

**Alternative Response (AR) Advisory Committee**

June 5, 2026  
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM.

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

**I. Call to Order and Welcome**

Co-Chair, Monika Gross called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM and asked Adam Anderson to call roll.

**II. Roll Call and Introductions**

***Committee Members present (6):***

Proxy for Jacie Boelts, Jamie Kramer  
Proxy for Pat Carraher, Jean McNeil  
Jennifer Carter

Monika Gross  
Heather Sikyta  
Proxy for Schalisha Walker, Noah Morales

***Committee Members absent (5):***

Jarren Breeling  
Michelle Paxton  
Bri McLarty

Heather Sikyta  
Susan Thomas

**A quorum was established.**

***Guests In Attendance (4):***

Adam Anderson  
Chloe Fowler

Meghan Svik  
Mary Pinker

***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.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

**A motion was made by Jennifer Carter to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Ivy Svoboda.** There was no discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (6):**

Proxy for Jacie Boelts, Jamie Kramer  
Proxy for Pat Carraher, Jean McNeil  
Jennifer Carter

Monika Gross  
Ivy Svoboda  
Proxy for Schalisha Walker, Noah Morales

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (0):**

**ABSENT (5):**

Jarren Breeling  
Bri McLarty  
Michelle Paxton

Heather Sikyta  
Susan Thomas

**MOTION CARRIED**

**IV. Approval of February 28, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made by Jennifer Carter to approve the February 28, 2025 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by proxy for Pat Carraher, Jean McNeil. There was no discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

**FOR (6):**

Proxy for Jacie Boelts, Jamie Kramer  
Proxy for Pat Carraher, Jean McNeil  
Jennifer Carter

Monika Gross  
Ivy Svoboda  
Proxy for Schalisha Walker, Noah Morales

**AGAINST (0):**

**ABSTAINED (0):**

**ABSENT (5):**

Jarren Breeling  
Bri McLarty  
Michelle Paxton

Heather Sikyta  
Susan Thomas

**MOTION CARRIED**

**V. Co-Chair Update**

Co-Chair Monika Gross updated the committee regarding legislative attempts to eliminate the Alternative Response Advisory Committee. She testified in opposition to this part of the bill, as did the Children's Commission. Because of this advocacy, the section to eliminate the committee was withdrawn, ensuring the committee remains active with its statutory work and responsibilities ongoing. Future focus will center on strategic planning and forming specialized workgroups.

**VI. Membership Update**

Adam Anderson provided the membership status report:

- **Resignations & Upcoming Vacancies:** Pat Carraher will step down in mid-July. Alex Hildebrand (law enforcement representation from York County) stepped away from the committee quite a while ago.
- **New Applicants:** Hazell Rodriguez (Legal Aid of Nebraska) has applied to succeed Pat Carraher. Sarah Hoyle (Children's Commission member) applied to join as a representative of county human services. These appointments will be reviewed by the Children's Commission at their August meeting.
- **Vacancies:** The committee is actively seeking law enforcement and lived experience representation.
- **Terms & Reappointments:** Anderson noted that member terms officially expired in mid-2025. He will email all current members to see if they wish to extend their appointments for another two years, which will be submitted for formal approval at the August Children's Commission meeting.
- **Process Improvements:** Anderson explained that recruitment shifted back to personal vetting and manual applications. Previous social media campaigns (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) brought in online applications via Google Forms, but applicants often lacked awareness of the strict in-person meeting requirements (2–3 times a year).

## VII. Legislative Update

Child Welfare Policy Analyst Chloe Fowler expanded on the recently concluded legislative session:

- **LB 845:** Explicitly targeted the elimination of this committee. Due to a unified front of opposition and online comments, that specific section was killed, while the remaining modified portion of the bill passed.
- **Interim Studies:** Fowler recommended keeping track of three relevant interim studies over the summer: **LR 380** and **LR 425** (related to Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers/YRTCs), and **LR 413** (examining guardianship).
- **Personnel Note:** Chloe Fowler announced she accepted a new role and will be leaving her position at the Commission in two weeks. The policy analyst position is officially posted on the Nebraska State Jobs website.

