



**CHILDREN'S
AID FOUNDATION
OF CANADA**

**GRANTING REPORT
2020-21 POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAM**



VIVIAN, Former youth in care

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For young people who are living in or have recently left care, the cost of attending a post-secondary institution can be an insurmountable barrier to a brighter future. A survey by Maclean's magazine of Canadian youth in 2018¹ found that the average cost of post secondary education is \$19,500 per year, with 74% of that total made up of rent (40%) and tuition (34%). Without the financial support of family, in almost all cases youth from care will be required to move to independent living between the ages of 18 and 21, meaning they must take on the cost of their studies as well as housing costs. Children's Aid Foundation of Canada's post-secondary education program was established in 1995 with the aim of providing essential financial support to deserving young people from care so they have the same educational opportunities as their peers not from care.

In 2019-20, following a strategic clarity review process, the Foundation committed to two key outcomes for youth transitioning from care: improving educational and employment outcomes by supporting education and employment programming, and by supporting initiatives that aimed to remove barriers faced by youth in care in pursuing their academic and career goals, such as housing, physical and mental health and social connections. The continued commitment to these goals became acutely important in 2020-21 with the wide disruptions and instability caused by COVID-19 for youth in pursuit of post-secondary education.

With only 46% of youth from care graduating from high school (vs 83% of their peers not from care), and being 50% less likely to attend post-secondary studies² youth in transition face serious barriers to education, outcomes that may be further worsened by poor mental and physical health, unemployment and homelessness, all exacerbated by the safety measures during the pandemic. Through experience and research, Children's Aid Foundation of Canada recognizes that a youth's path to academic success may not be a straightforward one. Youth can rely on support for multiple programs whether they are applying for the first time, have graduated and are starting another, are moving to graduate studies, or are returning to post-secondary education after leaving a former program without completing it, up until age 30. By continually reviewing program data, processes and guidelines and purposefully shaping our supports to meet the needs of youth in transition, we encourage and help to improve levels of enrollment, perseverance and academic success.

¹ "The cost of a Canadian university education in six charts." Maclean's, 2018
<https://www.macleans.ca/education/the-cost-of-a-canadian-university-education-in-six-charts>

² "The Post-Secondary Education Program Review." Children's Aid Foundation of Canada, 2017
https://www.cafdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/WhitePaper_LongForm.pdf

ABOUT THE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAM 2020-21

Children's Aid Foundation of Canada's Post-Secondary Education Program is a central component of our strategic plan as it relates to youth transitioning out of care, and it encompasses all of the grants and financial supports students can access directly from the Foundation. Through the generosity of our donors, hundreds of grants are provided directly to post-secondary students each year across the country. In addition to the Post-Secondary Education Program administered by our staff, the Foundation provides grants to numerous partner agencies throughout Canada to fund education-related supports to students at all stages of their educational journeys. Since the inception of the program the Foundation has granted **\$18.8 million** to **6,306** students through donor-funded scholarships, bursaries and other post-secondary awards.

When the Post-Secondary Education Program was launched in 1995, \$15,000 was awarded to nine students in the Toronto area. In the 2020-21 fiscal year, over \$1.8 million was awarded to 536 students across Canada. Children's Aid Foundation of Canada will continue the work to increase supports and programming for youth transitioning out of care in the upcoming year.

During the 2020-21 year, our students faced additional challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our students were able to access the Foundation's COVID-19 Youth Support Fund in spring 2020, however, as the pandemic continued our students continued to face significant threats to their education, including unexpected costs related to online learning and loss or reduction of employment. In response to these exacerbated needs, at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year the Foundation provided additional one-time grants of \$500 to 361 scholarship and bursary recipients. For more information about the Foundation's COVID-19 Response Program, please see our program report: <https://www.cafdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/COVID-19-Response-Program-Report%E2%80%93web.pdf>.

