

1. What is the rate of Medicaid coverage and percentages by category of Medicaid (e.g., ACA former foster care child category, IV-E category, etc.)?

Total Bridge to Independence participants =202

Total active Bridge to Independence young adults on Medicaid =157

Totals by Medicaid category:

Former Foster Care/Affordable Care Act = 131

Former Ward = 1

AABD (Aged/Blind/Disabled) =11

MAGI Parent/Caretaker = 9

Pregnant Women = 5

Reasons for young adults not being on Nebraska Medicaid include, but not limited to:

- Waiting period for a young adult who just gained citizenship;
- Income too high for SAGA standards (medical program for guardianship/adoption);
- Live out of state;
- Pending applications or have not applied.

How many letters of entitlement have been utilized for B2I participants since the program's inception and how many new letters of entitlement have been signed by quarter?

DCFS offered 5 letters of Entitlement between the time frame of July 2015-September 30, 2015.

In September, 2015, DCFS made the decision not to renew Letters of Entitlement to young adults. This decision was based on medical care outlined in the Bridge to Independence Regulations located at 395 NAC 10-005.01:

Medical care under the medical assistance program: If eligible, a young adult who is enrolled in the Bridge to Independence program will receive medical assistance through Nebraska Medicaid. The Department will assist the young adult in applying for the medical assistance program.

What are the expenditures due to medical costs associated with these letters of entitlement?

Since September 2015, no Letters of Entitlement have been offered to young adults, therefore, there are no expenditures to report.

- 2. Please provide a summary of the types of supportive services provided to young adults as part of their case plan concerning their immediate needs while in the B2I program, including both the range of services and the most frequently accessed services and any barriers that exist to needed supportive services.**

Per Bridge to Independence Regulations, DCFS does not provide funding for services. It is the expectation that the Independence Coordinator will help the young adult locate community supports and resources to meet their individual needs. The Independence Coordinators have become very aware of each community and what supports and services the community can offer for young adults. Some of the most frequent accessed services that have been connected to young adults are listed below. This is not an all-inclusive list, but it does provide the Advisory Committee information about the community outreach Independence Coordinators have been involved in. Additionally, all of the following services tie into helping young adult achieve success towards becoming more self-sufficient.

Transportation:

- ✓ Drivers Education: DCFS has a sub award with Central Plains Supportive Services to provide funds for Drivers Education fees;
- ✓ Opportunity Passport (asset-building program that includes financial education, asset-specific training and matched saving account);
- ✓ Locating volunteers to help with practice driving, help studying for the driving test, finding a “driving buddy” to utilize a vehicle).

Housing: (assisted with referrals, attending meetings, provided transportation if needed)

- ✓ Rentwise;
- ✓ Housing Authority;
- ✓ City Missions;
- ✓ Homeless Coalition;
- ✓ Need Based Fund through Central Plains Supportive Services;
- ✓ Enhancing Independent Living coordination for youth under age 19 between Independence Coordinators and Children and Family Service Specialist;
- ✓ HUB;
- ✓ Referring Young adults to apartment complexes who are young adult friendly;
- ✓ Treatment programs;
- ✓ Hope Chest;
- ✓ Youth Mart;
- ✓ Saint Francis;
- ✓ Caroles House of Hope;
- ✓ Jacob’s Place;
- ✓ YES House Shelter;
- ✓ CEDARS Bridges Transitional Living Program;
- ✓ Behavioral Health and the Regions;
- ✓ Mary Land Living Center.

Education-

- ✓ Referral to Education and Training Voucher with Central Plains;
- ✓ Informing young adult and attending meetings with Education Quest;
- ✓ Referral to Learn and Earn to Achieve Potential (LEAP);
- ✓ Collaboration with Southeast Community College and Metro Community College for additional supports that can be offered to the young adult;
- ✓ Referrals to Job Corps;
- ✓ Referral and attending meetings at Community Action Agencies;
- ✓ Referral and attending meetings at Heartland Family Services;
- ✓ Referral and attending meetings at Saint Francis Services.

