

Date: August 7, 2019

The Bridge to Independence Program is available on a voluntary basis, to a young adult who:

**A. Previously adjudicated to be a juvenile described in subdivision (3) (a) of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 43-247 or equivalent under tribal law.**

1. At age nineteen years of age, the young adult was in out of home placement or had been discharged to independent living; or
2. A guardianship assistance agreement or adoption agreement was in effect pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 673 if the young adult had attained sixteen years of age before the agreement became effective
3. A state-funded guardianship assistance agreement or adoption agreement was in effect if the young adult had attained sixteen years of age before the agreement became effective. (Note: As it relates to individuals who entered a guardianship or adoption after age 16, the young adult can chose to either enter the b2i Program or Extension of Guardianship agreement or Adoption Agreement. Extension of Guardianship Assistance must be entered and agreed upon prior to the young adult's 19<sup>th</sup> birthday). **(OR)**

**B. Adjudicated to be a juvenile described in subdivision (8) of Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-247 whose guardianship agreement was disrupted or terminated after the child had attained the age of 16 years.**

1. At age nineteen years of age, the young adult was in out of home placement or had been discharged to independent living;

**C. Citizenship/Qualified Alien:** The young adult must be a U.S. citizen or a qualified alien as defined in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA);

**D. Must be a Nebraska Resident:**

1. A resident is defined as a young adult living in the state voluntarily with the intent of making Nebraska his or her home. A young adult living outside the state of Nebraska may be deemed to be a Nebraska resident if the Young Adult:
  - a. Is temporarily absent from the state as the result of enrollment in postsecondary education, a trade school, or the

Job Corp and the Young Adult intends to return to Nebraska when the purpose of the temporary absence has been accomplished;

b. Is a member of the United States Armed Forces and he or she is stationed in a state other than Nebraska and the Young Adult does not claim the other state as his or her residence for voting or tax purposes; or

c. Prior to age 19, was placed in another state by the Department of Health and Human Services as part of a court proceeding filed under the Nebraska juvenile code and the Young Adult has continuously lived in the state where he or she was placed by the Department.

A young adult's intent to make Nebraska his or her home will be evaluated by the Department. The Department may consider whether the young adult has a Nebraska Driver's License, a motor vehicle registration in the State of Nebraska, owns or leases property in Nebraska or another state, or has accepted employment in the State of Nebraska or another state.

A young adult who is incapable of indicating intent is considered to be a resident of the state in which the young adult is living, unless the young adult was placed out of state as set forth in paragraph 1(c) in which case the young adult will be considered a resident of Nebraska if all provision so subsection 3 are met.

A young adult is considered to be incapable of indicating intent if documentation from a medical or mental health professional indicates that the young adult is not capable of indicating intent.

Exception to Nebraska Residency requirement: A young adult who was a Nebraska Resident but was placed outside Nebraska pursuant to the Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children is not subject to the residency requirement.

**E. Who does not meet the level of care for a nursing facility, a skilled nursing facility, or for an intermediate care facility for persons with developmental disabilities.**

**F. Enrolled in an educational program or employed (Must meet at least one of the following activities:**

1. Education:

a. Secondary Education:

i. Attending high school or a GED program if enrolled at least part-time (6 credit hours).

- b. Enrollment in a Higher Education Program or a Post-Secondary Vocational or Technical School: Educational courses taken at any institution which is licensed to provide education to operate in the State of Nebraska, or courses taken at a comparable institution located or licensed to operate in another state, shall count towards the participation requirement.
          - i. Enrolled and attending a minimum of 6 credit hours per semester/term.
2. Employment:
  - a. Employed working a minimum of 80 hours per month.
3. Promoting or removing barriers to employment program: must be participating for a minimum of 40 hours per month in a program or activity designed to improve, enhance or teach job-related skills applicable to the workplace or careers.
4. Incapable of Participation: Young adults who are incapable of meeting the required educational or employment conditions due to a medical condition can remain eligible for the Bridge to Independence Program.

**G. Reside in an approved placement and/or living arrangement:** A young adult may live alone or with a roommate(s). If a young adult is living in a non-licensed housing arrangement, a background check will not be performed on individual(s) living in the same residence.

The following is a list of approved Living Arrangements:

- Foster Family home: A young adult can continue to reside in their foster home, however it will be considered a “host home”.
- Licensed Foster Care Facility; Continued placement in these facilities should only be allowed when a young adult is completing high school or during a short term setting in which the young adult is preparing for transition to a less restrictive housing arrangement. The following are Licensed Foster Care Facilities:
- A supervised independent living setting, which may include but not limited to:
  - Single or shared residence, such as an apartment or house;
  - Host Home;
  - College dormitory or other post-secondary education housing; if a young adult is living in a dorm or other post-secondary education housing (i.e. sorority, fraternity housing or housing for students studying abroad) a plan will need to be developed to

ensure the young adult has a place to stay when school is closed during a school break.

- Emergency Shelter;
- Parental Home; Residing with a parent is an allowable supervised placement as long as the young adult was not reunified and/or placed with the parent through a court order, prior to the time of their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday or court's jurisdiction being closed.
- Transitional Living Program;
- Institutions; In order to qualify for an approved housing arrangement listed below, the young adult must be living in the following situations on a voluntary basis. If the young adult has been court ordered or ordered to be placed in an institution due to a Mental Health Board decision, the housing arrangement cannot be approved for the Bridge to Independence Program. Programs include:
  - Licensed mental health treatment facility;
  - Licensed substance abuse treatment facility;
  - Other adult Treatment Facility;
  - Military Housing

H. **Sign a Voluntary Services and Support Agreement:** This agreement provides the young adult entry into the Bridge to Independence Program. The Voluntary Services and Support Agreement must be signed between the young adult and the Department before services and supports can be started.