In 2021-22, to ensure that the Children's Aid Foundation of Canada is making the best use of our strengths and resources and is best able to remain responsive to changes in child welfare both locally and nationally, we have committed to a strategic and operational review of its Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Program. To this end the recruitment of a consultant to lead the Foundation in developing an organization-wide strategy for the Post-Secondary Education program, and to advise on the resources needed to successfully implement this strategy have begun.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAM IMPACT MEASUREMENT

The Post-Secondary Education Program Review, a joint publication between Children's Aid Foundation of Canada and the Child Welfare Institute, released in 2018, examined the impact of Foundation funding on students who received post-secondary grants between 2005 and 2015, as well as factors that contributed to their success during high school, while transitioning out of care, and during their post-secondary studies. The report showed that Children's Aid Foundation of Canada's funding had a significant positive impact on academic success and

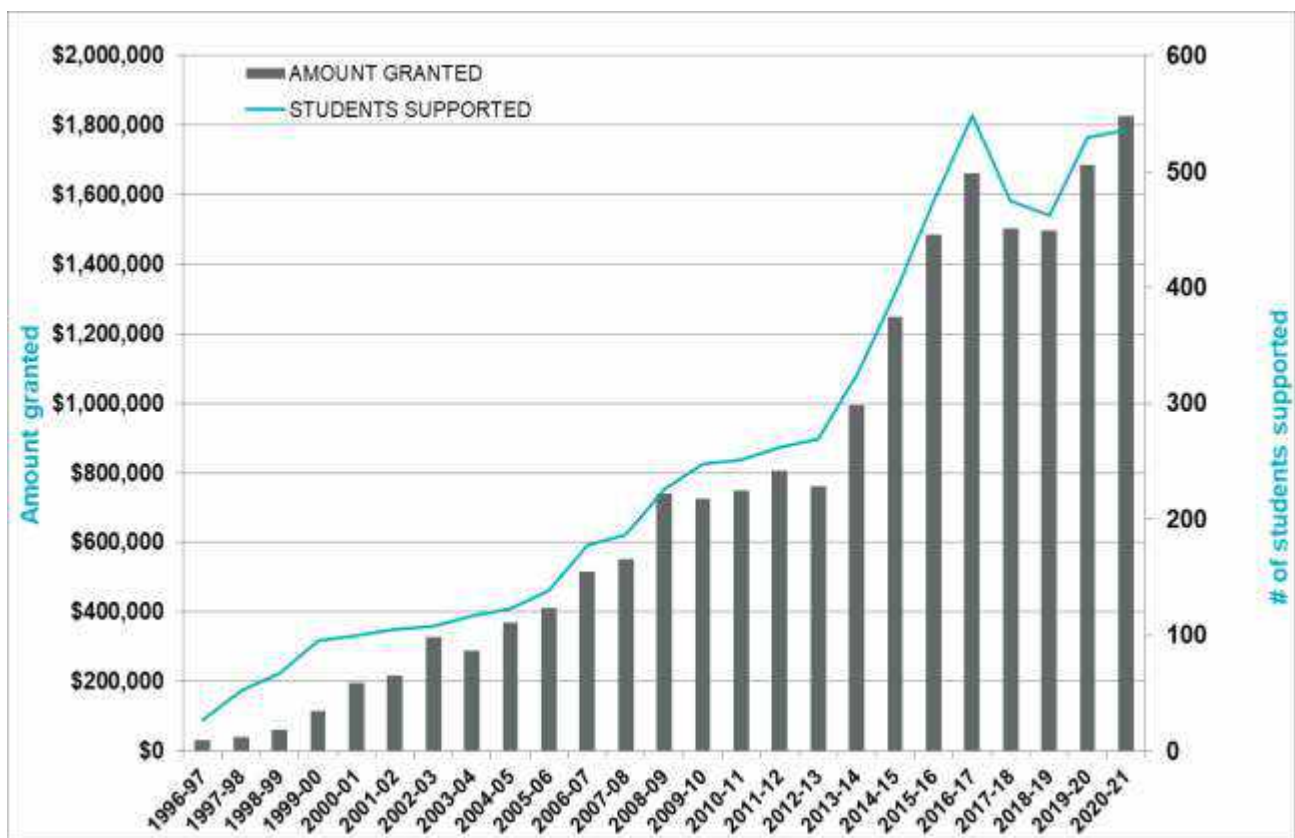
graduation rates, and demonstrated that the support provided by a community of donors gave encouragement and improved emotional well-being.

In spite of this our students still report that they struggled in areas such as poverty and mental health and there remain a large proportion of youth from care who do not attend post-secondary studies or even graduate from high school. The full report is available on our website:

https://www.cafdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/WhitePaper_LongForm.pdf

In 2020-21 the Foundation reacted to new challenges as they arose and built on current learning and research in order to continue align our impacted measurements with our strategic objectives, working to better centre our work around evidence-informed approaches that allow us to clearly demonstrate the ways our initiatives, including those contributing to better educational and employment outcomes for youth in transition, empower youth from care to build stable, successful futures.

