



ON YOUR OWN BUT NOT ALONE

Annual Report

to the
Iowa Department of Human Services

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Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

INTRODUCTION

Few young people are prepared to take on all the responsibilities of adulthood at the age of 18. Youth exiting foster care at that age, without the security and support of a stable family, face even more formidable challenges as they enter adulthood. The Iowa Aftercare Services Network (IASN) has provided services and support to help youth and young adults who exit foster care at or near the age of 18 make this transition successfully.

Youth and Shelter Services, Inc. (YSS) serves as the lead agency and fiscal agent for the Network, and has held the contract with the Iowa Department of Human Services for ten years. YSS, in addition to providing direct services through four of its central Iowa locations, subcontracts with ten other youth-serving agencies to provide aftercare services to eligible youth throughout the state. In addition to YSS, the agencies in the Network during State Fiscal Year and the location of their primary offices are:

- American Home Finding Association (Ottumwa)
- Boys and Girls Home and Family Services, Inc. (Sioux City)
- Children and Families of Iowa (Des Moines)
- Children's Square USA (Council Bluffs)
- Family Resources, Inc. (Davenport)
- Francis Lauer Youth Services, Inc. (Mason City)
- Foundation 2 (Cedar Rapids)
- Four Oaks (Cedar Rapids)
- Young House Family Services (Burlington)
- Youth Homes of Mid-America (Des Moines)

YSS also subcontracts with the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa to provide statewide coordination, technical assistance, and evaluation services for the Network. For further information on these agencies and the counties they serve for the Aftercare Network, see the Network's website at www.iowaaftercare.org.

The Network has provided aftercare services to Iowa's eligible foster care alumni since 2002 with funds allocated to the state from the federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. In 2006, the Iowa Legislature authorized additional support for these youth and appropriated state funding to create the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program. The PAL program provides monthly financial support to qualifying youth who exit a state-paid foster care placement at age 18 or older as long as they are either enrolled in post-secondary education or training, are employed, or both. The IASN implements PAL as a component of Iowa's aftercare services for those eligible. Young people remain eligible for IASN services until they turn 21.

The DHS aftercare contract to YSS requires annual reporting on the services provided and outcomes of the youth and young adults who participate in Aftercare and PAL programs. This information is used both to assess the impact of the services being delivered to eligible youth and to fulfill state and federal reporting requirements. Data presented in this annual report are primarily drawn from an on-line data collection system that was designed specifically for and is maintained by the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa for the IASN.

Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

Organization of the Report

As in past years, this report is organized into three parts and includes the same data elements as the SFY 2011 report to facilitate comparison to the previous year.

Part I provides three-year trend information from intake interviews with youth when they first access Aftercare services. This information is useful in understanding the characteristics of youth as they leave formal foster care and begin aftercare services.

Part II of the report looks at demographic and other characteristics of 761 participants who were served during SFY 2012. This part also summarizes the reasons youth exited the program during the year.

Part III of the report examines outcomes of 180 participants who exited services during the year and did not return for services prior to June 30, 2012 and for whom we have complete exit data. Data on outcomes in the areas of employment, resources, housing, education, relationships, parenting, high risk behaviors, health care coverage, and essential documents are presented as required by the DHS contract.

Aftercare and PAL are voluntary programs. Eligible young adults are free to initiate and discontinue services as they choose, and it is possible for youth to have multiple entries and exits from the program. Data is collected through individual interviews with the participants each time they enter or exit IASN services. To assess outcomes, data from the very first interview with the youth is compared with their last exit interview during the fiscal year for which this report is generated. Outcomes are only reported for youth who did not return to services prior to the end of the fiscal year. Efforts are made to ensure the accuracy of the data, but because the information is based largely on self-reports by youth and entered by multiple interviewers there may be some data entry errors that are not detected, resulting in some margin of error in the results presented in this report.

Key Data and Findings

The total number of unduplicated participants served by the Iowa Aftercare Services Network decreased slightly this year, from 788 youth served in SFY 2011 to 761 served in SFY 2012. This included 265 youth who entered the program for the first time, and 320 who exited the program without returning prior to June 30, 2012.

On average, 453 young people participated in Aftercare each month during SFY 2012, of which an average of 287 were receiving PAL and 166 were participating in Aftercare without PAL. Since SFY 2007, an average of 440 youth per year have aged out of Iowa foster care and an average of 282 youth per year have accessed Aftercare services.

Intakes: Young people enter Aftercare services with a variety of risk factors or potential barriers to a successful transition to adulthood. The following are characteristics of the 265 young people who accessed Aftercare for the first time in SFY 2012:

- More than 60% of youth reported having been referred for or received a mental health assessment, counseling or therapy in the last year and one quarter of youth had attempted suicide;

Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

- Just over 30% had been incarcerated or detained in the two years prior to accessing Aftercare;
- Only 72% of young people accessing Aftercare had their high school diploma or GED on intake;
- 30% were unemployed and actively seeking work; and 58% reported zero income;
- 8% described themselves as homeless at the time they accessed Aftercare.

Outcomes: Aftercare services are designed to help young adults move toward stability and self-sufficiency in five key areas: education, employment, housing, health, and relationships. A variety of measures are used to assess progress in these outcome areas. In this year's analysis of outcomes, we compare the original intake data collected when youth first accessed services with the last exit interview data for those youth who exited during state fiscal year 2012 and did not return before July 1, 2012. This provides an unduplicated group of 180 youth on which data is reported for the year, including 135 PAL participants and 45 who did not receive PAL (referred to as Basic participants).

Employment: Among the participants that exited services in SFY 2012, 47.2% were employed either full or part-time when they first accessed services. Full time employment at intake was only 26.1%, which increased to 38.9% of participants who were working full time (at least 25 hours per week) at exit. Another 13.9% were employed less than 25 hours per week at exit. The percentage of participants "unemployed and actively seeking work" declined from 38.7% at intake to 21.7% at exit in SFY 2012.

Housing: Compared to when they first access services, on exit more youth are assuming some responsibility for the cost of housing (from 62.6% at intake to 72.2% at exit) and fewer are living in transitional facilities, shelters or other supported housing arrangements (from 10.3% to 1.7%). While a sizable portion of Aftercare participants are attending college, very few take advantage of university housing.

Education: More than 90% of youth on exit have earned either a high school diploma or GED, compared to 77% of the same youth at intake. And about one-third have been able to complete some college while receiving services. There are fewer youth attending school at exit than at intake, however, indicating that post-secondary education retention and success continues to be a challenge for many Aftercare participants.

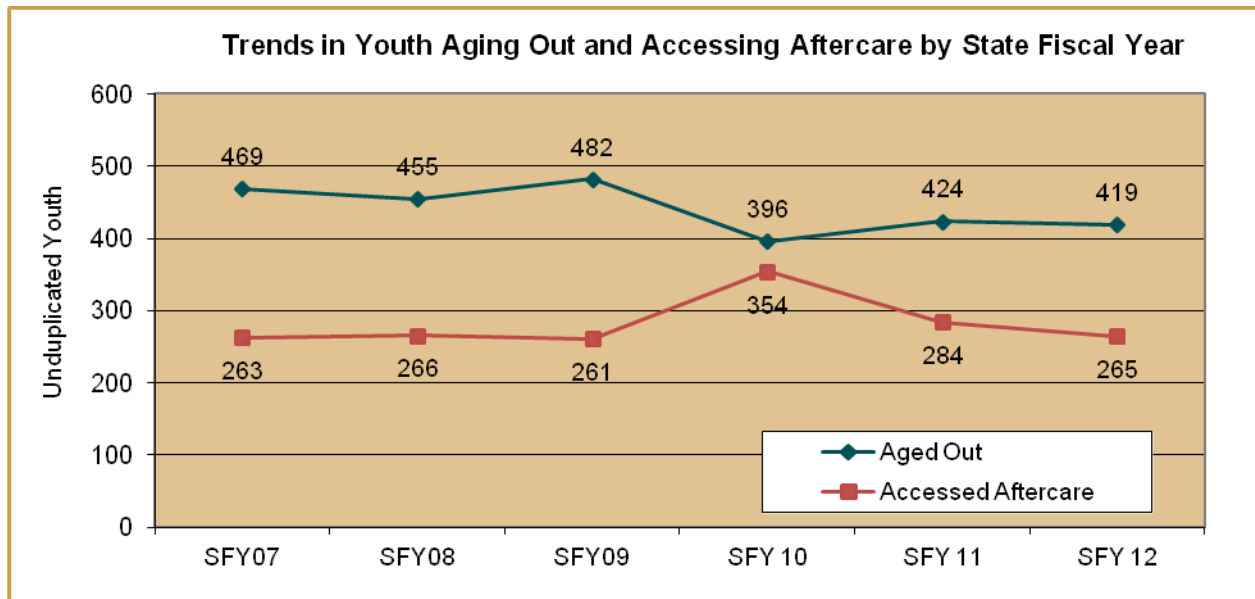
Health Insurance Coverage: Approximately 90% of young people have Medicaid at both intake and exit, in large part due to the automatic extension of this coverage under Medicaid for Independent Young Adults (MIYA). While a few exiting participants have other health insurance coverage, it is unclear what happens when former foster youth turn 21 and lose their eligibility for MIYA and Aftercare.

