



Nebraska Children's Commission

1225 L Street, Suite 401
Lincoln, NE 68508

August 28, 2025

Brandon Metzler, Clerk of the Legislature
State Capitol, Room 2018
PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Dear Mr. Metzler:

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 August 7, 2025 meeting.

Respectfully,

Melissa Nance, Chair
Nebraska Children's Commission

Nick Juliano, Co-Chair
Juvenile Services Committee

Deb VanDyke-Ries, Co-Chair
Juvenile Services Committee

Enclosure:

JSC & NCJJ Joint Annual Report 2024-2025 (Final)



2024-2025

JUVENILE SERVICES COMMITTEE & NEBRASKA COALITION FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE JOINT ANNUAL REPORT

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

Submitted Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-4203 and 43-
2412(1)(b)



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BACKGROUND

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 juvenile justice reform in Nebraska and in compliance with Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-4203 and §43-2412(1)(b). The recommendations contained in this report support ongoing reform efforts and reflect a collaborative, open, and inclusive process of discussion and information sharing.

To enhance collaboration, coordinate initiatives, and increase the impact and efficacy of juvenile justice reform, the JSC and NCJJ work together through joint meetings, shared reporting, and inclusive workgroups. This partnership allows for the most coordinated approach for reform while enabling each body to fulfill its statutory obligations as efficiently as possible.

Both groups have divided initiatives and workstreams based on the juvenile justice continuum of care, working together to pursue improved outcomes for Nebraska’s youth and families. They remain committed to serving as resources to the Legislature, Governor, Judicial Branch, and state agencies for any juvenile justice related issue or initiative.

NE Coalition for Juvenile Justice

- Prevention and Community Planning
- Juvenile Services Funding
- Grants
- Detention Alternatives
- Diversion
- Racial/Ethnic Disparities
- Representation for Youth in Juvenile Court

COLLABORATION

Juvenile Services Committee

- Post-Adjudication Services
- Placement, Treatment, and Rehabilitation
- Racial/Ethnic Disparities
- Representation for Youth in Juvenile Court

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.

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 a rehabilitation and treatment model.

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



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 a 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 resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MISSION

To design a comprehensive, accountable, and culturally competent continuum of care in the juvenile justice system that meets the needs of families and youth while maintaining public safety.

GOAL

To work collaboratively with the executive, legislative, judicial, and county branches of government, as well as the Nebraska Children's Commission and other key stakeholders, to establish and support an optimal juvenile justice system, one that prevents children and youth from entering or becoming further involved in the system.

Juvenile Services Committee Recommendations	Strategic Priority	Page # of Report
Creation of a One Nebraska Workgroup	Service Array and Access	Page 6
Pilot a bundled funding model for high-needs youth, including Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF) waiver services	Service Array and Access	Page 7
Completing facility visitations and supporting increased transition planning centered on the family	System Stability and Oversight	Page 9



JUVENILE SERVICES COMMITTEE

Nick Juliano & Deb VanDyke-Ries, Co-Chairs

Deb VanDyke-Ries (Nebraska Court Improvement Project) and Nick Juliano (RADIUS) serve as the co-chairs for the Juvenile Services Committee (JSC).

This joint annual report reflects the continuing commitment of the JSC and NCJJ to juvenile justice reform. It is submitted in accordance with state statute and highlights a collaborative and inclusive process that prioritizes the needs and voices of Nebraska's youth and families.

This year marks a pivotal moment in the committee's work on equity and access within the juvenile justice system. In January 2025, the Racial and Ethnic Disparities (R/ED) Workgroup initiated a significant shift in direction. Recognizing the value of uniting marginalized groups to amplify collective impact, the group proposed broadening its focus to include additional populations and renaming itself the *One Nebraska* Workgroup. This transition centers lived experience and is designed to foster greater cross-support and collaboration among workgroups and committees.

