

Microcash Grant - State Data Brief CALIFORNIA

Background

In November 2020, *Think of Us*, a non-profit working to increase proximity to lived experience in child welfare, invited youth with foster care experience to apply for “microcash” grants of up to \$1,000 per individual. Respondents were asked a total of 136 questions which variously concerned their demographic characteristics, individual needs, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on key life domains including employment and financial security, food security, housing, social connectedness, and mental and physical health. The total sample included young people ($N = 27,342$) from all 50 U.S. states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. With permission from youth, *Think of Us* analyzed and shared anonymized response data. -

Acknowledgements

Data analysis was supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Inc. Data evaluation and analysis of the survey responses, coupled with pro-bono data mentoring, were provided by Econ One. To learn more, visit: www.econone.com/practice-area/data-analytics/. This Fact Sheet in collaboration with *Think of Us* was developed by The Field Center for Children’s Policy, Practice & Research and the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2). The Field Center and SP2 are providing ongoing pro bono support to *Think of Us* as part of their continued efforts to respond to the impact of COVID-19 on young people with foster care experience. To learn more visit: www.fieldcenteratpenn.org and <https://www.sp2.upenn.edu/>.

Purpose

This state-level data brief focuses on the subsample of 14- to 27-year-old current and former foster youth in California ($n = 8,466$) who submitted a grant application. 18- to 21-year-old respondents (47.2%) comprised the largest age group. The majority of the sample identified as female (59.9%). Hispanic or Latino respondents (39.3%) comprised the largest race group. Approximately 17.7% of the respondents identified as LGBTQA+.

The *Think of Us* grant application included a series of open-ended questions asking youth if they needed assistance in specific areas. As shown in Table 1, the most frequently identified needs were related to budgeting and banking; navigating applications for public benefits; and employment and career-related supports.

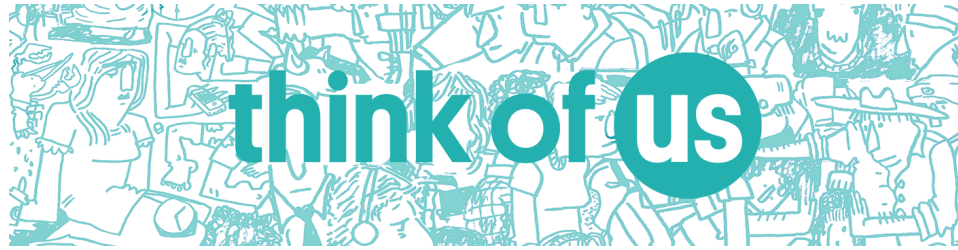


Table 1: Respondents’ Self-Stated Needs

Table 1: Respondents’ Self-Stated Needs		
Need for Assistance	Count	Percent
Need support being connected to professional in the career I want to work in	3452	40.8
Need help creating a budget	3027	35.8
Need professional interview clothes	2737	32.3
Help applying for Food Stamps	2239	26.4
Need help writing a resume	1554	18.4
Someone to help me fill out my housing application	1511	17.8
Need help preparing for a job interview	1482	17.5
Need a bank account	1312	15.5
Need support applying for public assistance	1174	13.9
Need support applying for unemployment	989	11.7
Need help paying for a therapist	798	9.4
Need help finding a doctor	647	7.6
Need help getting insurance	402	4.7

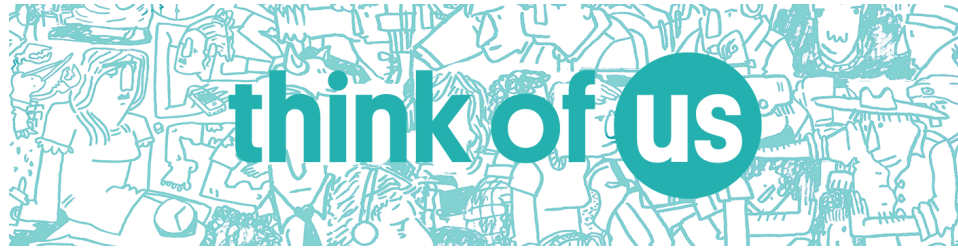
Note. Some respondents selected more than one need area. Consequently, the sum of counts displayed in Table 1 exceeds the total state sample size and the sum of percentages exceeds 100%.

More than four in ten respondents identified assistance with developing career networking contacts as a support need. More than a third of respondents voiced a desire for budgeting (i.e., money management skills training). Also, considerable numbers of youth needed assistance navigating public benefits application processes, with “food stamps” being the most frequently mentioned benefit type.

Taken together, these responses suggest that California’s foster care system can bolster its efforts to meet youths’ needs by implementing targeted interventions to strengthen youths’ knowledge of public benefits systems, facilitate social connections, and enhance practical skills in personal finance and employment/career preparedness.

Financial Security & Employment

When asked about the impact of COVID-19 on employment, nearly one in four respondents ($n = 1,986$; 23.5%) reported that they had been laid off from their job at some point during the pandemic. Among the adult



respondents (i.e., 18 to 27-year-olds) who had jobs prior to the pandemic, 41.2% of full-time workers and 36.3% of part-time workers suffered severe cuts in their work hours and income.

Of the 7,834 youth who responded to questions concerning their financial status, 35.3% reported that they were in financial crisis, and 33.9% indicated that their money situation was on a week-to-week basis. Just 17.9% of youth reported that their money situation would be fine for about a month, and 13% felt their money situation would remain stable for three months or longer.

Social Connections

Asked about their community connections and access to social supports, slightly less than half ($n = 3,982$; 47.0%) of respondents reported that they had at least one personal connection (such as an aunt, uncle, teacher, coach, neighbor, or pastor) on whom they could rely for advice and support. Even fewer youth ($n = 3,406$; 40.2%) had friends on whom they could rely for advice and support, and almost one in six youth ($n = 1,447$; 17.1%) had a formal mentor facilitated or provided by their foster care agency.

More than one in five respondents ($n = 1,708$; 20.2%) indicated that they felt like they were entirely or almost entirely on their own. More than one in ten respondents ($n = 1,052$; 12.4%) wished they had connections with more people to help them through the COVID-19 pandemic.

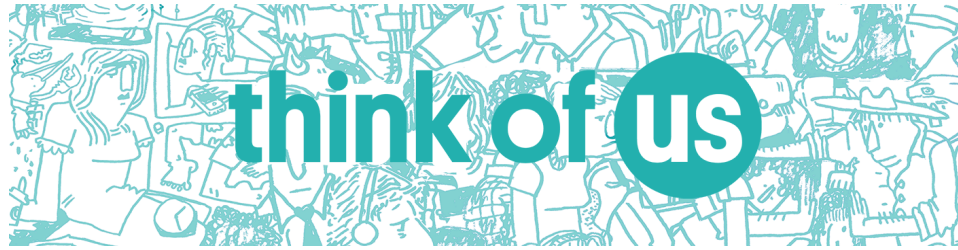
Food Security

Of the 8,207 youth who answered questions regarding their food security status, half (49.3%) indicated that they had enough food to eat. The other half of respondents, however, reported some level of food insecurity: 8.3% reported that they struggled every day to find enough food, 13.9% reported that finding enough food was a challenge at least one day per week, and 28.6% reported going hungry a couple of times per month.

Examining food security statuses by demographics: Food security was most prevalent among 14- to 17-year-olds, followed by 18- to 21-year-olds. The percentages of Black youth (11.2%) or multiracial youth (9.6%) who reported daily food insecurity were higher than that reported by White youth (7.6%) or Hispanic or Latino youth (5.9%).

Housing

More than half of respondents indicated that their housing conditions in November 2020 were equivalent to their pre-pandemic housing conditions ($n = 4,353$; 51.4%). Nearly one third reported that their housing conditions had worsened ($n = 2,763$; 32.6%); and a one in six respondents reported that their housing had improved since the pandemic began ($n = 1,350$; 16.0%).



Microcash Grant - State Data Brief FLORIDA

Background

In November 2020, *Think of Us*, a non-profit working to increase proximity to lived experience in child welfare, invited youth with foster care experience to apply for “microcash” grants of up to \$1,000 per individual. Respondents were asked a total of 136 questions which variously concerned their demographic characteristics, individual needs, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on key life domains including employment and financial security, food security, housing, social connectedness, and mental and physical health. The total sample included young people ($N = 27,342$) from all 50 U.S. states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. With permission from youth, *Think of Us* analyzed and shared anonymized response data.

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Purpose

This state-level data brief focuses on the subsample of 14- to 27-year-old current and former foster youth in Florida ($n = 727$) who submitted a microcash grant application. 18- to 21-year-old respondents (51.9%) comprised the largest age group. The majority of the sample identified as female (63.3%). Black or African American respondents (49.0%) comprised the largest race group. Approximately 21% of the respondents identified as LGBTQA+.

The *Think of Us* grant application included a series of open-ended questions asking youth if they needed assistance in specific areas. As shown in Table 1, the most frequently identified needs were related to employment- and career-related supports; budgeting and banking; and navigating applications for public benefits.

