

AMP YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS

April – May 2015

Youth participating in local AMP Councils provide feedback on their experience as AMP members semi-annually, which is a requirement of the Department of Human Services' Foster Care Youth Council contract with Youth and Shelter Services. Originally piloted in December 2011, a similar satisfaction survey has been conducted eight times over the last four years. Part 1 of this report is based on the youth surveys completed during local AMP Council meetings in April or May 2015. Part 2 shows trend data on selected survey items from all eight administrations of the AMP Satisfaction Surveys that have been developed and analyzed by the Youth Policy Institute of Iowa (YPII).

METHODOLOGY

The survey was developed by YPII in consultation with the State AMP Coordinator and the DHS project manager. Survey questions have remained similar over all the 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. A total of 207 surveys were returned in April and May 2015.

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. Further, no attempt is made to assess the internal consistency of individual survey responses.

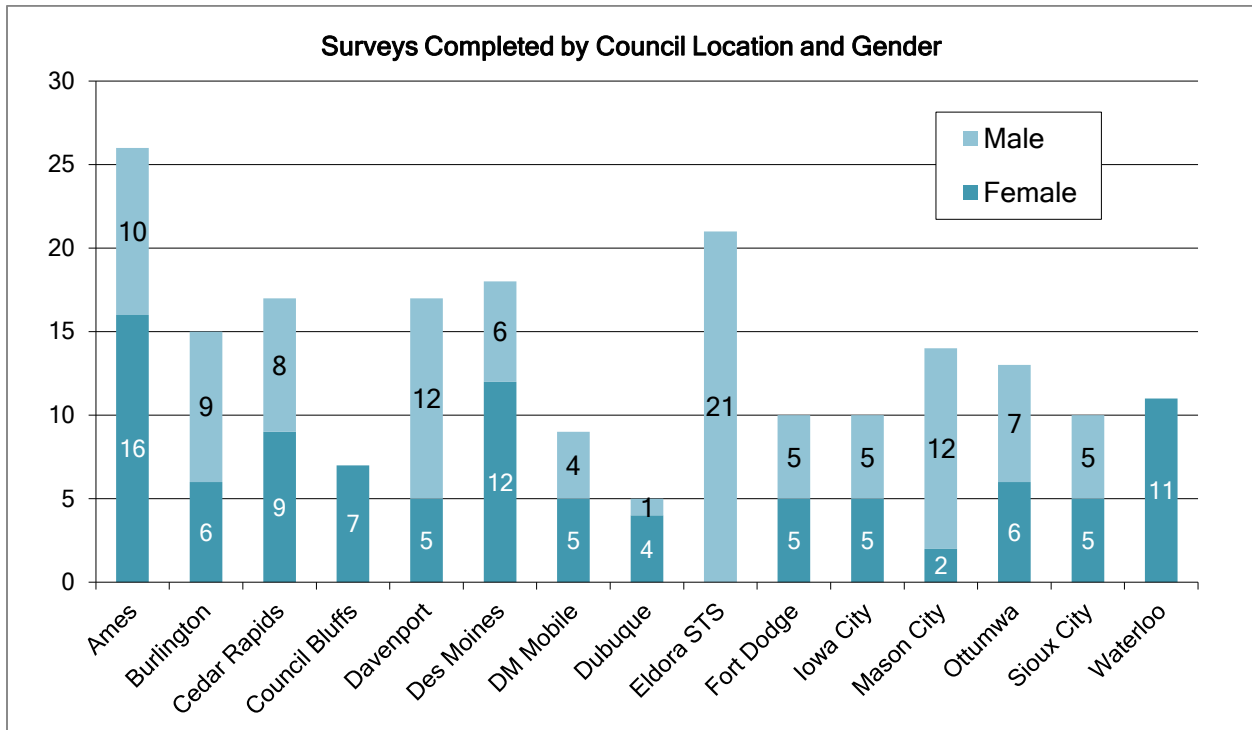
Completing the survey is voluntary and youth may skip some survey questions or choose not to participate at all. Because young people may join AMP at any time during the year, there are frequently youth attending meetings who are brand new to AMP or who have attended only a few AMP meetings or events when the survey is administered. In order to allow all youth the opportunity to complete a survey, but also take into account 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 combination with other methods of assessing the quality and effectiveness of AMP. Also note that the trend data presented in Part 2 of this report are from an ever-changing participant pool of AMP members, reflecting changes in membership more so than changes in how individual members have responded over time.

