

NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Mission.

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



Jim Pillen, Governor

July 15, 2025

Mr. Brandon Metzler
Clerk of the Legislature
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509

Subject: Olmstead Plan

Dear Mr. Metzler:

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 83-6122, the Department of Health and Human Services collaborated with the Olmstead Advisory Committee, self-advocates, and stakeholders with lived experience and expertise in disability services and supports to revise and provide updates to the state's Olmstead Plan, first published in December 2019.

The updated plan is attached for your review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tony Green".

Tony Green
Director, Division of Developmental Disabilities

Attachment

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DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Strengthening Pathways to Access:

Nebraska's *Olmstead* Plan

State Fiscal Years 2026-2031

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INTRODUCTION

Nebraska's Olmstead Plan is grounded in the belief that all individuals with disabilities should have the opportunity to live, learn, work, and thrive in the most integrated setting of their choice. This commitment began with the landmark 1999 Olmstead v. L.C. decision, which affirmed the right of people with disabilities to receive services in community-based settings when appropriate. Nebraska released its first Olmstead Plan in 2019, followed by revisions in 2023. Each version has built upon previous efforts by identifying priorities, addressing gaps, and promoting access to welcoming, community-based services.

The 2026–2031 Olmstead Plan reflects the next phase of this work, shaped by the 2024 evaluation conducted by Partners for Insightful Evaluation (PIE), which emphasized the importance of data, cross-system alignment, and community supports. The plan focuses on five priority areas: Community-Based Services, Education, Employment, Housing, and Transportation. Through a process involving workgroups, individuals with lived experience, and cross-agency partners, each section of the plan identifies shared goals, meaningful activities, and measurable outcomes. Together, they provide a roadmap for advancing quality, opportunity, and community integration for Nebraskans with disabilities.

The History of Nebraska's Planning

Nebraska's commitment to supporting individuals with disabilities through community-based services stems from the landmark 1999 Olmstead v. L.C. U.S. Supreme Court decision. This ruling affirmed that unjustified institutionalization of individuals with disabilities constitutes discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), emphasizing that services should be provided in the most integrated setting appropriate to an individual's needs.

In response, Nebraska began laying the groundwork for its own Olmstead Plan, recognizing the need for systemic changes to promote community integration. Early efforts focused on identifying gaps in services and gathering input from stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities, families, service providers, and advocacy groups.

The state formalized its commitment with the development of the Nebraska Olmstead Plan, first released in 2019. This foundational document outlined a vision for reducing reliance on institutional care and expanding access to home and community-based services (HCBS). Subsequent revisions, including the 2023–2025 version, reflect ongoing efforts to address challenges, track progress, and adapt to emerging needs.

Key milestones in Nebraska's Olmstead planning history include:

- **A Vision for Community Integration: Nebraska's Olmstead Plan** was published, and core goals for housing, employment, transportation, and community integration were set.
- **2021 Evaluation Report:** The initial evaluation of Nebraska's Olmstead Plan was conducted by the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC), highlighting initial successes and opportunities for improvement.
- **A New Vision for Community Integration: Nebraska's Olmstead Plan (2023 – 2025):**

Refined strategies based on data-driven insights and stakeholder feedback, strengthening the state's commitment to quality services.

- **2024 Evaluation Report:** An independent review conducted by Partners for Insightful Evaluation (PIE), highlighting progress and identifying areas for improvement.

Nebraska's Olmstead Plan continues to evolve, guided by a commitment to person-centered practices, data-informed decision-making, and collaboration across state agencies and community partners.

2024 Evaluation and Recommendations for Nebraska's Olmstead Plan

The 2024 evaluation of Nebraska's Olmstead Plan provides a comprehensive analysis of the state's efforts to enhance community integration for individuals with disabilities. The report acknowledges significant strides in expanding community-based services, improving housing accessibility, and increasing employment opportunities. However, it also identifies areas requiring further attention, such as transportation accessibility and data collection methodologies.

There were several recommendations offered in the evaluation report which included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Extend the Olmstead Plan's period from three to six years. This allows for more adequate time to implement strategies and monitor outcomes.
- Update the terminology used in the plan, primarily around priorities and goals. With clarified language, stakeholders should have a better understanding of the efforts outlined in the plan.
- Integrate data considerations across all priority areas, rather than having it as a stand-alone priority and workgroup.
- Create a new priority area called "Community Supports." This addresses the broader spectrum of services and resources necessary for individuals with disabilities to thrive in community settings. Adding this helps the Olmstead Plan align with existing workgroups and priorities addressed in other states.

