

Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee

October 13, 2017

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Nebraska State Capitol, Room 1023

1445 K Street, Lincoln, NE 68509

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Co-Chairs, Jeanne Brandner and Mary Jo Pankoke, called the meeting of the Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee to order at 10:10 a.m. They welcomed everyone and the group did formal introductions.

II. Roll Call and Introductions

Committee Members present (11):

Mary Fraser Meints

Alyson Goedken

Brandy Gustoff

Sarah Helvey

Doug Lenz

Mary Jo Pankoke

Amy Peters

Jill Schubauer

Jennifer Skala

Susan Thomas (arrived 10:20)

Lana Verbrigghe

Committee Members absent (4):

Jodie Austin

Vernon Davis

Deb Shuck

Juliet Summers

Ex-Officio Members present (4):

Jeanne Brandner

Timoree Klingler

Katie McLeese Stephenson

Deb VanDyke-Ries (arrived 10:19)

Ex-Officio Members absent (6):

Senator Kate Bolz

Judge Douglas Johnson

Kim Thomas

A quorum was established.

Guests in Attendance (10):

Dr. Katie Bass..... Foster Care Review Office

Kayla Bailey*..... Project Everlast

Cassy Blakely..... Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

Deanna Brakhage..... DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services

Bethany Connor Allen..... Nebraska Children's Commission

Amanda Felton..... Nebraska Children's Commission

Mary Furnas..... Foster Care Review Office

Lori Harder..... DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services

Alana Pearson..... Parent of Former Foster Youth

Tami Soper..... Office Senator Kate Bolz, District #29

Kristen Stiffler..... Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature

*Indicates a guest speaker attending via video conference

a. Notice of Publication

Recorder for the meeting, Amanda Felton, indicated that the notice of publication for this meeting was posted on the Nebraska Public Meetings Calendar 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 on the table near the entrance of the meeting room.

III. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Mary Fraser Meints and seconded by Doug Lenz to approve the agenda as presented. There was no further discussion. Roll Call vote as follows:

FOR (10):

Mary Fraser Meints
 Alyson Goedken
 Brandy Gustoff
 Sarah Helvey

Doug Lenz
 Mary Jo Pankoke
 Amy Peters
 Jill Schubauer

Jennifer Skala
 Lana Verbrigghe

AGAINST (0):**ABSTAINED (0):****ABSENT (5):**

Jodie Austin
 Vernon Davis

Deb Shuck
 Juliet Summers

Susan Thomas

MOTION CARRIED**IV. Approval of Minutes**

It was moved by Lana Verbrigghe to approve the minutes of the August 7, 2017 minutes as presented. It was seconded by Sarah Helvey. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (10):

Mary Fraser Meints
 Alyson Goedken
 Brandy Gustoff
 Sarah Helvey

Doug Lenz
 Mary Jo Pankoke
 Amy Peters
 Jill Schubauer

Jennifer Skala
 Lana Verbrigghe

AGAINST (0):**ABSTAINED (0):****ABSENT (5):**

Jodie Austin
 Vernon Davis

Deb Shuck
 Juliet Summers

Susan Thomas

MOTION CARRIED**V. Presentation on California's Extended Foster Care Program**

Kayla Bailey, a former foster youth from Nebraska currently living in California, shared information and several handouts from their extended foster care program. She reviewed the forms associated with the program including the [Transitional Independent Living \(TIL\) Plan and Agreement](#), [Benefits Essentials Training Guide](#), [Mutual Agreement for Extended Foster Care](#), and the [Supervised Independent Living Placement \(SILP\) Readiness Assessment](#). Ms. Bailey did highlight that the California program included the probation youth who age out of the system as well as foster youth.

VI. Foster Care Review Office Update

Dr. Katie Bass, Research Director with the Foster Care Review Office (FCRO), shared the [FCRO B2i Cares Review Report](#) for fiscal year 216-2017 with attendees. She directed attention to a new section that outlined service needs changes on page 6 of the document. Dr. Bass explained that she wanted to emphasize the differences in the service needs from the first review to the second review. While the data showed a drop in service needs between reviews, determining the reason for the drop was a complicated task. Dr. Bass expressed a hope to document progress vs. a simple count of service needs.

Members discussed in depth the complications that arise for youth with developmental disabilities (DD). Lori Harder, Deputy Director for Protection and Safety with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), gave additional detail on DHHS, Division of Developmental Disabilities and their current waiver. There was still a waiting list for applicants to receive DD benefits due to inadequate funding, but the waiver had recently been updated to allow for youth aging out of the foster care and probation systems to receive priority when being added to the list. A service coordinator was assigned to all Medicaid eligible individuals who would work with caseworkers and probation officers

to complete the priority request for DD funding. Members identified this issue as something the Committee should continue to examine.

