

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

April 11, 2025 at 9:30AM, CDT

In-Person Meeting

Country Inn & Suites – Nebraska Ballroom

[North Hotel & Conference Center]

5353 N. 27th Street

Lincoln, NE

The agenda was mailed to Council members prior to the meeting. The meeting was chaired by Rachel Siffring and called to order at 9:30AM, CST and the *Pledge of Allegiance* was recited. Quorum was present.

Present: Quinton Corwin, Caiti Donaldson, Jason Gieschen, Shauna Graham, Brent Hoffman, Shaistha Karipi, Matt Kaslon, Eddie Kraska, Beth Libra, Cheryl Montgomery, Stephen Morton, DJ Plautz, Sasha Reeks, Jennifer Severe-Oforah, Mark Shriver, Rachel Siffring, Judy Trent, and Joe Valenti.

Absent: Tony Green, George Griffith, Ashley Hansen, Dr. Tom Janousek, Seamus Kelly, and Amy Rhone.

Guests: Christopher Chambers, Jenn Clark, Tania Diaz, Tiffany Donaldson, Sue Gieschen, Robin Hoffman, Candi Kraska, Diana Meadors, Kerry Miller, Stacy Pfeifer, Sneha Roy, Sherry Stansberry, Ben Stromberg, and Dawn Sybrant.

Staff: Kristen Larsen, Rachel Ward, Edith Titamoh, and Nikki Krause.

Welcome, *Pledge of Allegiance*, and Introductions

Rachel Siffring welcomed everyone to the April 11, 2025 quarterly Council meeting and the *Pledge of Allegiance* was recited.

Kristen Larsen explained that the Governor has not appointed new Council members to the Council. So, until the new appointments have been made, Jason Gieschen and Stephen Morton are still acting members of the Council. Dawn Sybrant is in the process of being appointed as the Medicaid and Long-Term Care representative to the Council. Christopher Chambers is in the process of being appointed as the Department of Education – Special Education representative to the Council. Diana Meadors is in the process of being appointed as the Behavioral Health representative to the Council. Additionally, the reappointments of Caiti Donaldson and Shauna Graham have not been made.

Nebraska Open Meetings Act

Rachel S. explained that Council meetings fall under the Nebraska Open Meetings Act and a copy of the Act is posted on the entrance door by the sign-in table.

The Governor's Public Meeting Calendar referred members of the public and media to the Council's Meetings webpage for additional information (posted March 27, 2025).

Public Comment Period #1

Rachel S. mentioned that all public meetings must allow time on their agenda for people who are not on the Council to comment. Members of the public, who wanted to address the Council, were instructed to identify himself or herself, including an address and the name of any organization represented. No public comments were made.

Approval of Minutes

Rachel S. asked the Council members if there were any corrections to the *DRAFT* February 7, 2025 Council meeting minutes. There were no corrections. Council members were reminded to abstain from voting if they were not in attendance for the February 7, 2025 Council meeting. As there were no corrections, Matt Kaslon made the motion to approve the minutes and Eddie Kraska seconded. A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 14, No – 0, Abstain – 3.*** Motion carried.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

As required by Council policy, at the first meeting of each federal fiscal year, members of the Council shall verbally declare any potential conflicts of interest of which they are aware. Council members, who had not already done so or had updates, were asked to verbally declare any potential conflicts of interest. They are noted below.

Stephen Morton	None
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The following Council member updated her conflicts of interest.

Shaistha Karipi	None
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Financial Report

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the Designated State Agency (DSA) for the Council. DHHS is the flow thru for Council funds. However, it is the Council that decides on how Council funds are to be allocated and monitors the allocated funds.

Kristen reviewed the Financial Report for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025, a handout at the meeting. At the August 16, 2024 Council meeting, the Council approved the budget of \$443,664 for FFY2025 (October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025). The Year-to-Date Expenditures for the second quarter of FFY2025 (October 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025) were \$192,783 – 43.45% of the FFY2025 budget.

NOTE: At the November 22, 2024 meeting, the Council approved to increase the Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI) Needs Assessment contract to \$43,161. However, Kristen did not make changes to the overall budget at this time, as the Council hopes to save the \$13,161 in travel funds.

The report reflects the balance of funds from FFY2023, FFY2024, and partial award of FFY2025 as of March 31, 2025. Available Current Funds totaled \$381,219.51. Expenditures (obligations) totaled \$311,167.45. Balance of Current Funds Available was \$70,052.06.

NOTE: Kristen expects that the Council will receive flat funding for FFY2025. (The same amount as last year.)

NOTE: The Financial Forecast for FFY2024 shows a negative balance. It is possible that some subaward projects will not spend all their obligated amounts. Also, the FFY2024 obligations include the two-year subaward with People First of Nebraska (PFN). We anticipate PFN will only spend \$60,000 in year one. Thereby decreasing the negative balance. Business Unit shifts to FFY2025 will also address the negative balance.

Election of Council Officers & Applying for Reappointment to the Council with the Governor

Officer elections for FFY2026 will be conducted at the August 15, 2025 Council meeting. This includes the offices of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. If you are interested in any of these offices or would like more information, please contact Kristen Larsen at 402-471-0143 or kristen.larsen@nebraska.gov.

Eligible Council members whose term expire on October 1, 2025, and are interested in continuing to serve on the Council, are encouraged to reapply with the Governor. Applications can be submitted either online at the Boards & Commissions – Application for Executive Appointment webpage at <https://governor.nebraska.gov/board-comm-req> or by mailing a **completed** Executive Appointment Application to Pat Selk at the Office of the Governor. Council members eligible to apply for reappointment are:

George Griffith (Family)
Ashley Hansen (Family)
Eddie Kraska (Individual)
Beth Libra (Family)
Sasha Reeks (Individual)
Mark Shriver (MMI/UCEDD)

NOTE: Ashley was appointed to serve the remainder of Tricia Strauch's term. Reeks was appointed to serve the remainder of Dustin Henderson's term. The By-Laws indicate they are eligible to serve an additional two three-year terms.

The following Council members have terms that will expire October 1, 2025 and are ineligible for reappointment due to term limits:

Matt Kaslon (Individual)
Cheryl Montgomery (Non-Governmental)
Rachel Siffring (Family)

NOTE: If you know someone who meets these criteria and might be interested in being on the Council, please let Kristen Larsen know at 402-471-0143 or kristen.larsen@nebraska.gov.

NOTE: **Caiti Donaldson** (Individual), whose first appointment expired October 1, 2024, has decided not to apply for reappointment.

2025 Hybrid Tri-Board Meeting Update

The Tri-Board consists of the DD Network Partners (the DD Council, Disability Rights Nebraska, and Munroe-Meyer Institute/University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities). The 2025 **Hybrid** (in-person and virtual) Tri-Board meeting will be on Friday – June 13, 2025. The topic will be *Effective Advocacy to Improve Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS)*. **We strongly encourage you to attend in-person if possible.** In-person participants will meet at the Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI) facility located near the UNO Scott Campus at 6902 Pine Street. A link to the Zoom meeting will be forthcoming.

NOTE: You will need to register with Council staff by May 31, 2025 for the meeting. To register, please contact Nikki Krause at 402-471-2330 or nikki.krause@nebraska.gov.

NOTE: MMI is working on a hotel room block. A few of the hotel rooms are being held for the Council. Please let Nikki Krause know as soon as possible if you will be attending in-person and will need accommodations.