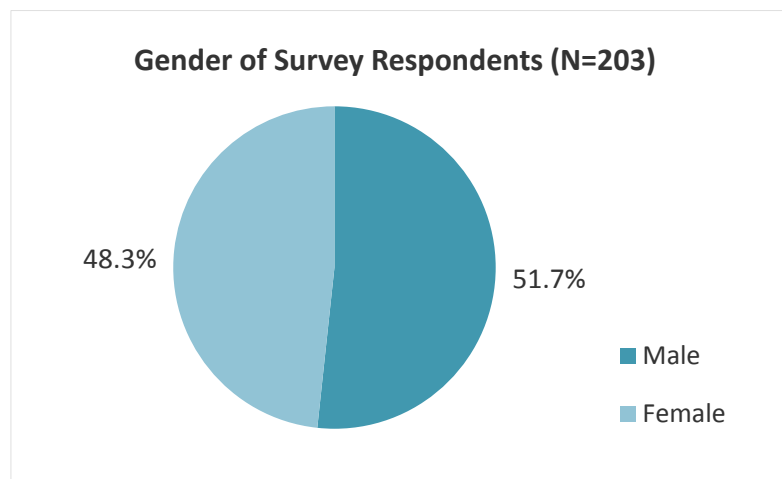
Part 1: April – May 2015 Survey Results

CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUTH

A total of 207 youth from all fifteen local AMP Councils completed surveys during April and May 2015. The number of surveys received from individual Councils ranged from 26 from the Ames Council to 5 from the Dubuque Council (see graph below).

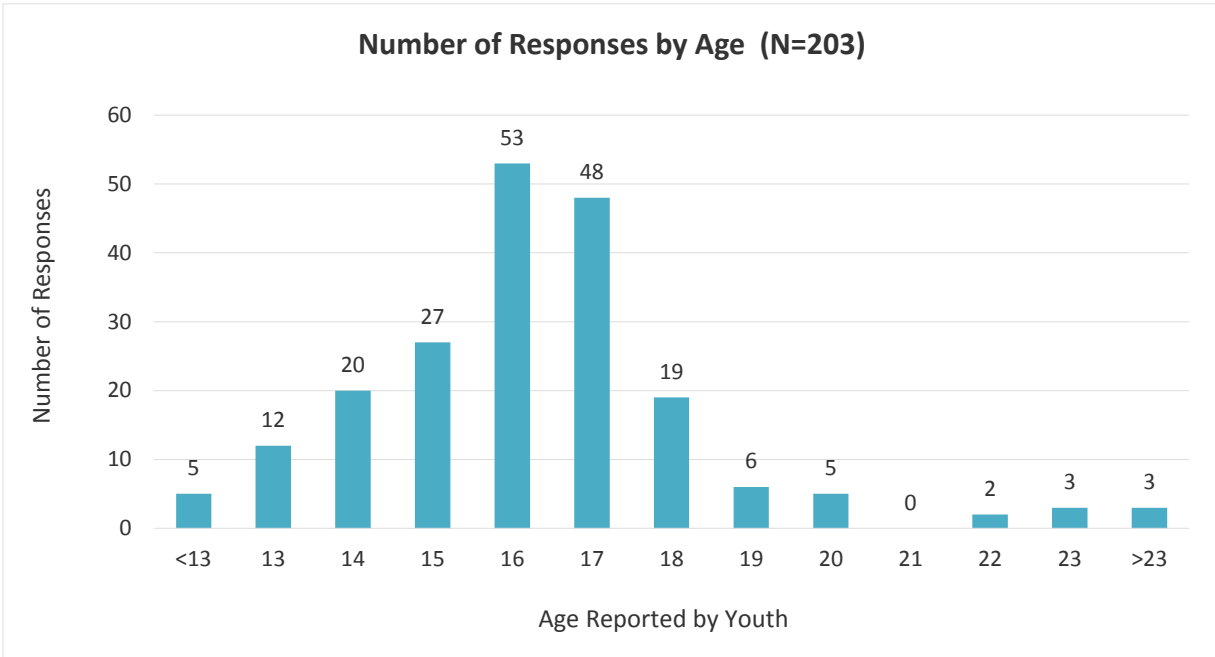


GENDER: Limited demographic information is requested from respondents, including gender, age, and how long youth have been involved in AMP. Both boys and girls participate in AMP relatively equally. Overall, in this survey administration, just over half of the respondents were male.

