

Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee

December 2, 2019

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Lincoln Community Foundation Building, 5th Floor Conference Room
215 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, NE 68508

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Co-Chair, Jeanne Brandner, called the meeting of the Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee to order at 9:07 a.m.

II. Roll Call and Introductions

Committee Members present (9):

Mary Fraser Meints
Misty Frazier
Sarah Helvey

Doug Lenz
Christina Lloyd
Bailey Perry

Sara Riffel
Camas Steuter
Juliet Summers

Committee members absent (5):

Whitney Beck
Vernon Davis

Susan Thomas
Lana Verbrigghe

Ex-Officio Members present (5):

Jeanne Brandner
Brandy Gustoff

Candi Marcantel
Kati McCleese Stephenson

Jennifer Skala

Ex-Officio Members absent (4):

Kim Thomas
Senator Kate Bolz

Deb VanDyke-Ries
Senator Anna Wishart

A quorum was established.

Guests in Attendance (10):

Adam Anderson.....Nebraska Children’s Commission
Dr. Katie Bass.....Foster Care Review Office
Jason Feldhouse.....Nebraska Children and Families Foundation
Chris Jones.....Nebraska Children’s Commission
Sara Quiroz.....Administrative Office of the Courts & Probation, Juvenile Division
Terrence Williams.....Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

a. Notice of Publication

Recorder for the meeting, Adam Anderson, indicated that the notice of publication for this meeting was posted on the Nebraska Public Meeting 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 sign-in table near the entrance of the meeting room.

III. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Mary Fraser Meints and seconded by Juliet Summers to approve the [agenda](#) as presented. There was no further discussion. Roll Call vote as follows:

FOR (10):

Mary Frazier Meints
Misty Frazier

Sarah Helvey
Doug Lenz

Christina Lloyd
Bailey Perry

Sara Riffel
Camas Steuter

Juliet Summers
Susan Thomas

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (3):

Whitney Beck
Vernon Davis
Lana Verbrigghe

MOTION CARRIED

IV. Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Sarah Helvey to approve the [September 30, 2019 minutes](#) as presented. The motion was seconded by Mary Fraser Meints. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (8):

Mary Frazier Meints
Sarah Helvey
Doug Lenz

Christina Lloyd
Bailey Perry
Sara Riffel

Camas Steuter
Susan Thomas

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (1):

Misty Frazier
Juliet Summers

ABSENT (3):

Whitney Beck
Vernon Davis
Lana Verbrigghe

MOTION CARRIED

V. Co-Chair Report

Co-Chair Jeanne Brandner updated the Committee regarding the status of the Children's Commission. She noted that new members have been appointed. Over half the new members have never served on the Commission. The Commission has met twice: once in October and once in November. The Commission will be preparing three to five strategic priorities. At the last meeting Commission observed presentations from Foster Care Review Office, Office of Inspector General of Child Welfare, and the Department of Health and Human Services Child and Family Services Review Report. Co-Chair Brandner updated the B2i Committee regarding the organizational structure of the Commission and the new structure of the Executive Committee, with Brandner as the Chair of the Commission. Brandner noted that the structure of the statutory committees has also been updated. The chair terms will expire at the end of odd numbered years. At least one chair must be a Commission Member.

VI. Workgroup Membership Review

Policy Analyst, Chris Jones directed the Committee's attention to a [membership handout](#) and provided an overview of the existing B2i Workgroups membership. She noted that many workgroups have met recently. The Juvenile Justice Extension Task Force has yet to get started and will begin work in the upcoming year. Jones added that any requests to join the workgroups can be sent to herself or Adam Anderson. Brandner noted that non-members of the Committee can join workgroups, and that eventually they may choose to join the full Committee. Members discussed the attendance and participation of young adults.

VII. Evaluation and Data Collection Workgroup Update

Dr. Katie Bass updated the Committee regarding the distribution of the B2i Evaluation that was recently finalized. Dr. Bass noted that the distribution plan of the evaluation cast a wide net, but she encouraged it to be forwarded if stakeholders have yet to receive it. She also shared that a meeting to review the technical assistance document will be upcoming. Additionally, she noted that after a review of the technical assistance document there will be a follow-up with the full Committee. The Committee has not received feedback since the evaluations have been sent. Dr. Bass requested any feedback members may have to be shared with her to pass on to Child Trends.

Members discussed the recommendations from the evaluation. Jones noted that the workgroups are looking at the recommendations from the evaluation to determine next steps.

VIII. Case Management Workgroup

Sara Riffel updated the Committee regarding the recommendations from the evaluation assigned to the Case Management Workgroup. The Workgroup discussed whether or not the current caseload size was driving any of the need for the recommendations in the evaluation. She noted that in the initial discussion the group did not feel that was the case. The group also discussed the public/private partnership and how that impacts the role of the Independence Coordinator. Additionally, the group discussed the stipends, and financial coaching for the young adults. Riffel noted that there is a next meeting, and that next steps include researching duplicative services, looking at data involved in financial education for young adults, and lack of coordination preparing youth to entering B2i. Additionally, the workgroup will begin to look at the process for youth exiting the B2i program. Members discussed recommended caseload sizes. Camas Steuter noted that caseload sizes are averaging 29 for Kathy Anstine's team and 18 for Terrence William's team. Co-Chair Brandner noted that having the evaluation results showing that things are smooth and successful, the workgroup was tasked to determine whether or not caseload size is still an issue.

Riffel answered questions regarding duplicative services, and specifics involving Federal IV-E funding. Currently there are not duplicative services, as program participants are required to end privately funded assistance to be involved in the program. Members noted that continuity in services has been recommended in the evaluation.

