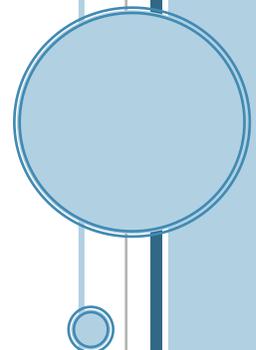


NEBRASKA
STRENGTHENING
FAMILIES ACT
COMMITTEE 2018
ANNUAL REPORT

Submitted Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-4218(4)

July 2018



Nebraska Strengthening Families Act Committee
2018 Annual Report

Statutory charge: The Nebraska Strengthening Families Act Committee shall monitor and make recommendations regarding the implementation in Nebraska of the federal [Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act, Public Law 113-183](#), as such act existed on January 1, 2017, and the Nebraska Strengthening Families Act, [Neb. Rev. Stat. [§43-4701](#) to [§43-4715](#)].

Priorities

- Priority 1: Continue to monitor the implementation of the State and Federal Strengthening Families Act
- Priority 2: Promote normalcy as the foundation to: prevent trafficking; address disparate impacts on minorities; and support the successful transition to adulthood
- Priority 3: Coordinate implementation with other policy making bodies

For more information or to get involved, please visit childrens.nebraska.gov, or email necc.contact@nebraska.gov.

Nebraska Strengthening Families Act Committee

2018 Annual Report

Nebraska thrives when its families, youth, and children have healthy and productive lives and reach their full potential. Youth in child welfare out-of-home placements face extra challenges in accessing these protective factors due to past abuse and neglect, the trauma of removal from their homes, and moving around due to placement changes. All children who are state wards in out-of-home placements have incredible potential, and the Strengthening Families Act empowers families, foster parents, caseworkers, guardians ad litem and other stakeholders to support children's well-being.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES ACT COMMITTEE BACKGROUND

The Nebraska Strengthening Families Act (NSFA) Committee was created as the Normalcy Task Force under the umbrella of the Nebraska Children's Commission (Commission) to monitor and make recommendations related to Nebraska's implementation of the Federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act, Public Law 113-183 (referred to in this document as the "Strengthening Families Act" or "SFA"). Nebraska's Strengthening Families Act, [LB746 \(2016\)](#), implements the federal SFA and initial stakeholder recommendations. Both the federal and state SFA represent a culture shift to allow children and youth to grow and thrive in less restrictive, more family-like environments and participate in age and developmentally appropriate activities. Additional legislation related to best practices in implementation was passed as [LB225 \(2017\)](#). The Committee has met quarterly in 2018 and 2017 to accomplish its statutory mandates. The Committee created three subcommittees to fulfill the detailed work of prioritized initiatives. These include: 1) the Trafficking Subcommittee, 2) the Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement "APPLA" Subcommittee and 3) the Court Implementation Subcommittee.

The Committee periodically creates and archives subcommittees depending on their fulfillment of assignments from the Committee. Archived NSFA Subcommittees include: Community & Family Voice, Grievance Procedure, Normalcy and Training. These groups may be called upon, reviewed and/or revived depending on need of the Committee and emerging issues.

