



# **A Review of Housing, Employment and Education Status for Older Youth Exiting Care in New Jersey: Findings and Recommendations**

*A Report by the Office of Performance Management and Accountability*

Allison Blake, Ph.D., L.S.W.  
Commissioner

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## Executive Summary

**Overview of project.** This report presents the findings of two case record reviews that were undertaken to examine outcomes pertinent to Measure 55 of the *Charlie and Nadine H. v. Christie* Modified Settlement Agreement. The focus of the review was on the housing, education, and employment status of youth aged 18-21 years who exited an out-of-home placement without achieving permanency and subsequently had their case closed by DCP&P between January 1 and December 31, 2013<sup>1</sup>. Information about these domains was obtained from the youths' case record and electronic files and examined by staff from both the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) using a structured protocol. In total, twenty-one reviewers examined the case records of 106 youth. This review represented youth throughout the entire state of New Jersey.

**Brief summary of results.** Some of the key findings related to housing, education, and employment are described here. Additional contextualizing factors for these domains along with findings specific to multiple aspects of the case planning are discussed in more detail in the report.

**Housing:** Overall, the results show that all but one of the youth (99%) had documentation in their case records that they had housing prior to case closure. The records of 99 of the 106 youth (93%) had documentation of a housing plan upon exiting DCP&P care. Moreover, most of the youth (81%) had worked with their caseworker prior to case closure in order to plan, as needed, for their housing. Prior to case closure, the top three placement settings for the youth were: *residing in previous resource home* (25%), *residing with friends* (11%), and *residing in a treatment home* (9%).

**Education:** The review revealed that 37 percent of all youth in the review were enrolled in an educational or vocational/employment training program at the time of case closure. There was evidence of caseworker planning with youth for educational or vocational programming in 87 percent of the applicable cases. One-half of all youth had completed a high school level of education at the time that their DCP&P case was closed.

**Employment:** The review indicated that 35 percent of all youth in the review were employed at the time of case closure. There was evidence of planning with the youth around their employment in 77 percent of applicable cases.

**For both the education and employment domains,** sixty-five percent of the applicable youth in the review met the criteria of being either enrolled in an education or vocational program or were employed at the time of case closure.

Fifty-nine of the 106 youth (56%) were either *enrolled in an education or vocational/employment program or were employed*. Breaking this down by domain: 39 youth (37%) were only enrolled in an educational or vocational/employment program, 37 youth (35%) were employed only and 17 youth (16%) were both enrolled in an educational and vocational/employment program and employed.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For this review, permanency is defined as being reunited with a supportive parent, adopted or achieving kinship legal guardianship.

<sup>2</sup> In order to accurately assess DCP&P performance in meeting this standard, cases were individually reviewed to determine if the youth was not employed or enrolled in an educational or vocational program due to such variables as the youth's incarceration or cognitive or developmental disability, thereby resulting in the final achievement outcome of 65 percent. Each case was jointly discussed by DCF and CSSP. An additional outlier exemption was one youth who had completed vocational school and was seeking employment. This was regarded as an acceptable outcome and therefore deducted from the universe used to calculate DCF performance.

## Section I: Overview of Report

**Introduction.** In December 2013 and February 2014, the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) Office of Performance Management and Accountability (PMA), Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P), Office of Adolescent Services (OAS), and the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP) jointly conducted a two-part case record review that specifically concentrated on services to older youth. The primary purpose of this review was to conduct a case record review for Measure 55 of the *Charlie and Nadine H. v. Christie* Modified Settlement Agreement which requires, "By December 31, 2011, 95% of youth exiting care without achieving permanency shall have housing and be employed or in training or an educational program." In this review, case records for youth involved with the DCP&P between the ages of 18-21 years who exited a DCP&P placement and had their DCP&P case closed between January 1 and December 31, 2013 without achieving permanency were examined. The main focus of the review was on the need for and delivery of services to these youth and outcomes in the areas of housing, education or vocational training and employment.

**Method.** This review examined youth for the time period of *January 1-December 31, 2013*, who met the methodology criteria of being in an out-of-home placement for at least one day within this period and exited to non-permanency within that period. The case records from the year preceding the youth's case closure were utilized for the review. The youth in the sample must have been in their current placement episode<sup>3</sup> for a minimum of three consecutive months, and must have been discharged from their out-of-home care placement during the review period.<sup>4</sup> This review did not include any youth who were reunified with caregivers, were adopted, or exited to kinship legal guardianship. A total of 106 cases were identified for this review.<sup>5</sup>

The case record review instrument utilized in the previous case record review on this topic in February 2013, which was developed jointly by DCF, CSSP and the Rutgers University School of Social Work, was revised slightly to enhance the clarity of questions. The review was completed by seventeen reviewers from DCF (including staff from the DCP&P, OAS, and the PMA) as well as four reviewers from CSSP. All reviewers attended an orientation prior to the review to become familiar with the review methodology and the instrument. Guidance was provided to reviewers as to where to look for specific information within the electronic and hard copy of the case file; consultation was provided throughout the review. DCF and CSSP staff conducted a full review of the first, second, and fifth case and the corresponding review instruments completed by each reviewer. Edits were made to the data when data conflicts were discovered. Each case record took about 1-2 hours to review. Each reviewer entered the case record information into a SurveyMonkey® database; the data were then downloaded into Excel format for the analysis. The preliminary results of the review as well as draft versions of the report were shared with DCF leadership and with CSSP.

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<sup>3</sup> "Placement Episode" means the duration of time in which the child is in resource family care or out-of-home placement, beginning when DCP&P obtains legal authority via court order or voluntary consent to remove the child and place the child out-of-home, and ending when the child is no longer in out-of-home placement (i.e., is discharged)..

<sup>4</sup> In some cases, the youth remained in their placement with responsibility transferred to a non-DCP&P authority.

<sup>5</sup> The review was conducted in two parts: Youth who exited between January and September 2013 were reviewed in December 2013 and youth who exited between October and December 2013 were reviewed in February 2014.

**Limitations.** It is important to note that review findings are limited by the case record review methodology. That is, the results described here are informed by one source— hard copy and electronic case records. The reviewers did not follow-up directly with any of the youth, caseworkers or involved stakeholders to augment the information uncovered in the review. As such, some of the results may be skewed because of lack of accurate or sufficient documentation in the case records. It is also important to reiterate that this was a review of a subgroup of adolescents who have been involved with DCF (i.e., those who had not achieved permanency) and does not encompass or reflect the entire adolescent population served.

## Section II: Overview of Youth

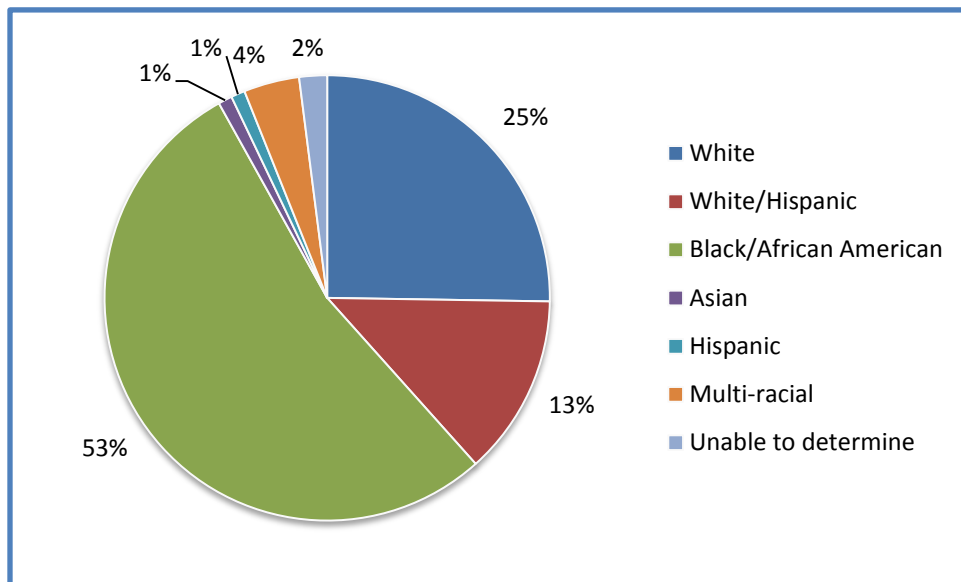
This section includes a general description of the youth reviewed.

