



November 23, 2021

Patrick O'Donnell, Clerk of the Legislature
State Capitol, Room 2018
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509

RE: Employment First Participant Report

Dear Mr. O'Donnell,

Nebraska Revised Statute 43-517 requires the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to report annually to the Legislature information regarding the Employment First participants engaged in an Associate's Degree educational program.

In September 2021, there were 41 Employment First participants engaged in an Associate's Degree educational program. All 41 of these participants were making satisfactory progress in their educational pursuits. These participants spent an average of 2.51 months in education to fulfill their work requirements under the program. The graduation rate of participants from the past year, October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2021, averages less than 1%.

From October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2021, the average hourly earnings for participants in the program was \$13.49. In addition, the DHHS Monthly Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) Post Summary report for September 2021 indicates that during the 2020-2021 reporting year, 22 participants were employed for at least six months while 43 were employed for at least six 12 months.

There were 65 former program participants employed during the reporting year from October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2021. As of September 2021, 43 reported their education levels:

- Seven participants have less than a 12th-grade education;
- Twenty-four have a 12th-grade education;
- Eight have received a certificate or diploma beyond high school;
- Three have an Associate's Degree; and,
- One has a Bachelor's Degree.

The Department does not presently have formal activities intended to promote post-secondary education opportunities for our participants. Upon entry into Employment First, participants are assessed to determine current educational levels, career interests, and any barriers to attaining economic self-sufficiency. Following an assessment, case managers engage the participant to

decide activities they may participate in to help them reach their ultimate career goal. When the participant's goal requires additional training or education, it is encouraged by the case manager and included as a work activity on the participant's plan.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 402-471-1757 or Stephanie.L.Beasley@nebraska.gov.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephanie Beasley".

Stephanie Beasley, Director
Division of Children and Family Services
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services