Acknowledgements

This report was made possible by federal funding from the Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood. The Iowa Department of Human Rights Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning, under contract with DHS, collects NYTD Outcomes data and partnered with other youth serving agencies to enhance the data provided in this report.

Partners include: Iowa Aftercare Services Network, who provided data from their Annual Report; Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP), who provided data from their year end report; and the Iowa College Student Aid Commission (Iowa College Aid) who provided data on their Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program.

Special gratitude is extended to the Iowa Department of Corrections (Katrina Carter), ETV (Tristan Lynn), Aftercare (Joan Havel and Carol Behrer), and Transition Planning (Teresa Jacobs) who collaborated with NYTD to ensure as many youth as possible had the opportunity to complete the survey. Because of their efforts, Iowa had the highest response rate to date and surveyed more youth in prison than ever before.

Final edits and reviews were completed by the Department of Human Rights and the Department of Human Services. Both extend their appreciation to all coordinating efforts for this report.

Finally, a special thanks is extended to the youth who shared their experiences, and the NYTD Ambassadors who lent their expertise to increase the quality of this report. Without their contributions, this report would not be possible.

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Report Background

In 1999, Public Law 106-169 established the Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (formerly the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program) at section 477 of the Social Security Act. This new law, that is nicknamed Chafee for short, provides states with flexible funding to carry out programs that support youth ages 14 or older in making the transition from foster care to self-sufficiency. Iowa has been able to use this funding for various programs and initiatives, including the Iowa Aftercare Services Network, Education and Training Vouchers and to fund Iowa’s foster care youth council, Achieving Maximum Potential.

The law also required the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to develop and ensure compliance of a data collection system to track two things: 1.) the independent living services states’ provide to youth ages 14 and older, and 2.) demographic and outcome measures of youth aging out of foster care. This dataset became known as the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) and became active in FFY2011.

For NYTD Services in Iowa, Social Workers and Juvenile Court Officers report quarterly to Iowa DHS on independent living skills that were provided to youth on their caseload. For NYTD Outcomes, the Department of Human Rights, in contract with DHS, directly surveys older youth transitioning from foster care. A cohort of youth are surveyed on or around their 17th birthday and then again near their 19th and 21st birthdays.

The purpose of this report is two-fold.

1.) To uplift current outcome information on older youth in and transitioning from foster care and out-of-home placement and to highlight relevant supports and services from other Chafee funded programs, such as the Iowa Aftercare Services Network (IASN); Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP); and the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program.

2.) To identify and center areas where youth serving agencies and service providers can continue effective transition work, while also pointing to service deficits which can be developed or enhanced in coming years. With another full cohort of data collection completed for Iowa NYTD, Iowa youth, advocates and system leaders can better understand the experiences of young people currently and formerly in foster care and out-of-home placement as they transition into adulthood.
In 2016, DHS contracted with the Department of Human Rights (DHR) to survey youth, track data, and create annual reports. Specifically, DHR is contracted to collect and report outcomes information on youth who are or were in foster care or other out-of-home placement.

Iowa’s current survey includes up to 33 questions that collect demographic information and measure youth outcomes across six domains:

- Financial Self-Sufficiency
- Educational Attainment
- Positive Connections with Adults
- Experience with Homelessness
- High-Risk Behavior
- Access to Health Insurance

The survey data is collected directly from youth (and not administrative records). Iowa offers three methods for completing the survey: phone, mail, or online. All survey responses are voluntary, with youth having the option to decline a question, or the survey itself, at any time. Collected responses are confidential, and no individual youth are identified in this report or in any survey data analysis shared with provider agencies. Youth are compensated for completing the survey through a gift card or care package of their choice.

The first half of this section includes survey analysis from the third NYTD cohort of youth at ages 17, 19 and 21. Youth in this dataset/cohort include those who turned 17 while in foster care during FFY2017. In FFY2017, 350 youth took the survey. A sample of those youth were surveyed again on or near their 19th birthday (124 youth total) and on or near their 21st birthday (130 youth total). Youth who did not take the survey on their 19th birthday were still eligible to take the survey on their 21st birthday.

The second half of this section includes an in-depth analysis of the 21 year-old responses collected in FFY2021 with comparison data from Iowa’s first and second NYTD 21 year-old cohorts (FFY2015 and FFY2018). Data throughout is disaggregated by race and sex. Due to smaller numbers when disaggregating by race and sex, all youth who reported a race other than white are categorized as “Youth of Color” for comparison purposes. National comparison data was derived from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children’s Bureau. Cohort 2 (FFY2018) is used for national comparison data as national data results from FFY2021 are not yet available to states.

Overall, the following data provides a statewide glimpse of how young people are doing as they transition from foster care or out-of-home placement into adulthood.
The following chart showcases the outcomes of youth in Cohort 3 as they transitioned out of foster care and into adulthood. National comparison data is used to compare outcomes at age 21.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NYTD YOUTH OUTCOMES</th>
<th>AGE 17 (N=350)</th>
<th>AGE 19 (N=124)</th>
<th>AGE 21 (N=130)</th>
<th>AGE 21 NATIONAL COHORT*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial Self-Sufficiency</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent reporting being employed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Self-Sufficiency</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent employed full-time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Self-Sufficiency</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent employed part-time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Self-Sufficiency</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent receiving employment-related skills training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Self-Sufficiency</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent receiving Social Security payments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Self-Sufficiency</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent receiving educational financial aid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Self-Sufficiency</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent receiving public assistance (food, housing, and/or financial)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Attainment</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently enrolled in high school, GED classes, post-secondary classes or college</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Attainment</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtained high school diploma/GED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Attainment</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received vocational certificate/license, associate’s or bachelor’s degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Connections with Adults</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has at least one adult to go to for support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>23% (in lifetime)</td>
<td>22% (past two years)</td>
<td>30% (past two years)</td>
<td>27% (past two years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced homelessness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Health Insurance</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently on Medicaid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Health Insurance</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has health insurance other than Medicaid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*APDO21 Source: FFY2021 Iowa National Youth in Transition Database Annual Report: Survey Results for 21-Year-Olds

*National Source: NYTD Data Brief #7 (November 2019); Highlights from the NYTD Survey: Outcomes Reported by Young People at Ages 17, 19, and 21 (Cohort 2)
Iowa National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