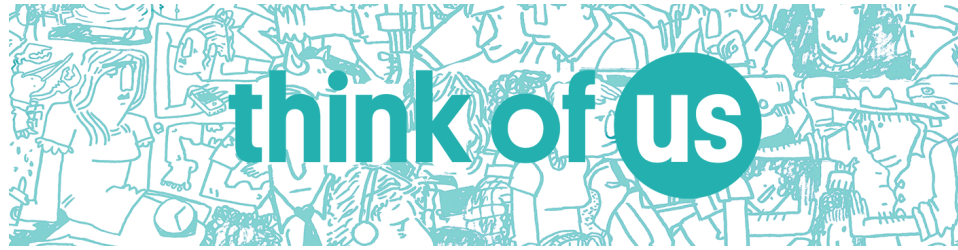


Table 1: Respondents' Self-Stated Needs

Table 1: Respondents' Self-Stated Needs		
Need for Assistance	Count	Percent
Need support being connected to professional in the career I want to work in	303	41.7
Need help creating a budget	294	40.4
Need professional interview clothes	184	25.3
Help applying for Food Stamps	167	23.0
Need help writing a resume	123	16.9
Need support applying for public assistance	118	16.2
Need a bank account	105	14.4
Need help preparing for a job interview	102	14.0
Someone to help me fill out my housing application	97	13.3
Need support applying for unemployment	80	11.0
Need help finding a doctor	79	10.9
Need help paying for a therapist	59	8.1
Need help getting insurance	49	6.7

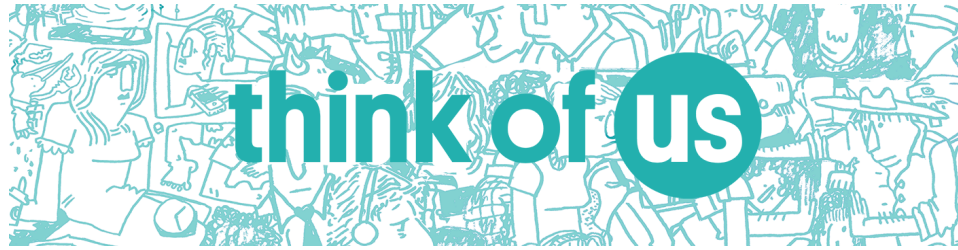
Note. Some respondents selected more than one need area. Consequently, the sum of counts displayed in Table 1 exceeds the total state sample size and the sum of percentages exceeds 100%.

More than four in ten respondents identified assistance with developing career networking contacts and budgeting (i.e., money management skills training) as a support need. Also, considerable numbers of youth needed assistance navigating public benefits application processes, with “food stamps” being the most frequently mentioned benefit type.

Taken together, these responses suggest that Florida’s foster care system can bolster its efforts to meet youths’ needs by implementing targeted interventions to strengthen youths’ knowledge of public benefits systems, facilitate social connections, and enhance practical skills in personal finance and employment/career preparedness.

Financial Security & Employment

When asked about the impact of COVID-19 on employment, nearly one in four respondents ($n = 171$; 23.5%) reported that they had been laid off from their job at some point during the pandemic. Among the adult respondents (i.e., 18- to 27-year-olds) who had jobs prior to the pandemic, 41.0% of full-time workers and 41.0% of part-time workers suffered severe cuts in their work hours and income.



Of the 673 youth who responded to questions concerning their financial status, 45.3% reported that they were in financial crisis, and 32.8% indicated that their money situation was on a week-to-week basis. Just 12.6% of youth reported that their money situation would be fine for about a month, and 9.2% felt their money situation would remain stable for three months or longer.

Social Connections

Asked about their community connections and access to social supports, more than four in ten respondents ($n = 312$; 42.9%) reported that they had at least one personal connection (such as an aunt, uncle, teacher, coach, neighbor, or pastor) on whom they could rely for advice and support. Comparatively fewer youth ($n = 224$; 30.8%) had friends on whom they could rely for advice and support, and slightly less than one in four youth ($n = 170$; 23.4%) had a formal mentor facilitated or provided by their foster care agency.

More than one in four respondents ($n = 196$; 27.0%) indicated that they felt like they were entirely or almost entirely on their own. More than one in ten respondents ($n = 90$; 12.4%) wished they had connections with more people to help them through the COVID-19 pandemic.

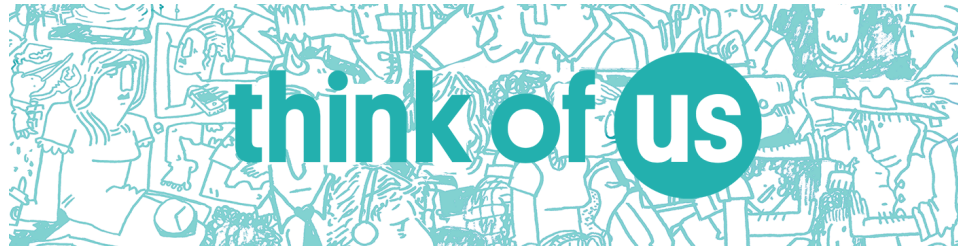
Food Security

Of the 693 youth who answered questions regarding their food security status, half (50.1%) indicated that they had enough food to eat. A sizable minority of respondents, however, reported some level of food insecurity: 9.7% reported that they struggled every day to find enough food, 12.8% reported that finding enough food was a challenge at least one day per week, and 27.4% reported going hungry a couple of times per month.

Examining food security statuses by demographic group: Some type of food insecurity was most prevalent among 22- to 23-year-olds. As well, the percentages of multiracial youth (15.2%) who reported daily food insecurity were roughly twice that reported by White youth (6.8%).

Housing

More than half of respondents indicated that their housing conditions in November 2020 were equivalent to their pre-pandemic housing conditions ($n = 430$; 59.1%). Nearly one in four respondents reported that their housing conditions had worsened ($n = 169$; 23.2%); and less than one in five respondents reported that their housing had improved since the pandemic began ($n = 128$; 17.6%).



Microcash Grant - State Data Brief GEORGIA

Background

In November 2020, *Think of Us*, a non-profit working to increase proximity to lived experience in child welfare, invited youth with foster care experience to apply for “microcash” grants of up to \$1,000 per individual. Respondents were asked a total of 136 questions which variously concerned their demographic characteristics, individual needs, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on key life domains including employment and financial security, food security, housing, social connectedness, and mental and physical health. The total sample included young people ($N = 27,342$) from all 50 U.S. states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. With permission from youth, *Think of Us* analyzed and shared anonymized response data.

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Purpose

This state-level data brief focuses on the subsample of 14- to 27-year-old current and former foster youth in Georgia ($n = 880$) who submitted a microcash grant application. 18- to 21-year-old respondents (46.9%) comprised the largest age group. The majority of the sample identified as female (59.1%). Black or African American respondents (56.9%) comprised the largest race group. Approximately 15% of the respondents identified as LGBTQA+.

The *Think of Us* grant application included a series of open-ended questions asking youth if they needed assistance in specific areas. As shown in Table 1, the most frequently identified needs were related to employment- and career-related supports; budgeting and banking; and navigating applications for public benefits.

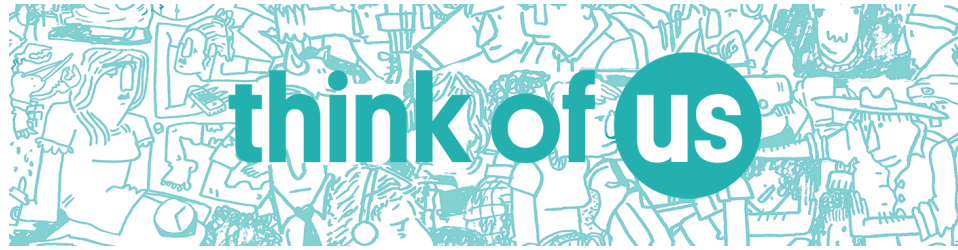


Table 1: Respondents’ Self-Stated Needs

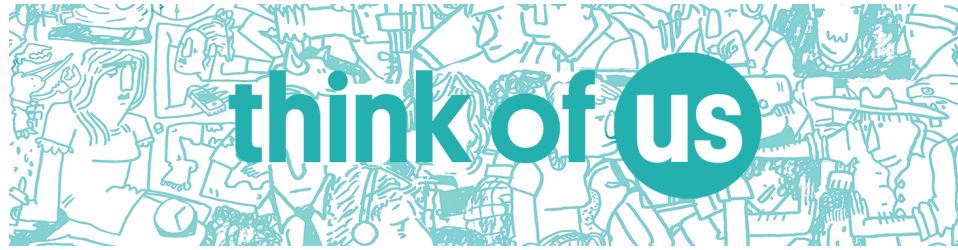
Table 1: Respondents’ Self-Stated Needs		
Need for Assistance	Count	Percent
Need support being connected to professional in the career I want to work in	381	43.3
Need help creating a budget	363	41.3
Help applying for Food Stamps	260	29.5
Need professional interview clothes	243	27.6
Need a bank account	205	23.3
Need help writing a resume	174	19.8
Someone to help me fill out my housing application	172	19.5
Need help preparing for a job interview	137	15.6
Need support applying for public assistance	127	14.4
Need support applying for unemployment	120	13.6
Need help getting insurance	77	8.8
Need help paying for a therapist	72	8.2
Need help finding a doctor	53	6.0
<p><i>Note.</i> Some respondents selected more than one need area. Consequently, the sum of counts displayed in Table 1 exceeds the total state sample size and the sum of percentages exceeds 100%.</p>		

More than four in ten respondents voiced a desire for assistance with developing career networking contacts. More than four in ten respondents identified budgeting (i.e., money management skills training) as a support need. Also, considerable numbers of youth needed assistance navigating public benefits application processes, with “food stamps” being the most frequently mentioned benefit type.

Taken together, these responses suggest that Georgia’s foster care system can bolster its efforts to meet youths’ needs by implementing targeted interventions to strengthen youths’ knowledge of public benefits systems, facilitate social connections, and enhance practical skills in personal finance and employment/career preparedness.

Financial Security & Employment

When asked about the impact of COVID-19 on employment, nearly one in four respondents ($n = 214$; 24.3%) reported that they had been laid off from their job at some point during the pandemic. Among the adult respondents (i.e., 18- to 27-year-olds) who had jobs prior to the pandemic, 39.8% of full-time workers and 35.8% of part-time workers suffered severe cuts in their work hours and income.



Of the 769 youth who responded to questions concerning their financial status, 42.4% reported that they were in financial crisis, and 32.1% indicated that their money situation was on a week-to-week basis. Just 13.4% of youth reported that their money situation would be fine for about a month, and 12.1% felt their money situation would remain stable for three months or longer.

Social Connections

Asked about their community connections and access to social supports, slightly more than half ($n = 479$; 54.4%) of respondents reported that they had at least one personal connection (such as an aunt, uncle, teacher, coach, neighbor, or pastor) on whom they could rely for advice and support. Comparatively fewer youth ($n = 337$; 38.3%) had friends on whom they could rely for advice and support, and approximately one in five youth ($n = 187$; 21.3%) had a formal mentor facilitated or provided by their foster care agency.

