

**NATIONAL FOSTER CARE
MONTH 2024**

OUTREACH TOOLKIT

Communication Tools to Spread the Word
#FosterCareMonth



National Foster Care Month (NFCM) is an initiative of the Children’s Bureau that seeks to increase national awareness of foster care issues. Each May, we take time to recognize the important role that people from all parts of child welfare play in supporting children, youth, and families. This year, join us as we raise awareness about this year’s theme: “Engaging Youth. Building Supports. Strengthening Opportunities.”

childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth

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Introduction

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

The Children's Bureau and its partner, Child Welfare Information Gateway, are pleased to offer this year's outreach toolkit to help you plan your local campaign for NFCM in May. In this toolkit, you will find a suggested timeline for campaign activities, key facts and statistics to include in your messaging, sample social media posts for easy sharing, themed graphics, GIFs, and more. Visit the [NFCM campaign page](#) to learn more about this year's theme and find resources for year-round support.

WHY WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

In 2021, [77 percent](#) of eligible youth in foster care, ages 14–21 years old, exited care without receiving the federally funded services necessary to prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

Because access to culturally appropriate resources and opportunities are essential to the futures of youth exiting foster care, child welfare professionals must look for ways to collaboratively work with related professionals to engage youth in permanency planning, gain access to holistic supports, and help nurture important relationships to set them up for future success.

The NFCM 2024 campaign brings to the forefront one of Children's Bureau Associate Commissioner Aysha E. Schomburg's strategic priorities to build equity in the child welfare system.

This year's theme, "**Engaging Youth. Building Supports. Strengthening Opportunities.**" raises awareness about the important role that members from all parts of child welfare are responsible for when it comes to helping youth leave care with strengthened relationships, holistic supports, and opportunities. It also emphasizes the importance of involving young people early and throughout their time in foster care to help improve their experience while in care and improve long-term outcomes.

The success of NFCM depends on your efforts to engage your community and raise awareness about the need to invest in the lives of children and youth in foster care.

Every step you take to help raise awareness can make a difference. Start planning now!

Stay connected to the campaign by [subscribing](#) to email updates.

If you have any questions, please contact us at NFCM@childwelfare.gov.

Getting Started: Timeline

Mark your calendar!

Consider the following timeline to schedule your planned actions for NFCM and find tools to help with each idea in this outreach toolkit.

March/
April

Visit the NFCM [campaign page](#) to explore the new resources and information to help you plan your community outreach. Join the NFCM [subscription list](#) to receive important updates and special messaging during the campaign. Make sure to have your colleagues sign up, too!

May 1

Today marks the start of NFCM! Update your social media pages with our [NFCM banners](#) and publish a message using our [sample social media posts](#) (also available in Spanish) announcing the first day of NFCM. Pair your post with our graphics and the hashtag **#FosterCareMonth** to join the conversation. Remember to tag Information Gateway in your [Facebook](#), [X](#) (formerly Twitter), and [LinkedIn](#) posts!

May,
Week 1

Show your commitment to engaging youth, building supports, and strengthening opportunities. Use the NFCM [virtual meeting background](#) and [email signature block](#) to show your support in all of your digital communications.

May,
Week 2

Uplift the conversation around the importance of providing youth transitioning out of care with the supports they need to thrive. Browse the [NFCM resource collection](#) and use our [sample email messages](#) to get your networks involved. Pair your messages with our [GIFs and graphics](#) to make them stand out.

May,
Week 3

Read and listen to [Reflections: Stories of Foster Care](#) to connect the backgrounds of those with lived experience to important practice issues and raise awareness about how the foster care system can better support children, youth, and families.

May,
Week 4

Keep your colleagues inspired year-round. Download tools like the [Quick Tips graphics](#) to hang in your office or save to your mobile phone so they can be referenced at any time. Refresh your resource collection with information from the [NFCM campaign page](#) that prioritizes holistic and culturally responsive approaches to supporting youth exiting foster care.