Positive Relationships: Social relationships and networks are essential to healthy development. The critical importance of a network of family and non-family adult supports for youth and young adults is well-documented. Most young people in Aftercare report that they do have supportive adults who they will *always* be able to turn to for support and guidance.

Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

PART I: Characteristics of New Intakes in SFY 2010 and SFY 2011

A total of 761 young adults were served by the Aftercare Network in State Fiscal Year 2012. Of these, 265 accessed services for the first time during the fiscal year. Approximately 75% of these young people accessed Aftercare within two months of exiting formal foster care. There was a slight decrease in total served and new intakes from the previous two years, as shown in the graph below.¹ Since SFY 2007, an average of 440 youth per year have aged out of Iowa foster care and an average of 282 youth per year have utilized Aftercare services. About 64 percent of youth aging out of Iowa foster care have accessed Aftercare over the last six years.



Age at Intake: The vast majority of young people are 18 when they first access Aftercare. Of the 265 youth who accessed services in SFY 2012, 26% entered Aftercare the month they turned 18 and 86.4% entered before their 19th birthday. The best time to encourage youth to take advantage of these services is prior to their aging out of formal foster care. Additional outreach efforts by IASN and continued efforts by DHS and Juvenile Court workers to inform young people of Aftercare services prior to when they exit care are needed to ensure that all eligible youth are aware of their opportunity to receive these services.

The following tables show characteristics of young people at the time they accessed Aftercare services over the last three state fiscal years. This trend data is helpful in understanding the characteristics of youth as they emancipate from foster care at age 18.

¹ Because of the upgrading of the IASN outcomes database in July 2009, some participants who returned for services in SFY 2010 may be included in the “new intakes” for that year if they were not a continuing participant on July 1, 2009, resulting in a somewhat inflated number of “new” participants reported for SFY 2010. The inclusion of these returning clients may also have some impact on the intake data reported in this part, particular in areas where an event (such as graduating from high school, getting essential documents, or opening a bank account) could have occurred after the original service episode began, but is now reported as a characteristic at “intake.”

**Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012**

RISK FACTORS/CHALLENGES PRESENTED AT INTAKE			
Percent responding “yes” they:	SFY 2010 (N=354)	SFY 2011 (N= 284)	SFY 2012 (N=265)
Have been referred for or received a mental health assessment, counseling or therapy in the last year	51.68%	56.69%	61.51%
Have been referred for or received an alcohol or substance abuse assessment or counseling in the last year	18.99%	23.24%	23.4%
Have ever attempted suicide	26.26%	22.89%	24.91%
Have ever inflicted self-harm in other ways	31.01%	26.06%	32.08%
Have ever had an unintended pregnancy	22.07%	21.83%	18.87%
Are a parent	11.45%	11.27%	7.55%
Have been incarcerated or detained in the past two years	30.45%	34.15%	30.94%

Young people enter Aftercare services with a variety of risk factors to a successful transition to adulthood. As shown in the table above, an increasing percentage of youth report having some form of mental health needs, including a significant number who have attempted suicide or inflicted self-harm. A declining percentage of youth at intake into Aftercare report ever having an unintended pregnancy or currently parenting. Approximately one-third reported having been incarcerated or detained in the previous two years. While these risks are not insurmountable, they do create challenges as Aftercare helps these young adults move toward self-sufficiency.

EDUCATION			
Highest education credential received:	SFY 2010 (N=358)	SFY 2011 (N= 284)	SFY 2012 (N=265)
High School Diploma	62.57%	55.63%	60.75%
GED	13.13%	9.86%	11.32%
Vocational certificate or license	0.56%	0.7%	0.38%
None of the Above	23.74%	33.8%	27.55%

Iowa allows youth to continue in voluntary foster care through age 19 to complete high school. Over the last three years, however, a large number of youth are leaving foster care and accessing Aftercare without having earned their high school diploma or GED. Of the 73 youth who accessed Aftercare last year without a high school credential, 64 (88%) reported that they were continuing to work toward a high school diploma or GED at intake, suggesting that they could have remained in foster care under a voluntary placement agreement but chose not to.

**Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012**

EMPLOYMENT			
Current employment status:	SFY 2010 (N=358)	SFY 2011 (N= 284)	SFY 2012 (N=265)
Employed (average 35+ hours per week)	8.10%	7.04%	5.28%
Employed (average 25-34 hours per week)	16.76%	10.92%	18.11%
Employed (less than 25 hours per week)	16.76%	19.01%	16.98%
Unemployed, actively seeking employment	40.22%	40.85%	30.19%
Unemployed, long-term disability	1.12%	1.76%	0.75%
Not in work force	15.36%	17.61%	25.66%
Other	1.68%	2.82%	3.02%

Among youth accessing Aftercare in SFY 2012, 30% were unemployed looking for work and 26% were not in the workforce. Of the 40% who were employed at intake, very few were working an average of 35 or more hours per week. Less than a quarter of young people accessing Aftercare were working 25 hours a week or more at intake. The employment data is likely influenced to some extent by the number of participants who are continuing their education rather than working at the time of intake.

MONTHLY INCOME			
Gross monthly income w/out PAL:	SFY 2010 (N=358)	SFY 2011 (N= 284)	SFY 2012 (N=265)
\$0	57.82%	59.51%	57.74%
\$1 - \$799	33.23%	33.79%	33.2%
\$800 - \$1,399	7.82%	5.28%	6.79%
\$1,400 or more	1.12%	1.4%	2.26%

Limited employment among youth accessing Aftercare is evident in their reported income. Over the last three years, nearly 60% of former foster youth report \$0 income at intake, and less than 10% report average monthly income of more than \$800.

BANKING			
Percent responding "yes" they have a:	SFY 2010 (N=358)	SFY 2011 (N= 284)	SFY 2012 (N=265)
Checking or debit account	45.53%	42.25%	44.53%
Saving account	49.72%	40.49%	43.77%

Consistently, less than half of the youth exiting foster care and accessing Aftercare report having a checking or debit account. Similarly, less than half report having a savings account, suggesting that these youth have limited experience with mainstream banking, which is an important step to becoming financially capable and moving to self-sufficiency.

**Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012**

HEALTH			
Percent responding "yes":	SFY 2010 (N=358)	SFY 2011 (N= 284)	SFY 2012 (N=265)
Have a primary care physician	67.6%	70.42%	63.02%
Have Medicaid	90.22%	90.14%	89.06%
Had been prescribed medication for ongoing maintenance of physical or mental health within the last year	56.98%	55.99%	58.11%
Had used tobacco in the last 30 days	49.16%	50.7%	42.64%
Had used alcohol to intoxication in the last 30 days	16.48%	13.38%	15.47%

Automatic enrollment to continue Medicaid coverage for youth aging out of foster care in Iowa has been largely successful, as approximately 90% of young people accessing Aftercare report that they have Medicaid. A majority of these youth have been prescribed medication for ongoing maintenance of physical or mental health. More than 40% report using tobacco and about 15% report that they have used alcohol to intoxication.