Reducing disparities in Nebraska's juvenile justice system remains a central goal. Over the past year, the workgroup has emphasized supporting smaller agencies with deep expertise in their respective communities and cultural contexts. Accordingly, the committee recommends formally transitioning to a One Nebraska Workgroup. By bringing together the voices and experiences of all marginalized groups, this broader and more inclusive approach aims to promote collaboration, shared learning, and mutual support—ultimately improving outcomes for Nebraska's youth and families.

Additionally, the Access to Treatment Workgroup continues to address barriers to timely, clinically indicated treatment for youth with complex needs. Over the past year, the workgroup has focused on funding, service coordination, and accountability, with the goal of ensuring equitable access to a complete continuum of care. A key recommendation from this group is to pilot a bundled funding model for high-needs youth, aiming to streamline access and improve outcomes statewide.

RACIAL & ETHNIC DISPARITIES WORKGROUP

Tami Soper, Chair

The Racial and Ethnic Disparities (R/ED) Workgroup has not convened since January 2025. At its last meeting, the group discussed a major shift in direction, including:

- **Expanding Focus:** Proposing to broaden its scope to include additional marginalized populations and adopt the name *One Nebraska* workgroup, with a focus on centering lived experience.
- **Strength in Numbers:** Recognizing the benefits of uniting all marginalized groups to amplify collective impact.
- **Cross-Group Collaboration:** Agreeing that a broader approach would facilitate greater cross-support among workgroups and committees.

Efforts to reduce disparities continue to hinge on access to culturally competent providers for families. Throughout the year, the workgroup has prioritized supporting and elevating smaller agencies across Nebraska that possess deep expertise in their specific communities and cultural contexts. The group recognizes that culturally competent language and services are often critical to success but remain difficult for families to access.

The committee highlights four key aspects regarding the value of diversity in service provision:

1. **Diversity among Providers:** Diversity enhances the service array by making culturally responsive approaches possible, approaches that might be overlooked by state agencies.
2. **Community Reflection:** Agencies that reflect the communities they serve can adapt more effectively within the relevant cultural values, which may not be considered by larger, more generalized systems.
3. **Adapting Strategies:** While resources frequently targeted larger populations, smaller cultural groups often face similar challenges. Successful strategies for one group can often be adapted to serve others.
4. **Embedded Partnerships:** Partnering with agencies within these communities promotes more positive outcomes, as these organizations are more attuned to the unique needs and strengths of their populations.

Given these considerations, the committee recommends moving forward with the establishment of a *One Nebraska* workgroup to enable a broader, more inclusive advocacy effort. By combining the voices and experiences of all marginalized groups, the group aims to promote greater collaboration, shared learning, and cross-support among workgroups and committees - ultimately improving outcomes for Nebraska's youth and families.

ACCESS TO SERVICES WORKGROUP

Julie Smith, Chair

Formed in 2022, the Access to Services workgroup brings together community experts to examine challenges, identify underlying issues, and develop actionable steps to improve timely access to clinically indicated treatment. Over the past year, the workgroup has focused on the intersection of funding, service coordination, and accountability, all with the goal of supporting youth with complex needs and promoting equitable access to a full continuum of care.

The workgroup has identified a strong potential solution to barriers affecting access to treatment:

Pilot a Bundled Funding Model for High-Needs Youth, including Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF) waiver services

Nebraska's current funding mechanisms for youth behavioral health services, particularly for PRTFs, create incentives for providers to serve lower-needs youth while youth with high medical and psychiatric complexity are left with limited options to meet their treatment needs. The system's reliance on fee-for-service and fragmented rate structures contributes to a "pick and choose" mentality, leaving the most vulnerable youth underserved and driving up costs for probation and state agencies as they strive to develop alternatives that will meet the complex needs of today's youth.

Overreliance on institutional settings in the current continuum fails to provide essential elements such as individualized care, parental support and skill development, and community integration opportunities. This has been a longstanding concern for policymakers, funders, regulators, and advocates, who have observed that, in many cases, the risks outweigh the benefits.

