

## Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee

May 5, 2022

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Lower Level Sarpy Conference Room  
301 Centennial Mall South  
Lincoln, NE 68508

### I. Call to Order and Welcome

Co-Chair Brandy Gustoff called the meeting of the Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee to order at 10:18 a.m. Interim Co-Chair Richard Hasty asked Adam Anderson to call roll.

### II. Roll Call and Introductions

#### *Committee Members present (7):*

Richard Hasty

Sarah Helvey

Proxy for Michaela Hirschman, Deanna Brakhage

Proxy for Jill Holt, Kitty Washburn

Felipe Longoria

Bailey Perry

Susan Thomas

#### *Committee Members absent (3):*

Douglas Beck

Whitney Beck

Jovan Johnson

Christina Lloyd

Keenan Page

Haylee Wing

#### *Ex-Officio Members present (3):*

Brandy Gustoff

Proxy for Maghan Madsen, Mary Uhlig

Deb VanDyke-Ries

#### *Ex-Officio Members absent (2):*

Jennifer Skala

Lindsay Meyer

#### **A quorum was present.**

#### *Guests In Attendance (9):*

Amanda Adams

Adam Anderson

KeAyra Braithwait

Deanna Brakhage

Keenan Page

Heather Wood

#### *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.

\*Minutes do not follow the order of the agenda.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

**It was moved by Bailey Perry and seconded by Sarah Helvey to approve the agenda as presented.**

There was no further discussion. Roll Call vote as follows:

**FOR (7):**

Richard Hasty  
Sarah Helvey  
Proxy for Michaela Hirschmann, Deanna  
Brakhage

Proxy for Jill Holt, Kitty Washburn  
Felipe Longoria  
Bailey Perry  
Susan Thomas

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (0):**

**ABSENT (6):**

Douglas Beck  
Whitney Beck  
Jovan Johnson

Christina Lloyd  
Keenan Page  
Haylee Wing

**MOTION CARRIED**

**IV. Approval of Minutes**

**It was moved by Susan Thomas to approve the February 21, 2023 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Bailey Perry.** There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (7):**

Richard Hasty  
Sarah Helvey  
Proxy for Michaela Hirschmann, Deanna  
Brakhage

Proxy for Jill Holt, Kitty Washburn  
Felipe Longoria  
Bailey Perry  
Susan Thomas

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (0):**

**ABSENT (6):**

Douglas Beck  
Whitney Beck  
Jovan Johnson

Christina Lloyd  
Keenan Page  
Haylee Wing

**MOTION CARRIED**

**V. Co-Chair Report**

Interim Co-Chair Richard Hasty introduced himself and shared about his history and interest in the B2i Committee.

**VI. Membership Update**

Adam Anderson shared an update regarding membership. He noted some of the duplicative positions that are open, but do not necessarily need to be filled.

## **VII. Youth Thrive Presentation**

Keenan Page joined via Webex and presented a PowerPoint regarding the Development of Youth and Families Thrive in Nebraska. He discussed the development of Strengthening Families. He shared that Youth and Families Thrive training bridges the gaps in Strengthening Families between the youth and adult populations. He said that YFT does not replace what an agency does but helps support it.

## **VIII. Legislative Update**

Amanda Adams noted LB14 got wrapped into AM1146. It is the bill that expands b2i to a select population of Probation. Sarah Helvey noted some of the specifics and the history of the bills. Helvey noted that this has been a longstanding recommendation of this Committee. Amanda noted a group is looking into an LR for child welfare rates.

## **IX. Strategic Plan Priorities**

Amanda Adams shared information regarding the Strategic Priority Tracker. Amanda briefly covered the larger priorities of Strategic Priority. She noted that this group and subcommittees do great at identifying the gaps, so they will focus on this priority in the group.

## **X. Workgroup Updates**

### **a. Sustainability Workgroup**

Amanda Adams shared an update regarding the workgroup. She noted that the next steps of the workgroup will look at the definition of sustainability. Amanda invited members of the Committee to join in the discussion. Adams will share the invitation.

### **b. Data & Evaluation Workgroup**

Heather Wood shared information regarding the recent work of the workgroup. She shared a PowerPoint with data gathered from b2i case reviews completed by FCRO. She noted one special aspect of the FCRO completing the reviews is that the FCRO also reviews the case files of youth prior to their reaching age 19 and entering b2i. Heather also shared the goals that young adults have chosen to work on.

Deanna Brakhage shared information regarding a post foster care housing program that those reaching the age 19 may choose to utilize instead of entering b2i.

Felipe Longoria asked if there is the possibility to breakdown the education goal to determine a goal of post-secondary degrees.

Heather Wood discussed specific trends of the four highest selected goals. Wood also discussed overall progress in the b2i program and specific progress factors such as removals and placement disruptions. She also shared thoughts regarding key influences on overall progress to independent living. She discussed the statistics and trends that have changed.

## **XI. DHHS Update**

### **a. Youth Thrive Roll Out**

Deanna Brakhage noted that the CFS Staff has been trained in Youth and Families Thrive. She shared that there is a meeting next week with the Center of Social Policy to discuss the survey and website access portion of Youth and Families Thrive. With this, they will be able to track the b2i individuals who had training.

b. Youth with Lived Experience Stakeholder meeting

Deanna Brakhage shared that there was a B2i roundtable in March with seven participants that had a lot of good conversation regarding what was lacking prior to entering b2i, what they like about b2i, and their overall thoughts of foster care. Youth want training for foster parents to prepare them for independent living. Youth also want connections with others who have experienced foster care. Brakhage shared that youth would like informational packets to help with a variety of independent living issues.

c. CQI

Deanna Brakhage shared an overview of quarterly CQI data. Brakhage talked about how many individuals are participants in b2i, and how tracking for reentry is now used. She also discussed what each page of the data covers.

**XII. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**XIII. New Business**

Amanda Adams noted that Nebraska Total Care has volunteered to present at the next meeting regarding a presentation for the next meeting, and the group was interested in having them speak.

Deanna Brakhage shared that Transitional Living ARPA funds have been awarded and the programs should be available for youth soon.

**XIV. Upcoming Meetings:**

- a. July 28, 2023, 9:30-11:30 p.m., in person

**XV. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:06 p.m.