

AMP YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS

April – May 2014

Youth participating in local AMP Councils are given the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience as AMP members semi-annually. Conducting a satisfaction survey at least annually is a requirement of the Department of Human Services' Foster Care Youth Council contract with Youth and Shelter Services. Results of the survey can also be used by AMP leadership and facilitators to improve the quality of the AMP experience for young people. This report is based on the youth surveys completed during local AMP Council meetings in April and May 2014.

METHODOLOGY

The survey is developed by the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa in consultation with the State AMP Coordinator and the DHS project manager. Survey questions have remained similar over the last several administrations, in part to provide data for required contract performance measures as well as to provide comparative data over time. AMP members are invited to complete the short, written survey during the course of a regular Council meeting. The surveys are collected and sent by Council facilitators to the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa for data entry and analysis. In order to reduce the data collection burden, Council facilitators were encouraged to conduct the survey at just one meeting rather than multiple meetings in this administration of the survey. We also emphasized that completing the survey was voluntary and some youth may have chosen not to participate. These factors reduced the total number of surveys completed in this administration to 130. Given the consistency of results with previous surveys, however, we believe the results remain an accurate reflection of the sentiments of all participating youth.

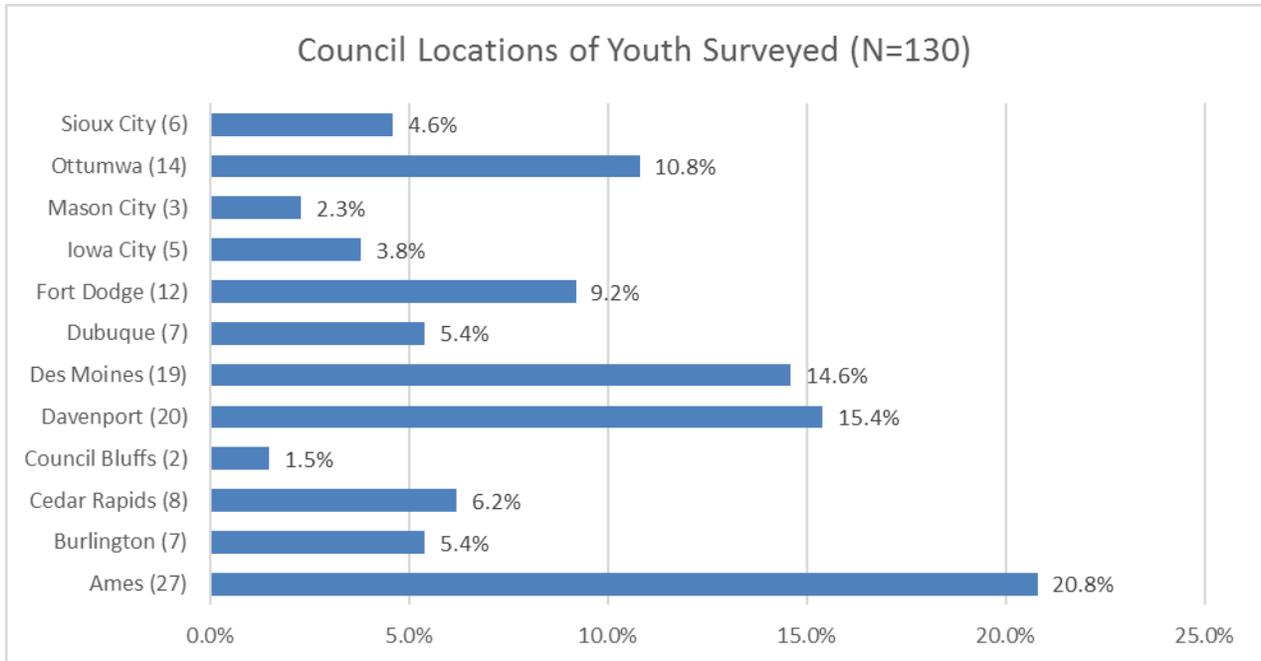
The AMP satisfaction surveys are intended to be anonymous and sent to YPII without review by the local Council facilitator, but facilitators do have access to the surveys in the normal course of administering it. Not being able to guarantee confidentiality may affect how some young people respond to the survey. It should also be noted that no attempt is made to assess the internal consistency of individual surveys. Offering the survey at just one meeting did lessen the likelihood that youth completed the survey more than once in this administration.