This includes a summary of:

- Youths' race and age at time of case closure; and
- Reason for case closure;

**Demographics & Background Information.** For this case record review, there were 106 total youth, which included 49 *female* and 57 *male*. The racial and ethnic composition of these youth includes one *Asian* (1%), 56 *Black/African American* (53%), four *Multi-racial* (4%), 26 *White* (25%), one *Hispanic* (1%), and five were *unable to determine* (2%) as the information was not included in the case record.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure 1: Youth Race/Ethnicity (n = 106)**



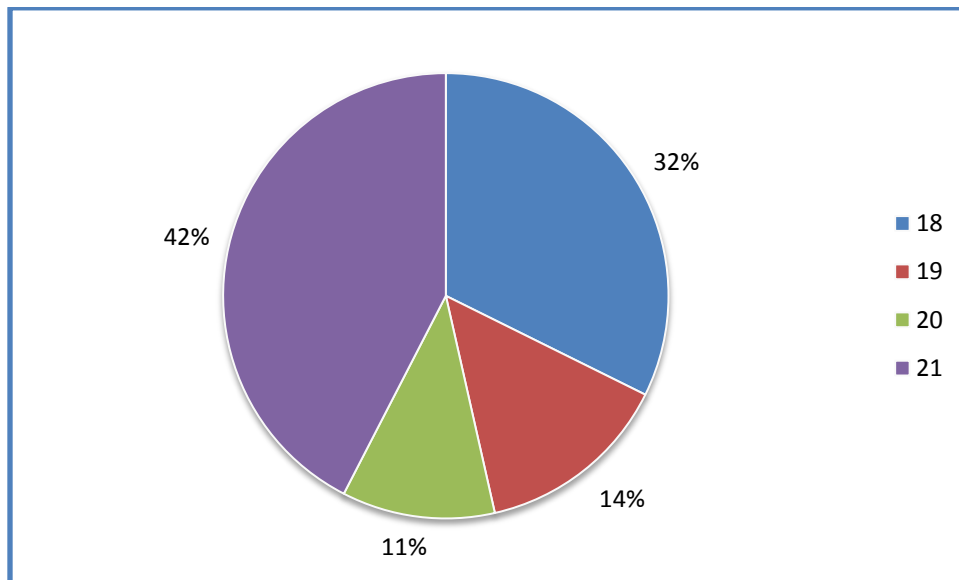
Source: Measure 55 Case Record Review, December 2013 and February 2014

<sup>6</sup> Note that throughout this report the percentages in the figures and tables were rounded; therefore, the data presented may not equal 100%.



Figure 2 shows the youths' age at time of case closure. Thirty-two percent were 18 years; 14 percent were 19 years; 11 percent were 20 years and 42 percent were 21 years.

**Figure 2: Youth Age at Closure (n = 106)**

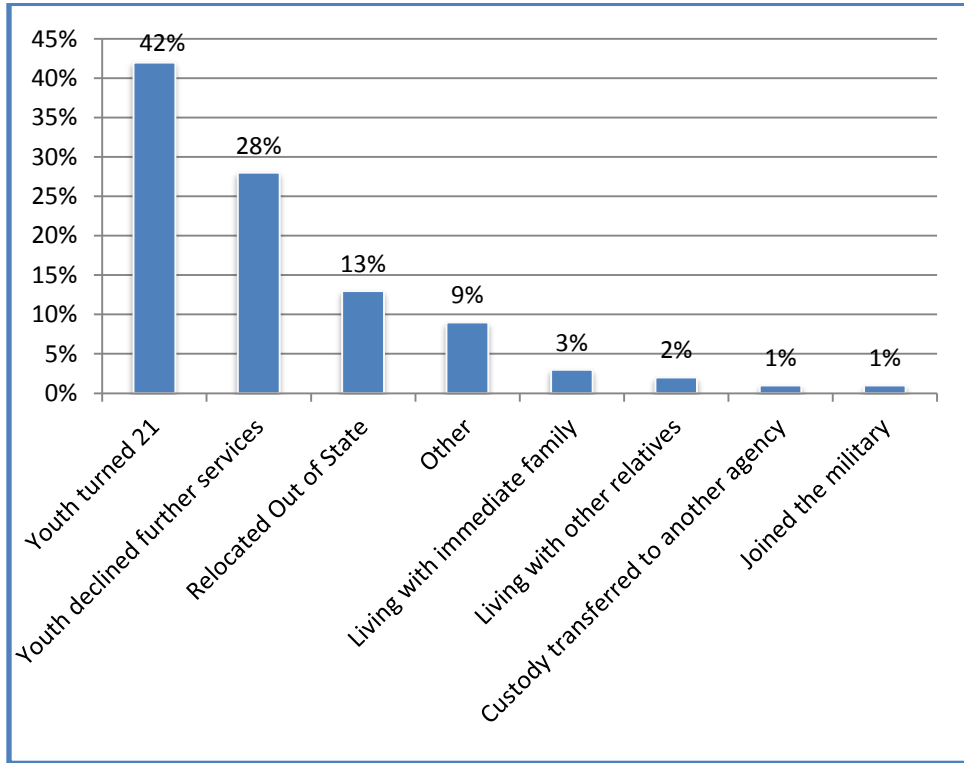


Source: Measure 55 Case Record Review, December 2013 and February 2014

**Reasons for Case Closure.** As shown in Figure 3, most of the cases (42%) were closed because the youth turned 21 years old and could no longer stay in the care of DCP&P. The second most common reason (28%) were youth under the age of 21 who declined further services despite being able to keep their case open. Case closing due to *Relocated out of state* accounted for 13 percent. The *Other* category (9%) within Figure 3 includes youth incarcerated (3), re-opened as parents as new DCP&P cases (2), cases that should not have been closed (4)<sup>7</sup> and one case where the closure reason could not be determined. The one youth who transferred to another agency had cognitive impairments and is continuing to receive services within the adult rehabilitative system.

<sup>7</sup> Such reasons included youth missing less than 6 months (1) and inappropriate case practice/failure to engage youth (3).

**Figure 3: Primary Reason for Case Closure (n = 106)**



Source: Measure 55 Case Record Review, December 2013 and February 2014

### Section III: Assessment and Planning Results

This section examines the specifics of DCF’s assessment and case planning procedures for the older youth which would influence the three domains of housing, employment, and education. This section also focuses on youths’ engagement with the assessment and planning process in case planning in general.

