

Alternative Response (AR) Advisory Committee

June 29, 2023
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Lincoln Community Foundation
215 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68508

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Co-Chair, Susan Thomas, called the meeting of the Alternative Response (AR) Advisory Committee to order at 10:02 a.m., and asked members to introduce themselves. Roll call was taken through introductions.

II. Roll Call and Introductions

Committee Members present (7):

Jarren Breeling	Bri McLarty	Susan Thomas
Patrick Carraher	Heather Sikyta	
Monika Gross	Ivy Svoboda	

Committee Members absent (5):

Alise Baker	Sarah Helvey	Michelle Paxton
Jennifer Carter	Alex Hildebrand	

A quorum was established.

Guests In Attendance (8):

Adam Anderson	Angela Harrown	Laura Opfer
Amanda Adams	Emma Johnson	Michelle Padilla
KeAyra Braithwait	Lea Ann Kappes	

a. Notice of Publication

Recorder for the meeting, Adam Anderson, indicated that the notice of publication for this meeting was posted on the Nebraska Public Meeting and Nebraska Children's Commission website in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. The publication would be kept as a permanent attachment with the meeting minutes.

b. Announcement of the placement of Open Meetings Act information

A copy of the Open Meetings Act was available for public inspection and was located at the sign in table and on the Nebraska Children's Commission website.

III. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Bri McLarty to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Pat Carraher. There was no discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (7):

Jarren Breeling	Bri McLarty	Susan Thomas
Patrick Carraher	Heather Sikyta	
Monika Gross	Ivy Svoboda	

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (5):

Alisa Baker
Jennifer Carter

Sarah Helvey
Alex Hildebrand

Michelle Paxton

MOTION CARRIED

IV. Approval of July 22, 2022 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Patrick Carraher to approve the February 24, 2023 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Bri McLarty. There was no discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (7):

Jarren Breeling
Patrick Carraher
Monika Gross

Bri McLarty
Heather Sikyta
Ivy Svoboda

Susan Thomas

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (5):

Alisa Baker
Jennifer Carter

Sarah Helvey
Alex Hildebrand

Michelle Paxton

MOTION CARRIED

V. Strategic Planning

Policy Analyst, Amanda Adams shared updates regarding the work of the Committee and Workgroups towards the priorities of the Children's Commission. She noted the first strategy for the Committee is reviewing the current supports offered to families and to identify gaps. The subgroups are working on where the families are struggling. She continued that the second strategy is partnering with DHHS in reviewing innovative child and well-being solutions and identifying ways to increase service options. The third strategy is to review equitable services used on court/non-court and alternative response cases in Nebraska. She noted that the Legal Services workgroup has been tasked with looking into what parents and families need, from the legal standpoint, to keep kids in home. Adams continued by noting another strategy is to review prevention services related to mental, social and emotional health resulting from traumatic experiences to mitigate

negative outcomes. She stated that the third strategy has not been looked at yet, but will be in the coming years.

VI. Workgroup Updates

Co-Chair Gross thanked the workgroups and Chairs for their hard work done on the annual report to the Children's Commission.

a. Workforce Stability Workgroup Mikayla Wicks

Amanda Adams shared that Mikayla Wicks has left the Committee and this workgroup will have to find a Chair. She noted that it doesn't have to be a member of the AR Committee.

Adams shared the methodology for determining the recommendations. She shared that this workgroup is made up of many different community providers. Some discussion at the workgroup revolved around burnout, and how to treat as people and not commodities. She noted that a representative from Brave Be came to the workgroup meetings to discuss their unique approach to workforce stability.

Adams shared that the state did a QICEY but it isn't consistently applied across the state. She noted that workers have sick time and vacation time, but they are very hesitant to use it because they know the work will be more when they come back from leave. The workgroup discussed how to spread out the work.

Co-Chair Monika Gross noted that through her work with the Foster Care Review Office, they have been recommending a workforce pipeline that can even stretch back as far as middle school. She noted that Metro Community College is working on a curriculum for different healthcare fields that goes back as far as third grade. She thinks that this could be a viable model for human services as well, as they are closely related fields.

b. Oversight Workgroup Jennifer Carter

Ivy Svoboda noted that the workgroup has spent a lot of time digging into what data can and should be able to be looked at. She noted at the last few meetings the workgroup discussed the current recommendations, and in the future they will look at engagement efforts and quality of services. They will also look at the 1184 ability to review cases and discover other data that needs to be reviewed. She thanked DHHS for sharing data.

c. Equitable Provision of Services Workgroup Mikayla Wicks

Amanda Adams shared there were several stakeholders across the child welfare. She noted that Eastern Service Area uses Utilization Management, which is a special team that does the work of finding and sending referrals, so the caseworker can focus on providing case management. She noted the recommendation is to take that process statewide. It would allow the caseworker to focus on making the decisions for the case rather than tracking down a provider for the service. Adams also noted that there is a recommendation regarding hand-off to community partners. Lastly, Adams shared that Aftercare was a service that was well-liked in Eastern prior to the state bringing back case management. This service allow for future follow-up should the family need additional help after case closure.

d. Legal Resources Workgroup Pat Carraher

Pat Carraher noted great discussion regarding resources. He noted the group discussed surveys, but they found that the group already knows what the families need. The workgroup focused on guardianship, and how to pay for the service or how to complete the forms on their own. The workgroup also discussed how the department of Education can help educate on services for

truancies and other services guides. Carraher noted that protection orders for domestic violence and how to get assistance would also be a great legal resource.

Amanda Adams shared the workgroup will look at what is being provided across the state and what is needed.

Co-chair Gross noted that there is an uptick of filings for guardianship and judges have noted the guardians are sometimes are unaware about the services available. She noted that there may need to be some education regarding what public assistance is available to them as a relative/kinship caregiver. Members discussed that DHHS has a legal resources guide, but many are unaware of it.

VII. Approval of Recommendations

Adams shared some procedures regarding the approval of the recommendations. Members discussed how to prioritize and proceed with the recommendations.

Amanda will add a blurb about prioritizing the Oversight Recommendations but keep the information about what the other workgroup have worked on.

A motion was made by Susan Thomas to approve the recommendations as discussed. The motion was seconded by Bri McLarty. There was no discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (7):

Jarren Breeling
Patrick Carraher
Monika Gross

Bri McLarty
Heather Sikyta
Ivy Svoboda

Susan Thomas

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (5):

Alisa Baker
Jennifer Carter

Sarah Helvey
Alex Hildebrand

Michelle Paxton

MOTION CARRIED

VIII. DHHS Update

Laura Opfer shared updates from DHHS. She shared information regarding Re-Imagine Well-Being Group, the Stephen Group, and the recommendations that will be forthcoming through the 1173 Committee via the Stephen Group report in December. She looked forward to positive change.

IX. New Business

There was none.

X. Public Comment

Co-Chair Gross opened the floor to public comment. There was none.

XI. Upcoming Meetings:

August 25, 2023, in person.

XII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Adam Anderson