Completing the survey is voluntary and youth may skip some survey questions or choose not to participate at all. Because young people may join AMP at any time during the year, there are frequently youth attending meetings who are brand new to AMP or who have attended only a few AMP meetings or events when the survey is administered. In order to allow survey results to be analyzed by length of young people's involvement, the survey asks how long youth have been involved in AMP and includes an option of "this is only my first meeting."

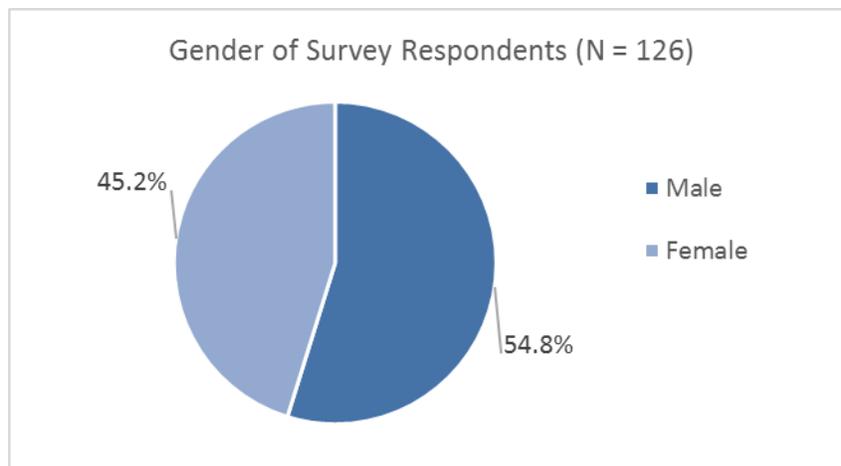
For these reasons, caution should be used when drawing definitive conclusions from the survey and results should be considered in conjunction with other methods of assessing the quality and effectiveness of AMP.

CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH

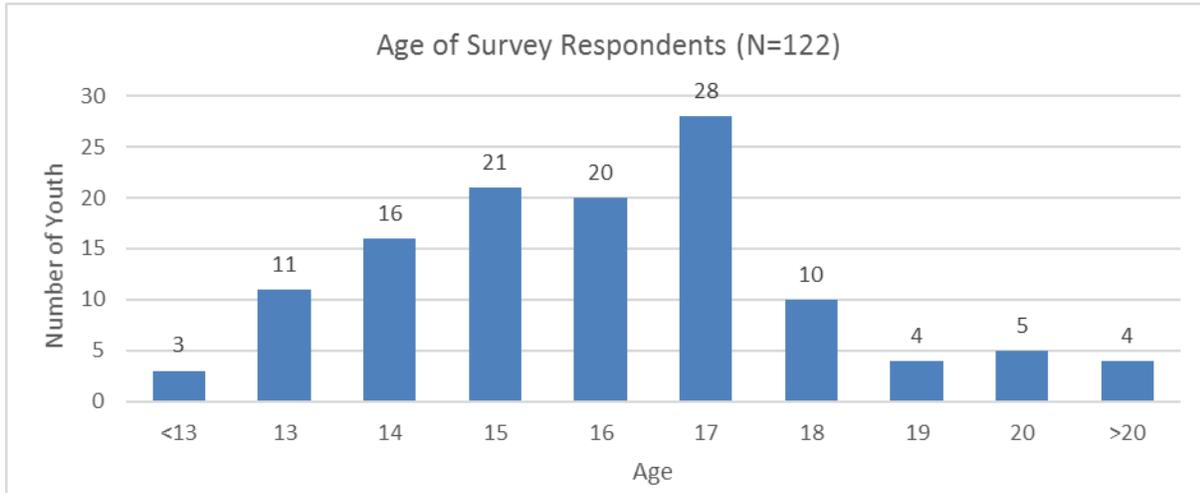
A total of 130 youth from twelve local AMP Councils were surveyed during April and May 2014. About half of the surveys were completed by youth in three locations. The Ames Council remains the largest of the local Councils accounting for 27 of the 130 returned surveys or 20.8% of the total; the Davenport Council returned 20 surveys and the Des Moines Council returned 19. The remaining Councils each surveyed 15 or fewer young people. Limited demographic information is requested from respondents, including gender, age, and how long they had been involved in AMP.