Slightly less than one in five respondents ($n = 173$; 19.7%) indicated that they felt like they were entirely or almost entirely on their own. More than one in ten respondents ($n = 105$; 11.9%) wished they had connections with more people to help them through the COVID-19 pandemic.

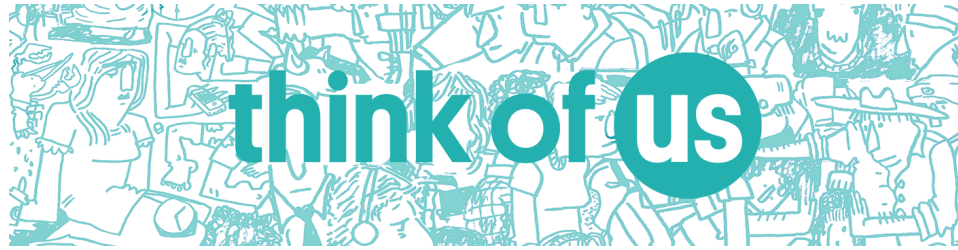
Food Security

Of the 853 youth who answered questions regarding their food security status, a majority of respondents (64.1%) indicated that they had enough food to eat. A sizable minority of respondents, however, reported some level of food insecurity: 5.6% reported that they struggled every day to find enough food, 11.0% reported that finding enough food was a challenge at least one day per week, and 19.2% reported going hungry a couple of times per month.

Examining food security statuses by demographic group: some type of food insecurity was most prevalent among 22- to 27-year-olds. As well, the percentages of youth who identified as parents reported higher daily (6.3%), weekly (12.7%) and monthly (22.6%) food insecurity than those who were not parents (5.4% daily, 10.4% weekly, and 18.0% monthly).

Housing

More than half of respondents indicated that their housing conditions in November 2020 were equivalent to their pre-pandemic housing conditions ($n = 509$; 57.8%). One in four respondents reported that their housing conditions had worsened ($n = 146$; 25.6%); and one in six respondents reported that their housing had improved since the pandemic began ($n = 225$; 16.6%).



Microcash Grant - State Data Brief INDIANA

Background

In November 2020, *Think of Us*, a non-profit working to increase proximity to lived experience in child welfare, invited youth with foster care experience to apply for “microcash” grants of up to \$1,000 per individual. Respondents were asked a total of 136 questions which variously concerned their demographic characteristics, individual needs, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on key life domains including employment and financial security, food security, housing, social connectedness, and mental and physical health. The total sample included young people ($N = 27,342$) from all 50 U.S. states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. With permission from youth, *Think of Us* analyzed and shared anonymized response data.

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Purpose

This state-level data brief focuses on the subsample of 14- to 27-year-old current and former foster youth in Indiana ($n = 240$) who submitted a microcash grant application. 18- to 21-year-old respondents (62.1%) comprised the largest age group. The majority of the sample identified as female (67.1%). White respondents (50%) comprised the largest race group. Approximately 17.1% of the respondents identified as LGBTQA+.

The *Think of Us* grant application included a series of open-ended questions asking youth if they needed assistance in specific areas. As shown in Table 1, the most frequently identified needs were related to budgeting and banking; navigating applications for public benefits; and employment- and career-related supports.



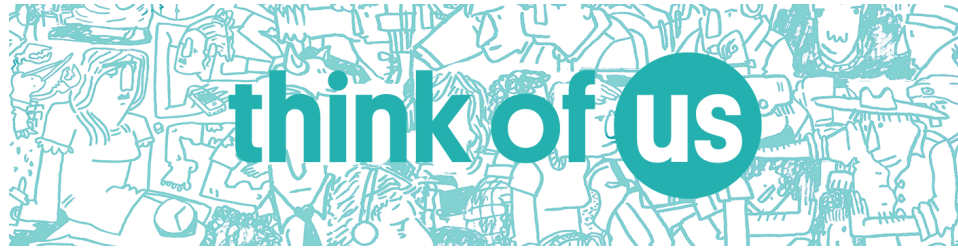


Table 1: Respondents’ Self-Stated Needs

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Need for Assistance	Count	Percent
Need help creating a budget	82	34.2
Need support being connected to professional in the career I want to work in	73	34
Need professional interview clothes	53	22.1
Help applying for Food Stamps	49	20.4
Someone to help me fill out my housing application	37	15.4
Need support applying for public assistance	33	13.8
Need a bank account	32	13.3
Need help writing a resume	29	12.1
Need help preparing for a job interview	22	9.2
Need support applying for unemployment	19	7.9
Need help paying for a therapist	12	5
Need help finding a doctor	11	4.6
Need help getting insurance	11	4.6

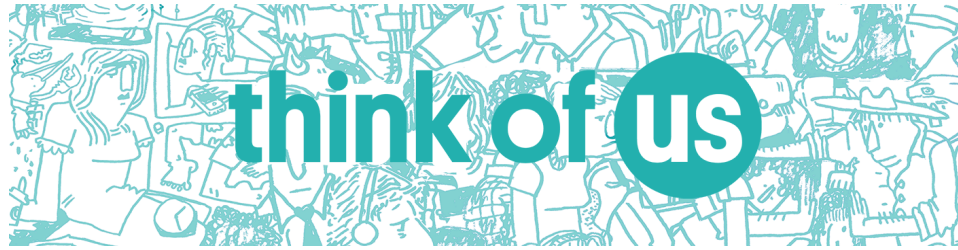
Note. Some respondents selected more than one need area. Consequently, the sum of counts displayed in Table 1 exceed the total state sample size and the sum of percentages exceeds 100%.

More than three in ten respondents identified budgeting (i.e., money management skills training) as a support need. More than a third of respondents voiced a desire for assistance with developing career networking contacts. Also, considerable numbers of youth needed assistance navigating public benefits application processes, with “food stamps” being the most frequently mentioned benefit type.

Taken together, these responses suggest that Indiana’s foster care system can bolster its efforts to meet youths’ needs by implementing targeted interventions to strengthen youths’ knowledge of public benefits systems, facilitate social connections, and enhance practical skills in personal finance and employment/career preparedness.

Financial Security & Employment

When asked about the impact of COVID-19 on employment, slightly more than one in four respondents ($n = 64$; 26.7%) reported that they had been laid off from their job at some point during the pandemic. Among the adult



respondents (i.e., 18- to 27-year-olds) who had jobs prior to the pandemic, 48.7% of full-time workers and 33.3% of part-time workers suffered severe cuts in their work hours and income.

Of the 223 youth who responded to questions concerning their financial status, 38.1% reported that they were in financial crisis, and 32.3% indicated that their money situation was on a week-to-week basis. Just 17% of youth reported that their money situation would be fine for about a month, and 12.6% felt their money situation would remain stable for three months or longer.

Social Connections

Asked about their community connections and access to social supports, slightly more than half ($n = 138$; 57.6%) of respondents reported that they had at least one personal connection (such as an aunt, uncle, teacher, coach, neighbor, or pastor) on whom they could rely for advice and support. Comparatively fewer youth ($n = 93$; 38.8%) had friends on whom they could rely for advice and support, and just one in four youth ($n = 60$; 25%) had a formal mentor facilitated or provided by their foster care agency.

Almost one in six respondents ($n = 41$; 17.1%) indicated that they felt like they were entirely or almost entirely on their own. One in ten respondents ($n = 24$; 10%) wished they had connections with more people to help them through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Food Security

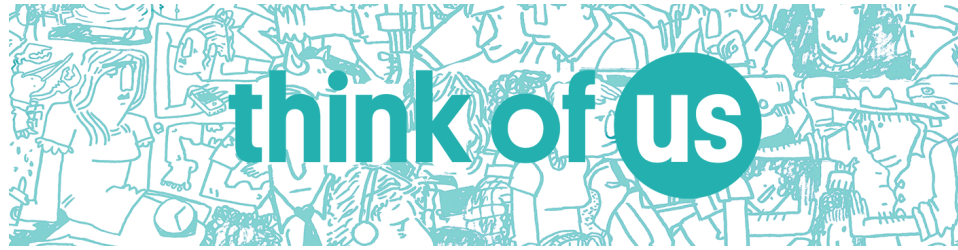
Of the 234 youth who answered questions regarding their food security status, most (60.3%) indicated that they had enough food to eat. A sizable minority of respondents, however, reported some level of food insecurity: 5.6% reported that they struggled every day to find enough food, 12.4% reported that finding enough food was a challenge at least one day per week, and 21.8% reported going hungry a couple of times per month.

Examining food security statuses by demographic group: Food security was most prevalent among 14- to 17-year-olds, followed by 18- to 21-year-olds. Youth who identified as parents were more than two times as likely to report daily food insecurity as were youth who did not identify as parents (i.e., 9.1% youth parents versus 3.8% of youth non-parents).

Housing

More than half of respondents indicated that their housing conditions in November 2020 were equivalent to their pre-pandemic housing conditions ($n = 240$; 55.9%). More than one in four respondents reported that their housing conditions had worsened ($n = 66$; 27.6%); and one in six respondents reported that their housing had improved since the pandemic began ($n = 40$; 16.7%).





Microcash Grant - State Data Brief KANSAS

Background

In November 2020, *Think of Us*, a non-profit working to increase proximity to lived experience in child welfare, invited youth with foster care experience to apply for “microcash” grants of up to \$1,000 per individual. Respondents were asked a total of 136 questions which variously concerned their demographic characteristics, individual needs, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on key life domains including employment and financial security, food security, housing, social connectedness, and mental and physical health. The total sample included young people ($N = 27,342$) from all 50 U.S. states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. With permission from youth, *Think of Us* analyzed and shared anonymized response data.