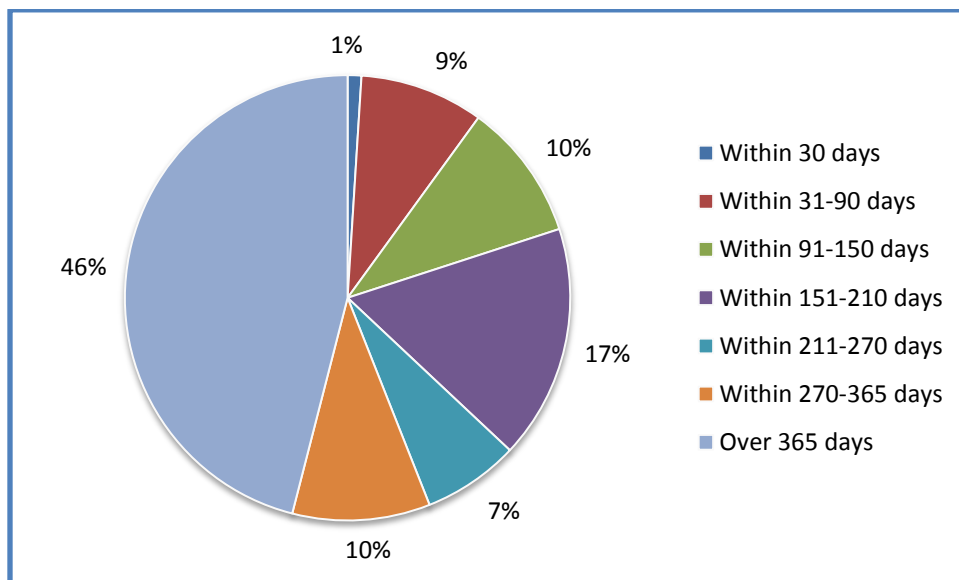
The specific questions pertained to the following:

- Completion of Independent Living Assessment, and youths’ participation in this process;
- Timing of case plan development;
- Timing of Transitional Living Plan development;
- Completion of Family Team Meetings; and
- Adolescent Closing Agreements.

**Independent Living Assessments.** Independent Living Assessments (ILAs)—based on the Casey Life Skills Assessment—are used by DCF to determine a youth’s capability in a variety of skill areas including daily living, housing, money management, self-care, and career and education. DCP&P policy and practice requires the ILA be completed annually for youth ages 14 and older who are in an out-of-home placement.

Data from the case record review determined that over three-fourths of the youth (77%) had completed an Independent Living Assessment. Of those with completed ILAs (82), 46 percent were completed over 12 months prior to case closure and 54 percent were completed within the year of the closing date. The full results are shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Timing of Completion of Independent Living Assessments (n = 82)**

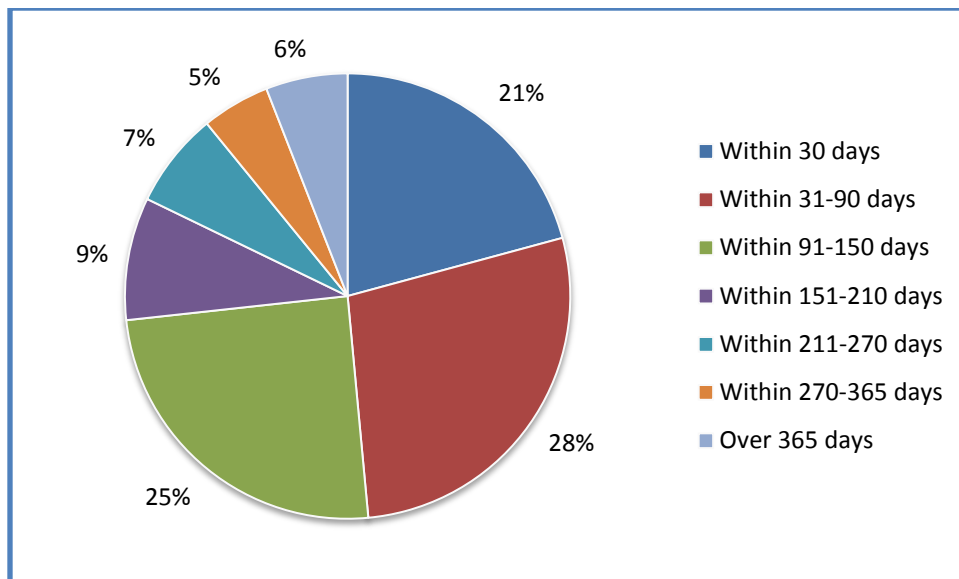


Source: Measure 55 Case Record Review, December 2013 and February 2014

Of the 24 youth who did not have a completed ILA, over three-fourths of these case records (80%) *had no documentation in the record* about why the assessment was not completed. For the remaining five youth, the reasons for lack of an ILA included: four youth *were incapable of completing the assessment due to cognitive/intellectual disabilities* and one youth *decided not to complete it*.

**Case Plans.** Case plans are considered to be a key guiding document in permanency case practice and are required to be reviewed and modified as necessary at least every six months. The review indicated that all youth (100%) had a case plan in the record, however, the timeliness varied as illustrated in Figure 5.

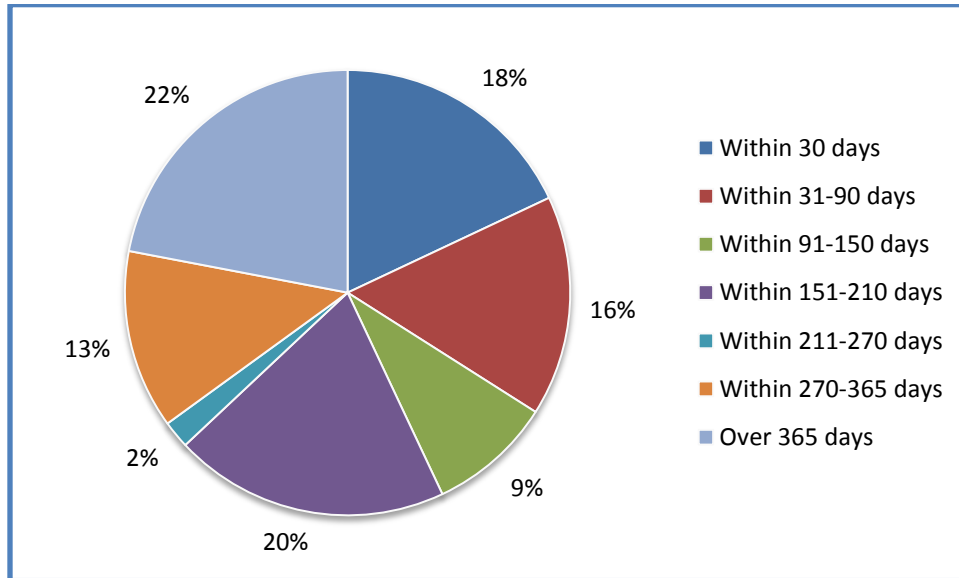
**Figure 5: Timing of Most Recent Case Plan (n=106)**



Source: Measure 55 Case Record Review, December 2013 and February 2014

**Transitional Living Plans.** Transitional Living Plans (TLPs) are completed for youth in placement starting at age 14, updated every 6 months or as needed and within 90 days of closing the youth’s case. The review indicated that less than half (42%) of the youth had a TLP in the record. For those that had a TLP, the timeliness of the document varied as shown in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: Timing of Most Recent Transitional Living Plan (n=45)**



Source: Measure 55 Case Record Review, December 2013 and February 2014

**Family Team Meetings.** All of the youth were discharged from their DCP&P out-of-home placement during the review period of January through December 2013. The records were assessed to determine if there was evidence of a Family Team Meeting (FTM) within the year of documentation available for review. There was evidence of a FTM in 75 percent of the cases. In the 26 cases where there was no FTM documented, in 15 cases (14%) the youth declined and in 11 cases (10%) no FTM was documented nor a reason offered why one was not documented.