ACCESS TO SERVICES WORKGROUP

The proposed model aims to address both challenges by providing individualized, community-integrated treatment options, accessible even for the highest-risk, highest-needs youth.

Launching a pilot program will allow for testing a split-rate funding mechanism for PRTF waiver services. This separates the daily room-and-board rate from the services rate with the long-term goal of moving to an all-inclusive bundled payment. This model should be developed in collaboration with Nebraska Medicaid, the Managed Care Organizations (MCO's), the Administrative Office of Courts and Probation, the Department of Health and Human services, and other vested interests as an alternative option to meet the treatment needs of youth.

The pilot should include:

- A cost analysis comparing bundled versus fee-for-service models, with specific attention to the cost-effectiveness and quality of outcomes for youth with complex psychiatric and medical needs,
- Outcome tracking and data collection aligned with the Community-Based Juvenile Services Aid Program's common data set requirements (Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-2404.02), and,
- Engagement of Medicaid in the design and evaluation phases, including a detailed breakdown of Medicaid and non-Medicaid costs associated with bundled services

CONTINUUM OF CARE WORKGROUP

Tammy Sassaman, Chair

In October 2023, the YRTC Workgroup was officially renamed the Continuum of Care Workgroup. Originally, this workgroup was established to conduct a comprehensive review of the statutory responsibilities related to Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers (YRTCs) and to evaluate the five-year operations plan submitted to the Legislature in accordance with Neb. Rev. Stat. Section 43-427. The workgroup focuses on three primary areas:

Youth Voice

Family Engagement

Accreditation

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. Section 43-4203(b), the Juvenile Services Committee is tasked to, “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.” To align with these statutory requirements, the Workgroup has focused on examining YRTCs throughout Nebraska and their treatment services to better understand their current status and needs. The group will continue monitoring YRTCs and other juvenile justice facilities, developing recommendations as findings emerge.

The Continuum of Care Workgroup has been conducting site visits to juvenile facilities statewide, providing direct assessment of living environments, services, and support provided to youth. These visits allow the workgroup to engage with staff and youth, gain firsthand insights into daily experiences, monitor compliance with standards, and identify both strengths and areas for improvement. Such site reviews are integral to the workgroup’s commitment to accountability and ongoing improvement in care.

A consistent concern raised through visits and stakeholder feedback is the environment to which youth return after release. Many youths return to communities and homes that lack support structures or may present risks that contributed to their system involvement.

CONTINUUM OF CARE WORKGROUP

The workgroup acknowledges that successful re-entry depends not only on preparation within the facility but also on the availability of a safe, stable, and nurturing placements, as well as ongoing educational, mental health, and vocational supports. To address these concerns and promote positive outcomes for transitioning youth from care, the workgroup recommends:

Completing Facility Visitations

The workgroup recommends the completion of all remaining scheduled visits to juvenile facilities across the state. These visits enable members to directly observe living conditions, service delivery, and the support available to youth preparing for transition. By engaging with facility staff, youth, and service providers, the workgroup can assess adherence to best practices, identify facility-specific strengths, and surface areas for improvement. Insights gathered from these site visits will ensure that recommendations are grounded in an up-to-date, firsthand understanding of statewide facility environments. Regular and comprehensive facility review fosters accountability, informs policy development, and promotes consistency in quality of care.

Beyond observations, documenting and analyzing patterns observed across facilities will allow for systemic improvements in Nebraska's continuum of care. The workgroup will use data and feedback from these visits to refine operational standards, guide technical assistance, and shape future training initiatives. Completing these visits closes gaps in oversight and ensures that Nebraska's approach to juvenile care and transition remains responsive, adaptive, and evidence based.

