

# Nebraska Children's Commission

November 14, 2023

- Ensuring empowerment with all members feeling safe, providing their voice to inputs and outcomes
- Establishing strong committee leadership with commitment to move forward on the priorities of the strategic plan

## Agenda

- Welcome to “Thriving Through Change” Workshop
  - Why are we here?
  - Ground Rules
  - Introductions & Icebreaker
  - The Adaptable Organization
- Situational Assessment Exercise
- Reflect, Discussion, Commit & Close

## Priorities of Strategic Plan

- Provide recommendations to increase the level of support available to relative and kinship placements
- Identify what new or innovative evidenced based practices and services could be implemented in the state of Nebraska to improve placement stability
- Create recommendations on how to better educate the people of Nebraska about services available for families and children

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## “Thriving Through Change” Workshop

“Thriving Through Change” presentation focuses on individual response to change and how it impacts the changes of the team, leaders and organizational environment making an impact. Outcome will be increased awareness of individual contribution, enhanced collaboration, and engagement with the committees.

## Situational Assessment Exercise

This exercise provides our group to view the ups and downs of organizational life over time as a way to create a common context for moving forward.

We are aiming for the appreciation, the “reality picture” produced AND becoming excited to move into the next phase of work together.

## Focus Question

What from this Commission’s past, present, and anticipated future will help engage, align and motivate us to move forward the work for the 3 priorities from the strategic plan?

## Recommendations for Next Steps

1. Review the results below as an Executive Team and at the next Nebraska Children’s Commission meeting.
2. Identify the top 3 – 5 areas which will help engage, align, and motivate the membership to move forward the work for the 3 priorities from the strategic plan:
  - a. Revisit Membership (rural, lived experience)
  - b. Stakeholder Education (Legislature, Governor, HHS, Membership)
  - c. Make it easy to engage (Keep the priorities visible, keep inviting co-chairs)
  - d. Relationship Building
  - e. Additional work toward LB 1173
3. Follow up on the members individual commitments, “one next step”.
  - a. What resources are needed? (Support, Connection, Time)
  - b. What support can the Nebraska Children’s Commission provide?
4. Create opportunity for intentional change at the individual, team, and leadership level to support the organizational changes needed.

## Accomplishments

What have been important milestones and results?

What have been significant efforts?

What are important areas of progress?

What went well?

Financial Primer (2015) ++	Increased rates for foster parents ++	Commission enshrined in statute w/o sunset	Extension in statute (2015)
Reports to HHS Committee of legislature at the table +	Efforts to hear families experience with in CFS +	Blueprint (2017) ++	Milestone – New leadership
Rate Committee (2012/13) +	Increase understanding of normalcy by congregate care	Using data to drive goals and focus	Changes to B2i – Age Gap Tribal Youth +++
Complacent	Understanding Alternative Response +	Concentrated executive team – deeper into “system”	Active Engagement – senators and HHS came to meetings +++++
More DHHS divisions attended (BTT regions)	Youth in group homes experiencing more normal life experiences +	Changes in statutes for B2I and probation youth +	Identification of strategic priorities

## Setbacks

What events and happenings have impeded progress?

What things required tacking a few steps back?

What factors intruded on plans?

Leadership Changes ++++	Lack of participation on workgroups/ meetings +++	Time	Working in silos +++++
Not everybody at the table that should be +++++	Competing oversight entities +++	Vehicle insurance for foster youth +++	Buy-in for stakeholders / decision makers
Re-learning culture re: Omaha vs. Lincoln vs. Greater NE	Re-Educating about the Commission +++++	Perception Commission members being heard +	Change in leadership – legislation, HHS, Commission ++++++
Members with personal agendas / complaints +	Changes at HHS Committee of leg. & HHS → lack of consistency / buy in to move forward	Closing of high-level care facilities w/o intermediate tie (i.e. Regional Center)	Focus on survival (of NCC) in 2015 then in 2019 +
Lack of diversity	Legislative watering of bills +	Limited understanding of disproportion impact	Pandemic ++
No shows Commission members			



## Strengths

Where do we have real advantages and momentum?

What have we built that we do not want to lose?

What are some reliable relationships/partnerships?

Group Agreement on B2I for non-citizens	Tracking Legislation	Pretty good relationships w/ variety of important stakeholders in the state +	Meeting w/ Sen. Hansen Chair HHS Comm. +
Historical record of work + + + +	Leadership within committees ++	Collaborative environment of shared responsibility +	Relationship with HHS + + +
Innovation +	Relationships Political Ties	Diverse knowledge base of members ++	Establishing some clarity around AR
Strong subcommittees like AR +	Lifting up the voices of who we serve and are now ready to hear the feedback to move on and make better	Family voice engagement / room for improvement (possible stipend) + + + -	LB 1173 opportunity to make change +
Utilizing reliable data sources to help inform recommendations & policy +	Passion into action ++	Young Adult Participation @ B2I +	Retreat + + +
NCC Staff! + + + +	Momentum: good group discussion and experiences	Credibility range of perspectives	Legislative access

## Weaknesses

What are the areas that need development?

