

## Strengthening Families Act Committee Meeting

November 9, 2020

2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Lincoln Community Foundation

215 Centennial Mall South

Lincoln, NE 68508

and

Webex Online Video Conferencing System

### 1. Call to Order

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Co-Chair of the Strengthening Families Act (SFA) Committee of the Nebraska Children's Commission (Commission), Vernon Davis, called the meeting to order at 2:06 pm and asked Adam Anderson to call roll.

### 2. Roll Call and Introductions

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#### *Committee Members present (7):*

Ashley Brown

Vernon Davis

Stephanie Gardella

Ron Giesselmann

*Proxy for Brandy Gustoff*, Bailey Perry

Terri Knutson

Jessica Rockemann

#### *Committee Members absent (6):*

Payne Ackerman

Deanna Brakhage

Heather Colton

Pat Frost

Sara Riffel

Deb Shuck

#### *Non-Voting Members present (3)*

Bailey Perry

*Proxy for Jeremy Behrends*, Sara Quiroz

Deb VanDyke-Ries

#### *Non-Voting Members absent (0):*

#### **A quorum was established.**

#### *Guests in Attendance (12):*

Crystal Aldmeyer.....Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

Adam Anderson.....Nebraska Children's Commission

Tom McBride.....Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association

Felicia Nelsen.....Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parents Association

Laura Opfer.....Nebraska Children's Commission

Susan Thomas.....Nebraska CASA Association

Schalisha Walker.....Project Everlast - Omaha

#### *a. Notice of Publication*

Recorder, Adam Anderson, indicated that the notice of publication for this meeting was posted on the Nebraska Public Meetings and Nebraska Children's Commission websites in accordance with the Nebraska Open Meetings Act.

#### *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 at the sign-in table and on the Nebraska Children's Commission Website

### 3. Approval of Agenda

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It was moved by Jessica Rockemann to approve the [agenda](#) as presented. Stephanie Gardella seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. Roll Call vote as follows:

**FOR (7):**

Ashley Brown	Ron Giesselmann	Terri Knutson
Vernon Davis	<i>Proxy for Brandy Gustoff</i> , Bailey	Jessica Rockemann
Stephanie Gardella	Perry	

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSENT (6):**

Payne Ackerman	Heather Colton	Sara Riffel
Deanna Brakhage	Pat Frost	Deb Shuck

**ABSTAINED (0)**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

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It was moved by Jessica Rockemann and seconded by Stephanie Gardella to approve the minutes of the [June 23, 2020](#) meetings with corrections to the date and time. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (7):**

Ashley Brown	Ron Giesselmann	Terri Knutson
Vernon Davis	<i>Proxy for Brandy Gustoff</i> , Bailey	Jessica Rockemann
Stephanie Gardella	Perry	

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSENT (6):**

Payne Ackerman	Heather Colton	Sara Riffel
Deanna Brakhage	Pat Frost	Deb Shuck

**ABSTAINED (0)**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5. Co-Chair Report**

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*a. Co-Chair Transition*

Co-chair Vernon Davis welcomed members to the meeting, especially during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Davis noted his transition to the Co-chair opening with the Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee. Adam Anderson noted that Payne Ackerman and Misty Frazier have expressed interest in the Co-chair position, and that choice will be put to a vote at the next Children's Commission Meeting.

**6. Membership Vacancies**

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Adam Anderson provided an update of vacant positions, noting that the SFA Committee is currently waiting for a nomination from the Legislature, a current or former foster parent. He noted that a representative of CEDARS is set to take Amara Madsen's vacancy, and he will be following up with Rebecca Daugherty to confirm her resignation from the SFA Committee.

**7. Normalcy Subcommittee**

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Tom McBride and Felicia Nelsen provided an overview of the work of the Subcommittee. Nelsen provided an update to the Committee regarding the [Normalcy Subcommittee Plan for 2021-2022](#). Co-chair McBride noted the work done by Karen Moran. He added that the goal of the subcommittee is to make the plans better and work with the individuals that are involved in writing the Normalcy Plans. Felicia Nelsen provided an overview of the Normalcy Plan timeline. McBride added that it is important to give feedback from the subcommittee and not only from DHHS in a collaborative approach. He continued that there is a great variance in the length and specificity of the Normalcy Plans from the providers.

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## 8. APPLA Subcommittee

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Co-Chair Aldmeyer updated the Committee on the recent work of the subcommittee. She noted that the Youth Thrive Survey is up and running. Once feedback is received from the survey the subcommittee will review. Deanna Brakhage provided feedback from case managers at the last meeting regarding transitional living plans. Aldmeyer hopes to get a meeting with DHHS and Saint Francis to review data in hopes to improve Transitional Living Plans (TLP)

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## 9. Trafficking Subcommittee

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Sarah Forrest shared via the chat function that the subcommittee on the recent work of the Subcommittee. She shared that at the most recent meeting the subcommittee there was a great presentation from DHHS on the most current data and policy progress made. The subcommittee identified many additional data needs and questions. She added that DHHS and Probation identified the need to work on services for this population. The subcommittee will reconvene in August/September to see if clear work plan and next steps emerge. Policy Analyst, Laura Opfer added that the Subcommittee also reviewed the Ansel Casey and TLP data from the Foster Care Review Office (FCRO). She noted that this data is a little bit higher than it was in the original FCRO report, but there are still a number of Ansel Casey or TLPs that are not completed, not updated, or out of date. Opfer believes this is an issue that this Subcommittee should continue to monitor. She added that the Youth Thrive Survey may be a good way forward, but it still needs to be looked at.

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## 10. Community & Family Voice Subcommittee

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Ron Giesselmann thanked Sarah Helvey for the work on the Subcommittee regarding LB 941. Laura Opfer provided an update regarding the work of the subcommittee and the work done on LB 941 from Senator Hunt. Opfer noted the work of the Subcommittee focused around a long approach to LB 941, however the legislation will be reintroduced in 2021, necessitating more immediate action. Opfer noted the difficulties including probation youth in this bill. shared that she has finished up work on the SFA annual report. She received feedback from a few members and incorporated those into the report. Opfer plans to add specific trafficking numbers on pages seven and eight of the report. She noted that this year has been a relatively slow year for the committee due to the pandemic, and reorganization.

**It was moved by Jessica Rockemann and seconded by Brandy Gustoff to reactivate the Community and Family Voice Subcommittee and continue to plan to provide feedback to Senator Hunt's office regarding Youth Bill of Rights Legislation.** There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (7):**

Ashley Brown  
Vernon Davis  
Stephanie Gardella

Ron Giesselmann  
*Proxy for Brandy Gustoff*, Bailey  
Perry

Terri Knutson  
Jessica Rockemann

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSENT (6):**

Payne Ackerman  
Deanna Brakhage

Heather Colton  
Pat Frost

Sara Riffel  
Deb Shuck

**ABSTAINED (0)**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**11. Trafficking Subcommittee**

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Laura Opfer noted that this Subcommittee has not met, and is waiting to determine next steps.

**12. New Business**

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Co-Chair Davis asked for new Business, there was none.

**10. Public Comment**

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Co-Chair Davis opened the floor for public comment. There was none.

**13. Next Steps**

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Next meeting will be on February 18, 2020, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Laura Opfer thanked Vernon Davis for his work as Co-chair of the SFA Committee. She noted that his commitment shows how much he truly cares about children.

**11. Adjournment**

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The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Adam Anderson