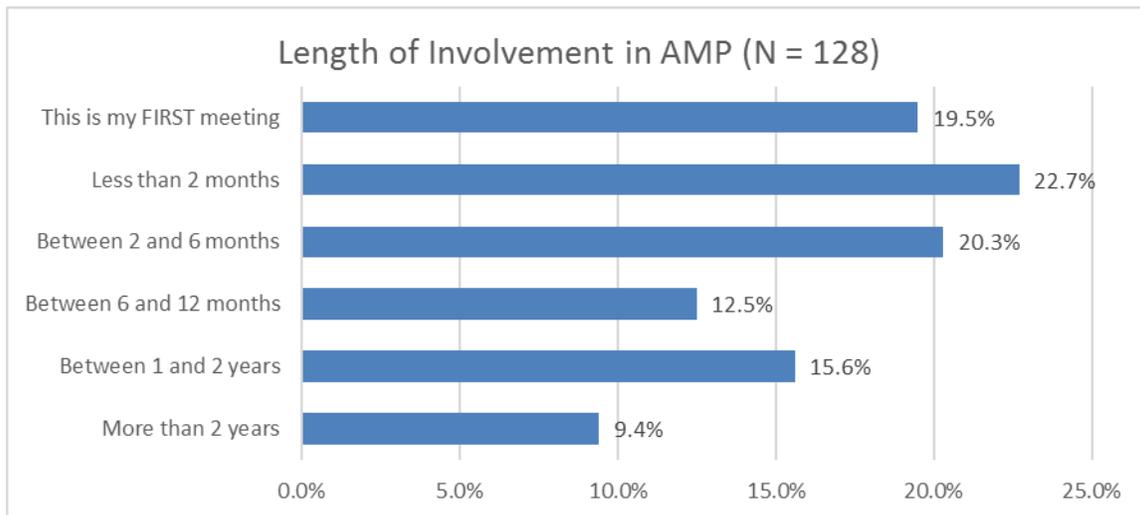
GENDER: Both boys and girls participate in AMP. Unlike previous administrations, boys outnumbered girls in responding to the April-May survey.



AGE: AMP is intended for youth ages 13 and up who have been involved in foster care, adoption or other out-of-home placements. The ages reported by survey respondents ranged from **age 11 to 29**. Most youth (69.7%) surveyed are ages 14 to 17; the median age of respondents is 16. The age distribution is very similar to previous survey administrations.



DURATION OF INVOLVEMENT: Among the 128 survey respondents in April – May 2014 who reported their length of involvement in AMP, one-quarter reported being involved for one year or more (9.4% indicated that they had been involved for more than two years, and another 15.6% reported involvement of one to two years). Among the survey respondents, 42.2% have been involved in AMP for less than two months, including a fifth of the youth (19.5%) who responded that they were attending their first AMP meeting. Survey results should be interpreted with the short duration of involvement of many of the respondents in mind. This distribution continues to show a pattern of a frequent turnover among youth participation in AMP, while a smaller proportion of youth engage for a longer period.



AMP April – May 2014 Satisfaction Survey Results

YOUTH’S ASSESSMENT OF AMP

The survey invited youth to rate a variety of aspects of their local AMP Council meetings from Excellent (5) to Poor (1). The areas covered included logistical features of local meetings (e.g., location and frequency), activities and discussion topics, and the youth’s overall experience as a member of AMP.