Employment- (Assisting with referrals/applications, attending meetings, and providing transportation if needed)

- ✓ Vocational Rehabilitation;
- ✓ Youth Employment and Support Services Program;
- ✓ HUB;
- ✓ Heartland Family Services;
- ✓ Identifying and attending Job Fairs;
- ✓ Employers that Independence Coordinators become aware of;
- ✓ Job Corps;
- ✓ Community Actions;
- ✓ Advanced Services;
- ✓ NE Dept. of Labor;
- ✓ Goodwill Employment;
- ✓ DHHS Job search through SNAP.

Mental health/substance abuse-

- ✓ Identification of providers that accept Medicaid;
- ✓ Identification treatment programs for either mental health or substance abuse;
- ✓ Referral and attending meetings with Behavioral Health System and/or the Region Services.

Barriers in accessing services needed for young adults vary by location, and the financial stability of the young adult. Some of the barriers young adults face include the following:

- Lack of transportation;
- No telephone for communication;
- Time management;
- Residing in a rural area or simply too far away from the service;
- Young adult not meeting service qualifications;
- Service needed does not exist where the young adult lives;
- Landlords or apartment complexes who won't allow young adult sign a lease;
- Money management/poor credit history;
- Mental health/substance abuse/developmental disabilities.

3. Please provide a summary of the types of supportive services provided to young adults as a part of their transition planning concerning their transition out of the B2I program, including both the range of services and the most frequently accessed services and any barriers that exist to needed supportive services.

Transitioning out of Bridge to Independence can be planned and well executed, or abrupt and without planning especially, when a young adult does not meet with the Independence Coordinator and DCFS terminate enrollment due to lack of contact. Independence Coordinators have detailed discussions with the young adult on what they feel the biggest lack of support will be once Bridge to Independence is no longer involved. Depending on this need, will drive the Independence Coordinator to help identify the supports needed. Additionally, efforts are focused around sustainability of housing, employment and education.

- The transitional planning at this stage may be as simple as offering information for future needs or actually making referrals and ensuring supports are in place.
- Independence Coordinators utilize their communities Connected Youth initiative to help young adults apply to multiple services at one time. This also allows the young adult to become aware of the supports that can be offered to them in their area for the future.
- Making suggestions, helping with referrals, and brain storming if the young adult is in need of the following areas: housing, employment, education, money management.
- Ensuring young adult is aware of independent living services they can utilize after age of 21 such as PALS, involvement with Project Everlast; Branching Out (Omaha Home for Boys), the Education and Training Voucher or LEAP Program for educational needs.
- Connecting young adults with adult services such as Behavioral Health Providers; SSI, DD Services, SNAP, Vocational Rehabilitation, Energy Assistance, Emergency Funds, etc.

The barriers appear to remain somewhat similar to barriers in question #2. The young adults own motivation can be a driving force to their own success or lack thereof. Sometimes the young adult has a difficult time conceptualizing what it will be like not to have an Independence Coordinator or that extra money every month and does not always engage in transitional planning.

4. Please provide expenditures for the previous year detailing itemized program service costs and program administrative costs including but not limited to: salaries, training costs (including itemized costs, such as the cost of materials, number of attendees at each training, travel costs, and the cost to train the trainers), and staff and supervisor turnover and changes (including the location of staff and supervisors). This should also include itemized adoption and guardianship costs and state-extended guardianship assistance program costs.

Expenses for Bridge to Independence for the past State Fiscal year which ended on June 30, 2016 are the following:

BRIDGE TO INDEPENDENCE INFORMATION FOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Salaries:	\$619,339.87
Benefits:	\$220,659.53
Office supplies, building expenses, etc...	\$38,655.98
Travel Expenses	\$64,514.31
Equipment, etc...	\$10,920.55
Maintenance Payments/Stipends	\$1,722,035.39
Adoption Subsidy Extension	\$1,937.00
Guardianship Subsidy Extension	\$755.00

Bridge to Independence Staff Location:

Supervisors

- Terrance Williams- Lincoln (supervises Independence Coordinators in Lincoln, Kearney, Grand Island, and North Platte).
- Kathy Anstine-Omaha (supervises Independence Coordinators in Omaha and Fremont)

Independence Coordinators location by office and number of staff

- North Platte-1
- Kearney-1
- Grand Island-1
- Lincoln-4
- Omaha-3
- Fremont-1

Currently, Bridge to Independence has two vacant positions which are located in Omaha.

