

**Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the  
Juvenile Services Committee (JSC) and the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ)**

January 23, 2025  
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Webex  
And  
Foster Care Review Office Conference Room  
1225 L Street, Suite 401  
Lincoln, NE 68508

**1. Call to Order**

JSC Co-Chair Deb VanDyke-Ries called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM, welcomed everyone and asked Adam Anderson to call roll.

**2. Roll Call**

**Juvenile Services Committee**

***Committee Members Present (11)***

Amoreena Brady  
Jennifer Carter  
Amy Hoffman  
Nick Juliano

Judge Denise Kracl  
Mark LaBouchardiere  
Dennis Marks  
Michelle Nunemaker

Tammy Sassaman  
Deb VanDyke-Ries  
Dr. Richard Wiener

***Committee Members Absent (5)***

Nicole Brundo  
Patrick Sailors

Vicky Smith  
Kaleb Vicharra

Dr. Richard Wiener

***Committee Resource Members Present (1)***

Julie Smith

***Committee Resource Members Absent (2)***

Senator Carol Blood  
Bethany Nelson

**A quorum was established for the Juvenile Services Committee**

**Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice**

***Coalition Members Present (12)***

Proxy for Neleigh Boyer, Mark  
LaBouchardier  
Karen Bredthauer  
Breanna Flaherty  
Monika Gross

Amy Hoffman  
Nandi Kumondan  
Daniel Schleusener  
Jill Schubauer  
Steve Solorio

Tami Steensma  
Lauren Walag  
Kirby Williams

***Coalition Members Absent (6)***

Stanford Bradley  
Brian Halstead

Denise Manthei  
Elaine Menzel

Jaiden Nelsen  
Bobbi Taylor

***Coalition Ex-Officio Members Present (0)***

***Coalition Ex-Officio Members Absent (2)***

Judge Chad Brown  
Judge Joel B. Jay

Sara Quiroz

**Guests in Attendance (4):**

Adam Anderson  
Sarah Brownell  
Sage Leis  
Navrus Shaw

Jessica Svoboda  
John Turner  
Erin Wasserburger  
JaQuala Yarbrow

*a. Notice of Publication*

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

*b. Announcement of the placement of Open Meeting Act information*

A copy of the Open Meetings Act was available for public inspection at the sign-in table and on the Nebraska Children's Commission website.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

**A motion was made by Dr. Richard Winers from the JSC and Karen Bredthauer from the NCJJ to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Kracl from the NCJJ and Amy Hoffman from the NCJJ.**  
There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**Juvenile Services Committee**

**FOR (10):**

Amoreena Brady  
Amy Hoffman  
Nick Juliano  
Judge Denise Kracl

Mark LaBouchardiere  
Dennis Marks  
Michelle Nunemaker  
Tammy Sassaman

Deb VanDyke-Ries  
Dr. Richard Wiener

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (0):**

**ABSENT (5):**

Nicole Brundo  
Jennifer Carter

Patrick Sailors  
Vicky Smith

Kaleb Vicharra

**MOTION CARRIED for the Juvenile Services Committee**

**Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice**

**FOR (11):**

Proxy for Neleigh Boyer,  
Mark LaBouchardiere  
Karen Bredthauer  
Breanna Flaherty

Monika Gross  
Amy Hoffman  
Daniel Schleusener  
Jill Schubauer

Steve Solorio  
Tami Steensma  
Lauren Walag  
Kirby Williams

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (0):**

**ABSENT (5):**

Stanford Bradley  
Brian Halstead

Nandi Kumondan  
Denise Manthei

Bobbi Taylor

**MOTION CARRIED for the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice**

*\*Minutes do not follow the approved agenda*

**4. Approval of October 24, 2024 Minutes**

A motion was made by Amoreena Brady from the JSC and Dan Schleusener from NCJJ to approve the October 24, 2024 meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Judge Kracl from the JSC and Karen Bredthauer from the NCJJ. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**Juvenile Services Committee**

**FOR (11):**

Amoreena Brady  
Jennifer Carter  
Amy Hoffman  
Nick Juliano

Judge Denise Kracl  
Mark LaBouchardiere  
Dennis Marks  
Michelle Nunemaker

Tammy Sassaman  
Deb VanDyke-Ries  
Dr. Richard Wiener

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (0):**

**ABSENT (4):**

Nicole Brundo  
Patrick Sailors

Vicky Smith  
Kaleb Vicharra

**MOTION CARRIED for the Juvenile Services Committee**

**Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice**

**FOR (11):**

Proxy for Neleigh Boyer,  
Mark LaBouchardiere  
Karen Bredthauer  
Breanna Flaherty