Cohort 3 Comparisons
The following chart showcases the outcomes of youth in Cohort 3 as they transitioned out of foster care and into adulthood. National comparison data is used to compare outcomes at age 21.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NYTD YOUTH OUTCOMES</th>
<th>AGE 17 (N=350)</th>
<th>AGE 19 (N=124)</th>
<th>AGE 21 (N=130)</th>
<th>AGE 21 NATIONAL COHORT*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High-Risk Behaviors Referred for substance abuse assessment or counseling (lifetime at age 17, in past two years for age 19 and 21)</td>
<td>37% (in lifetime)</td>
<td>19% (past two years)</td>
<td>12% (past two years)</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Risk Behaviors Received Mental Health Counseling (lifetime at age 17, in past two years for age 19 and 21)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>58% (past two years)</td>
<td>45% (past two years)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Risk Behaviors Experienced Incarceration (lifetime at age 17, in past two years for age 19 and 21)</td>
<td>54% (in lifetime)</td>
<td>27% (past two years)</td>
<td>25% (past two years)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Risk Behaviors Had Children (lifetime at age 17, in past two years for age 19 and 21)</td>
<td>7% (in lifetime)</td>
<td>12% (past two years)</td>
<td>25% (past two years)</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Risk Behaviors Ever given birth (lifetime at age 17, in past two years for age 19 and 21)</td>
<td>4% (in lifetime)</td>
<td>8% (past two years)</td>
<td>14% (past two years)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Risk Behaviors Ever fathered a child (lifetime at age 17, in past two years for age 19 and 21)</td>
<td>3% (in lifetime)</td>
<td>4% (past two years)</td>
<td>11% (past two years)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*FFY2021 Source: FFFY2021 Iowa National Youth in Transition Database Annual Report: Survey Results for 21-Year-Olds
*National Source: NYTD Data Brief #7 (November 2019); Highlights from the NYTD Survey: Outcomes Reported by Young People at Ages 17, 19, and 21 (Cohort 2)
Survey Participant Characteristics

This section provides an overview of survey participation and demographic characteristics of the youth who participated in the survey.

Figure 1. Survey Response Rates and Reasons for Non-Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>National %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Participated</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to Locate/Invite</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incarcerated</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>194</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages for national rates do not equal 100% due to other survey reporting status that Iowa did not have this reporting period (i.e. youth declined, runaway/missing, etc.).

**Participation Rate Observations:**

- Of the 194 youth eligible for the survey, 130 completed it for a compliance rate of 73% \(^1\) (65% \(^2\) and 67% \(^3\)).
- About 10% (N=19) of the youth eligible to take the survey are currently incarcerated. Out of these 19 youth, 7 completed the survey.
- 2% of the eligible NYTD population are deceased, which is more than double the national average.

Figure 2. Participation Method

**Participation Method Observations:**

- The majority of youth (69%) chose to complete the survey over the internet, an increase from FFY2018 (about 40%).
- In FFY2018, about 20% of youth completed the survey by mail compared to 4% this FFY.

---

\(^1\) States are required to survey 60% of youth in the follow-up population (19 and 21 year-olds). Youth who are incapacitated, deceased or incarcerated do not count against compliance rates.


\(^3\) https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/nytd_web_tables_outcomes_cohort_2_final.pdf
**Demographics**

Information on the sex of youth participants are analyzed from DHS administrative records, which includes "male" and "female" as options. This data does not reflect youth's self-reported gender identities.

For purposes of this report, Iowa NYTD categorized race and ethnicity data using the following:

1. If youth selected any race and Hispanic ethnicity, they are classified as Hispanic.
2. If youth selected more than one race, they are classified as two or more races.
3. If youth selected one race, no adjustments were made.

This is a different approach than what has been taken in past reports. Data from former years were reconfigured for this report to ensure accurate comparison.

**Figure 3. Sex of Participants by FFY**

**Participants by Sex Observations:**

- Of the 130 youth taking the survey, about 48% were female and 52% were male. This is comparable to the overall Iowa population as 50.3% are female and 49.7% are male.
- Females were more likely to take the survey. Of the 194 who were eligible to take the survey, 39% were female and 61% were male.
Figure 4. Youth Participation by Race and FFY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Category</th>
<th>FFY15 (N=136)</th>
<th></th>
<th>FFY18 (N=128)</th>
<th></th>
<th>FFY21 (N=130)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino^</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>--*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other**</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding
^If any race and Hispanic is selected, they are counted as Hispanic
**Other includes Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Unable to Determine/Decline due to sample having 5 or fewer youth in each category
*Too few to report in this fiscal year (< 5). These youth are categorized in Other

Figure 5. Participants by Race and Sex

Participants by Race Observations:
- Black youth made up 10% of survey participants in FFY21, a decrease from FFY18
- In Iowa, less than 1% of residents are American Indian and Alaska Native and less than 4% are Black or African American. Black and American Indian and Alaska Native youth were overrepresented in the NYTD population.
- Hispanic/Latino people make up 6% of Iowa’s population and 10% of the NYTD population.

https://worldpopulationreview.com/states/iowa-population
Participants by Geographical Location Observations:

- NYTD youth originated from 33 of Iowa’s 99 counties. Youth were identified with the county they resided in while in foster care at age 17.
- Polk (N=27), Woodbury (N=19), and Linn (N=17) counties were the most populated with NYTD participants.
- The Des Moines Transition Planning Specialist Region comprised the highest percentage of NYTD youth (31%).
A. Financial Self-Sufficiency

To better understand a youth’s outcome experiences in the area of financial self-sufficiency, the NYTD survey poses questions to youth regarding the acquisition of skills necessary to enter the labor market and to access financial resources to help meet their living expenses.

Figure 8. Financial Self-Sufficiency by FFY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FFY15 (N=136)</th>
<th>FFY18 (N=128)</th>
<th>FFY21 (N=130)</th>
<th>National(^b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently working, any</td>
<td>50% (N=68)</td>
<td>57% (N=73)</td>
<td>60% (N=78)</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently working, full-time</td>
<td>35% (N=47)</td>
<td>34% (N=44)</td>
<td>34% (N=44)</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently working, part-time</td>
<td>18% (N=24)</td>
<td>26% (N=33)</td>
<td>26% (N=34)</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving employment-related skills training</td>
<td>35% (N=47)</td>
<td>34% (N=43)</td>
<td>17% (N=22)</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving any public assistance</td>
<td>48% (N=65)</td>
<td>38% (N=49)</td>
<td>33% (N=43)</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving food assistance</td>
<td>46% (N=62)</td>
<td>34% (N=44)</td>
<td>25% (N=33)</td>
<td>--*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving housing assistance</td>
<td>8% (N=11)</td>
<td>9% (N=11)</td>
<td>9% (N=12)</td>
<td>--*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receiving ongoing welfare payments</td>
<td>7% (N=9)</td>
<td>2% (N=3)</td>
<td>8% (N=10)</td>
<td>--*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently receiving Social Security payments*</td>
<td>20% (N=27)</td>
<td>9% (N=11)</td>
<td>13% (N=17)</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently receiving educational financial aid</td>
<td>13% (N=17)</td>
<td>22% (N=28)</td>
<td>13% (N=17)</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently receiving significant financial resources not included above</td>
<td>7% (N=10)</td>
<td>11% (N=14)</td>
<td>7% (N=9)</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Social Security payments (Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or dependents’ payments) include payment from the government to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter for a person with a disability, be it the youth themselves or their guardian