These recommendations, integrated into this Plan, reflect Nebraska's commitment to refining and enhancing its Olmstead Plan to better serve individuals with disabilities, ensuring their full integration and participation in community life.

THE FOUNDATION FOR NEBRASKA'S OLMSTEAD PLAN

Nebraska's core values and guiding principles were established in the first Olmstead Plan, published in 2019.

Core Values

Nebraska's Olmstead Plan reflects the following fundamental beliefs in supporting individuals with disabilities. Nebraska is committed to:

- Person- and family-centered approaches;
- Ensuring the safety of, and improved quality of life for, people with disabilities;
- Services that are readily available, at locations accessible to individuals in need and their families; and
- Supporting individuals to live a meaningful life in the community they choose.

Guiding Principles of Nebraska’s Olmstead Plan

Nebraska’s Olmstead Plan is built on a foundation of guiding principles designed to promote dignity and independence for individuals with disabilities. These principles prioritize self-determination, ensuring individuals and their loved ones have control over decisions about their lives and access to a wide range of services and supports. Services are structured to maximize independence, provided in the least restrictive, most integrated settings possible. Respectful, “people first” language is emphasized, recognizing the unique strengths and identities of each individual. Evidence-based strategies ensure effective outcomes, while services span the entire lifespan — from birth through end of life — promoting safety, well-being, and upholding participant rights.

The plan also emphasizes fostering welcoming communities where individuals with disabilities can fully participate alongside others. It supports opportunities for people with disabilities to live, learn, work, and engage in social activities as valued members of their communities. Services are designed to recognize and respond to each person’s unique experiences and needs, ensuring they receive appropriate, effective support. Finally, accountability remains a key pillar, ensuring systems and services stay transparent and responsive to Nebraska’s leadership, taxpayers, and, most importantly, the individuals they serve.

Plan Development Activities

The development of Nebraska’s updated Olmstead Plan involved a structured, collaborative process aimed at refining priorities and ensuring alignment with stakeholder needs. On January 29, 2025, at the Olmstead Advisory Committee meeting, Partners for Insightful Evaluation (PIE) presented a summary of its evaluation report and recommendations submitted to the Legislature’s Health and Human Services Committee. During this meeting, the committee voted to integrate Data and Workforce Goals into existing plan priorities rather than maintaining them as separate objectives. Additionally, the committee approved the transition from a three-year to a six-year plan, extending the new plan’s coverage to state fiscal years 2026 through 2032 (July 2025 through June 2031).

Following these decisions, PIE representatives attended Olmstead Workgroup meetings in February and March 2025, engaging with key groups focused on Community Supports, Housing, Education, Employment, and Transportation. These sessions facilitated discussions to clarify focus area visions, define the significance of each area, and establish a high-level articulation of Nebraska’s objectives. By gathering input from stakeholders, these meetings ensured that the updated Olmstead Plan would reflect a shared vision for community integration and support for

individuals with disabilities.

Building on these discussions, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) collaborated with relevant state agencies to identify concrete goal outcomes and activities. This collaborative effort helped shape actionable steps for achieving the state’s Olmstead priorities. The proposed outcomes and activities were then presented again to workgroups for final feedback and then to the Olmstead Advisory Committee for review and consideration during its meeting on June 9, 2025, ensuring transparency and continued stakeholder engagement in the plan’s development.

An intent of this Olmstead Plan, in part to align with the evaluation findings from 2024, was to set visionary goals for each focus area. It is important to note that the activities included in this plan are high-level and do not encompass all the work being done to address specific focus areas and goals. The Olmstead Advisory Committee and its workgroups will likely undertake additional activities to help achieve the vision of the Plan, with additional progress and efforts captured through the data measures and the evaluation report scheduled for 2027.

FOCUS AREAS

Nebraska’s vision is for all individuals with disabilities to live, learn, work, and thrive in the most integrated setting of their choice. This Olmstead Plan focuses on five key areas: Community-Based Services, Education, Employment, Housing, and Transportation. Within each focus area, dedicated workgroups identified critical needs and priority topics. These insights were shared with relevant state agencies and key partners, who then collaborated to develop specific goals, activities, and measurable outcomes—ensuring that the Plan reflects both community-driven priorities and cross-agency coordination.

Community Supports

Vision: Nebraskans with disabilities will have access to individualized, community-based services and supports that reflect their unique needs, goals, and preferences. Services will be delivered in the most accessible and least restrictive settings possible, empowering individuals to live, work, and thrive in the communities of their choice.