105TH LEGISLATURE, 2ND SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

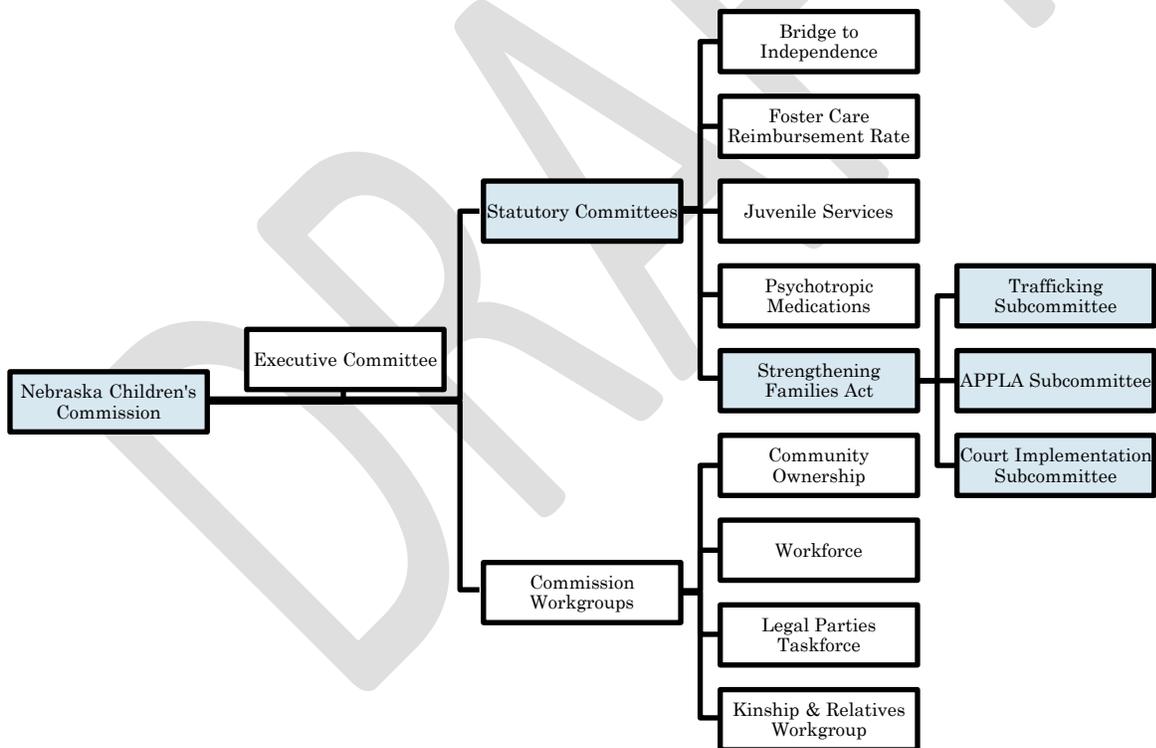
LB732

Legislative Bill 732 (Riepe) changed the annual reporting requirements related to the Nebraska Children’s Commission and the NSFA Committee. The annual report to the Legislature deadline has been changed from December 1st annually to September 1st annually. This abbreviated report will cover the shortened period of December 2017 to June 30, 2018. For subsequent years, the NSFA Committee will report on state fiscal year, July 1st to June 30th for each September 1st annual report.

LR451

[Legislative Resolution 451](#) (Bolz) was introduced on March 27, 2018. The interim study is to examine the work of the Nebraska Children’s Commission and to evaluate the need for the commission’s continuation and any revisions to its structure and purpose.

Under [Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-4218](#) the NSFA Committee was created. Members are appointed by the Nebraska Children’s Commission. The Committee is to report annually to the Nebraska Children’s Commission, the Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature, and the Governor.



The NSFA Committee was appointed in July 2017. Attendance records have been reviewed and indicate participation is active and a quorum is consistently met. The Committee meets quarterly despite no statutory mandate of minimum annual meeting requirements. The need for the NSFA Committee to remain as a statutory body has been reviewed. **The NSFA Committee recommends remaining a statutory committee in the event the Nebraska Children’s Commission were to sunset as scheduled June 30, 2019.** While statute indicates membership appointment by the

Commission, and required annual reports from the Committee, it does not specify if the Committee is to continue in the event that the Commission sunsets. Great progress has been made by the Committee, and further work remains.

Nebraska Strengthening Families Act Priorities

The NSFA Committee has identified the following three priorities to guide its work.

1. Continue to monitor the implementation of the State and Federal Strengthening Families Acts.
2. Promote normalcy as the foundation to:
 - a. Prevent trafficking;
 - b. Reduce disparate impacts on minorities; and
 - c. Successful transition to adulthood.
3. Coordinate implementation with other policy-making bodies.

Priority 1: Monitor the Strengthening Families Act

The Legislature charged the group with monitoring the implementation of the State and Federal Strengthening Families Acts, and the group has made this task its first priority. The Department of Health and Human Services – Division of Children and Family Services (DHHS-CFS), service providers, foster parents and system-involved youth provide regular feedback and updates. The Committee understands that implementation requires time and coordination, and strives to serve as a forum for stakeholders to exchange information, provide support, and create innovative solutions to the challenges facing families, children and youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Monitoring Activities

To comply with this mandate, the NSFA Committee engages in the below monitoring activities:

- Serve as a collaborative forum to support the implementation of this important Act.
- Engage with families and youth to receive their feedback and allow community members to participate actively in the implementation.
- Receive updates from stakeholders on implementation.
- Identify and target specific processes for enhancements.
- Provide recommendations and feedback to the legislature, Commission, Governor, and stakeholders.

