

Well-being and experiences in foster care: Youth survey

Frequently asked questions

Questions and answers from the training on January 29, 2026

1. What if the youth is in more than one program?

DCYF will provide a list of all eligible youth with their primary workers to all participating agencies.

2. Does the youth need to sign a form as part of the “informed consent” process?

No. Youth do *not* need to sign a form even if they are as young as 12 years old.

The survey protocol has been reviewed and approved by DHS’ Internal Review Board (IRB). Case managers will provide *verbal* informed consent using the script in the [guide](#). This youth-friendly approach reduces barriers to participation while meeting all IRB requirements.

3. Are *out-of-state* youth eligible for the survey?

Yes. Out-of-state youth are eligible to participate in the survey. Their Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) worker will coordinate with them and handle the invitation to participate.

4. What about youth who are not yet 12 years old, but will turn 12 before the May deadline?

Youth who are not yet 12 will not appear on the initial eligibility list, but they may take the survey once they turn 12 before the May deadline.

5. What will the email from Tango (the incentive vendor) look like?

The email will most likely come from: noreply@tangocard.com
With a subject line of: Your reward is ready.

It is possible that this email will be treated as spam so please check the spam folder.

General questions that may arise

1. What is the purpose of this survey?

The Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), in partnership with Wilder Research, is gathering feedback to better understand youth experiences, wellbeing, areas of strength, and areas where more support is needed. It also informs how DCYF can improve services and supports for foster youth.

2. Who is eligible to take the survey?

Any youth **ages 12 to 21** who is **currently in foster care** is eligible.

3. When is the survey open?

The survey runs from **February 1, 2026 through May 31, 2026**.

4. How should I invite youth to participate?

You should **directly share the opportunity** with youth you work with and let them know they can complete the survey during a scheduled session or on their own device at a time that works for them.

5. What exactly should I say when introducing the survey?

The [guide](#) provides a specific set of statements to share verbatim about voluntariness, confidentiality, potential risks, and incentives. These include:

- Participation is **voluntary** and will not affect services
- Responses are **confidential**
- Some questions may be **sensitive**
- Youth will receive a **\$50 gift card** after completing the survey

6. How long does the survey take?

It typically takes **15–30 minutes**, and the survey will **time out after 1 hour of inactivity**. If the youth did not complete the survey, and they have been inactive for more than one hour, they will need to start over with a new access code.

7. What should I know about the flyers with ID numbers/access codes?

Each flyer has a unique ID/access code, the survey link, and QR code.

Each ID/access code can be **used only once**, and each completed survey must correspond to one flyer, one ID/access code, one youth participant.

8. What if a youth starts the survey but cannot finish it?

Provide the youth with a **new flyer and ID/access code**, then email or call [Melissa Adolfson](#) with the first ID/access code so the incomplete case can be removed from the dataset. IDs/access codes cannot be reused.

9. What if a youth wants to withdraw after starting the survey?

Email or call Melissa Adolfson with the ID/access code from the youth's flyer so their case can be removed from the dataset.

10. Should youth complete the survey in private mode?

Yes. Youth completing the survey on an agency device should use **private/incognito mode** for additional privacy protection. Shortcut instructions for Chrome, Edge, Firefox, and Safari are provided in the guide.

11. What if youth want to complete the survey on their own time?

That's completely fine. Provide a flyer and remind them:

- They must enter the ID/access code on the landing page
- They can keep the flyer for resources
- The last day to complete the survey is **May 31, 2026**

12. What if the survey brings up distress or difficult emotions?

Follow your agency's guidelines for responding to youth concerns. The flyer also includes the following crisis resources:

- **Crisis Text Line:** www.crisistextline.org OR Text HOME to 741741
- **The Trevor Project:** www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help OR Text START to 678-678
- **Office of the Foster Youth Ombudsperson:** info.oofy@state.mn.us OR 651-946-2940

13. Will youth be compensated for participating?

Yes. Youth receive a **\$50 gift card** to a store of their choice after completing the survey. They choose between electronic or mailed cards.

14. How do youth receive their gift card?

Youth enter an email address at the end of the survey (their own or their case manager's). Gift cards will be emailed within **1–2 weeks**. It is possible that the gift card email will be treated as spam. Please check the spam folder. If not received after 2 weeks, contact Sophie at Wilder Research: sophak.mom@wilder.org

15. Who sends the gift cards?

Gift cards are sent via **Tango**, Wilder's gift card vendor.

16. Will I or anyone else see the youth's answers?

No. **Individual responses are confidential** and only Wilder Research staff will have access to them. Quotes may be used in reporting but will be fully de-identified.

17. What happens with the data after the survey ends?

Wilder will summarize statewide results for DCYF, participating agencies, and partners. Each agency will receive **aggregate findings specific to their agency**, when sample sizes allow.

18. Where can I find all survey materials?

All materials: guide, training slide deck, flyers, resource lists, and full survey are available on the survey's project webpage: <https://www.wilder.org/foster-survey>

19. Who do I contact with questions?

- **Case managers and agencies should reach out to Melissa Adolfson:**

melissa.adolfson@wilder.org

651-280-2763

- **Youth or caregivers should reach out to Sophie Mom:**

sophak.mom@wilder.org

651-280-2769

- **For questions about DCYF's foster youth initiatives, contact DCYF directly:**

dcyf.csp.foster.youth.transitions@state.mn.us

651-431-4707