PUBLIC BENEFIT PROGRAMS			
Percent responding they receive the following:	SFY 2010 (N=358)	SFY 2011 (N= 284)	SFY 2012 (N=265)
Food Stamps	29.61%	27.46%	18.49%
SSI or SSDI	4.47%	8.8%	7.55%
FIP	0.84%	1.41%	1.51%
Public Housing	1.4%	3.87%	2.26%
Child Care Subsidy	1.12%	2.82%	1.13%
Education Assistance	20.95%	14.44%	13.96%
Other public assistance	5.87%	3.87%	2.64%

A sizable percentage of youth report receiving some form of public assistance at the time they access Aftercare. While initially Aftercare helps young people access public benefit programs for which they are eligible to meet basic needs, reducing long-term dependency on public assistance is ultimately the goal of the program.

ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS			
Percent responding "yes" they have the following documents:	SFY 2010 (N=358)	SFY 2011 (N= 284)	SFY 2012 (N=265)
Birth certificate	79.33%	77.82%	81.13%
Social Security Card	87.43%	84.86%	85.28%
Driver's license	49.44%	47.54%	49.06%
State ID or passport	66.48%	62.68%	64.15%

**Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012**

Policies to ensure that young people have essential documents when they leave foster care have been enacted in Iowa over the last several years, which have largely been implemented successfully. More than 80% of youth report having their birth certificate and Social Security Card when they access Aftercare.

Unfortunately, less than half of the young people have a driver’s license at intake into Aftercare. Because driving is an important milestone for teenagers and often essential to being able to hold a job or attend school, further exploration of barriers to drivers education and the ability of foster youth to get a driver’s license continues to be needed.

HOUSING			
	SFY 2010 (N=358)	SFY 2011 (N= 284)	SFY 2012 (N=265)
Percent responding “yes” they:			
Are paying for housing	53.07%	49.65%	53.96%
Have name on a lease agreement	27.09%	25.35%	18.87%
Own basic household items	53.35%	50.35%	49.81%
Are moving next month	38.27%	34.15%	32.45%
Feel safe in my current living arrangement	94.69%	95.07%	96.98%
Are currently homeless	6.15%	8.45%	7.92%

Only about half of young people are paying anything for their housing and only a quarter have a lease of their own when they access Aftercare. A place to live is often in flux as young people age out of foster care, with a third planning to move within a month of beginning Aftercare services. Multiple moves by Aftercare participants are common. In addition, each year a small percentage of young people entering services describe themselves as homeless at the time they access Aftercare. Securing a safe, stable place to live is frequently a priority for this population.

PERMANENCY – SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS			
	SFY 2010 (N=354)	SFY 2011 (N= 284)	SFY 2012 (N=265)
Percent responding “yes” there is an:			
Adult family member who I will always be able to turn to for support...*	85.75%	76.41%	84.91%
Adult, non-family member, who I will always be able to turn to for support...	92.18%	90.85%	95.85%

* Full question in the Core Client Outcomes interview is: *Do you have an adult in your family that you will always be able to turn to for support, advice, share or celebrate personal achievements, help solve problems (for example, birth or adoptive parent, spouse, adult sibling, extended family member, legal guardian)?* Similar wording is used for the question about an adult non-family member.

Having sufficient social capital (a network of healthy relationships) is critical to achieving a successful transition to adulthood. Young people consistently report having at least one person (either in their family or a non-family member) who will always be available to them. Aftercare frequently helps young adults expand and strengthen positive, long-term relationships with supportive adults.

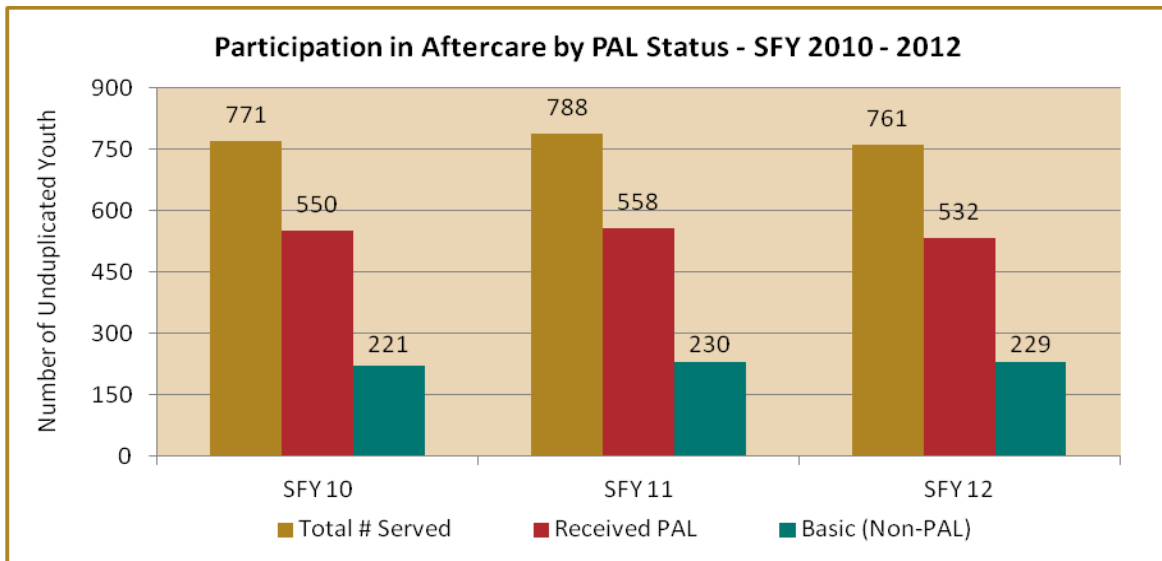
**Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012**

PART II – Characteristics of All Youth Served in SFY 2012

Unduplicated Number Served: The total number of unduplicated participants served by the Iowa Aftercare Services Network has remained relatively steady since SFY 2010, dropping slightly from 788 youth served in SFY 2011 to 761 served in SFY 2012. Of the 761 young adults served in SFY 2012, 265 entered the program for the first time, and 320 exited the program without returning prior to June 30, 2012.

Participation in Aftercare and PAL is voluntary and young people may choose to terminate services at their discretion. In other cases, services are discontinued when young people fail to meet the requirements and self-responsibility expectations of the program. In either case, young people may re-enter services when they are ready. This leads to a fair amount of turnover in program participation as youth may enter and exit services multiple times before their 21st birthday. In SFY 2012, 151 youth returned for services after a break in their participation.

PAL Participation: Of the 761 youth served in SFY 2012, 532 or 69.9% met requirements and received a PAL stipend for at least a portion of the time they participated; the remaining 229 youth did not receive PAL during the year, continuing a slight downward trend in the percentage of youth served receiving PAL. Prior to this year, 70.8% and 71.3% of the young people served received PAL in SFY 2011 and SFY 2010 respectively. *In the tables throughout this report, columns designated “Basic” refer to youth who did not receive a PAL stipend while participating in Aftercare services during the report year.*

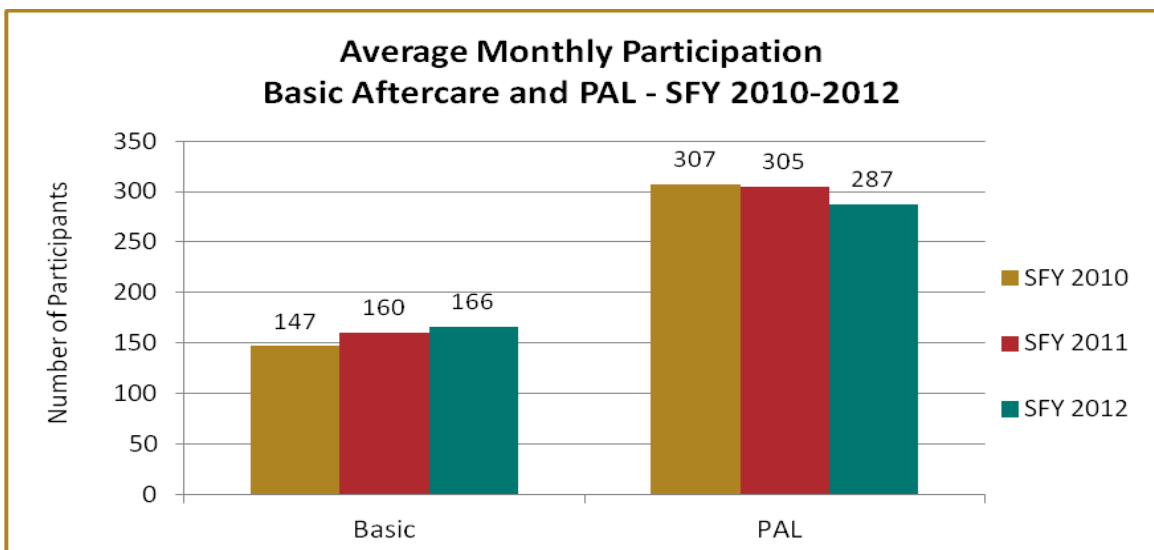


The broader eligibility criterion for just Aftercare (without PAL) allows some youth to qualify for general case management services and support but not the monthly financial assistance offered by the PAL program. Among the 229 youth served by IASN in SFY 2012 who did not receive PAL during the year, 96 were eligible **only** for Aftercare largely because they did not leave state paid foster care on or after their 18th birthday or had not been in care for six of the twelve months prior to aging out; or they aged out of a non-paid relative placement. The

