

Nebraska Adolescent Health Advisory Committee (NAHAC)
Young Adult Member Charter
December 2014

Overview: The Nebraska Adolescent Health Advisory Committee (NAHAC) collaborates to develop, advise and advocate for programs that will advance the health of Nebraska adolescents and young adults to ensure Nebraska adolescents are empowered and able to live safe, healthy, and successful lives. NAHAC infuses youth voice into all its process through gathering voice in the communities and inclusion of at least six members on the NAHAC.

Youth Value Statement: *The NAHAC values the views, worth and realness of youth members. We aim to eliminate barriers to participation in meetings, understanding of discussion and the health system, and contribution to the work of the committee through orientation, mentorship and providing resources, such as transportation and reimbursement, allowing all members to be fully involved.*

Youth Member Role and Responsibilities: At least six youth committee members will serve as representatives to the NAHAC. These members shall be between the age of 14 and 24.

Responsibilities:

- Actively participate in partnerships of the NAHAC.
- Follow all NAHAC and Department of Public Health policies.
- Represent the committee in a responsible, professional manner.
- Share your and your peers' perspectives, ideas and opinions at all bi-monthly NAHAC meetings.
- Vote alongside all other NAHAC members on all issues.
- Assist in planning and completion of committee projects.
- Participate in other committee opportunities/projects of interest.
- Remain open to and in search of further opportunities to incorporate youth voice into the work of NAHAC.
- Maintain confidentiality of personal experiences shared by committee members.
- Ask questions, draw attention to potential barriers and present possible solutions to committee and system practices and policies.

Support Responsibilities of Professional Members: Youth-Adult partnership provides the strength, guidance and teamwork necessary for youth voice to be gathered and heard. A working partnership between all members allows for these much needed supports. To maintain this relationship, NAHAC members agree to provide the following supports when possible and needed.

- Insight and information about health, grant programs and other system components.
- Connection to educational opportunities.
- An open mind and welcoming atmosphere for youth members feel comfortable.

- Honesty and direction about ways to grow in professional settings.
- Accountability.
- Answer questions about grants, programs, best practices, policies and other process things.
- Maintain confidentiality of personal experiences shared by committee members.
- Encouragement and celebration.
- Stipend and mileage reimbursement to make attending meetings easier.
- Help figuring out arrangements to attend meetings either in person or virtually.
- Mentorship.

Membership Policies:

Joining the Committee: Any Nebraskan between age 14 and 24 interested in having a voice in their health system and services available to youth and young adults can join the committee by submitting an application to Michaela Meismer at michaela.meismer@nebraska.gov. Applications are available by request and online at <http://dhhs.ne.gov/adolescenthealth>.

Selecting Youth Committee Members: Applications will be reviewed, electronically, by the committee and all applicants will be notified within a month of submitting of the application. Committee members will use the following questions to review applications.

1. Does the applicant come from a geographical area not represented on the committee?
2. Does the applicant represent a population not currently represented on the committee?
3. Who could serve as this member’s mentor?

Upon selection, the committee will identify someone to contact the youth about the decision. The member who will serve as the youth’s mentor will make this call, whenever possible. This call will include a conversation to schedule the new member’s orientation.

If the applicant is not selected, the committee will do its best to suggest other ways and groups for the youth to have his/her voice heard. These will be shared with the applicant when contacted about the committee’s decision.

Member Orientation: Each interested youth member will be matched with a mentor who is a current, professional NAHAC member prior to his or her first meeting within two weeks of his/her communication of interest in serving on the NAHAC. Whenever possible, this meeting should happen in person. During this meeting, the mentor will:

- Get to know the member,
- Review the purpose, policy and projects of the committee,
- Discuss the environment (location, dress, atmosphere, and trust) of meetings,
- Review mandatory reporting and confidentiality of meetings,
- Share the expectations of members,
- Answer any questions and address any fears the youth member may have to being on the committee,

- Gauge barriers to engagement youth members may face and share possible supports to overcome those barriers; and,
- Create a plan to make membership accessible and easy for the youth member.

Member Retirement:

Members can retire from the committee at any time by communicating with their mentor or committee coordinator, in person or in writing. If a youth member is struggling to consistently attend meetings (i.e. missed two consecutive meetings unexcused or three consecutive meetings excused), the youth's mentor will reach out to offer support and aid in problem-solving around any barriers preventing the youth from attending.

General Policies:

Opportunity Sharing: Conference attendance and other opportunities occasionally present themselves. The committee will work together to match these opportunities with the member best fitting member; youth or professional.

Decision Making Method:

NAHAC will use Gradients of Agreement to make decisions. The process goes as follows.

- Each member will hold up the number of fingers matching their level of comfort with the decision.
 1. Heck Yeah, I'm 110% in favor
 2. Sure sounds good
 3. Eh, I don't care either way
 4. No way, something isn't right about this
 5. Absolutely not! Over my dead body
- The meeting facilitator is responsible for helping those at a level of 3 or below share any concerns and support the group in discussing and finding compromise.
- Decision cannot be "approved" or "pass" if anyone votes a 4 or 5 during the process – there must be some compromise made to move those voting 4 and 5 to at least a 3 or higher.

Meeting Frequency: Meetings typically happen every two months, but may be more frequent, when necessary.

Stipend and Expense Reimbursement:

When funds allow, youth NAHAC members may request a stipend and expense reimbursement for each meeting or event attended. Stipends are paid at \$25 per meeting/event.

Reimbursable expenses include mileage and childcare costs. Mileage is paid at the federal rate for the most direct route to and from the meeting. Any additional mileage driven for a youth members' personal business during the same trip will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Childcare will only be paid for the duration of meeting and time spent driving from the meeting to/from childcare location. Stipends and mileage forms will be available at each meeting/event and will be submitted to Cassy Rockwell at 215 Centennial Mall South Suite 200, Lincoln NE 68508 within sixty (60) days of the meeting/event. Forms received after this date will not be honored.

Children at Meetings:

Parenting youth members are welcomed to bring their children to NAHAC meetings with them. Assistance in arranging childcare is also available and can be reimbursed, as long as funds are available.

Mentor-Mentee Partnership Policies

Matching:

Mentors will be matched in the most natural fashion possible. This means professional members known to the new youth member will be asked to serve as mentor first. Members living in close proximity to the youth will be asked, if a natural mentor doesn't exist. If a new youth member does not have a professional member known to them or living close, the committee will open selection to all members or explore recruiting additional professional members.

Mentor-Mentee Activities

Mentors are expected to meet the below basic standards to support the mentor-mentee relationship. Any additional support or activities are up to the mentee and mentor, and not considered an activity of the NAHAC. The mentor will:

- Treat the mentee as an individual,
- Check-in with their mentee prior to each meeting to problem-solve any barriers to attendance are addressed and answer any questions about the meeting agenda.
- Debrief with the mentee after each meeting to make sure all questions are answered and the mentee was able to voice all their opinions; and,
- Aid the mentee in completing the Participation Agreement (i.e. contacting caseworker, explaining NAHAC and addressing guardians' questions).

Addressing Mentee-Mentor Relationship Challenges

Both the mentee and mentor are encouraged to be open to conversations about struggles with the mentorship relationship. If the mentor or mentee are unable to address concerns with one another, they should seek support from the committee, coordinator or other committee members, if they experience difficulty in their mentee-mentor relationship.