Report of the Planning Committee: State Needs Assessment Survey

Judy Trent and Kristen provided an update on the 2027-2031 Five Year State Plan Development. The Council is working with MMI Contractor, Dr. Kerry Miller, to develop the questions for the Needs

Assessment Survey that will go out this summer and she will also be conducting statewide focus groups/one-on-one interviews to get more specific information.

The Planning Committee Five Year State Plan Development launch meeting was on March 3, 2025. This was a brainstorming effort to identify gaps and barriers that need to be addressed. The Planning Committee met again on April 10, 2025 to review the survey questions developed by Dr. Miller and provide feedback on them and to see if any areas were overlooked. Today, Dr. Miller would like the Council members to review the survey questions and provide feedback to her. Is something missing? Are the questions clearly understood?

- The surveys will go out to family members, guardians, caregivers, professionals, and self-advocates. (There will be an alternative survey that self-advocates can choose from to complete.)
- The surveys will be scored on a five-point scale.
 - 1 – Not Important
 - 2 – Slightly Important
 - 3 – Neutral
 - 4 – Important
 - 5 – Very Important
 - N/A – Not Applicable/I do not know(The alternative survey for the self-advocates utilizes a green thumbs up or a red thumbs down.)
- There are a limited number of questions for each section as we do not wish for participants to get survey fatigue with too many questions.
- Surveys will be translated into Spanish. If a translation other than Spanish is needed, MMI will have access to an interpreter.

The next steps are:

- Dr. Miller and the MMI team will prepare the Final DRAFT of the Needs Assessment Survey.
- Distribute the Needs Assessment Survey May 19, 2025 through August 31, 2025.
 - Council members are encouraged to let Kristen or Dr. Miller know where the survey could be distributed.
- The Planning Committee will meet on October 23, 2025 and November 3, 2025 to review the Needs Assessment written analysis and the Comprehensive Review and Analysis for guidance in setting DRAFT State Plan Goals and Objectives.
- November 21, 2025 the Council approves DRAFT State Plan Goals and Objectives.
- The DRAFT State Plan Goals and Objectives go out for the first round of public comment December 1, 2025 through January 15, 2026.
- The Planning Committee will meet (date to be determined) to review the public comments and edit, if needed, the state plan goals and objectives before the February 6, 2026 Council meeting.

Report of the Planning Committee: Subaward Recommendations for FFY2026

The Planning Committee met on April 10, 2025 to also make subaward recommendations for FFY2026. The Planning Committee recommends not issuing any Requests for Proposals (RFAs) for FFY2026 this spring/summer because the Council's budget is very tight. If the Council were to issue any RFAs, the funding for the subawards would need to come out of FFY2026 funding. Unfortunately, we do not know if or when we will be getting the FFY2026 funding. We are still waiting for the rest of the funding for FFY2025.

It is anticipated that the FFY2026 Grant Award will be \$527,344.

The anticipated Council Operating Budget for FFY 2026 would be \$414,000. (This includes Council Administrative, Staff Salaries, Travel, Indirect, and Operating Expenses.

The potential FFY2026 available funds would be \$113,344.

The subawards that could be renewed for a second year come to \$110,000.

NOTE: The Grant Review Committee would review the subaward proposals for year two for any recommendations or contingencies.

This leaves \$3,344. That is just cutting it too close.

The good news is that when looking at the State Plan, we have met every goal/objective.

Therefore, the Planning Committee recommends not issuing any RFAs for FFY2026 this spring/summer. A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 17, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried.

Individual Spotlight Award Presentation

For Developmental Disability Awareness Month the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) presented awards to showcase the exceptional efforts and passion of those involved in the DD community. As such, DDD has been going across the state to award the 12 winners. (DDD awarded three winners in each category.) **At today's meeting, Jason Gieschen was presented with the Individual Spotlight Award and a certificate from Senator Strommen! Congratulations, Jason!**

Presentation from the State Unit on Aging regarding Nebraska's Aging and Disability Center (ADRC) Program and Council Input

Ben Stromberg, DHHS Program Manager II – State Unit on Aging, presented on Nebraska's ADRC Program and gathered Council input on how to improve the program.

NOTE: A copy of Ben Stromberg's presentation and the handouts he brought are attached to the end of the minutes.

Concerns on Recent Federal Policies, Threats to Medicaid Funding, and Potential Council Funding Concerns

The last few weeks have been intense for Council staff. The Administration for Community Living (ACL) is where the Council gets its funding. On March 28th, it was announced that ACL is being dissolved. Top level staff have been let go and we have heard that Councils and UCCEDs are being moved under the Administration for Children and Families.

Mark mentioned that the UCCED Directors recently had a Technical Assistance meeting in Washington\ D.C., and that Jennifer Johnson, the Deputy Director of ACL, met with them. There is a lot of anxiety going around. Layoffs affected the areas of Policy, Communications, and Budget. Programmatic people were not hit significantly. Jennifer was very good at reassuring people. Councils and UCCEDs were once under the Administration of Children and Families about 13 years ago before they moved to ACL. "We were good then, we will be good now."

There is still some anxiety about funding and when/if we will receive the rest of FFY2025 funding and the funding for FFY2026.

Kristen explained that she and other Executive DD Council Directors have been on daily update calls with Jill Jacobs, the Executive Director for the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities. In addition to discussing the fate of DD Councils, they have been discussing the threats to Medicaid Funding. There is a large push for Councils to educate their congressional delegation. Kristen has been in talks with some of the other DD Councils in our region about possibly having a virtual regional event to educate policymakers on the vital importance of Medicaid to the DD community.

Beth went to Congressman Floods town hall meeting and has monthly calls with the Congressmen's DC staff. Kristen mentioned that she has been told that it may be more effective to reach out to the Congressmen's local staff and that individual Council members may have more luck reaching them than Council staff. Council staff have to walk the fine line between "educating" and "lobbying".

Updates from State Agency Representatives

NOTE: Agency representatives were asked to briefly touch on any pressing issues or important updates the Council needed to be informed of. The written reports in their entirety are attached at the end of the minutes for review. [Jenn Clark represented the Division of Developmental Disabilities; Diana Meadors represented the Division of Behavioral Health; Jennifer Severe-Oforah, Maternal and Child Health – Division of Public Health; Christopher Chambers represented the Department of Education – Office of Special Education; DJ Plautz, Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation; Dawn Sybrant represented Medicaid and Long-Term Care and Aging]

Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

DDD continues to make monthly Family Support Waiver (FSW) offers. To date, 1,711 offers have been made to families and their children. 46% of the offers have been accepted, 32% have been declined, and 22% are awaiting a response from the family. The most common reasons for declines are:

- No response after multiple contacts.
- The family is currently receiving services on the A&D waiver.
- Services are not needed.

DDD is ahead of schedule on eliminating the DD Waitlist. The DD Waitlist should be eliminated by June 30, 2025. DDD is currently in Phase 2: Building Momentum of the Elimination of the DD Waitlist. On March 19, 2025 the DDD submitted amendments to the Comprehensive Developmental Disabilities (CDD), Developmental Disabilities Adult Day (DDAD), Family Support (FSW), and the Aged and Disabled (AD) waivers to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

DDD is thankful for the Council's partnership in hosting the Charting the LifeCourse training sessions on April 7th.

Division of Behavioral Health (DBH)

Diana Meadors presented the DBH report. DBH has completed to FY2024 Annual State Fiscal report and the FY2024 Consumer survey. Both will be posted on the DBH webpage. The Recovery Friendly Workplace design is complete, and the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce is the first to pledge for this program implementation.