Don't stop raising awareness—bookmark the NFCM [campaign page](#) so you can utilize our resources and messaging throughout the year!

Key Facts and Statistics

Include these key facts and statistics in your messaging to demonstrate the importance of prioritizing conversations about the needs of youth exiting foster care and preparing them for adulthood and independent living.

STATISTICS

The transition to adulthood is a time of great potential for all young people, but youth who exit foster care without permanence face increased barriers to a successful transition. View these statistics to learn more about this population:

There are over [391,000](#) children and youth in foster care. Approximately 20,000 youth age out of the foster care system each year without a permanent family.

Once in foster care, older youth [spend more time in care](#) than their peers who enter care before age 14.

In 2021, an estimated [77 percent](#) of eligible youth in foster care, ages 14–21 years old, left care without receiving the federally funded services necessary to prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

Data shows that extended foster care is associated with improved access to services and positive outcomes for older youth ages 18 to 21. Nearly two-thirds ([65 percent](#)) of youth in extended foster care, through their 19th birthday, received more services, than older youth not in extended foster care.

[In 2021](#), 58 percent of Black youth and 57 percent of Hispanic and Latino youth in foster care aged 16 years or older exited care without permanence. Foster youth who transition out of care without strong connections are [more likely](#) to become homeless, be diagnosed with mental health disorders, suffer from substance abuse, and become involved in the juvenile justice system.

It is estimated that [22 percent](#) of employed youth who have experienced foster care do not earn enough to rise out of poverty; 71 percent earn less than \$25,000 a year.

Between [one-quarter and one-third of youth](#) and young adults experiencing homelessness had a history of foster care.

Among youth who have exited foster care, Black youth are nearly [five times more likely](#) than White youth to be incarcerated, while Latinx youth are twice as likely and American Indian youth are three times as likely. Additionally, youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning are more likely to be arrested and make up 13 percent of those who are detained.

Kinship care placements with relatives and close friends have [increased](#) from 14 percent in 2006 to 22 percent in 2021. [Maintaining relationships with relatives and kin](#) can increase stability, reduce trauma, and help children maintain cultural connections and a sense of belonging.

KEY FACTS

Use these key facts to learn how child welfare professionals can authentically engage young people and support the development of relational connections to improve outcomes for youth in foster care.

Young people must have [equitable opportunities](#) to build supportive, caring relationships with adults who support their education, career development, and employment goals.

Relational permanency is fundamental to the well-being of children and youth in foster care. [Stable, nurturing placements](#) have positive impacts on children and youth's resilience and long-term well-being.

[Youth and young adults are experts on their own lives](#). Empowering youth to make informed decisions about the services and supports they receive, who they receive them from, and when can help young people connect with providers and improve outcomes.

For young people in foster care—especially those exiting care without connections to a permanent family—[federally funded services](#) can be the difference between stability and instability. Referring youth to federally funded services, such as housing, education, employment, health care, and family support, can provide the assistance needed to help youth thrive.

Services and supports must be responsive to the unique ways older youth enter, experience, and exit the foster care system. [Cross-system collaboration](#) can improve access to available supports.

Social Media

Promote [NFCM](#) by using your social networks to help raise awareness!

Connect your followers and friends to the NFCM campaign by pairing these sample social media posts with the official hashtag: **#FosterCareMonth**. Remember to tag Information Gateway and the Children's Bureau in your posts.