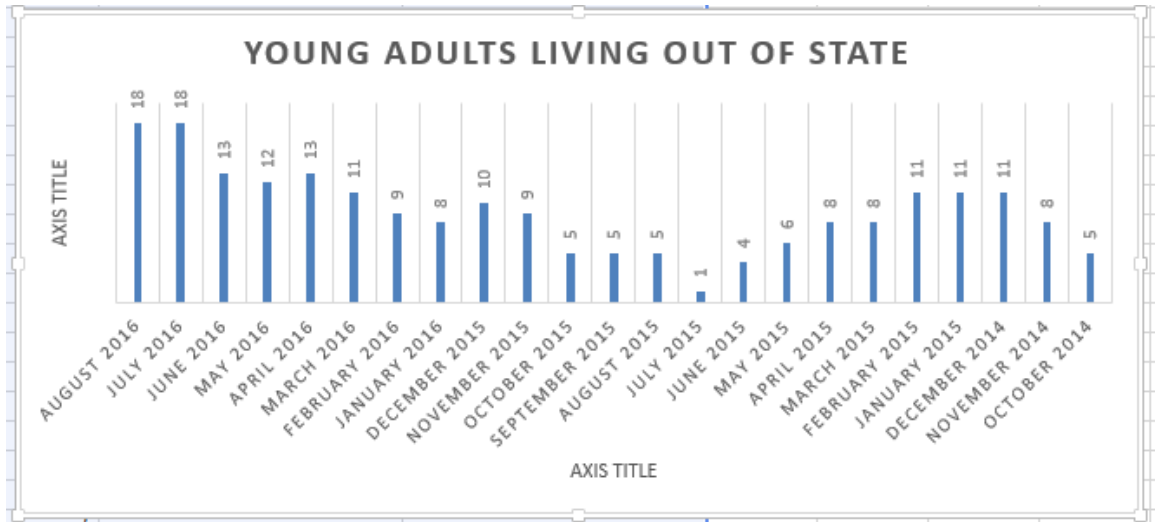
Staff Turnover:

In the past Year, Bridge to Independence experienced the following staff turnover:

- Both Supervisors, Meaghan Schweitzer and Doug Peters left the agency
- Lincoln experienced 3 turnovers (1 of the 3 was due to promotion to Supervisor for Bridge to Independence)
- Omaha experienced 3 turnovers
 - 2 remain vacant
 - One of the vacancies created in Omaha, was an Independence Coordinator who transferred to a Lincoln Independence Coordinator Position.

- 5. Please provide the number of B2I participants who are living out of state and the number of out of state visits by DHHS staff.**

Below is a chart that identifies the number of young adults living out of state, since the inception of the bridge to Independence program. (The number on top of each bar indicates the number of young adults living out of state for that particular month).