\(^b\)Federal data unavailable to states

\(^b\)https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/nytd_data_brief_7.pdf
Financial Sufficiency Observations:
- The percentage of youth who are employed continues to rise with each cohort.
- 17% of youth reported receiving employment-related skills training, the lowest percentage in Iowa NYTD history and almost half the national average of 31%.
- The number of youth receiving public assistance, specifically food assistance, is at an all-time low with 33% reporting any assistance and 25% reporting food assistance.
- Less youth reported being employed at age 21 (60%) than at age 19 (62%).

**Figure 9. Financial Self-Sufficiency by Race**

**Figure 10. Youth Working (Any) by Race and Sex (N=78)**

Financial Sufficiency By Race and Sex Observations:
- White youth were more likely to work part-time than full-time at age 21.
- American Indian and Alaska Native youth make up 6% of the NYTD survey population and 14% of those receiving employment-related skills training.
- White youth were more likely to report receiving Social Security payments compared to youth of color, an ongoing NYTD trend.
- Hispanic youth are 10% of the NYTD population and were the least likely to report receiving employment-related skills training at 5%.
Figure 11. Reasons for No Work (N=52)

- Other: 12
- In between jobs: 9
- Disability: 7
- Child Care Responsibilities: 6
- Prison: 5
- Lack of transportation: 4
- COVID-19: 3
- Don’t have documents: 3
- Lack of available jobs: 3

*Other included the following reasons: (note: unless otherwise noted, all responses are N=1; four participants did not specify)
  - “Lack of available jobs” (N=2)
  - “Attending school” (N=2)
  - “Hobbies”
  - “I just got a job but haven’t started yet”
  - “In low-income housing and would lose assistance if I started working”
  - “I keep getting declined or having no call backs”

**Reasons for Not Working Observations:**
- The majority of youth identified being in between jobs as the top reason for being unemployed following by having a disability and child care responsibilities.
- 10% of the youth who reported not being employed are living in prison.

Figure 12. Any Public Assistance by Sex (N=42)

**Any Public Assistance by Race and Sex Observations:**
- Females were more likely to receive public assistance (17%) compared to 15% of males.
- Female and male youth of color were less likely to receive public assistance than white youth.
B. Educational Attainment

Achieving a high school diploma or General Equivalency Degree (GED) can be considered a minimal requirement for self-sufficiency and can assist in establishing a solid educational foundation that will prepare youth for future educational pursuits. The NYTD survey asks young people their current enrollment status and the highest educational certification received.

**Figure 13. Education by FFY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FFY15 (N=136)</th>
<th>FFY18 (N=128)</th>
<th>FFY21 (N=130)</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently enrolled in high school, GED classes, post-secondary classes or college</td>
<td>23% (N=31)</td>
<td>27% (N=35)</td>
<td>19% (N=25)</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtained high school diploma/GED</td>
<td>79% (N=108)</td>
<td>84% (N=107)</td>
<td>78% (N=101)</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received vocational certificate/license, associate’s or bachelor’s degree, or higher</td>
<td>6% (N=8)</td>
<td>9% (N=11)</td>
<td>4% (N=5)</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Education Observations:**
- The number of youth enrolled in education decreased to 19% in FFY2021 from 27% in FFY2018, the lowest it has been in Iowa NYTD history and below national average.
- Iowa 21-year olds are more likely to have a diploma/GED than youth in other states.
- At age 17, 96% of youth were enrolled in education. That percentage decreased to 37% at age 19 and then to 19% at age 21.
- 11% more youth obtained their diploma/GED between age 19 (67%) and age 21 (78%).

**Figure 14. Education by Race**
**Education by Race Observations:**
- Black or African American youth were more likely to be enrolled in education than white and Hispanic youth.
- White youth make up 64% of the NYTD population and 44% of those currently enrolled.
- A disproportionate number of American Indian and Alaska Native and Black youth reported not having a high school diploma or GED at age 21.

![Figure 15. Youth Disconnected from Work and School by Race (N=46)](image)

**Disconnected from Work and School Observations:**
- 35% of NYTD participants were not currently employed or enrolled in school.
- Males were more likely to be disconnected than females. Of those disconnected, 67% were male and 33% were female.
- White youth were more likely to be disconnected than youth of color.
Enrollment by Race Observations:
- Males were least likely to be enrolled in education than females. Of those currently enrolled, 20% were male and 80% were female.
- Youth of color were more likely to be enrolled in education than white youth. Of those enrolled, 56% were youth of color who make up 36% of the NYTD population.
- 1 in 4 of youth who are not currently enrolled in education are white females.
- 93% of all males taking the NYTD survey are not enrolled in education.
Figure 19. Reasons for No School (N=105)

*Other includes the following reasons: (note: unless otherwise noted, all responses are N=1; nine participants did not specify)
“Poor grades” (N=2) “Already graduated” “Weren’t able to accommodate my learning disability” “I have trauma from attending school before” “I’m taking care of my grandpa” “Not ready yet. I have a disability” “COVID” “Hobbies” “Did some college. I want to be a vet tech but allergic to some supplies. Trying to figure out how to get around that” “Mental health problems” “Struggling getting up in the morning” “Want to go for tech, but my staff won’t let me” “Trying to get my life together, COVID” “Have to support my mom in case something goes wrong” “COVID, struggle with online learning”

No School Observations:
- Employment was the top reason youth reported for why they weren’t enrolled in education (30%).
- The second leading reason was ‘can’t afford it’ followed by ‘not interested.’
- Over 10% of youth reported ‘not interested’ as the reason why they aren’t enrolled.

