

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

October 23, 2025
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Courtyard Marriott
808 R Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

1. Call to Order

JSC Co-Chair Nick Juliano called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM, welcomed everyone and asked Adam Anderson to call roll.

2. Roll Call

Juvenile Services Committee

Committee Members Present (11)

Proxy for Amoreena Brady,
Julie Smith
Sarah Brownell
Jennifer Carter

Amy Hoffman
Nick Juliano
Judge Denise Kracl
Pat Sailors

Tammy Sassaman (9:26 AM)
Vicky Smith
Deb VanDyke-Ries
Dr. Richard Wiener

Committee Members Absent (3)

Beverly Duran
Laura Lemoine

Dennis Marks

Committee Resource Members Present (2)

Bethany Nelson
Julie Smith

Committee Resource Members Absent (1)

Shaylee Fortner

A quorum was established for the Juvenile Services Committee

Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice

Coalition Members Present (13)

Lincoln Arneal
Karen Bredthauer
Ingrid Ganseborn
Monika Gross
Amy Hoffman

Mark LaBouchardiere
Elaine Menzel
Kaleciana Perry
Adama Sawadogo
Teshawna Sawyer

Erika Schwarting
Steve Solorio
Tami Steensma

Coalition Members Absent (8)

Breanna Flaherty
Nandi Kumondan
Denise Manthei

Jaiden Nelsen
Wathina Porter
Daniel Schleusener

Myana Sigers
Lauren Walag

Coalition Ex-Officio Members Present (0)

Coalition Ex-Officio Members Absent (3)

Judge Joel B. Jay
Judge Candice Novak
Sara Quiroz

Guests in Attendance (9):

Adam Anderson
Chloe Fowler
Deb Raasch
Leslie Remus
Kelli Schadwinkel

John Turner
Erin Wasserburger
Allen Windle
Melissa Wood

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 July 25, 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 shared the following updates:

- **Interim Activities:** An update was provided regarding recent activities, including a tour of the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center (YRTC) in Kearney.
- **Studies:** Work is ongoing regarding a truancy interim study with Senator Kauth.

- **Research:** Research is being conducted on AI and data privacy within state government, as well as social network analysis to aid legislative strategy for the Children's Commission.

Members talked about potential legislation. Monika Gross shared that Children's Commission will share a legislative briefing on December 5 along with the Foster Care Review Office. Carter shared that last Friday there was a hearing regarding property taxes and school districts.

6. YRTC Update

Mark LaBouchardiere shared that there have been some media stories regarding incidents at YRTC involving a cell phone and other incidents of abuse, stemming back from March 2025. In July 2025 there were four staff members implicated in other incidents. Two staff resigned. One member was charged with a felony. The fourth staff member has been suspended pending investigation. In September 2025, it was discovered that the notification to the courts was overlooked due to confusion regarding the active investigation by the State Patrol at the time. Conversations with judges involved led to an understanding regarding changes in the process. Current process involves monthly updates and escape attempts. The new process will involve immediate notifications to parents and judges for additional allegations and pending investigations. In response to calls and questions from parents and the public, LaBouchardiere shared his efforts to help reduce the impact of these incidents, as abuse incidents cannot be 100% eliminated, and there is always a chance for these incidents to occur. He stated that the YRTC system will make efforts to strengthen and review training as well as implementing new protocol that has been established. That protocol includes notification to the Judge and Probation within five business days of a reportable incident, and this notification balances the need to inform the community with the need to avoid interfering with an ongoing criminal investigation.

LaBouchardiere shared that youth have been moved to Douglas County Youth Facility or Lincoln. He noted that youth supports include medical and mental health support, free or low-cost parent contact options.

LaBouchardiere shared that the current population is about 100 in Kearney, and the 48-bed facility may be able to open in January 2026, advanced from a date of March 2026. He noted that the facilities are nearly fully staffed but remain within the required staffing ratios. Co-Chair Juliano thanked LaBouchardiere for the transparency.

Julie Smith shared input from the perspective of Probation regarding the collaboration with YRTC in case planning and placement.

Pat Sailors encouraged group members to come together, reflect, and grow from the issues.

Jennifer Carter shared the role of the OIG in investigating the incidents. She noted that the OIG role is to share information with the Legislature and the public about whether the YRTCs have processes, resources, policies, as well as to report out whether those processes and policies were followed.

