

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

July 24, 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 Nick Juliano called the meeting to order at 9:08 AM, welcomed everyone and asked Adam Anderson to call roll.

2. Roll Call

Juvenile Services Committee

Committee Members Present (10)

Amoreena Brady
Jennifer Carter
Beverly Duran
Amy Hoffman

Nick Juliano
Judge Denise Kracl
Mark LaBouchardiere
Pat Sailors

Tammy Sassaman
Deb VanDyke-Ries

Committee Members Absent (3)

Dennis Marks

Vicky Smith

Dr. Richard Wiener

Committee Resource Members Present (2)

Shaylee Fortner
Kendra Bishop

Committee Resource Members Absent (1)

Julie Smith

A quorum was established for the Juvenile Services Committee

Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice

Coalition Members Present (15)

Lincoln Arneal
Breanna Flaherty
Ingrid Ganseborn
Monika Gross
Brian Halstead

Amy Hoffman
Nandi Kumondan
Mark LaBouchardiere
Denise Manthei
Elaine Menzel

Jaiden Nelsen
Adama Sawadogo
Daniel Schleusener
Tami Steensma
Lauren Walag

Coalition Members Absent (4)

Stanford Bradley
Karen Bredthauer

Erika Schwarting
Steve Solorio

Coalition Ex-Officio Members Present (1)

Sara Quiroz

Coalition Ex-Officio Members Absent (2)

Judge Joel B. Jay
Judge Candice Novak

Guests in Attendance (4):

Adam Anderson
Sarah Brownell
Shaylee Fortner
Keran Packerd

Crystal Olson
John Turner
Erin Wasserburger

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 Tammy Sassaman from the JSC and Brian Halstead from the NCJJ to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Jennifer Carter from the JSC and Ingrid Ganseborn from the NCJJ.

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

Juvenile Services Committee

FOR (10):

Amoreena Brady
Jennifer Carter
Beverly Duran
Amy Hoffman

Nick Juliano
Judge Denise Kracl
Mark LaBouchardiere
Patrick Sailors

Tammy Sassaman
Deb VanDyke-Ries

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (6):

Dennis Marks

Vicky Smith

Dr. Richard Wiener

MOTION CARRIED for the Juvenile Services Committee

Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice

FOR (14):

Lincoln Arneal
Breanna Flaherty
Ingrid Ganseborn
Monika Gross
Brian Halstead

Amy Hoffman
Nandi Kumondan
Mark LaBouchardiere
Elaine Menzel
Jaiden Nelsen

Adama Sawadogo
Daniel Schleusener
Tami Steensma
Lauren Walag

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (5):

Stanford Bradley
Karen Bredthauer
Denise Manthei

Erika Schwarting
Steve Solorio

MOTION CARRIED for the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice

**Minutes do not follow the approved agenda*

4. Approval of April 24, 2025 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Jennifer Carter from the JSC and Brian Halstead from NCJJ to approve the April 24, 2025 meeting minutes with edits as discussed. The motion was seconded by Judge Denise Kracl from the JSC and Mark LaBouchardiere from the NCJJ. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

Juvenile Services Committee

FOR (10):

Amoreena Brady
Jennifer Carter
Beverly Duran
Amy Hoffman

Nick Juliano
Judge Denise Kracl
Mark LaBouchardiere
Patrick Sailors

Tammy Sassaman
Deb VanDyke-Ries

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (6):

Dennis Marks

Vicky Smith

Dr. Richard Wiener

MOTION CARRIED for the Juvenile Services Committee

Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice

FOR (11):

Lincoln Arneal
Breanna Flaherty
Monika Gross
Brian Halstead

Amy Hoffman
Nandi Kumondan
Mark LaBouchardiere
Elaine Menzel

Adama Sawadogo
Daniel Schleusener
Lauren Walag

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (3):

Ingrid Ganseborn
Jaiden Nelsen
Tami Steensma

ABSENT (5):

Stanford Bradley
Karen Bredthauer
Denise Manthei

Erika Schwarting
Steve Solorio

MOTION CARRIED for the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice

5. Policy Analyst and Legislative Update

Policy Analyst Chloe Fowler introduced herself and noted that she is coming up to speed on the work of the Commission and Committees under the Commission. She shared that she has been working on revising and drafting the reports and looking into what the Commission will focus on in the new year.