Figure 20. High School Diploma/GED by Race and Sex (N=101)

High School Diploma/GED by Race and Sex Observations:
- About 39% of females and 38% of males reported having a diploma or GED.
- Females of color made up 37% of all females surveyed and comprised 33% of females with a diploma or GED.
- Males of color made up 35% of all males surveyed and 32% of males with a diploma or GED.
C. Positive Connections with Adults

Establishing and maintaining a positive, consistent and lasting relationship with at least one adult is a critical component in ensuring youth make a successful transition from foster care to adulthood. The NYTD survey asks youth about their support system, including positive adults in their life and their relationships with biological family members.

**Figure 21. Positive Connections with Adults by FFY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FFY15 (N=136)</th>
<th>FFY18 (N=128)</th>
<th>FFY21 (N=130)</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently has at least one adult to go to for support</td>
<td>92% (N=125)</td>
<td>87% (N=111)</td>
<td>92% (N=120)</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knew their caring adult before foster care*</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>54% (N=70)</td>
<td>--*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A biological family member is their supportive adult*</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>49% (N=63)</td>
<td>--*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has close relationship to 1 or more biological family members*</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>83% (N=108)</td>
<td>--*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has close relationship to 3 or more biological family members*</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>36% (N=47)</td>
<td>--*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has received Aftercare/PAL Services*</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>41% (N=53)</td>
<td>--*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has been legally adopted*</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>19% (N=25)</td>
<td>--*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NYTD Plus Question

*This is a NYTD Plus question that is not required to be asked nor reported to the federal government, therefore, there is no federal data to use for comparison. All NYTD Plus questions in this category were added after FFY18, so there is no state comparison data yet.

**Positive Connections with Adults Observations:**
- 92% of youth have at least one person to go to for support, an increase from FFY18 (87%) and above the national average (87%).
- Over half of youth knew their most supportive adult before entering foster care.
- Almost half of youth identified a biological family member as their most supportive adult.
- 4 in 5 youth surveyed have a close relationship with at least one biological family member and almost 2 in 5 have a close relationship with 3 or more family members.
- 41% of all 21-year olds surveyed have received Aftercare/PAL services.
- 19% of youth who transitioned out of foster care and into adulthood have previously been legally adopted.
- Youth having a supportive adult decreased as they aged- 98% at age 17, 95% at age 19 and 92% at age 21.
Figure 22. Positive Connections with Adults by Race

Observations:

- Youth of color were more likely than white youth to report connections with biological family members.
- Youth of color were less likely than white youth to access Aftercare services.
- White youth were most likely to have been formerly adopted. Hispanic youth were least likely.

Figure 23. Biological Family Member is Supportive Adult by Race and Sex (N=63)

Supportive Biological Connections Observations:

- Male youth were more likely than female youth to report a biological family member being their most supportive adult.
- Almost 1 in 4 of all youth reporting their supportive adult being a biological family member were males of color.
Aftercare Observations:

- Females were more likely to receive Aftercare services than males. 68% of all youth receiving Aftercare were female. 32% were male.
- White females were the most likely. Males of color were the least likely to receive Aftercare services.
- Not being aware of Aftercare (39%) was the most common answer when asked why youth haven't received these services.
**Figure 26. Description of Supportive Adult**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth parent (N=30)</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse/partner (N=21)</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent (N=16)</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling (N=10)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (N=9)</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoptive parent (N=8)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline/Don’t Know (N=8)</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aunt/uncle (N=6)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A friend (N=5)</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster parent (N=5)</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent of a friend (N=5)</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current or former worker/staff (N=4)</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher or coach (N=3)</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Other includes the following reasons: (note: all responses are N=1) “Cousin” “Legal Guardian” “Co-Worker” “Females” “Husband’s grandmother” “Step-Dad” “Step-Mom” “Therapist” “Someone from church or faith-based community”

**Description of Supportive Adult Observations:**

- 23% of youth identified a biological parent as their caring adult.
- Of the top 4 adult descriptors, biological connections make up 3 out of the 4.
D. Homelessness

Having a safe, stable and affordable place to live can protect against a number of negative outcomes. Young people who leave foster care unprepared to live on their own are at risk for becoming homeless soon after aging out.

**Figure 27. Experience with Homelessness by FFY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FFY15 (N=136)</th>
<th>FFY18 (N=128)</th>
<th>FFY21 (N=130)</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homeless within past two years</td>
<td>24% (N=32)</td>
<td>27% (N=34)</td>
<td>30% (N=39)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Homelessness Observations:**
- 30% of 21-year olds reported being homeless within the past two years, the highest in Iowa NYTD history.
- Iowa youth who were formerly in foster care are more likely to experience homelessness at age 21 than youth in other states.
- Youth experiencing homelessness increased as youth aged (23% reported ever being homeless at age 17 and 22% within the past two years at age 19).

**Figure 28. Homelessness by Race (N=39)**

- American Indian or Alaska Native: 4 (10.3%)
- Black or African-American: 7 (17.9%)
- Hispanic/Latino: 4 (10.3%)
- White: 23 (58.0%)
- Other: 1 (2.6%)

**Homelessness by Race Observations:**
- A disproportionate number of American Indian or Alaska Native and Black youth reported experiencing homelessness.
- Youth of color made up 41% of those experiencing homelessness and 36% of the NYTD population.
Homelessness by Race and Sex Observations:
- 54% of youth experiencing homelessness within the past two years were females.
- 50% of males experiencing homelessness were of color. Youth of color comprise 35% of the NYTD male population.
E. High Risk Behaviors

Transition-age youth who engage in high-risk behaviors are at an increased risk for a variety of negative outcomes. The Iowa NYTD survey collects information on key outcomes that have been associated with successful transitions to adulthood among youth in foster care.

Figure 30. High Risk Behaviors by FFY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FFY15 (N=136)</th>
<th>FFY18 (N=128)</th>
<th>FFY21 (N=130)</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ever received substance abuse assessment or counseling</td>
<td>13% (N=18)</td>
<td>13% (N=17)</td>
<td>12% (N=15)</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever received mental health counseling*</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>--*</td>
<td>45% (N=58)</td>
<td>--*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever been incarcerated**</td>
<td>27% (N=136)</td>
<td>21% (N=27)</td>
<td>25% (N=33)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had children (within past two years)</td>
<td>39% (N=53)</td>
<td>27% (N=35)</td>
<td>25% (N=32)</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given birth (within past two years)</td>
<td>27% (N=37)</td>
<td>21% (N=27)</td>
<td>14% (N=18)</td>
<td>--*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathered a child (within past two years)</td>
<td>12% (N=16)</td>
<td>6% (N=8)</td>
<td>11% (N=14)</td>
<td>--*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NYTD Plus Question that is not required to be asked nor reported to the federal government, therefore there is no federal data to use for comparison.
All NYTD Plus questions in this category were added after FFY18, so there is no state comparison data.
**A youth is considered to be incarcerated if the youth was confined in a jail, prison, correctional facility or juvenile or community detention facility in connection with allegedly committing a crime (misdemeanor or felony).
*Federal data unavailable to states at this time