Monika Gross  
Amy Hoffman  
Daniel Schleusener  
Jill Schubauer

Steve Solorio  
Tami Steensma  
Lauren Walag  
Kirby Williams

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (0):**

**ABSENT (5):**

Stanford Bradley  
Brian Halstead  
Nandi Kumondan

Denise Manthei  
Bobbi Taylor

**MOTION CARRIED for the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice**

**5. CJJ Conference Attendance**

Members discussed the upcoming CJJ conference in Washington DC.

A motion was made by Proxy for Neleigh Boyer, Mark LaBouchardiere from NCJJ to approve Breanna Flaherty, Nandi Kumondan and Sara Quiroz for attendance at the CJJ Conference in Washington DC on May 28-30, 2025. The motion was seconded by Monika Gross from the NCJJ. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice**

**FOR (11):**

Proxy for Neleigh Boyer,  
Mark LaBouchardiere  
Karen Bredthauer  
Breanna Flaherty

Monika Gross  
Amy Hoffman  
Daniel Schleusener  
Jill Schubauer

Steve Solorio  
Tami Steensma  
Lauren Walag  
Kirby Williams

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (0):**

**ABSENT (5):**

Stanford Bradley  
Brian Halstead  
Nandi Kumondan

Denise Manthei  
Bobbi Taylor

**MOTION CARRIED for the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice**

**6. Legislative Update**

Children's Commission Policy Analyst Sage Leis shared information regarding legislative bills LB 700, 65, 181, 492, 585. Julie Smith shared information regarding a bill focused on the DD population that also contains language regarding juvenile justice.

Co-Chair Deb VanDyke-Ries shared that the Court Improvement Project we'll be hosting A webinar February 11th at noon for a legislative preview.

**7. YRTC Update**

Mark LaBouchardiere noted that the Kearney facility is progressing and the tentative completion date is in February. He noted that the Hastings and Kearney facilities passed PREA audits with 100%. LaBouchardiere also noted that there have been 50% of youth from Douglas County, which can cause shifts in the dynamics of the facility and change how they operate between 4 different buildings. LaBouchardiere would be open to hearing from anyone who has recommendations about effective gang training. LaBouchardiere continued by sharing the population percentages at YRTC Kearney, noting 50% from Douglas County, 16% from Lancaster, 5% from Lincoln County, and 4% from Dodge and Hall counties. LaBouchardiere answered questions regarding the YRTC capacity to accommodate 11 and 12 year olds under LB565. He also noted that dorm style housing would be for youth that are approaching completion. He also noted that there would have to be some education strategy changes. He continued, that the Y RTC currently has policies in place for younger youth smaller youth and developmentally delayed youth. Members continued to discuss YRTC education at length.

**8. Probation Update**

Amoreena Brady shared three links in the chat.

Brady noted that Probation have started the process preparing for using tools in April or May. Brady shared that Probation are using implementation science to get better outcomes. Brady shared from a web video link that speaks of TRACKS process, but there is also a lot of content focused on balancing behavioral health needs and trauma. Brady stated that TARGET programming has been brought to RADIUS and will also be brought to Probation in June.

Brady noted that Probation have entered in a contract to study the TRACKS process to determine if it is effective.

Brady answered questions regarding implementation of TRACKS in District 2. She noted that the live date is April-May for District 2. She also noted difference between TRACKS and TARGET. She stated 30 providers would be trained in TARGET under the contract.

Members continued to discuss TARGET in terms of how it helps the families address trauma.

Amoreena also shared a link for the annual report that has been published. She highlighted fundamental measures for juvenile justice. She shared a link in the chat with the fundamental measures for juvenile justice. She noted that there is more in the annual report due to changing measures in the juvenile justice field. Brady noted population increase but not a

percentage increase in youth in out-of-home care. There has also been an increase in predisposition investigations. Probation would like to see this increase in the future to help have the youth with a structured path ordered moving forward. 75% completion rate and 21% recidivism rate. remained consistent.

## **9. JSC Workgroup Updates**

### **a. Access to Services**

Julie Smith shared that the group has been continuing to work exploring services options for non-congregate care options for youth. The group has had conversations with NE Medicaid, and there is hope the workgroup can look at a waiver program for services for youth with exceptional needs. She stated they are a very active group and Julie thanked the group for participation.

