

COVID-19 RESPONSE PROGRAM REPORT

August 2021



At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Children's Aid Foundation of Canada moved swiftly to create the **COVID-19 Response Program** to help youth who have transitioned out of the child welfare system address financial, emergency, and other needs being experienced as a result of the global outbreak. In August 2020, the program expanded to also support children and families being served by our agency partners.

This program was rolled-out in two phases. **Phase 1, the COVID-19 Youth Support Fund**, involved administering direct grants to former youth in care to help support their emergency needs such as housing costs, food and household supplies, mental health supports, technology support for e-learning and more. The Foundation received an unprecedented amount of direct applications in two days, four times the usual number of applications received annually, highlighting the increased need for support stemming from the pandemic.

After gaining knowledge and learnings about how best to serve these populations from the first phase of the Program, and as the COVID-19 pandemic was moving from an acute emergency to a longer-term reality, the Foundation shifted the focus of our COVID-19 Response Program from providing direct grants to young people to **partnering with organizations** across Canada who were able to directly respond to the emerging needs of children, families, and former youth in care. To accomplish this, **Phase 2 consisted of two new funds: the Child & Family Support Fund and the Support Fund for Former Youth in Care**. Child- and youth-serving organizations and agencies were able to apply for Foundation support to run an emergency fund, program, or service.

Phase 2 of the COVID-19 Response Program allowed us to extend our reach across Canada, to develop new partnerships, and to ultimately maximize our support for children, youth and families throughout the pandemic. It was our hope that by providing grants during this time to frontline organizations that families would be supported, that the number of children entering care on a permanent basis could be reduced, and that former youth in care would be supported both financially and otherwise throughout the pandemic.



“Simply, without the funding provided we would have seen a number of youth going without food, potentially losing their housing, potential for having to drop-out of school due to a lack of resources (e.g. technology, books).”

- Durham Children's Aid Foundation

HIGHLIGHTS

37,677 PEOPLE REACHED INCLUDING **7,227** FAMILIES AND **5,596** FORMER YOUTH IN CARE.



759 DONORS WITH OVER **\$9.3 MILLION** GRANTED



71 CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVING **ORGANIZATIONS** SUPPORTED

15 INDIGENOUS-LED **ORGANIZATIONS** SUPPORTED WITH 22 GRANTS IN TOTAL DIRECTED TOWARDS SERVING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

31 GRANTS DIRECTED TOWARDS AGENCIES SERVING **BLACK COMMUNITIES**



10 PROVINCES AND **2** TERRITORIES



Emergency grants distributed through the Child and Family Support Fund and Support Fund for Former Youth in Care **addressed emergency needs** such as:

- Food and other essentials (i.e. hygiene supplies, diapers, formula, etc.)
- Immediate shelter needs and housing costs
- Mental and physical health supports
- Technology support for e-learning

This funding also allowed child- and youth-serving partners to:

- Adapt or realign existing service delivery and programs to a COVID-19 reality to support children and families at risk
- Deliver new services or programs as a result of COVID-19

“Many families lost their means of income [due to the pandemic] and were struggling to manage their minimal monthly income. By providing sacred medicine support, children and families were able to connect with their culture. They are able to use the medicines for their personal well-being, and when participating in any sacred ceremonies and cultural programs that may be happening virtually. Providing funding for medical support enabled children and families to stay safe and healthy.”

– Native Child and Family Services, Ontario

THE IMPACT – CHILD & FAMILY FUND

The Child & Family Support Fund was administered in 8 provinces and 2 territories across Canada and reached 7,227 families + 9,104 individual children & youth. In total, **32,081 caregivers, children, and youth were supported.**

Partners reporting back about how the supports impacted recipients of the Child & Family Support fund noted the **top four impacts** they observed as:

- **68% of recipients** experienced improved mental health
- **43% of recipients** experienced decreased feelings of isolation
- **43% of recipients** experienced reduced financial strain or stress
- **43% of recipients** experienced increased food security

