

**Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee**

August 11, 2022

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Lincoln Community Foundation

215 Centennial Mall South (5<sup>th</sup> Floor Large Conference Room)

Lincoln, NE 68508

**I. Call to Order and Welcome**

Co-Chair Brandy Gustoff called the meeting of the Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee to order at 10:11 a.m., and asked Adam Anderson to call roll

**II. Roll Call and Introductions**

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

Douglas Beck

Felipe Longoria

Sarah Helvey

*Proxy for Bailey Perry, Brandy Gustoff*

*Proxy for Michaela Hirschman, Angela Miles*

Sara Riffel (10:41 am)

*Proxy for Jill Holt, Kitty Washburn*

***Committee Members absent (4):***

Whitney Beck

Christina Lloyd

Jovan Johnson

Susan Thomas

***Ex-Officio Members present (1):***

Brandy Gustoff

***Ex-Officio Members absent (6):***

Maghan Madsen

Jennifer Skala

Candi Marcantel

Lindsay Meyer

Katie McLeese Stephenson

Deb VanDyke-Ries

**A quorum was established at 10:11 a.m.**

***Guests In Attendance (9):***

Adam Anderson.....Nebraska Children’s Commission

Deanna Brakhage.....Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

Mary Fraser Meints.....Sustainability Workgroup

Angela Miles.....Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

Laura Opfer.....Nebraska Children’s Commission

Shayne Schiermeister.....Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

Kitty Washburn.....Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Coalition

Heather Wood.....Foster Care Review Office

Lana Verbrigghe.....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 at the sign in table and on the Nebraska Children's Commission website.

\*Minutes do not follow the order of the agenda.

### III. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Sarah Helvey and seconded by Proxy for Bailey Perry, Brandy Gustoff to approve the agenda as presented. There was no further discussion. Roll Call vote as follows:

**FOR (6):**

Douglas Beck

Sarah Helvey

*Proxy for Michaela Hirschman, Angela Miles*

*Proxy for Jill Holt, Kitty Washburn*

Felipe Longoria

*Proxy for Bailey Perry, Brandy Gustoff*

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (0):**

**ABSENT (5):**

Whitney Beck

Jovan Johnson

Christina Lloyd

Sara Riffel

Susan Thomas

**MOTION CARRIED**

### IV. Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Sarah Helvey to approve the May 5, 2022 minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Proxy for Michaela Hirschman, Angela Miles. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (6):**

Douglas Beck

Sarah Helvey

*Proxy for Michaela Hirschman, Angela Miles*

*Proxy for Jill Holt, Kitty Washburn*

Felipe Longoria

*Proxy for Bailey Perry, Brandy Gustoff*

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (0):**

**ABSENT (5):**

Whitney Beck

Jovan Johnson

Christina Lloyd

Sara Riffel

Susan Thomas

**MOTION CARRIED**

## **V. Co-Chair Report**

Laura Opfer noted that Brandy Gustoff has been appointed as interim Co-chair of the B2i Committee and explained the process

## **VI. Membership Update**

Adam Anderson shared that Katie McLeese Stephenson is not renewing her resource membership. Anderson noted that the Committee is looking for a representative of independent living services agency, a child welfare advocacy organization, a young adult currently or previously in foster care, a representative of a federally recognized tribe residing in the state of Nebraska. He noted the difficulty finding representation from the federally recognized tribe. Anderson reminded the Committee that at the previous meeting extending a membership spot to a member of the state's behavioral health regions. Anderson noted that the committee is limited to a specific number of members and encouraged members to forward the application to anyone that would be interested. Laura Opfer and Adam Anderson shared that Commission staff will put together an email listing membership needs and include the application in the email. Members discussed potential membership sources. Laura Opfer noted that personal invites from members often lead to better engagement.

## **VII. Workgroup Updates**

### **a. Sustainability Workgroup**

Laura Opfer provided a brief update from the recommendations in the [annual report](#).

### **b. Data & Evaluation Workgroup**

Heather Wood provided an update regarding the work of continuing to monitor the success of b2i and the reasons for exiting the b2i program. She noted meetings and collaboration with Deanna Brakhage providing information from the b2i program. Wood also noted continued work on a participation survey. Laura Opfer noted ongoing discussion regarding the overlap of the work of b2i and APPLA Subcommittee of the SFA Committee. Heather Wood will share an update regarding the FCRO b2i special report at the next b2i meeting.

Heather Wood noted collaboration between the groups revolves around the Youth Thrive Survey, which offers a method to survey and tools to use to measure b2i participant's success. Deanna Brakhage noted discussion regarding the Youth Thrive framework was postponed. Sara Riffel shared information regarding the Youth Thrive assessment and how it differs from traditional evaluations that track traditional milestones. Shayne Schiermeister noted that the data could be transferred to different b2i partners before the youth enters, and when the youth transfers from b2i. Members discussed the current use of the Ansell Casey Survey and noted that it is tied to other aspects of the child welfare system outside the b2i and older youth populations. Members discussed at length the expansion of Youth Thrive to b2i youth.

## **VIII. Annual Report**

Laura Opfer provided a brief overview of the [annual report](#). Members provided updates on the current status regarding the recommendations presented in the annual report and discussed the implementation status of prior recommendations. Members specifically discussed monitoring the recommendation regarding Independence Coordinators meeting with youth at a minimum of six months before the youth's 19th birthday. Opfer recommended adding a sixth recommendation from the Sustainability Workgroup based on the discussion of the committee. Members discussed the potential wording of a sixth recommendation. Members discussed removing the fifth recommendation regarding caseloads.

It was moved by Sarah Helvey to approve the 2022 B2i Annual Report with changes as discussed: amending recommendation #4 to, “Identify and implement best practices and ongoing evaluation mechanisms,” removing recommendation #5, and amending recommendation #3 by revising the first sentence as discussed. The motion was seconded by Proxy for Jill Holt, Kitty Washburn. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (6):**

Douglas Beck

Sarah Helvey

*Proxy for Jill Holt, Kitty Washburn*

Felipe Longoria

*Proxy for Bailey Perry, Brandy Gustoff*

Sara Riffel

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (1):**

*Proxy for Michaela Hirschman, Angela Miles*

**ABSENT (5):**

Whitney Beck

Jovan Johnson

Christina Lloyd

Susan Thomas

**MOTION CARRIED**

**IX. DHHS Update**

Deanna Brakhage shared a handout with CQI data from the b2i program. She provided a brief overview of the handout. Members discussed specific data points from the handout.

**X. Public Comment**

Mary Fraser Meints recommended that the committee review trend data.

**XI. New Business**

Laura Opfer shared a note from Deb VanDyke-Ries that they are developing a video with youth with lived experience to help spread awareness and understanding of the b2i program. VanDyke-Ries encouraged members to forward names of interested youth that would like to participate. Deanna breakage also shared that DHHS is working on a video about the program. She shared that the video includes interviews with past participants, Director Beasley, and Independence Coordinators. Laura Opfer will connect VanDyke-Ries and Brakhage.

**XII. Upcoming Meetings:**

a. November 29, 2022

b. February 2, 2023

**XIII. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.