, and a house/apartment Financial and Transportation Support Money Givers Discounts at grocery stores/restaurants Free Money Total: 7 responses

6. Miscellaneous	Anything Helpful Unsure I don't know None - All needs are met None N/A Nothing For alternative schools to stop attempting to emulate community schools No answer given Doesn't know any Not focused on obtaining services Nothing as of this point NADA Total: 13 responses
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Q: If you have been involved in either the juvenile justice or foster system/child welfare system, how has your involvement impacted your ability transition to adulthood?

- Individual feels as if that they are "less than" their peers because of their involvement in the Youth Justice System.
- Issues with obtaining identification and paperwork necessary for it.
- Individual believes that the Juvenile Court system is built on faulty premises and adds an additional burden to their life.
- This person's experience in the foster care system made them feel as if they practically restarted their childhood.
- Individual personally learned more about the law and Connecticut's Juvenile Justice System.
- Individual believes they are more independent as a result of their experiences in the Juvenile Justice System.
- Individual feels they were forced to mature earlier than their age and can't afford to be childish.
- "Trauma".
- They were forced to mature earlier than their age and can't afford to be childish.

Hope for adult achievement



Appendix C: Coding of Responses for New Haven Specific Survey

New Haven Qualitative Survey Information

Q. What do you like to do in your free time?

1. Sports/Fitness	Play Basketball Play Basketball Go to the Gym Ride Bike with Friends Ride Bike Play Sports Play sports Play Sports Play Football Ride Bikes, Play Ball Work Out Play Football Sports Play basketball play basketball, ride bikes Play basketball, go the gym Basketball, Swimming, Football Play basketball Swimming Ball Play Ball Workout Basketball Total: 28 responses
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2. Creative/Artistic	Draw Music Listening to Music Makeup Nails Build things Make Music cut hair build things Trap Hair Color Braid Hair Draw, Nails, Hair, Makeup Hair Nails Dance do hair "Get cute" Shop Do hair fashion Cook Fashion Make Videos Rap Rap Cooking Dance Clothes make videos Dance Total: 36 responses
3. Socialization	Hangout Hang out with friends Hangout with my friends Out with friends Hang out with my friends Support their Community Help my mom with my little brother hangout with girls Help my grandparents Total: 9 responses

4. Leisure	Youtube Read Books Play Video Games Video Games Nothing Video Games Take Picks Play video games Going out with friends Sleep Playing games Watch TV Relax Games Hang out Barbershops chill with his boys Play Video Games Sleep chill Total: 20 responses
5. Other	Smoke, Make money Work Shop Driving Read Everything Get money Eat Lunch "Do things" Smoke attempt to make money shopping Make money Travel, work with kids Look for jobs Smoke weed work party Smoke Total: 21 responses

Q. What are your aspirations?

1. Aspirations Related to Fame & Success	To Become Famous Become a rapper Money To be famous To become someone To be better than their father Work hard and get money Money Get money Total: 9 responses
2. Career & Business Aspirations	Get a Job Be a Nail Tech To be a designer To be a Hairstyle/Braider Start their own business Become a photographer I want to work in construction I want to do hair To own my own business I want to do hair To be a Hairstyle/Braider To be better than their father Work and make money After graduating they want to pursue a career in the trucking field I would like to be a professional chef Wants to cook for a living Gamer Rapper Make clothes Total: 19 responses
3. Higher Education-Related Aspirations	Go to college to work with kids, Go to college, for football and track Higher Education To be a designer Entering the medical field Begin a career as a nurse To become a doctor Learn how to code Dance Teacher and CRNA Special Ed Teacher Entering the medical field Begin a career as a nurse Total: 12 responses

4. Family & Personal Motivations	help my mother Support their family Church Their mom Mom Stay out of trouble Mom Travelling To be happy I see myself helping other people Their mom Financial Freedom, Travel the World Work hard and get money God/God Parent Jesus? I want to control my behavior make my parents proud of me, make it out of the hood mom, stepdad I see myself helping other people Total: 20 responses
5. Sports-Related Aspirations	Basketball Playing Pro-Ball, mom, stepdad Go to college, for football and track Wants to "ball" Wants to "ball" I want to be a basketball player Playing Pro-Ball Total: 7 responses