IMPACT TO DATE



Change from 2016-17 to 2018-19 represents a decrease in available bursary funding.

FISCAL YEAR	AMOUNT GRANTED	STUDENTS SUPPORTED
2020-21	\$1,826,586	536
2019-20	\$1,684,983	529
2018-19	\$1,497,839	462
2017-18	\$1,502,513	475
2016-17	\$1,661,445	548
2015-16	\$1,485,887	474
2014-15	\$1,247,696	395
2013-14	\$995,950	325
2012-13	\$761,039	269
2011-12	\$804,566	262
<i>*Numbers for 1995-2011 available upon request</i>		
	\$18,817,376	6306

HOW THE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAM WORKS

The Post-Secondary Education Program is made up of the following components:

SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships are awarded through an annual competitive review process and decisions are made by the Foundation's Scholarship Award Council using the criteria of financial need, individual attributes, academic achievement, personal contribution, and potential for success. Scholarship applications are due in February and students are notified about their awards in July. The maximum value for a scholarship for the 2020-21 year was \$5,000.

BURSARIES

Bursary applications are accepted on an ongoing basis (funding permitting) throughout the school year from students pursuing either part-time or full-time studies. This funding is available to students who meet the eligibility criteria and who demonstrate financial need. Bursary support for the 2020-21 school year was \$2,000 for a full academic year (\$1,000 per semester of full-time studies). Part-time students receive \$200 per course per semester, but may also request reimbursement for required textbooks (up to \$500 per year).

ILAN LEVY GRADUATION AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

Past bursary and scholarship recipients who have successfully completed a post-secondary program for which they received Foundation support are eligible to apply for an Ilan Levy Graduation Award of Excellence. These awards provide both an incentive to complete a program, as well as assistance with repayment of student loans, and they are awarded once a year at the Foundation's Stand Up for Kids Night event in September. Award winners receive \$500 for each year needed to complete their program (ie. \$2,000 for a four-year degree).

HSBC BANK CANADA YOUTH OPPORTUNITY FUND

Launched in 2013 by HSBC Bank Canada, the Youth Opportunity Fund provides individual grants to youth in and from care for activities that will help them move forward with their academic goals and achieve success in their career. In some cases these are available to individuals not enrolled in college or university. Examples of eligible requests include: tutoring for college or university, vocational assessments or career counseling, equipment required by post-secondary programs, short-term courses or apprenticeships related to career goals, application fees or preparation courses for graduate programs, high school upgrading or academic bridging/transitional year programs.

Each year the HSBC Youth Opportunity Fund also supports a number of scholarships and bursaries for post-secondary students, and up to five Opportunity Awards of \$500 (in addition to a bursary) that are awarded by the Foundation's Scholarship Award Council to recognize and encourage the efforts of students who have made significant progress towards their academic goals, but who did not rank high enough to receive a scholarship.

PARTNERS IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Children's Aid Foundation of Canada accepts funding applications directly from any student who was in the permanent care of a child welfare agency in Canada for at least one year and who meets our eligibility criteria. We also have several national, provincial and local partnerships through which we direct donations for scholarships and bursaries to youth from child welfare organizations.

NATIONAL

Ted Rogers Scholarship Fund

In collaboration with Rogers Communications, Children's Aid Foundation of Canada acts as one of 14 national partner organizations asked to refer selected youth who demonstrate community leadership to the Ted Rogers Scholarship Fund.

ONTARIO

Ontario Trust for Student Support (OTSS) Endowed Funds

In 2011, Children's Aid Foundation of Canada established endowed funds at George Brown College, Centennial College and Humber College. These funds were matched by the Ontario government through the Ontario Trust for Student Support program. Students are selected through the Foundation's scholarship or bursary review process and their award funding is transferred from these endowments into their student accounts. One additional fund established at the University of Waterloo by a Foundation donor can also be awarded to applicants to the Foundation's scholarships.