Increased transition planning centered on the family

Transition planning must be a holistic, family-centered process that starts well before a youth discharges. The workgroup recommends early, proactive engagement with families to ensure they play an active role in transition planning. This includes providing family-specific supports such as readiness workshops, individualized case planning sessions, and connections to community resources addressing behavioral, educational, and social reintegration needs. Partnering with families from the outset customizes re-entry to address their unique strengths and challenges, increasing the likelihood of a stable, successful transition. The workgroup also urges investment in follow-up and aftercare measures to support parents and caregiver's post-reunification.

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. Elaine Menzel (Nebraska Association of County Officials) serves as the Chair and Breanna Flaherty (Platte County Attorney) serves the Vice Chair of the NCJJ.

The NCJJ has five standing subcommittees who meet in addition to quarterly NCJJ meetings: Executive, Grant Review, Racial/Ethnic Disparities (R/ED), Diversion, Young Adult, and Community Planning. The goal of the NCJJ is to improve all aspects of the juvenile justice system throughout Nebraska by assisting communities and the state with planning and implementation of systemic improvements, advocacy, education, and award recommendations of state funds for such purposes. The ultimate goal of the NCJJ is to improve the lives and futures of children, youth, and families involved with the juvenile justice system.

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 joined with the Juvenile Services Committee of the Nebraska Children's Commission (JSC) to hold joint meetings and provide annual recommendations.

The NCJJ has been named as the State Advisory Group (SAG) for federal Title II grant purposes. During this fiscal year the NCJJ was able to secure a federal Title II grant to support the SAG activities such as meetings and training for members. The NCJJ worked with the Governor's office to appoint a fifth young member with lived experience in the juvenile justice system, as well as fill vacancies. The NCJJ and Governor's office continue to receive, review, and approve applications as needed to ensure the NCJJ meets both statutory and federal guidelines. The NCJJ has been able to add a few members to meet the requirements of Title II with new community members and build up the coalition to have a various representation of the population of Nebraska.

GRANT REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE



The Grant Review Subcommittee is responsible for making funding recommendations to the Crime Commission for the Community-based Juvenile Services Aid grant (CBA) and the Juvenile Services grant (JS). Annually, funds are announced and distributed on a formula basis for CBA funds; if any county or tribe does not request their CBA formula amount, those funds are put into a competitive funding opportunity called Enhancement-based grant (EB) funds. Counties and tribes are also able to apply for these EB funds in addition to their CBA formula allocations. The JS grant is open to counties, tribes, and non-profit agencies and is a competitive grant. Once Nebraska is able to start passing federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention funds (Title II) through to counties, tribes, and agencies, the grant review subcommittee will also make funding recommendations for this competitive funding.

Community-based Juvenile Services Aid

Community-based Juvenile Services Aid are state funds appropriated by the Nebraska Legislature and administered by the Nebraska Crime Commission. The Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program promotes the development and implementation of community-based programs designed to prevent unlawful behavior and to effectively minimize the depth and duration of the juvenile's involvement in the juvenile justice system. Funds are awarded to aid recipients prioritizing programs and services that will divert juveniles from the juvenile justice system, reduce the population of juveniles in juvenile detention and secure confinement, and assist in transitioning juveniles from out-of-home placements. Eligible applicants are limited to individual counties, multiple counties, federal or state recognized Indian tribes, or any combination of the entities listed.

GRANT REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

This year the grant review subcommittee assisted in the review of Community-based Juvenile Services grant requests in the amount of \$6,916,585 from 32 CBA and 17 EB grant applications. Of these, 32 counties received \$5,388,375 in CBA awards and 12 counties received additional awards totaling \$409,625 in EB for a total of \$5,798,000 awarded for project period July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. (See distribution of funds table below). It is worth noting that due to multi-county collaboratives, 80 of Nebraska's counties are covered by CBA and EB funds.