DBH continues to move forward with the seven Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHC). CCBHCs are one-stop-shop clinic models designed to ensure access to coordinated comprehensive behavioral health care. The Serious Mental Illness (SMI) Coordination 1915(i) Waiver continues to make progress with a roll out date of November 1, 2025. 988 continues to show positive impact on consumers in need of crisis services by the warm transfer protocols established between 988 and 911.

The Nebraska Strong Recovery team that was launched last April had a follow up audit with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and that was a huge success.

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

VR continues to provide technical assistance to agency providers in an effort of improving the quality-of-service delivery. The Career Pathways Advancement Project (CPAP 2.0) continues to provide outreach to the I/DD population to help prior clients advance.

VR and the Virginia Commonwealth University are partnering to host a training on best practices of supported employment. The training has been scheduled for July 1, 2025 and will be held at the Lincoln VR Office. Supported employment providers who hold an active service agreement with VR will be invited to attend.

There will be 17 “FREE” Summer Transition programs held across the state for transition age youth (14-21). These are innovative short-term programs to provide career exploration, job readiness, and work-based learning opportunities for students with disabilities. These are listed on VR’s webpage.

Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) – Office of Special Education (OSE)

Christopher Chambers provided the NDE-OSE update. Currently, the NDE continues to operate as usual while closely monitoring guidance from the federal government.

NOTE: Attached to the NDE-OSE update is a memo from NDE Commissioner Maher on the impact that the Executive Order will have for students with disabilities.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Parts B and C applications for states to receive federal funding will be available for public review and comment on the OSE webpage. The Nebraska Applications will be available beginning March 21, 2025 for Public Review for 60 days with the last 30 days available for Public Comment.

Monitoring is required by federal regulations through the monitoring process to ensure school districts in the state meet the requirements of IDEA, with particular emphasis on those requirements that are most closely related to improving educational results for children with disabilities.

Yesterday, LB653 added AM932. It is very confusing. He recommends reading both the bill and the amendment and sending any questions to the senators. It is unclear how this will affect option enrollment and students with disabilities.

The hybrid Nebraska Multi-tiered System of Support (NeMTSS) Summit is October 9-10, 2025 at the Younes Conference Center in Kerney, Nebraska. The theme is *Road Trip – Navigating Literacy on the MTSS Highway*. This hybrid event will highlight how a multi-tiered system of support can improve student outcomes in all areas, with a special emphasis on literacy.

Maternal and Child Health – Division of Public Health (MCH-DPH)

The Maternal and Child Health Block Grant/Title V concluded the stakeholder portion of the 2025 Needs Assessment on April 9, 2025. There were 13 Maternal and Child Health issues nominated. Title V is restricted to 7-10 priority needs. The Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) committee identified:

1. Early screening and diagnosis.
2. Accessing mental and behavioral health services.

Recent cuts in staffing at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) included the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program. EHDI at CDC provides technical assistance and funds to states to improve documentation, reporting and analysis of diagnostic and intervention data to optimize the impact of the program.

Measles has been identified in Kansas and Colorado. Measles is a highly contagious febrile rash illness that can cause serious illness: 1 in 5 people are hospitalized. 1 in 20 develop pneumonia. 1-3 in 1,000 people infected will die. Vaccination is the best protection against measles.

Medicaid and Long-Term Care and Aging (MLTC)

Dawn Sybrant provided the MLTC report. On January 31, 2025 MLTC published Provider Bulletin 25-02 which updates Medicaid Service Definitions (MSDs) for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). A couple of the important topics addressed in the provider bulletin include provider requirements and schools as a place of service. The provider bulletin addresses several other concerns brought to their attention by caregivers and providers. DHHS received over 300 comments from ABA providers and members of the community. Thank you to all the providers who submitted feedback on the draft versions of these MSDs during the open provider review and feedback period. All comments were carefully reviewed and used to inform changes and clarifications in the final service definitions.

Starting May 1, 2025 a significant change will take effect in the Home and Community-Services (HCBS) Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) system. Going forward, visits will only be accepted if the selected tasks align with the approved list of task codes. This system update will eliminate the option to select invalid tasks, ensuring that only authorized and validated tasks are recorded. Additionally, these tasks must now be cross-checked against the visit's prior authorization to ensure they are in compliance with the service plan. Provider Bulletin 25-03 was published on April 1, 2025 to outline the upcoming changes and inform providers of the steps they need to take moving forward.

MLTC is currently accepting applications for both the Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) and the Beneficiary Advisory Committee (BAC). Applications for the two groups can be found on their respective webpages.

Updates from the DD Network Representatives

NOTE: DD Network representatives were asked to briefly touch on any pressing issues or important updates the Council needed to be informed of. The written reports in their entirety are attached at the end of the minutes for review. [Seamus Kelly, Disability Rights Nebraska; Mark Shriver, Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI)/University Center of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)]

Disability Rights Nebraska

Tania Diaz provided the Disability Rights Nebraska report. The new Administration has issued many Executive Orders that have caused a level of confusion and uncertainty. Disability Rights Nebraska is watching actions and events carefully. Specifically, they are concerned with proposed Medicaid cuts,

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act Litigating, dissolving the Administration on Community Living and the Department of Education, reduction of federal workers, and some Social Security offices being closed and diminishing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Many lawsuits were filed in response to the Executive Orders.

Disability Rights Nebraska has been invited by ConAgra to provide some presentations to their staff. The presentations will take place this summer and will cover the following topics:

- Supported Employment
- Olmstead
- Social Role Valorization/Values Based Education

Disability Rights Nebraska was also contacted by a University of Nebraska – Lincoln (UNL) professor who wants to have a panel discussion on Ableism for her students.

Brad Meurrens was invited to be a member of a committee working on employment and improving the image and opinions of people with I/DD as workers. The project to increase employer awareness is supported by the Council and the UNL Public Policy Center is lead on the project. Pat Cottingham and Tania continue to work with subject matter expert Becki Koehler and the DD Network Partners on implementing the Supported Employment Action Plan.

NOTE: The first week of August 2025, Social Role Valorization Training is being offered. This would qualify as one of your in-state trainings.

Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI)/University Center of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)
The MMI website revision is complete! Please take a look at it and let them know what you think.

The 2nd Annual Nebraska Connecting Families Summit was held on March 7, 2025. The goal of the summit was to identify next steps for creating systemic supports across Nebraska to maximize funding, resources and information to enhance the accessibility and engagement of families and professionals with needed mental and behavioral health resources and services that have meaningful connections to educational settings. MMI has been granted an extension of the project for an additional eight months which will focus on developing technical assistance for schools and communities on engaging families and collaborating on behavioral health services.

MMI is planning for reductions in state funding and monitoring federal funding closely with the goal to maintain its current level of high-quality services, training, and research.

The Nebraska EmployABILITY Project started October 1, 2024. There are 64 students in the program, and they have completed career inventories. All have completed at least one work-based assessment related to pragmatics and work strength and endurance. All 64 have started career exploration and training activities.

MMI is developing onboarding training for Direct Service Providers (DSPs) in collaboration with DHHS DDD. This will be an asynchronous online training required of all newly hired DSPs. The current plan is for six modules including: History and Systems, Abuse and Neglect, Rights and Respect, Confidentiality and Consent, Individual Support Plans, and Medical Support Plans. This will be implemented sometime in 2026.