Why Community Supports Matters to Stakeholders: Access to community-based services plays a vital role in helping individuals with disabilities lead independent and fulfilling lives. These supports—which may include housing assistance, transportation, employment services, and more—are especially important in rural areas, where resources can be limited. When available and responsive to individual needs, community supports foster engagement, enhance well-being, and promote safety and personal choice. They also help individuals participate more fully in community life and reduce the need for institutional care.

Goal 1: Strengthen Collaboration to Support Access to Services across the Lifespan

By June 2031, Nebraska will strengthen cross-agency collaboration to ensure improved transitions for individuals with disabilities across key life stages—including pediatric to adult healthcare (medical home transition), public education to adult services (such as Home and Community Based Services [HCBS] waiver supports), transition to settings of greater independence (especially from Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics [CCBHCs]), and coordination for individuals dually eligible for Medicaid and Medicare. Efforts will focus on improving service continuity, reducing gaps, and promoting person-centered planning by engaging the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), and other key partners.

Key Partners

- DHHS – Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care
- DHHS – Division of Developmental Disabilities
- DHHS – Division of Behavioral Health
- Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) – Office of Special Education
- NDE – Nebraska VR (Vocational Rehabilitation)

Activities

- 1. Map and Strengthen Transition Pathways** – Develop clear transition protocols and timelines for:
 - Youth moving from pediatric to adult medical and specialty care
 - Students with disabilities transitioning from school to waiver services
 - Individuals becoming dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid
 - Transition into community-based, independent living settings from CCBHCs
- 2. Expand Family Training** – Collaborate to create and disseminate cross-system toolkits for educators, care coordinators, medical providers, and families to navigate transitions.
- 3. Develop Provider Network** – Collaborate with Nebraska Olmstead Advisory Committee, Advisory Committee on Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee, and other stakeholders to identify challenges and opportunities in developing a robust skilled provider network and how to train best and support personal care providers to enhance participant dignity, health, and safety.
- 4. Identify Gaps in Services for Individuals and Families with Special Healthcare Needs** – Identify programs and supports which can provide services across the continuum of care to support access to supports for individuals with disabilities and families who are not eligible for an HCBS waiver and/or Medicaid and support training and education to enhance access to care.

Data Measures

- Percentage of individuals transitioning from pediatric to adult medical homes with

- continuity of care verified within 12 months
- Percentage of eligible youth successfully enrolled in adult HCBS waiver services within 6 months of aging out of school-based supports
- Percentage of dually eligible individuals who receive coordinated care plans
- Number of individuals served in a CCBHC or through 1915i waiver, average length of services, and successful transition to community-based, independent living settings.

Goal 2: Enhance Data Collection and Utilization to Address Unmet Needs

By June 2031, Nebraska will implement a comprehensive data collection system to identify the average wait time for all home and community-based services from the point of application and from the point of authorization until services begin and the percentage of authorized hours provided. Reporting will include the identification of appropriate data by 2026, and publishing an annual report on service utilization trends starting in 2027 indexed to existing participant experience assessments to assess overall system services quality.

Key Partners

- DHHS – Division of Behavioral Health
- DHHS – Division of Developmental Disabilities

Activities

- 1. Ensure Compliance with CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) Access Rule –** Identify and define critical service utilization metrics by June 2026, including standardized data definitions across agencies for waitlist reporting by 2027 and Quality Measure Set reporting by 2028.
- 2. Ensure Transparency –** Launch an annual public dashboard and report on utilization trends, service disparities, and quality indicators.
- 3. Collaborate to Improve Systems –** DHHS Divisions of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities will partner with the Olmstead Advisory Committee, the Advisory Committee on Mental Health, and Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee to review trends and identify priorities for policy or operational changes annually beginning in 2029 to identify ways to increase efficiency and reduce application and authorization timeline.

Data Measures

- Average wait time from application to service authorization
- Average wait time from service authorization to initiation
- Percentage of authorized service hours that are delivered
- Percent of individuals who report satisfaction with services on National Core Indicators (NCI) surveys
- Compliance with CMS Access Rule timeliness and adequacy standards
- Number of individuals served in a CCBHC or through 1915i waiver, average length of services, and successful transition to community-based, independent living settings

Goal 3: Develop Communication Services and Resources to Enhance Access and Self-Advocacy

By June 2031, Nebraska will expand access to communication services and technologies to increase access to community supports and services for individuals with disabilities, including for those who are deaf or hard of hearing, deaf/blind, and other disabilities to support community integration and self-advocacy.

