Nebraska Children's Commission

Fact Sheet June 2019



Background

The Nebraska Children's Commission was a product of the 2011 LR37 (Campbell); an investigation by the Health and Human Services Committee that identified a number of gaps in the service delivery model for children and families.

In 2012, the Nebraska State Legislature created the Commission to provide a permanent leadership forum for the collaboration of child welfare and juvenile justice, and devise a strategic plan for child welfare and juvenile justice reform. Learn more at www.childrens.nebraska.gov

Who are we?

- 26 Members appointed by the Governor;
- Non-voting, ex-officio representatives from all three branches of government;
- Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice state, regional and community representatives;
- Private, public and community stakeholders; and
- Young adults who've aged out of foster care

Research, Report Findings & Recommendations Assign to Commission through legislation

Key Accomplishments

The Commission's work gave roots to major initiatives such as:

- ☑ Alternative Response
- ☑ Foster Care Reimbursement Rates
- ☑ Bridge to Independence Act
- ☑ Strengthening Families Act

Over 250 stakeholders and community members across the state participate in the Commission's initiatives, which have significant impact on child welfare and juvenile justice policy and legislation.

What are we?

- Umbrella Commission which informs, and coordinates the implementation of new state and federal child welfare and juvenile justice legislation;
- Preserves institutional knowledge of child welfare and juvenile justice which is important for term limits and executive and judicial branch turnover;
- Collaborative expert resource for the HHS Committee and Legislature; and
- Legitimate forum for community involvement and representation

The Nebraska Children's Commission works as a high-level leadership body with membership from the legislative, executive, and judicial branches along with system stakeholders to improve the safety and well-being of all children and families in Nebraska.

What you need to know

- Legislation was passed in 2019 to eliminate the sunset date. A new Commission membership will begin in July 2019.
- > This is the parent Commission to five statutory committees:
 - 1. Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee NRS §43-4216
 - 2. Psychotropic Medications Committee NRS §43-4203(2)(a)
 - 3. Juvenile Services Committee NRS §43-4203
 - 4. Strengthening Families Act Committee NRS §43-4218
 - 5. Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee NRS §43-4513



Timeline of Key Initiatives

LB821 (2012) Create the Children's Commission §43-4202

Statutory Committees

Established to research; make recommendations to improve policy for Nebraska's children such as:

- -Foster Care Rates
- -Psychotropic Medication use in state wards
- -Title IV-E Demonstration Project
- -Juvenile Services and the YRTCs

Alternative Response Approval

The Commission collaborated, researched, and approved DHHS's plan to implement Alternative Response in NE, a historic shift in the delivery of services to children at risk of abuse and neglect.

Bridge to Independence Act LB216 (2013)

Extends foster care and supports for young adults aged out of foster care to age 21.

Child Welfare

Financing Primer 2015

A collaborative publication to guide legislators about financing child welfare in Nebraska and the US.

Lead Agency Task Force §43-4204 created to make recommendations for contracting with not for profit entities as lead agencies.

Strengthening Families Act LB746 (2016)

Codifies the federal act, ensures Nebraska's compliance and implementation. Ensures foster youth grow up in less restrictive, more family-like environments and participate in age and developmentally appropriate activities.

Bridge Orders legislation passed LB708 (2017)

Commission's Legal Parties Task Force researched and recommended amending Nebraska's Juvenile Code to custody transfers to juvenile court and ease financial burden for custodians.

Nebraska Child Welfare Blueprint 2017

A collaborative publication guides all three branches of government on the continued reform of child welfare in NE.

Key Deliverables of the Nebraska Children's Commission

- 1. Annual report and hearing before the Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature
- 2. Education for stakeholders and testimony for proposed legislation;
- 3. Coordination amongst related child welfare and juvenile justice parent groups, commissions and statutory groups.