The Seeking Opportunities for an Advocacy Revolution (SOAR) conference is October 3-5, 2025 in Omaha, Nebraska. MMI/UCEDD will be hosting the conference. The SOAR conference will bring together self-advocates from Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Colorado, Wyoming, and South Dakota to share ideas on how to advocate.

Council Chair and Staff Updates

Rachel S. mentioned that she met with DSA representative Sue Medinger the first week of March to jointly present Kristen's 2024 Performance Evaluation and everything went well. As a reminder, the August 2025 Council meeting packet will have the short evaluation form for the 2025 Executive Director Performance Evaluation which will be discussed at the November 2025 Council meeting.

Rachel S. also mentioned that the August 2025 Council meeting will be her last meeting as Chair. Feel free to reach out and talk with her about Chair responsibilities.

Kristen had a few updates to share.

- The Program Performance Report (PPR) for 2024 was submitted on March 28, 2025. Now she is pulling some highlight stories to tell our story.
- She has submitted public comments twice now on the HCBS waiver amendments.
- The Nebraska Association of Service Providers (NASP) Conference went great as did the Proclamation for DD Awareness Month and the Senatorial Dinner.
- She is trying to narrow down and prioritize the work for Becki Koehler for the next six months for Supported Employment. We are not going to be able to renew her contract, so we need to figure out how we are going to leverage system change without a point person.
- Kristen was recently appointed to the Office of Public Guardian Advisory Committee and the Brain Injury Advisory Committee.

Rachel W. shared that Disability Pride Day is July 26, 2025 from 9am to 1pm. It will be at Antelope Park again. This year there will be a bounce house, a magician, face painting, and Henna tattoos. In the Auld Center, there will be an art gallery of art all of which was created by people with DD.

Rachel W. and Beth presented at the NASP Conference and will present at the Charting the LifeCourse Showcase in May. TransCen presented at the NASP Conference as well. Rachel W. was able to introduce Sean Roy to some key Nebraska players. The Nebraska Community of Practice onsite visit was on Monday and Tuesday (April 7 & 8, 2025). Day one was families, professionals, and advocates and day two was specifically for Ambassadors.

Edith Titamoh represented the Council on the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant/Title V 2025 Needs Assessment. She attended first Employer Survey Planning meeting with UNL last week. They reviewed different areas and questions to get employer opinions about employees with disabilities.

Nikki provided a brief legislative update.

- LB10 – Change requirements relating to wholesale drug distributors and dispensing of certain prescription drugs – Approved by Governor on March 11, 2025.
- LB42 – Provide for employment of nurse aides in intellectual and developmental disability facilities – Approved by Governor on March 11, 2025.
- LB592 – Change provisions relating to the achieving a better life experience program – Approved by Governor April 7, 2025.

- LB391 – Adopt the Give to Enable Scholarship Act and provide for certain income tax adjustments – Named Speaker Priority Bill.
- LB453 – Change requirements for background checks for guardians and conservators – Named Speaker Priority Bill.
- LB653 – Change provisions relating to reimbursement for special education programs, support services, and the enrollment option program, provide reimbursement for certain students under the enrollment option program, and change the authorized uses of the Education Future Fund – Named Education Committee Priority Bill.

Council Member Updates

Matt mentioned that his dad's surgery went well and he has been discharged. He also mentioned that he will be presenting in one of the virtual sessions during the technical assistance training iTACC will be doing this summer. He will be presenting on June 3, 2025 for the *Adopting Innovative Practices for Recruiting Prospective Members* session. Matt also mentioned that the August 2025 Council meeting will be his last meeting as Vice-Chair. Feel free to reach out and talk with him about Vice-Chair responsibilities.

Sherry Stansberry said that Disability Pride Day in Kearney will be July 11, 2025.

Eddie Kraska attended both the NASP Conference and the Senatorial Dinner. He was able to get a picture with the Governor after the DDAM Proclamation Ceremony. Eddie was in a production of *The Wizard of Oz*. He played Uncle Henry. Right now, he is preparing for the production of *Alice in Wonderland* that will be held in October.

Brent Hoffman participated in regional swimming here in Lincoln and advanced to state competition in Omaha.

Shauna Graham mentioned that this will be the fourth year that Bailey will be presenting a scholarship.

Beth mentioned that the Disability Pride Day in Norfolk will be on July 31, 2025. Last night, she presented her 55th presentation on Charting the LifeCourse. Ellie will be having an art show at the Art Center in Norfolk.

Reeks attended the NASP Conference and had a good time. She donated one of her paintings to the silent auction at the NASP Conference. She is excited to start her new job at Douglas County Corrections. She participated in women's state bowling and placed 14th in doubles.

Jason thanked everyone for the great honor of receiving one of the Spotlight Awards from DDD.

Judy mentioned her sister let her be part of the coaching staff on the basketball team she is on.

Shaistha Karipi mentioned that she helped two families get the Medicaid waiver. Her daughter will be going to three weeks of Camp Munroe. Shaistha also attended the Senatorial Dinner.

Rachel S. mentioned that Braxton is on the Youth Activation Committee for Special Olympics. They had a Summit at Ashland-Greenwood and over 200 kids attended. The kids on the Committee planned the breakout sessions. Braxton loved this and said this was his best day. Braxton has Special Olympics track

this weekend. Braxton and his dad participated in the Polar Plunge and were on 10/11 news. Braxton raised the most funds for the fundraiser.

Public Comment Period #2

Rachel S. mentioned that all public meetings must allow time on their agenda for people who are not on the Council to comment. Members of the public, who wanted to address the Council, were instructed to identify himself or herself, including an address and the name of any organization represented. The following public comments were made.

Stacy Pfeifer – Director of Enable Savings Plan – 421 S. 9th Street, Suite 137 Lincoln, NE
LB592 was signed by the Governor and LB391 was named as a speaker priority bill. She is in the beginning stages of planning the 10 year celebration of Enable.

Adjourn

Matt made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Shaistha seconded. By unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 3:06PM, CST.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for August 15, 2025 and will be in-person. The virtual Grant Review Committee meeting will be held the afternoon of August 14, 2025.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

Mission

The Council engages in **Advocacy**, **Capacity Building**, and **Systemic Change** activities that assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design and have access to needed community services, individualized support, and other forms of assistance that promote *self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion* in all facets of community life.

AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER NEBRASKA

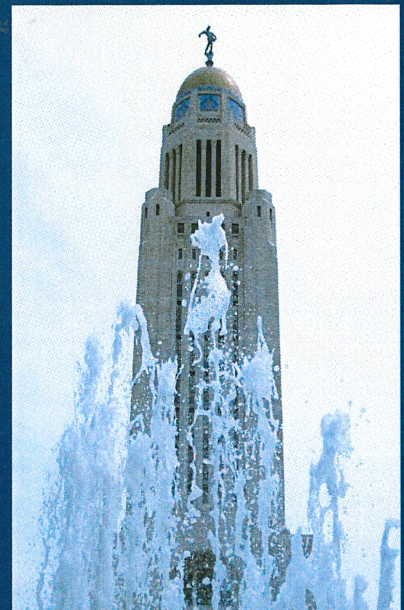
ADRC 101

4/11/2025

1

ADRC BACKGROUND

- ✓ Established by the Nebraska Legislature in 2015 as a pilot
- ✓ Permanent status established by Nebraska Legislature in 2018
- ✓ Responsibility assigned to DHHS State Unit on Aging for program oversight, technical assistance, reimbursement, and grant management



2

ADRC PURPOSE

- To provide information about long-term care services and supports available in the home and community for older Nebraskans or persons with disabilities, family caregivers, and persons who request information or assistance on behalf of others
- To assist eligible individuals to access the most appropriate public and private resources to meet their long-term care needs

*Source: Aging and Disability Resource Center Act LB793 (2018); §68-1113

3



PEOPLE WE SERVE

- ✓ Persons with Disabilities of any Age
- ✓ Persons Aged 60 and Older
- ✓ Family Members, Caregivers, Advocates & Providers

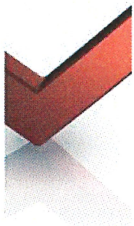
4

ADRC PARTNERS

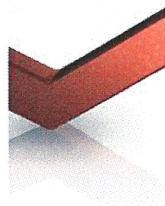


- Aging Office of Western Nebraska
- Aging Partners
- Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging
- Brain Injury Association of Nebraska
- Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging
- Easterseals Nebraska
- League of Human Dignity
- Midland Area Agency on Aging
- Munroe Meyer Institute
- Northeast Nebraska Area Agency on Aging
- South Central Nebraska Area Agency on Aging
- West Central Nebraska Area Agency on Aging
- 211 Nebraska

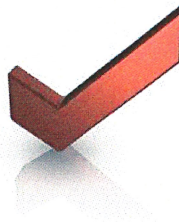
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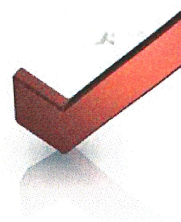
Information
& Referral



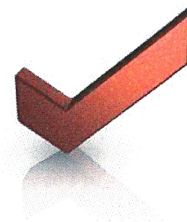
Options
Counseling



Transitional
Options
Counseling



Benefits
Assistance



Mobility
Training

CURRENT ADRC SERVICES

6

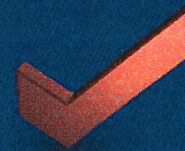
ADRC SERVICES BY SITE

Service #	Service	AOWN	AP	BRAAA	ENOA	MAAA	NENAAA	SCNAAA	WCNAAA	BIANE	LHD	MMI	Easterseals	211 Nebraska
40	Information & Referral	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
41	Options Counseling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
42	Transitional Options Counseling					✓					✓	✓	✓	
43	Benefits Assistance					✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
44	Mobility Training					✓					✓			

7

INFORMATION & REFERRAL PURPOSE

- Establish contact with the consumer (or representative)
- Assess the consumer's long and short-term needs
- Identify resources to meet those needs
- Assist consumer (as needed/requested) in referral to identified resources
- Follow up (based upon consumer preference) to ensure needs have been met



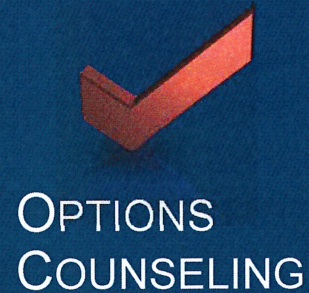
INFORMATION
& REFERRAL

8

OPTIONS COUNSELING PURPOSE

- Helps eligible consumer make informed choices about services and supports to meet their needs
- Provides information on options to allow consumer to live as independently as possible in setting of their choice
- Provides assistance in applying for and securing services

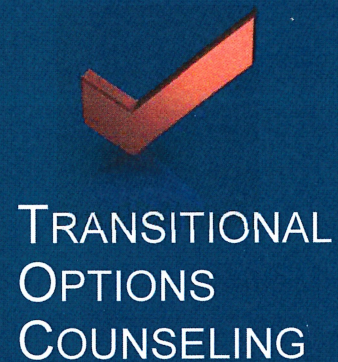
Note: ADRC does not provide services and supports, but rather assists the consumer in linking with community resources (including in-house) to receive needed supports.



9

TRANSITIONAL OPTIONS COUNSELING PURPOSE

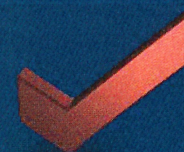
- Assist eligible consumers and chosen representatives when faced with specific, time-limited issue
- Example: Assisting person transitioning from hospital to independent living in obtaining and coordinating supports to facilitate the change



10

BENEFITS ASSISTANCE PURPOSE

- Assist eligible consumer in understanding eligibility criteria and process for obtaining benefits
- Assist in understanding beneficiary rights
- Provide consultation and advice on benefit options
- Assist in completing benefits application forms



BENEFITS
ASSISTANCE

11

MOBILITY TRAINING PURPOSE

- Provide eligible consumer training on transportation options available in their community
- Assist consumers in learning basic components of public transit system, rural handi-van system, bus schedules, etc.
- May be provided in individual or group setting and may involve field training



MOBILITY
TRAINING

12

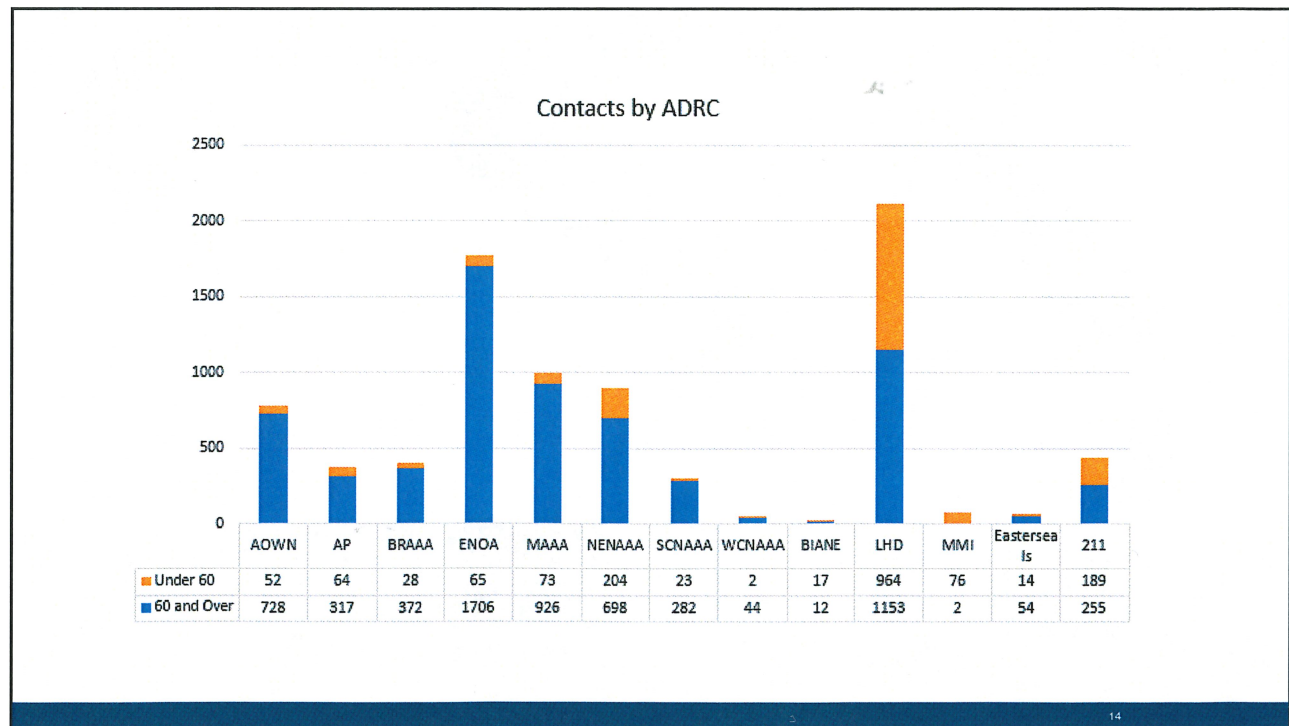
CONTACTS BY TARGET POPULATION

The following chart reflects the number of consumers over or under 60 years of age. The numbers highlight the number of contacts, not unique consumers.

