

# YOUNG ADULT SERVICES STUDY: FACT SHEET

## **What is the *Young Adult Services Study*?**

The Young Adult Services Study (YASS) is collecting information directly from youth and young adults in foster care in New Jersey about the services young adults receive and their experiences as they leave foster care. Your input is valuable to this effort because your experiences along with others may help improve services and supports for young people in foster care.

## **Why should I participate?**

By taking part in this study, you have a chance to have your voice heard, to talk about your needs from your own point of view, and to help other young people in similar situations.

## **How was I chosen?**

You have been asked to be in the study because you are or were a youth or young adult in foster care in New Jersey. We are asking 600 youth and young adults to take part in this study. You may have previously participated in an interview with us for this study.

## **What will I be asked to do?**

We are asking you to participate in an interview for the study. The interviewer will read the questions to you and enter your responses into a computer.

The interviewer will make a personal visit to interview you. Conducting the interview in person allows us to collect information from youth with a diverse set of experiences and allows you to respond privately to more sensitive items in the survey. The interviewer can schedule the interview at a time and place convenient for you.

**You will receive \$75 for the interview.** We may contact you to confirm or update your contact information for possible future YASS surveys.

We will also ask for your permission to look at different kinds of administrative data. Administrative data are information about you collected by government or other agencies. The kinds of data we would look at include:

- college records, such as attendance and graduation;
- public assistance records, such as WorkFirst New Jersey or food stamps;
- unemployment insurance wage records, such as dates of employment and wages;
- foster care agency records, such as how many and what types of placements you were in;
- birth, marriage, and death records
- criminal justice records, such as arrests or convictions; and
- consumer/credit database searches that may have your phone number or address.

We will use this data to locate you and see how you are doing as you get older.

## **Are the questions personal?**

Some questions may seem personal to some people. The interview covers a wide range of topics. The questions will focus on your relationships with family and friends, work and employment, places you have lived, substance use, and criminal justice involvement. The interview will ask about things that have been helpful to you and things that may have been difficult in your life. *You can skip any questions you do not want to answer.*

### **How long will it take?**

The interview will last about 75 minutes.

### **Who funds and conducts the study?**

Youth Villages, Inc. funds the study. Urban Institute is conducting the study and RTI International (RTI) is conducting the interviews. The Urban Institute is a nonprofit social policy research company in Washington DC. RTI is nonprofit research company based in North Carolina. The research team is not connected with any child welfare agency.

### **What happens to the information?**

We store your responses to the interview in a safe and secure way. We will store your information until the data have been cleaned and analyzed. We combine your answers with answers from everyone who participates in the interview and report the responses in summary form.

The information collected will be combined and made available for other researchers to use; these files will not include any information that could identify you or quote you personally and will only be available under password protected secure access.

### **What about COVID?**

Participating in-person may increase the risk of exposure to COVID-19, flu, or other illnesses. You have the option of doing the interview outside—on a porch, deck, or steps outside of your home. You may also request for the interviewer to wear a mask, and you may request a mask for yourself. If you prefer, the interview can also be conducted by telephone.

### **What about privacy?**

Members of the research team have signed a Privacy Agreement pledging they will not reveal any information to anyone other than authorized project staff. The Urban Institute obtained a federal Certificate of Confidentiality for this study to protect the identity of the research participants. We keep all information private to the extent permitted by law, and we never identify a single person in our reports. We combine your answers with responses from others who decide to take part in the study. We report results only in percentages, averages, and other statistics.

Some questions ask about illegal behavior such as drug use. We will not share this information with your caseworker or law enforcement. One exception to note: The interviewer may need to tell the appropriate authorities, such as DCF, if you report evidence of current abuse or neglect. They may also need to report if you threaten to hurt yourself or someone else, such as by calling a crisis counselor.

Before starting the interview, the interviewer will make sure you are in a place where no one can hear your answers.

### **Where do I get more information about the study?**

Contact us by phone, e-mail, or text if you have questions.

**Call:** Haley Ballou, the RTI Field Manager toll-free at 1-877-475-7054

**E-mail:** [YASS@rti.org](mailto:YASS@rti.org)

**Text:** 1-919-289-1205