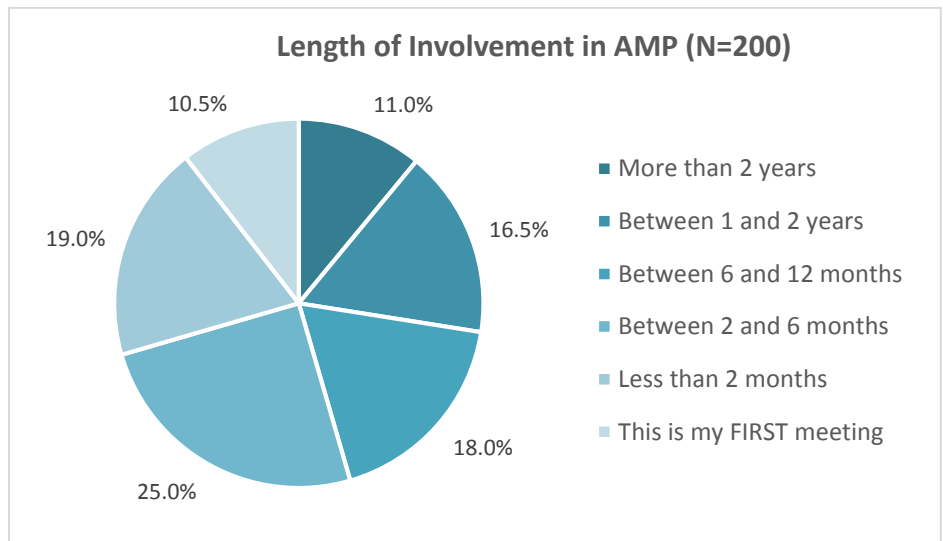


AMP Satisfaction Survey Results

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 10 to 26**, although very few are outside the expected age range of 13 to 21. **Half of the youth (49.8%) are age 16 or 17**, similar to the last survey administration in November-December 2014.



DURATION OF INVOLVEMENT: Among the 200 survey respondents in April and May 2015 who reported their length of involvement in AMP, more than one-quarter reported being involved for one year or more (11% indicated that they had been involved for more than two years, and another 16.5% reported involvement of one to two years). About 30% of the youth reported involvement of less than two months, including those who indicated that they were attending their first AMP meeting. As in the past, the survey responses demonstrate that new members are welcome to join AMP at any time. The prevalence of frequent new members may, in part, be due to the practice by many Councils of involving all (or most) of the youth placed a hosting agency’s shelter or group home in AMP meetings. As youth’s placements change, so does their ability to participate.



AMP Satisfaction Survey Results

YOUTH'S ASSESSMENT OF AMP

The survey invites youth to rate a variety of aspects of their local AMP Council meetings from Excellent (5) to Poor (1). The areas covered include 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.

As in past surveys, youth rate all aspects of their local Council quite high, with the vast majority giving each area an "excellent" or "very good" rating, including 81.8% who assessed their overall experience in AMP at that level.

The rating question includes 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, 83% of youth rated those aspects of AMP as Excellent or Very Good.

	Average Rating	5 Excellent	4 Very Good	3 Average	2 Fair	1 Poor
Location and time of meetings	4.28	102	60	40	1	1
Frequency and length of meetings	4.15	94	52	52	6	0
Amount of youth involvement in making decisions in AMP	4.08	87	61	46	8	3
AMP leader's understanding of the foster care system*	4.35	113	54	27	5	2
Relationship between AMP members and adult leaders	4.23	102	59	28	8	4
Opportunities to learn about supports and services available to you*	4.32	106	62	26	6	1
Topics discussed at AMP meetings	4.28	102	62	31	7	0
Activities during AMP meetings	4.26	102	58	38	4	1
Leadership opportunities for youth in AMP	4.15	95	58	36	11	2
Your overall experience as a member of AMP	4.35	117	49	30	6	1

