



Nebraska Children's Commission
1225 L Street, Suite 401
Lincoln, NE 68508

June 26, 2019

Patrick O'Donnell, Clerk of the Legislature
State Capitol, Room 2018
PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Dear Mr. O'Donnell:

The Nebraska Children's Commission is pleased to advance the attached Juvenile Services Committee report to the Judiciary Committee, as outlined by Neb. Rev. Stat. [§43-4203\(2\)\(b\)](#). The report was completed as a joint effort with the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice. Information included within relate to legislative reform, services for high needs youth, transition services, and youth and family engagement. The Nebraska Children's Commission reviewed and accepted this report at the June 18, 2019 meeting.

Respectfully,

Jeanne K. Brandner, Vice Chairperson
Nebraska Children's Commission

Nicole Brundo, Co-Chair
Juvenile Services Committee

Kim Hawekotte, Co-Chair
Juvenile Services Committee

Enclosure:

JSC and NCJJ Joint Annual Report 2019 (Final-Legislature)

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6/18/2019



Juvenile Services Committee and Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice 2018-2019 Joint Annual Report

Recommendations to the Nebraska
Children's Commission and the
Judiciary Committee of the Legislature

Submitted by the Juvenile Services Committee Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-4203(2)(b) and by the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-2412(1)(d)

Juvenile Services Committee and Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice Joint Annual Report

The Juvenile Services Committee (“JSC”) of the Nebraska Children’s Commission and the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice (“NCJJ”) present this joint report as a thoughtful contribution to the reform of juvenile justice in Nebraska and in compliance with [Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-4203](#) and [43-2412\(1\)\(b\)](#). The recommendations contained in this joint report support the ongoing juvenile justice reform efforts, and reflect a collaborative, open, and inclusive process of discussion and information sharing.

In order to enhance collaboration, coordinate initiatives, and increase the impact and efficacy of juvenile justice reform in Nebraska, the JSC and NCJJ have begun collaborating in the form of joint meetings, joint reporting, and inclusive workgroups. This collaboration will allow the most coordinated response possible for juvenile justice reform, while allowing each body to meet its statutory obligations in the most efficient way possible.

The two have divided initiatives and work based on the juvenile justice continuum of care.

These groups will work together towards juvenile justice reform and improved outcomes for Nebraska’s youth and families. Both groups remain willing to serve as a resource to the Legislature, Governor, Judicial Branch, and state agencies for any juvenile justice related issue or initiative.

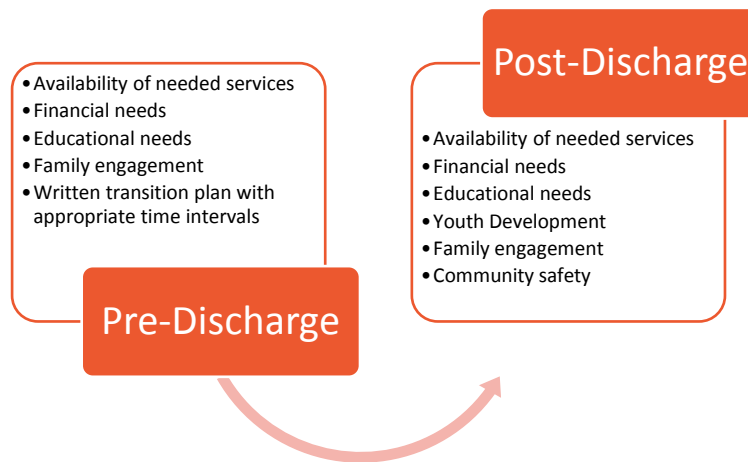
MISSION AND GOAL

- 1. Mission:** Design a comprehensive, accountable, culturally competent, continuum of care in the juvenile justice system that meets the needs of families and youth while maintaining public safety.
- 2. Goal:** To work collaboratively with the executive, legislative, judicial, and county branches of government, the Nebraska Children’s Commission (“Commission”), and other key stakeholders to establish and support the development of the ideal Juvenile justice System that will prevent children and youth from entering or becoming more deeply involved in the juvenile justice system.