The NSFA Committee has identified and targeted specific processes for enhancements which would strengthen the implementation of the Acts. These include the Youth Bill of Rights, grievance process, Normalcy Plan review and implementation of NSFA specific legislation passed in 2017.

Youth Bill of Rights

The Committee will support the DHHS-CFS as it works to create a Youth Bill of Rights, and to support the Court Improvement Project as it updates its “Know Your Rights” guide for youth. Youth need to be regularly notified of their rights in a developmentally and age appropriate manner. Youth and families need more information and awareness of the resources that are available to them. The

Committee continues to endorse and recommend inclusion of the rights identified in the report of the Community and Family Voice Subcommittee approved in 2016 which is available at <https://goo.gl/86CKRv>.

Grievance Process

Youth need an enforcement mechanism and grievance or complaint process for their rights. The Grievance Subcommittee has created a comprehensive guide to best practices available at <https://goo.gl/FrQg71>. The Subcommittee works with providers and state agencies to ensure that youth in foster care can enforce their rights.

Normalcy Plans Pursuant to LB225 (2017)

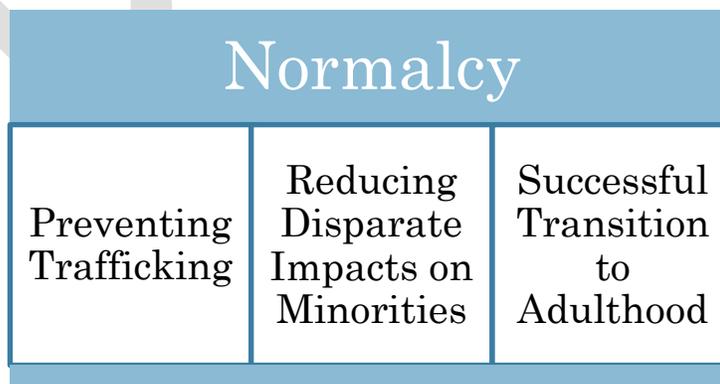
The Committee will actively review and analyze the Normalcy Plans provided pursuant to LB225 and thoroughly identify areas where stakeholders need support and advocacy to ensure that all youth have as much access to normalcy as possible.

Implementation of 2017 Legislation

In the 2017, the Nebraska State Legislature and Governor Pete Ricketts approved a number of additional provisions to support the implementation of the Nebraska Strengthening Families Act. Upon further review, the additional provisions respective to the Administrative Office of Probation and the DHHS- DCFS have been implemented. The 2017 SFA Annual Report cited a number of strategic actions to further support the continued implementation of the 2017 legislation. A review of these provisions and strategic actions are provided in Appendix A

Priority 2: Normalcy as the Foundation to a) Preventing Trafficking; b) Reducing Disparate Impact on Minorities; and c) Successful Transition to Adulthood

Normalcy is about supporting youth to reach their full potential by accessing protective factors like extracurricular activities, employment, and healthy supportive connections. Foster parents are empowered by the SFA to use the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard, which allows the freedom to make decisions as a caregiver that support normalcy, such as consenting to sleepovers, enrollment in sports activities, and participation in extracurricular activities. This connection to normalcy allows youth to build the foundation of protective factors needed to reach their full potential.



Priority 2(a): Normalcy as the Foundation to Prevent Trafficking

While the federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act focuses primarily on sex trafficking, the Nebraska Strengthening Families Act incorporates both sex and labor trafficking.

The Trafficking Subcommittee has served since 2016 as a forum for stakeholders to create innovative solutions to prevent and respond to trafficking among youth in out-of-home placements. This complex issue requires stakeholders to work together to improve outcomes for children. The Trafficking subcommittee affirms the recommendations of its [2017 Annual Trafficking Subcommittee Report](#), and offers this report as a thoughtful contribution to promoting the identified priorities.