Key Partners

- Aging and Disability Resource Centers
- Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH)
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Community Stakeholder Organizations

Activities

1. **Expand Resources** – Increase the number of community and technology supports available through key partners.
2. **Support New Technologies** – Develop training and resources to support usage of new and emerging technologies to support the communication needs of individuals with disabilities across the state.
3. **Collaborate to Improve Systems** – Partner between key partners and organizations to develop pathways for workforce development, expand availability of qualified service providers, and support inclusive service models that promote community access and empower individuals with disabilities to self-advocate.

Data Measures

- Number of certified ASL interpreters available through NCDHH
- Number of resources and trainings available through NCDHH on access and utilization of communication technologies and supports
- Identification of a plan to develop pathways for certification and support the recruitment of new ASL translators

Education

Vision: Nebraskans with disabilities will have equitable access to high-quality educational opportunities to prepare them for meaningful participation in their communities.

Why Education Matters to Stakeholders: Education is a fundamental right and the cornerstone of lifelong learning, independence, and engagement. Education creates opportunities for students with disabilities to learn alongside their peers, fostering social development and reducing stigma. It helps ensure that all students are valued members of their school

communities and are prepared to contribute meaningfully to society. Nebraska is committed to ensuring that every student, regardless of ability, has access to high-quality education that supports their full potential.

Goal 1: Strengthen staffing capacity and equitable access to educational support services statewide, with targeted strategies for rural schools.

By June 2031, Nebraska will assess and address staffing needs and service availability in special education and related services to ensure appropriate support for students with disabilities, particularly in rural areas. Efforts will focus on gathering comprehensive staffing data and identification of workforce and retention strategies to close service gaps.

Key Partners

- NDE – Office of Special Education
- Educational Service Units (ESUs)
- Local School Districts

Activities

- 1. Conduct a Workforce Needs Assessment** – Collaborate with Educational Service Units and school districts to analyze current staffing ratios and identify high-need areas based on student demographics and service data, including Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 Plans, as available.
- 2. Identify Service Gaps and Opportunities** – Analyze current availability and utilization of related services by region to analyze service availability, identify needs, and recommend strategies for more efficient allocation and access to services, particularly in rural areas, and incorporating findings from LR220 (2025).¹
- 3. Develop Workforce Recruitment and Retention Strategies** – Establish targeted strategies to recruit educators in special education and teaching roles, particularly in rural areas and consider the applicability of the Rural Law Opportunity Program and Rural Health Opportunity Program and in consideration of the finding of LR144 (2025) to the development of special education professionals or other incentive-based programs and by leveraging the Nebraska Educational Clearinghouse.²

Data Measures

- Completion of staffing assessment reports by 2028 and annual reporting of staff-to-student ratios by district beginning in 2029

¹ LR220 (2025)—Interim study to examine the adequacy of funding and resources available to Level 3 Special Education Contractual Services for Children

² LR144 (2025)—Interim study to examine potential changes to Nebraska's teacher certification requirements to create an apprenticeship-based pathway for persons seeking to transition into teaching grades kindergarten through twelve

- Completion of service availability and utilization mapping by 2028 and annual reporting by district beginning in 2029
- Identification of workforce recruitment and retention strategies to support special education and teaching roles
- Identification of barriers to service availability and utilization and strategic recommendations by ESU for efficient allocation and availability of services

Goal 2: Strengthen Educator Preparation and Ongoing Training in Education

By June 2031, Nebraska will improve both pre-service and in-service training to ensure all educators are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to support students with disabilities in adapted settings. This includes embedding special education content in general education licensure programs, expanding dual certification pathways, and offering ongoing professional development for current educators.

Key Partners

- Nebraska Department of Education
- Institutes of Higher Education
- Educational Service Units (ESUs)
- Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education

Activities

1. **Integrate Special Education into Teacher Licensure Programs** – Partner between the Nebraska Department of Education and institutions of higher education to identify how best to incorporate special education content into general education licensure programs to ensure that all educators are trained in education practices.
2. **Promote Dual Certification Pathways** – Promote and incentivize pathways for educators to earn dual certification in general and special education.
3. **Partner with Higher Education Institutions** – Collaborate with higher education institutions to develop training and curriculum for education best practices to support new and existing teachers.