Where are the gaps in effectiveness?

What are major organizational issues?

What are relationships/ partnerships which may need support?

Decline in momentum due to staff changes +++	Space for more coordination with outside committee workgroups	Need for yearly analysis of goals and progress ++ (? - Recognize what we contribute to understand full impact)	Lack of understanding of current legislative bills ++ (? – Time to act, acclimate, pace)
Attendance at NCC Committees (Senators too) +++++	Commission appointment delays	No “teeth” in our recommendations ++++++	Connection with legislators need development +++++
Want to attend workgroups but can’t do to quorum	Greater diversity in membership (race, ethnicity, experiences & thought) ++++++	More school / education perspective / Lived experience ++++	Need greater flexibility in ability to meet (really needs to be solved outside of NCC) ? – Open meeting laws sometimes is a constraint and slows down / may need a solution for outside help
Lack of interest by Governor – lack of appointments +	More rural representations ++	Lack of buy in / participation from members and senators	Risk of duplication with other branch groups (SCT Commission, Gov’s Commission, Need coordination) +
New folks might not join because of perception things aren’t changing	Constant explanation of roles purpose to HHS Leaders and HHS Committee		





## Risks

What forces are working against us?

What could “blow up” if not dealt with?

Where are potential dangers in the future?

Validity of work +	Financial sustainability for B2i	New Governor ? Potential risk if we don't know his plan, take open statute change	Future legislation buy-in
Governor not appointing +++	Money +	End the Commission	Change of political focus re: child welfare
Language of SFA is not clear re: scope and ability to hold organizations accountable	Many groups / multiple initiatives	Change is slow people get frustrated +	Commission member burnout
Stability of leadership – not agency specific ++ ? New leadership disruptive	Red tape w/ government and legislature +++++ ? Red tape – drags it out, politics	People don't feel they are heard + ? People in community may not feel heard or have a seat	Senators do not know our purpose +
Members don't know what we are +++	Lack of understanding of culture ++	Legislators term limited +++	Still recovering from COVID +
We must disagree w/ one another ++	Legislative rules	What can NCC do to help support truancy prevention and intervention	

## Opportunities

What forces are working for us?

What doors are open to us?

What are ideas whose time has come? \*ideas can be outgoing ideas or new ideas

Legislative interest & involvement +++++	Increased diversity & representation +++++	Senators are asking for meetings +++++	Future opportunities
New/Different ideas / people	Laws can change	Ways to use data and inform legislators	Statutory Requirements
Increased public attention ++++	(Duals) More cross – system coordination and cross-over attention +++++	More passionate and commitment ++	Increased agency communication and collaboration ++++ -other agencies are working w/in commission could be improved
Data is mostly available	ACF – Children’s Bureau proposed rule changes = opportunity	Being proactive about drafting legislation and giving it to senators to introduce	LB 1173
Opportunity to coordinate with child welfare focused groups in other branches (S.C.T. & Gov’ Commission)	Improved collaboration between departments organizations	New senators	Lots of talented passionate people come to the meeting
LB 1173 work group recommendations ++++	NCC’s role in primary prevention ++	Increased connections with tribal groups / community ++++	

# FUTURE

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**Risks**  
- What happens with increasing support?  
- What could "blow up" if not dealt with?  
- Where are potential changes in the future?

**Opportunities**  
- What doors are opening for us?  
- What doors are open to us?  
- What are ideas whose time has passed? Ideas are the outgoing ideas of new ideas.

# FUTURE

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Legislators Term limited

Validity of work

Financial Sustainability

Members don't know what we are

Legislative Interest is Involvement

Increased public attention

Complexity of More complex System  
Coordination  
Cross-over  
Attention

LB 1173  
Direct Group  
Recommendation

ACC's role  
- primary  
production

Increasing Commission's  
with new  
agency  
funding

Professionalism  
Commission not  
applying

Political Risk  
of Public  
Trust  
- Finance &  
- Oversight  
- Commission  
- Budget  
- in

Commission  
Trust  
- Finance &  
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Back of  
understanding  
of culture