Transition Services Workgroup

Review and evaluate supports needed and available to Nebraska youth and families at the time of transition from one placement setting to another, specifically from congregate care settings to family-like settings.



This group originally began as the Youth Rehabilitation Treatment Centers (YRTC) and Out of Home Placement Workgroup. After forwarding recommendations related to the YRTCs, the group reconvened as the Out-Of-Home Placement and Transitions Workgroup. At that time, they focused on the juvenile justice out-of-home continuum of care, along with transitions back to youths' communities. As the Committee refined its operations and scope, this third re-iteration of the group will now focus exclusively on transition services, working to highlight that the planning for effective transitions must begin at the time of out-of-home placement.

The goal of this workgroup is to develop a model that utilizes relevant and valuable information to assist in developing recommendations for the most appropriate and effective transitions. There are three main types of transition which occur from congregate care to a family-like setting. Those include re-entry from the YRTC's, therapeutic, and non-therapeutic placement settings.

The group is working on the creation of transition checklists for stakeholders, including consultation with providers, court professionals, the Administrative Office of Probation, and the Office of Juvenile Services. Best practice recommendations will be submitted as they relate to the areas included on the drafted checklists. At this time, the workgroup is in the process of developing formal recommendations, which will be ready for review in the next year.

High Utilizers of Services Workgroup

Identify the gaps in services and strategies to increase efficiency around youth with high needs.

Background

This workgroup further explores the demographic of youth receiving the most critical services available through the juvenile justice and related systems. “High utilizers of services” are juvenile justice involved youth, with complex care needs, whom experienced multiple placement settings and delays in appropriate placement due to a lack of available options. These youth have often experienced multiple interventions from various systems including child welfare, educational services, developmental disabilities and/or behavioral health in addition to juvenile justice involvement.

The goal of this group is to identify the gaps in services and ways to increase appropriate service delivery for juvenile justice youth with high needs and improve a continuum of services to meet the needs.

High Utilizers of Services Defined

With the assistance of the Administrative Office of Probation (AOP), a data set was collected and reviewed. Through this assessment, a definition of a *high utilizer of services* emerged. The following criteria was used to generate a population:

1. Top 5% of voucher recipients
2. Juveniles in current placement 12 months or more
3. Juveniles with six or more out of home placements
4. All juveniles placed out-of-state
5. Juveniles currently placed at a Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center (YRTC)

For more information, please contact us at NECC.Contact@nebraska.gov.

Collaborative Discussions

Membership composition of the JSC High Utilizers of Services workgroup is multidisciplinary to ensure productive and holistic discussions. In an effort to expand their knowledge on the efforts of other systems doing similar and important work, a meeting was held with representatives from various groups. The meeting included representation from Behavioral Health, the Supreme Court Commission on Children in the Courts, LB1112, and DHHS Children and Family Services. Within this group, discussion examined youth with high needs receiving services across systems, and placement disruptions. They also discussed issues specific to the greater Nebraska area including service array for juveniles, transition services, and provider capacity.

It was determined that all groups who participated in the collaborative meeting were serving these populations in very unique ways, and the efforts and work of the High Utilizers of Services group were not duplicative.

Emerging Characteristics

After reviewing the preliminary data provided by the AOP, and ruling out efforts by in other systems, high utilizing juveniles experiencing barriers to appropriate interventions emerged in three groups.

- a. Juveniles with complex treatment needs combining two or more focuses of treatment such as mental health, behavioral health, substance use, developmental disabilities, and Sexually Harmful Behaviors;

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- b. Juveniles exhibiting behavior related concerns such as aggression, treatment resistance, and elopement; and
- c. Juveniles with complex needs including one or more of the following:
 1. Cognitive impairment
 2. Abuse/Neglect history
 3. Sexually Harmful Behaviors.