Data Measures

- Percentage of in-state teacher preparation programs integrating educational practices and special education content
- Number of educators possessing dual certifications

Goal 3: Increase Parental Engagement and Knowledge of Resources Beyond Schools

By June 2031, Nebraska will enhance parental understanding and involvement in the transition process for students with disabilities by providing comprehensive information on community supports, independent living resources, and services beyond the school system.

Key Partners

- Nebraska Department of Education (NDE)
- Educational Service Units (ESUs)
- DHHS – Division of Developmental Disabilities

Activities

1. **Develop and Distribute Family-Friendly Guides** – Create easy-to-understand resource directories and guides for parents, detailing transition services and community supports following graduation.
2. **Host Regional Parent Engagement Workshops** – Collaborate between NDE, DHHS, ESUs, and disability support organizations to conduct workshops and webinars to increase parental awareness and engagement in transition planning.
3. **Collaborate with Disability Support Organizations** – Partner with PTI Nebraska, UNMC Munroe-Meyer Institute, and other disability support and advocacy organizations to provide targeted support and information to families through printed, digital, and peer-to-peer resource sharing.

Data Measures

- Number of families participating in workshops and webinars
- Number of families and students accessing online resources to support person-centered transition planning

Employment

Vision: Nebraskans with disabilities will have informed choices and access to competitive, integrated employment opportunities that align with their strengths, goals, and preferences.

Why Employment Matters to Stakeholders: Employment plays a critical role in fostering independence, financial stability, and a sense of purpose for people with disabilities. Meaningful, competitive employment enhances community integration and is closely linked to improved health outcomes. For individuals with mental health or substance use challenges, stable employment can also support recovery and reduce recidivism. Expanding access to employment opportunities not only benefits individuals but also strengthens Nebraska's economy by connecting employers to a diverse and talented workforce ready to help address labor shortages.

Goal 1: Increase access to proficient and evidence-based supported employment, customized employment, and supported self-employment for Nebraskans with disabilities.

By June 2028, Nebraska will increase access to proficient and evidence-based supported

employment, customized employment, and supported self-employment by developing and implementing a single set of training expectations and core competencies for supported employment providers across Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCBVI), the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), and the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH). This unified framework will promote consistent, high-quality service delivery statewide.

Key Partners

- DHHS – Division of Behavioral Health
- DHHS – Division of Developmental Disabilities
- NDE – Nebraska VR
- Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCBVI)

Activities

1. **Convene a cross-agency workgroup** – By August 2025, coordinate with VR, DDD, DBH, providers, advocacy organizations, and self-advocates to review nationally recognized and evidence-based training models and identify common competencies.
2. **Identify Shared Training Standards** – By January 2026, develop a draft set of shared training standards aligned with national best practices and stakeholder input.
3. **Pilot Training Model** – By July 2026, begin piloting the unified training model with select provider agencies and collect feedback.
4. **Training Implementation** – Within nine months of the conclusion of the pilot, finalize and launch a unified training framework statewide, including technical assistance and guidance documents.

Data Measures

- Percentage of employment providers trained under the new unified framework

Goal 2: Ensure timely access to effective individualized services and supports needed to secure and maintain quality, competitive, integrated employment for Nebraskans with disabilities.

By June 2031, Nebraska will ensure timely access to individualized, effective services and supports that enable individuals with disabilities to secure and maintain quality, competitive, integrated employment. The state will track and improve the service timeline from referral to job placement, increase the percentage of individuals on Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waivers who receive support from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), and the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCBVI), and monitor long-term employment outcomes, including sustained employment one year after case closure.

Key Partners

- DHHS – Division of Behavioral Health
- DHHS – Division of Developmental Disabilities
- NDE – Nebraska VR
- Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCBVI)

Activities

1. **Establish Baseline Data** – By December 2025, establish baseline data and definitions for key metrics, including average time from referral to placement and one-year job retention.
2. **Develop Standardized Reporting** – By June 2026, develop a standardized cross-agency reporting process to track employment outcomes for individuals receiving services through VR, DBH, DDD, and NCBCVI.
3. **Create Dashboard to Increase Transparency** – By December 2027, create and publish an annual employment outcomes dashboard, disaggregated by region and demographic characteristics.
4. **Identification of Gaps and Opportunities** – By June 2028, implement targeted technical assistance strategies for regions with lower performance, based on dashboard findings.