Trafficking Subcommittee Priorities

1. Monitor and make recommendations to ensure that the implementation of the Federal and State Strengthening Families Acts support the prevention of trafficking.
2. Minimize victimization for system involved youth by creating and supporting collaborative approaches to trafficking.

The Subcommittee has focused implementation monitoring efforts on the following strategies: culture change through normalcy activities; policy language and practice review; foster parent training, workforce support; legal system support; and community education.

At the heart of normalcy is authentic youth and family engagement. Many strategies have been developed, recommended, enacted and considered to address trafficking prevention. Above all, the approach to youth and family engagement ought to be genuine, non-biased, youth-centered, and empowering. Strategies referenced in the [2017 Annual Trafficking Subcommittee Report](#), such as “cooling off” spaces and the use of a “code word” youth can use, are examples of youth-driven normalcy efforts to prevent trafficking and safe disclosure of concerns to professionals working with youth.

Alternatively, professionals and systems must be coordinated and integrated in order to adequately prevent and respond to trafficked youth and minimize further victimization. The Subcommittee continues to advocate for a collective data sharing platform and centralized agency or organization to receive reports and coordinate

What is Trafficking?

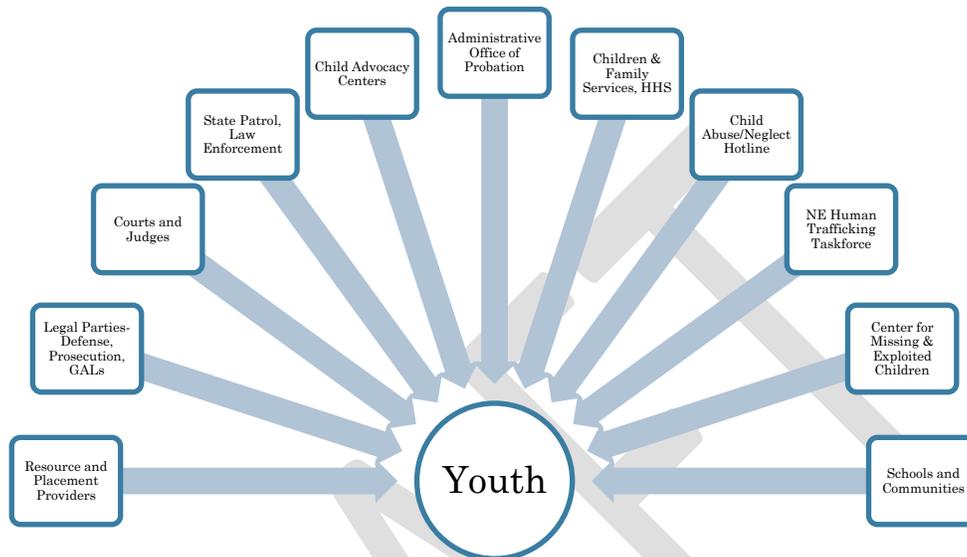
According to the national [Human Trafficking Hotline](#), “Human trafficking is a crime involving the exploitation of someone for the purposes of compelled labor or a commercial sex act through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. Human trafficking affects individuals across the world, including here in the United States.

Sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age (22 USC § 7102).

Labor trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purposes of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery, (22 USC § 7102).

For more information on these legal definitions, [click here to visit the Federal Laws page.](#)”

the response of trafficked minors in order to increase communication, serve youth in a more holistic way, maximize resources and minimize traumatization through multiple screenings, interviews and assessments. During the last few years, Nebraska’s implementation of the Acts has highlighted the degree to which systems must connect and work together in order to adequately prevent and respond to trafficking.



During 2018, the Trafficking Subcommittee supported and took an active role in LB 1132 (Pansing Brooks). This important legislation affirmed the Subcommittee’s position that sealing, expungement, and vacatur of records are extremely important for youth or adults who have received a criminal record for either prostitution, or a collateral offense related to being trafficked. Through this bill, it allows for a procedure to set aside convictions of victims of sex trafficking and to expunge records. The Subcommittee will monitor the impact of this bill and any need for modification.

