

Nebraska Children's Commission Meeting

February 10, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Webex
&
FCRO Conference Room
1225 L Street, Suite 401
Lincoln, NE 68508

1. Call to Order

Melissa Nance welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM She asked attendees to introduce themselves. Roll call was taken by Adam Anderson through introductions.

a. Introductions and Roll Call

Commission Members Present (12)

Jarren Breeling
Abigail Fox
Angel Geller
Ron Giesselmann

Richard Hasty
Sara Hoyle
Melissa Nance
Felicia Nelsen

Melissa Nilges
Lana Temple-Plotz
Susan Thomas
LaShawn Young

Commission Members Absent (0)

Commission Ex-Officio Members Present (8)

Proxy for Dr. Alyssa Bish, Camas Holder
Lane Carr
Jennifer Carter
Monika Gross

Proxy for Senator Victor Rountree, Noah Boger
Kari Rumbaugh
Judge Amy Schuchman
Deb VanDyke-Ries

Commission Ex-Officio Members Absent (3)

Senator Christy Armendariz
Thomas Janousek

Senator Glen Meyer

Roll call was taken through introductions, and a quorum was established.

Guests in Attendance (5)

Adam Anderson, Nebraska Children's Commission
Chloe Fowler, Nebraska Children's Commission
Theresa Goley, FCRRRC Co-Chair
Cindy Reed,
Ivy Svoboda, Nebraska Child Advocacy Centers

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 Meetings Calendar and Nebraska Children's Commission websites 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 Children's Commission Website.

2. Approval of the Agenda

It was moved by Felicia Nelsen and seconded by Richard to approve the agenda, with DHHS update moved up to Item 3. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (12):

Jarren Breeling
Abigail Fox
Angel Geller
RonGiesselmann

Richard Hasty
Sara Hoyle
Melissa Nance
Felicia Nelsen

Melissa Nilges
Lana Temple-Plotz
Susan Thomas
LaShawn Young

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAIN (0):

ABSENT (0):

MOTION CARRIED

Note that the order of items in the minutes will not be reflective of the original agenda.

3. Chair Update

Chair Nance

4. Policy Analyst Update

Chloe Fowler

5. Approval of the Consent Agenda

- a. [November 18, 2025 Meeting Minutes](#)
- b. [Member Nomination Report](#)

It was moved by Richard Hasty and seconded by Felicia Nelsen to approve the consent agenda items with changes in November 18, 2025 Minutes to include Ivy Svoboda as a guest. There was no further discussion. Roll call vote as follows:

FOR (12):

Jarren Breeling
Abigail Fox
Angel Geller
RonGiesselmann

Richard Hasty
Sara Hoyle
Melissa Nance
Felicia Nelsen

Melissa Nilges
Lana Temple-Plotz
Susan Thomas
LaShawn Young

AGAINST (0):

ABSTAIN (0):

ABSENT (0):

MOTION CARRIED

6. Commission Membership & Vacancies

Adam Anderson

7. Committee Update

- a. Alternative Response Committee
AR Co-Chair Monika Gross shared that recently LB 845 was introduced that would attempt to eliminate the AR Committee. Gross and Fowler are keeping an eye on the bill but also looking to restart the committee to look at some other issues that are emerging.
- b. Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee
B2i Chair, Richard Hasty note that the Committee met on January 28, 2026, and discussed the sunset date as well as focused on workgroup updates. The Data and Evaluation Workgroup has not met. Sustainability Workgroup has met a few times and is on track for recommendations. Deborah Dancer agreed to Chair the Special Populations Workgroup. Next meeting in April.
- c. Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee
FCRRC Co-Chair, Felicia Nelsen noted that the FCRRC has not met, but a majority of the work being done currently is being done by the NCR Workgroup. FCRRC Co-Chair Theresa Goley shared that over 50 of the revised NCR have been scored by different groups of people. Next step is to take data to analyst to test for margin of error. Goley will be looking at the outliers. Goley mentioned that the NCR workgroup needs to meet as well as the FCRRC.
- d. Juvenile Services Committee
JSC Co-Chair Deb VanDyke-Ries shared an update regarding the most recent meeting of the JSC. She noted that at the last meeting the JSC has decided to move forward with meetings separate from the NCJJ. She noted that the committee will keep an agenda item open for updates from the NCJJ. She shared updates regarding the work of the workgroups.
- e. Strengthening Families Act Committee
SFA Co-Chair Ron Giesselmann shared an update from the SFA Committee, noting that the committee will be looking to restructure and reorganize its efforts workgroups.

8. DHHS Update

Camas Holder, representing Child and Family Services (CFS), updated the Commission on the following items:

- a. YRTC – Location Plan
Highly discussed at Legislative Session: LB 1013, allow for proposed moves to occur due to current statute. Early stages of plan are outlined in an article in the Flatwater Press <https://flatwaterfreepress.org/state-pitches-moving-boys-from-troubled-kearney-youth-center-to-omaha/>. Holder discussed a proposed plan to reorganize the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers (YRTC). This plan involves moving the male population from Kearney to a "state-of-the-art" facility in Omaha, which would allow for single-bed occupancy instead of the current barracks-style housing. If LB 1013 passes to allow for this flexibility, the girls at Hastings would move to Kearney, enabling the retirement of outdated barracks.
- b. Warm Line Contractor
United Way of the Midlands was awarded the contract to operate the "warm line," an access point for families to receive community resources before needing formal DHHS intervention. A pilot is scheduled for July 2026, with a full statewide launch by the end of the year.. Contract is available to view online <https://das.nebraska.gov/materiel/purchasing/123190%20O3/123190%20O3.html>.
- c. Foster Care - Relative/Kinship Transition, Professional Foster Care
DHHS has moved to a single statewide model for kinship and relative services. As of the meeting, 106 of 108 related positions were filled, and all homes were scheduled to be transferred to the internal DHHS program by March 2, 2026.