*Source: State Unit on Aging
Aging Peer Place Report
December 6, 2024

2024 DATA

13



14

MOVING FORWARD

- The ADRC is a steppingstone to a No Wrong Door (NWD) system.
- Beginning in 2022, ADRCs utilized Medicaid Administrative Claiming to secure federal matching funds.
- The ADRC website, adrcnebraska.org, provides links to all Nebraska ADRCs and is being updated with an interactive map to assist individuals to more easily contact an ADRC.

15

15



16

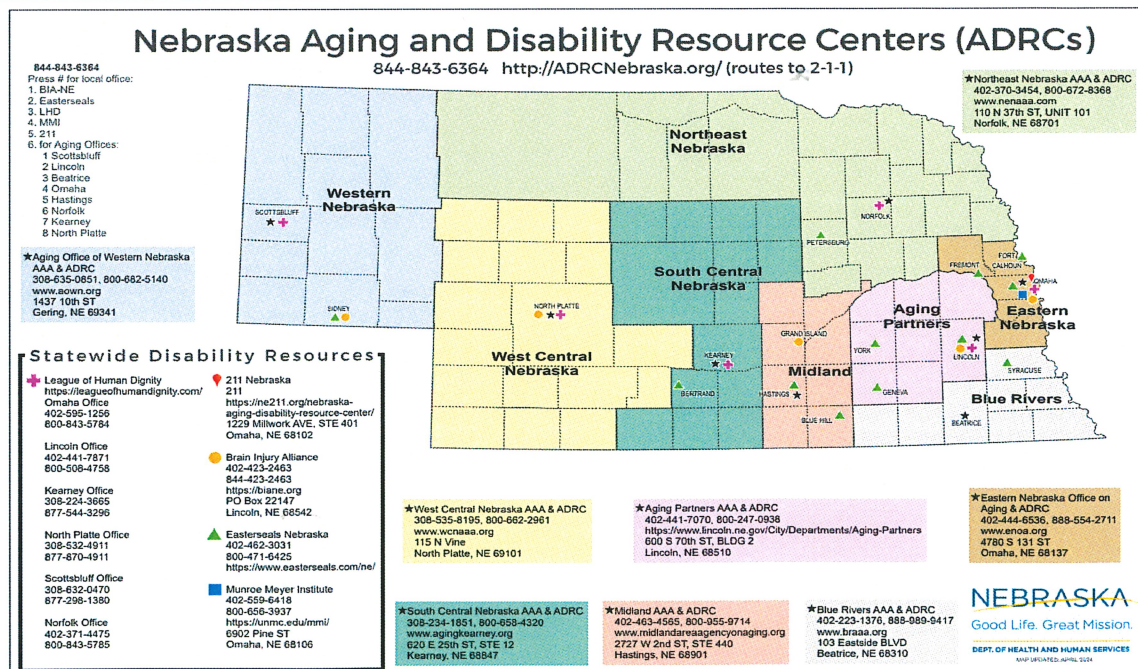
ADRC CONTACTS

TOLL FREE: 1-844-843-6364

Aging Office of Western Nebraska 1437 10 th Street Gering NE 69341 308-635-0851 800-682-5140 (toll free) https://www.aown.org	Aging Partners 600 S 70 th Street Lincoln NE 68510 402-441-7070 800-247-0938 (toll free) https://lincoln.ne.gov/city/mayor/aging	Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging 103 Eastside Blvd. Beatrice NE 68310 402-223-1376 888-317-9417 (toll free) https://www.braaa.org	Brain Injury Association of Nebraska PO Box 22147 Lincoln NE 68542 402-423-2463 Resource/Referral: 844-423-2463 (toll free) https://biane.org
Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging 4780 South 131 st Street Omaha NE 68137 402-444-6536 800-554-2411 (toll free) https://enaoa.org	Easterseals Nebraska 12565 West Center Road, Suite 100 Omaha NE 68144-8144 402-462-3031 800-471-6425 https://www.easterseals.com/ne/	League of Human Dignity 1701 P Street Lincoln NE 68508 402-441-7871 https://leagueofhumandignity.com/#2	Midland Area Agency on Aging 2727 West 2 nd Street, Suite 440 Hastings NE 68901 402-463-4565 800-955-9714 (toll free) https://www.midlandareaageagencyonaging.org
Northeast NE Area Agency on Aging 110 North 37 th Street, Unit 101 Norfolk NE 68701 402-370-3454 800-672-8368 (toll free) https://www.nenaaa.com	South Central NE Area Agency on Aging 620 East 25 th Street, Suite 1 Kearney NE 68847 308-234-1851 800-658-4320 (toll free) https://www.agingkearney.org	UNMC Munroe-Meyer Institute 6902 Pine Street Omaha NE 68198 402-559-6418 800-656-3937 (toll free) https://www.unmc.edu/mmi/	West Central Nebraska Area Agency on Aging 115 N Vine Street North Platte NE 308-535-8195 800-662-2961 https://wcnaaa.org/
211 Nebraska 1229 Millwork Avenue, Suite 401 Omaha NE 68102 402-444-6666 211 https://ne211.org/			

17

17



18

18





What do people say about the ADRC?

"Staff has been truly incredible about breaking down steps and focusing on what I can and should do for my mom."

"This was extremely helpful. Going into this, we were worried about options for my brother with a disability. We feel so much better now."

"I am grateful to receive kind and complete information."

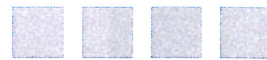
Visit the ADRC website:
adrcnebraska.org

Aging and Disability Resource Center

ADRC

Serving all Nebraskans

adrcnebraska.org
Call 1-844-843-6364 (toll free)



How do I get started?

Call 1-844-843-6364 (toll free) or any ADRC partner listed below. Depending on your needs, you may be redirected to another partner.

Aging Office of Western Nebraska
Scottsbluff: 308-635-0851

Aging Partners
Lincoln: 402-441-7070

Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging
Beatrice: 402-223-1376

Brain Injury Alliance
Statewide: 844-423-2463

Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging
Omaha: 402-444-6444

Easterseals Nebraska
Statewide: 800-471-6425

League of Human Dignity
Statewide: 800-656-4758

Midland Area Agency on Aging
Hastings: 402-463-4565

Munroe Meyer Institute
Statewide: 800-656-3937

Northeast Nebraska Area Agency on Aging
Norfolk: 402-370-3454

South Central Area Agency on Aging
Kearney: 308-234-1851

West Central Area Agency on Aging
North Platte: 308-535-8195

211
Statewide: Dial 211



Serving all Nebraskans

Aging and Disability Resource Center

ADRC

Serving all Nebraskans

adrcnebraska.org
Call 1-844-843-6364 (toll free)

Providing Nebraskans with useful information, assistance and education on community services and supports related to aging and disability



What is ADRC Nebraska?