For the remainder of 2018, the Subcommittee will continue to partner with the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force (NHTTF) in order to collaborate and emphasize the importance and necessity of integrated data. The Subcommittee also plans to continue to work on a coordinated and collaborative response to youth missing from care and those who are at risk of being trafficked through the use of Child Advocacy Centers and Multidisciplinary Team staffing.

The Trafficking Subcommittee of the SFA has proposed several systemic and programmatic strategies and recommendations in order to support the implementation of the Acts since its creation in 2016. A review and status update can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y7he3kk2>.

Priority 2(b): Normalcy as the Foundation to Address Disparate Impact on Minorities

The Normalcy Subcommittee has recognized normalcy as a powerful tool to connect minority youth with their communities and families. The Nebraska State Legislature has recognized the importance of race, culture, and identity for children in out-of-home care, as per Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-4702. A larger percentage of youth in welfare placements are minorities compared to the overall percentage of minorities in Nebraska’s population. Minority youth and families have different experiences of the

child welfare system, and the Strengthening Families Act Committee is dedicated to ensuring that normalcy is used as a tool to help all families and youth connect to their culture.

Strategic Action Steps to Address Disparate Impacts on Minority Children and Families.

- Normalcy activities and family contact should be used to attain the goals set forth in the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and foster connections for youth with tribal affiliation to their families and tribes as much as possible.
- Minority youth deserve to have their holistic identities understood and respected. These youth are entitled to experience normalcy and have their rights respected in light of their holistic identity and individual experiences.
- Youth contact with individuals they identify as family should be a right, and contact should not be denied unless there exists a documented safety concern or a court order preventing contact.
- The diversity of family structures of youth who are minority, refugee/immigrant or youth with tribal affiliations should be recognized. Every culture has a distinct concept of who is included in a family, and may be broader than just immediate blood relations. Stakeholders must respect the rights of youth to spend time with individuals they identify as family. Discussions of who the youth considers family should be youth driven and support the youth in understanding how to have positive and healthy relationships with family.
- Support the work of the communities and stakeholders to reduce the disparate impact of the child welfare system on minorities and prevent disproportionate amounts of minority families from entering the child welfare system or out of home placements.
- The right to cultural activities should include access to activities that reflect the cultural practices and religious beliefs of the youth and family.

Priority 2(c): Normalcy as the Foundation to a Successful Transition to Adulthood

Normalcy for youth transitioning out of the child welfare system includes creating a supportive network to help youth face life's challenges and a baseline of independent living skills. In addition to skills, youth need permanent families to face the challenges of growing up. Though the majority of youth will eventually live independently, emotional and legal permanency should remain a focus throughout the entire case.

The Committee has focused its efforts on the provisions of the State and Federal Strengthening Families Acts related to Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA). This permanency goal means that the youth will be self-sufficient, including caring for themselves independently and providing for themselves financially, through either employment, supportive services or public financial assistance, and that reunification, adoption, and legal guardianship were attempted, but unsuccessful or not in the youth's best interest. Without a permanent family, these youth need extra support to attain their goals, achieve emotional permanency, and transition to adulthood.

NSFA APPLA Subcommittee

The APPLA Subcommittee created a comprehensive best practices guide for stakeholders in Nebraska. The [Stakeholder Guide to Best Practices in the Transition to Independent Living](#) includes guidance to support a successful transition to adulthood following the core principles:

1. **Youth-Driven:** Legal and emotional permanency for youth must be youth-driven, regardless of the permanency objective, and must include youth in all conversations about the youth's permanency.
2. **Significant Supportive Connections:** Stakeholders consider the identification of significant supportive connections at each point in the case, including at the start, throughout, and at the close of the case, regardless of the youth's court approved permanency goal.
3. **Intensive & Ongoing Efforts:** Intensive and ongoing efforts to return the youth home or place the child with a relative, legal guardian, or adoptive parent should include a youth driven staffing process. Each family team meeting includes a discussion of an independent living skill, and creates a goal to attain an additional independent living skill.
4. **Transitional Living Plan:** The required transitional living plan is essential to a youth's successful transition and should support the youth's growth into adulthood and independent living, with a heavy focus on life skills, skill attainment and based on an assessment. The plan should be youth driven and informed, and reflect the goals, values, and abilities of the youth.
5. **Independent Living Skills:** Life skill attainment should be tracked as youth move from placement to placement. This tracking can be achieved through a paper form but would ideally be through a web-based application or other electronic/digital means. This will help foster parents identify gaps in independent living skills and support acquiring necessary skills.

