

READY BY 21

Education



There are several key factors that contribute to helping youth to be on target and Ready by 21 to become strong, contributing members of society. The Department of Human Resources is focusing on five of those factors: **Safe and Stable Housing**, **Education**, **Financial Stability**, **Health Care** and linkages to **Mentors**.

Goal: Youth will have a high school diploma/GED, or will be actively enrolled in an academic or occupational skills training program.

Youth in foster care consistently have lower rates of high school graduation, GED attainment, and college enrollment than the general population, and are more likely to “complete high school via a GED and not a regular diploma.”¹

¹Paul DiLorenzo et al. “Supporting Foster Youth to Achieve Employment and Economic Self-Sufficiency.” National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth. Washington, DC: 2006.

Measurable Outcomes:

- A baseline measurement of the % of youth achieving HS diplomas and GEDs will be established over the next year, and the % of youth achieving HS diplomas and GEDs will increase.
- A baseline measurement of the % of youth entering accredited post-secondary educational programs will be established over the next year, and the % of youth entering such programs will increase.
- A baseline measurement of the % of youth entering occupational skills training or apprenticeship programs will be established over the next year, and the % of youth entering such programs will increase.

Outcomes of former foster youth in their early twenties compared to the general population of young adults

Outcome	Former Foster Youth	All Young Adults
No HS Diploma or GED	24%	7%
GED, No Diploma	10%	5%
Attained 4-yr degree or above	3%	24%
Enrolled in a 4-year or graduate degree program	5%	16%

Source:Midwest Study; a. Northwest Study.

Proposed Strategies:

- The DHR and the local Departments of Social Services will work with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and the local education agencies, to improve educational outcomes of children in their care, such as attainment of high school diplomas, GEDs, and completion of postsecondary education.
- The DHR and the local Departments of Social Services will work with the MSDE to prioritize enrollment of foster care youth in Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs.
- The DHR and the local Departments of Social Services will work with the MSDE to prioritize enrollment of foster care youth in school-based financial literacy programs, prior to graduation.
- The DHR and the local Departments of Social Services will work with the MSDE and Department of Labor Licensing and Regulation to identify and coordinate opportunities for placement into occupational skills training programs, including apprenticeships.