



Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee Review of Past Recommendations (2013 to 2018)

This document summarizes recommendations of the Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee in previous annual reports which were not adopted or, remain under consideration.

2014

These recommendations were not adopted or were still under consideration from the 2013 annual report.

1. Offer assistance to Juvenile Probation. Juvenile Probation may want to create their own Bridge to Independence Program and there are many that could offer information about the federal program and implementation in Nebraska. If Juvenile Probation is not able to create its own program, legislation may be necessary. (2013-2018)
2. Young Adults should have the opportunity to request an extension of the 30 day grace period between becoming ineligible and end of services.
3. Send email or direct mail notice to young adult's foster parent 90 days prior to 19th birthday explaining the parent's potential role in the YAVSS after the young person ages out, and what choices need to be made.
4. Quarterly lunch-n-learns (rotate service area) to train service providers on the extended program, provide materials and let them meet their extended program contact. These will be conducted on a rotating basis by presenters to be determined by the Marketing Task Force.
5. Case management should follow an evidence-based model that is developmentally appropriate and respectful of young adults' autonomy.
 - a. Model identification, curriculum development, and implementation steps be conducted in the calendar year 2014 in anticipation that full model implementation would occur in January 2015.
6. Focus and Documentation: Examples from other states, specifically Michigan's transition plan, should be used as a guide.
7. Annual outcome stories/program review pitches. (Marketing)
8. Automated alerts from N-FOCUS via text message or email with a survey link to be sent to youth when a NYTD survey is due. A link or phone number could be provided for those requesting a paper survey.

Key Recommendations

1. Expand to include Juvenile Justice Population (out of home upon 19th birthday).
2. External, independent evaluation of program and participant outcomes.
3. Modify program eligibility to include tribal youth who are otherwise considered age of majority at age 18, rather than 19.
4. Modifications to state funded guardianship assistance programs to allow the young adult to become the payee.
5. For any young adult whose guardian fails or is unable to distribute the supportive payment to the young adult, DHHS should set forth a grievance procedure.
6. All participants should be eligible for Medicaid.
7. Greater emphasis on developing independent living skills with 16, 17 & 18 year olds rather than waiting until they enter the B2i program.
8. Statutory changes for HSCBS waiver and B2i stipend to best coordinate resources based on needs.
9. Modify eligibility to include residency restriction to young adults who have moved out of state because of ICPC or college attendance.



Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee Review of Past Recommendations (2013 to 2018)

9. Use public/private partnerships to acquire an independent evaluation to be administered to young adults exiting the program, with a \$10 gift card incentive.
10. There should be private dollars and state general funds utilized in a public private partnership to fully fund all eligible state extended guardianships.
11. After an IMFC worker establishes the monthly guardianship stipend, Right Turn should provide transition support to facilitate the Partnership Agreement.
12. Right Turn has the ability to work with all guardianships and adoptions prior to age 19 and should receive private dollars to support administrative functions to continue to work with young adults in guardianships and adoptions after age 19.
13. Right turn will provide the state and private funded guardianship stipends to guardians and young adults (as determined by Partnership Agreement) as they help to increase permanency and stability in these relationships. DHHS should also consider having Right Turn facilitate the Federal Guardianship and Adoption Assistance program for young adults after age 19.
14. Right turn will provide training and information on extended permanency subsidies to young adults and families
15. State extended guardianship assistance subsidy payments should be paid directly to the young adult, or as developmentally appropriate, direct payments to the young adult could be phased in over time. A partnership agreement between the guardian and young adult should be considered and other staggering support system should be in place to learn how to budget appropriately.
 - a. The Young Adult and Guardian will enter into an Extended Partnership Agreement that is developmentally appropriate and clearly outlines the financial arrangement for young people to have housing, food and other needs met.
 - b. For any young adult whose guardian fails or is unable to distribute the supportive payment to the young adult, DHHS should set forth a grievance procedure.

2015

16. All young people who receive support and services from the AOP at age 18 can access services from a central navigator until they reach age 21.
17. As of October 2015, five young people were being covered by these letters [of entitlement]. It is recommended that all young people in the program be covered by Medicaid rather than letters of entitlement to ensure the sustainability of the program.
18. It is recommended that potential solutions to this be explored to ensure Native young adults are able to access the program. For example, young people in the Santee tribe leave the system at 18, and the court order doesn't specify they are being discharged to independence living (which is a required component of eligibility per law).
19. It is recommended that the Advisory Committee and the FCRO look at the role of Independence Coordinators in helping young people budget, determine how best to spend their stipend, access financial management education, etc. Financial management should be a core component of the B2i program.
20. Areas needing continued work include reducing turnover in the Independence Coordinators, a greater emphasis on helping young people have a better future vs. focusing on stability, and addressing gaps in services. It was also recommended that there be a greater emphasis on developing independent living skills with 16, 17 & 18 year olds rather than waiting until they enter the B2i program. [FCRO B2i 2015 Q3 Report]



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2016

21. Path for enrollment in the current DHHS-facilitated Bridge to Independence program for youth involved in Nebraska's Juvenile Justice System utilizing the following two criteria:
 - a. A young person must be in a court-ordered out of home placement as they age out of probation on their 19th birthday; and
 - b. Prior to aging out, the court must hold a hearing and make a finding that such placement is necessary because returning to the home would be contrary to the welfare of the child.
22. Interagency agreement between the Department of Health and Human Services and Nebraska Probation Administration to be established that would ease the youth's path into Bridge to Independence and enhance the state's ability to draw down federal Title IV-E Funding.

2017

23. Partner with the Department of Health and Human Services – Division of Children and Family Services (DHHS-CFS) to ensure that services are coordinated and not duplicated for youth with developmental disability needs, youth with mental health needs, and youth who are parenting.
24. Support the work of DHHS-CFS and the Foster Care Review Office in completing an outcome evaluation of the Bridge to Independence Program, and partner in making program changes and recommendation based on the results of the evaluation.
25. Support the improvement of outcomes for similar at-risk groups of young adults, including through establishing a path to enrollment in the current DHHS-facilitated Bridge to Independence Program for youth involved in Nebraska's juvenile justice system who are in a court ordered out-of-home placement as they age out of probation on their 19th birthday, and the court has made a finding that out-of-home placement is necessary because returning to the home would be "contrary to the welfare of the child."

2018

26. Young Adults enrolled in the Bridge to Independence program and whose residence is paid for by Medicaid under a HCBS Waiver will not receive a Bridge to Independence stipend.
 - a. Young adults in the Bridge to Independence Program who are receiving services paid for by Medicaid, under a HCBS waiver, will receive case management that is coordinated across the two programs. A structured process will be developed to ensure these young adults access the needed services. An assessment will be undertaken to understand the needs of the young adult. A plan will be created based on this assessment to ensure access to needed services and case management without any duplicative services. *This recommendation is dependent on the statutory change proposed in Recommendation 26 above.*
27. Eligibility for the Bridge to Independence Program includes the requirement of Nebraska residency, not to exclude young adults placed through ICPC, and students attending school outside of Nebraska who still claim Nebraska residency.



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28. The Advisory Committee recommends the continuation of the Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee irrespective of the Nebraska Children's Commission statutory sunset date (June 30, 2019). A review and amendment of Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-4513 will be needed in the event the Nebraska Children's Commission sunsets and is no longer the parent Commission to the Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee.

29. DHHS- DCFS regulatory change: Increase program and activity requirements from 40 hours per month to 80 hours per month. 395 NAC 10-003.03C2