The APPLA Subcommittee identified the Strengthening Families Act Advisor/Advocate pursuant to [Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-1311.03\(2\)](#) as a priority for 2018. This year, the APPLA Subcommittee worked diligently to create Tip Sheets for Children & Family Service (CFS) Specialists at DHHS and Advisors to provide detailed information regarding this important role. The Subcommittee worked with DHHS-CFS, youth, families, and community partners to inform the content. A survey of stakeholders and the Youth Citizen Review Panel provided important feedback incorporated into the Tip Sheets. The Tip Sheets can be found in Appendix B.

For the remainder of 2018, the APPLA Subcommittee plans to continue to focus on the advisor role and educating Child & Family Service Specialists, Family Permanency Specialists and Probation Officers about the role and training workers on the importance of the role and how to help young people identify individuals. **The Committee recommends curriculum for CFS Specialists and Family Permanency Specialists be added to new worker training. The Committee also recommends system enhancements be made to N-FOCUS in order to store information, collect data and track the use of advisors within youths' electronic case file.**

Priority 3: Coordinate Implementation with Other Policy Making Bodies

Implementing the State and Federal Strengthening Families Acts is a collaborative effort. The implementation represents a culture change, and stakeholders need time to learn together. As systems work together, the paramount consideration should be the enhancement of normalcy for youth in care and the protection of youth rights.

Strategic Action Steps to Coordinate Implementation with Other Policy Making Bodies

Forum for Best Practices and Implementation

The Strengthening Families Act Committee will continue to serve as a forum for discussion and the identification of innovative solutions to the challenges posed by implementation.

Youth Engagement

The Strengthening Families Act Committee is dedicated to ensuring that implementation is youth informed, and encourages this through its engagement with youth members. Additionally, the APPLA Subcommittee has held a meeting with the Citizen Review Panel (CRP) to receive feedback from youth who were previously in out of home placements. The APPLA Subcommittee intends to continue to collaborate with the CRP as much as possible to promote youth driven and informed policies.

Strengthening Families Act Advisors/Advocates

As mentioned above, the APPLA Subcommittee worked diligently to identify and recommend best practices for the role of the Strengthening Families Act Advocate/Advisor, pursuant to [Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-1311.03\(2\)](#). The Subcommittee will collaborate with other groups such as the Trafficking Subcommittee and the NSFA Court Implementation Subcommittee to continue educating stakeholders on the importance of this role.

Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force Collaboration

The Trafficking Subcommittee receives regular updates from the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force (NHTTF), in addition to receiving and providing feedback to and from the group. The NHTTF focuses on adult victimization, while the Trafficking Subcommittee focuses on preventing and responding to minor victims of trafficking. The Committee and Subcommittee support the work undertaken by the NHTTF to create and implement pre-screening and screening tools.

NSFA Court Implementation Subcommittee

The Court Implementation Subgroup was initiated in July 2017 by the Strengthening Families Act Committee to collaborate with the Courts in supporting Normalcy and achieving improved outcomes for youth. The group met twice in 2017 and has met three times so far in 2018. The group has been very productive and has identified the following priorities for implementing the Strengthening Families Act within Nebraska's Juvenile Court system:

1. Variances in judicial practices exist across the state regarding normalcy within court hearings, court orders and court reports.
2. Judges and GALs across the state must take initiative to learn about and follow through on the requirements within the Strengthening Families Act. Additional training and education about the Strengthening Families Act is needed for legal parties for further implementation.
3. Children and youth attendance at court, or input via court forms, must occur in order for Judges to make statutorily required findings. The DHHS-DCFS Court Report is one piece of evidence to be considered for these statutory findings, but other information can and should also be considered.

This group has developed the following strategies to address the gaps in implementation within the court setting.

Legal Party Education and Awareness about the Strengthening Families Act

DHHS-DCFS has SFA within their new worker training and a requirement for normalcy to be documented within the Court Report.

Guardian ad Litem online training has been updated with the passage of the Act in 2016. A supplemental GAL training is being developed to include federal legislation impacting Juvenile Courts and is planned to be available in June. This will satisfy three hours of GAL required training.

