Nebraska’s Connected Youth Initiative Statewide Meeting  
January 20, 2021 | 10:00-11:15 AM CST

**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*

Meeting Notes  
**This meeting was recorded.**

**Attendees**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Aaron Weaver | Project Everlast Omaha |
| Amanda McEntarffer | The Hub |
| Andrew Ritta | Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Co. |
| Angie Ludemann | Dept of Health and Human Services |
| Bailey Perry | Omaha Home for Boys |
| Beth Nacke | NE Extension |
| Brady Rhodes | Community Impact Network in South Central NE |
| Brittney Williams | Project Everlast Omaha |
| Cassie Krueger | Central Plains Center for Services |
| Cindy Goodin | Youth Emergency Services |
| Cindy Reed | CASA of Midlands |
| Claire Hoff | Nebraska Children and Families Foundation |
| Cornelius Levering | NE Appleseed |
| Crystal Aldmeyer | Nebraska Children and Families Foundation |
| Dawn Coffey | MCC Opportunity Youth |
| Deanna Brakhage | Dept of Health and Human Services |
| Dinyal McCray | Child Saving Institute |
| Elci Warnell | Eastern NE Community Action Partnership |
| Felipe Longoria | Central Plains Center for Services |
| Greg Donovan | Society of Care |
| Jamie Bouslaugh | Norfolk Family Coalition |
| Jeff Smith | Central Plains Center for Services |
| Julia Craig | Opportunity Passport Omaha |
| Julie Nash | Hall County Community Collaborative |
| Kathy Anstine | Dept. of Health and Human Services |
| Kayla Ramsay | Norfolk Family Coalition |
| Keenan Page | Omaha Home for Boys |
| Lana Verbrigghe | Children’s Square |
| Lauren Ward | Nebraska Children and Families Foundation |
| Lindsey Drake | The Hub |
| Liz MacDonald | Community Action Partnership of Western NE |
| Lori Lines | Youth Emergency Services |
| Mary Pinker | Nebraska Children and Families Foundation |
| Melissa Friedrich | Families 1st Partnership |
| Mona Tarin | Nebraska Children and Families Foundation |
| Phillip Burrell | Project Everlast Omaha |
| Roger Doerr | Community Action |
| Rose Hood Buss | The Hub |
| Sara Quiroz | Office of Courts and Probation |
| Sara Riffel | Nebraska Children and Families Foundation |
| Sara Shalon | Central Plains Center for Services |
| Schalisha Walker | Project Everlast Omaha |
| Sebastian Coolidge | Young professional – Project Everlast Lincoln |
| Shayla Dailey | Job Corps |
| Shelby Rice | Fremont Family Coalition |
| Tonya Breckenhauer | Consultant |
| Tori Courter | Families 1st Partnership |

**Opening Question: What is the best advice you received or a lesson you learned in 2020?**

* Some things really matter, and somethings just do not!
* Give myself and others grace.
* Life is short take advantage of the days and opportunities whenever possible.
* Learned about the things that matter the most.
* Enjoy the small wins.
* Be flexible and ready to go with the flow.
* Video calls work to connect with friends from long ago.
* Hold on for the ride!
* Learning to pivot and give grace.
* One day at a time. Breathe.
* Keep on trucking.
* Appreciate your family time and time at home.
* Target pick up orders are not the same as in store shopping.
* Appreciate the swing of the pendulum... sometimes we must experience the sorrow to experience the joy.
* Remember your "why".
* Conflict does not mean contention, agree to disagree.
* Patience is invaluable but very hard to maintain.
* Be yourself, you are one of a kind.
* Stay the course and be flexible.
* Sometimes the hardships that happen in our lives lead us on the path to the best things that will ever happen to us.
* We are not the same person we were in 2020.
* Forgive yourself for what you had to do to survive these times.
* Be thankful for small things!! And make a list daily!
* Never stop identifying the wrong doings you see. Stand up for those who cannot or who are afraid to do so. And stand up for yourself.
* As one person I cannot change the world, but I can change the world of one person.
* Readjust your expectations, reclaim your will, and reassure yourself that you are giving your best.

