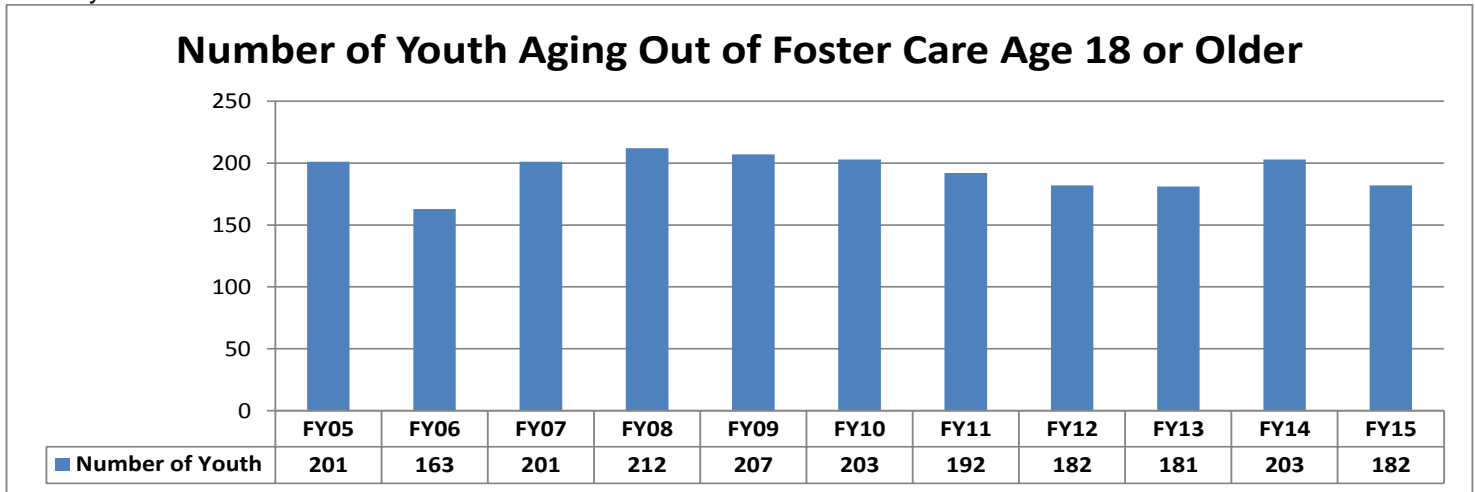


## Aging Out

The graph below shows the number of youth ages 18 and older who are released from State custody because they have reached the age of majority. Youth can remain in foster care up to age 21 years but most leave soon after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday or high school graduation. Aging out of Child and Family Services custody occurs when a child 18 years or older is released from the custody of the State.



### Research Regarding Youth Who Age Out of Foster Care

Teenage youth in foster care who cannot safely return to their family are often given a permanency goal of Individualized Permanence with transition to adult living (TAL) services. Many youth in foster care have significant challenges from living chaotic lives filled with instability, trauma and loss. If these youth “age out” of foster care at age 18 or upon graduation from high school without the benefit of a legal permanent family to help them transition into adulthood, their chances for success are compromised.

**Utah** State Department of Human Services completed research in 2010 called *Assessing Outcomes of Youth Transitioning from Foster Care\**. They found the following statistics for youth who exited foster care:

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Employment               | <p>74% of youth who aged out of foster care were below the national level of poverty. In 2007, youth who aged out of foster care had a median yearly wage of \$4,847.</p> <p>The median wage for part time or salaried workers between the ages of 16 and 24, as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, was \$31,790 in 2007.</p> |
| Post Secondary Education | <p>During the first three years after leaving care:<br/>           18.6% attended applied technology colleges,<br/>           10.6% attended community colleges,<br/>           10.2% attended universities.</p> <p>50% of Americans between the age of 18 and 24 have some college or have completed a degree.</p>                    |
| Arrests                  | <p>34% of youth who aged out of foster care between 1999 and 2007 have one or more felony or misdemeanor arrests on record during the year they left care.</p> <p>The arrest rate for adults age 18 to 25 in the general population was 6.8 per 1000 in 2001.</p>  |
| Early Pregnancy          | <p>31% of female youth who aged out of foster care experienced pregnancy.</p> <p>That is 197% higher than the rate of their peers in the Utah general population.</p>  |
| Mothers in Poverty       | <p>Within three years of leaving foster care, 65.7% - 84.1% of young mothers were at or below poverty level.</p>   |
| Mental Illness           | <p>14 % of the youth that left care since 1999 were diagnosed with a major mental illness.</p> <p>The rate of mood disorders among youth who left care is nearly 50% higher than the rate in the general population.</p>   |

\*<http://www.dhs.utah.gov/pdf/AssessingOutcomesofYouth>