The rating question also included two issues tied to contract performance measures – the AMP leader’s understanding of the foster care system; and opportunities to learn about supports and services available to you. In both cases, more than 75% of youth rated that aspect of AMP as Excellent or Very Good. In fact, the AMP leader’s understanding of the foster care system again received the highest average rating (4.30 on a 5-point scale) of all of the aspects covered.

In general, youth rated all facets of their local Council quite high, with the majority giving each area an “excellent” or “very good” rating. Complete results are shown in the table below (percentages are of those who answered each question).

	Average Rating	5 Excellent	4 Very Good	3 Average	2 Fair	1 Poor
Location and time of meetings	4.21	46.8%	30.2%	21.4%	0.0%	1.6%
Frequency and length of meetings	4.10	41.1%	31.5%	25.0%	0.8%	1.6%
Amount of youth involvement in making decisions in AMP	4.02	39.8%	29.3%	25.2%	4.1%	1.6%
AMP leader’s understanding of the foster care system*	4.30	54.0%	23.4%	21.8%	0.0%	0.8%
Relationship between AMP members and adult leaders	4.10	43.0%	27.3%	27.3%	1.7%	0.8%
Opportunities to learn about supports and services available to you*	4.19	48.0%	28.5%	20.3%	0.8%	2.4%
Topics discussed at AMP meetings	4.14	44.0%	28.8%	24.8%	1.6%	0.8%
Activities during AMP meetings	4.13	45.5%	27.6%	23.6%	0.8%	2.4%
Leadership opportunities for youth in AMP	4.19	48.4%	25.0%	25.0%	0.8%	0.8%
Your overall experience as a member of AMP	4.22	50.8%	25.4%	20.5%	1.6%	1.6%

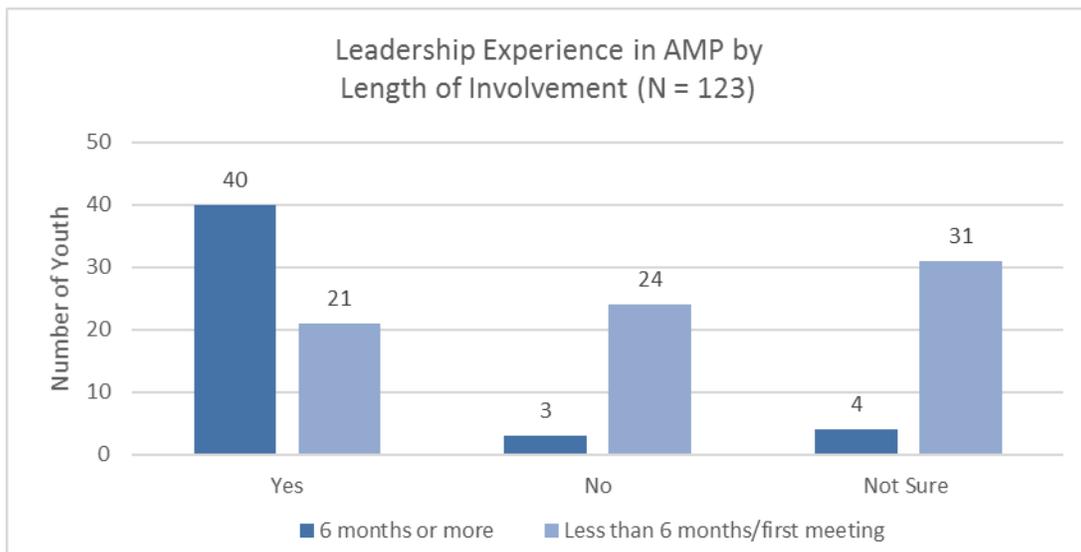
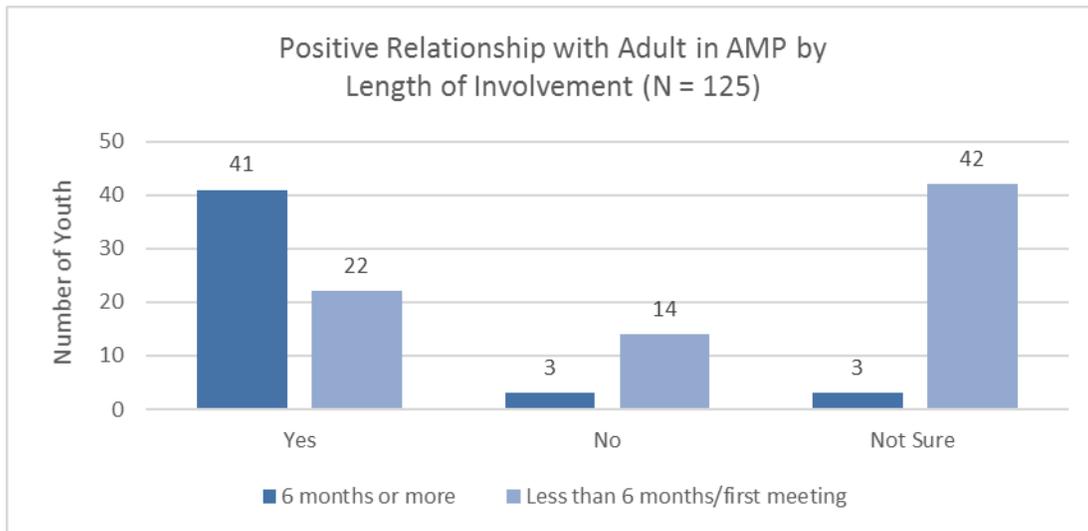
*DHS Contract Performance Measure