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Purpose

This state-level data brief focuses on the subsample of 14- to 27-year-old current and former foster youth in Kansas ($n = 376$) who submitted a microcash grant application. 18- to 21-year-old respondents (59.6%) comprised the largest age group, followed by 14- to 17-year-olds (20.2%), 22- to 23-year-olds (12%), and 24- to 27-year-olds (8.2%). The majority of the sample identified as female (63.6%). White respondents (59.3%) comprised the largest race group, followed by biracial or multiracial youth (16.8%), Black or African American youth (12.2%), and Hispanic/Latinx youth (8.5%). Approximately 21% of the respondents identified as LGBTQA+.

The *Think of Us* grant application included a series of open-ended questions asking youth if they needed assistance in specific areas. As shown in Table 1, the most frequently identified needs were related to budgeting and banking; navigating applications for public benefits; and employment- and career-related supports.

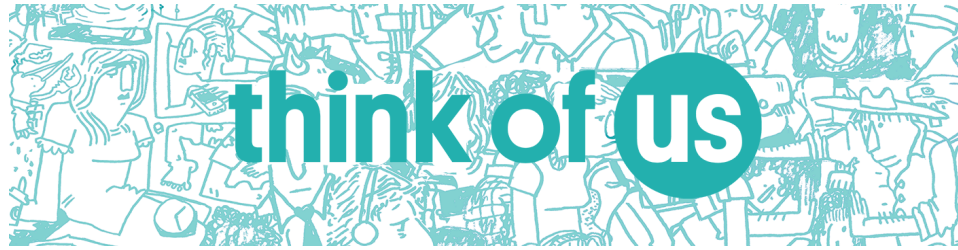


Table 1: Respondents' Self-Stated Needs

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Need for Assistance	Count	Percent
Need help creating a budget	127	33.8
Help applying for Food Stamps	98	26.1
Need support being connected to professional in the career I want to work in	97	25.8
Need professional interview clothes	81	21.5
Someone to help me fill out my housing application	51	13.6
Need help writing a resume	51	13.6
Need a bank account	49	13.0
Need support applying for public assistance	48	12.8
Need help preparing for a job interview	38	10.1
Need support applying for unemployment	32	8.5
Need help paying for a therapist	32	8.5
Need help getting insurance	29	7.7
Need help finding a doctor	26	6.9

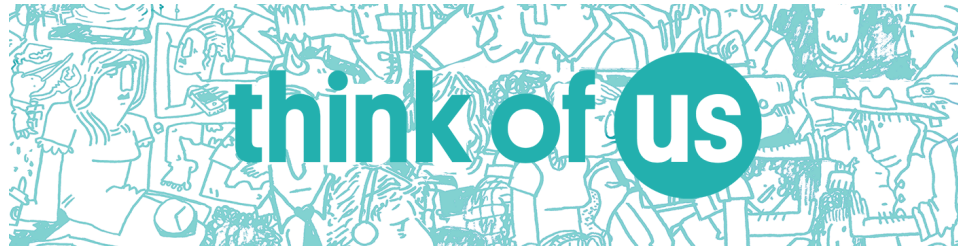
Note. Some respondents selected more than one need area. Consequently, the sum of counts displayed in Table 1 exceeds the total state sample size and the sum of percentages exceeds 100%.

More than one third of respondents identified budgeting (i.e., money management skills training) as a support need, and roughly one quarter of respondents voiced a desire for assistance with developing career networking contacts. Also, considerable numbers of youth needed help with accessing benefits to enhance their food security, housing stability, or employment/income prospects.

Taken together, these responses suggest that Kansas' foster care system can bolster its efforts to meet youths' needs by implementing targeted interventions to strengthen youths' knowledge of public benefits, facilitate social connections, and enhance practical skills in personal finance and employment/career preparedness.

Financial Security & Employment

When asked about the impact of COVID-19 on employment, nearly one in four respondents ($n = 85$; 22.6%) reported that they had been laid off from their job at some point during the pandemic. Among the adult respondents (i.e., 18- to 27-year-olds) who had jobs prior to the pandemic, 39% of full-time workers and 33% of part-time workers suffered severe cuts in their work hours and/or income.



Of the 348 youth who responded to questions concerning their financial status, 37.1% reported that they were in financial crisis, and 38.8% indicated that their money situation was on a week-to-week basis. Just 13.8% of youth reported that their money situation would be fine for about a month, and 10.3% felt their money situation would remain stable for three months or longer.

Examining financial security status by demographic group: 35.7% of White respondents indicated that they were in a financial crisis, compared to 42.1% of multiracial and 41.9% of Black or African American respondents. Just 28.6% of Hispanic/Latinx respondents reported being in a financial crisis.

Social Connections

Asked about their community connections and access to social supports, slightly more than half ($n = 196$; 52.1%) of respondents reported that they had at least one personal connection (such as an aunt, uncle, teacher, coach, neighbor, or pastor) on whom they could rely for advice and support. Comparatively fewer youth ($n = 168$; 44.7%) had friends on whom they could rely for advice and support. Roughly one in seven respondents ($n = 56$; 14.9%) had a formal mentor facilitated or provided by their foster care agency.

More than one in five respondents ($n = 77$; 20.5%) indicated that they felt like they were entirely or almost entirely on their own. Approximately 15% of respondents ($n = 56$) wished they had connections with more people to help them through the COVID-19 pandemic.

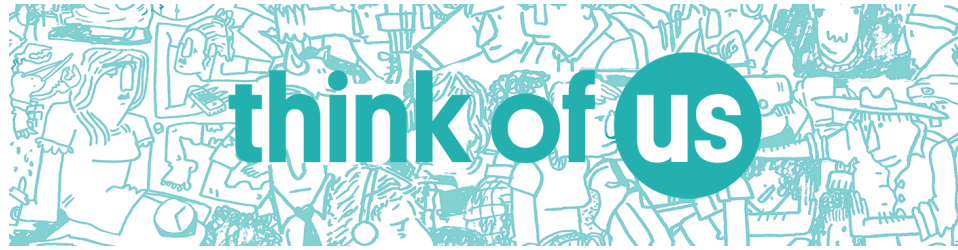
Food Security

Of the 362 youth who answered questions regarding their food security status, 47% indicated that they had enough food to eat. Slightly more than half of respondents reported some level of food insecurity: 11% reported that they struggled every day to find enough food, 14.1% reported that finding enough food was a challenge at least one day per week, and 27.9% reported going hungry a couple of times per month.

Examining food security statuses by demographic group: Daily or weekly food insecurity was most prevalent among 18- to 21-year-olds. As well, the percentages of Black youth (15.2%) or Hispanic/Latinx youth (13.3%) who reported daily food insecurity were greater than the percentage of White youth (9.9%) who reported daily food insecurity. Youth who identified as LGBQA+ were roughly three times as likely to report daily food insecurity as were youth who identified as heterosexual (i.e., 67.1% of LGBQA+ youth versus 23.6% of heterosexual youth).

Housing

More than half of respondents indicated that their housing conditions in November 2020 were equivalent to their pre-pandemic housing conditions ($n = 199$; 52.9%). Nearly one in three respondents reported that their housing conditions had worsened ($n = 113$; 30.1%); and just 17% of respondents reported that their housing had improved since the pandemic began.



Microcash Grant - State Data Brief KENTUCKY

Background

In November 2020, *Think of Us*, a non-profit working to increase proximity to lived experience in child welfare, invited youth with foster care experience to apply for “microcash” grants of up to \$1,000 per individual. Respondents were asked a total of 136 questions which variously concerned their demographic characteristics, individual needs, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on key life domains including employment and financial security, food security, housing, social connectedness, and mental and physical health. The total sample included young people ($N = 27,342$) from all 50 U.S. states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. With permission from youth, *Think of Us* analyzed and shared anonymized response data.

Acknowledgements

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Purpose

This state-level data brief focuses on the subsample of 14- to 27-year-old current and former foster youth in Kentucky ($n = 155$) who submitted a microcash grant application. 18- to 21-year-old respondents (54.2%) comprised the largest age group, followed by 22- to 23-year-olds (17.4%), 24- to 27-year-olds (17.4%), and 14- to 17-year-olds (11%). The majority of the sample identified as female (63.9%). White respondents (44.5%) comprised the largest race group, followed by Black or African Americans (35.5%), multiracial youth (14.8%), and Hispanic/Latinx youth (4.5%). Approximately 15% of the respondents identified as LGBTQA+.

The *Think of Us* grant application included a series of open-ended questions asking youth if they needed assistance in specific areas. As shown in Table 1, the most frequently identified needs were related to employment and career development supports; budgeting and banking; and navigating applications for public benefits.

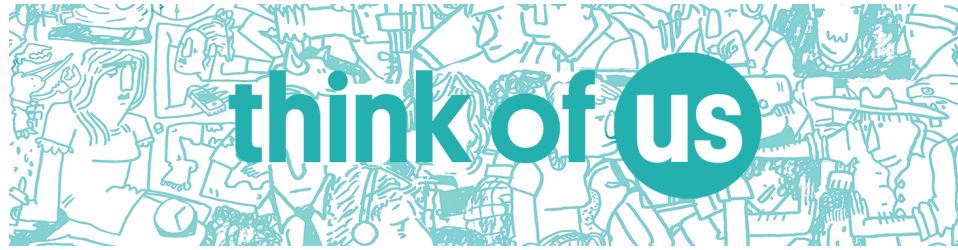


Table 1: Respondents’ Self-Stated Needs

Table 1: Respondents’ Self-Stated Needs		
Need for Assistance	Count	Percent
Need support being connected to professional in the career I want to work in	56	36.1
Need help creating a budget	54	34.8
Help applying for Food Stamps	51	32.9
Need support applying for public assistance	36	23.2
Need professional interview clothes	33	21.3
Need support applying for unemployment	24	15.5
Need a bank account	23	14.8
Someone to help me fill out my housing application	20	12.9
Need help writing a resume	18	11.6
Need help preparing for a job interview	17	11.0
Need help paying for a therapist	12	7.7
Need help getting insurance	11	7.1
Need help finding a doctor	10	6.5

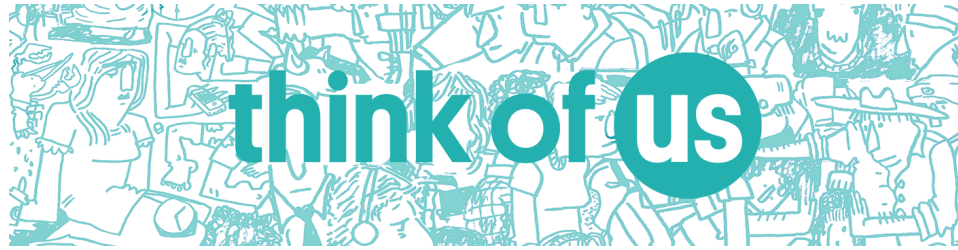
Note. Some respondents selected more than one need area. Consequently, the sum of counts displayed in Table 1 exceeds the total state sample size and the sum of percentages exceeds 100%.