GREATER TORONTO AREA

Corsage Project Community Awards

The Corsage Project's fundraising and granting flows through Children's Aid Foundation of Canada. Starting in 2014, the Foundation began managing the applications and allocation of their scholarships, but the Corsage Project has retained the application process and selection of their annual Community Awards, with payments issued by the Foundation.

Rosalie Hall Scholarships

This is an endowed fund held at Children's Aid Foundation of Canada. Decisions are made annually by the team at Rosalie Hall, and the Foundation disburses a yearly lump sum to support young parents in their post-secondary studies.

GRANTING OVERVIEW – 2020-2021

536 individual students were supported in the 2020-2021 academic year:

	2020-21		2019-20	
	Amount granted	Students supported	Amount granted	Students supported
Scholarships	\$1,236,500	262	\$1,248,700	271
Bursaries for full or part-time studies	\$222,700	139	\$187,950	124
Scholarships or bursaries granted through OTSS endowments	\$16,000	7	\$45,000	14
Youth who received grants from the HSBC Youth Opportunity Fund*	\$35,286	31	\$56,133	47
Graduation Awards*	\$109,600	78	\$106,000	85
COVID-19 Student Support grants	\$180,500	361	n/a	
Sub-Total:	\$1,800,586		\$1,643,783	
Other Scholarships Partially Administered by CAFC				
Ted Rogers Scholarships† (Canada)	n/a	48	n/a	52
KRG Scholarships (Ontario)	0	0	\$12,000	3
Corsage Project Community Awards	\$5,000	10	\$1,700	4
Rosalie Hall Scholarships	\$21,000	7	\$20,000	6
Sub-Total:	\$26,000		\$41,200	
TOTAL GRANTED/SUPPORTED:	\$1,826,586	536	\$1,684,983	529

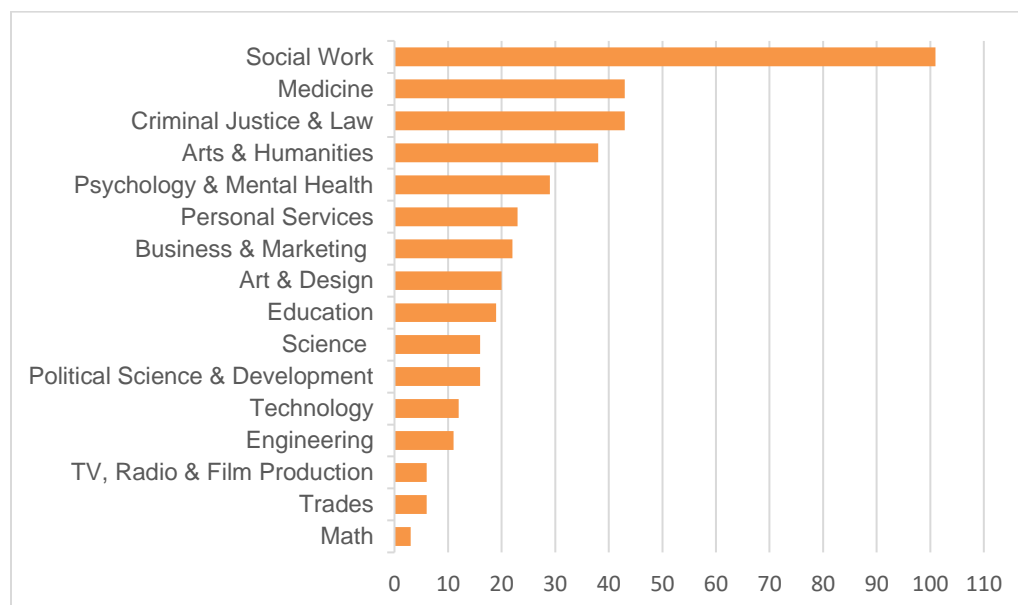
*Students receiving HSBC Youth Opportunity Fund grants and Ilan Levy Graduation Awards of Excellence may also be receiving a scholarship or bursary.

†Funding for the Ted Rogers Scholarships is granted directly to students by the Ted Rogers Scholarship Fund.

