

Invitation to Participate in a Research Study on Foster Care

"The research team is committed to hearing from young people directly and including their voice to improve child welfare programs."

-Ummra Hang, MSW; Advocate, and expert consultant on the Survey of Youth Transitioning from Foster Care

Date

[Recipient Name]

[Recipient Street Address]

[Recipient City, ST Zip]

Dear [Recipient Name]

We're from RTI International, a non-profit research organization. As part of the *Survey of Youth Transitioning from Foster Care*, we're conducting interviews with young adults who were recently or are currently involved with the child welfare system. You are among a group of select young adults invited to take part in this study because your experiences can help improve supports for older youth in foster care.

By taking part in the study, you will have the chance to talk about your life experiences, experience in foster care, and transition to adulthood. The interview also asks about things that have helped you in your life and things that have been difficult. You will be able to enter your answers for more sensitive questions privately on a computer.

Your input will help us better understand the issues that affect young adults like you. The information you provide can help the child welfare system improve services and supports for young people ... hopefully helping the next generation of youth. We can't do that without voices like yours.

You will receive a **\$75 gift card** for sharing your input with us. If you skip some of the questions or stop participating before the study is over, you will still receive the gift card.

Your decision to take part in the study - and which questions you decide to answer - is up to you. We will keep your information private to the extent permitted by law. The only exception to this is if you tell the interviewer that you plan to seriously harm yourself or someone else, or if a child has been or will be seriously harmed. In these situations, the interviewer may need to notify a mental health professional or other authorities.

The Administration for Children and Families, an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, sponsors the study. RTI International is conducting the interviews. The research team is not connected to any child welfare agency. We will never use your name. Your involvement does not affect any benefits or services you receive.

The enclosed fact sheet contains additional information about the study. Send us a photo or email to learn more and to schedule the interview! An interviewer will reach you by telephone to see if you have any questions.

Call us in advance and we look forward to talking with you.



Do you have questions about participating in the study? Ready to schedule your interview?

Contact us!



RTI International
PO Box 12194
Research Triangle
Park, NC 27709



Text or call:
919-XXX-XXXX



FosterCareStudy@
rti.org

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0970-0546 (Exp Date: 04/30/2022). The time required to complete the interview is estimated to be 55 minutes.

Melissa Dolan, Study Director

Survey of Youth Transitioning from Foster Care: Fact Sheet

What is the *Survey of Youth Transitioning from Foster Care*?

We designed the survey to collect data directly from young people who were recently, or are currently, in foster care. The survey asks about life experiences, experience in foster care, and transition to adulthood.

We consulted with youth formerly in foster care when designing this study.

Why should I participate?

By taking part in this survey, you have a chance to have your voice heard, to talk about your needs from your own point of view, and to help other young people in similar situations.

Who sponsors and conducts this study?

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF), a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sponsors this study. ACF hired a team of researchers from RTI International (RTI) to conduct the study. RTI is a non-profit research company located in North Carolina. RTI conducts research projects for a wide variety of government agencies, universities, and private companies. The research team is not connected with any child welfare agency.

How was I chosen?

In doing this survey, we cannot talk to everyone in the country. That would cost too much and take too long. We selected a sample of young people who were in foster care when they were 17 years old.

As a token of our appreciation, you will receive a \$75 electronic gift card. The gift card will be sent to your email address from FosterCareStudy@rti.org.

Are the questions personal?

Some questions may seem personal to some people. We ask questions about your life experiences and time in foster care. The interview will ask about things that have been helpful to you and things that have been difficult in your life. You can skip any questions you do not want to answer.

How will you conduct the study?

The survey will happen on the telephone and the Internet. The interviewer will read the questions over the telephone and type the answers into the computer. After you finish the telephone part of survey, we will tell you how to log on to a secure web site to finish the survey and receive the electronic gift card.

How long will it take?

The interview will last about 50 to 60 minutes including both the telephone survey and the web survey.

What happens to the information?

We store your responses to the survey in a safe and secure way. We combine your answers with answers from everyone who participates in the survey and report the answers in summary form. Information may be shared with qualified individuals who are learning about the experiences of young adults who have been in foster care. Your name will never be linked to the information you provide. We keep your names and other identifiers separate from your answers.

What about privacy?

All RTI staff members and interviewers signed a Privacy Agreement pledging that they will not reveal any information to anyone other than authorized project staff. RTI also obtained a federal Certificate of Confidentiality for this study to protect the identity of the research participants. We keep all information private to the extent permitted by law, and we never identify a single person or family in our reports. We combine your answers with responses from thousands of others from around the country. We report results only in percentages, averages, and other statistics.

Two important exceptions to note: (1) if you tell the interviewer that you plan to seriously harm yourself or someone else; or (2) if a child has been or will be seriously harmed. In these situations, the interviewer may need to notify a mental health professional or other

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authorities. Other than these situations, no one else will know what you said during the interview. We will ask you to make sure that you are someplace where no one can hear your answers when you talk to the interviewer, or see what you enter in the web survey.

What else do I need to know?

We would like to give you a few toll-free hotline numbers and websites where counselors are available to talk or text at any time of the day or night.

National Lifeline Network (<https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>): 1 800-273-8255

National Domestic Violence Hotline (<https://www.thehotline.org>): 1 800-799-7273

National Human Trafficking Hotline (<https://www.humantraffickinghotline.org>): 1 888-373-7888

Also, please see the attached pages for other important information about your voluntary participation in this important study. If you have questions, you can ask them before you start the survey.