The survey also included two additional questions related to the youth having a positive relationship with an adult through AMP and opportunities for leadership In order to provide data for two other contract performance measures. The exact questions and responses are shown in the table below.

AMP April – May 2014 Satisfaction Survey Results

	YES	NO	Not Sure
Do you have at least one significant, positive relationship with an adult through AMP?	50.0%	13.5%	36.5%
In the past year, has AMP given you at least one experience where you practiced leadership?	49.2%	21.8%	29.0%

In both cases, the longer youth have been involved, the more likely they were to answer the question affirmatively. Among the 47 youth who have been involved for six months or more, 87% indicated that they had a positive relationship with an adult in AMP and 85% stated that they had at least one experience to practice leadership through AMP. Conversely, youth involved in AMP for less than six months were less likely to report having a positive relationship or leadership experience. The charts below show the distribution of responses to these two performance measure questions by self-reported length of involvement in AMP.



OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

In response to open-ended questions, many youth indicated that what they like most about AMP is the people, the fun activities, or the food. Several youth suggested getting more youth involved in AMP or teaching various life skills as things AMP could be doing for young people in foster care.

CONCLUSION

Although the total number of surveys completed in this round was less than previous administrations, the same patterns emerged in the responses of youth. There were few differences in the characteristics of youth responding to the April – May 2014 survey from previous surveys in terms of age, gender and length of involvement. Further, results to questions relating to performance measures and youth's overall satisfaction with AMP remained very similar to prior survey administrations. For those youth who stay involved in AMP for at least six months, the vast majority report positive relationships with adults in AMP and involvement in leadership experiences. Even new members tend to respond positively to Likert scale questions about various aspects of their local AMP Council.



The Youth Policy Institute of Iowa (YPII) is a non-profit organization that specializes in coordination and evaluation of programs and policies for older adolescents transitioning from child welfare to adulthood. YPII partners with a variety of youth-serving organizations and public agencies to develop, evaluate, and expand services and opportunities for youth in

Iowa. YPII has consulted with Youth and Shelter Services, Inc., to provide assistance to AMP (Achieving Maximum Potential), Iowa's Foster Care Youth Council, since 2011. Positive youth development and authentic youth engagement are hallmarks of our approach to creating positive change.
