

## Nebraska Children's Commission Meeting

February 13, 2024  
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Webex Videoconferencing System  
And  
Foster Care Review Office  
1225 L Street, Suite 401  
Lincoln, NE 68508

### 1. Call to Order

Chair Misty Flowers welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM She asked attendees to introduce themselves and answer an icebreaker question . Roll call was taken by Adam Anderson through introductions.

### 2. Introductions and Roll Call

#### *Commission Members Present (9)*

Jarren Breeling	Ron Giesselmann	Felicia Nelsen
A'Jamal Byndon	Sara Hoyle (9:54 a.m.)	Susan Thomas
Misty Flowers	Melissa Nance	LaShawn Young

#### *Commission Members Absent (4)*

Richard Hasty  
Lana Temple-Plotz

#### *Commission Ex-Officio Members Present (6)*

Dr. Alyssa Bish	Monika Gross	Deb VanDyke-Ries
Proxy for Jennifer Carter, Noah Karmann	LaDonna Jones-Dunlap	
	Kari Rumbaugh	

#### *Commission Ex-Officio Members Absent (5)*

Senator Beau Ballard	Tony Green
Senator Carol Blood	Judge Amy Schuchman
Senator Myron Dorn	

**Roll call was taken through introductions, and a quorum was established.**

#### *Guests in Attendance (3)*

Amanda Adams, Nebraska Children's Commission  
Adam Anderson, Nebraska Children's Commission  
Camas Holder, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services  
Ivy Svoboda, Nebraska Alliance of CACs

#### *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 Meetings Calendar and Nebraska Children's Commission websites 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 Children's Commission Website.

### 3. Approval of the Agenda

It was moved by Susan Thomas and seconded by Jarren Breeling to approve the agenda as presented. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (7):**

Jarren Breeling	Melissa Nance	LaShawn Young
Misty Flowers	Felicia Nelsen	
Ron Giesselmann	Susan Thomas	

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAIN (0):**

**ABSENT (4):**

A'Jamal Byndon	Sara Hoyle	
Richard Hasty	Lana Temple-Plotz	

**MOTION CARRIED**

*Note that the order of items in the minutes will not be reflective of the original agenda.*

### 4. Approval of the Consent Agenda

- a. [December 14, 2023 Minutes](#)
- b. [Member Nomination Report](#)

It was moved by LaShawn Young and seconded by Ron Giesselmann to approve the Consent Agenda items. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (8):**

Jarren Breeling	Ron Giesselmann	Susan Thomas
A'Jamal Byndon	Melissa Nance	LaShawn Young
Misty Flowers	Felicia Nelsen	

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAIN (0):**

**ABSENT (3):**

Richard Hasty	Sara Hoyle	Lana Temple-Plotz
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**MOTION CARRIED**

### 5. Commission Membership & Vacancies

Adam Anderson shared current vacancies and noted that at a recent small agency meeting other agencies state that appointments are currently on hold from the Governor Pillen's Office.

Chair Flowers noted recent discussions regarding diversity of appointments.

## 6. DHHS Update

### a. Structural changes since November 2023

Camas Holder noted that Children and Family Services Director Dr. Alyssa Bish started January 1, 2024. She continued by noting that Kathleen Stolz is Director of field staff and Michaela Hirschmann moved to the Office of Economic Assistance as Director. Holder added that Suzana Borowski is now in an Administrator II position, Nicole Hirsch is the Permanency Program Administrator, and Casey Smith is acting Service Area Administrator in the Central Service Area. Holder responded to a question regarding the provided [organization chart](#). Holder also shared that the Utilization Management team has been dispersed among Resource Developer teams.

### b. Programming Updates

Camas Holder shared that there is a Statewide Provider Meeting next week. Holder shared information regarding the assessment program for children and families coming into care. She noted there was previously up to 12 assessments conducted on families in the past. She stated that DHHS has been looking at the assessment array to prevent duplicative assessments but still ensure safety. She added that additional information will be shared in the future as changes are proposed. Holder noted that Safety and Risk Assessments are the main focus in reviewing the assessment array. Holder continued, noting that Therapeutic Family Care (TFC) launched in January and that 5 of 9 positions within the TFC program have been filled. She noted that DHHS has begun to assess youth in Nebraska Caregiver Responsibilities (NCR) tiers 4 and 5. Holder stated that the department is using the Child And Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS) assessment to evaluate youth for TFC. DHHS estimates a date of mid-March for enrolling providers into two new Medicaid services: Crisis Support and Mobile Crisis Support. She outlined that the Crisis Provider will be available 24/7 and that Care Coordinators are working to create care coordination plans.

Holder responded to a question about Probation Youth eligibility. Holder responded that Probation Youth would begin to be evaluated later in the year.

Holder responded that the Family Strengths and Needs Assessment (FSNA) has been eliminated as well as the Protected Factors Questionnaire (PFQ), Risk Reassessment, and Reunification Assessment.

Holder responded to a question regarding Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) data and Tribal CQI data. She noted that DHHS would be willing to present data at upcoming meetings.

Holder shared that there will be a Federal Child and Family Services Case Review in 2025.

