

Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Subcommittee

July 21, 2026

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Virtual

&

FCRO Conference Room

1225 L Street, Suite 401

Lincoln, NE 68508

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Chair Richard Hasty called the meeting of the Bridge to Independence (B2i) Advisory Subcommittee to order at 2:05 p.m. and asked members to introduce themselves.

II. Roll Call and Introductions

Committee Members present (8):

Terry Gibbs

Richard Hasty

Felipe Longoria-Shinn

Camille Ohri

Sarah Mitchell

Mary Petite

Hannah Olafson

Susan Thomas

Committee Members absent (4):

Dylan Graeve

Jordan Ramsey

Monalisa McGee

Kitty Washburn

Ex-Officio Members present (2):

Brooke Fuhr

Colton Stogdill

Ex-Officio Members absent (2):

Jennifer Skala

Theresa Cusic

A quorum was present.

Guests In Attendance (4):

Adam Anderson

Deanna Brakhage

Dr. Tami Soper

Heather Wood

*Minutes do not follow the order of the agenda.

III. Approval of Agenda

It was moved by Terry Gibbs and seconded by Susan Thomas to approve the agenda as presented.

There was no further discussion. Approved by unanimous consent.

MOTION CARRIED

IV. Approval of April 28, 2026 Minutes

It was moved by Susan Thomas and seconded by Camille Ohri to approve the April 28, 2026 minutes as presented. There was no further discussion. **Approved by unanimous consent.**

MOTION CARRIED

V. Chair Report

Chair Richard Hasty reported that his current term with the Nebraska Children's Commission and his tenure as Chair will conclude on **June 30, 2027**, coinciding with his upcoming retirement.

- **Leadership Transition:** Chair Hasty invited members to consider interest in the Chair or Co-Chair position to allow for an intentional transition period. Terry Gibbs commended Felipe Longoria-Shinn's leadership in prior workgroups and suggested him as a candidate. Felipe expressed interest in learning more about the role and requirements.
- **Governance Requirements:** Staff noted that per Children's Commission rules, at least one Subcommittee Chair/Co-Chair must be a member of the main Children's Commission.

VI. Policy Analyst Update

Adam Anderson announced that a candidate has been hired for the Policy Analyst position, with an official start date of **Monday, July 27, 2026**.

- Interim efforts are focused on finalizing annual report draft revisions.
- The annual reports are scheduled for formal review and approval by the full Nebraska Children's Commission on **August 11, 2026**.

VII. Membership Update and Subcommittee Procedures

The Subcommittee held an in-depth discussion regarding future operating rules, quorum structures, and membership makeup following legislative changes and DHHS's transition to a non-voting role.

- **Key Governance Agreements:**
 1. Maintain informal, collaborative meeting discussions while keeping structured voting mechanisms for official recommendations to give weight to subcommittee decisions.
 2. Maintain public notice and advance meeting scheduling for transparency, while retaining flexible meeting formats (removing strict in-person attendance quotas).
- **Action / Recommendation to the Children's Commission:**

It was moved by Terry Gibbs and seconded by Camille Ohri to recommend the following governance structure for the B2i Advisory Subcommittee to the Nebraska Children's Commission:

- Establish a voting membership range of **10 to 15 members**, approved by the Commission.
- Transition **Executive Branch** positions to non-voting/resource member status alongside Judicial and Legislative branch representatives.

- Expand representation categories to explicitly include **Education** and **Mental Health** representatives.
- Maintain a simple majority of active voting members as quorum.

There was no further discussion. **Approved by unanimous consent.**

MOTION CARRIED

VIII. Workgroup Discussion

1. Data & Evaluation Workgroup

- **Data Review:** Heather Wood presented data from the FCRO Point-in-Time Report (June 2026) showing higher rates of prior congregate care placements among B2i young adults. Additional 2025 review metrics were highlighted, including top goals selected by participants: **Transportation (95.6%)** and **Employment (89.7%)**, with overall independent living goal progress at **91%**.
 - **Recommendations & Edits:** The workgroup recommended promoting B2i through video content for youth in out-of-state/congregate settings and exploring expanded clinical supports. Following a suggestion by Felipe Longoria-Shinn, the recommendation wording was updated to explicitly direct case managers to utilize the B2i promotional video and related promotional materials when informing eligible youth.

2. Sustainability & Peer Workgroup

- **Updates:** Felipe Longoria-Shinn confirmed that the workgroup's recommendations remain unchanged, structured with clear descriptions and action steps, alongside a brief overview of the workgroup's process added to the report.

3. Special Populations Workgroup

- **Scope & Terminology Revisions:** The subcommittee discussed broadening the workgroup's scope beyond immigration status. Language in the report was updated to clarify focus on **both documented and undocumented immigrant youth**, while explicitly expanding future focus areas to include other specialized populations such as **tribal youth, probation youth, and adjudicated/juvenile justice youth**.

IX. Annual Report

It was moved by Felipe Longoria-Shinn and seconded by Susan Thomas to approve the **B2i Subcommittee Annual Report as edited during the workgroup discussion**. There was no further discussion. **Approved by unanimous consent.**

MOTION CARRIED

X. DHHS Update

Deanna Brakhage provided updates on behalf of DHHS:

- **Staffing:** Deanna Brakhage reported interviewing for four additional Independence Coordinator positions (Northern, Eastern, Southeast, and Central service areas).
- **Data Dashboard:** Data measures have transitioned to an automated monthly dashboard rather than manual quarterly reporting.
- **Virtual Visits Option:** A policy update allows young adults in B2i the option for virtual visits, though Independence Coordinators maintain discretion to require face-to-face visits based on goal progress, safety, or program eligibility.
- **Work Requirements:** In response to questions from Sarah Mitchell regarding federal HR1 work requirements (SNAP/Medicaid), Deanna indicated B2i participants are expected to be exempt, but agreed to follow up with specific confirmation.

XI. New Business

CASA Conference: Susan Thomas noted that the CASA Conference is scheduled for August in Lincoln, NE at the Graduate Hotel. Deanna Brakhage shared that DHHS staff plan to attend the regional conference in Ogallala, NE.

Upcoming Meeting:

- a. October 6, 2026. 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM

XII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:47 PM