Increased  
Diversity  
of Representation

Sectors  
are asking  
for meetings

More passionate  
or commitment

Increased  
Agency  
Communication  
Collaboration

New  
Sectors

lots of talent  
in private  
sector

Money

and the  
budget

Changes  
Slow  
People are  
Frustrated

Still  
Recovering  
from COVID

Are most  
legislators  
w/ diverse  
backgrounds

Some  
opportunities  
around different  
kinds of people

Stability  
for

ACF Children  
Bureau  
Proposed Rule  
Changes  
Opportunity

Data &  
misleading  
analysis

Commission  
member  
burnout

Improved  
Collaboration  
Between  
Legislators

change of  
public trust  
in commission

Commission  
member  
burnout

Red tape  
w/ government  
& legislators  
about

reading a  
reporter's  
report

Legislative  
rules

Laws can change

need to  
use state  
+ reform  
legislators

being  
proactive  
without  
waiting  
for things  
to happen

LB  
1173

importance  
of  
public  
trust  
in  
commission

Stability  
of Leadership  
not  
improving  
public  
trust

people don't  
feel they  
heard  
from  
fact heard  
or have a  
say

LB 1175  
Recommendation

LB 1175  
Recommendation  
- Finance &  
- Oversight  
- Commission  
- Budget  
- in

What can  
we do to help  
support  
members  
prevention  
& intervention

*Reflect, Discussion, Commit & Close*

What were some of the “take aways” for you today?

Hope	Not Stuck	How?
General consensus impactful & engaged	Recharging investment	See all this to guide us to the future

What are some of the “leave behinds” for you today?

Frustration that I was alone	Fried Chicken
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What information was exciting to learn about?

History +	LB 1173
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What information surprised you or puzzled you?

So many groups covering same topics	Not everyone using open meetings
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What are some activities we can do to engage, align and motivate?

Prevention Partners at NCC	Be more intentional about partnerships with other commissions	Put LBs in Senators hands	Education of senators on alignment
Why this commission is important campaign	Get clear on why we should be the group LB 1173	Each sub-commission & committee are working toward a common goal	Inviting co-chairs to the larger commission meetings
Decision or discussion who is representing NCC w// Senators	Structure in place		

What would help or hinder you to engage, align and motivate on the 3 priorities of the strategic plan?

Help	Hinder
More detail of each priority	Lack of time in the day
Understanding how FCRO reports can help to offer data and recommendations that are supportive	Delay in governor appointment
Have more/seek more personal one-on-one meetings with system stakeholders, relationship building	Managing the day-to-day
Keep strategic priorities posted at my workstation where it is visible every day	No measurable goals
More knowledge or information	Workload capacity
Clarity on process (internal to the NCC) for promoting NCCs ideas/ solutions / recommendations	Competing opinions and personal priorities
Engagement w/ committee or subcommittee	Sometimes the form seems to obstruct function – slow process
Food at meeting	Time commitment of meetings & executive team discussions
Reimburse for time for those that aren't paid to be here	Ability to take off regular work to attend
Memory – Remembering what they are	Length of time to accomplish ideas in a complex bureaucratic system
Have consistent engagement w/ those with subject matter expertise	Budget cuts
Intentionally involve more individuals with lived experience in our committee workgroup meetings	Realignment of strategic plan with actual priorities
Keeping priorities at forefront and showing progress as we go	Focusing on recommendations unrelated to priorities
Help me to engage and be motivated. Ask me to do something	Lack of implementation of ideas / recommendations
Continue to make it as easy as possible to be prepared for meetings and have clear expectations of tasks.	Limited time to devote to the priorities / strategies

Suppose in the future a book is written about the NE Children’s Commission, what would be the name of our chapter?

- “Song that never ends...” repeating recommendations
- “Refocus and Re-energize”

In your role, what is one next step for you individually to engage, align and motivate on the 3 priorities of the strategic plan?

Review priorities and advocate	Share ideas on coordination	Organization leaders collaboration and encourage their participation rejuvenated
Tell foster parents about NCC	Go to website to learn and share w / CASA Leaders	Extending reach for B2I
Provide support to Melissa	Work with Executives on Structure for Senators	Keep in mind #1 and #2 Kinship, relationship evidenced based practices
Work with group homes supervisors on normalcy	Sharing information about getting stuff done! We can do it!	Bring priorities of NCC to GFC – Make a connection “how do you see...” (Deb)
SP #2 – Evidenced based practices PEW	Educate elected officials on NCC priorities	Improve NICWC Website providing resources for families, truancy prevention & intervention.
Follow up on LB 1173 report Tribal voice	More invites – review stakeholder list	Conversation with Ladonna
Look at reports related so we can align and coordinate legislation	Get LaShawn on committee	Conversation with Kitty on POC Commission – what are they working on?
Update on AR	More site visits	Few hours to read LB 1173
Become a part of a committee	1-hour a week to focus on NCC issues and coordination	Follow up on statutes B2I immigrants, Sen. Hanson’s office and Boys Town
Get involved with subcommittee with Tammy	Support Jennifer on coordination (Monika, Deb and Ivy)	