**Adolescent Closing Agreement.** The Adolescent Closing Agreement is a document that allows the DCP&P worker to review and document a discussion with the adolescent about closing his or her DCP&P case and the availability and limitations on service eligibility once his or her DCP&P case is closed<sup>8</sup>. The form which is required by DCP&P policy and practice to be signed by the youth at the time of exiting care, allows the youth to give a written explanation and documentation as to why he or she would like his or her DCP&P case closed. Data collected during the case record review determined that over half of the youth (51%) signed an Adolescent Closing Agreement. However, for the remaining youth (52) who did not sign this agreement, for most (73%) there was no case documentation as to why this did not happen. For those where an explanation was identifiable, the reasons included: youth had cognitive

<sup>8</sup> In Case Closing Agreement, the “limitations of service eligibility” is that there are some services that young adults may be able to access once their case is closed. During the completion of the case closing agreement, information is shared with the youth on a case by case basis on the services that may be available to them post case closure.

impairments/developmental disabilities (8); youth left the area with insufficient notice to caseworker (5); and youth declined to sign (1). Adjusting for those cases where the Adolescent Closing Agreement could not be reasonably completed (15), the DCP&P performance level for this standard was 59 percent.

Related to the Adolescent Closing Agreement, reviewers assessed whether there was documentation regarding *counseling the youth about keeping his/her CP&P case open* for those youth who were under age 21. Of the 106 youth, 48 percent were not applicable.<sup>9</sup> Of the remaining 55 youth who were applicable, 75 percent (41) of the case files documented that the youth were counseled, while 25 percent (14) were not advised about options to keep his or her case open.

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<sup>9</sup> These cases were not applicable due to the following reasons: *Youth exited at age 21; Youth was re-opened as a parent; Youth was mentally/cognitively impaired; Youth was involved in criminal justice system; Youth relocated to a different state; and Youth was missing or on runaway status.*

## Section IV: Housing Results

This section examines the specifics of youths' housing situation at the time of case closing.

The specific questions pertaining to housing included:

- Youths' housing type and status prior to case closing;
- Service planning in the housing domain;
- Strengths and weakness of the housing domain

**Housing Type Prior to Case Closure.** The youth resided in a number of different settings prior to case closure. In some cases, the youth remained in their previous placement as a private arrangement or continued to reside in a rehabilitative setting through the DCF Children's System of Care (CSOC) or other State-funded adult service. Living *in previous resource home* (25%)<sup>10</sup> or *with friends* (11%) along with *living in a treatment home* (9%) were the top three settings identified in the review. All but one youth (99%) had documented housing prior to case closure. Records for 99 of the 106 youth (93%) included documentation of a housing plan for the time when their DCP&P case was to be closed.<sup>11</sup> These housing results are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1: Type of Housing Prior to Case Closure (n = 106)**

<b>Housing Setting</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Previous Resource Home	25%
Living with friends	11%
Treatment Home	9%
Supervised Transitional Living Program	8%
Living with relative(s)	8%
Group Home	7%
Independent Living Program	7%
Living with biological parent(s)	7%
Independent Living	6%
Residential Child Care Facility	5%
Living on their own	4%
Incarcerated	3%
Shelter Care	1%
Missing/Unknown	1%

Source: Measure 55 Case Record Review, December 2013 and February 2014

<sup>10</sup> Resource home includes those that are *Unrelated* (17%) and *Related* (8%) to the youth. Combining the latter with the *'Relatives'* and the *'Biological parents'* categories results in 23 percent of the youth residing with a relative prior to case closure.

<sup>11</sup> For those youth who reviewers determined did not have a housing plan upon exiting DCP&P care, reviewers were asked why there was no plan and the following responses were given: four were planning to move out of state and did not indicate a plan for housing; one declined to engage in future planning; one youth was missing; and for one youth, the record had no reason for lack of a future housing plan.

**Service Planning in Housing Domain.** Reviewers were asked to assess if there was evidence of planning activities in the record related to housing for the youth. Adjusting for where planning activities were not needed (5 cases)<sup>12</sup>, there was documented evidence of DCP&P planning for the youth’s housing in 81 percent of the cases.

**Strengths and Weaknesses of Housing Domain.** Case reviewers were asked to note strengths and areas in need of improvement that they identified in documentation available in the case records regarding assistance provided to youth in obtaining housing. Qualitative feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of this domain from reviewers was recorded on a case-by-case basis. Reviewers noted particular achievements or case challenges as they reviewed each case. Reviewers selected from a fixed list of responses (compiled from the October 2013 Measure 55 report from the February 2013 review), being able to choose more than one as applicable. The following is a listing of responses regarding DCP&P work in the housing domain.

**Table 2: Strengths of work to assist and link youth to housing (n=106)**

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Number of cases</b>
Record indicated engagement with youth and family, as applicable	80
Record identified resources and programs for the youth	71
Record indicates that caseworker-supervisory conferences were conducted	52
Record indicated that mentors and others were facilitated to support youth	35
Record indicated necessary follow-up at various steps in the process	32
Assessment tools were completed	31
Planning tools were completed	24
Planning tools were completed and timely	16
Assessment tools were completed and timely	13
All options were explored with the youth	13
No strengths noted	6

Source: Measure 55 Case Record Review, December 2013 and February 2014

**Table 3: Areas in need of improvement to assist and link youth to housing (n=106)**

<b>Area needing improvement</b>	<b>Number of cases</b>
Improved caseworker-supervisory conferencing	36
Completion of partial or absent assessments	36
More community resources available to achieve the goal	35
Completion of partial or absent plans	34
Improved necessary and appropriate follow-up casework	31
More timely planning documentation	30
Improved engagement with youth	26
More timely assessments	25
Improved overall case documentation	25
No improvement necessary	17

Source: Measure 55 Case Record Review, December 2013 and February 2014

<sup>12</sup> Reasons planning was not needed include: youth refused services (1); youth did not need assistance (2); youth incarcerated (2).



**Housing Section Summary.** The review of the records of the 106 youth indicated that all but one had housing documented by the caseworker prior to case closure. In one-half (50%) of the records, the documentation indicates that youth had intentions to reside at a different location at the time of or after case closure, including but not limited to such arrangements as returning to a parent's home, living with friends or relatives, living on their own or going to college.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> These future transitions were not verified by the caseworker and are outside the scope of this review.

