

Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee

April 30, 2024

9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Nebraska State Office Building
Lower Level Sarpy Conference Room
301 Centennial Mall South,
Lincoln, NE 68509

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Co-Chair Richard Hasty called the meeting of the Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee to order at 9:35 a.m. and had members introduce themselves. Co-Chair Brandy Gustoff asked Adam Anderson to call roll.

II. Roll Call and Introductions

Committee Members present (8):

Brandy Gustoff
Richard Hasty
Sarah Helvey
Felipe Longoria-Shinn

Keenan Page
Susan Thomas
Lana Verbrigghe
Kitty Washburn

Committee Members absent (5):

Douglas Beck
Diana Hernandez-Granilla
Christina Lloyd

Mia Pokorny
Haylee Wing

Ex-Officio Members present (1):

Lindsay Meyer

Ex-Officio Members absent (3):

Jennifer Skala
Colton Stogdill
Theresa Cusic

A quorum was present.

Guests In Attendance (9):

Adam Anderson
Deanna Brakhage
Stephanie Gardeman

Dylan Graeve
Shayne Schiermeister

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 Kitty Washburn to approve the agenda as presented.

There was no further discussion. Roll Call vote as follows:

FOR (8):

Brandy Gustoff
Richard Hasty
Sarah Helvey
Felipe Longoria-Shinn

Keenan Page
Susan Thomas
Lana Verbrigghe
Kitty Washburn

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (6):

Douglas Beck
Diana Hernandez-Granillo
Christina Lloyd

Mia Pokorny
Haylee Wing

MOTION CARRIED

IV. Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Angela Miles to approve the January 16, 2024 as presented. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (8):

Brandy Gustoff
Richard Hasty
Sarah Helvey
Felipe Longoria-Shinn

Keenan Page
Susan Thomas
Lana Verbrigghe
Kitty Washburn

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (6):

Douglas Beck
Diana Hernandez-Granillo
Christina Lloyd

Mia Pokorny
Haylee Wing

MOTION CARRIED

V. Co-Chair Report

Co-Chair Richard Hasty noted that Amanda Adams has left the Children's Commission and that Adam Anderson is the Interim Policy Analyst. Hasty shared information about the hiring process for the vacancy.

Hasty and Anderson spoke about the timeline for the workgroup recommendations and annual report.

VI. Membership Update

Adam Anderson provided an update regarding membership. He explained the process for the rotating pool of young adults, noting that it may help to alleviate some of the pressure for young adults to attend.

VII. Dana Village Presentation

Stephanie Gardeman was invited to speak about the Dana Campus Transitional Living Program through Lutheran Family Services. She noted the history of the campus and the program. Lutheran Family Services purchased the campus and program from a private funder, who was operating the program previously. She shared information regarding the program that focuses on youth that have aged out of foster care. She noted that there are three dorms that have been renovated to apartments, with 71 being available through an external property management company. When young adults are in TLP, the max they pay for housing is \$450. The income cap is just over \$46K. Approximately 10 spots are currently available this year for the TLP program. Anyone can apply to live on campus under income cap. Gardeman shared that ages 18-24, and former foster youth are eligible for the voluntary programming. One of the program facets is subsidized housing while in the program. She noted that there are additional funds through a grant that are used for the subsidized housing. Gardeman shared some of the mostly worked on goals are employment and GED attainment. She continued by noting that the goal is to get the youth sustainable by 12-24 months.

Gardeman answered a question regarding juvenile justice background. She shared that it is open to juvenile justice youth if they experienced foster care at any point in their life. She noted that felonies are the only thing that may prevent youth from the program. Gardeman also shared that currently youth seeking employment are mostly employed in the community. She also shared information regarding the extensive remodeling of the dorm buildings and the other buildings on campus. She noted that there are plans to bring "fair-market" housing to campus as well as other businesses and amenities in order to build a village.

Gardeman shared that LFS has an office in Blair, and in the summer hopes to have therapy available on campus. Trade programs that were previously in place are still in place.

Deanna Brakhage discussed partnering with LFS on the soon to be added Probation youth starting in 2025, in order to process applications ahead of their entering the B2i program.

Gardeman shared a little information regarding program coordination, which is done by herself and soon an additional coordinator.

Members discussed evictions. Previous evictions will be forgiven if they are part of the TLP program. The program provides for basic household furnishing such as a bed, which can be taken with them if they leave.

Gardeman offered to show the campus to those interested.

VIII. Legislative Update

Amanda Adams noted that there is a Commission Legislative Workgroup meeting to decide which bills to focus on this session. She noted that the group has discussed LB 945, which requires documents and materials to be provided to young adults prior to aging out. There has been discussion regarding health records. Sarah Helvey shared that this bill was brought up from youth. She noted that documents required

were included due to concerns brought up from youth. She noted specific details regarding the release of these documents being decided by a judge.

Adamas shared that LB 1089 discusses fees and fines that should not be required to be paid by youth. She noted that Douglas County generally currently waives the fees.

Sarah Helvey shared that LB 911 is a bill regarding ICWA data collection. She also noted that LB 42 looks at the definition of neglect, and LB 271 changes the definition of mandatory reporting. She shared that these are both being monitored as carryover.

IX. Workgroup Updates

a. Sustainability Workgroup

Keenan Page shared information regarding the draft recommendations for the workgroup which includes adding additional opportunities for the work or school hourly requirements. Members discussed. Sarah Helvey noted the federally, additional barrier removal activities aren't precluded for federal funding. Dylan Graeve added how it would help in goal planning for the young adult. Dylan shared his perspective on and his history with the B2i program.

b. Data & Evaluation Workgroup

Richard Hasty discussed the data packet prepared by Heather Wood. Members discussed a specific marketing plan. The Committee would like to hear follow-up about where the support system data from the last page comes from.

c. Immigration Status Workgroup

Felipe Longoria-Shinn shared information regarding the work of the workgroup in their work to expand B2i to immigrant youth. He shared that the group has met and created four recommendations.

Members discussed identifying immigrant youth at the opening a case. Members identified that there are cases when youth slip through the cracks without being identified as an immigrant. Members talked about how it may be policy but not practice.

Longoria-Shinn noted that additional discussion will have to take place to edit and revise discussions. Richard Hasty recommended any feedback be submitted.

Sarah Helvey recommended someone from DHHS present on their immigration process at the next meeting.

X. DHHS Update

Lindsay Meyer, from Probation shared that tshe has been meeting with DHHS training on various systems and logistics for operationalizing the process fro probation youth going into B2i. She noted that the application/referral process is currently being developed and will be shared soon.

Shayne Schiermeister shared an update regarding the Youth Thrive Survey. Members discussed the survey process. Keenan Page noted that the time taken to fill out the survey would be one thing that the Sustainability Workgroup would like to count towards hourly goals in the program. Dylan Graeves discussed survey taking and the benefits of completing the survey and being involved.

Schiremeister also shared that there is one Independence Coordinator Position open and one that position that will be hired for soon.

Lana Verbrigghe noted that there is a new way the data is going to be presented moving forward and she would like any feedback. The data provided began in January 2024 and will provide information based

on data entered by Independence Coordinators. Sarah Helvey brought attention to the the decrease in youth that are pregnant and parenting, Deanna Brakhage and

XI. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

XII. New Business

Members discussed ideas for guests such as Junior Achievement and Jobs for American Graduates

XIII. Upcoming Meetings:

- a. July 16, 2024, 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM virtual

XIV. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:36 PM

DRAFT