Of the students who received Children’s Aid Foundation of Canada scholarships or bursaries in 2020-21:

- **47%** attended **public college**
- **52%** attended **university**
- **1%** attended a **private or career college** (eg. International Academy of Applied Health, Toronto Film School, or the College of Carpenters and Allied Trades)
- **23** were pursuing a **graduate or post-graduate program** (eg. law, education, social work, public administration, financial economics)
- Grant recipients attended **89** different schools

AREAS OF STUDY FOR FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP AND BURSARY STUDENTS

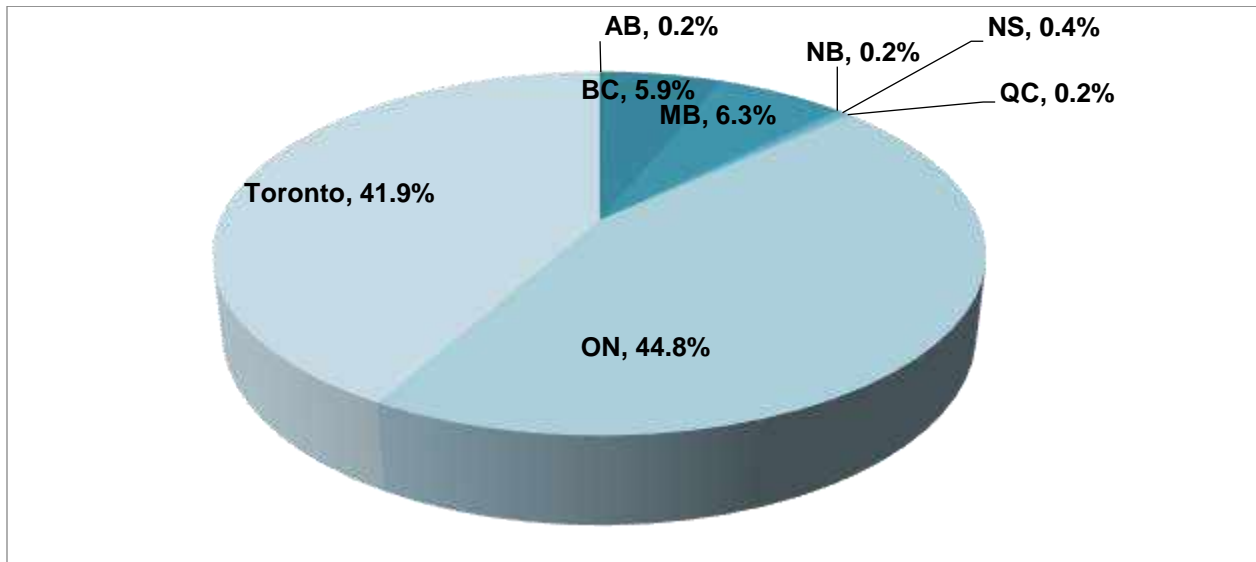


Program Examples **Social Work** / Sociology, Social Service Worker, Personal Support Worker, Addiction & Mental Health Worker **Medicine** / Nursing, Medical Radiation Sciences, Kinesiology, Public Health **Criminal Justice and Law** / Juris Doctor, Criminology, Police Foundations, Paralegal **Arts & Humanities** / Anthropology, English, History, Library Technician **Psychology & Mental Health** / Psychology – Forensic and Behavioral, Neuroscience, Counselling