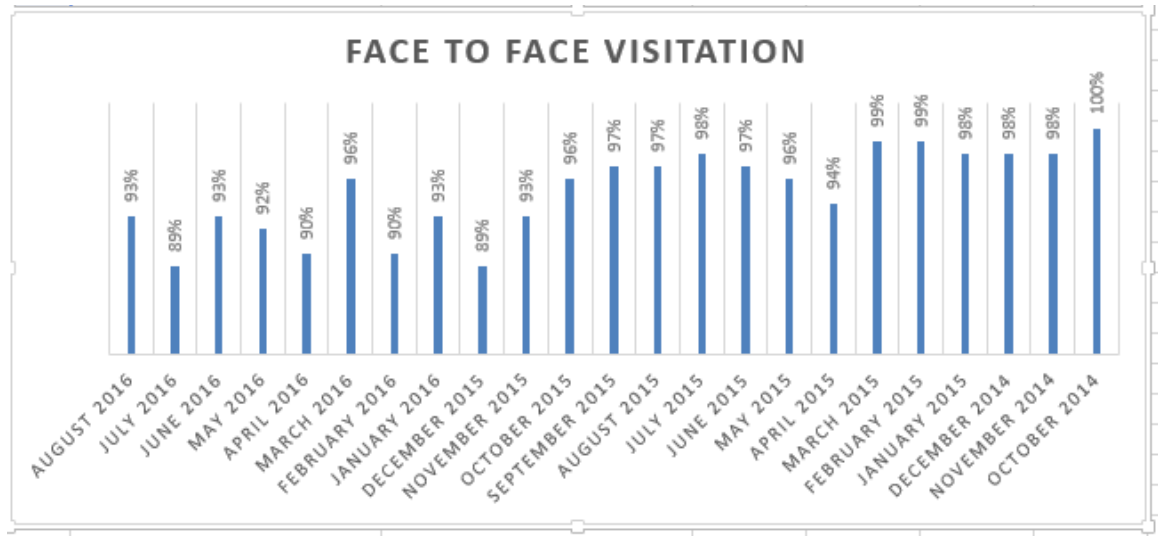
Currently, Bridge to Independence has young adults residing in the following states: Colorado, Wyoming, Texas, Florida, Missouri, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Iowa, Michigan, South Dakota, Arkansas, Georgia, Minnesota, Arizona and Kentucky.

DCFS has the ability to request courtesy supervision from a child welfare worker in another state through the Interstate State Compact for Placement of Children (ICPC). However, this service is contingent on the other state agreeing to provide supervision for Nebraska. DCFS has discovered, if the state in which the young adult is residing in does not have extension of foster care, they will not provide supervision.

Currently, DCFS have an assigned worker to supervise the young adult for us in the following states through ICPC: Arizona, Michigan and Minnesota.

The following states have denied providing supervision for our young adults: Texas, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Iowa, Colorado, Wyoming, Georgia, Kentucky, and Delaware.

Every month DCFS captures visitation rates however, this data is not exclusively for those living in Nebraska versus out of state. Since the implementation of Bridge to Independence, Independence Coordinators have been very consistent with visitation for those living in Nebraska and living outside of Nebraska borders. The follow data chart provides the percentage of completed face to face contacts between Independence Coordinators and young adults that occurred for the month.



Reasons for missed visitation for those living out of state included:

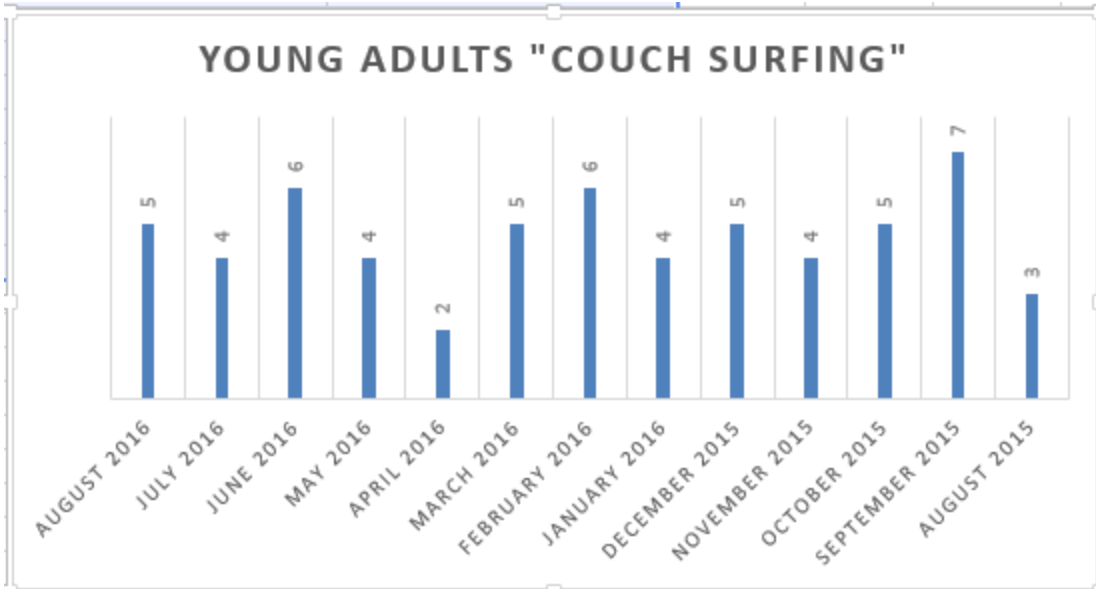
- Bad weather/blizzard;
- Can't get a hold of the young adult to make travel arrangements.

