

INDEPENDENT YOUTH HOUSING PROGRAM FOR FORMER FOSTER YOUTH: OUTCOMES FOR PARTICIPANTS

The Independent Youth Housing Program (IYHP) was created in 2007 by Washington's legislature to provide housing assistance and case management for former foster youth.¹ The current two-year budget for IYHP is \$1.8 million.

Those eligible for the IYHP are foster youth who on or after September 1, 2006 meet the following criteria:

- 18 years of age or older
- Was a dependent of the state of Washington in the four month period before his or her 18th birthday in foster care. Priority is given to youth in care for over one year.
- Have not yet reached the age of 23
- Have total income less than 50% of the area median income

At the time the program was created the legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to conduct a study measuring the outcomes for youth who are participating or who have participated in the independent youth housing program.² For this report, we examine the use of state-paid services, and arrests and employment during fiscal year 2011 for the group of youth receiving IYHP services during fiscal year 2010.

Summary

The Independent Youth Housing Program (IYHP) was created in 2007 by Washington's legislature to provide housing assistance and case management for former foster youth ages 18 to 23. In the current biennium, \$1,800,000 is budgeted for IYHP.

The legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to conduct a study measuring outcomes for youth participating in IYHP.

For this study, we identified former foster youth who received IYHP during fiscal year 2010 and looked at their use of state-paid services, and arrests and employment during fiscal year 2011.

Findings:

- Most (77 percent) had state-paid medical coverage ;
- Most (84 percent) received Basic Food Assistance;
- About one third (32 percent) received some form of cash assistance;
- 11 percent received child care subsidies;
- 6 percent had been arrested; and
- 64 percent had been employed at some time during the year.

Rates of arrest and employment are roughly comparable to rates for the general population of young adults in Washington State.

Because we were unable to identify a comparable group of former foster youth who did not participate in IYHP, we cannot determine whether or how receipt of IYHP supports may have influenced the use of state services, arrests or employment.

¹ SSHB 1922, Laws of 2007.

² SSHB 1922, Laws of 2007, Section 8.

The Independent Youth Housing Program

The Independent Youth Housing Program (IYHP) is managed by the Department of Commerce. The department contracts with five non-profit agencies that also provide other services to current and former foster youth to implement IYHP. The five agencies are:

- Catholic Family and Child Service serving Benton, Franklin, Kittitas, Walla Walla and Yakima Counties,
- Community Youth Services serving Lewis and Thurston Counties,
- Pierce County Alliance serving Pierce County,
- Volunteers of America (VOA) serving Spokane County, and
- YMCA of Greater Seattle serving King County.

Youth may be referred to the IYHP by other programs, agencies or the DSHS social worker. They may also contact the program directly.

IYHP provides eligible former foster youth with assistance paying monthly rent, utility payments (gas and electricity), move in costs (such as first and last month's rent, security deposits), cost of credit checks and parking if necessary. Some of the agencies hold the lease to the apartment and the youth pays the agency; others agencies assist the youth in obtaining the rental lease and with payments, but the youth hold the lease.

In fiscal year 2010 (FY 2010, July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010), IYHP served 99 youth statewide. The number of youth served by each agency is provided in Exhibit 1. IYHP was initially piloted in three agencies and expanded to two more in FY 2010.

Exhibit 1
Former Foster Youth Served by IYHP Programs in FY2010 by Agency³

Agency	Number Enrolled During Program Year	Number Exited	Number Enrolled at End of Program Year	Total Number Served During Fiscal Year 2010
Catholic Family and Child Services	6	5	11	16
Community Youth Services	13	14	14	28
Pierce County Alliance	12	8	16	24
VOA Spokane*	10	0	10	10
YMCA of Greater Seattle*	21	0	21	21
Total	62	27	72	99

* Program newly established during FY2010.

For this study, staff at the Department of Commerce and the Department of Social and Health Services identified former foster youth who received IYHP during FY2010. Identifying information was used to locate administrative records for information on participants' use of publicly-paid services, and employment and arrest records during FY 2011. The findings are shown in Exhibit 2.⁴

³ Washington State Department of Commerce (2010) Ten-Year Homeless Plan: 2010 Annual Report, Appendix B. <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/DesktopModules/CTEDPublications/CTEDPublicationsView.aspx?tabID=0&ItemID=10195&MIId=870&wversion=Staging>.

⁴ Although 99 youth were served during FY2010, two were omitted from this analysis because the database lacked sufficient identifying information to match recipients to other services and arrest and employment data.

Most IYHP participants received medical coverage and basic food assistance during in FY2011. Thirty-two percent received some form of cash assistance, through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, State Family Assistance, or Disability Lifeline programs.⁵

Of those receiving IYHP, 6.2 percent were arrested during FY2011. This rate is identical to the arrest rate for the general population of 18 to 23 year olds in Washington State.⁶

Overall, 63.9 percent of participants were employed at some time during FY2011. In 2010, a statewide survey found that 56 percent of young adults between 18 and 24 years of age were employed.⁷ The statewide findings were based on employment at the time of the survey while the information reported here reflects employment at any time during the year. IYHP youth appear to be employed at rates roughly comparable with young adults in the general population.