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. Funds received through the Juvenile Services Grant Program (JS) shall be used exclusively to assist the recipient in the implementation and operation of programs or the provision of services identified in the recipient's community plan, including; programs for local planning and service coordination; screening, assessment and evaluation; diversion; alternatives to detention; family support services; treatment services; reentry services; truancy prevention and intervention programs; and other services documented by data that will positively impact juveniles and families in the juvenile justice system. Applicants are limited to community-based agencies or organizations, political subdivisions, school districts, federally recognized or state-recognized Indian tribes, or any combination of the entities listed. Projects funded through juvenile services funds include but are not limited to programs for assessment and evaluation, family support services, alternatives to detention, mentoring, school programs, diversion and to address Racial and Ethnic Disparities. For fiscal year 2025, the JS grant received 28 requests totaling \$1,951,485 were reviewed and awarded to 14 counties, tribes, and/or organizations for a total of \$564,300 for project period July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 (see distribution of funds table).

Title II Grants

Title II Formula Grants are awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and authorized by the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (JJDPA) to support states and local jurisdictions with juvenile justice system improvement and delinquency prevention and intervention efforts. Nebraska was awarded \$600,341 in December 2023 in Title II funds, and \$600,451 in January 2025.

GRANT REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Within Title II, each state has a Designated State Agency (DSA) and State Advisory Group (SAG) to assist with the administration of funding, reporting, and programming. The Nebraska Crime Commission (NCC) is the DSA for Nebraska for Title II purposes.

As part of the application process, NCC staff collaborated with the NCJJ (SAG) to create and submit a three-year plan pursuant to Part B of the JJDP Act (34 U.S.C. §§11131-11133). This plan addresses the state of Nebraska's intentions to implement the thirty-three requirements and include four core requirements as listed in 34 U.S.C. §§11133(a). The four core requirements are:

- Deinstitutionalization of status offenders,
- Separation of juveniles from adult inmates,
- Removing juveniles from adult jail or lockup,
- Addressing racial and ethnic disparities

Nebraska was deemed to be in compliance with the four core requirements during federal fiscal year 2023 (October 1, 2023 - September 30, 2024) by OJJDP in January 2025. The compliance data for federal fiscal year 2024 has been submitted to OJJDP and we are waiting for a response. At this time, we believe we will be out of compliance in the areas of Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders and Sight and Sound Separation based on ratios provided to states by OJJDP earlier in the year. If we are found out of compliance, our overall funding will be reduced by 20% for each area, or 40% in total. The NCC is actively working with the entities who put us out of compliance to correct issues.

During Nebraska's previous participation in Title II funding, statutory and policy changes were made to align with the JJDP Act, which has allowed Nebraska to remain compliant with the requirements of the act. As the JJDP Act was reauthorized in 2018 when Nebraska was not participating, the NCJJ and NCC will need to review statutes and policies to ensure no updates in language are needed.

GRANT REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Additional goals in the three-year plan focus on building the structure and capacity needed to effectively administer the grant and be in compliance with the core requirements. For year one, the goals were to create a compliance monitoring plan, along with monthly data of facilities being monitored, a monitoring universe being created, a compliance manual, and a plan for reducing racial and ethnic disparities in Nebraska. A Juvenile Justice Specialist has been hired, along with data currently being gathered and analyzed for the R/ED plan and an up-to-date crime analysis. The Jail Standards Division of the Nebraska Crime Commission has been designated to complete the necessary requirements of the Compliance Monitor. A new compliance universe is in progress, and the existing compliance manual is being updated to new standards established by the OJJDP. The Compliance universe has been created and is updated on a regular basis, and the updated compliance manual was approved by OJJDP and will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated as necessary.

DIVERSION SUBCOMMITTEE

The Juvenile Diversion Subcommittee of the NCJJ is a working group established in 2013. The duties of the subcommittee, as 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 of 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 statewide goals. The Diversion Subcommittee Strategic Plan can be found [here](#). The new Nebraska Screen and Assessment Tool (N-SAT) was completed by Dr. Zachary Hamilton in June, 2021. Since that time, 69 users across 72 counties have received initial training in the NSAT. The NSAT continues to be utilized, with 2,477 screeners and 65 assessments entered into the online portal.

