



# 504

young people received Core Aftercare during SFY 2025. Of those, 30.6% were new participants.

## Life After Foster Care: Why Aftercare Services Matter

Every year, hundreds of young Iowans take a bold step into adulthood after leaving an out-of-home placement. For many, this experience feels like standing at the edge of the unknown without family or a trusted adult to catch them when they fall. That's where the Iowa Aftercare Services Network (IASN) comes in: we walk beside these youth, offering hope, guidance, and the support they deserve as they build their future.

The challenges these youth face are real and often overwhelming. The

Network helps them build connections to community resources and develop the skills they need to live on their own. Our program participants build long-term stability through financial planning, personal development, and career readiness.

IASN serves youth ages 17 to 23 across all 99 Iowa counties, providing a seamless continuity of care. Meaning that if a young person moves anywhere within the state, the progress they have made in Aftercare follows them. They can

continue right where they left off, staying on track with their housing, education, and employment goals.

Our programs are rigorously monitored and shaped by youth feedback, ensuring services evolve with the needs of Iowa's youth. With consistent, statewide support, IASN empowers young people not just to survive but to thrive as they create independent, successful lives.

Find our full Annual Reports and Participant Surveys at [iowaaftercare.org](http://iowaaftercare.org).

### Key Indicators



#### Supportive Relationships

Participants reported positive personal relationships with adults in their lives.



#### Stable Housing

Youth reported having a safe and stable place to live.



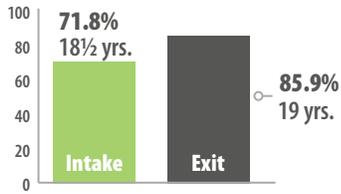
#### Sufficient Resources

Youth reported having enough resources for living expenses.

# Participant Characteristics

## Age

Approximately three in four (71.8%) new intakes were under 18½ when first accessing Aftercare, and 85.9% were under age 19.



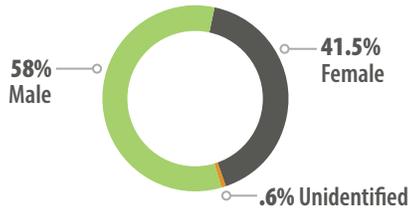
## Housing

The number of youth living on their own with sole responsibility for housing costs, increased from 10.6% at intake to 26.2% at exit.



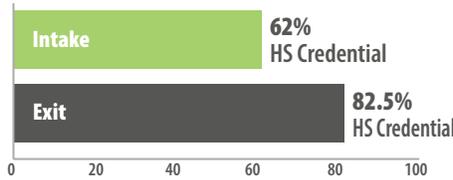
## Gender

Of new intakes in SFY 2025, 58.0% identified as male and 41.5% as female, while 0.6% did not identify as male or female.



## Education

Among this year's outcomes group, 62% had earned a high school credential prior to accessing Aftercare, and 82.5% at exit.



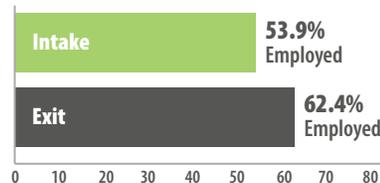
## Race

At intake, 44.3% identified as White Only, Non-Hispanic, and 55.7% identified as Youth of Color (i.e., with one or more other categories).



## Employment

Employment at any level increased from 53.9% to 62.4% at exit (both higher than the prior year).



*My advocate constantly goes out of her way to help and make sure I am okay, always checking in and helping me find new ways to succeed.*



*[My advocate] has given me so much genuine advice as well as shown me that the goals I set in this program I can actually reach. She helped me be able to move and get a better job.*

# Pre-Aftercare

## 149

youth served

## 650

contacts with youth to prepare them for exit from care

# Core Aftercare

## 176

young people accessed Aftercare for the first time (54 of 99 counties)

## 314

young people served per month on average

## 375

participants received a PAL stipend at least once

# Extended Aftercare

## 192

young people were served through Extended services (43 of 99 counties)

## 71

young people served per month on average

## \$238

in supportive payments per month on average

\*Family foster home ([non-relative], Relative, Adoption, Subsidized Guardianship, or Suitable Other placement); Q RTP (Qualified Residential Treatment Program) or shelter; SAL (Supervised Apartment Living); STS (State Training School).

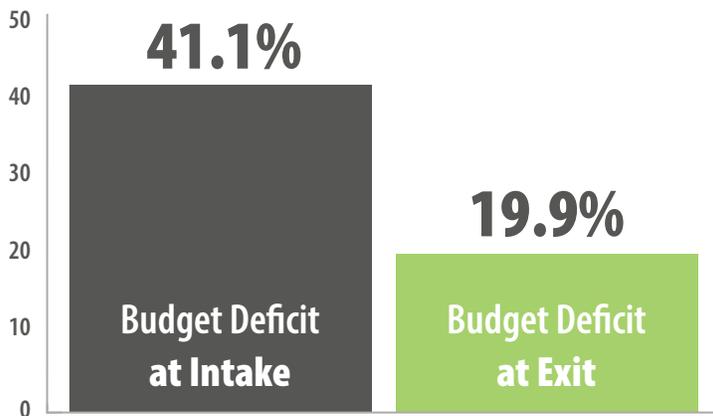


# 21%

of young people had improved their financial stability while in Core Aftercare.

## Financial Stability is on the Rise

Youth are making significant progress in financial stability while in Aftercare. When entering the program, 41.1% reported not having enough resources to cover their expenses in the previous month. By the time of their exit interview, that number had dropped to just 19.9%, showing a clear improvement in their ability to meet basic financial needs.