High-Risk Behaviors Observations:
- 1 in 4 youth at age 21 have experienced incarceration within the past two years.
- Youth reporting incarceration decreased as youth aged (54% at age 17 and 27% at 19).
- 1 in 4 youth gave birth to or fathered a child that was born within the past two years.
- Youth were more likely to report having children at age 21 than at age 19.
- The number of youth reporting children at age 21 is at an all-time low.
- Iowa is above the national average in all high risk behavior outcomes.
**Figure 31. High Risk Behaviors By Race**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black or African American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>American Indian or Alaska Native</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NYTD Participants</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Counseling</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incarceration</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had children (past two years)</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given birth (past two years)</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathered a child (past two years)</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**High Risk Behaviors by Race Observations:**
- American Indian and Alaska Native youth were overrepresented in all high risk behavior outcome areas except for mental health counseling.
- Youth of color were more likely than white youth to experience incarceration.
- White youth were more likely than youth of color to access substance abuse and mental health counseling.
- A disproportionate percentage of Hispanic youth did not access mental health counseling within the past two years.

**Figure 32. Mental Health Counseling by Race and Sex (N=58)**

- **Females (N=35):**
  - Youth of Color: 11 (31.4%)
  - White: 24 (68.6%)

- **Males (N=23):**
  - Youth of Color: 6 (26.1%)
  - White: 17 (73.9%)

**Mental Health Counseling by Race and Sex Observations:**
- Of those reporting mental health counseling, 60% were female and 40% were male.
- White youth were more likely than youth of color to report mental health counseling within the past two years.
Incarceration by Race and Sex Observations:
- Of the youth who experienced incarceration, 67% were male and 33% were female.
- 46% of males experiencing incarceration were youth of color. Youth of color comprise 35% of the male NYTD population.

Children by Race and Sex Observations:
- Of 21 year-olds who reported children, 56% were female and 44% were male.
- A higher percentage of females reported giving birth to a child than males who reported fathering a child within the past two years.
- Youth of color made up 44% of females reporting children and are 37% of the NYTD female population.
F. Access to Health Insurance

Access to health care can help ensure that youth receive the prevention and treatment services they need to remain healthy. Youth in Title IV-E foster care are eligible to receive Medicaid. Additionally, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act allows for certain eligible youth to be covered by Medicaid up to age 26. The NYTD survey asks youth whether they are receiving Medicaid or some other type of health insurance coverage.

Figure 35. Access to Health Insurance by FFY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FFY15 (N=136)</th>
<th>FFY18 (N=128)</th>
<th>FFY21 (N=130)</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently on Medicaid</td>
<td>67% (N=91)</td>
<td>71% (N=91)</td>
<td>79% (N=103)</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently has health insurance other than Medicaid</td>
<td>25% (N=34)</td>
<td>29% (N=37)</td>
<td>13% (N=17)</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other health insurance covers medical services</td>
<td>97% (N=33)</td>
<td>27% (N=35)</td>
<td>12% (N=15)</td>
<td>--*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other health insurance covers mental health services</td>
<td>74% (N=25)</td>
<td>21% (N=27)</td>
<td>9% (N=12)</td>
<td>--*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other health insurance covers prescription drugs</td>
<td>94% (N=32)</td>
<td>27% (N=34)</td>
<td>10% (N=13)</td>
<td>--*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Unable to access this federal data

Access to Health Insurance Observations:

- 79% of youth reported being on Medicaid, the highest in Iowa NYTD history and 10 percentage points higher than the national average.
- Youth were more likely to report being on Medicaid at age 21 than at age 17 (75%) and age 19 (70%).
Access to Health Insurance Observations:
- At age 21, 85% of youth reported having one or more types of health insurance.
- 44% of females and 41% of males reported having health insurance.
- A disproportionate number of American Indian and Alaska Native and Hispanic youth reported not having Medicaid.
States are required to deliver and report on independent living services provided to youth within 11 broad service categories. The data on the next page provides a statewide glimpse of the independent living services provided by DHS to Iowa youth ages 14 and older in foster care and other out-of-home placements.

**NYTD Services**

**Independent Living Needs Assessment**: a systematic procedure to identify a youth’s basic skills, emotional and social capabilities, strengths and needs in order to match the youth with appropriate independent living services.

**Academic Support**: services designed to help youth complete high school or obtain a GED. Such services include the following: academic counseling, GED preparation, tutoring, homework help and helping accessing educational resources.

**Post-Secondary Educational Support**: services designed to help a youth enter or complete a post-secondary education such as: classes for test prep (i.e. ACTs or SATs), college counseling, information about financial aide and scholarships, help completing college or loan applications, and tutoring while in college.

**Career Preparation**: services that focus on developing a youth’s ability to find, apply for and retain employment. Can include: assessments, job seeking and job placement supports, completing job applications, developing interview skills, and understanding employee benefits.

**Employment Programs or Vocational Training**: services designed to build skills for a specific trade, vocation or career through classes or on-site training. Can include internships, apprenticeships, trade programs and classes like cosmetology, auto mechanics, and nursing.

**Budget and Financial Management**: training or practice with living within a budget, opening and using a checking and savings account, accessing information about credit, loans and taxes, and filling out tax forms.

**Housing Education and Home Management Training**: assistance or training in locating and maintaining housing, including filling out rental applications, handing security deposits and utilities, understanding how to keep a healthy and safe home, how to do laundry, meal plan, live cooperatively, grocery shop, etc.

**Health Education and Risk Prevention**: includes providing information about hygiene, nutrition, fitness and exercise, medical and dental care benefits, sex education, sexual development and sexuality, family planning, and substance use.

**Family Support and Healthy Marriage Education**: includes education about communication, parenting, responsible fatherhood, childcare skills, and domestic violence prevention.

**Mentoring**: means a youth has been matched with a screened and trained adult for a one-on-one relationship that involves the two meetings on a regular basis.