DIVERSION SUBCOMMITTEE

At this point, the NSAT will be re-evaluated utilizing feedback received from diversion programs through a survey. If updates need to be made, the diversion subcommittee members will be asked to weigh in and assist with this process. For more information about Juvenile Diversion in Nebraska, 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. As 2024 was a community plan writing year, this past year the members of the Community Planning Advisory Subcommittee assisted NCC staff with the creation of a new template and manual for communities and tribes to utilize for their community plans. A webinar to review changes was also held at the request of the Subcommittee members. Subcommittee members also assisted with reviewing the submitted plans and providing feedback for the counties.

This upcoming year will include a focus on best practices for utilization of community plans. There are a handful of communities struggling to maintain a community team, and approximately six community team chairs noted that their plans are only utilized at grant writing time which is not the intent of the plans. The Community Planning Advisory Subcommittee will work on tips and processes these counties can follow to get a more engaged team and better utilization of plans. For more information about the Community-based Juvenile Services Aid Program, please see the Annual Report [here](#).



R/ED SUBCOMMITTEE



The Juvenile Justice Specialist has been assigned as the Racial and Ethnic Disparities coordinator for the purposes of title II, and as such will lead the Racial and Ethnic Disparities (R/ED) subcommittee. The R/ED Subcommittee is actively working to expand its membership. Once fully established, its goals include promoting data-driven decision-making to guide grant-funded services aimed at reducing racial and ethnic disparities, increasing education and awareness among grantees and stakeholders, and providing both resources and advocacy support.



YOUNG ADULT SUBCOMMITTEE



The NCJJ chair and vice-chair have developed a Young Adult Subcommittee to work on bringing more youth and family voice to the forefront of juvenile justice issues and discussion. NCJJ member Steve Solorio has agreed to chair this subcommittee. The vice-chair position is currently vacant. Steve has worked with the Juvenile Justice Specialist to create a recruitment strategy, outlining minimum and maximum age requirements, membership goals, and contacts to begin recruiting young adults. The young adult members of the NCJJ will be the first asked to join, and one of them will be asked to co-chair with Steve. The goal of this subcommittee is to encourage young adults to pursue their own goals in shaping the future for Nebraska's juvenile justice system. The hope is this subcommittee will strengthen young adult membership in the NCJJ.

GRANT FUNDS

Distribution of Grant Funds Table	
Project Period July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025	
FY2025 Juvenile Services Awards	
African Immigrant Family Services	\$35,200.00
Columbus Area United Way	\$47,555.00
Completely KIDS	\$26,168.00
Dakota County	\$12,000.00
Lancaster County	\$99,940.00
Latino Center of the Midlands	\$61,883.00
Omaha Center for Refugees and Immigrant Services, INC. (OCRISI)	\$25,000.00
Omaha Tribe of Nebraska	\$80,282.00
Platte County	\$2,248.00
Saunders County	\$46,722.00
Urban League of Nebraska	\$50,000.00
Washington County	\$3,600.00
York County	\$16,725.00
YouTurn	\$56,977.00
Total	\$564,300.00