In one situation an Independence Coordinator traveled to Louisiana and was unable to locate the young adult at the address provided.

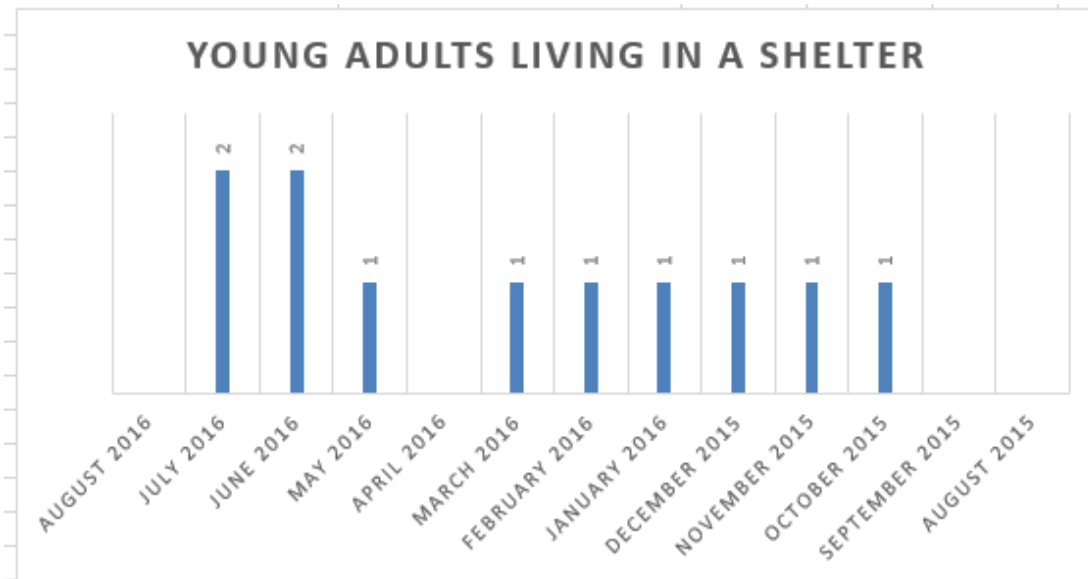
6. Please provide any outcome data available, including but not limited to rates of homelessness, educational attainment, and employment. How do these rates compare to those of same age peers, both with and without foster care experience?

Homelessness

Bridge to Independence identifies "homelessness" as those individual who do not have a roof over their head. Since the beginning of the program, we have not had any young adult that knowingly has this definition. Homelessness is an urgent situation, and Independence Coordinators must make all efforts to secure a housing situation for the young adult, even if it is temporary. In August 2015, we started to capture data that provides information for those young adults who would be considered "couch surfing" and for those individuals who are residing in "a shelter". The following two data charts will outline those young adults meeting the criteria of "Couch Surfing" or "Living in a shelter."



Reasons for “couch surfing” varies among the young adults. One of the main reasons for couch surfing, is financial instability of the young adult. Other reasons have included, the young adult is in between living arrangements and would like to move on their own, but locating a place is difficult for them. Some young adults, find it satisfying to stay at a friend’s house or relative’s house for short periods of time.