6. Approval of JSC & NCJJ 2025 Annual Report

The 2025 Annual Report was displayed for attendees. Members discussed revisions to the report at length.

Lauren Walag clarified that LB 530 passed, but the provision to lower the age for charging juveniles with serious felonies from 14 to 12 did not pass, and this revision must be made in the report.

Concerns were raised by Mark LaBouchardiere and Jennifer Carter regarding the difficulty in approving a document with substantive unreviewed revisions. Members agreed on a process to move forward. It was suggested to remove the Continuum of Care section from the immediate vote due to the magnitude of changes, allowing the rest of the report to move forward to the Children's Commission. It was also suggested that an ad hoc workgroup of the JSC convene to revise the Continuum of Care section prior to forwarding the report to the Children's Commission.

In response to a question, Adam Anderson explained that the scope expanded from solely juvenile justice R/ED to include child welfare and align with the Children's Commission's priority of equal service distribution. The name was changed to focus on driving services equally to all children and families across Nebraska in part due to pushback on targeted DEI programs.

A motion was made by Dan Schleusener from the NCJJ to approve the NCJJ 2025 Annual Report with revisions to the membership lists and links to reports. 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 (12):

Lincoln Arneal
Breanna Flaherty
Ingrid Ganseborn
Monika Gross

Amy Hoffman
Nandi Kumondan
Mark LaBouchardiere
Elaine Menzel

Adama Sawadogo
Daniel Schleusener
Tami Steensma
Lauren Walag

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (7):

Stanford Bradley
Karen Bredthauer
Brian Halstead
Denise Manthei

Jaiden Nelsen
Erika Schwarting
Steve Solorio

MOTION CARRIED for the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice

A motion was made by Tammy Sassaman from the JSC to approve the JSC 2025 Annual Report with revisions as discussed, and revisions discussed and approved by the ad hoc workgroup of the JSC. The motion was seconded by Mark LaBouchardiere of the JSC. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

Juvenile Services Committee

FOR (10):

Amoreena Brady
Jennifer Carter
Beverly Duran
Amy Hoffman

Nick Juliano
Judge Denise Kracl
Mark LaBouchardiere
Patrick Sailors

Tammy Sassaman
Deb VanDyke-Ries

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (6):

Dennis Marks

Vicky Smith

Dr. Richard Wiener

MOTION CARRIED for the Juvenile Services Committee

7. YRTC Update

Mark LaBouchardiere shared population counts at the Nebraska YRTC locations. He noted there are 19 youth at Hastings which will be going up to 23 soon, 103 at Kearney from 70 in April, and 14 at Lincoln from 10. He shared that these are significant increases at the facilities from April at a time when the facilities normally see decreases. He also shared that LB 530 could have population impacts at all the facilities. Lastly, he shared that they have had their ACA accreditation and Hastings were compliant in 100% of all mandatory files and 99.4% of non-mandatory reviews. Lincoln was compliant in 100% of both mandatory and non-mandatory reviews. He congratulated both facilities for their work and noted a final panel review will happen in August for the official accreditation seal.

In response to questions, LaBouchardiere noted that the division is on track with the budget and the facility construction is still on track for completion in January 2026.

8. Probation Update

Amoreena Brady shared that Probation trained twenty-seven licensed providers across Nebraska in the TARGET (Trauma Affective Regulation: Guide for Education and Therapy) curriculum to address trauma exposure and its impact on youth functioning.

Brady updated the members that the Targeted Responsive Assessments for Court Key to Youth Success (TRACKS) screening and assessment process has been implemented across all probation districts except for District 5, which is scheduled to start on September 1st.

Quiroz expressed concern about rising costs, including the need to increase service provider rates, the potential for more youth in detention due to age expansion, the need for PRTFs, and potential impacts from changes to Medicaid.