*DHS Contract Performance Measure

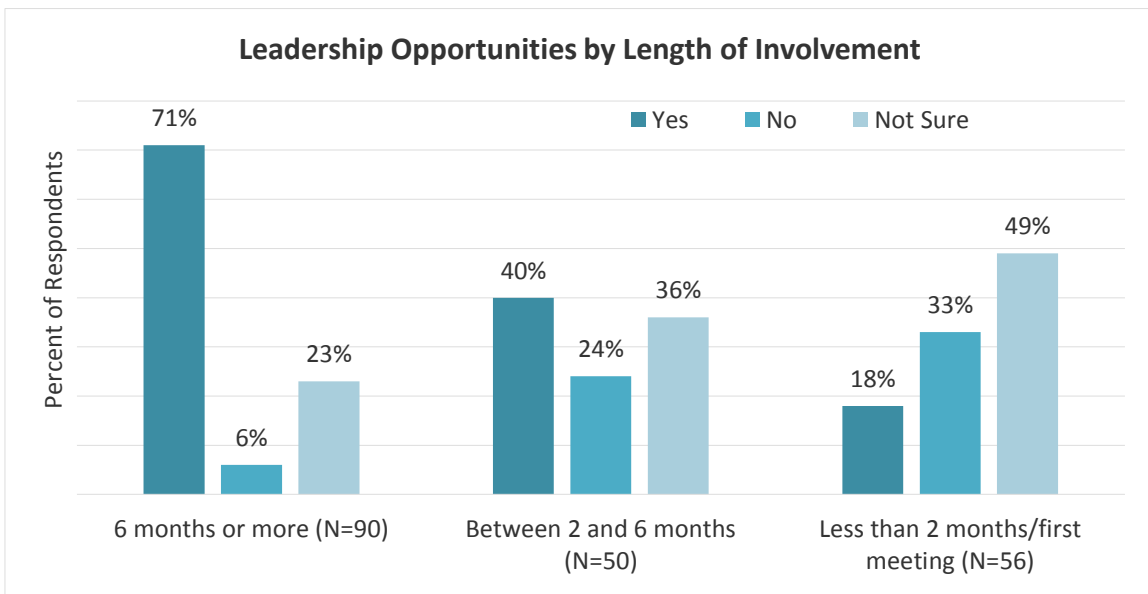
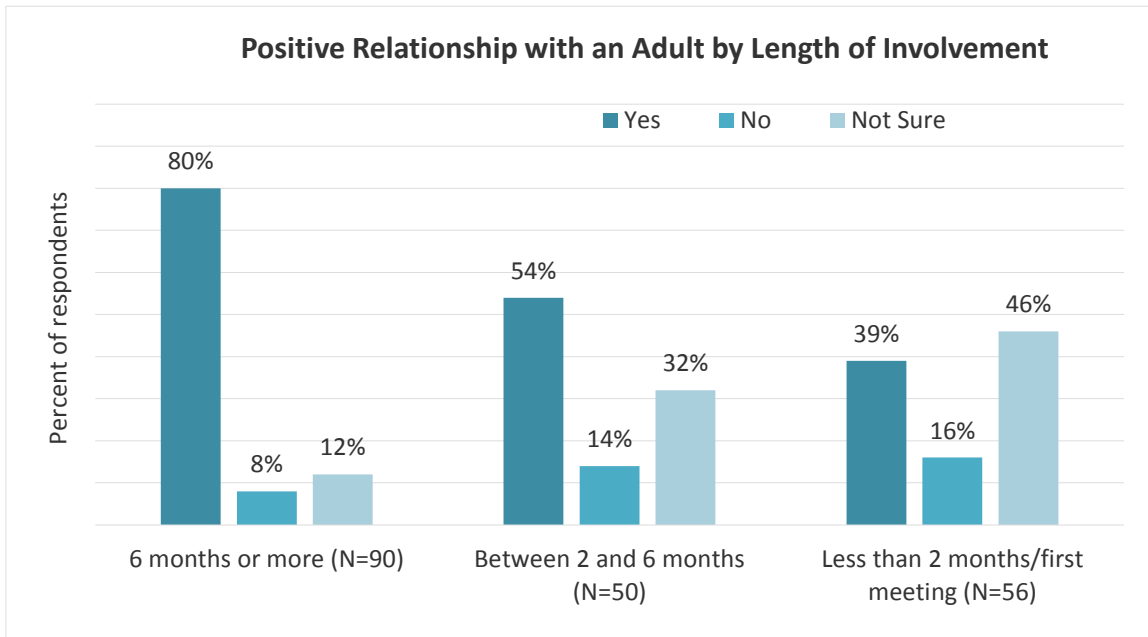
ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The survey also includes two separate 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 response percentages are shown in the table below.

AMP Satisfaction Survey Results

	YES	NO	Not Sure
Do you have at least one significant, positive relationship with an adult through AMP?	61.1%	11.8%	27.1%
In the past year, has AMP given you at least one experience where you practiced leadership?	47.8%	17.4%	34.8%

Youth who have been involved in AMP longer are much more likely to respond affirmatively to both of these performance measure questions. For example, among youth involved for six months or more, 80% reported that they have a positive relationship with an adult through AMP; and 71% report that they have had leadership opportunities.



OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

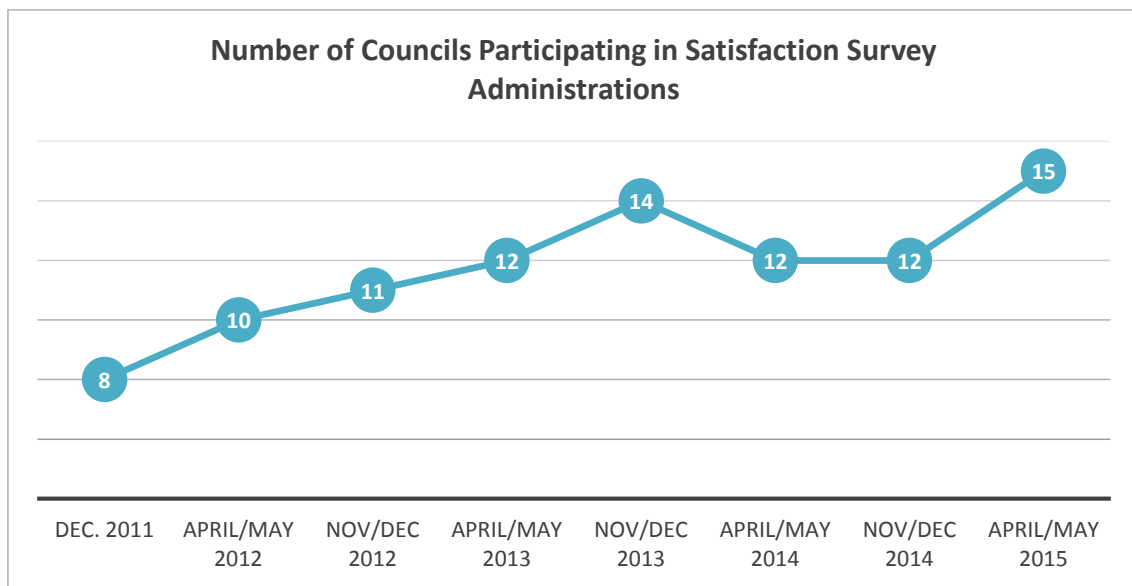
Finally, the survey gave youth the opportunity to respond to two open-ended questions. At the request of the AMP state coordinator, the questions in this administration were: “What have you learned in AMP you can share with another youth in the system?” and “What information can AMP provide to help you reach your dreams?” In response, many youth provided positive feedback about their experience in AMP. Getting information about resources available after foster care was a common theme about how to help them reach their dreams. Complete responses to the open ended questions are shared with the AMP state coordinator.