Comprehensive Foster Care – Formerly referred to as "professional foster care," this program for high-acuity youth has built up to 14 homes, most of which were full at the time of the meeting.
- d. CFSR Update
Holder noted that new leadership at the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Alex Adams, is focused on reducing "administrative burden" and increasing innovation. This shift may allow states more flexibility in using

federal funds for creative local services. DHHS is considering opting into a new federal pilot called "Home for Every Child," which focuses on right-sizing foster care placements and emphasizing prevention to avoid unnecessary system entry. A formal decision is expected by mid-March 2026 at a meeting in DC to discuss pilot program requirements.

e. Budget

LB 857 (Nebraska Prenatal Plus Program): This bill is a "huge priority" for the department, aimed at providing intensive services to at-risk pregnant women.

Lana Temple-Plotz asked a question regarding reducing LOAs. Holder reported that the department significantly reduced spending on "high acuity" letters of agreement from \$6 million per month in 2024 to approximately \$2.5 million per month. This was achieved through a new clinical team that ensures youth are in the correct level of placement and exploring Medicaid eligibility before using state general funds.

Susan Thomas asked a question regarding DHHS Kinship/Relative transition. Holder explained that it was a balance between factors such as the number of homes currently managed by DHHS, cost, and other factors.

Holder noted that Dr. Bish is back from leave.

9. Probation Update

Kari Rumbaugh from the Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation gave an overview of the following items:

a. LB 530

Joint Work Group: Probation and DHHS have a joint work group specifically addressing 11 and 12-year-old youth who are frequently placed in detention because no other options exist.

Comprehensive Foster Care (CFC): Rumbaugh clarified that the "no eject, no reject" model is provided specifically through Comprehensive Foster Care (CFC) (partnering with Apex).

Service Gaps: While shelter access exists across the state, there is a total lack of CFC capacity in Western Nebraska.

CSP Overview: Rumbaugh provided a specific infographic for Comprehensive Supervision Probation (CSP) https://childrens.nebraska.gov/PDFs/MeetingDocuments/2026/NCC/02.10.2026/CSP%20Youth%20Infographics_1.07.26.pdf, noting that the out-of-home placement rate for CSP youth is roughly 60%, significantly higher than the 26-28% rate for the general probation population

b. Budget

General Fund Management: Probation is tightening the use of state general funds, identifying areas where other funding sources should be used first. Changes were communicated to providers and scheduled to start March 1, 2026.

PRTF Preauthorization: They are requiring preauthorization for Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTFs) to ensure federal funding or MCOs are utilized before the Juvenile Services Division budget is used as a "last resort".

Transportation: Identified as being "over-utilized," leading to a new focus on ensuring no other options exist before probation funds it.

Electronic Monitoring (EM): High utilization of GPS monitoring is being reviewed to see if alternatives, such as school attendance checks, can replace electronic monitoring where appropriate

Single-Case Agreements: Probation is studying these agreements (including for out-of-state and DD-eligible youth) to ensure youth are being served by the correct division and budget.

Medicaid Rate Alignment: Starting July 1, all probation rates will align with Medicaid. This will result in a 2% rate reduction for services currently paid above the Medicaid threshold.

c. Behavioral Health Enhancement

Funding Review: Rumbaugh noted they are specifically examining the Behavioral Health Enhancement rate (not just general trauma-informed care) to ensure it is being used for high-acuity youth who truly require that level of specialized support..

d. Quarterly Data Report

Rumbaugh provided an overview of the infographic shared in the chat <https://nebraskajudicial.gov/sites/default/files/publication-report-files/Q4-2025-Juvenile-Infographics.pdf>.
Recidivism: The overall recidivism rate is stable at 17%, which is a significant decrease from a previous high of 21%.
Placement Data: While out-of-home placements saw a small year-over-year increase, over 90% of all youth on probation continue to be served safely in their own homes

CSP Tracking: In response to Judge Schuchman's question about tracking when youth are removed from CSP, Rumbaugh explained that they are enhancing the JUSTICE/NPACS system to include timestamped checkboxes and specific dates for when the CSP designation is both added and removed.

10. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

11. New Business

Deb VanDyke-Ries shared a link for the Court Improvement Project 2026 preview webinar in the chat. <https://nebraskajudicial.gov/programs-services/court-improvement-project/2026-cip-legislative-preview>.

12. Upcoming Meeting Planning

- a. May 12, 2026, In-person at Carol Joy Holling near Ashland for Strategic Planning Retreat Meeting, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

13. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:36 AM

Respectfully Submitted,
Adam Anderson