Regarding the Juvenile Justice System Enhancement, Brady noted the recidivism rate dropped by two percentage points over the last quarter for youth in Restore services, even while serving higher-risk/gang-involved populations.

Quiroz shared that Probation is launching a new adolescent development curriculum, initially developed in District 3J (Lancaster County).

In response to a question about the "empty building sitting in Omaha," Sara Quiroz noted that the facility is a Douglas County issue and not overseen by Probation.

Quiroz shared that Brady has been recognized on a national level for her leadership during the launch of the JJSEN and noted that Probation is lucky to have her and that she deserves the credit she received from the national recognition.

9. JSC Workgroup Updates

a. Access to Services

Adam Anderson noted that the workgroup is the most active workgroup working on the recommendations for the report and moving forward recommendations. He encouraged members to join the workgroup.

b. Racial & Ethnic Disparities

Chloe Fowler met with the chair about where the focus of the workgroup will land in the future. Adam Anderson encouraged members to join the workgroup.

c. Continuum of Care

Tammy Sassaman noted that she is trying to get new workgroup members as well as meeting in the future. Members added their names to the email list for future contacts.

10. NCJJ Subcommittee Updates

a. Executive Subcommittee

Elaine Menzel noted that the Subcommittee reviewed the agenda and worked on the public comment portion of the report.

b. Community Planning Advisory Subcommittee

Erin Wasserburger shared that the Subcommittee is in the process of scheduling a meeting to discuss community plans submitted for the CBA and JS grants.

c. Juvenile Diversion Subcommittee

Erin Wasserburger shared that they will be setting a meeting with new diversion program members. The group will be putting together a survey to reevaluate the Nebraska Screening and Assessment Tool. Wasserburger noted that they will be working with Drs. Hamilton and Compana for updates. The group has also released a best practice guidebook they are looking to get to county attorneys this fall.

d. Grant Review Subcommittee

Erin Wasserburger shared that the Subcommittee will be setting an August meeting to set the RFA process as well as set the priorities for the Enhancement and JS grants.

e. Young Adult Subcommittee

John Turner shared there is an August 5th meeting scheduled. He noted that they are in the process of rebuilding the Subcommittee.

11. Title II Update

a. Compliance and Monitoring

John Turner shared the JJDPa Compliance Report. He noted Nebraska is out of compliance with DSO (De-institutionalization of Status Offenders) requirements because nine status offenders were placed at Cedars, which is considered staff secure. Efforts are underway to find non-Title II grant funds to update the facility's door/locks, as Title II funds cannot be used for construction. He continued that the Greater Nebraska Youth Center of North Platte is also a staff-secure facility but is currently compliant, having hosted no status offenders in the last year. They are also actively seeking funds to immediately address their door security.

Turner noted that the state is in compliance with both the jail removal page and the requirement for Interests of Justice hearings for youth charged as adults.

b. Award and Budget Update

i. Prevention Grant

Erin Wasserburger noted that the prevention grant is awaiting a signature, before working on a contract for an online diversion program for rural areas. It would be a program good for low-risk youth. She noted that there will be a survey coming out.

ii. SFY26 Title II Award

Remaining funds contracted for R/ED and MST pilot looking at bachelor-level therapy at MidPlains, in rural areas. 2024 funding some but tribal passthrough changed. 2025 not release and will be 40% reduction based on compliance.

c. R/ED Plan Update

John Turner shared that Dr. Christian Bijoux will be assisting with R/ED Plan. Turner noted that the R/ED Subcommittee will be starting up again soon.

d. Partnership with Nebraska Children and Families Foundation – Lincoln Arneal

Erin Wasserburger noted that she will need to meet with Arneal to make sure that there is a plan in place for reimbursement for youth participation in the NCJJ.

e. Youth Summit

October 14-16 in Minneapolis.

12. New Business

There was none.

13. Public Comment

There was none.

14. Upcoming Meeting Planning

October 23, 2025, in-person

15. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 11:33 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Adam Anderson

DRAFT