



nebraskachildren
AND FAMILIES FOUNDATION

*Cultivating the Good Life
for all of our children*



Building well-being in Nebraska

Nebraska's greatest resource in our people. Our state's policies can either hamper or unlock the potential of our friends and neighbors. Devoting the resources, time, and energy to build the well-being of our state's citizens will help our communities thrive, both economically and socially.

Just as a house can't build itself, individuals can't build their own well-being. Constructing well-being across Nebraska requires a team effort. We know from experience that amazing things happen when you rally all of a community's people – schools and churches, service providers and health care professionals, law enforcement, businesses, government agencies, and especially parents and youth – around the common goal of strengthening families and building well-being.

Nebraska Children exists not only because of the clear need for prevention in our state's well-being data but also because government is a poor substitute for a family. Large, top-down approaches like the child welfare system are expensive, hard on families, and by design, become involved only *after* a crisis has happened. Nebraska Children believes in doing business a different way. Our well-being model is based on the belief that everyone faces challenges and that providing support early, before challenges turn to crises, improves outcomes for children, adults, and communities. Communities lead the way and discover their own challenges and strengths with the funding, support, and encouragement of many partners.

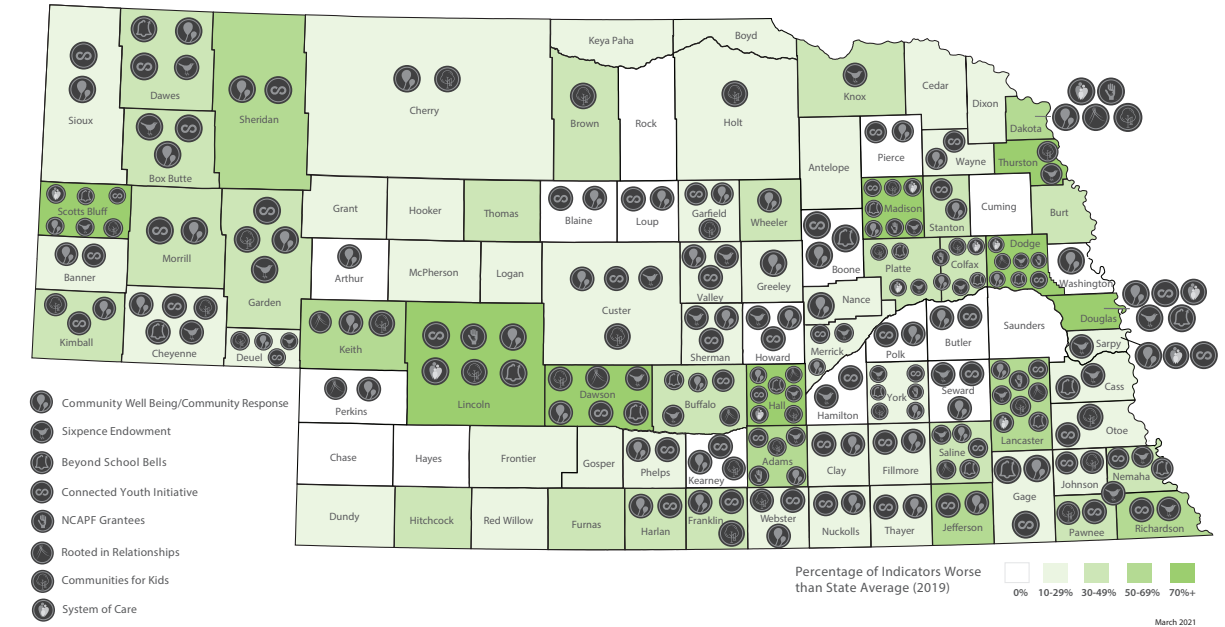




Community engagement is key

Nebraska Children's collaborative approach is designed to eliminate the complex barriers that keep families from thriving. The map to the right shows our presence across the state as we partner with community collaboratives. The collaboratives are prevention-focused and community-owned, working toward strengthening families and their communities. From Omaha to the Panhandle, we're using proven approaches to:

- Strengthen families by increasing their protective factors
- Working in partnership with families to meet their well-being goals
- Ensuring that every child can maximize their potential
- Partnering with young people to remove the barriers to a positive adulthood
- Reducing entry into the child welfare system and other systems of care
- Increasing informal and formal supports for children and families
- Improving the opportunities and outcomes for every child and elimination of disproportionality of children, youth, and families involved in the child welfare and justice systems
- Engaging with communities to understand the barriers they face and implementing system changes with our public and private partners to remove those obstacles





The power of collective impact

Communities are best situated and most motivated to identify their own challenges and create solutions.