## Section V: Education & Employment

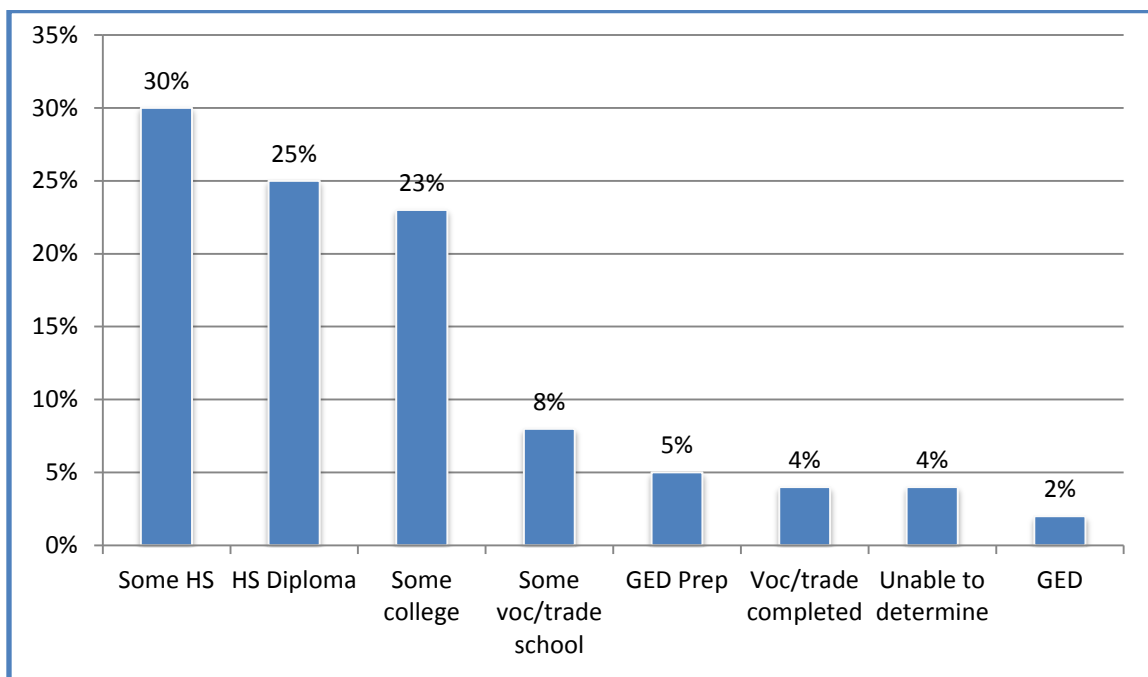
This section provides results from the education and employment domains of the case record review, including the specifics of youths' educational/vocational training and/or employment status at the time of case closing. The *Charlie* and *Nadine H v. Christie* MSA requires that 95% of youth either be employed or enrolled in an educational/vocational training program at the time of case closure. The specific questions pertained to the following:

- Youths' educational attainment at time of case closing;
- Youths' educational enrollment at case closing ;
- Youths' engagement in planning process for education and employment;
- Youths' employment status at case closure ;
- Strengths and areas in need of improvement in the education and employment domains

**Highest level of educational attainment at time of case closure.** At the time of case closure, the youths' highest level of education attainment documented in the case record is as follows: one half of the youth attained at least a completed high school level of education as indicated by a *HS diploma* (25%), *GED* (2%) or completion of *some college* (23%) Some youth had been in GED prep courses (5%). For the remaining youth, almost one-third had *some high school experience* (30%), while four youth (4%) were categorized as *unable to determine*. The *junior high school, associate's degree* and *college completed* categories were not represented.

These results are shown in Figure 7.

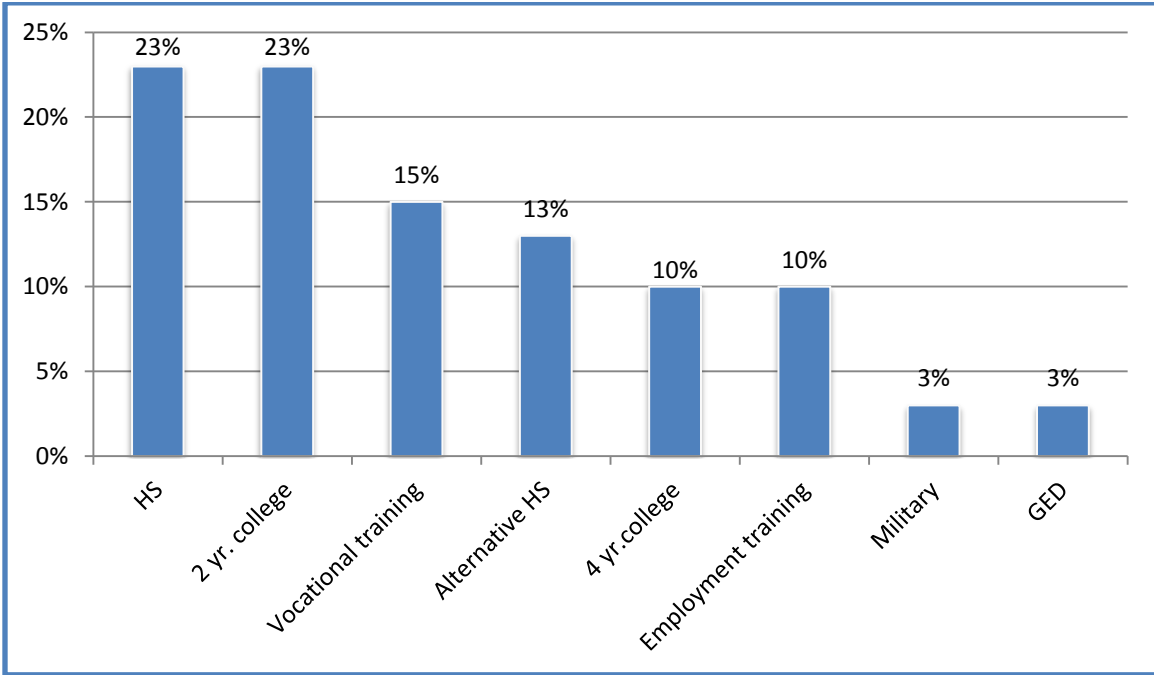
**Figure 7: Youths' Highest Level of Education Attainment at Case Closure (n = 106)**



Source: Measure 55 Case Record Review, December 2013 and February 2014

**A. Educational/vocational program enrollment.** According to the case record documentation, thirty-nine youth (37%) were enrolled *in school or vocational/employment training* at the time of case closure. The types of programs are illustrated in Figure 8.

**Figure 8: Type of School/Vocational/Employment Training Program (n=39)**



Source: Measure 55 Case Record Review, December 2013 and February 2014

**Service Planning in Educational/Vocational/Employment Training Domain.** Reviewers were asked to assess if there was evidence of planning activities in the record related to education/training for the youth. Adjusting for where planning activities were exempted/not applicable<sup>14</sup> (5 cases), there was clear evidence of DCP&P planning for the youth’s education/training in 87 percent of the cases.

<sup>14</sup> Exemptions included: youth was employed/not interested in education (2); youth declined enrollment (2); youth was incarcerated (1).

**B. Employment status.** Regarding the employment status of the youth in the case record review, thirty-seven youth (35%) were *employed at the time of case closure*. Of the 37 youth, five had two jobs and one had three jobs.

**Service Planning in Employment Domain.** Reviewers were asked to assess if there was evidence of planning activities in the record related to employment for the youth. Adjusting for where planning activities were exempted/not applicable<sup>15</sup> (16 cases), there was clear evidence of DCP&P planning for the youth’s employment in 77 percent of the cases.

**Strengths and Weaknesses of Education and Employment Domains.** Case reviewers were asked to note strengths and areas in need of improvement that they identified in the case records regarding assistance provided to youth in obtaining education and employment. Qualitative feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of this domain from reviewers was recorded on a case-by-case basis. Reviewers noted particular achievements or case challenges as they reviewed each case. Reviewers selected from a fixed list of responses (compiled from the October 2013 Measure 55 report from the February 2013 review), being able to choose more than one as applicable. The following is a listing of responses regarding DCP&P work in the education and employment domains.