Dr. Bass continued by going over the review process. She noted that the current process was not pulling in the desired data. The FCRO would be examining the review process with a goal of focusing on their legislative oversight responsibilities. This would mean if personal contact with youth could not be attained, a review would be completed based on paper documentation from the case file. Dr. Bass noted that the FCRO would continue to partner with the DHHS to assist with the evaluation of their data.

VII. Department of Health and Human Services Update

Alyson Goedken, DHHS Administrator, distributed an [update](#) for members on the program. Ms. Goedken indicated that there had been a steady increase in the number of youth taking advantage of the program since its inception, with 92% of young adults exiting care at age 19 enrolled in b2i within 30 days of exit in 2016.

A [handout on cost analysis](#) was also shared with the group. Lengthy conversation was had on the difficulty in obtaining IV-E funding and how the program has and hopes to address funding shortages. Ms. Goedken explained that, originally, the fiscal note had a reliance of over 50% on federal funding. While steps have been taken, such as adjusting the state plan amendment to determine IV-E eligibility based on the young adult income at age 19 and identifying a way to streamline the collection of required eligibility documents, it was unclear how many of the participants would qualify for federal funding. A significant barrier was identified with the income eligibility where youth could make no more than \$411 a month or they would be ineligible to receive federal IV-E funding.

After sharing a [data packet](#) with the group, Ms. Goedken began discussion on the potential options for consideration to assist in easing the budget burden currently being faced. This included reconsidering eligibility for young adults who receive duplicative services, youth who are incapable of participating in either employment or the education eligibility programs, operationalization of the Barriers program, requiring Nebraska residency, and implementing a waiting list for the B2i program. These topics spurred heated discussion among members. Members debated on the young adults most in need that could be excluded from the program. The group reviewed the pros and cons to each item, and noted that the Evaluation and Data Collection Workgroup would be a good venue to take a close look at the data that related to these issues.

VIII. Evaluation and Data Collection Workgroup Update

Dr. Bass, Chair of the Evaluation and Data Collection Workgroup, gave a brief update on the happenings of the group. Moving forward, it was the hope that the Workgroup would be able to review data such as what was presented that day prior to full meetings to help identify gaps in data or to facilitate data sharing between entities.

Dr. Bass also expressed interest in receiving additional data on the work happening with the Jim Casey Foundation. She described the previous discussions to pull in technical assistance in pulling, reviewing, sorting, and continually examining the information that is already being gathered by multiple sources. While there would also be an external evaluation component as part of the collaboration, the technical assistance regarding internal data would enable the systems to collect longitudinal data to continually examine and improve from.

It was noted that a meeting of the Workgroup would be scheduled via doodle in the upcoming weeks.

IX. IV-E Penetration Rate Update

Due to time restrictions, and previous discussion on this topic, this Committee skipped this agenda item.

X. Annual Report Discussion

The group discussed potential areas of focus to include as recommendations in the Committee's annual report. The group had lengthy discussion on the potential for duplicative efforts and/or services for the program population. **It was moved by Doug Lenz and seconded that the Committee explore the possibility of further collaboration and alignment with the Connected Youth Initiative (CYI), in order to examine duplication of services between public and private partners.** Discussion included a note on the complications that could arise given existing statute

related to private case management. Case management services could not be contracted to private entities outside of the eastern service area. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (8):

Alyson Goedken
Sarah Helvey
Doug Lenz

Amy Peters
Jill Schubauer
Jennifer Skala

Susan Thomas
Lana Verbrigghe

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (7):

Jodie Austin
Vernon Davis
Mary Fraser Meints

Brandy Gustoff
Mary Jo Pankoke
Deb Shuck

Juliet Summers

MOTION CARRIED

It was moved by Susan Thomas and seconded by Jennifer Skala for the Committee to complete further exploration of duplication of services between the B2i program and other supportive services/programs. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (8):

Alyson Goedken
Sarah Helvey
Doug Lenz

Amy Peters
Jill Schubauer
Jennifer Skala

Susan Thomas
Lana Verbrigghe

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (7):

Jodie Austin
Vernon Davis
Mary Fraser Meints

Brandy Gustoff
Mary Jo Pankoke
Deb Shuck

Juliet Summers

MOTION CARRIED

XI. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

XII. New Business

There was no new business.

XIII. Upcoming Meeting Planning

The next meeting would be planned via doodle poll in the next few weeks.

XIV. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:23 p.m.