

Bridge to Independence Update
 Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee Meeting
 10.13.2017

Program Successes

1. b2i implemented in October 2014.
2. Currently serving 276 young adults in their transition to independence (as of 9/22/17).
3. The total number of young adults in the program has steadily increased. In October 2014, less than 80 young adults were in b2i. In calendar year 2017, the total number of young adults in the program has increased every month.
4. In calendar year 2016, 92% of young adults exiting care at age 19 enrolled in b2i within 30 days of exit.
5. b2i is fully staffed with 12 dedicated Independence Coordinators and 2 Supervisors.
6. Enhanced data reporting from NFOCUS began in June 2017 which includes a CQI packet and a daily due date tracker for staff.
7. Internal b2i Operations and CQI meetings began in June 2017.
8. On-going collaboration and coordination with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation's older youth initiatives including Opportunity Passport and Central Navigation.

Funding b2i

1. The original appropriation relied heavily on IV-E/federal funds (over 50%) based on the legislative office fiscal note submitted.
2. IV-E funding hasn't reached the original appropriation estimate due to the low IV-E claiming rate.
 - a. Young adult income (1996 ADFC rates per federal law, income cannot be >\$411/mo.)
 - b. Complex eligibility determination process
 - c. IV-E state plan approval in April 2017.
 - d. Court orders meet necessary language requirements in a timely manner (within 6 months after the young adults 19th birthday).
3. DCFS has relied on additional state general funds and other federal funds to cover program costs (Chafee).
4. Utilizing the Chafee funds for program operations impacts the available funding for other older youth initiatives typically funded through Chafee.
5. DCFS will need to implement program changes to assure the sustainability of the b2i program.

	STATE FUNDS APPROPRIATED	STATE FUNDS EXPENDED	STATE GENERAL FUND DIFFERENCE	IV-E FUNDS UTILIZED	CHAFEE FUNDS UTILIZED
2014	1,048,518	64,191	984,327		
2015	1,585,597	1,155,832	429,765		384,139
2016	1,770,896	2,038,370	(267,474)		642,300
2017	1,782,202	2,489,158	(706,956)	204,938	487,308

*In 2017, \$670,383 of the b2i costs were covered by other Protection and Safety Programs

	STATE FUND APPROPRIATION	PROJECTED TOTAL PROGRAM COSTS	PROJECTED IV-E FUNDS	PROJECTED CHAFEE FUNDS
2018	1,784,760	3,200,000	250,000	400,000

*Per August CQI data, 28 out of 276 young adults are IV-E eligible.

Proactive Steps Taken by DCFS

1. Enhance the IV-E claiming ability to increase federal funding by evaluating the cause for low IV-E claims. A process efficiency initiative is underway to streamline the determination processes and the documentation required. Additionally, data was obtained in September 2017 to monitor the reasons for IV-E denials; this data will be distributed to the field monthly. This will enable the field to address the denial reasons to begin enhancing the number of young adults eligible for IV-E funding. This action step is ongoing.
2. Modified IV-E state plan to allow IV-E determination at the time a young adult enters b2i which was approved by ACF in April 2017.
3. Attempt to minimize out of state travel to visit young adults (courtesy supervision via ICPC or Chafee services). The Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) will be utilized as a first step to obtain courtesy supervision to limit travel. Additionally, DCFS has been working with specific states where young adults reside to secure Chafee funded services which includes regular visits. In September 2017, a spreadsheet was created for b2i young adults to reside out of state. The spreadsheet will aid DCFS in monitoring the number of young adults who reside out of state, states who are providing courtesy supervision and/or who have denied courtesy supervision. This will help DCFS focus on securing Chafee funded services for young adults who reside in states where courtesy supervision has been denied.
4. Engage the Children's Bureau to support the state in obtaining courtesy supervision for young adults who reside in other states.
5. Review the number of young adults who are receiving services through b2i and waiver program to the assess duplication of services.
6. Drafting a program guidance memo for parents to apply for and accept TANF payments.

Options for Consideration

1. Reconsider the following program eligibility:
 - a. The ability for young adults to receives duplicative services, i.e. services provided 24/7 residentially by Medicaid or Medicaid waivers such as developmental disabilities and b2i;
 - b. The ability for young adults who are incapable of participating in either the employment or the education eligibility program;
 - c. The operationalization of the Barriers program (length of time a Young Adult participates in the barriers program, limit the allowable barriers programs).
 - d. Eligible young adults must be Nebraska residents.
2. Implement a waiting list for the b2i program with ACF approval.