Part 2: Four-Year Trends

Over the past four years, there have been eight rounds of satisfaction surveys conducted with members of local AMP Councils. While the membership in AMP is continuously changing, the surveys reveal a great deal of consistency in young people’s assessment of their involvement. The following few charts are presented to provide a brief overview of the satisfaction surveys over this time and highlight some of the key variables the instrument measured.

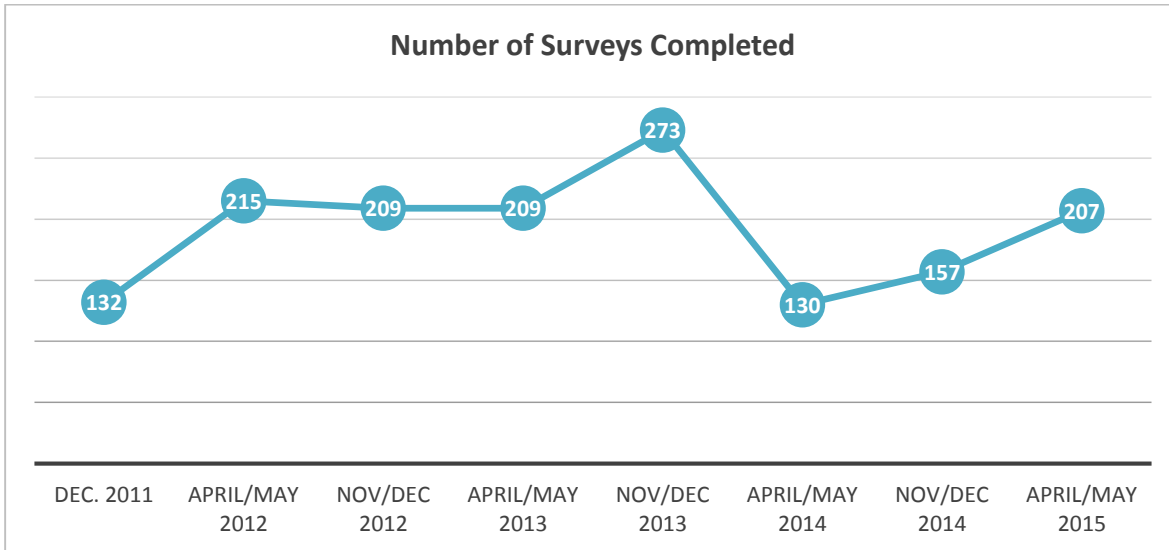
The satisfaction survey was first piloted with AMP youth in December 2011 and repeated approximately every six months thereafter. While there were minor changes for each administration (most notably in the open-ended questions), the survey instrument and methodology remained relatively consistent over the eight administrations.

Since the first survey administration, AMP has grown from ten to fifteen local Councils, including an AMP Council at the State Training School in Eldora and a “mobile Council” in the Des Moines area, increasing accessibility both geographically and to unique subsets of youth involved in Iowa’s child welfare or juvenile justice systems. The following chart shows the number of AMP Councils that participated in each satisfaction survey administration. While all Councils were encouraged to conduct the survey, in some cases it was not feasible (e.g., new Councils or those transitioning to a new facilitator were not able complete surveys in the assigned timeframe).