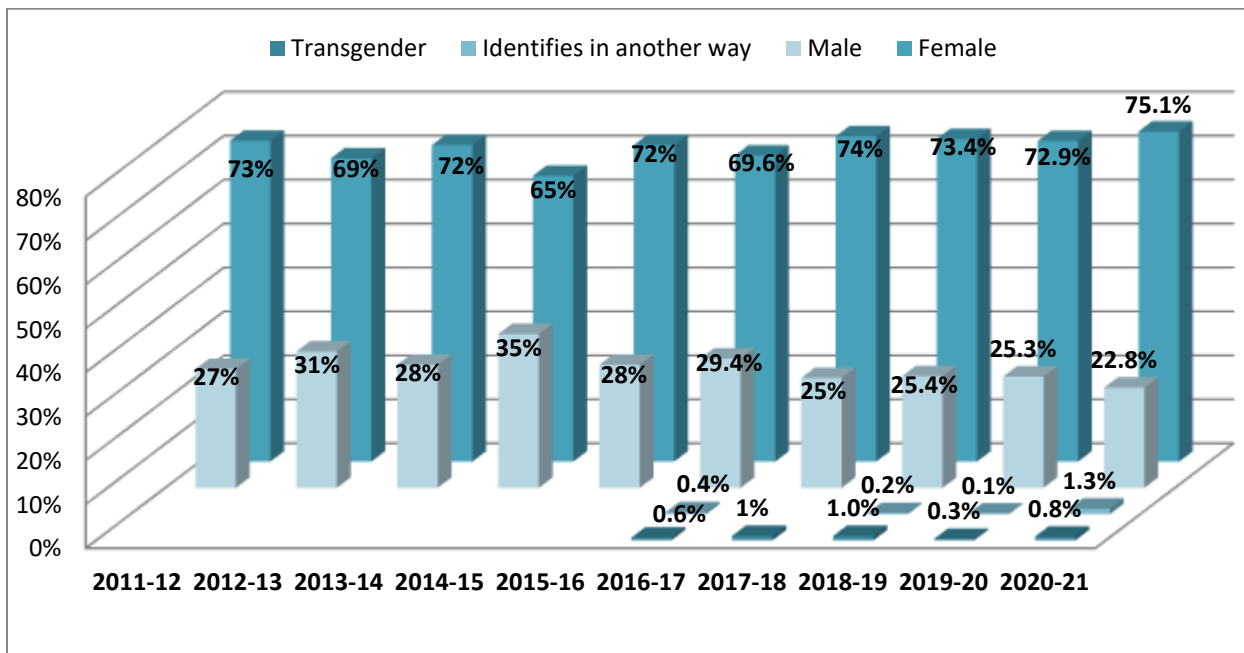
INCREASING OUR REACH

Children’s Aid Foundation of Canada is working to better understand the diversity of the students we support, and the extent to which we are reaching populations who are overrepresented in the child welfare system, and youth who are located across the country.