More than one third of respondents voiced a desire for assistance with developing career networking contacts. A similar percentage of youth needed help with building their personal budgeting and money management skills. As well, considerable numbers of youth needed assistance navigating public benefits application processes, with “food stamps” being the most frequently mentioned benefit type.

Taken together, these responses suggest that Kentucky’s foster care system can bolster its efforts to meet youths’ needs by implementing targeted interventions to strengthen youths’ knowledge of public benefits systems, facilitate social connections, and enhance practical skills in personal finance and employment/career preparedness.

Financial Security & Employment

When asked about the impact of COVID-19 on employment, nearly one in three respondents ($n = 45$; 29%) reported that they had been laid off from their job at some point during the pandemic. Among the adult respondents (i.e., 18- to 27-year-olds) who had jobs prior to the pandemic, 41.1% of full-time workers and 44.1% of part-time workers suffered severe cuts in their work hours and income.



Of the 151 youth who responded to questions concerning their financial status, 44.4% reported that they were in financial crisis, and 34.4% indicated that their money situation was on a week-to-week basis. Just 9.9% of youth reported that their money situation would be fine for about a month, and 11.3% felt their money situation would remain stable for three months or longer.

Examining financial security status by demographic group: More than half of Black or African American respondents indicated that they were in a financial crisis ($n = 29$; 53.7%). In percentage terms, comparatively fewer White youth ($n = 29$; 43.3%) were experiencing a financial crisis when they submitted their *Think of Us* microcash grant application.

Social Connections

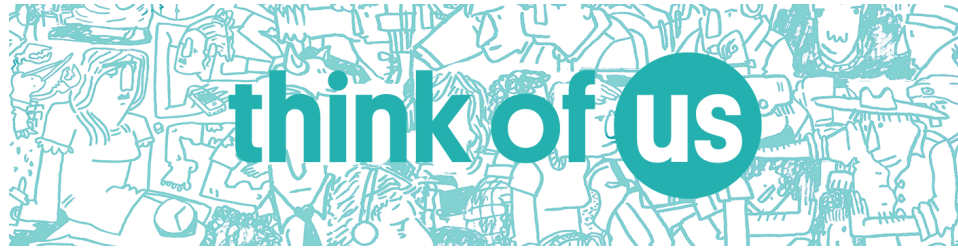
Asked about their community connections and access to social supports, slightly less than half ($n = 76$; 49%) of respondents reported that they had at least one personal connection (such as an aunt, uncle, teacher, coach, neighbor, or pastor) on whom they could rely for advice and support. Comparatively fewer youth ($n = 57$; 36.8%) had friends on whom they could rely for advice and support. Roughly one in eight respondents ($n = 19$; 12.3%) had a formal mentor facilitated or provided by their foster care agency.

Nearly one quarter of the respondents ($n = 37$; 23.9%) indicated that they felt like they were entirely or almost entirely on their own. Roughly one in six respondents ($n = 27$; 17.4%) wished they had connections with more people to help them through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Food Security

Of the 151 youth who answered questions regarding their food security status, less than half (48.3%) indicated that they had enough food to eat. Most respondents reported some level of food insecurity: 13.9% reported that they struggled every day to find enough food, 12.6% reported that finding enough food was a challenge at least one day per week, and 25.2% reported going hungry a couple of times per month.

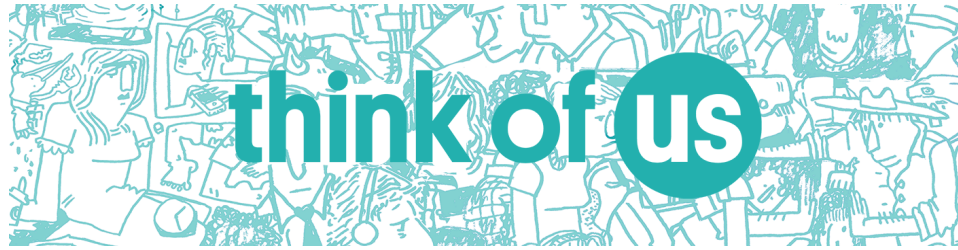
Examining food security statuses by demographic group: The percentage of Hispanic/Latinx youth who reported daily food insecurity (42.9%) was more than twice that of any other race group. Roughly one in five Black or African American youth reported daily food insecurity ($n = 11$; 20.4%). Comparatively lower percentages of youth in other race groups reported daily food insecurity: just 4.5% of White youth and 13% of multiracial youth indicated that they struggled daily to find enough food to eat.



Housing

Slightly less than two-thirds of the respondents indicated that their housing conditions in November 2020 were equivalent to their pre-pandemic housing conditions ($n = 99$; 63.9%). Roughly one fifth of the respondents reported that their housing conditions had worsened ($n = 34$; 21.9%); and 14.2% of the respondents reported that their housing had improved since the pandemic began.

Examining housing stability by demographic group: 28.6% of Hispanic/Latinx youth and 26.1% of White youth indicated that their housing conditions had worsened since the pandemic began. Comparatively lower percentages of Black or African American youth (18.2%) and multiracial youth (17.4%) reported that their housing conditions had worsened.



Microcash Grant - State Data Brief MASSACHUSETTS

Background

In November 2020, *Think of Us*, a non-profit working to increase proximity to lived experience in child welfare, invited youth with foster care experience to apply for “microcash” grants of up to \$1,000 per individual. Respondents were asked a total of 136 questions which variously concerned their demographic characteristics, individual needs, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on key life domains including employment and financial security, food security, housing, social connectedness, and mental and physical health. The total sample included young people ($N = 27,342$) from all 50 U.S. states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. With permission from youth, *Think of Us* analyzed and shared anonymized response data.

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Purpose

This state-level data brief focuses on the subsample of 14- to 27-year-old current and former foster youth in Massachusetts ($n = 514$) who submitted a microcash grant application. 18- to 21-year-old respondents (55.3%) comprised the largest age group, followed by 14- to 17-year-olds (23.7%), 22- to 23-year-olds (13.6%), and 24- to 27-year-olds (7.4%). The majority of the sample identified as female (64.2%). White respondents (38.1%) comprised the largest race group, followed by Hispanic/Latinx (22%), multiracial (18.1%), and Black or African American (15.6%) respondents. Approximately 23% of the respondents identified as LGBTQA+.

The *Think of Us* grant application included a series of open-ended questions asking youth if they needed assistance in specific areas. As shown in Table 1, the most frequently identified needs were related to employment and career development supports; budgeting and banking; and navigating applications for public benefits.

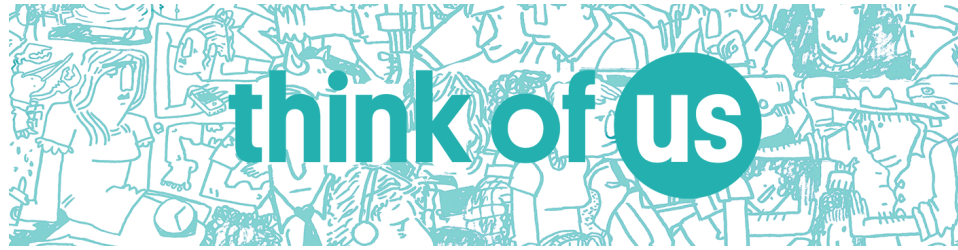


Table 1: Respondents’ Self-Stated Needs

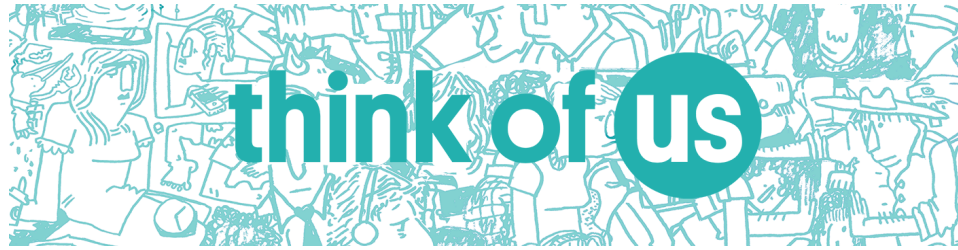
Table 1: Respondents’ Self-Stated Needs		
Need for Assistance	Count	Percent
Need support being connected to professional in the career I want to work in	206	40.1%
Need help creating a budget	165	32.1%
Need professional interview clothes	142	27.6%
Help applying for Food Stamps	97	18.9%
Someone to help me fill out my housing application	90	17.5%
Need support applying for public assistance	75	14.6%
Need help writing a resume	72	14.1%
Need help preparing for a job interview	67	13.0%
Need a bank account	58	11.3%
Need support applying for unemployment	37	7.2%
Need help paying for a therapist	32	6.2%
Need help finding a doctor	30	5.8%
Need help getting insurance	9	1.8%
<p><i>Note.</i> Some respondents selected more than one need area. Consequently, the sum of counts displayed in Table 1 exceeds the total state sample size and the sum of percentages exceeds 100%.</p>		

More than four in ten youth voiced a desire for assistance with developing career networking contacts. Roughly one third of the total sample needed help with building their personal budgeting and money management skills. As well, considerable numbers of youth needed assistance navigating public benefits application processes, with “food stamps” being the most frequently mentioned benefit type.