**Supervised Independent Living**: means that a youth is living independently under a supervised arrangement that is paid for or provided by the state agency.
YOUTH AGES 14 AND OLDER RECEIVED INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES IN FFY2021

3,116 YOUTH RECEIVING SERVICES BY RACE

- Female: 46%
- Male: 54%

- 28% WERE AJUDICATED DELINQUENT
- 3% MEMBER OF A TRIBE
- 35% RECEIVED SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

TOP 5 INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES PROVIDED TO YOUTH:

- 2,265 | 73% HEALTH EDUCATION AND RISK PREVENTION
- 1,959 | 63% INDEPENDENT LIVING NEEDS ASSESSMENT
- 1,952 | 63% FAMILY SUPPORT AND HEALTHY MARRIAGE EDUCATION
- 1,894 | 61% ACADEMIC SUPPORT
- 1,883 | 60% BUDGET AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

OTHER INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES PROVIDED TO YOUTH:

- 1,777: Mentoring
- 1,748: Career Prep
- 1,674: Housing Education and Home Management
- 1,026: Post-Secondary Educational Support
- 974: Employment Programs
- 135: Supervised Independent Living

TOP 5 INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES PROVIDED TO YOUTH AGES 18 AND OLDER:

- 90% BUDGET AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
- 79% CAREER PREPERATION
- 78% MENTORING
- 78% HEALTH EDUCATION AND RISK PREVENTION
- 84% HOUSING EDUCATION & HOME MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Iowa National Youth in Transition Database Annual Report
October 1, 2020- September 30, 2021
As we know from this data report, postsecondary attainment rates are significantly lower than for those who were not in foster care. Financial aid results in lower tuition costs and increases the likelihood that a youth will attend college. In Iowa, there are many financial support programs for youth formerly in foster care. The All Iowa Opportunity Scholarship is funding from the State of Iowa made available to students with first priority given to those with foster care experience. Federal programs include the Pell Grant and the Education and Training Voucher (ETV).

DHS partners with the Iowa College Student Aid Commission (Iowa College Aid) to administer the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program. The ETV program in Iowa usually provides educational awards of up to $5,000 per year to students who age out of foster care and students who are adopted after age 16. The federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 increased ETV funding through September 2022 allowing Iowa to award up to $12,000 per student. Grant awards can be used to pay for tuition, fees, room and board, books, or other living expenses.

Iowa College Aid also receives all federal FAFSA data on Iowa applicants, which identifies youth who report themselves as "orphans, wards of the state or in foster care." This streamlines the ETV application process for Iowa students. Students who submit a FAFSA on or after October 1 are automatically directed to complete the ETV application. Awards are made until funds are expended. Once all funds for a particular academic year are awarded, a waiting list begins.

A report released by Iowa College Aid in 2019 found that both being eligible for and receiving an ETV award are associated with positive and significant postsecondary and employment outcomes. Those who received an ETV award were 15 percentage points more likely to persist from year one to year two and six percentage points more likely to graduate. ETV recipients were also found to be more likely to be employed in Iowa than non-recipients.

Intentional collaboration between DHS and educators has improved information sharing and system level problem solving capacity, as their continued goal is to ensure all youth in foster care who are likely to be eligible for the ETV award are given information about the program. In fact, recent federal policies provide obligations for state agencies to use foster care and education data to better inform educators, child welfare, and the public.

For more information on ETV or to contact the ETV Coordinator, call 877-272-4456 Option 3, email grants@iowacollegeaid.gov or visit their website: iowacollegeaide.gov/ETV.

The following section contains ETV data sourced from Iowa College Aid, which provides a more detailed look at the 2020-2021 academic school year.
IOWA EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER (ETV) IN ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-21

255 TOTAL AWARDED

137 TOTAL ATTENDED

OF RECIPIENTS ATTEND COMMUNITY COLLEGE 54%

OF RECIPIENTS ATTEND A REGENT UNIVERSITY 22%

OF RECIPIENTS ATTEND AN INDEPENDENT COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY 14%

10% ATTEND OUT OF STATE COLLEGES
LESS THAN 1% ATTEND COSMETOLOGY SCHOOL

OF THOSE WHO APPLIED, 68% WERE AWARDED

OF THOSE AWARDED, 54% ATTENDED

THE RETENTION RATE FROM FALL TO SPRING REMAINED STEADY FROM 2019-20 TO 2020-21

COMPARING ETV FROM ACADEMIC YEAR 2017-18,

483 APPLICANTS
309 AWARDED
177 ATTENDED

13% ATTENDED UNIVERSITIES
4% ATTENDED OUT OF STATE
68% ATTENDED COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DHS is committed to ensuring youth who age out of foster care at or around age 18 are prepared for adulthood. By federal law, transition planning and independent living services should begin at age 14. In Iowa, DHS contracts with YSS to provide aftercare services to youth transitioning out of foster care through the Iowa Aftercare Services Network (Aftercare). Seven youth-serving agencies deliver these services in all 99 counties in Iowa.

Aftercare is designed to help equip participating youth with the skills, resources, and connections that all young people need to navigate the path to adulthood successfully. Core Services are provided to youth ages 18-21; Extended Services are available to young adults age 21 and 22. The Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) component of Aftercare provides monthly stipends to qualifying youth who are working and/or pursuing education. In SFY2021, $1.47 million of the regular Aftercare budget went to help participants meet their living expenses.

Aftercare services are voluntary and provided by trained Self-Sufficiency Advocates who partner with young adults up to the age of 23 to create and execute Self-Sufficiency Plans. Full Program Rules for Aftercare can be found in 441 Iowa Admin. Code Chapter 1878.

Legislation that became active in January 2020 expanded Aftercare to include "Extended Services" for 21 and 22-year-olds who had previously received Aftercare between the ages of 18 and 21. Extended services are less structured and are designed to be responsive to young adults wanting additional supports as they continue their path to self-sufficiency. A policy change effective in SFY2021 revised the eligibility for PAL, allowing young people who aged out of non-licensed relative care or suitable other placements receive PAL. This was an important policy change that eliminates a disincentive to placing older youth with relatives or suitable other adults when an out-of-home placement is needed.

To learn more about Aftercare, visit their website: iowaaftercare.org or call 800-443-8336.

The following section contains State Fiscal Year 2021 outcome data sourced from the Iowa Aftercare report, developed by Youth Policy Institute of Iowa (YPII). This data provides a glimpse into how youth who have aged out foster care around the age of 18 are now being served by Iowa Aftercare Services.
Overview

The path to adulthood can be particularly steep for youth who have experienced foster care or other out-of-home placements. Making that transition during the COVID-19 pandemic has added extra challenges, further stress, and greater uncertainty about the future.