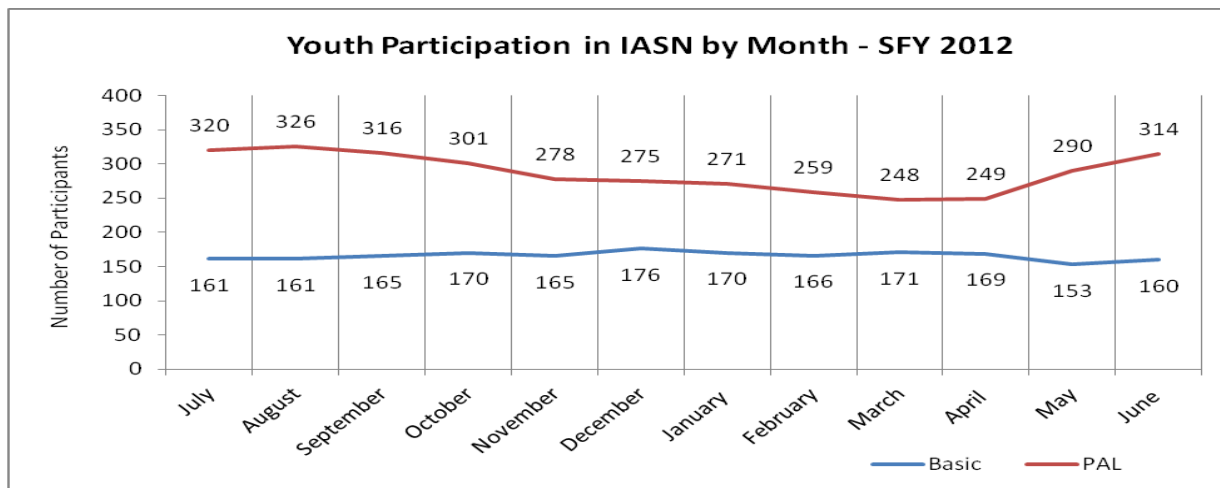
Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

remaining 133 youth in Aftercare Basic met the age and foster care exit requirements for PAL, but did not qualify for the PAL program because they were either still eligible for voluntary foster care (e.g., they had not yet completed high school) or they were not meeting the education and employment requirements of PAL. Many of these youth may qualify for PAL at some point in the future as their circumstances change.

Average Monthly Participation: On average, 453 young people participated in Aftercare each month during SFY 2012. Of those, an average of 287 received PAL and 166 were participating in Basic Aftercare (i.e., did not receive a PAL stipend). While the overall total served per month is similar to last year when 465 young people participated in Aftercare each month, there were fewer PAL participants and more Basic participants on average in SFY 2012 compared to the previous two years.



The number of active participants changes monthly as youth access and exit services and shift between PAL and Basic. In SFY 2012, monthly enrollment in PAL ranged from a low of 248 in March to a high of 326 in August. As shown below, there was considerably less fluctuation in the number of youth receiving Basic Aftercare services.



Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

Serious Emotional Disorder: Historically, 50 to 60 percent of youth accessing the Aftercare Network each year come to the program with a history of mental health assessment, diagnosis and treatment. In SFY 2012, 54.9% of the 761 youth served had been diagnosed with one or more Serious Emotional Disorders (SED) prior to leaving foster care. A breakdown of SED by PAL and Non-PAL (Basic) youth for SFY 2012 is shown in the table below. Those youth not qualifying for the PAL component are more likely to have an SED than those who do receive PAL.

	Total Served (N=761)		Received PAL (N=532)		Basic (N=229)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
SED	418	55%	272	51%	146	64%
Non-SED	290	38%	226	42%	64	28%
Not Reported	53	7%	34	6%	19	8%

Other Demographics—Gender and Race: Other demographic data recorded from participants at the time of intake includes gender, age, race and ethnicity. The following tables show the gender and race/ethnicity of the 761 youth served by the Aftercare Network in SFY 2012 and disaggregated by whether youth received PAL. Overall, there is little change from the previous year. More women than men utilize aftercare services. Young women are also more likely to qualify for PAL. The vast majority are White (85%), reflecting Iowa’s overall and foster care populations, but a sizeable percentage identify themselves as African American (16%), Multi-racial (9%), or American Indian (5%). Of all youth served in SFY 2012, 11% identified themselves as Hispanic and 2.4% recognized themselves as a member of an Indian Tribe.

GENDER	Total Served (N=761)		Received PAL (N=532)		Basic (N=229)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	320	42%	217	41%	103	45%
Female	441	58%	315	59%	126	55%

RACE* / ETHNICITY	Total Served (N=761)		Received PAL (N=532)		Basic (N=229)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
White	645	85%	447	84%	198	86%
African American	118	16%	85	16%	33	14%
American Indian	39	5%	23	4%	16	7%
Asian	9	1%	2	<1%	7	3%
Native Hawaiian	3	<1%	3	<1%	0	0%
Multi-Racial	66	9%	40	8%	26	11%
Race Not Reported	4	<1%	2	<1%	2	<1%
Ethnicity—Hispanic	81	11%	56	11%	25	11%

* Youth can identify with more than one race, therefore, percentages will not add up to 100%.

Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

Age: Most youth first access Aftercare at age 18, but there are about an equal number of 18, 19 and 20 year olds participating in the program at any given time. In SFY 2012, the average age of new intakes was 18.4 years, with youth ranging in age from 18.0 to 20.6 at intake. Among new participants in SFY 2012, 86% first came to Aftercare at age 18, including 72% who accessed services within six months of their 18th birthday. Additionally, 11% of new participants this year accessed services at age 19, and only 2.6% first accessed services at age 20.

Of 195 young people who completed an exit interview during the year, 115 (59%) were age 21, essentially aging out of Aftercare. The average age among youth exiting with an interview was 20.4 years. Of these exiting youth, 15% were still 18, and 26% were 19 or 20, all of whom could potentially return for services. Youth who exited services without completing an exit interview were somewhat younger, with an average age of 19.4, suggesting that many may return for one or more additional episodes of service. Of the 126 youth who exited without an interview, approximately 36% were age 18, 33% age 19, 26% age 20, and only 6% were age 21.

Foster Care History: Beginning in SFY 2010, Aftercare has collected information on the foster care history of participating youth. Among youth accessing Aftercare, the vast majority were in foster care for more than two years. About half spent most of their time in care with a non-relative foster family. Time in foster care and the last type of foster care placement reported by the youth is shown in the table below, disaggregated by PAL status. Youth placed in a foster family or Supervised Apartment Living setting as their last placement are more likely to receive PAL than those in other types of last placement.