Taken together, these responses suggest that Massachusetts’ foster care system can bolster its efforts to meet youths’ needs by implementing targeted interventions to strengthen youths’ knowledge of public benefits systems, facilitate social connections, and enhance practical skills in personal finance and employment/career preparedness.

Financial Security & Employment

When asked about the impact of COVID-19 on employment, more than one fifth of the respondents ($n = 108$; 21%) reported that they had been laid off from their job at some point during the pandemic. Among the adult respondents (i.e., 18- to 27-year-olds) who had jobs prior to the pandemic, 49.6% of full-time workers and 36.4% of part-time workers suffered severe cuts in their work hours and income.



Of the 456 youth who responded to questions concerning their financial status, 28.1% reported that they were in financial crisis, and 39.9% indicated that their money situation was on a week-to-week basis. Just 16% of youth reported that their money situation would be fine for about a month, and 16% felt their money situation would remain stable for three months or longer.

Examining financial security status by demographic group: More than one third of Black or African American respondents indicated that they were in a financial crisis ($n = 26$; 36.1%) when they submitted their *Think of Us* microcash grant application in November 2020. A similar proportion of Hispanic/Latinx respondents reported being in a financial crisis ($n = 39$; 36.8%). In percentage terms, comparatively fewer White youth ($n = 36$; 20.9%) and multiracial youth ($n = 22$; 27.5%) reported being in a financial crisis.

Social Connections

Asked about their community connections and access to social supports, slightly more than half of the respondents ($n = 280$; 54.5%) reported that they had at least one personal connection (such as an aunt, uncle, teacher, coach, neighbor, or pastor) on whom they could rely for advice and support. A similar percentage of youth ($n = 260$; 50.6%) had friends on whom they could rely for advice and support. Less than one quarter of the respondents ($n = 119$; 23.2%) had a formal mentor facilitated or provided by their foster care agency.

Roughly one in six youth ($n = 80$; 15.6%) indicated that they felt like they were entirely or almost entirely on their own during the COVID-19 pandemic, and 12.8% of the respondents wished they had connections with more people to help them through the pandemic.

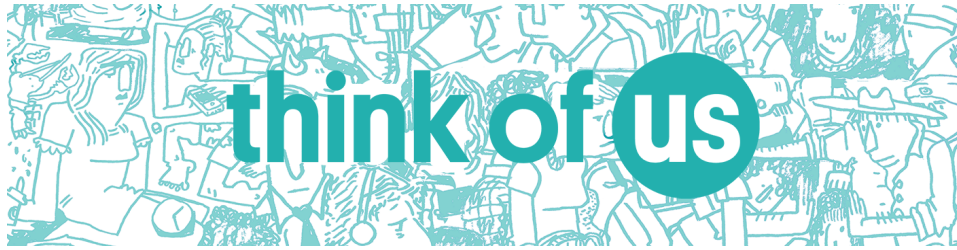
Food Security

Of the 497 youth who answered questions regarding their food security status, less than two-thirds (62.2%) indicated that they had enough food to eat. A considerable minority of the sample reported some level of food insecurity: 5.8% reported that they struggled every day to find enough food, 9.9% reported that finding enough food was a challenge at least one day per week, and 22.1% reported going hungry a couple of times per month.

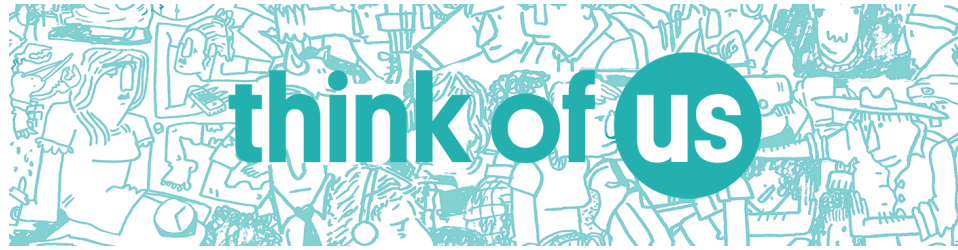
Examining food security status by demographic group: In percentage terms, White youth were the least likely among all race groups in the sample to report daily food insecurity. Just 4.7% of youth who identified their race as White reported struggling daily to find enough to eat, compared to 7.9% of Black/African American youth and 7.4% of multiracial youth.

Housing

Approximately 57% of the total sample indicated that their housing conditions in November 2020 were equivalent to their pre-pandemic housing conditions. Roughly one in three respondents reported that their housing conditions had worsened ($n = 150$; 29.2%); and 13.6% reported that their housing conditions had improved since the pandemic began.



Examining housing stability by demographic group: In percentage terms, multiracial and White youth were slightly more likely than youth of other races to experience a deterioration in housing conditions during the pandemic. One third of multiracial youth and 31.6% of White youth indicated that their housing conditions had worsened since the pandemic began, compared to 27.5% of Black/African American youth and 24.8% of Hispanic/Latinx youth.



Microcash Grant - State Data Brief NEW YORK

Background

In November 2020, *Think of Us*, a non-profit working to increase proximity to lived experience in child welfare, invited youth with foster care experience to apply for “microcash” grants of up to \$1,000 per individual. Respondents were asked a total of 136 questions which variously concerned their demographic characteristics, individual needs, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on key life domains including employment and financial security, food security, housing, social connectedness, and mental and physical health. The total sample included young people ($N = 27,342$) from all 50 U.S. states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. With permission from youth, *Think of Us* analyzed and shared anonymized response data.

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Purpose

This state-level data brief focuses on the subsample of 14- to 27-year-old current and former foster youth in New York ($n = 2141$) who submitted a microcash grant application. 18- to 21-year-old respondents (46.8%) comprised the largest age group, followed by 14- to 17-year-olds (19.5%), 24- to 27-year-olds (17.3%), and 22- to 23-year-olds (16.4%). The majority of the sample identified as female (61.9%). Black or African American respondents (52.6%) comprised the largest race group, followed by Hispanic/Latinx (23.1%), multiracial (15.3%), and White (4.9%) respondents. Of the 800 respondents who answered a question concerning their gender identity/sexual orientation, approximately 17% identified as LGBQA+.

The *Think of Us* grant application included a series of open-ended questions asking youth if they needed assistance in specific areas. As shown in Table 1, the most frequently identified needs were related to employment and career development supports; budgeting and banking; and navigating applications for public benefits.

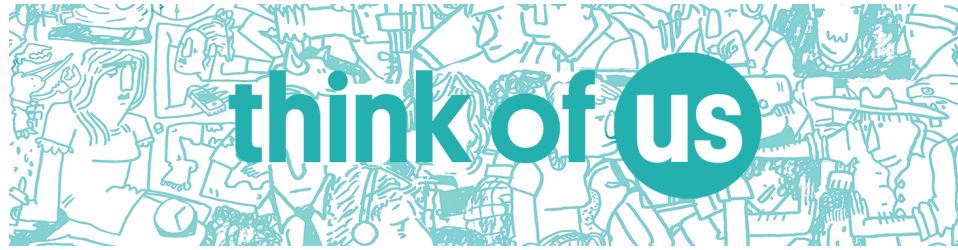


Table 1: Respondents’ Self-Stated Needs

Table 1: Respondents’ Self-Stated Needs		
Need for Assistance	Count	Percent
Need support being connected to professional in the career I want to work in	1029	48.1%
Need help creating a budget	881	41.1%
Need professional interview clothes	705	32.9%
Help applying for Food Stamps	563	26.3%
Need a bank account	477	22.3%
Need help preparing for a job interview	462	21.6%
Need help writing a resume	431	20.1%
Someone to help me fill out my housing application	403	18.8%
Need support applying for public assistance	332	15.5%
Need support applying for unemployment	272	12.7%
Need help paying for a therapist	140	6.5%
Need help finding a doctor	126	5.9%
Need help getting insurance	119	5.6%

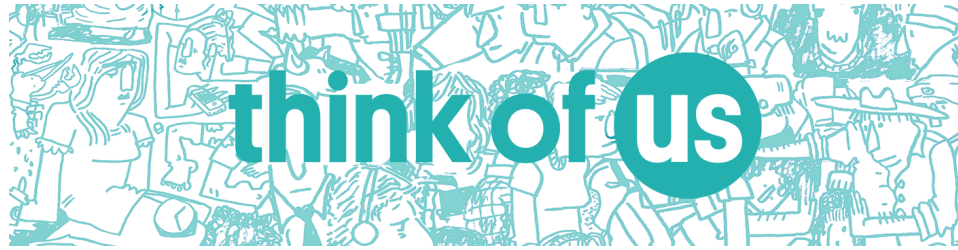
Note. Some respondents selected more than one need area. Consequently, the sum of counts displayed in Table 1 exceeds the total state sample size and the sum of percentages exceeds 100%.

Nearly half of youth in the total state sample voiced a desire for assistance with developing career networking contacts. Roughly four in ten of the respondents needed help with building their personal budgeting and money management skills. As well, considerable numbers of youth needed assistance navigating public benefits application processes, with “food stamps” being the most frequently mentioned benefit type.

Taken together, these responses suggest that New York’s foster care system can bolster its efforts to meet youths’ needs by implementing targeted interventions to facilitate social connections, enhance practical skills in personal finance and employment/career preparedness, and strengthen youths’ knowledge of public benefits systems.

Financial Security & Employment

When asked about the impact of COVID-19 on their employment, more than one fifth of the respondents ($n = 453$; 21.2%) reported that they had been laid off from their job at some point during the pandemic. Among the adult respondents (i.e., 18- to 27-year-olds) who had jobs prior to the pandemic, 34% of full-time workers and 32% of part-time workers suffered severe cuts in their work hours and income.



Of the 1,979 youth who responded to questions concerning their financial status, 49.1% reported that they were in financial crisis, and 33.3% indicated that their money situation was on a week-to-week basis. Just 10.6% of youth reported that their money situation would be fine for about a month, and 7.1% felt their money situation would remain stable for three months or longer.