The Nebraska Court Improvement Project (CIP) and Nebraska Appleseed have developed a statewide training for court stakeholders in July and August 2018 at the following locations: Grand Island, Omaha and Fremont. These presentations will include a recorded webinar, live in-person webinar and will be available for CLE credits.

The Court Implementation subgroup will continue to consider training for the other relevant groups such as the State Bar Association, local bar associations, judge specific trainings and/or county attorney associations.

Court Information Forms

CIP has been working on updating their “What Now” Guide for children and youth. This guide is a modernized and updated version of the CIP’s “Know Your Rights” guide. This document was created with input from the Youth Citizen Review Panel, Probation, and DHHS.

Other court documents under review include the Child and Youth Court Information forms available through the Nebraska Court Improvement Project and the DHHS-DCFS Court Report.

Once the court information documents have been updated and the advanced training has been made available statewide, this group has completed its goal to increase education and awareness surrounding the Strengthening Families Act.

Prevention for Youth with Tribal Affiliation

The Trafficking Subcommittee has identified youth with Tribal affiliation as an important population. The group will pursue partnerships with the tribes and the Indian Child Welfare Act Coalition to support these youth.

Prevention and Education

The Trafficking Subcommittee is exploring the Department of Education as a partner to identify numbers of homeless youth for prevention efforts. The Subcommittee will also explore training for educators and trafficking prevention education for students.

Engagement with the Administrative Office of Probation

The Committee receives updates from the Administrative Office of Probation on related initiatives and activities that support youth development. While the Strengthening Families Act does not apply to youth in juvenile justice out-of-home placements because youth remain in the legal custody of their parent and are not state wards, Probation provides information about practices and procedures for handling important aspects of out-of-home placements, such as family engagement, religious preferences, and connection to activities.

Driver's Licensure

The Committee will support efforts to connect youth in the child welfare system to driver's licensing services, car insurance, and automobile access and purchase.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Strengthening Families Act Committee and its subcommittees are committed to monitoring the implementation of the Acts, developing strategies that support normalcy, engagement, and stakeholder collaborative efforts to prevent trafficking, disparate impacts on minorities and successful transitions to adulthood. While much has been accomplished, further work remains to improve outcomes for youth in care. For 2019 state fiscal year, the NSFA Committee sets forth the following agenda:

1. (Placeholder for plans for next year)
- 2.
- 3.

RECOMMENDATIONS

STATUTORY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

STATUTORY RECOMMENDATIONS
Recommendations
1. The Advisory Committee recommends the continuation of the Strengthening Families Act Committee irrespective of the Nebraska Children’s Commission statutory sunset date (June 30, 2019). A review and amendment of membership appointments cited in Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-4218 will be needed when the Commission is no longer the parent body to the Nebraska Strengthening Families Act Committee.
2. (placeholder)
3. (placeholder)
4. (placeholder)

PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategies

Status

PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS	
Strategies	Status
5. The Strengthening Families Act Committee continues to recommend a comprehensive Bill of Rights that includes the rights identified in the Community and Family Voice Subcommittee Report from 2016, available at https://goo.gl/86CKRv .	
6. The Committee recommends curriculum for CFS Specialists and Family Permanency Specialists be added to new worker training.	
7. The Committee also recommends system enhancements be made to N-FOCUS in order to store information, collect data and track the use of advisors within youths’ electronic case file.	
8. (Placeholder)	

SYSTEMIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategies

Status

SYSTEMIC RECOMMENDATIONS	
Strategies	Status
9. (Placeholder)	

2017 RECOMMENDATIONS STATUS UPDATE (TO BE INSERTED).

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Strengthening Families Act Committee Membership