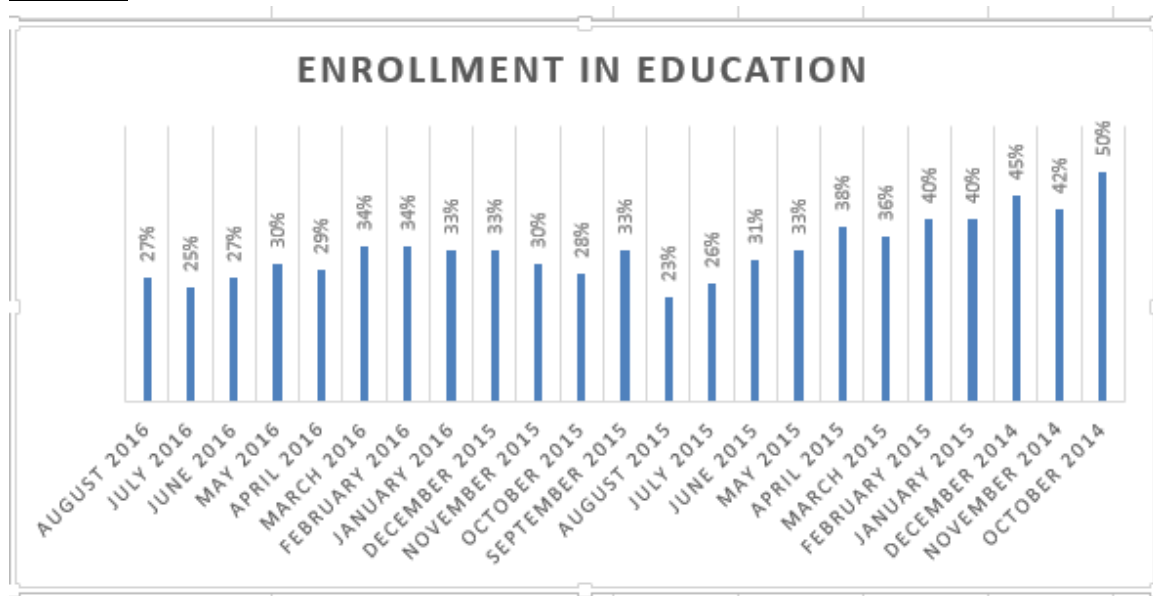


Residing in shelters have the same reasons as those individuals whose chose to couch surf. Living in a shelter, also opens up some additional housing avenues for transitional living housing. However, some young adults who chose to enter a shelter, have additional challenges as they

are fleeing a domestic violent situation, have no friends or family to reside with. These stays with the shelter have been short term.

Since the beginning of the program DCFS have monitored the enrollment of program eligibility categories young adults are participating in on a monthly basis.