Time in Foster Care	Total Served (N=761)		Received PAL (N=532)		Basic (N=229)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Less than 6 months	25	2%	9	2%	16	7%
6 months to a year	68	10%	44	8%	24	10%
1 to 2 years	134	16%	94	18%	40	17%
More than 2 years	528	71%	382	72%	146	64%
Not sure	6	1%	3	1%	3	1%
Last Placement						
Relative	36	5%	19	4%	17	7%
Foster Home (non-relative)	373	49%	295	55%	78	34%
Group Home or Shelter	151	20%	70	13%	81	35%
Other Institution	63	8%	33	6%	30	13%
Supervised Apartment Living	120	16%	106	20%	14	6%
Other	17	2%	8	2%	9	4%
Not Sure / Missing	1	<1%	1	<1%	0	0%

Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

Geographic Distribution: The eleven agencies that comprise the Iowa Aftercare Services Network provide statewide coverage to ensure access to services by youth throughout the state. Over the years, youth in all 99 Iowa counties have been served. In SFY 2012, youth from 85 counties participated. Not surprisingly, urban counties account for the majority of youth served. Nine counties, each serving 20 or more youth during the year, accounted for more than half (54.4%) of the 761 youth served, with 110 youth (14.4%) being served in Polk County alone. Other counties serving large numbers of youth include: Woodbury (66), Black Hawk (55), Pottawattamie (35), Linn (32), Webster (31), and Story (27). In 42 counties, 3 or fewer youth participated in Aftercare.

Reasons for Exit: When young people leave Aftercare services, their reason for exiting is recorded by the Self-Sufficiency Advocate who has been working with the youth. The table below shows the circumstances for all youth who exited Aftercare during the year and did not return prior to July 1, 2012. Of these youth, 195 completed an exit interview. The remaining 126 exiting youth discontinued services without an interview. In these cases, the reason for exit is based on the Self-Sufficiency Advocates' knowledge of the youth's last circumstances. Very few of the youth who did not complete the exit interview had reached the end of their eligibility (*i.e.*, turned 21), and may return for further services. Reasons participants exited are shown in the table below, overall and disaggregated by PAL status.

	All Exits (N=321)		Received PAL (N=209)		Basic (N=112)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Turned 21 – end of eligibility	123	38.3%	108	51.7%	15	13.4%
Not meeting self-responsibility requirements	54	16.8%	19	9.1%	35	31.3%
Moved (including moving temporarily and potential transfers)	45	14.0%	28	13.4%	17	15.2%
Voluntarily chose to end services	31	9.6%	14	6.7%	17	15.2%
Incarcerated	10	3.1%	7	3.3%	3	2.7%
Institutionalized or hospitalized	2	0.6%	0	0%	2	1.8%
Military	2	0.6%	2	1.0%	0	0%
Achieved self-sufficiency	3	1.0%	2	1.0%	1	0.9%
Other	14	4.4%	7	3.3%	7	6.3%
Unknown/Missing	37	11.5%	22	10.5%	15	13.4%

Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

The most prevalent reason for exit in SFY 2012 was that the participant was turning 21 and was no longer eligible for services. This was especially true among PAL participants (although they may not have been receiving PAL at the end of their participation). The most common reason for non-PAL participants to be discharged from the program was for failing to meet program requirements (primarily the expectation that they meet at least twice a month with their Advocate), which could also be interpreted as the youth voluntarily ending services.

Youth in this population tend to be very transient at this age and 14% of exits were the result of the participant moving out of the area where they were receiving services. Many of those youth may reengage with another agency, but had not done so by the close of the fiscal year. In addition, approximately 9.6% voluntarily end their participation, and services were discontinued for 3.1% when participants were incarcerated. A small number of youth exit as the result of being institutionalized or hospitalized or because they join the military. While “achieved self-sufficiency” is among the options as a reason for exit, it is seldom selected by youth or Self-Sufficiency Advocates, reflecting the difficulty all young adults face in fully making it on their own by age 21 or younger.

Youth with less than three months of service: Beginning last year, we identified a set of youth who exited services within three months of their intake date. While many youth have multiple entries and exits from services, a smaller number never seem to fully engage with the program. In SFY 2012, 28 (8.7%) of the 321 exits from the program were of youth who participated for less than three months and did not return before the end of the fiscal year. Of these youth, about one-third received PAL for at least one month. These youth are excluded from the following outcomes analysis.

(continued on next page)

Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

PART III – Outcomes of Youth Exiting Aftercare

The overall purpose of Iowa's Aftercare and PAL programs is to assist young people who age out of foster care make a successful transition to adulthood. The challenges facing this population are well-documented and outcomes for these youth are often less desirable than their peers who have not been in foster care. The services and supports offered by the Iowa Aftercare Services Network are designed to help these young adults move toward stability and self-sufficiency in five key areas: education, employment, housing, health, and relationships. A variety of measures are used to assess progress in these outcome areas.

In this analysis of outcomes, we compare the original intake data collected when youth first accessed services with the last exit interview data for those youth who exited during State Fiscal Year 2012 and did not return before July 1, 2012. This provides an unduplicated group of youth on which data is reported for the year. It should be noted that some of the youth included in this analysis may have already returned for services after the close of the fiscal year or could yet return if they are not yet age 21. Exit data is available for 180 young people who completed an exit interview with Aftercare staff during SFY 2012 and who did not return before the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2012).

The average age of these 180 youth was 18.4 at intake and 20.5 at exit. Of exiting youth, 65% were age 21 at exit and are no longer eligible for services. The average length of time between when this population first accessed services and their SFY 2012 exit is just over two years. Two-thirds of the youth exiting services and on which data is included in this report were involved with Aftercare for a period of two year or more and half were involved for at least two and a half years, although this may include some interruptions of service over that timeframe.

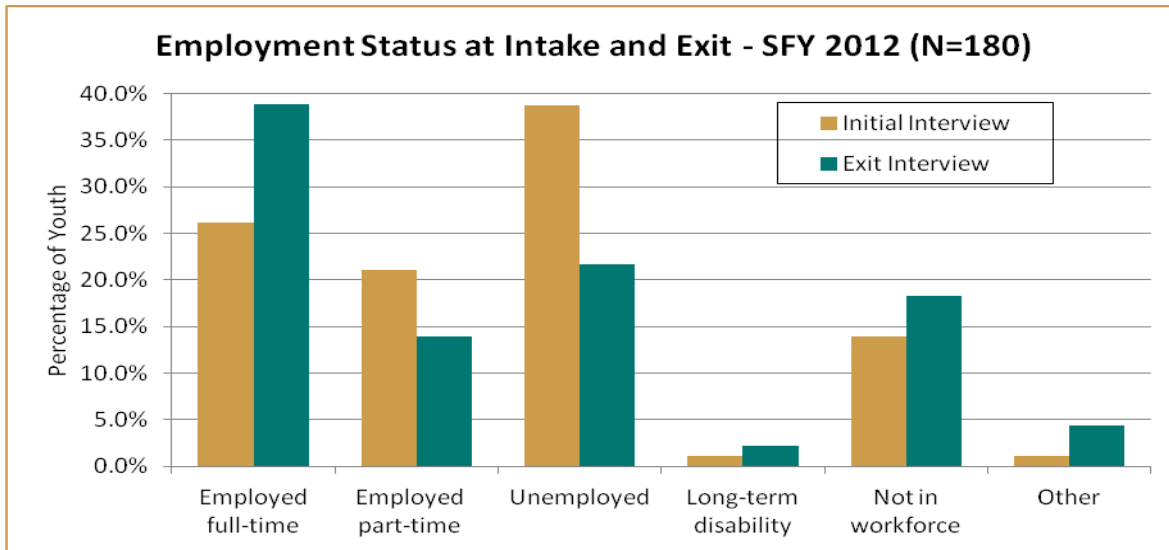
Specific questions from the Core Client Outcomes database are used to assess progress in nine outcome areas identified by the Department. A major upgrade to the Aftercare Core Client Outcomes data collection instruments was made in July 2009. This upgrade resulted in new questions being added and some questions being eliminated or revised significantly to provide better information and to be more consistent with requirements and questions of the National Youth in Transition Database. For this reason, original intake information on 77 youth included in this analysis who first accessed Aftercare services prior to July 1, 2009, is not identical to the exit data collected in SFY 2012. Where these differences in questions occur, they are noted in the data tables and analysis presented below.

For purposes of this analysis and report, we define those youth who met the qualifications and received a PAL stipend for at least one month as a PAL participant. Of the 180 total participants for whom data is reported, 135 (75%) are included in the PAL population, and 45 (25%) are in the Non-PAL (*i.e.*, Basic) grouping. This is a slight shift from last year's report when 81% were PAL participants. Data is presented for all 180 youth combined, as well as for the 135 PAL participants and 45 Basic participants separately for each of the indicators.