Next Steps

1. Work with our data resource members to develop a method to gather further data using focus groups to gather quantitative data about the emerging characteristics and identify common barriers.
2. Partner with Nebraska service providers to strategize solutions to fill the identified gaps and/or identify systems barriers that prevent providers from adequately meeting the needs of the youth identified in this high utilizers population.
3. Continue to gather feedback and direction from the JSC.

Youth & Family Engagement Workgroup

Develop strategies to obtain the voices of system involved youth and their families to encourage knowledgeable and prepared support systems for the youth.

Through engagement, youth and family voice inform policy, practice, and service provisions by providing their perspective of navigating the juvenile justice continuum of services. Created in 2018, this workgroup is currently researching existing youth and family advisory forums in Nebraska.

Workgroup Goals:

1. Gather promising practices for including youth and family voice in policy development and practice implementation.
2. Identify all youth and family councils in Nebraska and create a resource guide to share with other entities which don't have a council, and for youth and families seeking opportunities to become involved.
3. Make recommendations to the Committee on best practices for youth and family engagement at all stages of the system to support youth and families.

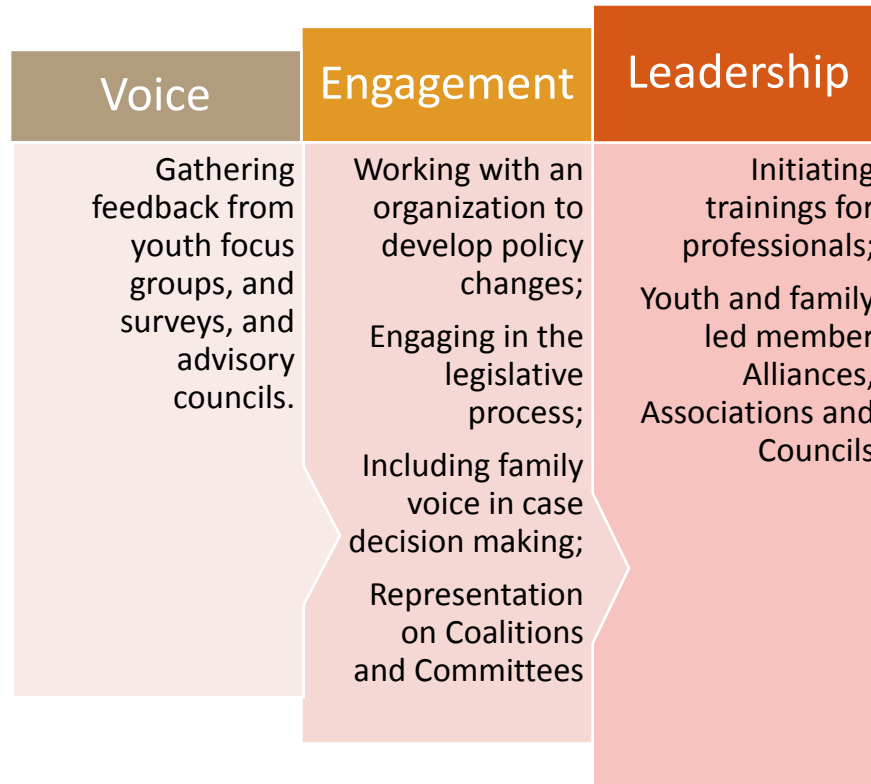
At this time, this group has no formal recommendations. Formal recommendations will be available in the upcoming year.

The JSC, in partnership with the NCJJ, created a workgroup to research models of youth and family engagement, and to develop a best practice and resource guide for Nebraska to improve the integration of youth and family voice into service delivery and policy making. The group began meeting in March 2018. Membership is comprised of youth currently receiving services through their juvenile justice involvement as well as representatives from community providers and juvenile justice stakeholders.