GRANT FUNDS

FY2025 Community-Based Juvenile Services Aid (CB) Awards

Recipient	CB Award	EB Award	Total
Adams County - Lead (Clay, Nuckolls, Webster, Filmore & Franklin)	\$139,617.00	\$32,945.00	\$177,562.00
Box Butte County	\$16,647.00		\$16,647.00
Buffalo County (Sherman)	\$177,158.00		\$177,158.00
Cheyenne County - Lead (Deuel, Kimball)	\$41,544.00		\$41,544.00
Colfax County	\$58,484.00		\$58,484.00
Cuming County - Lead (Burt)	\$23,152.00		\$23,152.00
Custer County - Lead (Blaine, Dawson, Gosper, Greeley, Hooker, Logan, Loup, McPherson, Thomas & Valley)	\$178,233.00		\$178,233.00
Dakota County		\$55,000.00	\$55,000.00
Dawes County	\$32,333.00		\$32,333.00
Dodge County	\$116,084.00	\$43,115.00	\$159,199.00
Douglas County	\$1,347,751.00		\$1,347,751.0
Gage County	\$44,676.00		\$44,676.00
Hall County	\$184,078.00		\$184,078.00
Holt County - Lead (Boyd, Brown, Wheeler)	\$37,204.00	\$25,144.00	\$62,348.00
Howard County	\$30,927.00	\$15,210.00	\$46,137.00
Jefferson County - Lead (Thayer)	\$19,847.00	\$8.730.00	\$28,577.00
Kearney County - Lead (Phelps & Harlan)	\$68,912.00		\$68,912.00

GRANT FUNDS

Recipient	CB Award	EB Award	Total
Keith County - Lead (Arthur, Dundy, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Chase, Perkins, Red Willow)	\$74,112.00		\$74,112.00
Lancaster County	\$1,094,870.00	\$49,310.00	\$1,144,180.0
Lincoln County	\$122,465.00		\$122,465.00
Madison County - Lead (Antelope, Pierce, Stanton, Boone, Knox, & Wayne)	\$199,065.00		\$199,065.00
Merrick County - Lead (Hamilton & Nance)	\$81,989.00	\$44,697.00	\$126,686.00
Nemaha County - Lead (Richardson, Johnson & Pawnee)	\$122,465.00		\$122,465.00
Otoe County	\$199,065.00		\$199,065.00
Platte County	\$122,465.00		\$122,465.00
Saline County	\$53,343.00	\$7,030.00	\$60,373.00
Sarpy County	\$560,604.00		\$560,604.00
Saunders County	\$82,303.00	\$71,580.00	\$153,883.00
Scotts Bluff County - Lead (Banner, Morrill)	\$125,387.00		\$125,387.00
Seward County - Lead (Butler)	\$95,274.00		\$95,274.00
Sheridan County	\$7,050.00		\$7,050.00
Thurston County	\$22,904.00		\$22,904.00
Washington County	\$80,138.00	\$5,874.00	\$86,012.00
York County - Lead (Polk)	\$64,079.00	\$50,990.00	\$115,069.00
TOTAL	\$5,388,375.00	\$409,625.00	\$5,798,000.00

MEMBERSHIP LISTS

JUVENILE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Member Name	Type	Title and Organization	Representation
Amoreena Brady	Voting	Director , Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation, Juvenile Services Division	Representative of juvenile probation
Sarah Brownell	Voting	Facilities Director , DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services, Office of Family Services	Representative of the office of juvenile services
Jennifer Carter	Voting	Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare , Office of Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare	Representative of the Nebraska Children's Commission Member
Beverly Duran	Voting	Teacher , North Platte Public Schools	Advocate group representative
Amy Hoffman	Voting	Director of Juvenile Programs and Interventions , Nebraska Crime Commission	The Executive Director of the Nebraska Crime Commission on Law Enforcement
Nick Juliano (Co-Chair)	Voting	President & CEO , RADIUS	Treatment placement representative
Judge Denise Kracl	Voting	Fifth Judicial District Court Judge , Fifth Judicial District	Judge representative
Laura Lemoine	Voting	Deputy Douglas County Attorney , Douglas County Attorney's Office, Douglas County	County attorney representative
Dennis Marks	Voting	Attorney , Sarpy County Public Defenders' Office	Defense attorney representative
Patrick Sailors	Voting	Director of Crisis and Residential Services , Child Guidance Center	In-Home Service Representative
Tammy Sassaman	Voting	Executive Director , Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association	Advocate group representative
Vicky Smith	Voting	Service Director , CEDARS Youth Services	Group home/shelter representative
Deb Van-Dyke Ries (Co-Chair)	Voting	Director , Nebraska Court Improvement Project	Representative of the Court Improvement Project
Kaleb Vicharra	Voting	Direct Support Professional , People's City Mission	Young adult with previous juvenile justice experience
Dr. Richard Wiener	Voting	Bessey Professor of Psychology , University of Nebraska, Lincoln	Data expert representative
Shaylee Fortner	Resource	DHHS Program Manager II , DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services	Representative of the office of juvenile services
Bethany Nelson	Resource	DHHS Program Coordinator , DHHS, Medicaid and Long-Term Care	Representative of DHHS, Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care
Julie Smith	Resource	Juvenile Justice Programs Specialist , Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation, Juvenile Services Division	Representative of Juvenile Probation