7. Probation Update

Julie Smith shared updates from the quarterly handout, <https://nebraskajudicial.gov/sites/default/files/publication-report-files/Q3-2025-Juvenile-Infographics.pdf>. Some highlights include: 79% of youth released from Probation were released successfully, a majority of youth on probation (approximately 72%) are classified as low or moderate risk, and 71% of youth are supervised at home, while placement number remain stable with low usage of out-of-home placement.

Smith shared additional information regarding the implementation of LB 530. She shared that the implementation roll-out has included hosting webinars and training for judges and law enforcement.

Lastly, Smith share that in July the Youth Advisory Team was launched as a multidisciplinary group. The team will be meeting quarterly to share feedback regarding Juvenile Justice System Enhancement.

8. JSC Workgroup Updates

a. Access to Services

Julie Smith

Julie Smith shared that the workgroup continues to meet to address concerns raised by the “Warehouses of Neglect” report released. She shared that the workgroup is working towards a Medicaid waiver service that offers a blended funding model between the state and Medicaid to offer YRTC services in the community. Dr. Wittry added information regarding lack of access to preventative care soon enough that leads into more intensive care later. Dr. Wittry added that the workgroup is looking at all options to make this service possible. Smith added information about how Probation provides services to youth and how some of those services should be provided as medically necessary.

b. Racial & Ethnic Disparities

Chloe Fowler

Chloe Fowler shared that group will be meeting and expanding with social media advertising.

c. Continuum of Care

Tammy Sassaman

Tammy Sassaman shared that the workgroup has met twice and will meet again tomorrow. She shared that the group has discussed also focusing on the

9. NCJJ Subcommittee Updates

a. Executive Subcommittee

Elaine Menzel

Chair Elaine Menzel shared appreciation for members’ attendance, and the work the Crime Commission staff has done to advance the work of the Committee. Due to technical issues elections of the

b. Community Planning Advisory Subcommittee

Erin Wasserburger

Met September 2nd, to review plans and reports. All requirements are now in the application. Will be reviewing applications in

c. Juvenile Diversion Subcommittee

Amy Hoffman & Erin Wasserburger

Meeting in September regarding feedback from the survey. Working on brief how-to document on issues occurring. Dr. Hamilton will be reviewing the implementation.

d. Grant Review Subcommittee

Erin Wasserburger

Priorities were set as a whole group. The group kept past priorities: direct services, rural communities, history of grant management. A scoring guide assists in the review. The RFA will include step-down language that an applicant is not guaranteed funding past 2 years.

Shortening EB application process, that a reapplicant will only need to update the budget portion. Also considering JJI evaluation.

Wasserburger shared information regarding the process of reaching out to recipients that are not utilizing their funding, and the de-obligation process.

e. Young Adult Subcommittee

John Turner

Young Adult Subcommittee met in July and discussed plans to expand membership. There are seven new members all under the age of 22. The next meeting will be in November. The group will elect a chair as well as discuss what the group wishes to prioritize and what the group needs from the Coalition.

10. Title II Update

a. Compliance Monitoring and Reporting

The Starting 11B initiative to discuss transfers of juveniles into adult courts, to comply with Title II requirements. There have been three meetings so far. John Turner noted that Nebraska is currently in compliance with all core Title II requirements and that all facilities that were found to be secure facilities have been working to address the issues.

b. Award and Budget Update

Erin Wasserburger noted that nothing has been released for FY2026, most likely due to the Federal Government shutdown, but all spending-down is on track.

i. Prevention Grant

John Turner shared that a separate grant that has contract with Life Labs that offers virtual training through a program called journey.do in a social media styled curriculum. This program is intended to provide support for smaller communities that do not have dedicated diversion staff.

c. RED Plan Update

John Turner shared that the subcommittee has one new member from Ainsworth. A meeting will be set up soon. The group continues working with Dr. Bijoux to look at all information to look at most pressing concerns. His recommendations have been simple but very effective. His goal is actionable items. Erin Wasserburger noted that from recent R/ED work, Tulsa, Oklahoma looks promising.

d. Youth Summit

John Turner shared that Nandi Kumondan attended the youth summit. Turner shared feedback from Kumondan of interest. Kumondan liked the art of detained youth that had QR codes where the artist could share a personal message. Kumondan attended seminars regarding silos, to challenge community members to break silos.

11. New Business

Tammy Sassaman shared that the NJJA Conference will be May 6-7, 2026

12. Public Comment

There was none.

13. Upcoming Meeting Planning

- a. Tentatively January 22, 2026 Time & Place TBD, but likely via Zoom and will include the election of Chair and Vice Chair for the NCJJ

14. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Adam Anderson