The workgroup serves both as a conduit for youth and family councils to be heard and as a point of access for policy makers and system advocates through JSC and NCJJ. Council representatives are invited to present about their group to our workgroup and the workgroup hosted the Youth Policy Fellowship to present to the JSC/NCJJ in January. The youth and family councils which exist in Nebraska are being documented in a resource guide for interested parties, stakeholders and organizations seeking to implement a youth/family council.

Juvenile Services Committee

The Youth and Family Engagement workgroup has focused on three tiers of engagement. Each level of engagement requires different levels of commitment from the participants and supporting professionals. Across the spectrum of juvenile services and service delivery for youth and families, Nebraska is host to several of these groups that fall into each of these tiers.



For more information on the resource guide, please contact us at NECC.Contact@nebraska.gov.

Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice

The Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) was created in 2000 by LB1167 and codified at [Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-2411](#) as an advisory committee to the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (Nebraska Crime Commission). The NCJJ was formed to recommend grant recipients to the Nebraska Crime Commission; identify juvenile justice issues, share information, and monitor and evaluate programs in the juvenile justice system; recommend guidelines and supervision procedures to be used to develop or expand local diversion programs for juveniles; and prepare an annual report including recommendations on administrative and legislative actions which would improve the juvenile justice system.

While the NCJJ is no longer federally mandated, due to the withdrawal from Title II funding, the NCJJ remains active with five standing subcommittees who meet in addition to quarterly NCJJ meetings: Executive, Grant Review, Disproportionate Minority Contact, Diversion, and Community Planning.

The goal of the NCJJ remains to improve all aspects of the juvenile justice system in the state of Nebraska by assisting communities and the state with the planning and implementation of systemic improvements, advocacy, education, and award recommendations of state funds for such purposes. It is hoped the lives and futures of children, youth, and families involved with the juvenile justice system will be improved.

Due to the desire to not duplicate efforts with other statewide commissions and coalitions, and to develop strong recommendations for juvenile justice in Nebraska, the NCJJ has joined forces with the Juvenile Services Committee of the Nebraska Children's Commission to hold joint meetings and provide annual recommendations.

Diversion Subcommittee

The Juvenile Diversion Subcommittee of the NCJJ is a working group established in 2013. The duties of the subcommittee, outlined in [Neb. Rev. Stat. §81-1427](#), include assisting in regular strategic planning related to supporting, funding, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of plans and programs receiving funds from the Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program.

In January 2018, the subcommittee developed a strategic plan identifying priorities of the subcommittee in which goals and direction could be established moving forward. Those goals were then assigned to working groups to start the process of achieving those statewide goals. The Diversion Subcommittee Strategic Plan can be found [here](#).

For more information about Juvenile Diversion in Nebraska, please see the Annual Report [here](#).

Community-Based Juvenile Services Aid Division

The Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Division is a separate and distinct budgetary program within the Nebraska Crime Commission. Funds under this program are used exclusively to assist aid recipients in the implementation and operation of programs or the provision of services identified in the aid recipient's comprehensive juvenile services plan, including programs for local planning and service coordination; screening, assessment, and evaluation; diversion; alternatives to detention; family support services; treatment services; truancy prevention and intervention programs; pilot projects approved by the Nebraska Crime Commission; payment of transportation costs to and from placements, evaluations, or services; personnel when the personnel are aligned with evidence-based treatment principles, programs, or practices; contracting with other state agencies or private organizations that provide evidence-based treatment or programs; pre-existing programs that are aligned with evidence-based practices or best practices; and other services that will positively impact youth and families in the juvenile justice system.

Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice

The Director of the Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Division of the Nebraska Crime Commission is responsible for providing technical assistance and guidance for the development of comprehensive juvenile services plans; coordinating the review of the Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program application and making recommendations for the distribution of funds; developing data collection and evaluation protocols, overseeing statewide data collection, and generating an annual report on the effectiveness of juvenile services that receive funds; developing relationships and collaborating with juvenile justice system stakeholders, providing education and training as necessary, and serving on boards and committees when approved by the commission; assisting juvenile justice system stakeholders in developing policies and practices that are research-based or standardized and reliable and are implemented with fidelity and which have been researched and demonstrate positive outcomes; developing and coordinating a statewide working group as a subcommittee of the NCJJ to assist in regular strategic planning related to supporting, funding, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of plans and programs receiving funds; and working with the coordinator of the NCJJ in facilitating their obligations specific to the Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program. The Financial Grants Monitor is responsible for fiscally monitoring sub-grantees, processing reimbursement contingent upon documentation, reviewing cash reports, processing cash requests, and the overall fiscal oversight of the Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Division.

For more information about the Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program, please see the Annual Report [here](#)

Community Planning Advisory Subcommittee

Pursuant to [Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-2404.01](#), the Director of the Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program shall develop and coordinate a statewide working group as a subcommittee of the NCJJ to assist in regular strategic planning related to supporting, funding, monitoring, and evaluating the effectiveness of plans and programs receiving funds from the Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program. The working group was developed in 2013 and is comprised of individuals from across Nebraska. This statewide working group is referred to as the Community Planning Advisory Subcommittee of the NCJJ.

Juvenile Services Funds

Juvenile Services funds are state funds appropriated by the Nebraska Legislature and administered by the Nebraska Crime Commission. Availability of funds are announced on an annual basis and applications are accepted through a competitive grant process. The purpose of these funds, as outlined in state statute, is to provide the implementation of programs that are considered to be evidence-based or working towards becoming evidence-based. These funds provide program development and evaluation consultation for projects funded through Juvenile Services. A variety of projects are funded through juvenile services such as programs for assessment and evaluation, family support services, alternatives to detention, delinquency prevention, community centers, mentoring, substance abuse, school programs, prevention of delinquent behavior, diversion and to address Disproportionate Minority Contact.

For more information, click [here](#).

Juvenile Suicide Prevention Conference

JSC and NCJJ Joint Conference for Juvenile Suicide Prevention

At their October 16, 2018 meeting, the JSC and the NCJJ reviewed the [2018 annual report of the Office of Inspector General of Child Welfare](#). During the review, members noted the rise in the reports of suicide attempts over the last three fiscal years. Members identified the need for systemic discussion on the issue of suicide prevention as it relates to youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

The JSC and NCJJ collaborated with representation from the Division of Behavioral Health, Juvenile Probation, and numerous other stakeholders to organize a free, one-day suicide prevention conference focusing on youth involved in the juvenile justice system held on May 20, 2019. The conference provided a forum for education and action planning to better support juvenile justice youth at risk of suicide.

The conference featured presentations from Denise Bulling, Ph.D., Senior Research Director, UNL Public Policy Center, Mario Scalora, Ph.D., Director, UNL Public Policy Center, a panel of statewide intervention efforts, and breakout sessions. It was available at the Educational Service Unit (ESU) in La Vista, and through satellite participation at Hastings, Ogallala and Scottsbluff ESU sites to more than 200 participants.

Afternoon breakout sessions brought together stakeholders, professionals and community representatives to identify strengths, barriers, and opportunities for issues specific to juvenile suicide prevention in Nebraska. Participants included attorneys, therapists, school social workers, direct service workers in juvenile justice and child welfare, community coaches, foster care, youth and family members, and many others.

A wealth of information and feedback was cumulated during the day's events. Overlapping themes appeared across several groups and satellite sites including communication and collaboration, enhanced training, reducing stigma, funding, increasing access and availability of services. During the interim, the JSC and NCJJ will work on refining the final recommendations and priorities which emerged from this conference.