Data Measures³

- Average time (in days) from referral for employment services to engagement in services
- Average time (in days) from referral for employment services to job placement
- Percentage of individuals on HCBS waivers who are referred to and receive services from Nebraska VR and NCBVI
- Percentage of individuals who are employed one year after VR case closure

Goal 3: Increase the Number of Young Adults with Disabilities Pursuing Employment After High School

By June 2031, Nebraska will increase the number of individuals with disabilities who enter competitive, integrated employment directly following completion of high school. This goal focuses on strengthening the pipeline from school-based transition services to employment, ensuring that students, families, educators, and employers have the tools and support needed to facilitate a successful shift into the workforce.

Key Partners

- NDE – Nebraska VR
- NDE – Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP)
- DHHS – Division of Behavioral Health
- DHHS – Division of Development Disabilities

³ All reported measures should be disaggregated by disability category and include an analysis of unsupported employment outcomes.

- Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- PTI Nebraska (Parent Training and Information)

Activities

1. **Resources for Readiness** – By August 2026, develop and distribute tailored resources for students, families, and teachers highlighting the benefits of employment and available supports.
2. **Supporting Employers** – By August 2027, launch a statewide employer engagement campaign to promote hiring, highlight success stories, and provide practical tools for recruiting and retaining employees with disabilities.
3. **Training for Schools and ESUs** – By October 2028, implement regional training and technical assistance for school-based teams to improve post-high school employment outcomes.
4. **School to Work Pipeline** – By July 2029, assess established and formalized school-to-work pathways to understand opportunities for additional strategies for coordination with career, technical, and post-secondary programs in partnership with businesses and focusing on internships, apprenticeships, and early work experiences.

Data Measures

- Number of individuals with disabilities aged 21–22 utilizing vocational rehabilitation through Nebraska VR or Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Average number of day service hours used per individual on HCBS waivers aged 21–22 (as an inverse measure of employment participation).
- Increased compliance for school districts developing IEPs for transition-age students with measurable post-secondary goals (Indicator 13).

Housing

Vision: Nebraskans with disabilities will have access to safe, affordable, accessible housing in the communities in which they choose to live.

Why Housing Matters to Stakeholders: Housing is vital for everyone, including those with disabilities. Housing provides the stability needed for all other aspects of life and represents a fundamental choice that people deserve to make for themselves. Without it, people with disabilities face an increased risk of institutionalization or homelessness, which undermines their dignity, independence, and quality of life. Including housing in Nebraska’s Olmstead Plan will ensure that individuals with disabilities are supported in living independently and given an opportunity to thrive in their communities.

Goal 1: Cross-Listed Resources to Enhance Access to Affordable and Accessible Housing for Individuals with Disabilities

By June 2031, ensure 100% of rental housing development projects funded by the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority and the Department of Economic Development are listed on a single, accessible website such as nebraska.findhelp.com.

Key Partners

- Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA)
- Department of Economic Development (DED)

Activities

1. **Enhance Website Visibility and Accessibility** – Update both the NIFA and DED websites to improve the visibility and accessibility of Findhelp platform, ensuring seamless navigation for users including the use of standardized housing tags, such as *#limited mobility*, *#visual impairment*, *#seniors*, to provide transparency and increase ease of use for individuals with disabilities.
2. **Provide Staff Training on Findhelp** – Offer comprehensive training for NIFA and DED staff on effectively using the Findhelp platform to locate and share housing resources.
3. **Enable Staff to Add Units to Findhelp** – Train NIFA and DED staff on the process of adding rental housing units to the Findhelp platform, ensuring up-to-date listings.
4. **Deliver Training for Service Providers** – Conduct training sessions for service providers through existing statewide systems such as the three Continuums of Care, Olmstead workgroups, and the Department of Health and Human Services, to help them utilize [Nebraska.findhelp.com](https://nebraska.findhelp.com) effectively.

Data Measures

- Percentage of NIFA and DED rental housing development projects funded by the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority and the Department of Economic Development listed on a single, accessible website.
- NIFA and DED rental housing development projects identified using tags to identify applicability to relevant individuals based on disability or needs.
- Average monthly usage of a single, accessible website listing rental housing development projects funded by the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority and the Department of Economic Development.

Goal 2: Increase Housing Access for Individuals with Serious Mental Illness (SMI)

By June 2031, establish a statewide coordinated referral and tracking system with DHHS Division of Behavioral Health that connects individuals residing in institutional or high-acuity behavioral health settings to community-based, accessible housing options.