Employment: Young people exiting foster care and entering adulthood tend to lead marginal economic lives. Among the participants that exited services in SFY 2012, less than half were employed either full or part-time when they first accessed services. At exit, 38.9% of participants were employed at least 25 hours per week and another 13.9% were employed but

Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

less than 25 hours per week. The percentage of participants “unemployed” declined from 38.7% at intake to 21.7% at exit in SFY 2012. At the same time, there was an increase of 4.4% in participants not in the workforce at all. This includes both full-time students, as well as those who have become discouraged and are no longer seeking work. While lingering effects of the overall economic recession are still impacting this population, the employment gains demonstrated by young people exiting services this year is an improvement from last year’s outcomes and is an encouraging sign.



Specific percentages of employment status of exiting participants, and a breakdown by PAL and Basic participants, are shown in table below. Labor force participation, in general, is higher at both intake and exit among PAL participants than Basic participants reflecting, in part, the requirements of the PAL program.

	All (N=180)		PAL (N=135)		Basic (N=45)	
	Initial	Exit	Initial	Exit	Initial	Exit
Employed full-time*	26.1%	38.9%	28.7%	47.0%	18.2%	13.6%
Employed part-time*	21.1%	13.9%	25.7%	15.4%	28.8%	20.0%
Unemployed	38.7%	21.7%	33.8%	20.6%	45.5%	25.0%
Long-term disability	1.1%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	4.6%	9.1%
Not in workforce	13.9%	18.3%	11.8%	14.0%	20.5%	31.8%
Other	1.1%	4.4%	0.0%	0.0%	4.6%	9.1%

*The pre-2009 intake question regarding employment status categorized full-time employment as 30 or more hours per week and did not define part-time employment. Beginning in July 2009 the intake and exit interview question regarding employment included more specific options of “employed an average of 35 or more hours per week,” “employed an average of 25 to 34 hours per week,” and “employed for less than 25 hours per week.” In this table, responses of “employed 30 or more hours per week” from those that first accessed services prior to July 2009 are combined with responses of “employed 35 or more hours per week” and “employed 25 – 34 hours per week” from those accessing services after July 2009 and reported as employed full-time for initial interviews. Employed part-time includes those reporting “employed part-time” in the earlier data collection instrument with those reporting “employed less than 25 hours per week” in the newer version. Other options remained the same.

**Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012**

Resources to Meet Living Expenses: Self-sufficiency is the ultimate goal of Aftercare and PAL services, but few young people achieve full independence by the age of 21 and young people exiting Aftercare are no exception. In the Core Client Outcomes we distinguish between earned income and all resources (including public assistance) when asking participants about their ability to meet their living expenses. On exit, whereas only 39.4% of participants report having enough earned income alone to meet living expenses, 92.8% of participants report having enough money to cover their expenses when other assistance (including PAL when applicable) is included. In either case, there is substantial improvement from intake to exit. In related areas of managing money and having a bank account, participants also demonstrate progress as shown in the table below.

The question closest to measuring adequate resources in the pre-July 2009 interview was “Do you have a monthly budget to cover expenses?” with response options of “yes” or “no”. This table shows the percent who responded “yes” to the resource questions in older and newer versions of the interviews separately. Similarly, the question in the pre-2009 instrument regarding a bank account was revised to be more specific in the newer tool to identify the type of account(s) held by youth. This data should be interpreted with caution because of changes in the wording of the questions.

Resources – Pre-7/1/09 intake	Initial (N=77)	Exit	PAL Initial (N=70)	PAL Exit	Basic Initial (N=7)	Basic Exit
Has a monthly budget to cover expenses?	54.6%	N/A	57.1%	N/A	28.6%	N/A
Has a bank account	68.8%	N/A	71.4%	N/A	42.9%	N/A
Resources – Post 7/1/09 Intake	Initial (N=103)	Exit (N=180)	PAL Initial (N=66)	PAL Exit (N=136)	Basic Initial (N=37)	Basic Exit (N=44)
Has enough money to cover needed expenses with earned income alone	16.5%	39.4%	13.6%	43.4%	21.6%	27.3%
Has enough money to cover needed expenses with income and other assistance	62.1%	92.8%	68.2%	96.3%	51.4%	81.8%
Can manage money responsibly	70.9%	85.6%	78.8%	91.2%	56.8%	68.2%
Has a checking account	47.6%	71.1%	56.1%	76.5%	32.4%	54.6%
Has a savings account	45.6%	67.8%	54.6%	72.1%	29.8%	54.6%

Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

Safe and Stable Housing: With limited income, finding affordable housing is often a major challenge for aftercare participants. As is true for many young adults, youth in Aftercare frequently rely on friends or family for a place to live or to share housing expenses. Compared to when they first access services, on exit more youth are assuming some responsibility for the cost of housing (from 62.6% at intake to 72.2% at exit) and fewer are living in transitional facilities, shelters or other supported housing arrangements (from 10.3% to 1.7%). While a sizable portion of Aftercare participants are attending college, very few take advantage of university housing.

On exit, 19.44% of youth reported having been homeless sometime in the previous two years, and two participants reported living on the street or outdoors at the time they exited Aftercare services.

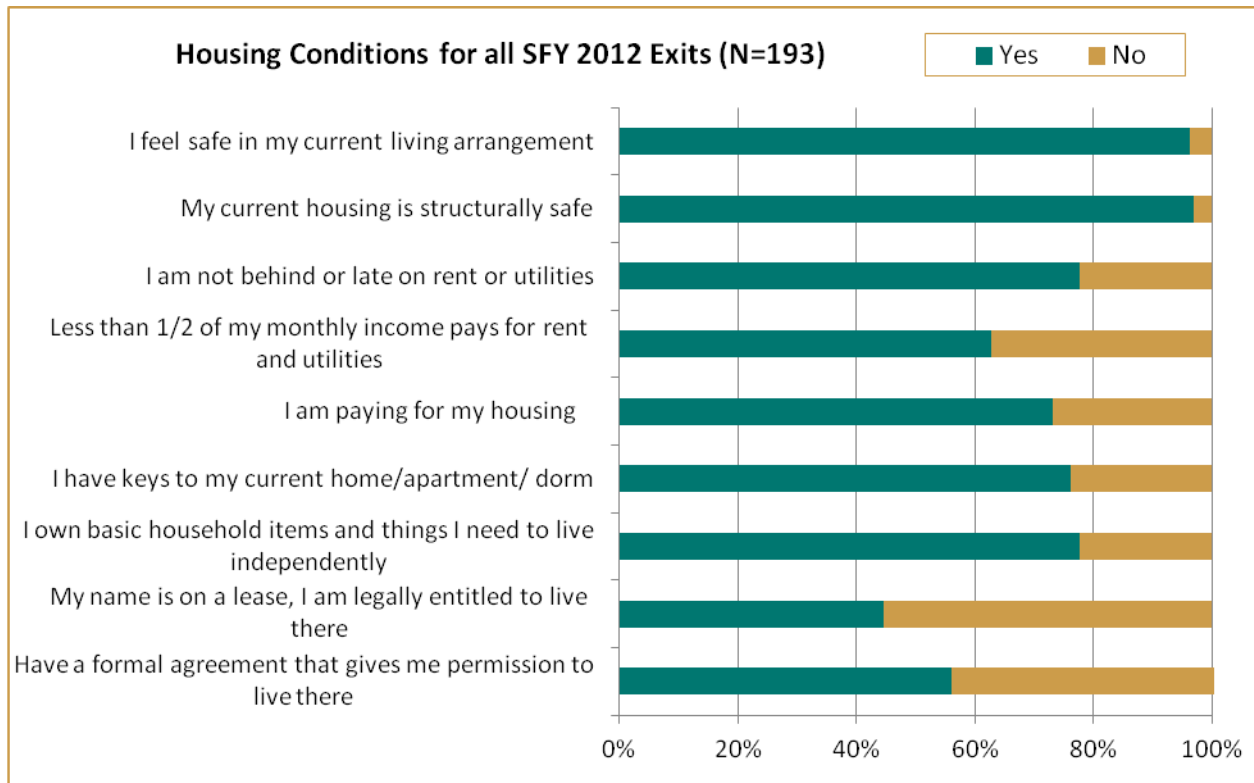
Housing	All Initial (N=155)*	All Exit (N=180)	PAL Initial (N=110)*	PAL Exit (N=135)	Basic Initial (N=45)*	Basic Exit (N=45)
University housing (residence hall, sorority/fraternity)	5.8%	4.4%	8.2%	5.2%	0%	2.2%
Apartment or house (sole responsibility for rent)	18.7%	17.2%	21.8%	17.0%	11.1%	17.8%
Apartment or house (shared responsibility for rent)	19.4%	33.9%	22.7%	38.5%	11.1%	20.0%
Someone else's apt or house paying rent	24.5%	21.1%	25.5%	23.7%	22.2%	13.3%
Someone else's apt or house, not paying rent or living expenses, couch surfing	17.4%	14.4%	10.0%	11.9%	35.6%	22.2%
Transitional facility, shelter, or other supported housing arrangement	10.3%	1.7%	10.9%	1.5%	8.8%	2.2%
Street/outdoors	0%	1.1%	0%	0%	0%	4.4%
Other	3.9%	5.0%	0.9%	1.5%	11.1%	15.6%

* Due to changes in interview questions beginning in July 2009, comparable intake data is not available on all exiting participants. The percentages for initial data are based on 155 participants for whom intake data is available, including 110 PAL participants and 45 Basic or Non-PAL participants.