**2021 older youth legislation (NE Appleseed) Cornelius Levering**

* + Many bills have already been introduced during this session, the following are focused on Child Welfare and are the main ones NE Appleseed focused on during the meeting.
    - LB 202 (Expansion of B2i to Juvenile Justice)
    - LB 262 (Expansion of B2i to Lawfully Present Residents)
    - LB 357 (Youth Bill of Rights) – set for hearing January 28th at 1:30 pm in Room 1113, the Judiciary Committee
  + Any letters of support for these bills would be appreciated.
  + Any young people who are interested in testifying in person or writing their testimony to support the bills are also appreciated. Appleseed would be able to help young people complete the testimony if interested.

**Pandemic stimulus package Sara Riffel**

* + Attachment included with notes.
  + Chafee funds expanded:
    - Each state will be allowed additional Chafee and ETV funds. Each state has discretion about how those are used.
    - As a system we have an opportunity to advocate for these funds to be used with direct services or direct dollars to young people
  + Preventing youth from aging out only based on age.
  + Streamlining the FAFSA for youth with experience in foster care and/or homelessness (this provision does not have an end date)
  + DHHS is awaiting more guidance on how to use funds.

***New in CYI 2021:* Improving Outcomes for Youth Survivors of Human Trafficking Lauren Ward**

* + Lauren Ward, new Asst. VP of Trafficking with Nebraska Children. (lward@nebraskachildren.org)
    - Working to improve a statewide action team to focus on victims of sex and labor trafficking.
    - Assess what services are in place and what the gaps are to focus on moving forward.
    - Three-year grant opportunity (Office of Victims of Crime, DHHS, and NC).
    - Focus on working with Native populations.
    - New training and screening tool named PAVE coming to providers in Nebraska.

***Group Discussion:* Nebraska CYI equity targets discussion Group**

* + Policy/practice working document attached with notes.
  + Initial ideas to tackle this year as a CYI system (draft document, this document will continue to be a living document and continuously be edited and added to).
  + Open to feedback, ideas, changes, etc.
    - **What excites you?** 
      * Youth and Families Thrive training for CFS workers
      * Having a Transition specialist inside DHHS
      * B2i Expansion
      * New Trafficking resources
      * Having so many voices at the table and the collaboration to make things happen.
      * Love seeing how much youth voice is present and a focus of this work.
      * Having up to date information to connect to the communities and the action steps that follow.
      * Fostering Achievement in Nebraska team moving forward to improve postsecondary system
    - **How do you see yourself/your organization in this work?**
      * Continuing to learn and collaborate with other systems and stakeholders
      * Working together as true partners to make the work happen
      * Being a conduit to share the information in the community
      * Advocate and collaborate
      * Continue to connect and support young people to opportunities and advocate to use their voices to make change while providing a safe place to do the work.
      * Cultivate meaningful relationships to support the work that is being done by both young people and community partners.
    - **What policy and/or practice improvements are missing from the list?** 
      * More direct feedback loops
      * Support development of restorative justice support in schools

**Cross-partner Sharing**

* + - Policy Consortium team – contact Lincoln Arneal for more information
    - Community Forum in Central NE, online sessions in Feb. and March (contact Brady Rhodes coordinator@unitedwayscne.org)
    - Inclusive Communities Youth and Young Adult Workshop – March 27th 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM CST (up to 60 youth from any community can participate - registration details coming soon!!)
    - National youth advocacy employment opportunity:
    - Cetera has an open position for a Young Fellow to join us for 2021 as an Associate Consultant. This position will be one with regular hours each week and can serve as a consistent part-time job for a fellow who is interested in joining our team for youth engagement work. Full details of the position and the link for applying is below. Feel free to pass to any Young Fellows you think would be interested! The application will be open through Sunday. <https://forms.gle/TGxG3B2dtP4xqhtF8>

**Important Dates & Review Action Items**

\*PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN ANY OF THE SUBGROUPS

* + **CYI Statewide meeting** – Wednesday, March 17th @ 2 PM CST
  + **Older youth task force meetings:**
    - Fostering Achievement in Nebraska (postsecondary/career) – Feb. 2nd @ 10:00 AM
    - Opportunity Passport (financial well-being) – Feb. 3rd @ 1:30 PM
    - Youth Leadership – TBD (contact Lincoln Arneal)
  + **Legislative Days** – Feb. 6th-8th (virtual)
  + **Inclusive Communities Youth and Young Adult Workshop** – March 27th 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM CST

*"We see the first woman in American history elected to the national office, Vice President Kamala Harris.****Don't tell me things can't change."*** *~* President Joe Biden