Juvenile Services Committee Membership

Member Name	Member Type	Title and Organization	Representation
Nicole Brundo (Co-Chair)	Voting	Deputy County Attorney , Division Lead, Douglas County Attorney's Office, Juvenile Division	County Attorney representative
Kim Hawekotte (Co-Chair)	Voting	Executive Director , Foster Care Review Office	Nebraska Children's Commission Representative
Michele Borg	Voting	Education of Systems-Involved Students (ESIS) Coordinator , Nebraska Department of Education	Department of Education Representative
A'Jamal Byndon	Voting	DMC Coordinator , Douglas County	Entity Administering Title II Funds Representative
Tamara Gavin	Voting	Deputy Director , DHHS, Division of Behavioral Health	DHHS, Division of Behavioral Health Representative
Judge Larry Gendler	Voting	Judge of the Separate Juvenile Court , Sarpy County Juvenile Court	Judge Representative
Nick Juliano	Voting	Director Regional Advocacy and Public Policy , Boys Town	Treatment Placement Representative
Cynthia Kennedy	Voting	Chief, Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program , Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice	Nebraska Crime Commission Representative
Mark LaBouchardiere	Voting	Facilities Director , DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services, Office of Juvenile Services	Representative of the Office of Juvenile Services
Tom McBride	Voting	Executive Director , Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association	Advocate Group Representative
Kari Rumbaugh	Voting	Assistant Deputy Administrator , Administrative Office of Probation, Juvenile Services Division	Juvenile Probation Representative
Patrick Sailors	Voting	Director of Crisis and Residential Services , Child Guidance Center	In-Home Service Representative
Dan Scarborough	Voting	Geneva YRTC Facility Administrator , DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services, Office of Juvenile Services	Office of Juvenile Services Representative
Vicky Thompson Smith	Voting	Program Manager , CEDARS Youth Services	Group Home/Shelter representative
Margene Timm	Voting	Supervising Attorney of the Juvenile Unit , Lancaster County Public Defender's Office	Defense Attorney Representative
Deb VanDyke-Ries	Voting	Director , Nebraska Court Improvement Project	Court Improvement Project Representative
Dr. Richard Wiener	Voting	Beddey Professor of Psychology , University of Nebraska, Lincoln	Data Expert Representative
Nicole Berggren	Resource	Program Manager , DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services, Office of Juvenile Services	Office of Juvenile Services Representative
Lisa Neeman	Resource	Administrator II, Health Services Delivery Systems , DHHS, Medicaid and Long-Term Care	DHHS, Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care Representative
Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks	Resource	Senator , Nebraska Legislative Council, District 28	Judiciary Committee Representative
Julie Smith	Resource	Juvenile Justice Programs Specialist , Administrative Office of Probation, Juvenile Services Division	Juvenile Probation Representative

Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice Membership

Member Name	Member Type	Title and Organization	Representation
Cassy Blakely (Chair)	Voting	Technical Assistance and Training Coordinator , American Institutes for Research	At Large Member
Elaine Menzel (Vice Chair)	Voting	Legal Counsel , Nebraska Association of County Officials	The Executive Director of the Nebraska Association of County Officials, or Designee
Roma Amundson	Voting	County Commissioner , Lancaster County	County Commissioner or Supervisor Representative
Don Arp	Voting	Executive Director , Nebraska Crime Commission	Executive Director of the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, or Designee
Jim Blue	Voting	President and CEO , CEDARS Youth Services	Community-based, Private Nonprofit Organization* Representative *Organization works with juvenile offenders and their families in the 1st District
Neleigh Boyer	Voting	Attorney , DHHS, Division of Legal Services	The chief executive officer of the Department of Health and Human Services or his or her designee
Patrick Connell	Voting	Vice President of Behavioral Health, Compliance and Government Relations , Boys Town	Community-based, Private Nonprofit Organization* Representative *Organization works with juvenile offenders and their families in the 2 nd District
Greg Gonzalez	Voting	Deputy Chief of the Executive Services Bureau , City of Omaha Police Dept	Law Enforcement Representative
Brian Halstead	Voting	Deputy Commissioner , Nebraska Department of Education	Commissioner of Education or Designee
Kim Hawekotte	Voting	Executive Director , Foster Care Review Office	Executive Director of the Foster Care Review Office
Denise Kracl	Voting	Colfax County Attorney , Colfax County	County Attorney
Brett Matthies	Voting	Manager of Emergency Services , Region 6 Behavioral Health Services	Regional Behavioral Health Authority (\$71-808) Representative
Justin Myers	Voting	Young Adult Representative	Young Adult
Sheli Schindler	Voting	Director , Lancaster County Youth Services Center	Secure Juvenile Detention Facility or Staff Secure Youth Confinement Facility Director or Designee
Amanda Speichert	Voting	Attorney , Lindemeier & Dawson Attorneys at Law	Public Defender
Lorilei Stark	Voting	Family and Youth Stabilization Coordinator , Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska	Community-based, Private Nonprofit Organization* Representative *Organization works with juvenile offenders and their families in the 3rd District
Hon. Vernon Daniels	Non-Voting	Judge of the Separate Juvenile Court , Douglas County Court	Separate Juvenile Court Judge
Hon. Randin Roland	Non-Voting	County Judge , 12th Judicial District Court	County Court Judge
Kari Rumbaugh	Non-Voting	Assistant Deputy Administrator for Juvenile Services , Nebraska Probation Administration	Probation Administrator of the Office of Probation Administration or Designee

Juvenile Services Committee Statutory Authority

Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-4203(b)

The commission shall create a committee to examine the Office of Juvenile Services and the Juvenile Services Division of the Office of Probation Administration.

Such committee shall review the role and effectiveness of out-of-home placements utilized in the juvenile justice system, including the youth rehabilitation and treatment centers, and make recommendations to the commission on the juvenile justice continuum of care, including what populations should be served in out-of-home placements and what treatment services should be provided at the centers in order to appropriately serve those populations.

Such committee shall also review how mental and behavioral health services are provided to juveniles in residential placements and the need for such services throughout Nebraska and make recommendations to the commission relating to those systems of care in the juvenile justice system.

The committee shall collaborate with the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Juvenile Justice Institute, the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Center for Health Policy, the behavioral health regions as established in section 71-807, and state and national juvenile justice experts to develop recommendations.

The recommendations shall include a plan to implement a continuum of care in the juvenile justice system to meet the needs of Nebraska families, including specific recommendations for the rehabilitation and treatment model.

The recommendations shall be delivered to the commission and electronically to the Judiciary Committee of the Legislature annually by September 1.

Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice Statutory Authority

Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-2412

(1) Consistent with the purposes and objectives of the Juvenile Services Act and the federal act, the coalition shall:

- (a) Make recommendations to the commission on the awarding of grants under the Commission Grant Program to eligible applicants;
- (b) Prepare at least one report annually to the Governor, the Legislature, the Office of Probation Administration, and the Office of Juvenile Services. The report submitted to the Legislature shall be submitted electronically;
- (c) Ensure widespread citizen involvement in all phases of its work; and
- (d) Meet at least two times each year.

(2) Consistent with the purposes and objectives of the acts and within the limits of available time and appropriations, the coalition may:

- (a) Assist and advise state and local agencies in the establishment of volunteer training programs and the utilization of volunteers;
- (b) Apply for and receive funds from federal and private sources for carrying out its powers and duties;
- (c) Provide technical assistance to eligible applicants;
- (d) Identify juvenile justice issues, share information, and monitor and evaluate programs in the juvenile justice system; and
- (e) Recommend guidelines and supervision procedures to be used to develop or expand local diversion programs for juveniles from the juvenile justice system.

(3) In formulating, adopting, and promulgating the recommendations and guidelines provided for in this section, the coalition shall consider the differences among counties in population, in geography, and in the availability of local resources.