Nebraska’s Connected Youth Initiative Statewide Meeting
December 15, 2020 | 1:30-2:45 PM CST
Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/97224008471?pwd=eThqcXpHSlZkMmdSNzFuRzU1WDJlUT09>

**Purpose:** Convening of statewide network of stakeholders and leaders, establishing priorities, and sharing best practices to support Nebraska’s older youth system to improve equitable outcomes for unconnected youth\* in our state.

*\*unconnected youth are aged 14-25 that are unconnected from family and community support and have experience in public systems such as foster care, juvenile justice, probation, homeless, and/or are at-risk of homelessness and/or experienced or at-risk of human trafficking*

AGENDA & NOTES

**This meeting is recorded**

* Introductions

**Attendees:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Kayla Ramsay | Norfolk Family Coalition |
| Stacy Schenk | DHHS CFS |
| Sara Shalon | Central Plains Center for Services |
| Collena Laschanzky | Southeast NE Collaborative |
| Josh Arias | Buffalo County Community Partners |
| Cindy Goodin | Youth Emergency Services |
| Lincoln Arneal | Nebraska Children and Families Foundation |
| Bailey Perry | Omaha Home for Boys |
| Lindsey Drake | The Hub |
| Julie Kindler | Pathfinder Support Services/Fremont Family Coalition |
| Bryce Allison | UNL Extension |
| Julie Nash | Hall Co. Community Collaborative |
| Stephanie Wilhelm | CAPWN |
| Crystal Aldmeyer | Nebraska Children and Families Foundation |
| Bobbi Taylor | Nebraska Children and Families Foundation |
| Faith Mills | Panhandle Partnership |
| Brady Rhodes | South-Central NE Collaborative  |
| Phillip Burrell | Project Everlast Omaha |
| Greg Donovan | Society of Care |
| Ronda Newman | Nebraska Children and Families Foundation |
| Rose Hood Buss | The Hub |
| Mona Tarin | Nebraska Children and Families Foundation |
| Julia Craig | FHAS/Opportunity Passport Omaha |
| Tonya Beckenhauer | Consultant |
| LeaAnn Johnson-Krappes | Consultant |
| Felipe Longoria | Central Plains Center for Services |
| Sebastian Coolidge | Advocate |
| Elci Warnell | Lift Up Sarpy/ENCAP |
| Dawn Coffey | MCC |
| Jeff Smith | Central Plains Center for Services |
| Nathan Busch | Nebraska Children and Families Foundation |
| Sara Riffel | Nebraska Children and Families Foundation |

* State of Connected Youth Initiative (2020)
	+ PowerPoint (attached)
* *Group Discussion:* COVID Recovery
	+ **What does the next 6-12 months look like for older youth in Nebraska as we begin to recover from the impact of 2020 and advance equitable outcomes for young people?**
		- Strengthening support for pregnant and parenting youth. Need to strengthen partnerships to support young parents.
		- Strengthen mental health support for young people – need to be able to maintain technology supports to help meet young people where they are.
			* Kearney has focus groups to discuss thoughts from young people
			* One on one contact during quarantine is important
			* Medicaid expansion is important – need to advertise to young person that mental health supports are included in the expansion
			* Support services funds are not regularly used for mental health, but they can be – even preventative care
			* Might be able to use more funds for mental health if there were funds specially allocated towards mental health. Then they won’t have to choose between getting funds to help with rent over their mental health.
				+ Maybe making a rule that if a young person requests funds for mental health, that does not disqualify them from making another request for support services funds for another need.
				+ It would help to have a list of providers organizations partner with to help alleviate some of the stress for young people.
				+ Possibly could create a system for the mental health providers to bill the organizations for the young person’s visit.
				+ Keeping up a virtual option for mental health visits can help young people utilize services more.

Need to work with young people on etiquette and the best use of time for the appointments. Making sure the young people are in a place where they can talk without distractions.

Also need to figure out if there is a lack of availability now that more people are comfortable with virtual visits.

* + - Need to connect youth with community networks (civic engagement, volunteer opportunities, etc.). (how to expand beyond the leadership councils). Strengthen community connections wherever young people feel they are safe and a part of.
		- Help support housing and financial stability for young people
		- Communities need to make space available for young people to lift their concerns and voices. What are the processes they are going through to access supports and what barriers are they encountering that can be resolved?
	+ **What is top of mind for you when thinking about the long-term impact of COVID-19, economic downturn, and social injustices for unconnected youth in Nebraska?**
		- Housing and the barriers they encounter in obtaining stable housing (credit, legal issues, etc).
			* There is a lack of stable and affordable housing, what new innovative solutions can we find to get young people housed?
			* New legislation for future of affordable housing depending on the size of the city. Need to make sure that unconnected young people are a target population in new solutions.
		- Finding solutions to cope with the impact of 2020 has required unconventional solutions, finding ways to get out of this will also require unconventional solutions. Keeping what young people are going through at top of mind will be important to make sure young people are kept up to date on communication.
			* Consistent times for professionals to be available for young people to talk with
			* Making sure organizations and professionals are up to date on all resources and information that will be important for young people to know.
		- UBI/stipend, or just guaranteed rent for 2021, for all of our CYI youth participating in coaching regularly. This stability could be a game changer helping these young people move forward.
* Cross-partner Sharing
	+ Share any upcoming events and opportunities or organizational updates that impact youth and young adults in Nebraska – *please unmute or put comments in the chat*
		- Thriving Families work going on in NE. All communities identified they wanted to lift up lived experience. If you are working with young people in Douglas, Platte-Colfax, Dakota, and Hall counties that are interested in providing youth voice.
		- Snap benefits supplemental amount – accidentally set out January amount as well as December’s with the December amount. If they spend that amount, they will not get it again in January (they will still receive their regular amount).
		- Chatbot is up and functioning. Anyone can text help to the chatbot and it will provide central navigator information in the zip code provided. Commercial will be coming out after the holidays.
			* 308-280-8383
			* 402-226-5842
		- Central Plains is hosting a Virtual Holiday gathering for ETV/LEAP/College students on Thursday from 12:30-1:00 pm, to help support them and celebrate the hard year they have overcome. Students will receive $15 gift card.
* Next Steps
	+ Revised playbook summary to include new priorities and recovery efforts
	+ Task force meeting schedule for 2021
		- Next meeting – January 20, 2021 🡪 will review 2021 equity targets for Nebraska’s plan
		- Bi-monthly, 3rd Wednesday @ 10 am CST
	+ Task force work groups – reminders:
		- Fostering Achievement in Nebraska – contact Sara Riffel
		- Opportunity Passport (financial well-being) – contact Crystal Aldmeyer
		- Youth leadership and engagement – contact Lincoln Arneal