Holder responded to a question regarding the LB 1173 Workgroup, that the Reimagining Wellbeing, IV-E claiming rate and Kinship/Relative and Prevention recommendations have been incorporated into the discussion moving forward and how the department can shift some prevention to a community-based structure. She noted that there has been some waiting for the legislative session to see if new legislation would be introduced surrounding these recommendations.

## 7. Probation Update

Kari Rumbaugh shared [Q4 2023 Juvenile infographic](#) in the chat. She spoke regarding the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement (JJSEN) work that has been the focus over the last number of years. She stated that they will continue to prioritize those recommendations. Rumbaugh noted that Probation have been reviewing screening tools for enhancement. She continued, noting that Probation is focused on up-to-date screenings to help families.

Rumbaugh also discussed the increase in youth intakes as outlined in the Chief Justice's recent State of the Judiciary speech. She noted stabilization in investigations.

Rumbaugh shared specifics regarding the infographic and also discussed current out-of-state placements due to in-state waitlists. She emphasized the importance for Probation youth to be able to access Therapeutic Family Care through Medicaid, as youth in Probation are also Medicaid eligible.

Rumbaugh responded to a question regarding community engagement. She noted that outreach happens in the Community probation districts.

## **8. Legislative Update**

Amanda Adams shared information regarding the legislation being tracked by the Commission that can be found on the website. She shared information regarding the policy filter used by the Commission: Commission impact, Committee impact, past work of the Commission, and any other legislation relevant to child welfare.

Monika Gross shared additional information regarding LB 1417. She noted that the FCRO is working on a one-pager that will be shared. She shared that the nearly 300 volunteers of the FCRO have been working on educating Senators regarding this bill.

Chair Flowers shared that LB 911 has a hearing coming up. She shared that this bill is regarding Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) data.

## **9. Strategic Priorities**

### **a. Retreat Follow-Up**

Amanda Adams highlighted items from the NECC Workshop notes.

Members discussed disproportionate impact and ways to increase diversity on subcommittees and workgroups. Adams noted that from the strengths of the Commission a Lived Experience Workgroup that will be recommending ways to engage the community. She continued by noting that the weight of Commission Members' testimony is more impactful than Commission staff. Adams continued to advocate for increased involvement by members.

Adams shared an email from a community member with feedback regarding the inclusiveness of the Commission. She will share the email with members and reach out to that person to see if they would like to join.

A'Jamal Byndon proposed exit interviews for members leaving and having honest conversations regarding grassroots efforts, etc.

Chair Flowers proposed increasing diversity in many efforts for the commission. Felicia Nelsen encouraged feedback from Committees and Subcommittee.

LaDonna Jones-Dunlap proposed diving into the FCRO reports for additional recommendations. Monika Gross shared that the FCRO is always available to present data.

Chair Flowers proposed highlighting the most popular items from the workshop data.

Byndon and Young both encouraged a look into immigrant issues regarding child welfare and their specific issues.

Adams will be revisiting the strategic plan at the next meeting.

### **b. Prepare for 2025 Strategic Plan**

## **10. Governance Document**

Amanda Adams shared proposed changes and gathered feedback from the members regarding those changes.

### **a. Legislative Workgroup & Process**

## **11. Engagement Practices**

### **a. Monthly updates in what form?**

### **b. New Member one-on-one orientation**

- c. Accountability Pathway
- d. Other ideas?

## **12. Committee Updates**

### **a. Alternative Response Committee**

AR Co-Chair Monika Gross noted meeting in December and submitting a report to the legislature with recommendations. She continued that the workgroups have begun to meet again and will have a full meeting in March.

### **b. Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee**

Amanda Adams shared that the Committee is focused on immigration status reforms for B2i as well as focusing on data.

### **c. Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee**

FCRRC Co-Chair Felicia Nelsen noted a recent meeting and discussion regarding the legislative bills that affect the Committee. She shared that the Committee remains focused on the upcoming report that is due in July.

### **d. Juvenile Services Committee**

JSC Co-chair Deb VanDyke-Ries noted a recent meeting. She shared that the workgroups are currently working on culturally relevant services, continuum of care and YRTC investigation.

### **e. Strengthening Families Act Committee**

SFA Co-Chair Ron Giesselmann shared that the Normalcy Subcommittee has begun work on Normalcy Plans and Reports. APPLA is on hold, and Trafficking has looked at the AG report on Trafficking. He also shared that the group has focused on upcoming legislation and racial and ethnic data.

### **f. Lived Experience**

Jarren Breeling shared that there was a recent meeting and the group has begun to form plans for membership and sharing. She noted an upcoming meeting.

## **13. Public Comment**

Misty Flowers opened the floor for public comment. There was none.

## **14. New Business**

Misty Flowers opened the floor for new business. Susan Thomas shared that the Dana Campus has been purchased by Lutheran Family Services. She would like to see information shared with the B2i Committee. Monika Gross shared that the FCRO staff have had a chance to tour. Gross noted that the program looks promising for youth and families.

## **15. Upcoming Meeting Planning**

- a. May 14, 2024 In Person
- b. August 6, 2024
- c. November 12, 2024

## **16. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 12:02 PM

Respectfully Submitted,  
Adam Anderson