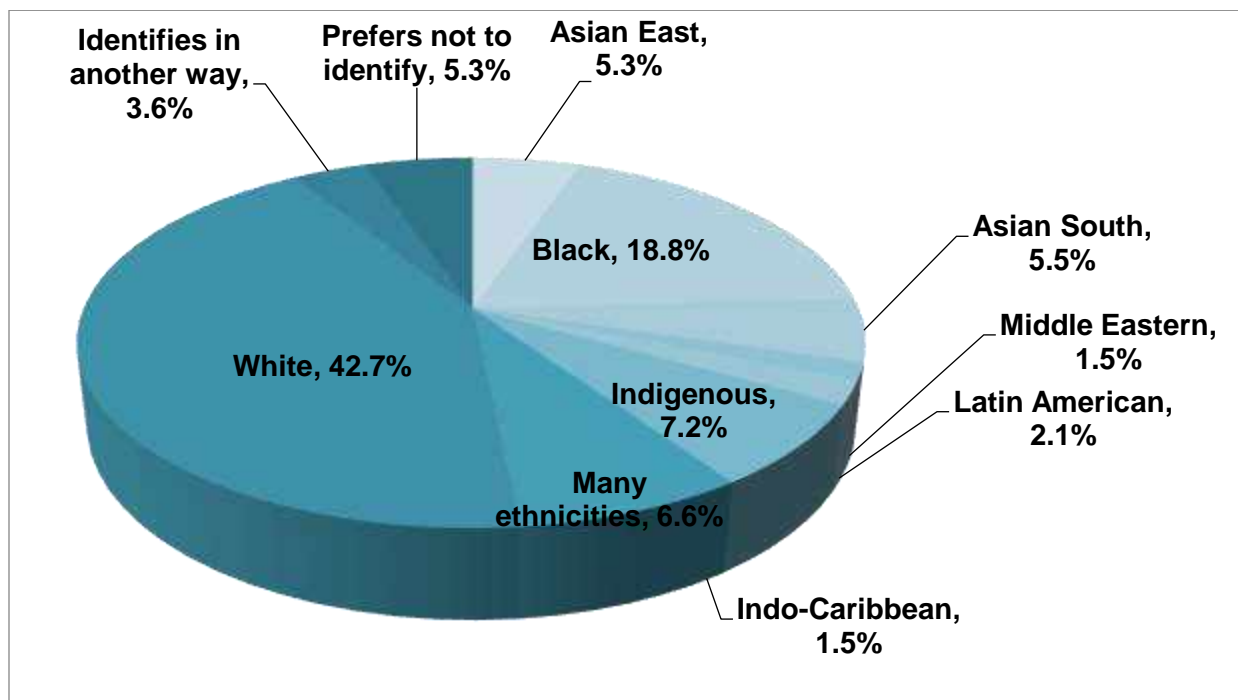
GEOGRAPHIC SPREAD OF AWARD RECIPIENTS, BY HOME PROVINCE



RECIPIENTS BY GENDER



RECIPIENTS' RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITIES



DEEPENING OUR IMPACT

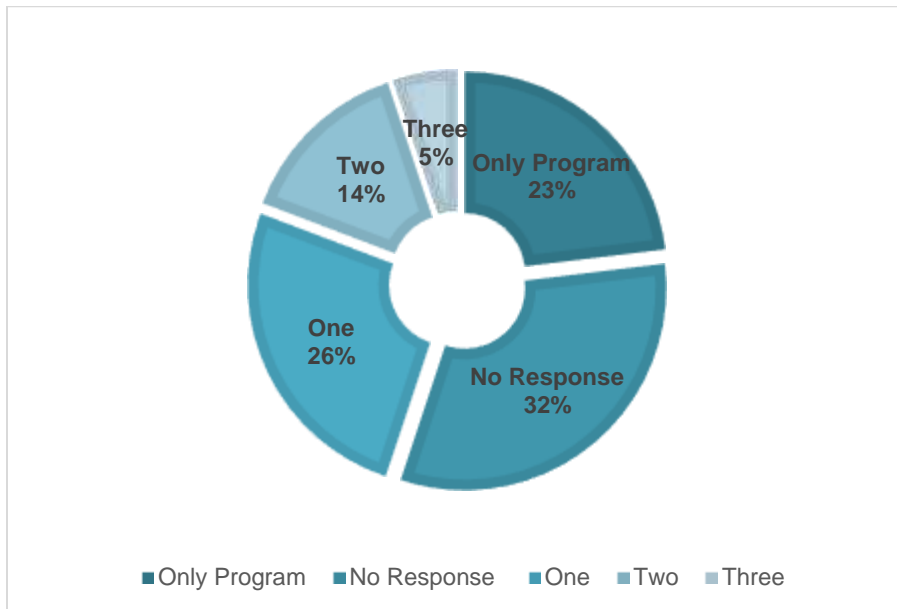
Children’s Aid Foundation of Canada is continually improving our ability to demonstrate the impact of post-secondary awards on our recipients, and to understand the needs of our students and the barriers they face, in order to ensure that our supports are responsive to these needs. We particularly want to better understand the outcomes of our former award recipients, and how the Foundation can best support them as they work towards their career goals. In order to increase this understanding, we ask our Graduation Award recipients to complete a follow up survey six months after receiving their awards, which provides a snap shot of youth in the first year following their graduation. Of the 78 Graduation Award recipients, 74 completed the follow up survey.

In 2020-21 there were **78** graduates, with 39 graduating from university, 38 from college and 1 from trade school. 3 students completed Masters Degrees, and 2 students graduated from PhD programs.

PERSISTENCE

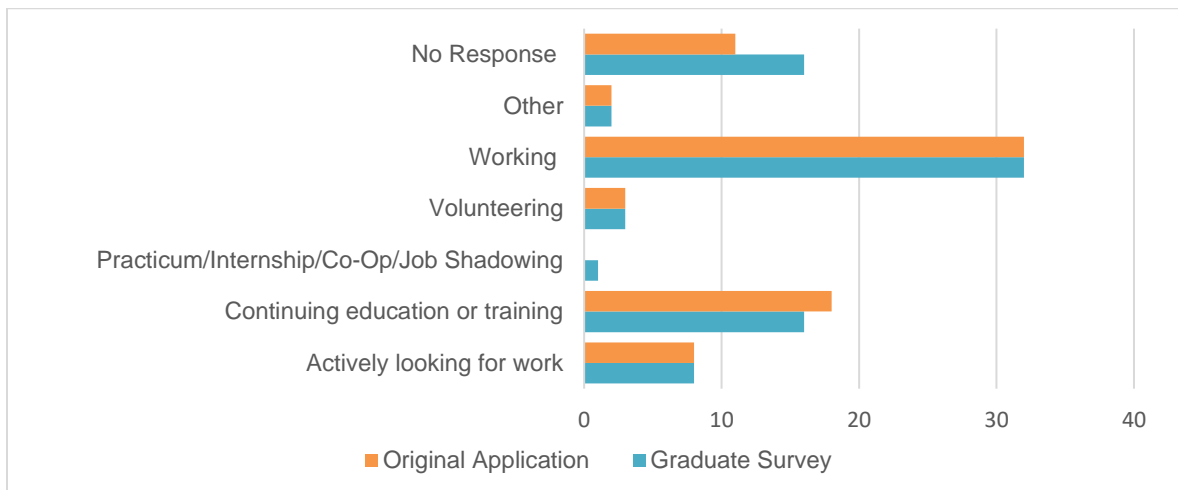
On graduating, the majority of responding youth had started, or started and finished, at least one additional program before the recently-completed program.