Examining financial security status by demographic group: More half of the youth who identified as Black or African American indicated that they were in a financial crisis ($n = 554$; 52.6%) when they submitted their *Think of Us* microcash grant application in November 2020. A similar percentage of youth who identified as multiracial indicated that they were in a financial crisis ($n = 155$; 50.5%). In percentage terms, comparatively fewer White youth ($n = 30$; 34.1%) and Hispanic/Latinx youth ($n = 196$; 43.6%) were experiencing a financial crisis when they submitted their grant applications.

Social Connections

Asked about their community connections and access to social supports, fewer than half of the respondents ($n = 936$; 43.7%) reported that they had at least one personal connection (such as an aunt, uncle, teacher, coach, neighbor, or pastor) on whom they could rely for advice and support. Comparatively fewer youth ($n = 797$; 37.2%) had friends on whom they could rely for advice and support. Less than one fifth of the respondents ($n = 418$; 19.5%) had a formal mentor facilitated or provided by their foster care agency.

Nearly one quarter of the state sample ($n = 521$; 24.3%) indicated that they felt like they were entirely or almost entirely on their own during the COVID-19 pandemic. Roughly 13% of respondents wished they had connections with more people to help them through the pandemic.

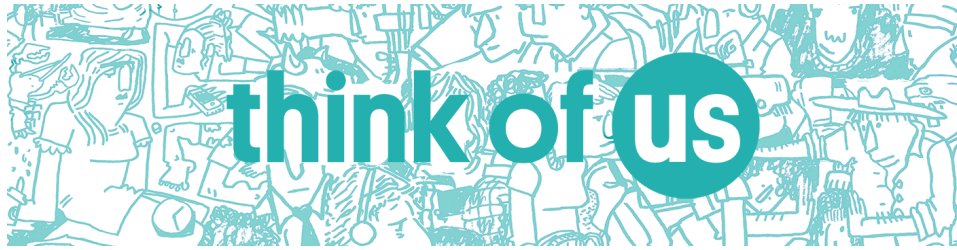
Food Security

Of the 2,054 youth who answered questions regarding their food security status, 51.4% indicated that they had enough food to eat. A considerable minority of the state sample reported some level of food security: 8.9% indicated that they struggled every day to find enough food, 13.5% reported that finding food was challenging on a weekly basis, and 26.2% reported going hungry a couple of times per month.

Examining food security status by demographic group: In percentage terms, White youth were the least likely among all race groups in the state sample to report daily food insecurity. Approximately 7% of White youth reported struggling daily to find enough to eat, compared to 8.1% of Hispanic/Latinx youth, 9.2% of Black/African American youth, and 10.4% of multiracial youth.

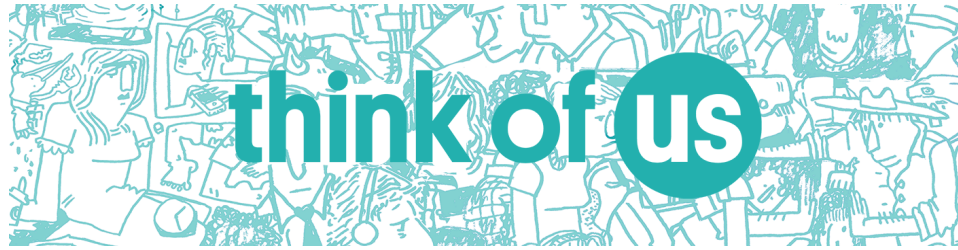
Housing

Nearly two-thirds of the total state sample indicated that their housing conditions in November 2020 were equivalent to their pre-pandemic housing conditions ($n = 1373$; 64.1%). Roughly one in four respondents



indicated that their housing conditions had worsened ($n = 493$; 23%), and 12.8% reported that their housing conditions had improved since the pandemic began.

Examining housing stability by demographic group: In percentage terms, White youth were slightly more likely than youth of other races to experience a deterioration in housing conditions during the pandemic: 34.3% of White youth indicated that their housing conditions had worsened since the pandemic began, compared to 23.5% of Hispanic/Latinx youth, 23.2% of multiracial youth, and 21.6% of Black or African American youth.



Microcash Grant - State Data Brief VIRGINIA

Background

In November 2020, *Think of Us*, a non-profit working to increase proximity to lived experience in child welfare, invited youth with foster care experience to apply for “microcash” grants of up to \$1,000 per individual. Respondents were asked a total of 136 questions which variously concerned their demographic characteristics, individual needs, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on key life domains including employment and financial security, food security, housing, social connectedness, and mental and physical health. The total sample included young people ($N = 27,342$) from all 50 U.S. states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. With permission from youth, *Think of Us* analyzed and shared anonymized response data.

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Purpose

This state-level data brief focuses on the subsample of 14- to 27-year-old current and former foster youth in Virginia ($n = 412$) who submitted a microcash grant application. 18- to 21-year-old respondents (57.8%) comprised the largest age group, followed by 14- to 17-year-olds (18.9%), 24- to 27-year-olds (14.8%), and 22- to 23-year-olds (8.5%). The majority of the sample identified as female (58.7%). Black or African American respondents (35.7%) comprised the largest race group, followed by White youth (35.4%), multiracial youth (12.9%), and Hispanic/Latinx youth (12.6%). Approximately 17% of the respondents identified as LGBTQA+.

The *Think of Us* grant application included a series of open-ended questions asking youth if they needed assistance in specific areas. As shown in Table 1, the most frequently identified needs were related to budgeting and banking; navigating applications for public benefits; and employment- and career-related supports.

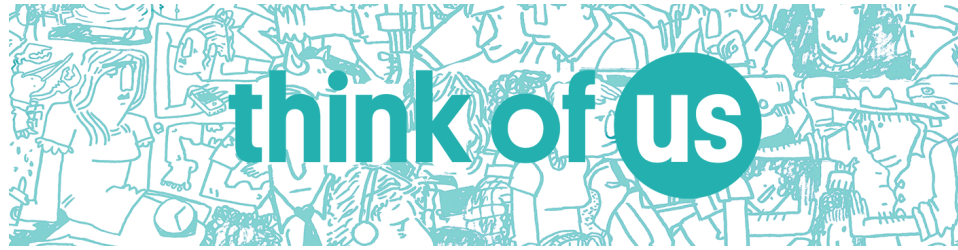


Table 1: Respondents’ Self-Stated Needs

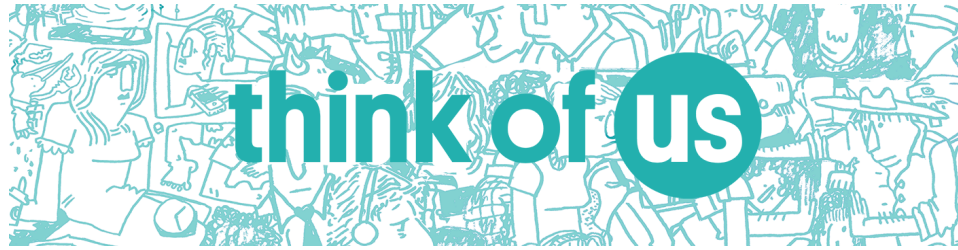
Table 1: Respondents’ Self-Stated Needs		
Need for Assistance	Count	Percent
Need help creating a budget	175	42.5
Need support being connected to professional in the career I want to work in	158	38.3
Help applying for Food Stamps	106	25.7
Need professional interview clothes	104	25.2
Need help writing a resume	70	17.0
Someone to help me fill out my housing application	68	16.5
Need support applying for public assistance	66	16.0
Need a bank account	61	14.8
Need support applying for unemployment	57	13.8
Need help preparing for a job interview	55	13.3
Need help paying for a therapist	37	9.0
Need help finding a doctor	36	8.7
Need help getting insurance	17	4.1
<p>Note. Some respondents selected more than one need area. Consequently, the sum of counts displayed in Table 1 exceeds the total state sample size and the sum of percentages exceeds 100%.</p>		

More than four in ten respondents identified budgeting (i.e., money management skills training) as a support need. More than a third of respondents voiced a desire for assistance with developing career networking contacts. Also, considerable numbers of youth needed assistance navigating public benefits application processes, with “food stamps” being the most frequently mentioned benefit type.

Taken together, these responses suggest that Virginia’s foster care system can bolster its efforts to meet youths’ needs by implementing targeted interventions to strengthen youths’ knowledge of public benefits systems, facilitate social connections, and enhance practical skills in personal finance and employment/career preparedness.

Financial Security & Employment

When asked about the impact of COVID-19 on employment, nearly one in four respondents ($n = 100$; 24.3%) reported that they had been laid off from their job at some point during the pandemic. Among the adult respondents (i.e., 18- to 27-year-olds) who had jobs prior to the pandemic, 39.3% of full-time workers and 32.3% of part-time workers suffered severe cuts in their work hours and income.



Of the 380 youth who responded to questions concerning their financial status, 35.8% reported that they were in financial crisis, and 38.4% indicated that their money situation was on a week-to-week basis. Just 12.9% of youth reported that their money situation would be fine for about a month, and 12.9% felt their money situation would remain stable for three months or longer.

Social Connections

Asked about their community connections and access to social supports, slightly more than half ($n = 213$; 51.7%) of respondents reported that they had at least one personal connection (such as an aunt, uncle, teacher, coach, neighbor, or pastor) on whom they could rely for advice and support. Comparatively fewer youth ($n = 155$; 37.6%) had friends on whom they could rely for advice and support, and just one in four youth ($n = 104$; 25.2%) had a formal mentor facilitated or provided by their foster care agency.

More than one in five respondents ($n = 89$; 21.6%) indicated that they felt like they were entirely or almost entirely on their own. More than one in ten respondents ($n = 47$; 11.4%) wished they had connections with more people to help them through the COVID-19 pandemic.