The ADRC assists Nebraskans who are aging or have a disability and/or their representatives in locating services and supports in their community.

There is no charge for services. The ADRC is funded by the State of Nebraska, with oversight by the Department of Health and Human Services State Unit on Aging.

Who provides ADRC services?

A network of partners provides ADRC services. Partners include:

- Aging Office of Western Nebraska
- Aging Partners
- Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging
- Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska
- Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging
- Easterseals Nebraska
- League of Human Dignity
- Midland Area Agency on Aging
- Munroe Meyer Institute
- Northeast Nebraska Area Agency on Aging
- South Central Nebraska Area Agency on Aging
- West Central Nebraska Area Agency on Aging

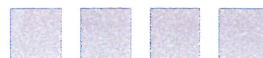
■ 211



Who does the ADRC assist?

The ADRC provides information, assistance and education on how to connect with services and supports for:

- Seniors age 60 and over
- People with disabilities of all ages
- Family members, caregivers and advocates for both



ADRC Services

■ All ADRC services are **FREE** and available for eligible persons and/or their caregivers. Services are provided either by phone or in person. Each ADRC partner determines the services they provide. Services include:

Information and Referral

Assistance with information about services and supports.

Options Counseling

Assistance in making informed choices about services, supports, and settings to best meet the person's needs.

Transitional Options Counseling

Assistance in specific, time-limited issues such as transition from a hospital to independent living.

Benefits Assistance

Assistance in understanding and/or applying for public benefits (Medicaid, Medicare, SSI/SSDI, supplemental food and nutrition, housing vouchers, etc.).

Mobility Training

Training on transportation options and how to utilize local transportation.

Nebraska Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)

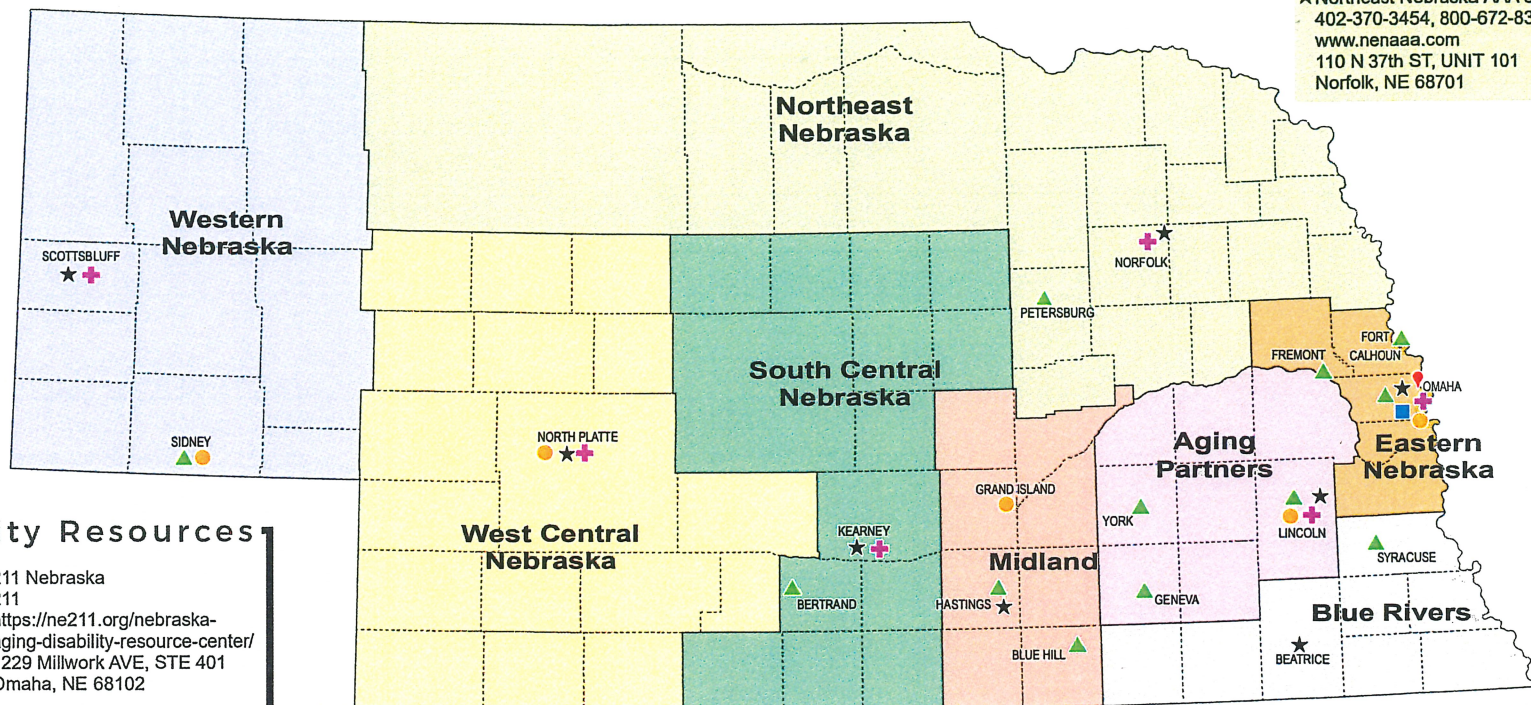
844-843-6364

Press # for local office:

1. BIA-NE
2. Easterseals
3. LHD
4. MMI
5. 211
6. for Aging Offices:
 - 1 Scottsbluff
 - 2 Lincoln
 - 3 Beatrice
 - 4 Omaha
 - 5 Hastings
 - 6 Norfolk
 - 7 Kearney
 - 8 North Platte

844-843-6364 <http://ADRCNebraska.org/> (routes to 2-1-1)

★Northeast Nebraska AAA & ADRC
402-370-3454, 800-672-8368
www.nenaaa.com
110 N 37th ST, UNIT 101
Norfolk, NE 68701



★Aging Office of Western Nebraska
AAA & ADRC
308-635-0851, 800-682-5140
www.aown.org
1437 10th ST
Gering, NE 69341

Statewide Disability Resources

✚ League of Human Dignity
<https://leagueofhumandignity.com/>
402-595-1256
800-843-5784

Lincoln Office
402-441-7871
800-508-4758

Kearney Office
308-224-3665
877-544-3296

North Platte Office
308-532-4911
877-870-4911

Scottsbluff Office
308-632-0470
877-298-1380

Norfolk Office
402-371-4475
800-843-5785

211 Nebraska
211
<https://ne211.org/nebraska-aging-disability-resource-center/>
1229 Millwork AVE, STE 401
Omaha, NE 68102

● Brain Injury Alliance
402-423-2463
844-423-2463
<https://biana.org>
PO Box 22147
Lincoln, NE 68542

▲ Easterseals Nebraska
402-462-3031
800-471-6425
<https://www.easterseals.com/ne/>

■ Munroe Meyer Institute
402-559-6418
800-656-3937
<https://unmc.edu/mmi/>
6902 Pine ST
Omaha, NE 68106

★West Central Nebraska AAA & ADRC
308-535-8195, 800-662-2961
www.wcnaaa.org
115 N Vine
North Platte, NE 69101

★South Central Nebraska AAA & ADRC
308-234-1851, 800-658-4320
www.agingkearney.org
620 E 25th ST, STE 12
Kearney, NE 68847

★Aging Partners AAA & ADRC
402-441-7070, 800-247-0938
<https://www.lincoln.ne.gov/City/Departments/Aging-Partners>
600 S 70th ST, BLDG 2
Lincoln, NE 68510