FACEBOOK:

[@ChildWelfare](#)

[@TheChildrensBureau](#)

LINKEDIN: [@Child-Welfare-Information-Gateway](#)

X (FORMERLY TWITTER): [@Childwelfaregov](#)

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

The following are sample social media posts to help you spread the word:

May is National #FosterCareMonth! This year's theme, "Engaging Youth. Building Supports. Strengthening Opportunities." will raise awareness about authentic youth engagement, the importance of life-long connections, and how to best support youth as they transition out of foster care. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth>

May is here! Together we can make a difference in the lives of youth in foster care. Let's improve how we engage, support, and prepare youth to transition out of care into adulthood and independent living. #FosterCareMonth <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth>

Translaci3n: ¡Lleg3 el mes de mayo! Juntos podemos marcar la diferencia en las vidas de los j3venes en cuidado de crianza. Mejoremos la forma en que involucramos, apoyamos y preparamos a los j3venes para su transici3n del cuidado de crianza a la edad adulta y la vida independiente. #FosterCareMonth

This May, help bring attention to the different ways we can engage and support youth transitioning out of foster care. The official outreach toolkit has the resources to get you started! #FosterCareMonth <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth>

Translaci3n: Durante el mes de mayo, ayuda a llamar la atenci3n sobre las diferentes formas en que podemos involucrar y apoyar a los j3venes durante su transici3n fuera del cuidado de crianza. ¡El kit oficial de herramientas de divulgaci3n tiene los recursos para ayudarte a comenzar! #FosterCareMonth

Don't wait until youth are exiting foster care to prepare them for independent living. Explore resources on #housing, #employment, and more to help youth transitioning out of #fostercare develop a plan that meets federal requirements, builds on their strengths, and supports their needs. #FosterCareMonth <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth>

Culturally appropriate supports that recognize an individual's identity, culture, and lived experience may improve the effectiveness of services and supports and improve long-term outcomes for children and youth. Visit the National #FosterCareMonth resources to learn more. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth>

Traducción: Los apoyos culturalmente apropiados que reconocen la identidad, la cultura y la experiencia vivida de cada persona pueden mejorar la efectividad de los servicios y apoyos como también los resultados a largo plazo para los niños y jóvenes. Revisa los recursos del Mes Nacional del Cuidado de Crianza para obtener más información. #FosterCareMonth

Showing up matters. Authentic relationships have lifelong impacts. Listen to the experiences of youth, foster parents, and others involved with foster care to learn tips about building and maintaining meaningful relationships. #FosterCareMonth <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth>

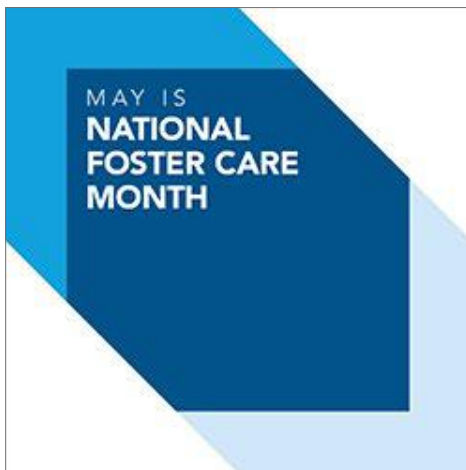
Young people must have equitable opportunities to build supportive, caring relationships that nurture their development, well-being, and future goals. Check out the projects in action to address the needs of youth transitioning out of foster care. #FosterCareMonth <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth>

Graphics

Grab attention with these free NFCM graphics.

Add them to your social media pages, websites, Zoom or Teams backgrounds, newsletters, emails, and other print or digital communications. To download them, click the link below each image or download it from the [NFCM campaign page](#).

GIFS



[Share the GIF](#) (600 x 600px)



[Share the GIF](#) (600 x 600px)

COVER PHOTOS



[Download Facebook Cover Photo](#) (830 x 312px)

[Download X \(formerly Twitter\) Cover Photo](#) (1500 x 500px)