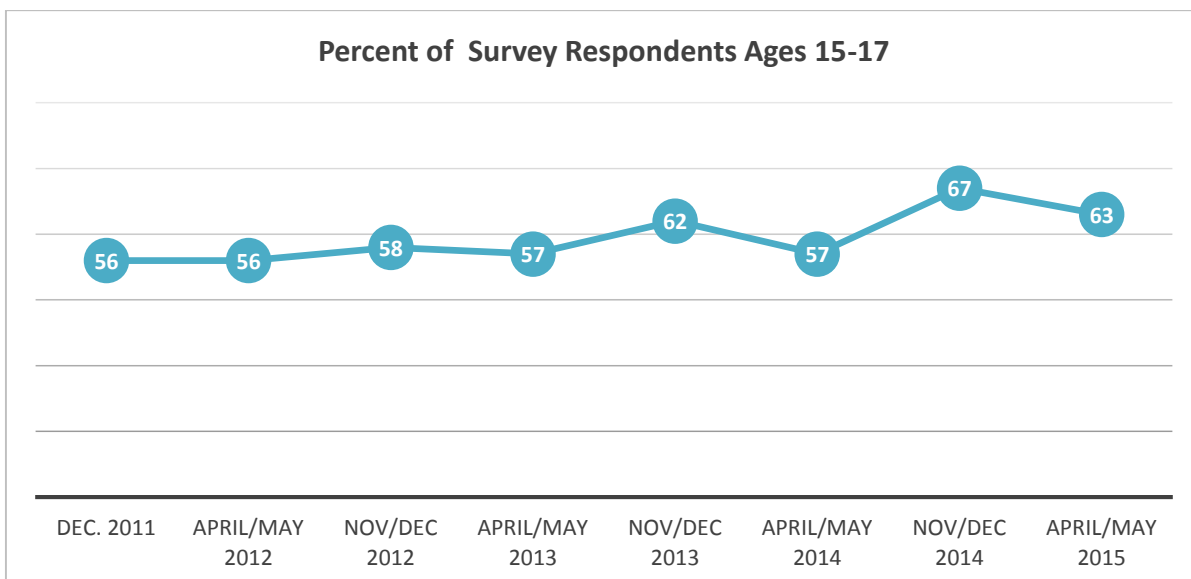


AMP Satisfaction Survey Results

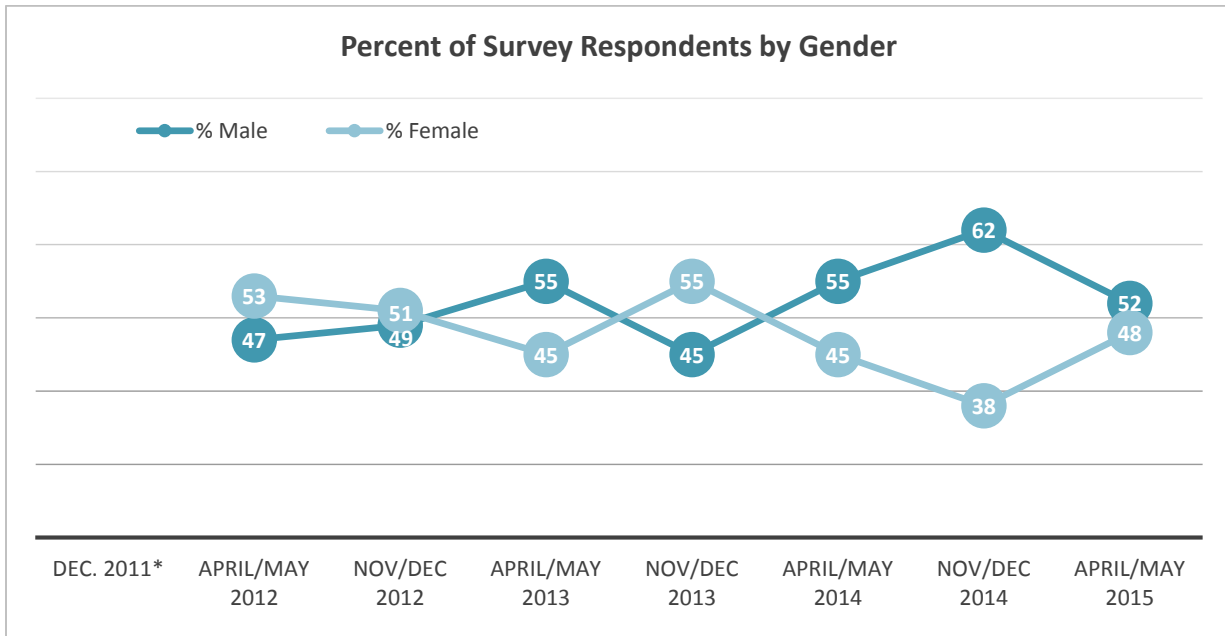
The number of youth completing surveys varied over the eight administrations based on the number of Councils, overall membership, and attendance. On average, 192 youth responded in each round of survey administrations. Initially, several of the local Council facilitators worked hard to have as many youth as possible complete surveys over the course of several meetings. To lessen the data collection burden, beginning with the April-May 2014 survey, facilitators were instructed to choose a single meeting and invite whatever youth were present to complete a survey, with greater emphasis placed on data integrity rather than quantity of surveys.