## VIII. DHHS Update

Jamie Kramer provided an update regarding programmatic and data developments within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS):

- **The Warmline (211 Nebraska):** DHHS entered a contract infrastructure system with Matt Wallen and the United Way 211 team in December. Currently in Stage 2, focus is heavily on hiring, onboarding, and training. A pilot program featuring one urban and one rural site is set to launch in early July to iron out processes before a statewide rollout by the end of the year.
- **Operational Mechanics:** Calls to the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline that do not meet statutory definitions for an intake, but meet criteria for evidence-based prevention programs under the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), will experience a "warm transfer" to a Warmline specialist. Specialists will follow up with families within 60 days to ensure a closed-loop system. This works in tandem with the passage of **LB 668**, establishing statutory labels for prevention cases outside of traditional child welfare, enabling the state to claim back up to 50% in matching federal funds.
- **FFPSA Plan Approval:** Federal partners officially approved Nebraska's Family First Prevention Services Plan within the last two weeks, giving the green light to the "community pathways" design.
- **Screening Tools:** Kramer confirmed that implementation of the SAFE model remains on pause, and the department continues to utilize Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools.
- **Data Packet Review:** Kramer presented a 12-month culmination data packet showing that 5% of cases statewide track-changed (flipped) from Alternative Response (AR) to Traditional Response

(TR) while open, primarily due to an unmanageable home safety threat. She offered to provide a 12-month side-by-side comparison at the next meeting to better reflect changing trends.

- *Slide 4:* AR-eligible families resulting in subsequent substantiation sat low across a 36-month look-back window (highest was Central Service Area at 2.5%).
- *Slides 5 & 6:* Subsequent accepted intakes within 12 months of AR closure hovered around 16% statewide.

## IX. Office of Inspector General

Jennifer Carter and Meghan Svik detailed findings from an OIG Investigation Report conducted during the summer of 2025. Svik walked through the investigative timeline and core programmatic findings. Carter noted that conducting accurate ongoing data analytics remains difficult because AR metrics fundamentally and categorically differ from Traditional Response (TR) tracking. The committee engaged in a discussion surrounding how the introduction of the new 211 Warmline screening pathways might alter subsequent intake trends across both AR and TR tracks.

## X. Workgroup Discussion and Future Planning

Monika Gross led an exercise to clarify the committee's core statutory mandates and chart out active workgroups. She emphasized the critical need to build a "closed-loop" reporting system connecting community partners back to DHHS to track real family engagement, a framework that aligns directly with the upcoming Warmline structure.

The committee's brainstorming discussion was captured on a flip chart, organized under the following strategic pillars:

### 1. Statutory Responsibilities & Overview

- **Report Handling:** Receipt and screening reports of Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN).
- **System Pathways:** Ongoing use of Alternative Response (AR) and Traditional Response (TR).
- **Provision of Services:** Utilization of AR and non-court services to ensure child safety, reduce CAN, and engage families.
- **Evaluation:** Examine the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) AR response and formulate recommendations.

### 2. Data Review, Metrics, & System Effectiveness

- **AR vs. TR Comparison:** Compare AR data to TR data to evaluate the effectiveness of AR vs. TR.
- **Risk Assessment:** \* Determine if changes should be made regarding families with high or very high risk.
  - Analyze whether risk levels change how AR cases are handled.
- **Service Engagement:** Evaluate if families engage in services after a handoff, if the services are working effectively, and if families prefer community-based providers over DHHS.
- **Hotline & Intake Trends:** \* Review data regarding previous hotline calls, including a 6-month look-back on prior AR history.
  - Evaluate potential exclusion criteria.
  - Investigate why there are higher numbers of subsequent intakes/substantiations in certain Service Areas (SAs).
- **Warmline Impact:** Assess how the Warmline impacts overall AR use.
- **Oversight:** Maintain ongoing data review.

### 3. Community Collaboration & Prevention Landscape

- **DHHS & Community Partnership:** Foster collaboration between DHHS-AR and Community Collaboratives.
- **Service Delivery:** Establish community service providers as the "face" of AR service provision.
- **Handoffs & Support:** Facilitate a "warm handoff" from AR to Collaboratives, leveraging their role to support family engagement.
- **Prevention Spectrum:** Determine where AR fits within the broader prevention landscape (e.g., Primary vs. TR Prevention).

### 4. Established Workgroups

- **Data Review & Oversight**
- **Family Engagement / AR Effectiveness**
- **Prevention & AR Intervention Continuum**
- **Services Evaluation:** Reviewing what services are offered vs. what is actually taken advantage of by families.

### XI. New Business

There was no new business.

### XII. Public Comment

Co-Chair Monika Gross opened the floor to public comment. There was no public comment.

### XIII. Upcoming Meetings:

The members present identified September 17, 2026 as the tentative date for the next meeting.

### XIV. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:44 PM

Respectfully Submitted,  
Adam Anderson