Aftercare is designed to help equip participating youth with the skills, resources, and connections that all young people need to navigate the path to adulthood successfully. **Core Services** are provided to youth ages 18-21; **Extended Services** are available to young adults ages 21 and 22. The **Preparation for Adult Living** (PAL) component of Aftercare provides monthly stipends to qualifying youth who are working and/or pursuing education. In SFY 2021, $1.47 million of the regular Aftercare budget went to help participants meet their living expenses.

**Key Indicators**

- **Supportive Relationships**: 96.3% Participants report having positive relationships with adults.
- **Stable Housing**: 90.2% Participants report having a safe and stable place to live.
- **Sufficient Resources**: 73.6% Participants report having enough resources to meet expenses.

**Participants rate Aftercare 4.7 out of 5**

Source: April 2021 Satisfaction Survey

"Aftercare has helped provide the resources for me to thrive and is helping me create a stable financial foundation."
High quality services
Regular feedback from participants on the services and support they receive is a primary measure of quality and effectiveness. The following results from the March 2021 Satisfaction Survey show how 384 participants assessed the helpfulness of their Aftercare Advocate in developing five key life skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Somewhat helpful</th>
<th>Very helpful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal setting</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>84.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessing resources</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing money</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“[My Advocate] is always there for me when I have questions about anything; she helps me when I’m struggling ...”

Outcome measures from intake to exit ($n=164$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Measure</th>
<th>Intake</th>
<th>Exit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education (HS diploma/HiSED)</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment (25+ hours/week)</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earnings (&gt; $800 net/month)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing (Paying costs)</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This summary was prepared by the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa. Visit iowaaftercare.org/Program Results to access the 2021 Annual Outcomes Report or call 515.727.4220 for more information.
COVID and Older Youth in Foster Care

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the lives of everyone and certainly so for young people in and transitioning from foster care and out-of-home placements, including their relationships, employment, education, housing and other activities. In response, the federal government enacted the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 which waived certain eligibility requirements for services and provided flexible funding to states to support current and former youth in foster care.

Iowa DHS, in partnership with YSS and Youth Policy Institute of Iowa, created a plan that included the following:

- Gathering information from older youth in Aftercare and younger youth in AMP to inform how DHS should use the funding and flexibilities
- Setting aside a portion of the Aftercare budget to meet COVID-related financial needs of youth
- Allowing youth to remain in foster care past their 18th birthday if they wanted to
- Allocating additional money to Foster Funds to cover everyday expenses of youth in foster care
- Development and implementation of a marketing and awareness campaign that included a webpage with information on Iowa's full plan, earned media, direct mail and text, and other efforts
- Most of the flexible funds were used to provide two rounds of stimulus-style pandemic-relief payments directly to eligible youth and young adults.

1,823
Young people applied for pandemic relief payments between May-October 2021

1,442
Of those applications were approved

Ages of those receiving payments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-22</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-26*</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Authorization for Payments to young adults 25-26 expired 9/30/2021

The impact of COVID as reported by older youth in Aftercare:

- 27% Unable to stay in touch with friends/family
- 52% Lost job, reduced hours, unable to find work
- 22% Lost housing, got behind on rent/utilities, forced to move
- 63% Reported increased stress
- 20% Could not afford transportation
- 1 in 4 youth dropped out or their education was disrupted

$1,646,500
Provided directly to young people

*Authorizations for payments to young adults 25-26 expired 9/30/2021
Youth Engagement

Iowa DHS and their contractors believe in and value authentic youth engagement, recognizing that when supported through productive partnerships with adults, youth can play a pivotal role in making the child welfare system more responsive to youth and families and more effective in achieving desired outcomes. These next few pages will highlight a variety of different youth engagement initiatives supported by DHS.

AMP (Achieving Maximum Potential) is a youth engagement program for current and former youth in foster care. Summarized by the motto, "Nothing About Us, Without Us," AMP serves as Iowa’s Foster Care Youth Council through a contract between YSS (AMP’s lead agency) and the Iowa Department of Human Services. The primary purpose of AMP is to empower young people to become advocates for themselves and for system-level improvements to child welfare policies and practices in Iowa.

AMP offers leadership opportunities, service-learning projects, speaking opportunities, and educational or vocational assistance to youth ages 13-23 who have experienced foster care, adoption or other out-of-home placements. AMP also offers opportunities to learn life skills and access a variety of resources as young people transition from foster care to adulthood.

AMP currently has twelve local councils. They also work with a variety of stakeholders to expand opportunities for youth in foster care, including through a new relationship with ISU Extension's 4-H Champions Group and AC4C (Alliance of Coalitions for Change) on joint advocacy efforts. For more information on AMP, visit their website: weareampiowa.com

The following section contains outcome data sourced from AMP’s State Fiscal Year 2021 report, developed primarily by YPII. The selected data specifically provides a glimpse into the membership and activities of AMP during the 2021 State Fiscal Year.
ACHIEVING MAXIMUM POTENTIAL (AMP) IN STATE FISCAL YEAR 2021

28% OF MEMBERS ARE 14 OR YOUNGER
15% OF MEMBERS ARE 18 OR OLDER
33% OF MEMBERS ARE YOUTH OF COLOR
70% OF MEMBERS RESIDE IN A CONGREGATE CARE PLACEMENT

336 COUNCIL MEMBERS

211 MEETINGS
44% SPEAKER, PRESENTATION, OR TOPIC DISCUSSION
27% SOCIAL ACTIVITY, PARTY OR GAME
27% SKILL-BUILDING ACTIVITY
21% AMP COUNCIL BUSINESS OR INFORMATION
12% ADVOCACY
8% SERVICE ACTIVITY

MAJOR PROJECTS

ACTIVATING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT NATIONAL SUMMIT
AMP SERVED ON IOWA’S TEAM AND CO-CREATED AN ACTION PLAN TO ADVANCE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN IOWA. AS A RESULT, DHS LEADERSHIP IS HOLDING QUARTERLY MEETINGS WITH YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE TO ADDRESS PRIORITY ISSUES.

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA/DAY ON THE HILL
AMP DEVELOPED A LEGISLATIVE AGENDA USING THE INPUT FROM 500 YOUTH THROUGH THE TALKING WALL PROJECT. AGENDA INCLUDED: TRANSITION SKILL GAPS, CLOTHING ALLOWANCE INCREASE, AND EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE LAST DOLLAR SCHOLAR. FOR DAY ON THE HILL, AMP CREATED A VIDEO FEATURING 4 YOUTH TO SHARE WITH LEGISLATORS.

PLUGGED IN AND CHARING CONFERENCE
HELD VIRTUALLY THIS YEAR ON A SERIES OF MONDAYS. FEATURED GUEST SPEAKERS FROM AMP, FOSTER CARE ALUM, SOCIAL WORKERS AND TRANSITION PLANNING SPECIALISTS.

