

EXTERNAL EVALUATION

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THE EVALUATION

1. Does participating in b2i enhance young adult outcomes (education, employment, financial, housing, parenting, well-being) during the transition to adulthood, during the program, and after the program?
2. How does b2i case management and the stipend influence young adult outcomes during the program and after graduating from the program?
3. What young adult personal or life characteristics influence success in b2i? Is the program targeting the right population, do length of time in foster care, number of placement changes, substance use, or mental health challenges, impact success?
4. Do young adults who participate in b2i perceive they have gained knowledge, skills, and relationships in preparing to transition to adulthood?
- 4.5. Is the b2i program targeting the right population.
- 5-6. Does case management at younger ages (<19 years) prepare young adults for the b2i program?
- 6-7. How is the b2i program being implemented in different communities, and what are the successes and challenges to implementing each program component?

~~TDHHS-DCFS, the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFF), and the FCRO, and DHHS-CFS have begun the process of designing~~ contracted with Child Trends ~~an~~ for an external evaluation for the B2i Program. The B2i population participates in evaluations and data collection from several different entities. This independent evaluation ~~will be carefully~~ is designed to ensure that the outcomes for this population are clearly identified and determine correctly which measure will demonstrate whether young adults are making progress towards these outcomes.

NCFF and DCFS are seeking to answer several important questions related to its Bridge to Independence (b2i) program, specifically:

The current evaluation has identified three components and the group recommends that they be undertaken in the order described below.

1. Outcome Analysis and Data Consultation

Description: This task includes ~~a preliminary analysis of linking existing survey data, including that from the Outpatient Payment System Opportunity Passport Participant Survey (OPPS), National Youth in Transition Database (NYDTD, National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD), and the Connected Youth Initiative (CYI), and FCRO data to determine if the data sets are useful in examining~~ analyze outcomes for young adults participating in b2i. ~~the above research questions. This process will result in a memorandum detailing tasks to accomplish during the study period~~ Results will be reported in Fall 2019.

2. Youth Assessment of B2i Program and Other Supports and Services

Description: Child Trends researchers will assess how the B2i program is serving young people in Nebraska by conducting focus groups and phone interviews with young people in a rural and urban community. A mix of young people were invited to participate—both those who are currently participating in the B2i program (or other extended care activities) as well as those youth who are not participating in any extended care activities. The qualitative study will identify promising strategies and generate lessons for the broader child welfare field through input from young adults about their perceptions of the B2i program as well as other available services and supports (whether the programs and services provided them with new knowledge, skills, and relationships), and reasons for staying in care or leaving care.

3. Develop Framework for Nebraska and Other States to Assess Extended Care.

Description: Develop a framework for Nebraska to use to conduct ongoing assessment of their extension of care program. In developing the framework, the research team will document the process paying close attention to how the framework and learnings in Nebraska can reach other states.

The Workgroup and Advisory Committee will continue to work on this evaluation and look forward to providing the Legislature, and Governor with more information to guide the work of supporting improved outcomes for Nebraska's young adults. Good progress has been made towards accomplishing this goal and the Workgroup and Advisory Committee anticipate a completed evaluation in 2019.