

Alternative Response (AR) Advisory Committee

December 15, 2023
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM.

Virtual or
Foster Care Review Office
Conference Room
1225 L Street, Suite 401
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 10:14 AM, and asked members to introduce themselves. Roll call was taken through introductions.

II. Roll Call and Introductions

Committee Members present (8):

Jacie Boelts
Jarren Breeling
Patrick Carraher

Jennifer Carter
Monika Gross
Heather Sikyta

Ivy Svoboda
Susan Thomas

Committee Members absent (5):

Alise Baker
Sarah Helvey

Alex Hildebrand
Bri McLarty

Michelle Paxton

A quorum was established.

Guests In Attendance (7):

Adam Anderson
Amanda Adams
Machaela Hackendahl

Pam Hopkins
James McCave
Amanda Roth

Anahi Salazar

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 Jarren Breeling to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Pat Carraher. There was no discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (8):

Jacie Boelts
Jarren Breeling

Patrick Carraher
Jennifer Carter

Monika Gross
Heather Sikyta

Ivy Svoboda

Susan Thomas

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (5):

Alisa Baker
Sarah Helvey

Alex Hildebrand
Bri McLarty

Michelle Paxton

MOTION CARRIED

IV. Approval of August 25, 2023 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Heather Sikyta to approve the August 25, 2023 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ivy Svoboda. There was no discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (8):

Jacie Boelts
Jarren Breeling
Patrick Carraher

Jennifer Carter
Monika Gross
Heather Sikyta

Ivy Svoboda
Susan Thomas

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (5):

Alisa Baker
Sarah Helvey

Alex Hildebrand
Bri McLarty

Michelle Paxton

MOTION CARRIED

V. Co-Chair Update

Chair Monika Gross shared that the AR Special Report was submitted to the Legislature on December 7, 2023.

Amanda Adams thanked members for attending the Children's Commission retreat. Members who attended the retreat shared their thoughts and encouraged members to attend future retreats.

VI. Strategic Planning

Policy Analyst, Amanda Adams noted that in November the Children's Commission determined that moving forward the Commission will be looking at revising Strategic Priorities. Adams noted during agenda item IX that the Commission has assigned the AR Committee with looking at prevention services from other states

and what resources were available in Nebraska to reduce them. Members discussed adding this as a standing agenda item to discuss at each meeting.

VII. DHHS Update

Jacie Boelts shared a presentation regarding AR and AR data. She highlighted changes such as a reduction in visits with families from three down to one due to feedback from families who noted the invasiveness of three visits. She also noted that AR will no longer require Protective Factors Questionnaire (PFQ) but that tool will remain available for use. Boelts noted that there is a process for case reviews that will indicate changes regarding outcomes.

Boelts continued by sharing information regarding Review Evaluate Decide (RED) Team. RED Team reviews any cases that do not meet any of the 16 exclusionary criteria. Boelts provided data from RED Team, such as intake numbers and outcomes of RED Team decisions: AR, TR, or Multiple Reporter.

Ivy Svoboda asked Boelts to provide the number and percentage of total intakes that end up going to AR.

Boelts shared that DHHS has added an NFOCUS button to indicate refused services. She provided specific data and answered questions regarding cases with subsequent intakes.

Boelts provided a list of services provided to AR families. Amanda Roth discussed the differences and creativity of the caseworkers in accessing certain services in rural communities versus Eastern Nebraska. Members discussed the availability of services in greater Nebraska.

Boelts continued, and shared the average length of cases statewide is 49 days for the last quarter – June-September.

Boelts concluded by explaining the new QA review process.

VIII. LB1173 NCC Response

Amanda Adams spoke about the response to the 1173 Workgroup report. She noted that the largest conversation point was the prevention piece of the report. She noted that this committee has made many thoughtful recommendations that have been incorporated into the special report and 1173 Workgroup.

IX. Workgroup Updates

Co-Chair Monika Gross welcomed the workgroup chairs to report out on the work of their workgroups.

a. Workforce Stability Workgroup

Amanda Adams reminded the Committee regarding the previous work of the workgroup. One previous recommendation was to reach out to high school and colleges. Members discussed that perhaps DHHS can report out regarding their efforts but also find ways to impact private sector human services employees. Members agreed to have this as a standing agenda item to discuss.

b. Oversight Workgroup

Co-Chair Carter noted that Workgroup met recently and discussed future recommendations, which could potentially include determining effectiveness of AR, DHHS review of cases who refuse services, monthly audits by DHHS of cases, and potentially reinstating reviews for cases upon subsequent intake, monitoring safety, and feedback from families with lived experience.

c. Equitable Provision of Services Workgroup

Adams noted that per conversation during this meeting the provision of services across the state is not equitable and this workgroup should start up again, but the group is lacking a chair. Adams encouraged the members to think of potential candidates from outside the committee to lead and join. Members discussed thoughts for moving forward in the absence of a group leader or regular meetings. Members agreed to have this as a standing agenda item at future meetings.

d. Legal Resources Workgroup

Chair Pat Carraher noted a recent meeting where the group discussed the availability of IV-E money or prepetition work. He noted a recent rule change that makes it easier to access the funds, but due to not having a centralized process for accessing the funds Nebraska may miss out. Carraher continued by noting pro-se petitions were discussed and declined by the courts. Carraher continued, by sharing the group is now focused on legal resources for navigating the educational system.

X. New Business

There was no new business.

XI. Public Comment

Co-Chair Monika Gross opened the floor to public comment. There was no public comment.

XII. Upcoming Meetings:

March 15, 2024, 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

XIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:34 AM

Respectfully Submitted,
Adam Anderson