FUTURE FEST
AN ANNUAL RESOURCE FAIR FOR OLDER YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE IN CEDAR RAPIDS. 62 YOUTH ATTENDED. TEN AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS WERE SHOWCASED VIRTUALLY.

COMMUNICATION EFFORTS
AMP UPDATED ITS WEBSITE (WEAREAMPIOWA.ORG), LAUNCHED A TV-LIKE STUDIO, AND LAUNCHED AMP FAM.

COMPARING AMP FROM SFY2018,
1,300 MEMBERS
26% 14 OR YOUNGER
NYTD Creative Expressions Contest

The NYTD Creative Expressions Contest is an annual art contest that invites youth and young adults who have experienced foster care and/or juvenile justice to create a work of art that captures the given theme of the contest.

In 2021, the 5th Annual Creative Expressions Contest centered around the theme "See Me for Me: Looking Past Labels and Stereotypes," inspired by multiple Talking Wall responses indicating the negative impact labels and stereotypes have on their identity, relationships and cases. A total of 56 young people submitted 67 pieces of art into the contest. Artwork came from youth across the state in a variety of settings including group home, shelter, PMIC, foster homes, detention, and youth who have aged out of the system. To date, 89 youth have participated in this contest.

Entries are judged using an evaluation rubric by a team of youth and young adults. Youth who place in the top 3 of the contest receive a gift card of their choice ($100, $60, and $35 respectively) and a certificate. A Fan Favorite award ($100 gift card and certificate) is given to the artist who earned the most votes from a public voting campaign. All other youth receive a certificate and an art swag bag. The winners from this year are featured below.

Once all entries have been judged and awarded, the NYTD Coordinator identifies locations for the art to be displayed in the community (if permission has been granted by the artist). Art is currently on display at the following locations: Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Homeless Youth Center, AMP, and United Way of Central Iowa.
The Talking Wall

In 2018, Iowa NYTD began hosting the Talking Wall in partnership with DHS, Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP) and Iowa’s Juvenile Justice Advisory Council (JJAC). Through the Talking Wall, youth are empowered to lend their voices to the decision-making process by sharing their experiences and their visions for change. This also gives decision-makers and professionals an opportunity to align their action to what youth are saying they need. Talking Wall responses are shared with youth advocates, stakeholders and state leaders.

Posters with 5 prompting questions are posted on walls that relate to state-level initiatives and workgroups. Youth are provided sticky notes to write down their ideas to post on each Talking Wall. This year’s questions included:

- What would you like to see happen to improve the foster care and/or juvenile justice system in Iowa?
- What would you like to see happen to improve the foster care and/or juvenile justice system in Iowa, specifically for youth of color and Indigenous youth?
- What would you like to see happen to improve the foster care and/or juvenile justice system in Iowa, specifically for girls and young women?
- What do youth returning home from a placement need?
- What are the do’s and don’ts of the people who work with you?

In FFY2021, 41 organizations participated leading to 1,466 post-it notes uplifting the voices of 491 youth. More than 10 state-level stakeholder groups reviewed the Talking Wall data and hosted discussions on how to translate the ideas into actions. Outcomes of the Talking Wall include:

- AMP used the Talking Wall data to inform their 2021 Legislative Agenda. Their agenda led to DHS doubling the clothing allowance for youth in foster care.
- Iowa’s Juvenile Court Services partnered with NYTD to host an inaugural state-level Family and Youth Engagement Summit focused on advancing Talking Wall ideas. As a result, all 8 of Iowa’s judicial districts created action plans to advance youth engagement in their district.
- The Juvenile Justice Advisory Council voted for and allocated resources to start a Youth Justice Council made up of youth and young adults with juvenile justice experience.
- Creation of trainings done in partnership with youth on topics related to foster parenting Black youth and the adolescent brain.
- JJAC subcommittees created an official plan to respond to youth’s ideas which includes advancing healing-centered engagement in Iowa, exploring how to replicate the Parent Partner model in juvenile justice and creating a toolkit on how communities can couple authentic youth engagement and data to address the school-to-prison pipeline.
- Leaders used the Talking Wall to inform how Iowa can use American Rescue Plan dollars.
NYTD Ambassadors

In 2021, the Iowa Department of Human Rights onboarded five consultants, named NYTD Ambassadors, to partner on the collection, analysis and reporting of NYTD data in Iowa. NYTD Ambassadors are young adults who have personally taken the NYTD Survey and are between the ages of 17-26.

NYTD Ambassadors play a critical role ensuring the data that’s collected on older youth in foster care is being done so in the most equitable, appropriate, and productive way. This partnership serves as an opportunity for young adults and state agencies to collaborate using survey data to inform, empower, and advance positive youth and community outcomes.

NYTD Ambassadors are financially compensated and meet at least once a month. NYTD Ambassadors are expected to be a leader within DHR and NYTD, inform other youth about NYTD, use their professional and lived expertise to analyze NYTD data, co-create clear data messages, provide recommendations on ways to better the NYTD survey, and assist with annual reports and data presentations, and co-lead the Creative Expressions Contest and the Talking Wall project.
Considerations and Next Steps

- Data in this report could benefit DHS, JCS, the JJAC and other stakeholder efforts to address the high number of youth experiencing incarceration before age 21
- Data in this report may benefit DHS efforts to evaluate Family First Prevention Services Act efforts, and should be reviewed by those implementing the change
- Data in this report could be analyzed to better understand the strengths and areas of opportunity for Iowa Aftercare Services
- DHR and DHS will host a release and discussion of this report in a webinar and during a listening tour in each of the TPS regions in partnership with NYTD Ambassadors
- The report will be shared with AMP, Youth Justice Council, Iowa Aftercare Services, ETV, Juvenile Court Services, DHS Leadership and other stakeholders
- The 2nd Annual Family and Youth Engagement Summit will take place Summer of 2022 and will center around the data found in this report
- Infographics will be developed for stakeholders and the general public
- Transition Planning Specialists, in their role as DHS transition planning champions, will review this report to identify areas of need and recommend casework practice changes accordingly
- Data will be used to inform training of DHS and Juvenile Court Services (JCS) staff
- Feedback on the FFY2021 report will be collected and used to improve the quality of future reports
- An update on this report, including community response, will be included in the 2022 Annual Performance and Services Report (APSR). The APSR is a child welfare/foster care report created annually by the Iowa Department of Human Services, posted publicly, and provided to the U.S. Children's Bureau.
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