### **b. Racial & Ethnic Disparities**

Sage shared that the R/ED group is looking to make changes by combining with the SFA group examining inclusivity at multiple levels. She noted there will be an update on the new workgroup at the next meeting. .

### **c. Continuum of Care**

Tammy Sassaman shared that LaDonna has left her position with the State. Sassaman shared that she will put together a presentation for the next meeting and look at expanding the group in April.

## **10. NCJJ Subcommittee Updates**

### **a. Executive Subcommittee**

Breanna Flaherty asked members for updates from the Executive Committee. There were none.

### **b. Community Planning Advisory Subcommittee**

Community Plans were due in Dec. and the group is waiting for a couple to come in due to technical issues. Plans were sent and are being reviewed by members.

### **c. Juvenile Diversion Subcommittee**

Amy Hoffman shared that the Governor approved the release of the diversion report. Dr. Shaw shared his screen and spoke about the diversion report. He spoke about the effectiveness of diversion programs. The report shows diversion more effectively reduces recidivism than non-participation, and that diversion outperforms Probation for recidivism. One factor that Dr. Shaw pointed out is that they didn't control for risk scores in Probation.

### **d. Grant Review Subcommittee**

Erin Wasserburger shared that CBA grants are due in Dec. and EB grants in Jan. 31 CBA apps were normal. 17 EB grants. Over \$1.8M in requests and close to \$500K in available funds.

### **e. Young Adult Subcommittee**

Steve Solorio noted no meeting occurred, Solorio will be the adult member on the Subcommittee and the group is needing one more young adult member to get the meetings moving forward. John Turner and Erin Wasserburger had a meeting with Iowa YAC. Iowa is very active and robust. Members have spoken at national conventions.

## **11. Title II Update**

Erin Wasserburger noted that the Crime Commission has hired John Turner as the Juvenile Justice Specialist. John introduced himself.

### **a. Award and Budget**

Wasserburger noted that funds from 2021 has \$23K left and should be close to being used up. Wasserburger shared a process regarding coming into compliance in order to receive the full grant of \$641K moving forward, and received a waiver that they don't have to pass through funds.

**i. Prevention Grant**

Wasserburger shared that the second federal grant is \$875K. The grant will focus on delinquency prevention and statewide rural programming. She shared some additional changing thresholds for future grants and that the data review will be in July.

**b. Year 1 Milestone Requirements**

Wasserburger shared that the compliance manual will be online. There will be more information needed moving forward. The process to monitor jails and compliance is beginning. There will be an update to the funds pass-through.

**c. RED Plan Update**

Wasserburger shared that the R/ED plan will be updated every year based on data tables from OJJDP. Nebraska data shows that there are disparities in arrests and detentions for Black, Native American, and Hispanic youth. Wasserburger noted that they would like to follow up with R/ED training for communities, by contracting through a community liaison. The plan will be redone in a few months. Application for this is due in August.

**d. JDP 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference**

Wasserburger shared that in November there was a conference for the JDP 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Steve Solorio, Dan Schleusener, and Elaine Menzel went to the conference. Wasserburger shared that there were 30 people from Nebraska from outside the Coalition. She shared that Elaine Menzel was happy to be able to network, attended a session on Medicaid and enjoyed hearing from the youth. Menzel would like to see culture incorporated in Nebraska.

Steve Solorio shared that Brian Stevenson was a great presenter. Solorio shared that he wanted to connect with youth advisory councils. He connected with Iowa, and he hopes to make progress with the YAC in Nebraska. Steve got a lot of good information about gangs.

Dan Schleusener shared that he enjoyed LE speaking about youth engagement programs. He plans to bring some of those ideas back to Nebraska. He also enjoyed the school safety sessions.

**e. Partnership with Nebraska Children and Families Foundation**

Wasserburger noted that the work with CFF is a step to provide compensation to young adults. Wasserburger has a meeting regarding this today.

**12. Community Based Aid Conference**

Wasserburger shared that Lancaster County and NCJJ will be holding a conference in June 11-13 at Cornhusker Hotel in Downtown Lincoln. There will be no cost to attend. She will be sending out information soon.

**13. New Business**

There was none.

**14. Upcoming Meeting Planning**

- a.** April 24, 2025, Time and Place TBD

**15. Adjourn**

Meeting was adjourned at 11:51 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Adam Anderson