Housing Stability: Beginning in July 2009, a number of additional questions regarding safe and stable housing were added to the interview instrument. While comparable intake data is not available on these questions for all of these participants, the data collected from 193 exits on these questions is presented below. More than 95% of young people feel safe in their living arrangement; and approximately three-quarters report that they own basic household items, are pay for their housing, and have keys to where they are living. Housing challenges remain for this population in terms of affordability of housing (for 37% more than half of their income goes

Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

toward rent and utilities and 22% are behind on their rent or utility bills). Less than half have their name on a lease.



Rent Subsidy Program: For young people not receiving PAL, Aftercare provides access to a Rent Subsidy program administered by the Iowa Finance Authority with funding from DHS. In SFY 2012, about \$70,000 was used to subsidize the rent of Aftercare participants in eighteen different counties through this program. On average, twenty-two youth a month received an IFA rent subsidy. The amount of the subsidy is the difference between the lesser of the actual rent or fair market rent and thirty percent of the youth’s monthly gross income, not to exceed \$350. In SFY 2012, the rent subsidy averaged \$261.08 per month.

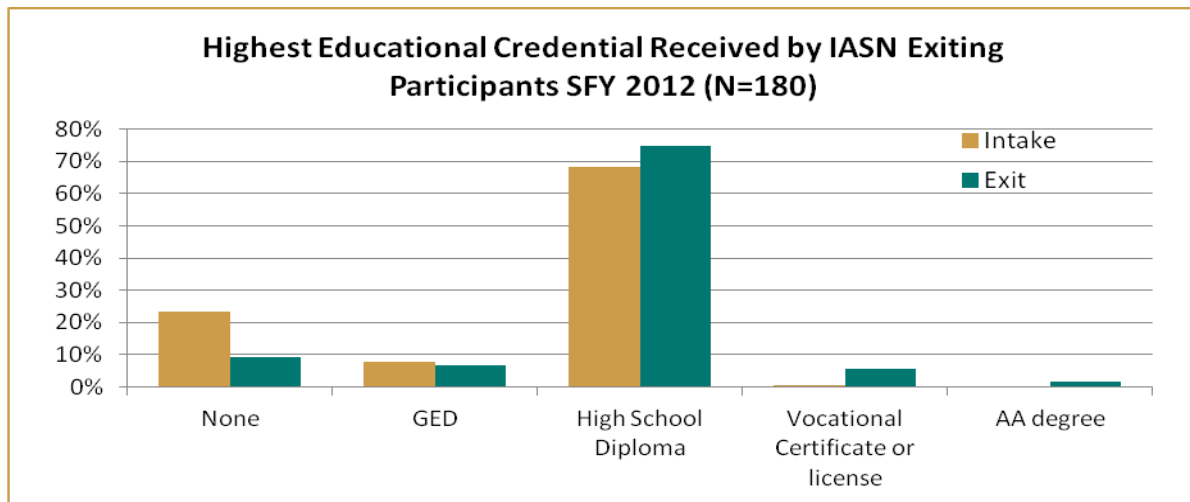
Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

Education: As shown in the table below, young people make considerable progress in the area of education while participating in Aftercare. More than 90% of youth on exit have earned either a high school diploma or GED, compared to 77% of the same youth at intake. And about one-third have been able to complete some college while receiving services. There are fewer youth attending school at exit than at intake, however, indicating that post-secondary education retention and success continues to be a challenge for many Aftercare participants.

	All (N=180)		PAL (N=135)		Basic (N=45)	
	Initial	Exit	Initial	Exit	Initial	Exit
% Attending School *	48.3%	31.1%	50.4%	34.1%	42.2%	20.0%
Highest level of education completed						
10 th grade or less	2.7%	2.2%	1.5%	0.7%	6.7%	6.7%
11 th grade	22.8%	8.9%	11.8%	2.2%	55.6%	28.9%
12 th grade	74.4%	54.4%	86.7%	54.8%	42.9%	53.3%
College freshman	--	17.2%	--	20.7%	--	6.7%
College sophomore	--	12.2%	--	15.6%	--	2.2%
College junior	--	3.9%	--	5.2%	--	--
College completion**	--	0.6%	--	0.7%	--	--
Highest Credential Received						
None	23.3%	9.4%	11.9%	2.2%	57.8%	31.1%
GED	7.7%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	11.1%	6.7%
High School Diploma	68.3%	74.7%	80.7%	81.5%	31.1%	57.8%
Vocational Certificate or license	0.5%	5.6%	0.7%	6.7%	--	2.2%
AA degree	--	1.7%	--	2.2%	--	--
Bachelors Degree	--	0.6%	--	0.7%	--	--

* Percent attending school includes youth who answered that they were enrolled full-time or part-time at intake in the pre-July 2009 interview instrument, as well as those responding that they were enrolled full-time (school only); employed and enrolled; or enrolled in career prep or internship on the new questions.

** College completion may include community or junior college.



Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

Positive Relationships: Building social capital – social relationships and networks that support healthy development – is critical during adolescence and early adulthood. Most young people in Aftercare report that they do have supportive adults who they will *always* be able to turn to for support and guidance.

Relationships – Pre-7/1/09 intake	All Initial (N=77)	All Exit	PAL Initial (N=70)	PAL Exit	Basic Initial (N=7)	Basic Exit
Has positive relationship with supportive adult for:						
Emotional support	96.1%	N/A	97.1%	N/A	85.7%	N/A
Help in a crisis	96.1%	N/A	97.1%	N/A	85.7%	N/A
Job/school advice or guidance	97.4%	N/A	98.6%	N/A	85.7%	N/A
Relationships – Post 7/1/09 Intake	Initial (N=103)	Exit (N=180)	PAL Initial (N=65)	PAL Exit (N=135)	Basic Initial (N=38)	Basic Exit (N=45)
Has a positive relationship with supportive adult family member	83.5%	85.0%	84.6%	83.7%	81.6%	88.9%
Has a positive relationship with supportive non-family adult	93.2%	95.0%	95.4%	95.6%	89.5%	93.3%

The family members most often identified by youth at exit as providing that support are birth parents (33%); extended family members (29%); and adult siblings (14%). Non-family support is provided most often by adult friends (49%); caseworkers (21%); and former foster parents (19%). Of youth exiting Aftercare, 15% did not identify any family member who offered life-long support and 5% could not identify a non-family adult support person.

While the vast majority of youth report having positive relationships with adults, many recognize that they could still use more. The Aftercare Network poses the question: “*Do you have positive personal relationships with adults in the community?*” on semi-annual satisfaction surveys which are completed by active participants in the months of October and April. The table below shows the distribution of responses to this question in the surveys completed in SFY 2012.

Do you have positive personal relationships with adults in the community?	Oct. 2011 (N=371)	April 2012 (N=333)
Yes, plenty	80.9%	76.3%
Some but not enough	16.7%	19.8%
No	2.4%	3.9%

Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

Children and Parenting: Early childbearing and parenting is relatively common among youth who age-out of foster care. While less than 10% of youth entered Aftercare as parents, by the time they exited, 30% are parenting. Of exiting participants who are parents, more than 90% have their children living with them.

