

Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee

March 26, 2025
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Lincoln NSOB LLC – Sarpy Room
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68508

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Co-Chair Richard Hasty called the meeting of the Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee to order at 10:08 a.m. and asked Adam Anderson to call roll.

II. Roll Call and Introductions

Committee Members present (8):

Terry Gibbs
Dylan Graeve
Richard Hasty
Proxy for Lana Verbrigghe, Deanna Brakhage

Felipe Longoria-Shinn
Camille Ohri
Sami Spain
Kitty Washburn

Committee Members absent (5):

Douglas Beck
Brandy Gustoff
Angela Jarecki

Mia Pokorny
Susan Thomas

Ex-Officio Members present (2):

Colton Stogdill

Brooke Fuhr

Ex-Officio Members absent (3):

Jennifer Skala
Theresa Cusic

A quorum was present.

Guests In Attendance (10):

Adam Anderson
Cody Manthei

Sarah Mitchell
Heather Wood

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 proxy for Lana Verbrigghe, Deanna Brakhage and seconded by Terry Gibbs to approve the agenda as presented. There was no further discussion. Roll Call vote as follows:

FOR (7):

Terry Gibbs	Camille Ohri
Dylan Graeve	Sami Spain
Richard Hasty	Kitty Washburn
Proxy for Lana Verbrigghe, Deanna Brakhage	

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (6):

Douglas Beck	Felipe Longoria-Shinn
Brandy Gustoff	Mia Pokorny
Angela Jarecki	Susan Thomas

MOTION CARRIED

IV. Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Camille Ohri and seconded by proxy for Lana Verbrigghe, Deanna Brakhage to approve the July 16, 2024 minutes as presented. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (7):

Terry Gibbs	Camille Ohri
Dylan Graeve	Sami Spain
Richard Hasty	Kitty Washburn
Proxy for Lana Verbrigghe, Deanna Brakhage	

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (6):

Douglas Beck	Felipe Longoria-Shinn
Brandy Gustoff	Mia Pokorny
Angela Jarecki	Susan Thomas

MOTION CARRIED

V. Co-Chair Report

Chair Richard Hasty discussed the upcoming agenda. He noted that the Committee will revisit the annual report as well as discuss workgroups.

VI. Policy Analyst Update

Policy Analyst Sage Leis shared that she is leaving the Commission. Members discussed steps moving forward.

a. Legislative Update

Sage Leis shared LB 345 would create grants. Leis noted that LB 89 is not directly related to B2i but would define genders as male and female for every state agency. She noted much opposition for LB 89 in hearing. LB 181 by Michaela Cavanaugh would allow B2i for special immigration statuses. She also shared that LB 346 would eliminate AR, B2i, and FCRR Committees.

Members discussed

LB 296 would require Dept. of Ed to keep a centralized location for records and make some graduation requirement bills. Members discussed. Leis noted that the bill will be implemented by July 1, 2026. Leis will talk to Deb VanDyke-Ries to see if she can join a meeting to discuss if this would be a good avenue for a recommendation from the B2i Committee.

b. Annual Report Review

c. Workgroup Discussion

Sage Leis talked about how to transition the Sustainability Workgroup into an expansion-focused workgroup. Felipe Longoria-Shinn stated that he would be willing to Co-Chair an expansion workgroup. Chair Hasty discussed previous recommendations such as an opt-out policy recommendation. This is an option in other states. Members also discussed other options for workgroups, like youth-led policy workgroups. Deanna Brakhage shared information regarding focus to remove employment barriers for youth in the B2i program. Brakhage also talked about a B2i peer group workgroup that could start here and build out from here. Adam Anderson and Sage Leis will follow up with Deanna Brakhage and Felipe Longoria-Shinn.

Chair Hasty recalled having a testimonial at each meeting. Sage Leis discussed how this could help the Committee's annual report. Dylan Grave noted that he may know individuals who may be interested in participating. Additionally, Terrence Williams shared the B2i program has an individual who would be interested. Sage Leis will create a Google Form survey where youth can share information. Brakhage also encouraged to expand questionnaires to additional populations.

JaQuala Yarbrow spoke about youth that are aging out who are not hearing about B2i. Deanna Brakhage explained the process of notifying youth about B2i. Brooke Fuhr also explained the process from Probation. Brakhage continued by talking about the youth who may miss the notification due to being missing from care. Yarbrow talked about missing youth connecting them to b2i workers. Members talked about this notification process. Yarbrow brought up the idea of using age-appropriate language as well as language at an education level focus.

Members carried on by noting that a fix to this problem may be helped by an opt-in process. Camas Holder talked about a marketing push with prior feedback from a youth-led group.

Sage Leis stated that it would be good to continue to put the recommendations from the Immigration Status Workgroup into the annual report. Felipe Longoria-Shinn spoke about having a Special Population Group, encompassing Probation, Native Americans, Adoption. Leis and Brooke Fuhr recommended starting with Sustainability and if the need arises expand to special populations.

Members spoke about continuing to add the immigration status recommendations into the annual report. Longoria-Shinn offered to reach out to the members of the Immigration Status Workgroup to see if they would be interested in joining the work of the Sustainability Workgroup. Sage Leis will draft a workgroup outline for each of the workgroups.

Members talked about how to track data between Opportunity Passport and B2i. Heather Wood will work with Adam Anderson to set up a Data Evaluation Meeting.

VII. Membership Update

Adam Anderson shared information regarding the membership of the Committees and Workgroups.

VIII. DHHS Update

Camas Holder shared that four youth have entered B2i from Probation. Brooke Fuhr noted that it is actually five youth who have entered. Holder noted the retirement of Kathy Anstine from the ESA. A new B2i Coordinator has been hired in August. Another will be hired soon. Brooke Fuhr answered a question regarding Probation implementation. She noted that due to the appeal of LB 50 the staff of Probation is not actively promoting B2i, but legal parties are allowed to approach judges regarding the program.

Deanna Brakhage spoke about the similarities and differences between youth from Probation, particularly in the area of affordable housing. She noted that Probation youth that have entered outside the proposed entry plan have been given an IC quickly.

Brakhage shared a CQI data packet and gave a brief overview of the data. Felipe Longoria-Shinn asked to have ethnicity breakdown. Sage Leis would like to add pregnant and parenting to the Special Populations workgroup discussed earlier. Brakhage also explained Chaffee and IV-E funding.

IX. New Business

There was no new business.

X. Upcoming Meetings:

- a. June 18 or June 25, 2025

XI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.