Key Partners

- Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA)
- Department of Economic Development
- DHHS – Division of Behavioral Health
- DHHS – Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care

Activities

1. **Identify Process Gaps** – By June 2026, partner between DED, NIFA, and DBH to identify process gaps which impede individuals with SMI from accessing necessary housing within their communities.
2. **Conduct Pilot Training** – By June 2027, develop an improved process, including statewide coordinated referral and tracking system, and pilot training to DBH service coordinators to support individuals with SMI in accessing housing within their communities immediately upon discharge from existing institutional or high-acuity behavioral health settings.
3. **Publish Resources** – By June 2029, develop resources and publications to create awareness about housing accessibility for individuals with SMI and awareness among institutional and high-acuity behavioral health settings.
4. **Evaluate for Expansion** – By December 2029, evaluate the enhanced process for application to other populations with disabilities including for those transitioning out of correctional institutions.

Data Measures

- Identification of process gaps and development of an improved process to provide housing access to individuals with SMI
- Number of DBH service coordinators trained in new process to support and connect individuals with SMI to community-based housing options
- Number of individuals with SMI successfully utilizing a coordinated referral and tracking system to access community-based housing options

Goal 3: Strengthen Data and Planning to Address Gaps in Affordable and Accessible Housing

To support strategic decision-making, Nebraska will conduct a focused review of the Nebraska Supported Housing Plan, Strategic Housing Framework, and LR86 (2025) Interim Study. This analysis will emphasize LR86 priorities to identify potential agency or legislative policy solutions that address the need for affordable, accessible housing for Nebraskans with disabilities.

Key Partners

- Department of Economic Development
- NDE – Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP)
- DHHS – Division of Developmental Disabilities
- Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA)

Activities

1. **Conduct Targeted Housing Policy Analysis** – By July 2028, DHHS will lead collaboration between ATP, DED, and NIFA to complete a structured review of the *Nebraska Supported Housing Plan, Strategic Housing Framework*, and LR86 (2025)⁴, with a specific emphasis on LR86 findings and priorities related to affordable, accessible housing.
2. **Produce Policy Brief with Recommendations** – By December 2028, DHHS will publish a policy brief summarizing key takeaways from the document analysis and recommend at least one potential action that could be addressed through a state agency or in partnership with the Legislature.
3. **Advance Action Item(s)** – Between 2029 and July 2031, DHHS will work with state agencies and external partners to further develop, plan, and initiate at least one of the recommendations in the policy brief.

Data Measures

- Completion of housing policy analysis and publication of brief by July 2028
- Identification and public dissemination of recommended next steps based on findings by December 2028
- Documentation of progress on action item(s) between 2029 and 2031

Goal 4: Support Individuals with Disabilities to Stay in their Homes

By June 2031, Nebraska ATP will reduce the overall length of time it takes to complete home modification projects from referral to project completion allowing individuals with disabilities who need a home modification to remain independent in the home of their choice service in a timely manner.

Key Partners

- NDE – Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP)
- DHHS – Division of Developmental Disabilities

Activities

1. **Contractor Recruitment** – Perform activities to increase the number of approved contractors signed up with ATP.
2. **Database Improvements** – Implement changes to the ATP database to increase efficiency and improve contractor retainment.
3. **Services Coordinator Training** – Provide training to Services Coordinators on the ATP process and information needed when referring for home modifications.

⁴ LR86 (2025)—Interim study to identify and examine the state of affordable and accessible housing in Nebraska

Data Measures

- Overall time taken from referral for home modification to project completion
- Number of approved contractors recruited
- Number of trainings provided to Services Coordinators

Transportation

Vision: Nebraskans with disabilities will have equitable access to safe, reliable, and affordable transportation options that support independence and full participation in community life.

Why Transportation Matters to Stakeholders: Accessible infrastructure is essential for ensuring that individuals with disabilities can navigate their communities with independence and dignity. While transportation systems offer critical connections to employment, healthcare, and social activities, gaps in accessibility, especially in rural areas, can limit full participation. True accessibility goes beyond vehicles and includes well-designed sidewalks, curb cuts, transit stops, and pathways that support safe, seamless mobility. Investing in infrastructure promotes quality opportunities, reduces isolation, and helps all Nebraskans thrive in the places they call home.

Goal 1: Improve Physical Accessibility at Public Facilities

Ensure that all Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) facilities where public programs or services are offered meet ADA accessibility standards. By 2031, fully implement the NDOT ADA Transition Plan and annually report progress on key physical accessibility enhancements.

Key Partners

- Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT)

Activities

1. **Conduct Accessibility Assessments** – Identify and document barriers to access at rest areas, NDOT-owned buildings, and highway system elements.
2. **Implement Facility Improvements** – Develop and carry out a phased plan to address physical accessibility barriers at prioritized NDOT locations.
3. **Monitor and Report Progress** – Track improvements and provide annual updates aligned with ADA compliance milestones.