Parenting	All Initial (N=180)	All Exit (N=180)	PAL Initial (N=135)	PAL Exit (N=135)	Basic Initial (N=45)	Basic Exit (N=45)
Are you a parent? *	9.4%	30.6%	7.4%	32.6%	15.6%	24.4%
Are you currently pregnant, given birth or fathered a child in the last year?	5.0%	26.1%	4.4%	25.9%	6.7%	26.7%
Does your child live with you? (as a % of those who indicated they were a parent)	N/A	91.0% (N=56)	N/A	91.1% (N=45)	N/A	90.9% (N=11)

* Includes those who responded that they were supporting one or more dependents on the pre July 2009 initial interview, as well as those who responded “yes” to the new interview question “Are you a parent,” beginning in July 2009.

High Risk Behaviors: The prevalence of selected high risk behaviors among Aftercare participants are presented in the tables below. Note that some of the questions changed beginning in July 2009 so strict comparison from initial to exit should not be made.

	All (N=180)		PAL (N=135)		Basic (N=45)	
	Initial	Exit	Initial	Exit	Initial	Exit
% responding “yes” to:						
Suicide*						
Made Plans to commit suicide	7.8%	5.9%	5.3%	6.6%	15.6%	5.3%
Attempted suicide	3.9%	3.6%	3.0%	3.1%	6.7%	5.3%
Incarcerated or Detained in Jail or detention facility**	20.0%	27.5%	17.0%	24.6%	28.9%	47.1%
Homeless in last 2 years***	12.2%	19.7%	5.9%	14.9%	31.1%	34.1%

* Pre-2009 questions asked about suicide plans or attempts in the last six months, which were revised to questions asking about suicide plans or attempts the last year. Nine youth declined to answer questions related to suicide at exit. Percentages are of those who did respond.

** Pre-2009 question asked about incarceration/detention in last year, revised to ask about incarceration/detention in the last 2 years in new interview.

*** Pre-2009 question asked if the participant had been homeless since leaving foster care. The revised question asks if he/she has been homeless in the last two years.

Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

Among exiting participants, 27.5% had been incarcerated or detained in the last two years. Because Aftercare serves youth who have been adjudicated delinquent as well as those who entered foster care as a Child in Need of Assistance, many of these youth may have been detained as juveniles prior to accessing Aftercare. We currently do not have data to isolate the number of Aftercare clients who are incarcerated during or after receiving Aftercare services.

	All (N=180)		PAL (N=135)		Basic (N=45)	
	Initial	Exit	Initial	Exit	Initial	Exit
Substance Use in last 30 days						
Tobacco	37.8%	44.9%	34.1%	44.8%	48.9%	45.5%
Alcohol to Intoxication	8.3%	18.5%	7.4%	19.4%	11.1%	15.9%
Marijuana	8.9%	9.0%	5.2%	9.0%	20.0%	9.1%

Tobacco use, in particular, is high among the population of young people served by Aftercare and substantially higher than their same-age peers. Self-reported use of alcohol to intoxication and marijuana use among this population is more consistent or somewhat lower among Aftercare participants than their same age peers.

Health Insurance Coverage: Establishment of the Medicaid for Independent Young Adults (MIYA) coverage group in 2006 for former foster youth up to their 21st birthday has improved the rate of health insurance coverage for this population. Less than 5% of youth on exit have no medical insurance, but those with MIYA could lose their coverage when they turn 21. A small number of youth exiting Aftercare have insurance other than Medicaid, including 3.9% who have employer provided insurance, 2.2% who are paying for their own insurance, and 3.9% with other insurance coverage. Data is not available on if youth have both Medicaid and other insurance.

	All (N=180)		PAL (N=135)		Basic (N=45)	
	Initial	Exit	Initial	Exit	Initial	Exit
Enrolled in Medicaid	91.1%	89.9%	92.6%	89.6%	86.7%	90.9%
Insured (other than Medicaid)						
Employer provided	0.6%	3.9%	0.0%	5.2%	2.2%	0%
Private pay/self-provided	1.1%	2.2%	0.7%	3.0%	2.2%	0%
Other insurance	2.8%	3.9%	3.0%	4.8%	2.2%	2.2%
No medical insurance	3.9%	4.5%	3.7%	4.5%	4.4%	4.4%

Essential Documents: While most young people entering Aftercare report knowing how to obtain essential documents, not all have those documents in their possession. Progress is demonstrated by Aftercare participants in the areas of knowing how to obtain essential documents as well as actually having those documents in their possession between accessing and

**Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012**

exiting services. Among exiting youth, 87% have both their birth certificate and social security card, compared to 77% at the time of their intake.

% responding "yes"	All (N=180)		PAL (N=135)		Basic (N=45)	
	Initial	Exit	Initial	Exit	Initial	Exit
Knows how to obtain the following:						
Birth certificate	91.1%	94.4%	92.6%	94.8%	86.7%	93.2%
Social Security card	93.3%	96.6%	93.3%	96.3%	93.3%	97.7%
Medical records	79.4%	95.0%	83.0%	98.5%	68.9%	84.1%
Educational records	91.1%	95.5%	93.3%	98.5%	84.4%	86.4%
Has in their possession:						
Birth certificate	81.1%	89.4%	82.2%	91.9%	77.8%	81.8%
Social Security card	89.4%	96.1%	90.4%	96.3%	86.7%	95.5%
Driver's license	N/A	65.6%	N/A	77.0%	N/A	31.1%
Both BC & SSC	77.2%	87.2%	78.5%	91.1%	73.3%	75.6%

Conclusion

The challenges facing young people who age out of foster care at age 18 without traditional family support and their resulting poor outcomes are well-documented. In response, Iowa has developed a system of supports and services to meet the needs of this population of emerging adults and help move them to stability and self-sufficiency. The Iowa Aftercare Services Network has assisted more than 2,250 young people who aged out of foster care and voluntarily accessed Aftercare services since the program began in 2002. Increasingly, young adults are taking advantage of Aftercare and PAL support up to their 21st birthday when they lose eligibility for the services.

Iowa's Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program was designed to provide much needed financial support to this population. Interestingly, a smaller proportion of young people served by the Aftercare Network this year met the eligibility requirements for PAL.

Outcomes among those exiting services show improvement in a number of areas, while the struggles encountered by this population continue even with the support that is provided. Positive outcomes achieved by the Aftercare Network in SFY 2012, as measured by progress made by 180 exiting participants, include:

- An increase from 76.6% of participants with a high school credential at intake to 90.6% of participants at exit;
- 61 young people (33.9% of exiting participants) had completed at least one year of college;

Iowa Aftercare Services Network -- Annual Outcomes Report
July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

- An increase in full-time employment from 26.1% at intake to 38.9% at exit;
- Compared to when they first access services, on exit more youth are assuming some responsibility for the cost of housing (from 62.6% at intake to 72.2% at exit) and fewer are living in transitional facilities, shelters or other supported housing arrangements (from 10.3% to 1.7%).
- Across-the-board increases in young people who have essential documents (e.g., birth certificate, Social Security card), driver's licenses, and bank accounts – important steps toward achieving self-sufficiency.

Perhaps more compelling are the words of Aftercare participants themselves. The following comments were made by participants on Aftercare's semi-annual satisfaction surveys:

- *The aftercare program is fantastic. I honestly don't know what I would do without the support*
- *It has been a wonderful and helpful program that I would recommend to anyone.*
- *It has helped me a lot having someone to talk to and set goals and a month to month budget with it has helped me have a stable life on my own.*
- *It has been a huge success for me and I am extremely thankful for the services Aftercare provides. I am confident that after I complete the Aftercare program I will be well set to becoming a successful adult.*
- *My aftercare worker has helped with a lot to be there as a financial and emotional support throughout the three years I have worked with her.*
- *I have had a lot of help with schooling and setting goals for the future that has helped me with my life.*
- *It's an amazing program and truly does help people that have been affected by foster care.*

Beginning in the fall of 2012, the Department of Human Services will begin collecting data from a random sample of young people who were in foster care on their 17th birthday two years ago for the federally-required National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD). It will be interesting and instructive to learn from the NYTD data how these young adults are faring at age 19 and again at age 21, regardless of their participation in Aftercare and/or PAL.

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