Exhibit 2
State Services and Outcomes in FY 2011 for Youth Receiving IYHP in FY 2010

Services and Outcomes FY11	Youths Still Enrolled July 2011		Exiting Youths in FY10		All Youths	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number*	Percent
IYHP Clients	76	100.0%	21	100.0%	97	100.0%
State-Paid Services						
Any Medical Coverage	60	78.9%	15	71.4%	75	77.3%
Disability Medical Coverage	11	14.5%	4	19.0%	15	15.5%
Basic Food Assistance	64	84.2%	18	85.7%	82	84.5%
Cash Assistance						
TANF or State Family Assistance	18	23.7%	7	33.3%	25	25.8%
Disability Lifeline	5	6.6%	1	4.8%	6	6.2%
Working Connections Child Care	7	9.2%	4	19.0%	11	11.3%
Outcomes						
Arrest Rate (Any arrest)	4	5.3%	2	9.5%	6	6.2%
Felony Arrest Rate	2	2.6%	0	0.0%	2	2.1%
Gross Misdemeanor Arrest Rate	1	1.3%	1	4.8%	2	2.1%
Employment Rate	51	67.1%	11	52.4%	62	63.9%

* Although 99 youth were served during FY2010, two were omitted from this analysis because the database lacked sufficient identifying information to match recipients to other services.

In this report, we provide only descriptive statistics of services use and outcomes for IYHP participants. Because young adults who have aged out of foster care may receive housing supports through other programs,⁸ we are unable to determine whether or how receipt of IYHP supports may have influenced use of state services, arrests or employment.

⁵ More information on the services and outcomes is provided in the Appendix.

⁶ WSIPP analysis of Washington State Patrol data indicated a total of 34,628 persons aged 18 to 23 were arrested in Washington in 2011. According to Washington State Office of Financial Management (<http://www.ofm.wa.gov/pop/stfc/default.asp>) the total population for this age group to be 559,354. Thus the arrest rate for this age group is 6.2 percent.

⁷ Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (2010) *Wanted: Work Experience for Young Adults*. Olympia <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Documents/WantedWorkExperienceforYoungAdults.pdf>.

⁸ Housing supports for former foster youth may be available through the primarily federally funded Chafee Independent Living Program or, for youth involved in education, through the Education and Training Voucher Program. In addition, former foster youth may be eligible housing supports through various local governments and philanthropic agencies.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix – Services and Outcomes

Any Medical Coverage - The Health Care Authority provides medical coverage—primarily through the Medicaid program—to individuals who meet income eligibility requirements or have disabling medical conditions. Data on eligibility maintained in the Health Care Authority's ProviderOne system provided information on whether or not individuals had medical coverage through Medicaid, Medical Care Services, or related programs.

Disability Medical Coverage - Certain Health Care Authority medical programs provide medical coverage due to specific physical or mental health disabilities. This includes individuals who receive federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. Data on eligibility maintained in the Health Care Authority's ProviderOne system provided information on whether or not individuals had disability-related medical coverage. Those receiving Disability Medical Coverage were also counted in the category "Any Medical Coverage".

Basic Food Program - The Basic Food Program provides benefits to individuals and families with incomes up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) and whose resources are below established limits. (Prior to October 1, 2008, the income limit was 130 percent FPL.) The program is comprised of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the state Food Assistance Program for legal immigrants ineligible for federal SNAP benefits. Benefits can only be used to purchase food items at participating stores. This report includes federal dollars that are reimbursed directly to food stores and are not a part of the DSHS budget.

TANF and State Family Assistance - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families / TANF is a federally funded program that provides monthly cash grants to needy families, children under age 18 (or under age 19 if attending high school or working towards a GED full-time), parents or caretaker relatives of these children, unmarried teen parents under 18, and pregnant women. Eligibility requires non-exempt recipients to participate in WorkFirst employment and training activities. State Family Assistance (SFA) is a state funded cash program for certain persons meeting state residency requirements who are not eligible for TANF assistance.

Disability Lifeline - Disability Lifeline is a state-funded program providing monthly cash grants to clients who are poor, without dependent children and unable to work because of a physical, emotional or mental incapacity. All Grant Categories: Unemployable, expedited Medicaid / T19, aged blind, disabled, other.

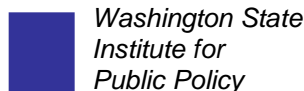
Working Connection Child Care - DSHS, through the Economic Services Administration, determines eligibility and authorizes subsidy payments for the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program administered by the Department of Early Learning (DEL). WCCC provides child care assistance to: eligible Temporary Assistant for Needy Families / TANF families who require child care to participate in approved WorkFirst activities, job search, employment, or training; and non-TANF families who require child care to maintain employment or to attend approved training.

Arrest - Arrest data is maintained by the Washington State Patrol (WSP). Local law enforcement agencies are generally required to report only felony and gross misdemeanor offenses into the WSP arrest database. As a result, WSP data may understate the full volume of arrests because law enforcement officials are not required to enter some misdemeanor offenses into the database.

Employment - Data on wages earned and hours worked are recorded in the Washington State Employment Security Department's Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage database. The measure of employment used here considers a person employed if he or she had earnings greater than zero at any point in the fiscal year. Certain workers (such as, the self-employed, federal employees, and elected officials) are not represented in the UI wage database. However, approximately 83 percent of the state's civilian wage employment is captured.

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