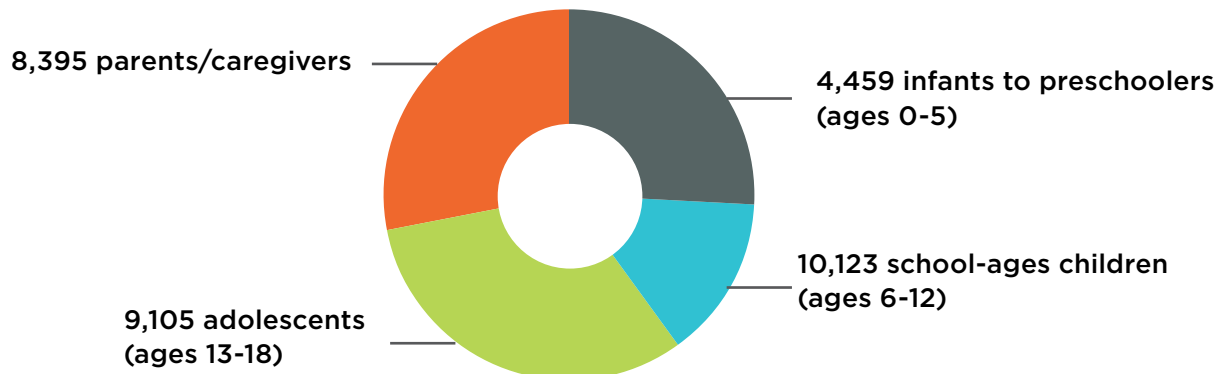


“The key impact (has been) prevention. Helping families who are struggling because of COVID and other issues, to be able to provide the necessities and safety for their children, so they are not being taken back into care. Helping the families to get some of the supports and services back in place so they can have visits with their children and eventually get them back home.”

– Halifax Children’s Aid Foundation

THE CHILD & FAMILY SUPPORT FUND

Number of people supported out of a total of 32,082



THE IMPACT - YOUTH FUND

The Support Fund for Former Youth in Care was administered in 8 provinces and 1 territory and reached **5,446 individuals**.

Partners reporting back about how the supports impacted recipients of the Support Fund for Former Youth in Care noted the **top four impacts** they observed as:

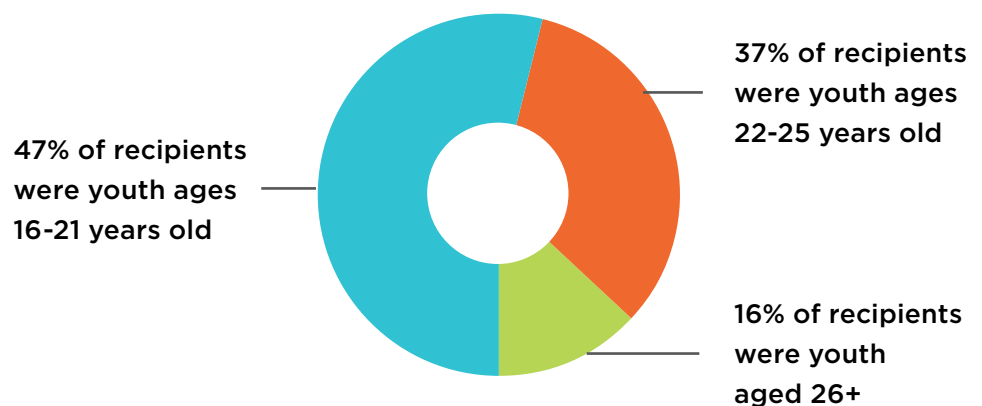
- **94% of recipients experienced reduced financial strain**
- **68% of recipients experienced increased food security**
- **58% of recipients experienced improved mental health**
- **60% of recipients experiencing increased housing security**

“We had a former youth in care reach out to our agency in distress. She reported that she was working a contract job and had tested positive for COVID-19. She was laid off work, would not be getting paid, had to isolate, and was scared and feeling lost. She was worried about paying rent and bills, how she would get food and groceries, and dealing with the stress of the situation. The youth reported that this funding was a “life saver” and that she didn’t know what she would do without our support.”

- Family & Children’s Services of St. Thomas and Elgin

THE FORMER YOUTH IN CARE SUPPORT FUND

Ages of recipients



37% of recipients identifying as a population over-represented in child welfare (i.e. Indigenous and/or Black), including 29 youth identifying with both over-represented populations.

The average age of the total number of recipients was 22 years old.



CELEBRATING OUR PARTNER AGENCIES AND DONORS

Thank you to our incredible partner agencies across the country who worked tirelessly on the front line to deliver these emergency supports. None of this work would be possible without our extraordinary community of compassionate, committed donors and supporters. Thank you.

PARTNER AGENCIES

Adoptive Families Association of BC - Agedout.com
Animikii Ozoson Child & Family Services Inc.
Batshaw Youth and Family Centres
Black Women in Motion - ON
Bookworm Club c/o The Jean Tweed Centre
Boost Child and Youth Advocacy Centre
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Child Welfare League of Canada
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Pacific Community Resources Society
Parents of Black Children
Partners For Youth
Peacebuilders Canada

Peel Children's Aid Foundation
Rendezvous Satellite Rotary Club
Restoration and Empowerment for Social Transition Centres
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Simcoe Muskoka Family Connections
Southeast Child and Family Services
Southern First Nations Network of Care
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This COVID-19 Response Program supporter list recognizes the generosity of donors who made a gift of \$1,000 or more directly to the Program.

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