

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE
SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 962

FINAL READING

Introduced by McKinney, 11.

Read first time January 12, 2026

Committee: Judiciary

- 1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to public health and welfare; to adopt the
- 2 Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act; and to provide an
- 3 operative date.
- 4 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 **Section 1.** Sections 1 to 8 of this act shall be known and may be
2 cited as the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act.

3 **Sec. 2.** For purposes of the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support
4 Act:

5 (1) Community-based provider means a nonprofit or local governmental
6 entity contracting with the Department of Health and Human Services, the
7 Office of Juvenile Services, or the Office of Probation Administration to
8 deliver services for youth transitioning from congregate care placements
9 or probation supervision, including mentoring and employment support;

10 (2) Credible messenger means an individual who has lived experience
11 in the justice or foster care system and who is trained in mentorship and
12 restorative justice practices;

13 (3) Facility means a juvenile detention facility, group home,
14 residential treatment facility, or a youth rehabilitation and treatment
15 center;

16 (4) Individualized employment plan means an age-appropriate,
17 customized career plan that:

18 (a) Is developed collaboratively by a counselor employed by the
19 State Department of Education, the youth, and a representative of a
20 facility or the Office of Probation Administration, as appropriate; and

21 (b) Identifies employment, credentialing, and job placement steps
22 for the youth;

23 (5) Transition plan means a written, individualized plan developed
24 as described in section 5 of this act; and

25 (6) Youth means any individual under nineteen years of age who is
26 exiting or transitioning from a congregate care placement, including at a
27 facility or residential treatment program, or who is transitioning from
28 probation supervision.

29 **Sec. 3.** (1) The purpose of the Youth Reentry and Transitional
30 Support Act is to ensure youth in congregate care placements receive
31 essential support for successful transition back into their homes and

1 communities.

2 (2) The Legislature finds that:

3 (a) Youth and families require intensive support to assist in
4 planning, supervision, and support during the transition phase; and

5 (b) Planning for discharge upon entry to a facility is the best
6 practice to ensure a successful re-entry.

7 **Sec. 4.** (1)(a) The Department of Health and Human Services, the
8 Office of Juvenile Services, the Office of Probation Administration, and
9 the State Department of Education shall collaboratively establish the
10 Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Program.

11 (b) The Department of Health and Human Services shall be responsible
12 for supervision and programming for youth placed in the care, custody,
13 and control of the department by court order pursuant to the Nebraska
14 Juvenile Code. The Office of Probation Administration shall be
15 responsible for supervision and programming for youth placed under
16 probation supervision by court order pursuant to the Nebraska Juvenile
17 Code.

18 (2) The Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Program shall provide
19 for the following for each youth:

20 (a) Completion of a transition plan;

21 (b) Regular reviews of each youth's transition plan. These reviews
22 shall be accomplished by a representative of the facility or the Office
23 of Probation Administration, as appropriate, and shall occur weekly for
24 detention or other short-term placements and monthly for all other
25 placements, including placement at a youth rehabilitation and treatment
26 center; and

27 (c) Supervision following re-entry by the Department of Health and
28 Human Services, the Office of Juvenile Services, or the Office of
29 Probation Administration, as appropriate, to ensure a successful
30 transition.

31 **Sec. 5.** (1) A transition plan shall be developed for each youth

1 upon admission to a facility or admission to another congregate care
2 placement or probation supervision.

3 (2) The transition plan shall be developed using validated
4 assessment instruments, screenings, and evaluations. The transition plan
5 shall be developed collaboratively with involvement from the youth, the
6 youth's family or guardian, and facility representatives and the
7 Department of Health and Human Services, the Office of Juvenile Services,
8 or the Office of Probation Administration, as appropriate. When possible,
9 development of the plan should include coordinating with local family
10 resource centers, community-based providers, or other community resources
11 in order to support the youth and the youth's family and identify long-
12 term supports.

13 (3) A transition plan shall include provisions regarding:

14 (a) Treatment services, including continuity of behavioral health,
15 medical, and medicaid services;

16 (b) Enrolling eligible youth in programs and services offered by the
17 State Department of Education;

18 (c) Developing an individualized employment plan identifying career
19 and training pathways for youth obtaining employment upon reentry;

20 (d) Services from community-based providers, including credible
21 messenger mentoring or in-home supportive or behavioral health services;

22 (e) Coordinating with family resource centers to align family and
23 community support;

24 (f) A housing stabilization strategy and safe placement;

25 (g) A school reentry or educational advancement plan;

26 (h) Assisting youth in applying for medicaid benefits and
27 maintaining eligibility;

28 (i) Plans and processes to obtain identification documents and
29 public benefits; and

30 (j) Family engagement and restorative justice objectives consistent
31 with reforms enacted in Laws 2023, LB50.

1 (4) During the first ninety days following a youth's re-entry, a
2 family team meeting shall be held at least once every thirty days. Such
3 meeting shall include the youth and the youth's family or guardian and
4 the Department of Health and Human Services, the Office of Juvenile
5 Services, or the Office of Probation Administration, as appropriate.

6 (5) Youth who are eligible for participation in the bridge to
7 independence program as provided in the Young Adult Bridge to
8 Independence Act shall be referred to that program. Services under the
9 Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act shall not duplicate services
10 available under the bridge to independence program.

11 **Sec. 6.** (1) Each participating agency shall implement the Youth
12 Reentry and Transitional Support Act within its existing duties, staff,
13 and appropriations.

14 (2) The Department of Health and Human Services and Office of
15 Juvenile Services shall integrate transition planning into its existing
16 case management, child welfare, and medicaid resources to support
17 services under the act.

18 (3) The Office of Probation Administration shall integrate
19 transition planning into probation supervision and existing community-
20 based programs.

21 (4) The State Department of Education shall deliver vocational
22 rehabilitation and employment services through existing federal Workforce
23 Innovation and Opportunity Act and pre-employment transition services
24 funding or other existing federal funds.

25 (5) The Department of Labor may assist with workforce placement and
26 apprenticeships using existing programs.

27 (6) Community-based organizations may partner with participating
28 agencies through existing grants, contracts, or volunteer programs
29 without additional state appropriations.

30 (7) No new General Fund appropriation is authorized under the Youth
31 Reentry and Transitional Support Act. All participating agencies shall

1 absorb any costs incurred using current appropriations or available
2 federal, philanthropic, or reallocated funds.

3 **Sec. 7.** Nothing in the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act
4 shall be construed to require:

5 (1) The Office of Probation Administration to provide services to a
6 youth after a term of probation has ended; or

7 (2) The Department of Health and Human Services or Office of
8 Juvenile Services to provide services to a youth after the youth has left
9 the care, custody, and control of the department.

10 **Sec. 8.** The Department of Health and Human Services, the Office of
11 Juvenile Services, the Office of Probation Administration, the State
12 Board of Education, and the Department of Labor may adopt and promulgate
13 rules and regulations that provide for:

14 (1) Defining joint responsibilities in implementing the Youth
15 Reentry and Transitional Support Act; and

16 (2) Setting minimum training standards for credible messengers and
17 staff responsible for implementing the Youth Reentry and Transitional
18 Support Act.

19 **Sec. 9.** This act becomes operative on December 1, 2026.