The mix of youth in AMP completing satisfaction surveys in terms of age and gender remained relatively consistent over the eight survey administrations. The median age of survey respondents was 16 in all administrations. Only recently, has there been a slight increase in the proportion of youth who are age 16 and 17, relative to other youth. The vast majority of youth in all administrations were between the ages of 14 and 17. On average, 52% of respondents have been male, and 48% female, indicating that AMP is accepting of and relevant for both boys and girls. See charts below.

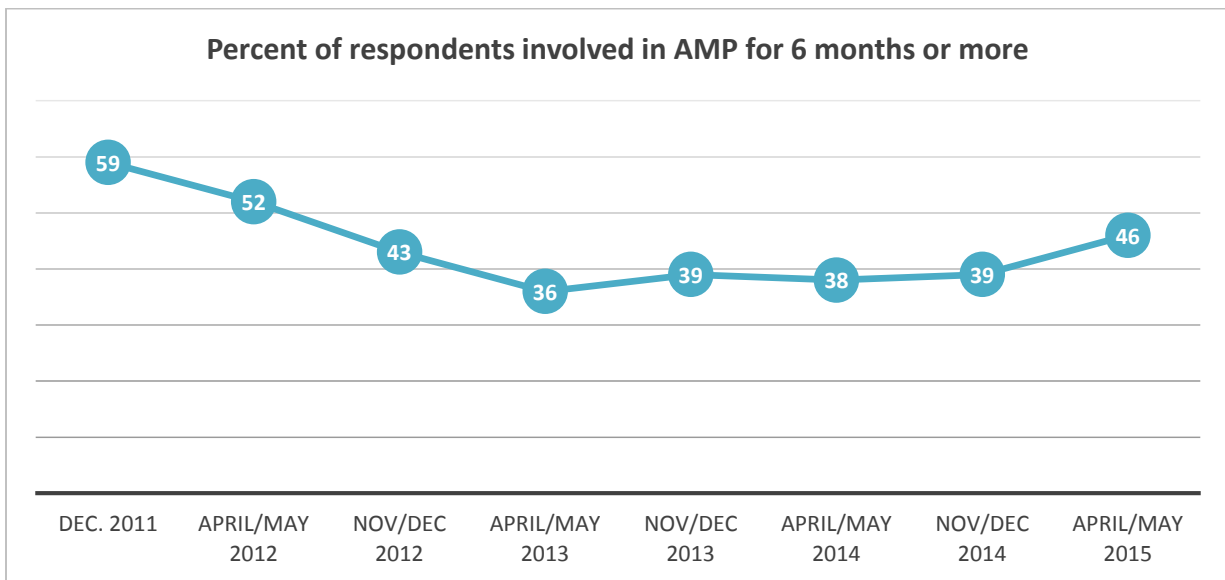


AMP Satisfaction Survey Results



*Gender was not requested in the pilot survey in Dec. 2011.

On average, 43.7% of the survey respondents over the eight administrations reported being involved in AMP for 6 months or more, reflecting both the creation of new Councils throughout this time period, the mobility of youth in foster care, and the ever changing population of young people who access an AMP Council.

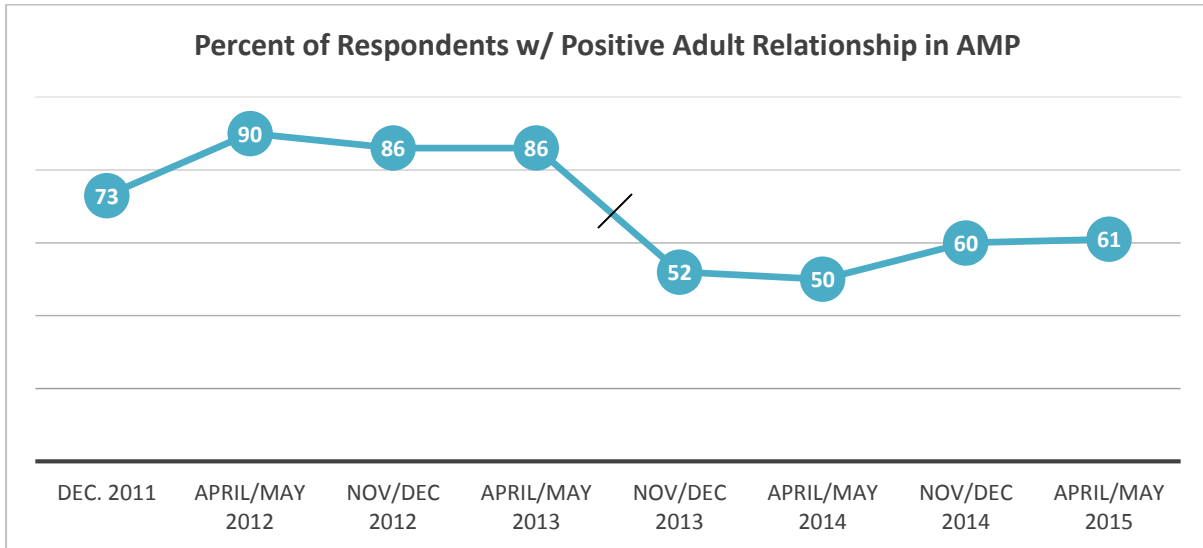


A key performance measure for AMP is the percentage of young people who report having a positive relationship with an adult through AMP. In the first four administrations of the survey, the instrument addressed this issue in a Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) question. For these