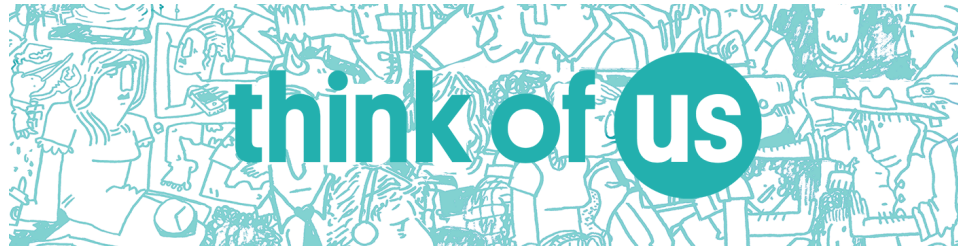
Food Security

Of the 406 youth who answered questions regarding their food security status, most (57.1%) indicated that they had enough food to eat. A sizable minority of respondents, however, reported some level of food insecurity: 10.1% reported that they struggled every day to find enough food, 12.1% reported that finding enough food was a challenge at least one day per week, and 20.7% reported going hungry a couple of times per month.

Examining food security statuses by demographic group: Daily or weekly food insecurity was most prevalent among 18- to 21-year-olds. As well, the percentages of Black youth (13.1%) or multiracial youth (15.4%) who reported daily food insecurity were roughly twice that reported by White youth (6.9%). Youth who identified as LGBQA+ were roughly three times as likely to report daily food insecurity as were youth who identified as heterosexual (i.e., 46.5% of LGBQA+ youth versus 14.9% of heterosexual youth).

Housing

More than half of respondents indicated that their housing conditions in November 2020 were equivalent to their pre-pandemic housing conditions ($n = 227$; 55.1%). Nearly one in four respondents reported that their housing conditions had worsened ($n = 92$; 22.3%); and a similar percentage of respondents reported that their housing had improved since the pandemic began ($n = 93$; 22.6%).



Microcash Grant - State Data Brief WASHINGTON

Background

In November 2020, *Think of Us*, a non-profit working to increase proximity to lived experience in child welfare, invited youth with foster care experience to apply for “microcash” grants of up to \$1,000 per individual. Respondents were asked a total of 136 questions which variously concerned their demographic characteristics, individual needs, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on key life domains including employment and financial security, food security, housing, social connectedness, and mental and physical health. The total sample included young people ($N = 27,342$) from all 50 U.S. states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. With permission from youth, *Think of Us* analyzed and shared anonymized response data.

Acknowledgements

Data analysis was supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Inc. Data evaluation and analysis of the survey responses, coupled with pro-bono data mentoring, were provided by Econ One. To learn more, visit: www.econone.com/practice-area/data-analytics/. This Fact Sheet in collaboration with *Think of Us* was developed by The Field Center for Children’s Policy, Practice & Research and the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2). The Field Center and SP2 are providing ongoing pro bono support to *Think of Us* as part of their continued efforts to respond to the impact of COVID-19 on young people with foster care experience. To learn more visit: www.fieldcenteratpenn.org and <https://www.sp2.upenn.edu/>.

Purpose

This state-level data brief focuses on the subsample of 14- to 27-year-old current and former foster youth in Washington state ($n = 1152$) who submitted a microcash grant application. 18- to 21-year-old respondents (45.7%) comprised the largest age group. Most respondents identified their gender as female (58.2%) and reported their race as White (38.7%). Approximately 22% of the respondents identified as LGBTQA+.

The *Think of Us* grant application included a series of open-ended questions asking youth if they needed assistance in specific areas. As shown in Table 1, the most frequently identified needs were related to budgeting and banking; employment- and career-related supports; and navigating applications for public benefits.

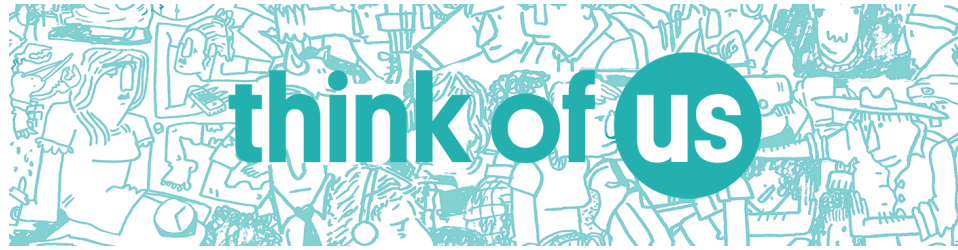


Table 1: Respondents' Self-Stated Needs

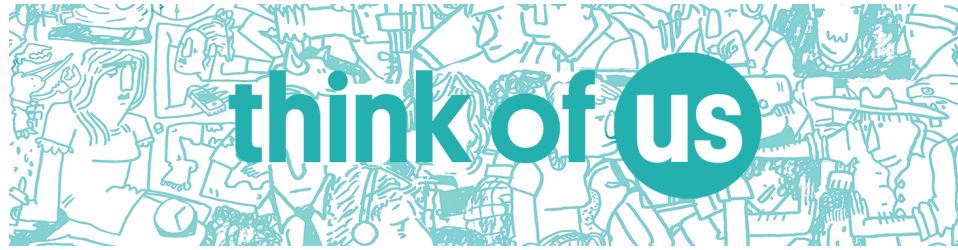
Table 1: Respondents' Self-Stated Needs		
Need for Assistance	Count	Percent
Need help creating a budget	359	31.2
Need support being connected to professional in the career I want to work in	343	29.8
Need professional interview clothes	317	27.5
Help applying for Food Stamps	220	19.1
Need help writing a resume	179	15.5
Someone to help me fill out my housing application	162	14.1
Need help preparing for a job interview	162	14.1
Need a bank account	161	14.0
Need support applying for public assistance	113	9.8
Need help paying for a therapist	105	9.1
Need support applying for unemployment	72	6.3
Need help finding a doctor	65	5.6
Need help getting insurance	61	5.3
<p><i>Note.</i> Some respondents selected more than one need area. Consequently, the sum of counts displayed in Table 1 exceed the total state sample size and the sum of percentages exceeds 100%.</p>		

Roughly one third of respondents identified budgeting (i.e., money management skills training) as a support need. Well over half of youth (57.1%) noted their desire for help with job applications or career preparation. Also, considerable numbers of youth needed assistance navigating public benefits application processes. A combined 49.3% of youth needed help with accessing benefits to enhance their food security, housing stability, or employment/income prospects.

Taken together, these responses suggest that Washington state's foster care system can bolster its efforts to meet youths' needs by implementing targeted interventions to strengthen youths' knowledge of public benefits systems, facilitate social connections, and enhance practical skills in personal finance and employment/career preparedness.

Financial Security & Employment

When asked about the impact of COVID-19 on employment, slightly less than one in five respondents ($n = 220$; 19.1%) reported that they had been laid off from their job at some point during the pandemic. Among the adult



respondents (i.e., 18- to 27-year-olds) who had jobs prior to the pandemic, 40.4% of full-time workers and 30.3% of part-time workers suffered severe cuts in their work hours and/or income.

Of the 1,019 youth who responded to questions concerning their financial status in November 2020, 37.7% reported that they were in financial crisis, and 30.7% indicated that their money situation was on a week-to-week basis. Just 15.6% of youth reported that their money situation would be fine for about a month, and 16% felt their money situation would remain stable for three months or longer.

Examining financial security status by demographic group: Nearly half (48.5%) of Black or African American youth indicated that they were in financial crisis, compared to 37.4% of Hispanic/Latinx youth and 31% of White youth.

Social Connections

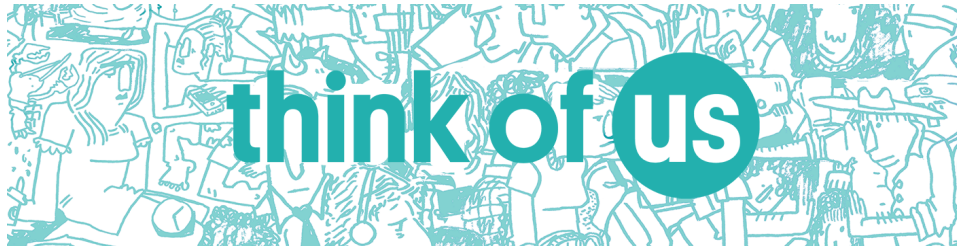
Asked about their community connections and access to social supports, slightly more than half ($n = 607$; 52.7%) of respondents reported that they had at least one personal connection (such as an aunt, uncle, teacher, coach, neighbor, or pastor) on whom they could rely for advice and support. Comparatively fewer youth ($n = 498$; 43.2%) had friends on whom they could rely for advice and support, and less than one in six respondents ($n = 176$; 15.3%) had a formal mentor facilitated or provided by their foster care agency.

Nearly one in five respondents ($n = 218$; 18.9%) indicated that they felt like they were entirely or almost entirely on their own. Roughly one in eight respondents ($n = 146$; 12.7%) wished they had connections with more people to help them through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Food Security

Of the 1,110 youth who answered questions regarding their food security status, 56% indicated that they had enough food to eat. A sizable minority of respondents, however, reported some level of food insecurity: 7.9% reported that they struggled every day to find enough food, and 11.7% reported that finding enough food was a challenge at least one day per week. Nearly one quarter of respondents ($n = 270$; 24.3%) reported that they went hungry a couple of times per month.

Examining food security statuses by demographic group: Daily or weekly food insecurity was most prevalent among 22- to 23-year-olds. As well, the percentages of Black youth (10.9%) or multiracial youth (10.2%) who reported daily food insecurity were roughly twice that reported by White youth (6%) or Hispanic/Latinx youth (6%). Youth who identified as LGBTQA+ were more than twice as likely to report daily food insecurity as were youth who identified as heterosexual (i.e., 31.6% of LGBTQA+ youth versus 15.5% of heterosexual youth).



Housing

More than half of respondents ($n = 594$; 51.6%) indicated that their housing conditions in November 2020 were equivalent to their pre-pandemic housing conditions. Roughly one in three respondents reported that their housing conditions had worsened ($n = 355$; 30.8%). Just 17.6% of respondents reported that their housing had improved since the pandemic began.