NEBRASKA COALITION FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE MEMBERSHIP

Member Name	Type	Title and Organization	Representation
Lincoln Arneal	Voting	Assistant VP of Policy & Leadership, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation	At Large Member
Stanford Bradley	Voting	Youth Program Coordinator, Malone Community Center	Youth Advocate
Karen Bredthauer	Voting	County Commissioner, Hall County	One County Commissioner or supervisor
Breanna Flaherty (Vice-Chair)	Voting	Platte County Attorney, Platte County	One County Attorney
Ingrid Gansebom	Voting	Regional Administrator, Region 4 Behavioral Health	One member of a regional behavioral health authority established under section 71-808
Monika Gross	Voting	Executive Director, Foster Care Review Office	The Executive Director of the Foster Care Review Office
Brian Halstead	Voting	Deputy Commissioner, Nebraska Department of Education	The Commissioner of Education or their designee
Amy Hoffman	Voting	Director of Juvenile Programs and Interventions, Nebraska Crime Commission	The Executive Director of the Nebraska Crime Commission on Law Enforcement or their designee
Nandi Kumondan	Voting		At least one member who is under 24 yrs with JJ experience
Mark Labouchardiere	Voting	Director of Facilities, Department of Health and Human Services	The Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Health and Human Services or their designee
Denise Manthei	Voting	Case Manager, Hope Harbor	Community-based, private nonprofit organizations who work with juvenile offenders and their families (3rd District)
Elaine Menzel (Chair)	Voting	Legal Counsel, Nebraska Association of County Officials	The Executive Director of the Nebraska Association of County Officials or their designee
Jaiden Nelsen	Voting		Youth Advocate
Sara Quiroz	Non-Voting	Assistant Deputy Administrator, Juvenile Probation, Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation	The probation administrator of the Office of Probation Administration or their designee
Adama Sawadogo	Voting	Founder & Executive Director, African Immigrant Family Services	Community-based, private nonprofit organizations who work with juvenile offenders and their families (2nd District)
Daniel Schleusener	Voting	Chief Deputy, Buffalo County Sheriff	Representative from law enforcement
Erika Schwarting	Voting	Director of Operations, Youth Emergency Services	At Large Member
Tami Steensma	Voting	Director, Sarpy County Juvenile Justice Center	The director or their designee from a secure juvenile detention facility or a staff secure youth confinement facility
Steve Solorio	Voting	Youth Program Manager, El Centro de las Americas	Community-based, private nonprofit organizations who work with juvenile offenders and their families (1st District)
Lauren Walag	Voting	Assistant Public Defender, Douglas County	One public defender
Judge Joel B. Jay	Non-Voting	County Judge, 11th Judicial District Court	One separate juvenile court judge
Judge Candice Novak	Non-Voting	Judge of the Separate Juvenile Court, Douglas County Court	One county court judge
Vacant	Voting		At Large - Tribal Representative
Vacant	Voting		Youth Advocate