**Table 4: Strengths of work to assist youth to employment, education or training programs (n=106)**

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Number of cases</b>
Record indicated engagement with youth and family, as applicable	75
Record identified resources and programs for the youth	60
Record indicates that caseworker-supervisory conferences were conducted	43
Record indicated that mentors and others were facilitated for youth	30
Planning tools were completed	30
Assessment tools were completed	24
Record indicated necessary follow-up at various steps in the process	24
Planning tools were completed and timely	10
Assessment tools were completed and timely	10
All options were explored with the youth	9
No strengths noted	4

Source: Measure 55 Case Record Review, December 2013 and February 2014

<sup>15</sup> Exemptions included: youth already employed (6); youth declined assistance (3); youth was incarcerated (1); youth had cognitive/development impairments that precluded/deferred employment planning (6).

**Table 5: Areas that need improvement to assist youth in employment, education, or training programs (n=106)**

Area needing improvement	Number of cases
Completion of partial or absent plans	38
Completion of partial or absent assessments	38
Improved necessary and appropriate follow-up casework	35
Improved caseworker-supervisory conferencing	35
More community resources available to achieve the goal	33
More timely planning documentation	30
Improved engagement with youth	28
Improved overall case documentation	22
More timely assessments	20
No improvement necessary	17

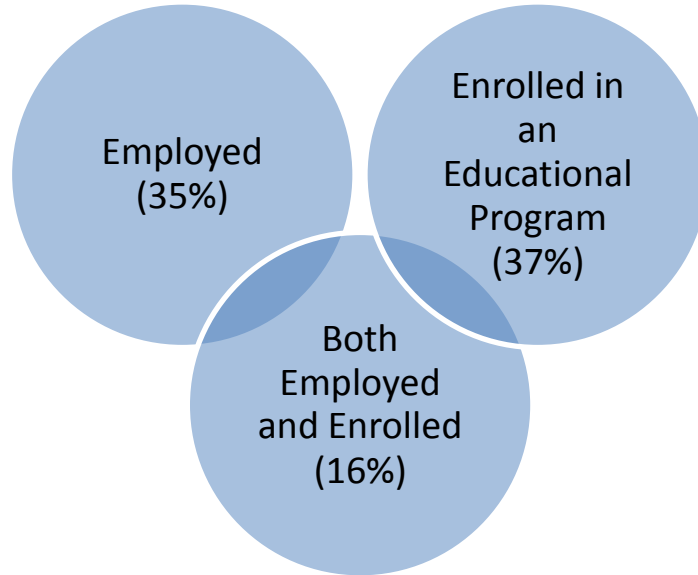
Source: Measure 55 Case Record Review, December 2013 and February 2014

**Education/Training and Employment Section Summary.** Of the 106 youth under review, fifty-nine youth (56%) were either enrolled in an educational program or employed. Seventeen youth (16%) were enrolled in an educational program and employed. The records of the remaining forty-seven youth who were neither enrolled in an educational program nor employed presented with a variety of reasons including those referenced earlier in this report which reasonably exempted the youth from having the enrollment or employment outcome standard applied to them at the time.<sup>16</sup> Several other reasons such as having a criminal history (3 youth) or lack of local employment opportunities<sup>17</sup> generally were viewed as additional barriers to employment *and* also contributed to the overall results. Adjusting for the exemptions (15 cases) extracted from the merged enrollment and employment results produces the number of applicable cases to be 91. Accordingly, 65 percent of the applicable youth were either enrolled in an educational program or employed and 35 percent (32) were not. This is summarized in Figure 9 and 10.

<sup>16</sup> Examples of exempt cases included: being incarcerated; declining to participate or engage in the activity; having cognitive or developmental impairments which precluded or deferred the activity.

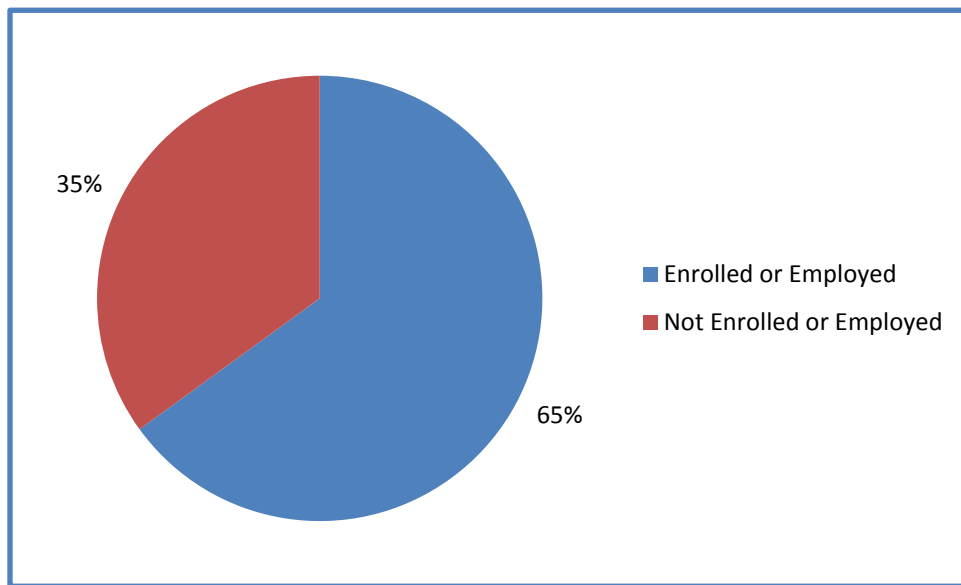
<sup>17</sup> Fifteen youth were seeking but unable to obtain employment.

**Figure 9: Youth Employed or Enrolled or Both (n=59)**



Source: Measure 55 Case Record Review, December 2013 and February 2014

**Figure 10: Youth Education or Employment Status (n=91)**



Source: Measure 55 Case Record Review, December 2013 and February 2014

## Section VI: Conclusion

Since the last record review for MSA Measure 55, DCP&P has demonstrated improved performance and youth outcomes and met the benchmark related to housing for these older youth. However and despite an improved performance by 13% from the last record review, the outcomes related to youth enrollment in an education/vocational/employment training program or being employed upon case closure continues to reflect the need to strengthen our work in engaging youth and linking them to sustainable and comprehensive supports and services. The delineated “Strengths” and “Areas Needing Improvement” specified in this report provide detail and guidance to assist DCF in developing strategies that build upon existing and developing case practice strengths in order to improve outcomes with and for youth.

### **Next Steps & Recommendations**

1. One-half of the youth in this review did not possess a high school diploma or GED, which likely has implications for subsequent education and employment opportunities. DCF is advancing efforts to secure the necessary supports and services youth need to achieve educational success through ongoing and targeted outreach to school districts and piloting cross system educational partnership trainings, finalizing a data sharing agreement with the NJ-Department of Education, and trainings with staff in CP&P Local Offices. In addition, the Office of Educational Support and Programs (OESP) piloted its first training to Education Stability Liaisons in June 2013 regarding the importance of educational planning with youth beginning in 8th grade. This training included the review of important benchmarks all workers should be aware of for their youth in middle and high school, the steps to choosing a post-secondary program and the availability of scholarships and supports. In addition, support and technical assistance was provided to DCP&P case managers to ensure youth are on target to graduate, receive academic supports such as tutoring (if needed), college preparatory courses and are knowledgeable of Career Technical Education pathways.
2. DCF will further update, strengthen, and enforce policies regarding the completion of independent living assessments and adolescent case closing agreements through two trainings, Got Adolescents which is offered to CP&P staff and the Adolescent Module Training which is offered to CP&P staff as well as contracted providers who work with adolescents. DCF continues its efforts to modify the Adolescent Case Closing Agreement and the Transitional Plan for Adolescents to include sections that will capture housing, employment and education status at case closure. OAS is working with the Office of Information Technology to have the Transitional Plan added to NJ Spirit for November 2014 and both forms will be updated and available in the policy manual by September 2014.
3. Of the youth's records reviewed, close to one-quarter were living with relatives following their exits from care and had **not** achieved permanency prior to exiting care. DCF should continue to ensure through training and supportive coaching from supervisors and managers that permanency planning for youth in care is an ongoing process and should not cease once a youth receives a non-permanency goal. To that end, DCF piloted the Permanency Roundtables (PRT) in November 2013, including a kickoff event entitled The Value of Permanency and the PRT case consultations. This process highlighted the importance of permanency for adolescents/young adults regardless of their goal.