Jason Feldhaus noted that Chaffee funds are used to fund coaching services, and it is possibly duplicative based on Chaffee funds used to provide coaching services via the B2i program.

IX. Finance & Policy Workgroup Update

Jason Feldhaus directed the Committee's attention to the Finance & Policy Workgroup [handout](#). Feldhaus shared that there is a slight issue with court orders for B2i participants being sealed and not accessible to FCRO or DHHS. FCRO, DHHS, and JUSTICE staff will have meetings upcoming. Feldhaus noted that immediate recommendations to change statute are pending discussions between those parties to see if there is a process that could be developed to get access to those records quicker.

Feldhaus discussed the Workgroup's recommended change to the [statute](#) to amend language regarding Developmental Disability funding versus eligibility. Next steps involve recommending language to the Committee. Current language allows for duplication of service but not funding. Past discussion involved the stipend replacing SSI. Steuter noted that a youth participant who is eligible for DD funding may not be able to comply with the requirements of the B2i program. She added that youth are eligible for SSI payments and a B2i stipend at the same time. Also, Steuter stated that current practice does not exclude DD youth from complying with program requirements. Members discussed at length the specific statute language recommendation.

Senator Wishart's office offered to coordinate a meeting via stakeholders to make a recommendation regarding framework changes to statute. Juliet Summers recommended that we make a recommendation to the Commission to pursue a statutory language change to address the eligibility issues. Sarah Helvey recommended striking subsection five from the statute.

Feldhaus stated that the Workgroup continues to support the recommendation of the Committee regarding the language to cover the year of ineligibility Tribal youth experience when turning age 18.

Feldhaus also updated the Committee regarding the stipend amount as written. During the previous meeting a concern was raised that the stipend amount can have a wide range, between \$300 and \$1300. The discussions in the Workgroup regarded equity and the amount needed for youth. No decision was made at the workgroup level, as further discussion and background information was needed. The stipend amount in certain circumstances is determined via the Nebraska Caregiver Responsibility Tool in occurrences when a youth exits foster and then returns to care under the B2i program. Members

discussed appropriateness of the NCR for determining the stipend amount. The Committee Members discussed the amount of the stipend and the problems regarding the language involving stipend amount. The Workgroup agreed to keep the language and to keep the discussion on the table.

X. DHHS Update

Camas Steuter updated the Committee regarding caseload sizes that were previously discussed during the Case Management Workgroup.

XI. Legislative Recommendations

Co-Chair Brandner summarized the action items discussed during the meeting, and reminded the Committee of previous recommendations that have been forwarded to the Commission and since then approved.

Sarah Helvey moved to recommend striking subsection (5) of 43-4504, with the effect of including youth with DD eligibility in the B2i Program. Motion was seconded by Juliet Summers. Members discussed at length implications of striking subsection five and the original language presented to the legislature that was intended to allow for DD eligible youth to enroll in B2i, but then, if funded would remove them from B2i eligibility. **Roll Call vote as follows.**

FOR (6):

Mary Fraser Meints
Misty Frazier

Sarah Helvey
Bailey Perry

Juliet Summers
Susan Thomas

AGAINST (4):

Doug Lenz
Christina Lloyd

Sara Riffel
Camas Steuter

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (3):

Whitney Beck
Vernon Davis
Lana Verbrigghe

MOTION FAILED

Members continued discussion regarding a potential fix for Subsection (5).

Mary Fraser Meints moved to amend Subsection (5) of 43-4504, to read “For those eligible for the level of nursing facility, etc., and are not receiving funded services from DD.” Doug Lenz seconded the motion. Members discussed wording for Subsection (5). During discussion Juliet Summers recommended strike “and” in subsection 4, add an “and” on 3(e) and start Subsection (5) with “Young adult who meets the level of care...and is funded is ineligible for B2i.” **Mary Fraser Meints withdrew her motion.**

Members continued discussion regarding language fix. It was recommended that collaboration between the divisions would help clear up confusion regarding the previously recommended language and a potential fix for this issue.

It was moved by Juliet Summers to recommend an amendment to Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4504, Subsection (5); with the intent to retain eligibility for the Bridge to Independence Program for young adults who meet the level of care for a nursing facility as defined in section 71-424, for a skilled nursing facility as defined in section 71-429, or for an intermediate care facility for persons with developmental disabilities as defined in section 71-421, and who are not receiving funded services; following discussions by Members of the Subcommittee, DHHS, Developmental Disabilities Community and with coordination from the Offices of Senator Wishart and Senator Bolz. Motion was seconded by Doug Lenz. Members discussed the specific wording of the motion, clarifying the intent of the motion is to recommend a non-specific amendment following collaboration between the parties regarding the intentions on maintaining B2i funding for those DD eligible and on the DD waitlist. Roll Call vote as follows:

FOR (9):

Mary Fraser Meints
Misty Frazier
Doug Lenz

Christina Lloyd
Bailey Perry
Sarah Riffel

Camas Steuter
Juliet Summers
Susan Thomas

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (1):

Sarah Helvey

ABSENT (3):

Whitney Beck
Vernon Davis
Lana Verbrigghe

MOTION CARRIED

XII. Public Comment

The Co-Chairs welcomed public comment. There was no public comment.

XIII. New Business

Co-Chairs opened up the floor for new business. Co-Chair Brandner reminded the Committee to think of Chair nominations for 2020.

XIV. Upcoming Meeting Planning

Co-Chair Brandner noted that the meeting frequency has been removed by statute. The Committee will look at meeting in March.

XV. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:46 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Adam Anderson