Data Measures

- Number of NDOT-let state and local projects annually that include accessibility components (e.g., sidewalks, curb ramps, accessible parking)
- Number and percentage of Local Public Agency (LPA) subrecipients with an ADA Coordinator, ADA Policy, and Title VI Nondiscrimination Plan

Goal 2: Advance Digital Accessibility of NDOT Web Content

Enhance the accessibility of NDOT's digital platforms to ensure compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. By 2031, all NDOT public-facing digital content will be optimized for users with disabilities.

Key Partners

- Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT)

Activities

1. **Evaluate and Plan Website Enhancements** – Conduct a comprehensive digital accessibility audit to identify barriers across NDOT web properties by June 2028, including the statewide trip planning app.
2. **Phase in Accessibility Improvements** – Implement prioritized upgrades to improve accessibility of content and navigation across platforms including the statewide trip planning app.
3. **Engage Users in Testing** – Collaborate with disability advocacy groups to validate improvements through usability testing and feedback.

Data Measures

- Annual accessibility compliance rating of NDOT websites and digital tools
- Number of accessible documents, forms, and maps published online each year

Goal 3: Ensure Accessible and Public Participation

Improve access to NDOT's public engagement processes to support participation of individuals with disabilities in transportation planning and decision-making.

Key Partners

- Nebraska Department of Transportation

Activities

1. **Develop Accessible Engagement Policies** – Maintain clear guidelines to ensure meetings are planned with accessibility in mind, including location, format, and materials.
2. **Ensure Communication and Physical Access** – Provide ASL interpretation, live captioning, screen-reader-compatible materials, and ADA-compliant venues.
3. **Include Disability Stakeholders** – Proactively engage people with disabilities in outreach and decision-making tied to the ADA Transition Plan.
4. **Support Local Level Accessibility** – Engage and advise county and local governments on the importance of public participation, particularly for those with disabilities, and support the

development of projects that enhance the accessibility of county and local-level transportation services and infrastructure and education on the findings and recommendations of LR251 (2025).⁵

Data Measures

- Number of public meetings hosted with documented accessibility features.
- Number and type of accessibility-related public comments received on NDOT's ADA efforts.

⁵ LR 251 (2025) - Interim study to examine the adequacy and accessibility of transportation options for people with disabilities in Nebraska

CLOSING SUMMARY

The 2026–2031 Olmstead Plan reflects Nebraska’s enduring commitment to building a system in which all individuals with disabilities can fully participate in community life. Achieving this vision means expanding opportunities for integration and reducing unnecessary reliance on institutional settings. The plan builds on lessons learned from past efforts while setting ambitious goals for improving access to housing, employment, transportation, education, and services that support independent living.

As with all statewide initiatives, implementation will take place within the broader context of changing fiscal realities, policies, and regulations at both the state and federal levels. These factors may require adjustments to timelines or strategies. However, the foundational commitment to civil rights and community integration will remain unchanged. Progress will be monitored through measurable goals and shared accountability across agencies and stakeholder groups.

This Plan is not a finish line—it is a waypoint in the ongoing journey toward self-determination and full participation for Nebraskans with disabilities. Some may view the current version as a starting point rather than an endpoint, and that perspective is valid and valuable. Nebraska views this Olmstead Plan as a living document, one that will continue to evolve to meet the needs of the people it is designed to serve. Through ongoing collaboration, continuous improvement, and steadfast advocacy, Nebraska will move closer to a future where every individual can live, learn, work, and thrive in the most integrated setting of their choosing.

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APPENDIX A: ACRONYMS

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

ATP: Assistive Technology Partnership

CCBHC: Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic

CMS: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

DBH: Division of Behavioral Health (at DHHS)

DDD: Division of Developmental Disabilities (at DHHS)

DED: Department of Economic Development

DHHS: Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

ESUs: Educational Service Units

HCBS: Home and Community Based Services

IEPs: Individual Education Programs

MCOs: Managed Care Organizations

MLTC: Medicaid and Long-Term Care (at DHHS)

NCBVI: Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

NCDHH: Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

NDE: Nebraska Department of Education

NDOT: Nebraska Department of Transportation

Nebraska VR: Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation

NIFA: Nebraska Investment Finance Authority

Pre-ETS: Pre-Employment Transition Services

PTI Nebraska: Parent Training and Information

SMI: Serious Mental Illness