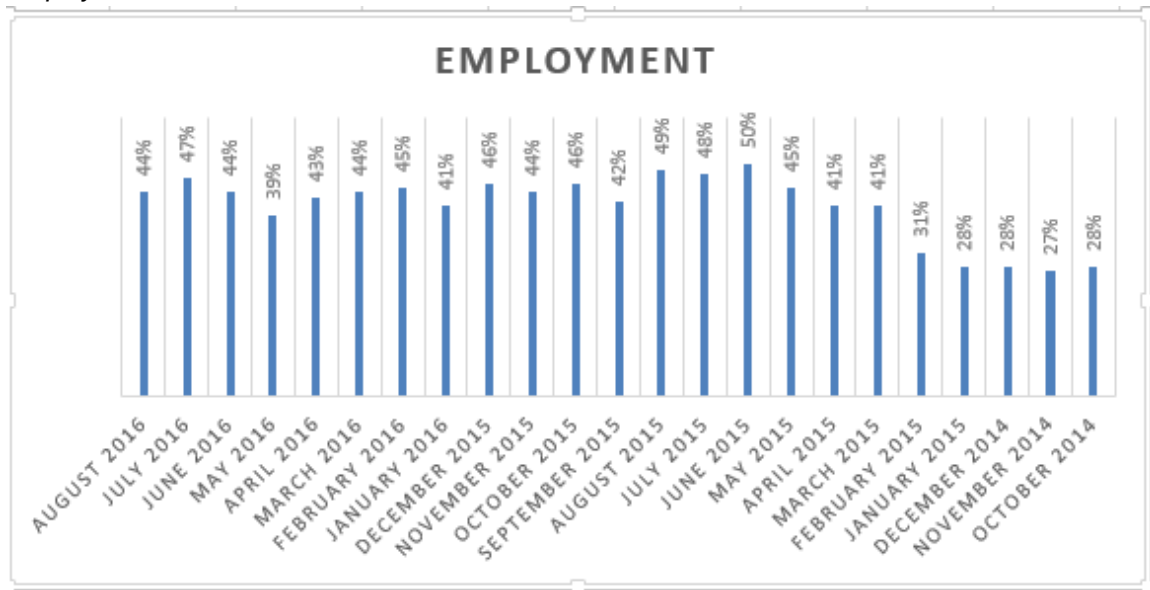
Education



Enrollment in education has been a steady decrease since the beginning of the program. Interesting as it may be currently, we have 30% young adults in the program that had an IEP while they were in secondary education. Independence Coordinators have provided information that the some of the reasons young adults are not choosing to be in school may include but not limited to:

- Would rather work and save money;
- Not ready to be in post-secondary education;
- Going to school and parenting is too hard.
- Needing a break;
- Have been told all of their life they have to be in school, and now they have a choice;
- Earning \$13 an hour is enticing at this age to some.

This is an area in which DCFS would like to focus on more in the next year. We would like to capture data as to why young adults are dropping out of school, or choosing not to attend post-secondary education or completion of their GED. Attending an education program does not constitute success within the Bridge to Independence program as it may not be a goal for all young adults. However, gathering additional data would help with program delivery and identifying barriers for education completion.

Employment

Percentage in the Employment category remains consistent. However, the following reasons have been discovered for instability with employment:

- Transportation
- Lack of opportunity in rural areas
- Obtaining a food handlers permit
- Criminal history
- Not having a telephone to provide potential employers
- Motivation

The category for promoting employment and removing barriers to employment has ranged from 22% to 29% in the last year.

DCFS is unable to respond as to how the aforementioned rates compare to those of same age peers, both with and without foster care experience, as DCFS does not capture data for young adults who do not have foster care experience.

7. What, if anything, is preventing eligible youth from participating in the B2I program?

Young adults who are eligible for Bridge to Independence may come into the program if they so choose. The reasons for preventing enrollment into the program are a minimum, but could include the following reasons:

- Young adult does not apply;
- Young adult chooses not to come into the program;
- Does not meet the housing requirements;
- Unable to be located;
- Incarcerated.

8. At what levels and in what ways are case management being provided?

Bridge to Independence case management core values focuses on Guidance, empowerment and being non-judgmental. Case management can vary from minimal to intense intervention at any given time depending on this situation. The Independence Coordinator will provide assistance to appropriate level which young adult will agree. Being available, having quick response time and being non-judgmental are all very important factors towards Bridge to Independence case management.

Listed below are few examples of case management that is being provided:

- Help young adult get into a shelter if homeless or other housing situations;
- Take a young adult to Psychiatric Unit of a Hospital if young adult is feeling suicidal;
- Locating resources for mental health treatment if needed;
- Bridge to Independence on call supervisors, will talk to a young adult over the phone during afterhours to answer questions regarding housing or employment or literally anything else the young adult is uncertain of;
- Working with young adults on their goals, using their goals as means to their success in becoming an independent young adult; creating a strategy to achieve the goals;
- Helping a young adult self-identify resources on their own;
- Guiding a young adult into creating a safety plan as well as supportive network to access in times of crisis i.e. due to concerns of a young adult's mental health or substance abuse;
- Bridge to Independence will help develop the discussion with a young adult on how to be safe, how to escape an unhealthy relationship;
- Cultivate the discussion with young adult on how to be safe, how to connect with close friends, relatives, informal/formal supports to discuss in appropriate manner what is going on and how can young adult receive access to services/support which would benefit them in that time of crisis;
- Bridge to Independence helps young adults prepare for scenarios as they come: for example, working one-on-one to develop resume, doing mock interviews, looking for employment opportunities, having discussions on what to ask or say when applying for a job, doing the interview, calling for follow up;
- Assisting with credit reports and inaccuracies;
- Helping with budgeting;
- Locating needed resources;
- Helping with handy work around the young adults apartment;
- Transporting the young adults to needed appointments;
- Helping with job searching.

Sometimes this case management boils down to a simple 5 minute conversation, other times it may be an hour or more. DCFS's principle for Bridge to Independence is that no young adult in the program is on their own at age 19.

Helping Young Adults achieve their goals on an individual basis as well as collaborating and utilizing services best tailored to EACH young adult's needs;

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-Simple Breakdown of Roles and Responsibilities of Young Adult and of B2i Coordinator

- Of Independence Coordinator
 - Collaborate with the young adult in developing their goals
 - Approve housing
 - Provide support
 - Assist with seeking out community resources- formal and informal
 - Independent living education

9. How does the data of young adults involved in the B2I program compare to same age peers, both with and without foster care experience?

DCFS is unable to respond to this question, as DCFS does not capture data for young adults who do not have foster care experience.

10. Please provide any data regarding B2I participant involvement in the criminal justice system, including: A) number of B2I participants receiving criminal charges; B) information regarding sentences imposed upon or served by B2I participants; C) whether B2I participation was terminated as a result of criminal charges or sentencing; and D) any comparative information that would be useful in interpreting B2I participation's effect, if such exists, in reducing criminal justice system involvement of participants.

As it relates to sub question (A & B), DCFS has not been capturing the number of participants receiving criminal charges or sentences imposed on the young adult if found guilty in criminal court. Since the implementation of Bridge to Independence, we have discovered that young adults are not always forthcoming with disclosing this information. If the Independence Coordinator does find out about involvement with the criminal system it could be through numerous ways, the young adult disclosure, the newspaper, mug shots, Crime Stoppers, friends and family disclosing the information, word of mouth by other young adults, NDEN or Facebook.

Bridge to Independence program will terminate a young adult as a result of a young adult being incarcerated for more than 30 continuous days, meaning the young adult was unable to meet B2i program eligibility requirements. Bridge to Independence has captured data if the young adult was terminated due to an incarceration that will last longer than 30 days. However, once the sentence of incarceration is over, they may re-enroll in the program. A total of 5 young adults have been terminated from the program due to incarceration sentences that lasted longer than 30 days. One young adult was terminated twice during his enrollment period due to this same reason.

Bridge to Independence can provide positive support for those exiting foster care. However, young adults need to self-identify positive supports and resources. Some young adults struggle in transition from having limited freedom as a state ward to having maximum freedom and no supervision as a young adult. It takes some time for young adults to realize the aftermath of their actions and what consequences may surface. Unfortunately, some young adults are involved in gang related activity, sometimes this is even generational. Bridge to Independence has discovered some young adults are unable to break away from familial/friends' influence or gang influence which may lead to more criminal activity or be present during it. Interestingly enough, young adults have reflected back to Independence Coordinators on some previous criminal charges (prior to age 19) as a means for them to express themselves while being in the system; e.g. "becoming non-compliant in a placement to the point of receiving an assault charge, only to be able to talk with someone in charge who would listen to them". Independence Coordinators have also heard similar statement echoed by young adults "not understanding how to settle disagreements without becoming assaultive". It is imperative through our work with young adults they understand that they can reach out to the Independence coordinators for support and guidance.