

Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee

April 28, 2026

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Sarpy Conference Room
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68509

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Chair Richard Hasty called the meeting of the Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Committee to order at 10:06 a.m. and asked Adam Anderson to call roll.

II. Roll Call and Introductions

Committee Members present (9):

Terry Gibbs
Richard Hasty
Camas Holder
Felipe Longoria-Shinn
Camille Ohri

Mary Petite
Jordan Ramsey
Proxy for Sami Spain, Hannah Olafson
Susan Thomas

Committee Members absent (4):

Dylan Graeve
Monalisa McGee

Sarah Mitchell
Kitty Washburn (Virtual)

Ex-Officio Members present (1):

Brooke Fuhr

Ex-Officio Members absent (4):

Jennifer Skala
Colton Stogdill

Theresa Cusic
Senator Glen Meyer

A quorum was present.

Guests In Attendance (11):

Omar Ambrose
Adam Anderson
Deanna Brakhage

Chloe Fowler
Angela Morehead
Terrence Williams

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 Terry Gibbs and seconded by Camille Ohri to approve the agenda as presented.

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

FOR (9):

Terry Gibbs
Richard Hasty
Camas Holder
Felipe Longoria-Shinn
Camille Ohri

Mary Petite
Jordan Ramsey
Proxy for Sami Spain, Hannah Olafson
Susan Thomas

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (4):

Dylan Graeve
Monalisa McGee

Sarah Mitchell
Kitty Washburn

MOTION CARRIED

IV. Approval of Minutes

It was moved by Felipe Longoria-Shinn and seconded by Susan Thomas to approve the January 28, minutes as presented. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (9):

Terry Gibbs
Richard Hasty
Camas Holder
Felipe Longoria-Shinn
Camille Ohri

Mary Petite
Jordan Ramsey
Proxy for Sami Spain, Hannah Olafson
Susan Thomas

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAINED (0):

ABSENT (4):

Dylan Graeve
Monalisa McGee

Sarah Mitchell
Kitty Washburn

MOTION CARRIED

V. Chair Report

Chair Hasty reported that while the committee technically faces a statutory "sunset" on **June 30, 2026**, the Nebraska Children's Commission has already voted to continue the group as a formal committee under its own authority.

Discussion on Future Rules:

- **Procedural Flexibility:** Because the committee will no longer be statutorily bound, members discussed whether to relax formal meeting structures.
- **Member Perspectives:** Felipe Longoria-Shinn and Chloe Fowler suggested that less formal structures might be more inviting and less "cold" for young adults. However, Camas Holder and Susan Thomas emphasized the importance of maintaining public notice so the community knows the committee remains active.
- **Operational Changes:** Moving forward, the committee will no longer be required to hold 50% of meetings in person, allowing for better emergency virtual participation.
- **Action Plan:** Chair Hasty will seek feedback from the larger Commission during the **May 12th strategic planning meeting** to determine which formal elements (like specific membership quotas) must remain.

VI. Policy Analyst Update

Chloe Fowler, Child Welfare Policy Analyst, shared a handout and provided a comprehensive legislative wrap-up for the 2026 session:

- **LB 741 & 751:** Legislation aimed at increasing diversity within the Commission and studying missing Black women and children.
- **LB 962 (Priority Bill):** Passed as the **Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act**, which heavily aligns with B2i goals for community transition.
- **Alternative Response:** The Commission successfully prevented the elimination of the Alternative Response Advisory Committee, preserving a critical layer of oversight.
- **Interim Studies:** Fowler highlighted **LR 467**, which examines how to make Nebraska more attractive to young people—a study directly relevant to B2i sustainability.

VII. Annual Report

Chloe Fowler discussed the timeline for the annual report and next steps.

VIII. Workgroup Discussion

a. Data and Evaluation Workgroup

The committee reviewed **CY2025 FCRO data** showing an increase in B2i cases.

- **Top Goals:** Youth goals remain consistent, primarily focusing on **transportation, employment, and financial stability**.
- **Health Barriers:** Members discussed how low Medicaid reimbursement rates act as a disincentive for providers (particularly dentists), creating significant service gaps for young adults.
- **Housing Impact:** Data showed that safe housing is a primary driver of success; youth with safe housing are significantly more likely to make overall progress in the program.

b. Sustainability Workgroup

Co-Chair Felipe Longoria-Shinn shared that the workgroup has met several times and discussed recommendations. He presented **three key recommendations**:

- **Program Norms:** Establishing a "one-pager" or video to revisit program expectations with youth every six months. Members noted that youth are often "bombarded" with info at the start and need reminders of available resources.

- **Youth Voice:** Increasing the use of social media and marketing materials to engage young adults.
- **Support Systems:** Focusing on identifying a primary support person who is not just the Independence Coordinator (IC) to ensure long-term stability.

c. Special Populations Workgroup

Chloe Fowler noted an upcoming meeting with Deborah Dancer, and members discussed the workgroup moving forward.

- **Immigration Focus:** Susan Thomas highlighted a case involving a youth with a work permit but no green card, sparking a discussion on how B2i can better support documented immigrant youth who face unique instability.
- **Leadership: Deborah Dancer** will take the lead on re-activating this workgroup.

IX. Membership Update

Adam Anderson shared information regarding the membership of the Committee. He noted new members Mary Petite and Jordan Ramsey have been appointed since last meeting, and Hannah Olafson's application to permanently replace Sami Spain will be reviewed by the Commission on May 12th.

X. DHHS Update

Deanna Brakhage reported a significant increase in B2i participation, with **nearly 100 more unduplicated young adults** in 2025 compared to the previous year.

- **Probation Entry:** 20 youth have entered via the new probation pathway since January 2025.
- **Medicaid:** Young adults with foster care experience after age 18 remain **exempt** from new Medicaid work requirements in Nebraska.

XI. New Business

There was no new business.

XII. Upcoming Meetings:

- a. July 21, 2026, 2:00 PM, Virtual

XIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 PM