Member Name	Member Type	Title and Organization	Representation
Vacant	Voting	,	parent who has experience with the Foster Care System
Vacant	Voting	,	representative of a child care institution
Payne Ackerman	Voting	Former Foster Youth , Project Everlast	young adult currently or previously in foster care
Erin Bader	Voting	Director of Permanency and Well Being Programs , Lutheran Family Services	professional who has relevant practical experience
Cassy Blakely	Voting	Assistant VP of Youth Policy , Nebraska Children and Families Foundation	professional who has relevant practical experience
Ashley Brown	Voting	Program Director , Nebraska KVC	representative from a child welfare service agency
Anna Brummer	Voting	Foster Parent Representative , Foster Parent Representative	current or former foster parent
Nathan Collier	Voting	Former Foster Youth , Former Foster Youth	young adult currently or previously in foster care
Heather Colton	Voting	Associate Attorney/Guardian Ad Litem , Pollak & Ball, LLC	Guardian Ad Litem
Vernon Davis (Co-Chair)	Voting	Young Adult Previously in Foster Care , Young Adult Previously in Foster Care	young adult currently or previously in foster care
Jude Dean	Voting	Foster Parent Representative , CEDARS	current or former foster parent
Patricia Frost	Voting	Education Specialist II , Nebraska Department of Education	representative of the Department of Education (non-statutory)
Kim Hawekotte	Voting	Executive Director , Foster Care Review Office	Executive Director of the Foster Care Review Office
Sarah Helvey (Co-Chair)	Voting	Child Welfare Program Director / Staff Attorney , Nebraska Appleseed	representative from a child welfare advocacy organization
Nikki Novak	Voting	Foster Family Services Supervisor , Boys Town	representative from a child welfare service agency
Stacy Scholten	Voting	Service Delivery Administrator , DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services	representative of the Executive Branch of Government
Nicole Seymour	Voting	Coordinated Response Program Manager , Nebraska Families Collaborative	representative from a child welfare service agency (NFC)

Strengthening Families Act Committee Membership

Member Name	Member Type	Title and Organization	Representation
Deb Shuck	Voting	Central Service Navigator for the Older Youth System of Care, CAPWN	representative from an agency providing independent living services
Lisa Story	Voting	Foster Parent Representative, Foster Parent Representative	current or former foster parent
Juliet Summers	Voting	Policy Coordinator for Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice, Voices for Children in Nebraska	representative from a child welfare advocacy organization
A'Jamal Byndon	Resource	Administrator, Community Initiative Consultant, Nebraska Families Collaborative	representative from a child welfare service agency
Jim Bennett	Ex-Officio	Director of Placement, Supervision Services, Administrative Office of Probation, Juvenile Services Division	representative from the Juvenile Probation System
Timoree Klingler	Ex-Officio	Legislative Aide to Senator Sara Howard, Nebraska Legislative Council	representative of the Legislative Branch of Government
Deb VanDyke-Ries	Ex-Officio	Director, Nebraska Court Improvement Project	representative of the Judicial Branch of Government

Strengthening Families Act Committee Membership

In 2017, the Nebraska State Legislature and Governor Pete Ricketts approved a number of additional provisions to support the implementation of the Strengthening Families Act.

IMPLEMENTATION OF 2017 LEGISLATION	
Provision	Status
DHHS was tasked with promulgating rules and regulations requiring additional training for foster parents on recognizing human trafficking, including sex and labor trafficking. (Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-4707).	DHHS-CFS has implemented the training for parents and has begun training foster parents in collaboration with the Child Advocacy Centers and other stakeholders.
The legislation provides that DHHS must also require, as a condition of each contract entered into by a child-care institution to provide foster care, a written normalcy plan describing how the child-care institution will ensure that all children have access to age or developmentally appropriate activities to be filed with the department and a normalcy report regarding the implementation of the normalcy plan to be filed with the department annually by June 30.	DHHS-CFS has implemented these contractual requirements.
DHHS and Probation are required to establish procedures for the immediate dissemination of a current picture and information about a child who is missing from a foster care or out-of-home placement to appropriate third parties, which may include law enforcement agencies or persons engaged in procuring, gathering, writing, editing, or disseminating news or other information to the public. Any information released to a third party is subject to state and federal confidentiality laws and must not include that the child is under the care, custody, or supervision of the department or under the supervision of probation. Such dissemination by probation shall be authorized by an order of a judge or court.	<p>The Administrative Office of Probation has implemented this process in collaboration with the youths' parents.</p> <p>The Department of Health and Human Services collaborates with the Nebraska State Patrol's Missing Persons Clearinghouse to disseminate pictures of youth missing from care to ensure safe disclosure of information.</p>