4. Given the limitations with applying the definition of permanency as described earlier in the report to this group of youth ages 18-21, DCF will explore the development of a revised definition which does not limit permanency outcomes for this group exclusively to reunification with a supportive parent, adoption, or kinship legal guardianship. As policy is updated regarding case practice with youth 18-21, language will be clarified and strengthened regarding the importance of relational permanency and social connections for youth aging out of care.



## **Appendix: Review Instrument**

## Measure 55-December 2013 Review

The purpose of this review is to assess the housing, education and employment outcomes for youth 18-21 who left an OOH placement without achieving permanency and whose case was closed. This is reference Measure 55 of the MSA. Survey contact: kevin.m.ryan@dcf.state.nj.us

**\* 1. Reviewer ID Number [Select your assigned number 01-15 from the drop-down list]**

**[Source: Reviewer Sheet]**

**\* 2. Review Sample ID # [Source: MSA # on Reviewer Sheet]**

**\* 3. CP&P Local Office [Select from drop-down]: [Source: Reviewer Sheet]**

**\* 4. What was the Unit Assignment of the youth's most recent primary worker? [Source: Reviewer Sheet]**

- Adolescent Unit
- Adoption Unit (LO)
- Adoption/KLG Subsidy Specialist
- Impact Unit
- Permanency Unit
- Intake Unit
- Unable to determine
- Other (please specify)

**\* 5. If this review could not be completed, indicate one or more reasons.**

- Not Applicable. Survey can be completed.
- Not within age range ( under age 18 or over the age of 20.99)
- Most recent placement episode was less than 90 days
- Youth's CP&P case is still open
- Unable to access NJ SPIRIT/Restricted case
- Other Reason Not Completed (please specify)

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## Measure 55-December 2013 Review

### \*6. Gender of the youth [Source: Reviewer Sheet]

- Male
- Female

### \*7. Race/ethnicity of youth [Source: Reviewer Sheet]

- White
- White/Hispanic
- Black/African American
- Black/African American/Hispanic
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- Multi-racial
- Unable to determine/not documented
- Other (please specify )

### \*8. What was the youth's Date of Removal which prompted the most recent placement sequence? [Source: Reviewer Sheet-Date of Removal]

Date of Removal      MM    DD    YYYY  
                           /  /

### \*9. Date of youth's case closure [Source: Reviewer Sheet-Date Case Closed]

Youth closed date:      MM    DD    YYYY  
                                   /  /

### \*10. Youth's age at time of case closure [Source: Reviewer Sheet]

- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21

## Measure 55-December 2013 Review

**\*11. What was the primary identified reason for the youth's case closure?**

- Youth turned age 21
- No longer in need of services/service need(s) met
- Relocated Out of State/Country
- Living with Immediate family
- Living with other relatives
- Youth declined further services
- Joined the military
- Custody and care transferred to another agency
- Youth missing longer than 6 months
- Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

**\*12. Does the record include an Adolescent Closing Agreement signed by the youth?**

- Yes
- No

**13. Since the Adolescent Closing Agreement was not signed, is there documentation as to why?**

- No documentation in the record
- Youth declined to sign closing agreement
- Other (please note a reason)

\_\_\_\_\_

**\*14. Is there evidence in the case record that the youth was counseled about the benefits of keeping his/her CP&P case open?**

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

## Measure 55-December 2013 Review

**15. Since Not Applicable was selected in the previous question, indicate why.**

- Youth exited at age 21
- Youth missing or on runaway status
- Youth in criminal justice system and does not have the option to stay in custody
- Youth was mentally/developmentally impaired
- Youth relocated to another state/country
- Other (please specify)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**\*16. What was the youth's permanency goal in the most recent case plan?**

- Reunification
- Adoption
- Kinship Legal Guardianship
- Independent Living (16-17)
- Individual Stabilization (18+)
- Maintenance In-Home
- Other Long Term Specialized Care
- No case plan in record or no goal in plan
- Other (please specify)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**\*17. When was the youth's most recent Case Plan developed?**

- Within 30 days of case closure
- Within 31-90 days of closure (3 months)
- Within 91-150 days of closure (5 months)
- Within 151-210 days of closure (7 months)
- Within 211-270 days of closure (9 months)
- Within 270-365 days of closure (12 months)
- Over 365 days of closure
- No case plan in record

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## Measure 55-December 2013 Review

### \*18. When was the youth's most recent Transitional Living Plan developed?

- Within 30 days of case closure
- Within 31-90 days of closure (3 months)
- Within 91-150 days of closure (5 months)
- Within 151-210 days of closure (7 months)
- Within 211-270 days of closure (9 months)
- Within 270-365 days of closure (12 months)
- Over 365 days of closure
- No transitional living plan in record

### \*19. When was the youth's most recent Family Team Meeting held?

- Within 30 days of case closure
- Within 31-90 days of closure (3 months)
- Within 91-150 days of closure (5 months)
- Within 151-210 days of closure (7 months)
- Within 211-270 days of closure (9 months)
- Within 270-365 days of closure (12 months)
- Over 365 days of closure
- FTM offered but youth declined
- No FTM documentation in record

### \*20. When was the most recent Independent Living Assessment completed?

- Within 30 days of case closure
- Within 31-90 days of closure (3 months)
- Within 91-150 days of closure (5 months)
- Within 151-210 days of closure (7 months)
- Within 211-270 days of closure (9 months)
- Within 270-365 days of closure (12 months)
- Over 365 days of closure
- Assessment was never completed

## Measure 55-December 2013 Review

**21. Since the Independent Living Assessment was NOT completed, is there documentation in the record as to why?**

- No documentation in the record
- Youth decided not to complete it
- Youth was Incapable of completing due to youth's cognitive challenges
- Other (please note a reason)

**\*22. Where did the youth reside prior to case closure?**

- Resource Home-Unrelated
- Resource Home-Related
- Residential Child Care Facility
- Group Home
- Treatment Home
- Supervised Transitional Living Program
- Shelter Care
- Independent Living Program
- Independent Living
- Other (please specify)

**\*23. What was the discharge date for the placement selected in the previous question?**

**[Source: Reviewer Sheet-Placement Episode End Date]**

MM DD YYYY

Placement end date:  /  /

**\*24. Is there evidence in the record (e.g. case plan, contact sheets, family agreement, collateral reports or Transitional Living Plan, etc.) of planning activities related to HOUSING for after the youth's case closed?**

- Yes
- No
- Planning activities not needed (explain why)