Q. What are the top 3 things you and/or your community need at this time?

1. Community Programs and Connection	A Community Center with Games Coming together Community Events, Open Investment Events Engagement Leadership Mentorship Boys and girls club community services center drug program for users activities for children, More parks more after school programs Big brother programs Guidance Support Programs for children, community service Programs Leadership Parental guidance Community Center, Transport for students more things for kids to do, Activities and Programs Something to do somewhere safe After school programs, youth at risk center, mentor or leadership program Activities for girls Rec centers, more active mentors Community Centers Youth Center more things for the kids to do Things to do Places to go Total: 37 responses
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2.Safety and Violence Prevention	Safety To stop the violence Less violence No gun violence, stopping the KIA boys Make me feel safe More things to keep us safe, Stop the violence, a safe place Keep us safe, finding things to do, programs make community safer violence prevention programs Less bad influences, less guns gun control Protection Total: 15 responses
3. Employment Accessibility	Better schools, easy jobs More available career paths More transport, Jobs Jobs More jobs Jobs Jobs and activities Jobs, Housing, Training More trade programs more training courses jobs easy ways for us people to make good money job Total: 15 responses
4. Sports and Social Activities	Basketball related activities more playgrounds More basketball courts basketball More things for fun More activities More after school activities More fun things Finding activities to do A place to feel safe when playing ball Fun Places Things to do everyday Friends and Games Rappers Basketball

	open gyms, more basketball programs pickleball courts Total: 18 responses
5. Other	More Organization Clothing Brand Lashes Help Food, Money, Clothes New Updates, Help Homeless Everything Role Models Peace Better living conditions for kids Housing help, better education clothing donuts clothes and shoes Total: 16 responses

Q. What could NLEP or other programs/services do you support you and/or your community better?

1. Youth Empowerment, Mentorship & Support	Empower the Youth Creating programs with free mentors More mentors, <i>more things for the kids to do</i> People who care, <i>Positive Change</i> Being active and consistently mentoring kids Be more present Help me with my goals and dream to do better in life Help kids stay on-track Help youth obtain employment Help improve behavior without medication Create a program that'll help kids be better Support More Children More mentors, more things for the kids to do More consistency Help kids stay on-track Being active, and consistency mentoring and reliability Help us Help improve behavior without medication Be more present Help with school and money Help kids stay on-track Total: 23 responses
2. Community Programs & Activities	More community events and programs Sports such as kickball that could bring people together More activities for teens in the community More activities in the community Activities for girls Availability of a Rec Center After school programs in their neighborhood Help with fundraisers to assist with developing opportunities Create programs that'll help kids be better Everything More activities in the community More community events and programs Create programs that'll help kids be better Have more activities for teens in the community More activities for teens in the community Help with fundraisers to assist with developing opportunities Create programs that'll help kids be better Total: 17 responses

3. Safety, Well-being & Positive Change	Keep us safe Stop killing, safety Be more involved in promoting safety Better life and things for the children Avoiding Bullying Stop killing, safety Be more involved in promoting safety Stop killing Better life and things for the children Be more involved in promoting safety Stop killing, safety Total: 12 responses
4. Education, Financial & Employment Opportunities	Financial Classes with someone, not a 'teacher' Give the children an opportunity to gain understanding of their future aspirations, and give them an opportunity to succeed, prosper, and feel secure Help with school and money Gain employment Programs and training Jobs Help youth obtain employment Gain employment Help with school and money Financial Classes with someone, not a 'teacher' Jobs Programs and training Help kids stay on-track Help with school and money job opportunities For justice involved youth to maintain employment with paid community jobs, as it would help them stay out of the Juvenile Justice System by making money Total: 16 responses