SHAREABLE GRAPHICS



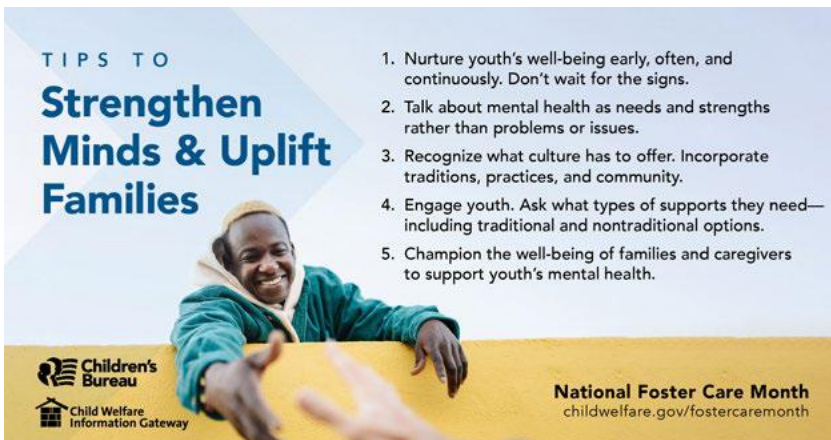
[Download](#) (1200 x 628px)

[Download Square Image](#) (1080 x 1080px)



[Download](#) (1200 x 628px)

[Download Square Image](#) (1080 x 1080px)



[Download](#) (1200 x 628px)

TIPS FOR

Engaging Youth, Building Supports, and Strengthening Opportunities



1. **Create a safe space.** Help ensure youth feel comfortable sharing their needs and interests.
2. **Champion engagement.** Involve youth in making decisions about their future.
3. **Support connections.** Encourage youth to build relationships that nurture their well-being, culture, and identity.
4. **Commit to collaboration.** Work with related professionals to unlock opportunities for youth.
5. **Encourage independence.** Connect youth to services that strengthen their education, work, and life skills.



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[Download](#) (1200 x 628px)

STATEMENT GRAPHICS

Showing up matters. Authentic relationships have lifelong effects.








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[Download](#) (1080 x 1080px)


Engage young people early and throughout their time in foster care.







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[Download](#) (1080 x 1080px)


Connecting youth to holistic opportunities strengthens their future outcomes.







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[Download](#) (1080 x 1080px)

Nurture family and community relationships to support well-being.





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[Download](#) (1080 x 1080px)

VIRTUAL MEETING BACKGROUND



[Download](#) (1920 x 1080px)

Email Signature

Add the NFCM signature block to every email you send to help raise awareness about this year's theme: "Engaging Youth. Building Supports. Strengthening Opportunities."



[Download](#)

Sample Messages

Share these messages with colleagues, media contacts, policymakers, families, and other contacts interested in foster care to help raise awareness about the importance of working collaboratively to holistically support youth as they plan for their future and prepare to transition out of foster care.

You can modify the content to fit your newsletters, websites, press releases, talking points, or other products.

MESSAGE #1

Subject: Join in Raising Awareness for National Foster Care Month!

This year, [National Foster Care Month](#) (NFCM) will raise awareness about the needs of youth transitioning out of foster care into adulthood and independent living.

This year's theme—"Engaging Youth. Building Supports. Strengthening Opportunities"—emphasizes how it is essential to create a child welfare system that takes a holistic and culturally responsive approach to engaging youth in planning for their future to help them leave care with lasting relationships, meaningful supports, and greater opportunities.

Visit the campaign page to learn more about NFCM and to find tools, resources, and outreach materials, such as those below, to help your networks raise awareness:

- Share [Reflection: Stories From Foster Care](#) to highlight how the foster care system can better support children, youth, and families.
- Help educate the public about the needs of youth exiting foster care by sharing information from the NFCM [resource collection](#).
- Use free outreach tools, including the themed graphics, sample social media posts, virtual meeting backgrounds, and more from the official 2024 [outreach toolkit](#).
- Join the [NFCM subscription list](#)! Receive important updates and special messaging during the campaign.

Make sure you're following the National **#FosterCareMonth** campaign on [Facebook](#), [X](#) (formerly Twitter), and [LinkedIn](#) so you can help share this important message in May!