By forming local community collaboratives where anyone and any organization interested in being engaged is invited to the table, we are able to utilize every resource we have available to build well-being for families. Collaboratives can identify gaps in services, listen to and learn from those who have firsthand experience, and use the latest strategies and data to develop long-term plans that maximize resources – plans that aren't reliant on one person or one funding source.

The result is a community-based collaboration that strengthens the efforts of all contributing parties. The resulting inclusive well-being system is an alternative to calling law enforcement or Child Protective Services (CPS) when a family has a challenge.

Nebraska Children reports the well-being data to get community stakeholders on the same page, the facilitation to guide everyone in the right direction, the proven practices to move the needle, the evaluation tools to make sure everything is working, and the funding that makes sustained action possible.

The results – like the collaborative process – are transformative to Nebraska's communities. Fewer than one percent of families involved voluntarily with community collaboratives' prevention services end up involved in the child welfare system. Meaning, families are being strengthened and staying together.

Our work

Each of our initiatives is part of a larger well-being portfolio. Initiatives can be plugged into community collaboratives to address their needs and priorities.

Cradle to Career

Bring Up Nebraska/Community Response

Bring Up Nebraska is a statewide prevention initiative designed to give local community collaboratives the ability to develop plans using the latest strategies and data to prevent life's struggles from becoming a crisis for many Nebraska families and children.

Community Response is one way community collaboratives strengthen families and enhance community well-being without the intervention of the child welfare system. By working within

communities and bringing all of their strengths and services together in a coordinated way, families can be supported before challenges become a crisis.

Participants in a Community Response are nonprofit service providers, doctors, mental health practitioners, schools, churches, transportation and housing services, utility companies, and more. The goal is to listen to families and give them what they need to thrive so they can stay together, remain self-sufficient, and support the health and learning of their children.

System of Care

System of Care is a framework for coordinating behavioral health services and supports for youth and their families who are dealing with a behavioral health challenge.

A System of Care connects and coordinates the work of State child-serving agencies, nonprofits, local governments, behavioral health care providers, families, and patient advocates. It helps children, youth, and families function better at home, in school, in the community, and throughout life.

Early Childhood

Sixpence Early Learning Fund

Sixpence provides support to parents of young children and early childhood caregivers so they can create safe, stimulating environments that spark learning through meaningful interaction. The fund, which braids public and private funds, focuses on children ages 3 and under.

Rooted in Relationships

This initiative partners with communities to enhance the social-emotional development of children, ages 0-8 by supporting caregivers including childcare providers, and enhancing early childhood mental health community systems. Social-emotional development is vital to the health and well-being of children so they can positively interact with others and learn how to manage stress and adversity. Rooted in Relationships promotes the use of evidence-based practices that support the social-emotional needs of children and families.

Prosper Lincoln

Prosper Lincoln is an initiative/agenda that was developed with broad community input and support after the release of the Lincoln Vital Signs report. Prosper Lincoln is designed to improve prosperity for all Lincoln residents. Prosper Lincoln has a three-pillar approach: Early Childhood, Employment Skills, and Innovation/Entrepreneurship. Nebraska Children is the backbone organization for the Early Childhood work.

Communities for Kids

Communities for Kids partners with communities' public and private entities to support and coordinate planning for access to high-quality early care and education for all children from birth through age 8. These partnerships will be customized to address each community's unique assets and needs – so each community can grow and prosper well into the future.

Middle Childhood

Beyond School Bells

Beyond School Bells is a statewide public-private partnership supporting school-community collaborations that provide school-age youth with high-quality afterschool and summer learning opportunities. We work closely with diverse state and local partners to enhance existing afterschool programs and to launch new programming serving underserved communities across the state. Over the past several years, Beyond School Bells has emerged as a national leader in developing and piloting rural learning opportunities including hands-on STEM learning and career exploration.

Teen/Young Adulthood

Connected Youth Initiative/Project Everlast

This innovative, youth-led program has achieved success addressing the policies affecting youth aging out of foster care or otherwise disconnected from family support. These initiatives work with young people to help them meet their well-being goals around permanence, educational achievement, employment, housing, physical and mental health, personal and community engagement, and economic stability.

Camp Catch-Up

This unique camp allows siblings (ages 8-19) who have been placed in different foster or adoptive homes to reunite and “catch up” during a weekend of fun, adventure, and connection. We give them a safe, exciting weekend together to share memories, laugh, and rekindle their bond.

Nebraska has made progress towards a community well-being system, but we need more people at the table – more elected officials, more businesses, more community members, and more representation from those people who have been impacted by state systems.



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215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 200
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508
402-476-948 | www.NebraskaChildren.org



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