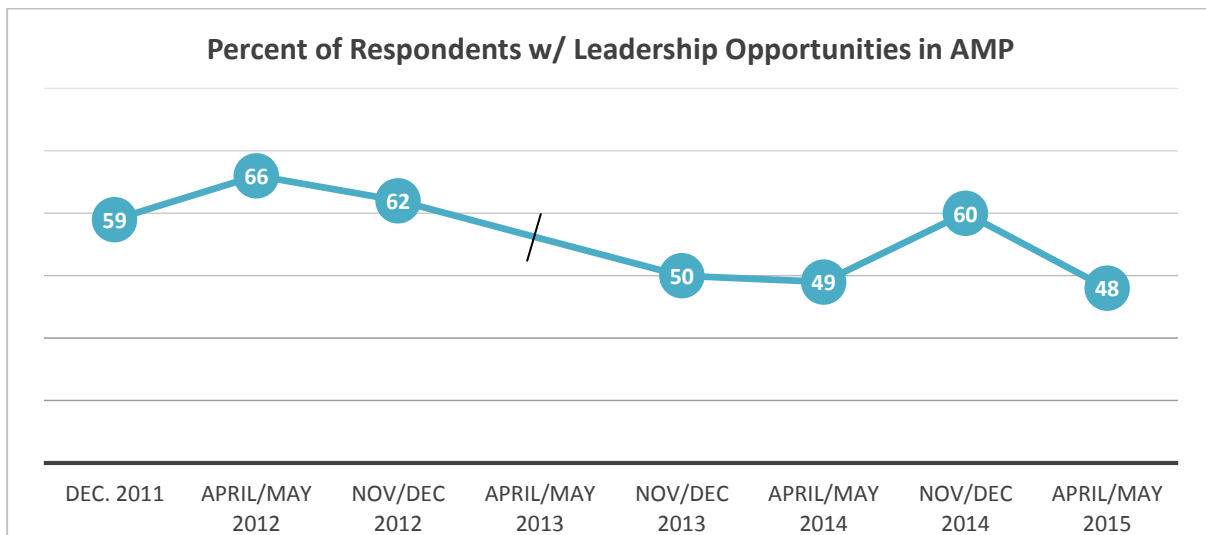
AMP Satisfaction Survey Results

administrations, the chart below shows the percentage of youth who responded Agree or Strongly Agree to the statement about having a positive relationship with an adult. Beginning in the Nov.-Dec. 2013 survey, the question was changed to multiple choice options of “yes”, “no” or “not sure”. The percent answering “yes” to that question are represented in this chart.

It should also be noted that this measure is strongly related to the length of the young person’s involvement with AMP. The reports prepared after each semi-annual administration of the satisfaction survey disaggregate this measure based on length of involvement in AMP.



Another important goal for AMP is to give youth leadership opportunities. In the chart below, respondents who answered “yes” to the question related to being given leadership opportunities are shown. This question was not addressed the same way in the April-May 2013 survey, and beginning in Nov.-Dec. 2013, a “not sure” answer was provided as a possible response option. This variable is also largely dependent on a young person’s length of involvement in AMP.



CONCLUSION

Iowa's support of Foster Care Youth Councils throughout the state continues to create opportunities for youth in foster care or other placement to participate in AMP. Over the last four years, young people have consistently provided very positive feedback about AMP through the semi-annual satisfaction surveys. While such surveys are only one means of assessing the quality and effectiveness of these Councils, they suggest that AMP is offering a valuable opportunity for young people to develop a sense of belonging and friendship in a supportive environment, as well as to experience leadership and learn important social and life skills.

As one young person said in her comments on the most recent survey: *"AMP is a great program where the leaders all believe in you and understand. I have found AMP to be a place where you can be you and your not judged. It's an overall great place to go and have fun while learning."*



The Youth Policy Institute of Iowa (YPII) is a non-profit organization that promotes policies and practices that make a difference in the lives of youth. YPII partners with a wide variety of youth-serving organizations and public agencies to develop, evaluate, and expand services and opportunities for youth in Iowa. Positive youth development and authentic youth engagement

are hallmarks of our approach to creating positive change. 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.