MESSAGE #2

Subject: Engaging Youth. Building Supports. Strengthening Opportunities. May Is National Foster Care Month!

In 2021, [77 percent](#) of eligible youth in foster care, ages 14–21 years old, left care without receiving the federally funded services necessary to prepare them for adulthood and independent living.

This year, [National Foster Care Month](#) (NFCM) will raise awareness about the needs of youth transitioning out of foster care into adulthood and independent living.

Because access to culturally appropriate resources and opportunities are essential to the futures of youth exiting foster care, child welfare professionals should look for ways to collaboratively work with related professionals to engage youth in permanency planning, gain access to holistic supports, and help nurture important relationships to set them up for future success.

Use the NFCM [resource collection](#) and [outreach toolkit](#) to help educate the public and professionals about the needs of youth exiting foster care and to learn about the benefits of starting conversations about the future early and continuously during a young person's time in foster care.

Stay connected to the conversation throughout the month of May by following **#FosterCareMonth** on [Facebook](#), [X](#) (formerly Twitter), and [LinkedIn](#). Join the official [NFCM subscription list](#) to receive important updates and special messaging during the campaign—and make sure your colleagues sign up, too!

Sample Proclamations

Reaching out to State and local leaders to request a proclamation is a great way to spread awareness and make a difference! Whether it's done through an official decree or a ceremonial announcement, take these steps to help build awareness for NFCM in your community:

- Contact your State or local officials to make an official request.
- Provide [key facts and statistics](#) to demonstrate why this issue should be given attention.
- Share these sample proclamations to help leaders identify key messaging to use when discussing this very important issue.

FEDERAL

[National Foster Care Month](#) (2023)

The White House

President Joe Biden proclaimed May 2023 as NFCM.

TRIBAL

[Cherokee Nation](#) [Video] (2023)

Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin, Jr. and other Tribal leaders proclaimed the month of May as Cherokee Nation Foster Care Awareness Month.

STATE

[Alaska](#) (2023)

Governor Mike Dunleavy proclaimed May 2023 as Foster Parent Appreciation Month in Alaska.

[Michigan](#) (2023)

Governor Gretchen Whitmer proclaimed May 2023 as Foster Care Month in Michigan.

[Tennessee](#) (2023)

Governor Bill Lee proclaimed May 2023 as Foster Parent Care Month in Tennessee.

[Virginia](#) (2023)

Governor Glenn Youngkin proclaimed May 2023 as Foster Care Awareness Month in Virginia.

[West Virginia](#) (2023)

Governor Jim Justice proclaimed May 2023 as Foster Care Month in West Virginia.

LOCAL

[Barrington, IL \(2023\)](#)

Karen Darch, president of the Board of Trustees for the Village of Barrington, IL, recognizes May as National Foster Care Month.

[Centre County, PA \(2023\)](#)

The Centre County Board of Commissioners proclaimed May 2023 as Foster Care Awareness Month.

[New Hanover County, NC \(2023\)](#)

The New Hanover County Board of Commissioners proclaimed May 2023 as Foster Care Awareness Month.

[San Francisco, CA \(2023\)](#)

The San Francisco Human Services Commission proclaimed May 2023 as Foster Care Month.

[Weld County, CO \(2023\)](#)

The Weld County Board of Commissioners proclaimed May 2023 as Foster Care Month.

STAY CONNECTED

Recognizing National Foster Care Month is an important part of keeping the needs of children and youth in foster care in the minds of the public.

Follow us on social media to find out about new resources and sign up for our free [subscription list](#) for year-round information.

FACEBOOK: [@ChildWelfare](#)
[@TheChildrensBureau](#)

LINKEDIN: [@Child-Welfare-Information-Gateway](#)

X (FORMERLY TWITTER): [@Childwelfaregov](#)

If you have a few minutes, please help us improve next year's campaign.

[TAKE THE SURVEY!](#)



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

