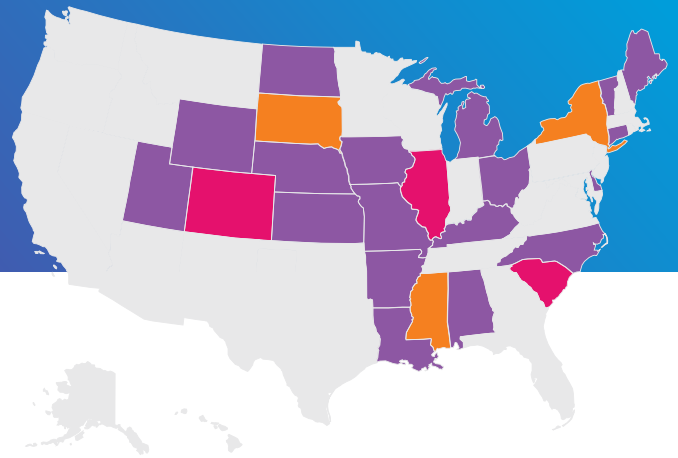




# State Survey Analysis



**24** States Responded

## Background

In October 2021, the Children’s Bureau established the Quality Improvement Center on Engaging Youth in Finding Permanency (QIC-EY) to help ensure that children in foster care throughout the United States are engaged authentically, particularly in relation to permanency decisions.

In December 2021, the QIC-EY surveyed states to gain an understanding of how youth engagement is supported by child welfare systems across the nation. This survey will help to inform the work of the QIC-EY. Twenty-four states responded:

Alabama	Delaware	Kentucky	Mississippi	North Carolina	South Dakota
Arkansas	Illinois	Louisiana	Missouri	North Dakota	Utah
Colorado	Iowa	Maine	Nebraska	Ohio	Vermont
Connecticut	Kansas	Michigan	New York	South Carolina	Wyoming

## Questions and Answers

### 1. Does your state currently have training on youth engagement in your preservice training for new child welfare workers?

Regarding the inclusion of youth engagement in preservice training for new child welfare workers, the respondents indicated the following:



Of the states that include youth engagement in preservice training, 86.7% (13 of 15) reported that there is content specifically related to engaging youth in permanency planning.

### 3. Does your state require child welfare workers to participate in in-service (i.e., ongoing) training on youth engagement?

Thirty-three percent (8 of 24) require child welfare workers to participate in in-service training on youth engagement. There is variability in the frequency of the training ranging from monthly to semi-annually.

### 4. Does your state currently have training for supervisors on how to coach workers on youth engagement?

Supervisory training on how to coach workers on youth engagement is provided in 38% (9 of 24) of the states. The training varies from 1 to 10 hours.

### 5. Is youth voice currently integrated into training provided by your state for child welfare workers and/or supervisors?

Seventy-five percent (18 of 24) of the respondents indicated that their state integrates youth voice into training provided to child welfare workers and/or supervisors.



**75% (18 of 24)**

The state integrates youth voice into training provided to child welfare workers and/or supervisors

Half of those 18 states reported that this was accomplished by having youth tell their stories or share their perspectives during the training. Other states reported that youths helped to develop the training, podcasts or videos or served as co-facilitators.

### 6. Which of the following reflects your site's values with respect to youth engagement?

Survey participants checked all options that reflect their state's values with respect to engaging youth. The responses are given in order from the most frequently reported value to the least frequently reported:



**88% (21 of 24)**

Youth voices are being heard and treated as worthwhile



**83% (20 of 24)**

Youth are given the opportunity to make decisions, gain leadership skills and see their ideas realized.



**79% (19 of 24)**

Youth are respected, valued and trusted; and they feel appreciated, safe and comfortable.



**75% (18 of 24)**

Youth receive recognition and compensation for their services in acknowledgement that they are important to successful outcomes.



**71% (17 of 24)**

Youth see change and progress happening as a result of their contributions.



**58% (14 of 24)**

Youth are in a space where they have ownership and control in decision-making processes related to case and transition planning.



**46% (11 of 24)**

Youth feel they are in an environment that facilitates their meaningful engagement and involvement as both teachers and students.



**46% (11 of 24)**

Youth are in a space where they have ownership and control in decision-making related to systems change.

## 7. What are the three biggest barriers that you think impact your state's ability to engage youth authentically and successfully in finding permanence?

The respondents reported that the three biggest barriers impacting their state's ability to engage youth authentically and successfully are:



**88% (21 of 24)**

Caseworker turnover prevents meaningful engagement of youth in finding permanence.



**54% (13 of 24)**

Caseworkers do not have time to engage youth in discussions about finding permanence.



**54% (13 of 24)**

Caseworkers are not skilled in shared decision-making with youth regarding finding permanence.

## 8. How is youth voice authentically integrated into the overall operation of your system?

When asked to identify all the ways that youth voice are engaged authentically in overall operations, the results were as follows:



**83% (20 of 24)**

20 states indicated that youth are involved in decision-making processes such as case and transition planning and are viewed as legitimate and important contributors to a successful system.



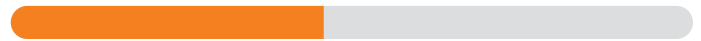
**79% (19 of 24)**

19 states indicated that youth participate in youth-driven or youth-centered meetings in addition to those that are family centered and that youth contribute to policy development.



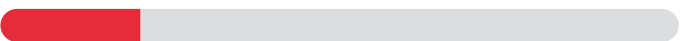
**67% (16 of 24)**

16 sites responded that messaging to young people includes youth-friendly options such as email, texting, social media, verbal communication and signage in youth-friendly places and that youth work together as partners with adults to achieve good outcomes.



**46% (11 of 24)**

11 states hire recent foster care alumni to mentor and/or to work with youth in the child welfare system.



**21% (5 of 24)**

5 states reported that youth are involved in decision-making at all organizational levels.

## 9. Does your state have programs or interventions that support youth engagement?

Programs to support youth engagement were reported in 88% (21 of 24) of the states.



**88% (21 of 24)**

21 states indicated that they have programs or interventions supporting youth engagement.

## 10. Does your state have a youth advisory board for youth who are or were in foster care?

All 24 states have youth advisory boards for youth who are or were in foster care. Respondents indicated that the roles of the boards were as follows:



**96% (23 of 24)**

23 states believed that the role provided young adults with an opportunity to learn skills and to become empowered as well as to review policies and procedures.



**88% (21 of 24)**

21 states indicated that the board's role is to solicit and to share feedback from other youth on issues related to child welfare.



**58% (14 of 24)**

14 states saw the role as developing policies and procedures.



**42% (10 of 24)**

10 states are using youths for training social work staff.

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## 11. Does your state have strategic planning initiatives that support youth engagement (for example, PIP, CFSR, etc.)?

Of the 24 respondents, 83% (20) indicated that the state they represent has strategic planning initiatives that support youth engagement.



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