## The Delicate Balance Between Earning and Learning

Many young people in Aftercare want to work, but finding employment isn't easy. With 71.8% of new intakes 18 to 18½ and 85.9% under the age of 19, most are still finishing high school or working toward a diploma, and only 17.6% have ever held a job before.

**This paints a complex picture:** youth need income to be self-sustaining in today's economy, but balancing work with education can be especially challenging for youth who are already struggling to find safe housing and reliable transportation.

## Steven's Path to Independence

When Steven entered the Aftercare program, he was unemployed, living with his aunt, and had no transportation, making job hunting a challenge. Through motivational interviewing, his advocate helped Steven identify his goals: **secure his own apartment, find a job, and attend college.**

Over the next few months, Aftercare provided budgeting guidance, helped him build a resume, apply for jobs, and complete applications for financial aid and housing. With his aunt's support for transportation, Steven landed a job, and within six months, earned a promotion to team leader. He enrolled in 911 dispatch classes and moved into his own apartment.

Steven's determination and Aftercare's support have set him on a solid path toward self-sufficiency.

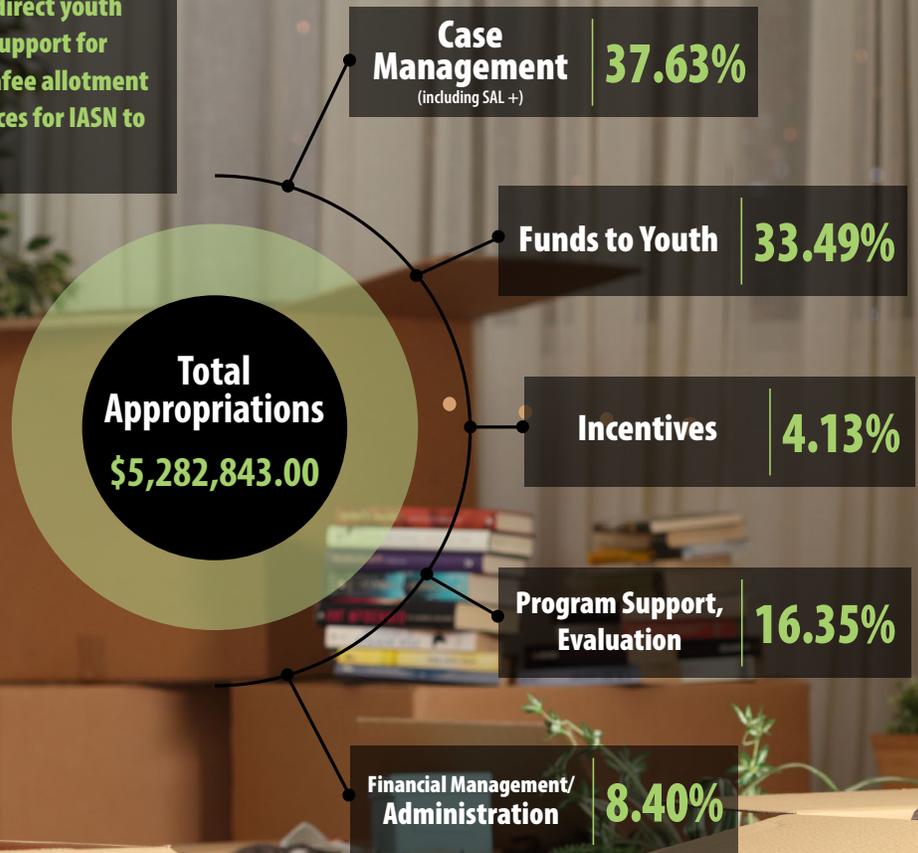


# Self-Sufficiency Advocates: A Partner for Independence

When youth join Aftercare, they are paired with a Self-Sufficiency Advocate (SSA)—a dedicated professional who offers guidance while respecting their independence as adults. Advocates do more than provide resources; they partner with youth to build the life they envision. Together, they set goals and create actionable plans. From securing safe housing and accessing emergency funds to enrolling in college or job training, advocates help youth navigate critical steps.

Beyond immediate needs, Advocates focus on long-term success. They teach practical skills like budgeting, time management, and problem-solving; these tools empower youth to thrive on their own. Whether it's finishing school, starting a job, or learning to manage life's challenges, Advocates provide the support and confidence youth need to achieve stability and independence. Adulting isn't easy, but with Aftercare, youth don't have to face it alone.

The Iowa Legislature allocated about \$1,769,260 for direct youth funds. This amount is only part of the state's overall support for Aftercare. Additional funding from Iowa's federal Chafee allotment is also contracted by the Department of Human Services for IASN to operate the program statewide.



Policy development, coordination, quality assurance, marketing, and evaluation services are provided on behalf of YSS by the Child Welfare Research and Training Project (CWRTP) at Iowa State University. Visit [iowaaftercare.org/ProgramResults](http://iowaaftercare.org/ProgramResults) to access the full 2025 Annual Outcomes Report or call (515) 294-8224 for more information.

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Iowa Department of Health and Human Services  
[hhs.iowa.gov](http://hhs.iowa.gov)



## IASN Partner Agencies

- [American Home Finding Association](#)
- [Child Saving Institute \(CSI\)](#)
- [Ellipsis](#)
- [Family Resources](#)
- [Foundation 2](#)
- [Four Oaks](#)
- [YSS \(Lead IASN Agency\)](#)