NUMBER OF PROGRAMS STARTED PRIOR TO MOST RECENT PROGRAM



YOUTH ACTIVITIES

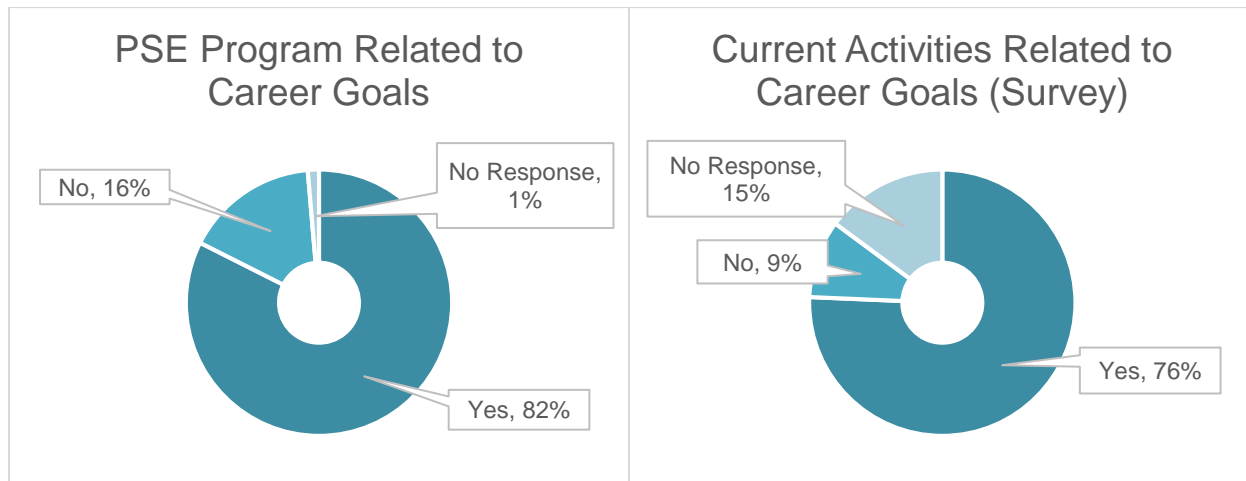
In both the **original application** and in the **follow up survey** youth were asked what they were doing currently.



Though the numbers are virtually identical, analysis of the narrative responses between the initial application and the survey responses show that the numbers do not necessarily represent the same students. Review of the responses show:

- **18%** of youth reported a change in their search for career related work, including finding employment in their field, a work placement or internship, or promotion or permanency in a role they already had

- Outside of career related work, **7%** reported that they had found employment, or additional employment, either full time, part time, or self employed
- **5%** reported they had lost their employment since their application
- **25%** reported they were in the same occupation as they had reported in their original application



Additional details which stood out from the graduate survey:

- **64%** of youth expressed the need for further training in order to achieve their career goals, including a more specialized or Master's degree, a new course of study for a change in career path, professional certification courses, as well as short-term courses to fill gaps in their education to better prepare for the job market in their field
- **55%** of youth reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had negatively impacted their ability to find career related work. They experienced difficulty in completing internships and co-ops, in their ability to job search and network, found a reduction of positions in their field to apply to, or the positions that they were already in the interview process for were interrupted.
- **15%** of youth felt transportation was a barrier to success in their career path, and expressed a need for help to obtain a driver's license

In 2021-22 the Foundation will continue to refine the data collected as part of the graduation award process. Particular focus will be on the comparison of this year's employment results to data collected in prior years in order to better understand and monitor the effect of the new and ongoing challenges caused by COVID-19 on this population.

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