



Pay for Success Populations: Transition Aged Youth

Transition aged youth refers to young people aged 16-25 exiting the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. In a process sometimes called ‘aging out’, these young people either elect to move or are forced by statute to leave out-of-home placements such as foster care to live independently as adults. Transition aged youth are particularly vulnerable to homelessness and may have frequent interactions with the criminal justice system.

Benefits of working with this population

Transition aged youth are more likely to achieve poor outcomes as adults. A Los Angeles study of youth exiting the criminal justice and child welfare systems found that 66% of exiters experienced an incarceration event within four years and 50% of exiters experienced extreme poverty as measured by cash assistance (Culhane, 2002). Exiters were also likely to seek mental health and substance misuse treatment.

The provision of housing and support services can alter this path by stabilizing housing, improving attainment in education, employment and training, shifting patterns of healthcare to more appropriate usage, and avoiding criminal justice involvement. There are likely to be longer term impacts on the public purse due to increased tax revenue contributed in adulthood.

Maintaining stable housing	Education, employment, and training	Healthcare	Criminal justice involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stable placements• Fewer emergency shelter days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased school enrollment• Increased educational attainment• Increased in likelihood of working >40 hours per week• Increased wages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced ED visits• Reduced inpatient visits• Reduced outpatient visits• Increased prescription costs• Reduced depressive symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced time spent in jail• Reduced contacts with system

Evidence base for achieving outcomes

Few evaluations focus exclusively on the impact of supportive housing on transition aged youth, but several studies examine youth as a subset of wider homeless populations.

- Using only criminal justice, emergency shelter and public assistance cost avoidance, a California-based study found a cost saving of \$3,346 per youth per year, at which rate it estimated that a supportive housing intervention becomes cost neutral after 10-15 years (Latham et al, 2003).
- A New York City-based study compared jail, shelter, state psychiatric, Medicaid, food stamp and cash assistance costs of housed versus unhoused youths exiting the foster care system and found a gross cost avoidance of \$11,021 per person in the housed cohort. The housing cost per person was \$22,818, suggesting the intervention may break even after two years (NY/NYIII Evaluation, 2013).

Outcomes below are derived from two studies with non-experimental pre/post or comparison evaluation designs.

	Maintaining stable housing	Education, employment, and training	Healthcare	Criminal justice involvement
Latham et al (2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •91% housing stability rate after two years •27% decrease in emergency shelter costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •7% increase in school enrollment rates •50% increase in total income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •19% survey respondents suggested more appropriate healthcare access used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •87% difference in criminal justice costs between intervention and comparison groups
NY / NYIII (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Housed youth incurred 6.43% of control group's single adult shelter costs and 0% of family shelter costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Housed youth incurred 70% of control group's cash assistance costs •Housed youth incurred 145% of control group's food stamps (greater usage) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housed youth incurred 0% of control group's state psychiatric costs •Housed youth incurred only 28% of control group's Medicaid costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Housed youth incurred 0.23% of control group's jail costs

Recommended outcome metrics for triggering payments

As the evidence base for transition aged youth has not to date been evaluated using an experimental design, it would be prudent to base success payments on metrics closely linked to stable accommodation.

Housing stability

- Measured using social worker questionnaires
- Good evidence for >85% stability after one year

Emergency shelter usage

- Measured using shelter or HMIS data
- Good evidence for >25% reduction in shelter costs

If using a non-experimental evaluation design, it may be possible to test the evidence for additional metrics, including criminal justice costs and education, employment and training outcomes. Testing these metrics will be more attractive to investors and service providers if they form a small proportion of the total success payments.

Potential end payers and funders

The juvenile and adult criminal justice systems, State Medicaid, and state departments responsible for human services and mental health services would be suitable end payers. The involvement of the child welfare system should be discussed with stakeholders, as the system has a clear role in guiding youth to supportive housing and facilitating the transition to housing providers. Services engaging this population are good candidates for seeking federal government support through funding or partnerships that ensure service sustainability.

Variations in the sub-population

Local jurisdictions may look to track transition aged youth as they leave foster care, the juvenile justice (or justice) systems, or both. Youth interacting with both the foster care and justice systems are often referred to as 'dually involved'. Studies report between 10% and 30% overlap of youth between systems (Herz et al, 2010). The degree of overlap may influence which organizations are key stakeholders in your PFS work.

Works Cited

Culhane, Dennis P., Stephen Metraux, Manuel Moreno, Halil Toros, and Max Stevens. "Young Adult Outcomes of Youth Exiting Dependent or Delinquent Care in Los Angeles County." November 2011.

Herz, D.C., J.P Ryan, and S. Bilchik. "Challenges facing crossover youth: An examination of juvenile-justice decision making and recidivism," *Family Court Review*, 48(2): 305-321. 2010.

Latham, Nancy, Emily Boer Drake, Rachel Cuevas, and Eiko Sugano. "Foster Youth Housing Initiative: Final Evaluation Findings." November 2008.

"New York/New York III Supportive Housing Evaluation: Interim Utilization and Cost Analysis." New York City. 2013.