## Measure 55-December 2013 Review

**\*25. Is this youth planning to continue to reside with his/her last placement resource?**

- Yes
- No

**26. What type of housing was the youth planning to have at the time of case closing?**

**[Select one based upon last contact with youth]**

- Biological parent(s)/guardian's home
- Home with friends/Shared Housing
- Home with relatives
- Youth Shelter (18-21)
- Adult Shelter
- Own apartment/room
- Residential Treatment Facility
- Specialized Therapeutic Treatment Home
- Other Housing. Please describe below:
- Group Home
- Independent Living
- College Dormitory
- Medical/Rehabilitative Setting
- Youth will be in Jail/Prison/Planning NA
- Military
- Youth Missing
- Youth had no housing plan

**27. Since the youth did NOT have a housing plan, is there documentation in the record as to why? [Select all that apply.]**

- No documentation in the record
- Youth was unable to find housing anywhere that he/she could financially afford
- Lack of housing available in the youth's community
- Lack of CP&P planning to ensure that youth would have housing at the time of case closure
- Youth declined to engage in planning activities.
- Other (please note a reason)



## Measure 55-December 2013 Review

**\*28. What was the youth's highest level of educational attainment at the time of case closure?**

- Some Junlor High School
- Completed Junlor High School
- Some High School
- High School Diploma
- GED Preparation
- GED
- Some College
- Associate's Degree
- College Completed (BA, BS)
- Some vocational/trade school
- Vocational/trade school completed
- Unable to determine
- Other (please specify)

**\*29. Is there evidence in the record (e.g. case plan, contact sheets, family agreement, collateral reports or Transitional Living Plan, etc.) of planning activities related to EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL TRAINING OR EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAM for after the youth's case closed?**

- Yes
- No

**30. Since there was no evidence in the record of planning activities related to education, vocational or employment training, is there documentation in the record as to why?**

- No documentation in record
- Youth was employed and did not need/request further education or training at that time
- Youth had medical barriers to enrollment
- Youth declined or not interested/considering other options
- Moved out of state/country
- Other (please note a reason)

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## Measure 55-December 2013 Review

**\*31. Is there evidence in the record that the youth was ENROLLED in school or vocational training or employment training at the time of case closure?**

- Yes
- No

**32. Since the youth was NOT enrolled in school or vocational training or employment training at the time of case closure, is there documentation in the record as to why?**

**[Select all that apply.]**

- No documentation in the record
- Youth was employed and did not need further education or training at that time
- Youth was unable to access program due to transportation difficulties
- Youth was unable to access program due to conflict with schedule
- Youth was unable to access program due to financial limitations
- Youth had medical barriers to enrollment
- Youth in process of enrolling
- Youth declined or not interested/considering other options
- Moved out of state/country
- Inadequate follow-through by caseworker
- Other (please note a reason)

\_\_\_\_\_

**33. What type of school, vocational training or employment training program?**

- High School
- Alternative High School
- GED
- 4 year college
- 2 year college
- Vocational training
- Employment training program
- Military
- Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

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## Measure 55-December 2013 Review

**\*34. Is there evidence in the record that the youth was a participant in the NJ Scholars program at the time of case closure?**

- Yes
- No

**35. Is there evidence in the record that the youth was given information about the NJ Scholars program?**

- Yes
- No

**36. Since the youth is NOT participating in NJ Scholars, indicate PRIMARY reason:**

- Not eligible because of Insufficient time in placement (>18 months after age 14 or >9 months after age 16 or >3 months in a TLP.)
- Not eligible because not HS graduate or GED
- Youth declined participation
- Youth employed and not interested in schooling
- Youth unable to get accepted at post-secondary school
- Was participating but failed to maintain minimum GPA (~2.0 for 2 semesters)
- Relocated to another country
- Unable to meet US residency requirement for FAFSA application
- School does not accept Title IV funding
- No documentation in record
- Other (please specify)

**\*37. Is there evidence in the record (e.g. case plan, contact sheets, family agreement, collateral reports or Transitional Living Plan, etc.) of planning activities related to EMPLOYMENT for after the youth's case closed?**

- Yes
- No

## Measure 55-December 2013 Review

**38. Since there is no evidence in the record of planning activities related to obtaining employment, is there documentation in the record as to why?**

- No documentation in record
- Youth declined planning assistance
- Youth had cognitive/developmental impairment(s)
- Youth was incarcerated
- Youth was missing/runaway
- Other (please note a reason)

**\*39. Is there evidence in the record that the youth was employed at the time of case closure?**

- Yes
- No

**40. Since the youth was NOT employed at the time of case closure, is there documentation in the record as to why? [Select all that apply.]**

- No documentation in the record
- Youth was enrolled in education, vocational training or employment training program and was not seeking employment at the time
- Youth was seeking but unable to obtain employment (note reasons in Other)
- Relocated out of state/country
- Mental/developmental impairment precluded employment
- Youth had medical barriers to employment
- Criminal history barriers
- Caseworker failed to adequately follow-through with youth
- Youth elected to not be in education/training or be employed
- Other (please note a reason)

**41. What type of job? [Select one for each job held by the youth, as applicable]**

	Job #1:	Job #2:	Job #3:
Type of job:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

## Measure 55-December 2013 Review

**\*42. Please select from the list below the strengths that were evident in the work to assist and link this youth to HOUSING? [Select all that apply.]**

- All options were explored with the youth.
- Record Indicated engagement with youth and his/her family, as applicable.
- Record Indicated that mentors and others were facilitated to support the youth.
- Record Identified resources and programs for the youth.
- Assessment tools were completed.
- Assessment tools were completed and timely.
- Planning tools were completed.
- Planning tools were completed and timely.
- Record Indicated necessary follow-up at various steps in the process.
- Record Indicates that caseworker-supervisory conferencing was conducted.
- No strengths noted.
- Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

**\*43. Please select from the list below the areas that need improvement in the work to assist and link this youth to HOUSING. [Select all that apply.]**

- More timely assessments.
- More timely planning documentation.
- More community resources available to achieve the goal.
- Improved overall case documentation
- Improved necessary and appropriate follow-up casework.
- Completion of partial or absent assessments.
- Completion of partial or absent plans.
- Improved engagement with youth
- Improved caseworker-supervisory conferencing.
- No Improvement necessary.
- Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

## Measure 55-December 2013 Review

**\*44. Please select from the list below the strengths that were evident in the work to assist and link this youth to EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING PROGRAMS? [Select all that apply.]**

- All options were explored with the youth.
- Record Indicated engagement with youth and his/her family, as applicable.
- Record Indicated that mentors and others were facilitated to support the youth.
- Record Identified resources and programs for the youth.
- Assessment tools were completed.
- Assessment tools were completed and timely.
- Planning tools were completed.
- Planning tools were completed and timely.
- Record Indicated necessary follow-up at various steps in the process.
- Record Indicates that caseworker-supervisory conferencing was conducted.
- No strengths noted.
- Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

**\*45. Please select from the list below the areas that need improvement in the work to assist and link this youth to EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING PROGRAMS. [Select all that apply.]**

- More timely assessments.
- More timely planning documentation.
- More community resources available to achieve the goal.
- Improved overall case documentation
- Improved necessary and appropriate follow-up casework.
- Completion of partial or absent assessments.
- Completion of partial or absent plans.
- Improved engagement with youth
- Improved caseworker-supervisory conferencing.
- No Improvement necessary.
- Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Measure 55-December 2013 Review**

**46. Do you have any other comments you want to make regarding this case? (optional)**