★Midland AAA & ADRC
402-463-4565, 800-955-9714
www.midlandareaagencyonaging.org
2727 W 2nd ST, STE 440
Hastings, NE 68901

★Blue Rivers AAA & ADRC
402-223-1376, 888-989-9417
www.braaa.org
103 Eastside BLVD
Beatrice, NE 68310

★Eastern Nebraska Office on
Aging & ADRC
402-444-6536, 888-554-2711
www.enaa.org
4780 S 131 ST
Omaha, NE 68137

NEBRASKA
Good Life. Great Mission.
DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
MAP UPDATED: APRIL 2024

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative Report to Council Members

Representative: Tony Green, Director

Agency: Department of Health and Human Services – Division of Developmental Disabilities and Home & Community Based Services

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

Family Support Waiver (FSW) Offers

- The Division continues to make monthly Developmental Disabilities Waiver offers. To date, we have currently made 1,711 offers to families and their children (3/27/2025).
 - 46% (783) of the offers have been accepted.
 - 32% (543) of the offers have been declined.
 - Most common reason for declines:
 - No Response (after multiple contacts)
 - Currently receiving services on the A&D waiver
 - Services not needed
 - 22% (385) of offers are awaiting a response from the family.

Elimination of the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waitlist

- The Division is currently in Phase 2: Building Momentum. Current activities include:
 - Submission of amendments to CDD, DDAD, FSW, and AD waivers to CMS on March 19, 2025
 - Requested 7/1/2025 implementation date
- The Division continues to make offers for the DDAD and CDD waiver to individuals based on their eligibility
 - The Division has made 67 offers for the CDD waiver, 100% of which have been accepted
 - The Division has made 701 offers for the DDAD waiver, of which 237 have been accepted (34%), 58 have declined (8%), and 406 are pending (58%).
- The timeline and other information on the elimination of the waitlist can be found at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/DD-Wait-List.aspx>.

Charting the LifeCourse Summit

- The Division is thankful for NCDD's partnership in hosting the Charting the LifeCourse training sessions on April 7. This event was presented by UMKC Institute for Human Development and NASDDDS National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disability Services with support from DHHS and NCDD.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

All Information available on DD Calendar of Events page on DD Homepage

- Olmstead Advisory Committee Meeting – Wednesday, April 30, 2025
- Monthly DHHS Stakeholder Meeting – Monday, May 5, 2025
- Person-Centered Planning Champions Monthly Meeting – Tuesday, May 6, 2025
- DD Advisory Committee Meeting – Wednesday, May 14, 2025

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative Report to Council Members

Representative: Diana Meadors

Agency: DBH

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

- DBH has completed the FY24 Annual State Fiscal report and that is posted on the DBH web page. <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/behavioral-health.aspx>
- DBH has also completed the FY24 Consumer survey and that will be posted on the DBH web page.
- The Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) design is complete, and The Nebraska Chamber of Commerce is the first to pledge for this program implementation. We are also rolling out the QPR training as part of the RFW.
- We continue to move our 7 CCBHC programs forward and assist with fine tuning the details
- The SMI 1915i waiver continues to make progress with a roll out date of November 1, 2025
- We are fine tuning the RFA for the Opioid Settlement dollars. We hope to have the RFA available by July 1, 2025.
- Nebraska Strong Recovery team launched last April had a follow up audit with SAMHSA and that was a huge success. SAMHSA was very impressed with the work completed and the continued work towards the use of these funds.
- 988 continues to show positive impact on consumers in need of crisis services by the warm transfer protocols established between 988 and 911.

EVENTS:

Stuff the Truck state campaign Against Hunger April 10, 2025

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative Report to Council Members

Representative: DJ Plautz

Agency: Nebraska VR

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

- VR continues to provide technical assistance to agency providers in an effort of improving the quality of service delivery.
- Successful SE/CE outcomes for PY 2024 = 151
- Additional SE/CE data elements are currently under review with the Olmstead Employment Workgroup

Current Agency activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD:

- VR continues to collaborate with Becki Koehler and agency partners as a result of the Dr. Mills study and subsequent action plan.
- CPAP 2.0 continues to provide outreach to the ID/DD population in an effort to help prior clients advance.
 - Read more about CPAP @ <http://www.vr.nebraska.gov/pathways>
- VR and ATP are actively engaged in the Olmstead Advisory Committee.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

- VR and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) are partnering to host a training on the best practices of supported employment. This training has been scheduled for July 1st and will be held at the Lincoln VR office. Supported employment providers who hold an active service agreement with VR will be invited to attend.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative Report to Council Members

Representative: Christopher Chambers, Part B Specialist on behalf of Amy Rhone,
Director/State Administrator for the Office of Special Education

Agency: Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Special Education

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last

Agency update:

Currently, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) continues to operate as usual while closely monitoring guidance from the federal government. See attached PDF from Commissioner Maher.

The IDEA Parts B and C applications for states to receive federal funding will be available for public review and comment on the Office of Special Education [webpage](#). The Nebraska Applications will be available beginning March 21, 2025 for Public Review for 60 days with the last 30 days available for Public Comment.

[IDEA Part B Federal Application – HERE](#)

[IDEA Part C Federal Application – HERE](#)

Upon approval, Nebraska will receive IDEA federal funding on July 1, 2025 to support the state's Part B 611 (school age) and 619 (preschool) programs and Part C (birth to age 3) early intervention program.

Current Agency activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD:

Monitoring Clarification Meetings

Monitoring is required by federal regulations through the monitoring process to ensure school districts in the state meet the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), with particular emphasis on those requirements that are most closely related to improving educational results for children with disabilities.

NDE Office of Special Education Monitoring Priority Areas

- Provision of a free appropriate public education (**FAPE**) in the Least Restrictive Environment (**LRE**) including compliance with the requirements of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
- Procedural Safeguards
- General Supervision including:
 - Child Find - the evaluation and identification of children and youth with disabilities

- Disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

2025 NeMTSS Summit- **Road Trip!** Navigating Literacy on the MTSS Highway

Younes Conference Center-Kearney, NE

October 9 and 10th, 2025



Subject: Update on Executive Order and Impact on Education for Students with Disabilities

On March 21st, Commissioner Maher shared a special update with school leaders across the state regarding the executive order titled [*"Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, and Communities"*](#), signed by President Trump. This executive order directs that, "The Secretary of Education shall, to the maximum extent appropriate and permitted by law, take all necessary steps to facilitate the closure of the Department of Education and return authority over education to the States and local communities, while ensuring the effective and uninterrupted delivery of services, programs, and benefits on which Americans rely."

Commissioner Maher emphasized, "We will not panic. We will deal with facts." Furthermore, both Secretary McMahon and White House officials have publicly stated that it would require an act of Congress to eliminate the Department of Education. Therefore, there is still much to unfold regarding this matter.

At this time, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) continues to operate as usual while closely monitoring guidance from the federal government.

Commissioner Maher looks forward to engaging with Secretary McMahon and other federal officials to better understand the path forward. Nebraska is well-positioned to explore any opportunities this change may bring, while also preparing to address any challenges that may arise.

We understand that recent discussions around the Executive Order have raised questions and concerns about its potential impact on infants, toddlers, and students with disabilities. We would like to take this opportunity to address these concerns and clarify how this may affect the services for infants and toddlers and education for students with disabilities.

First and foremost, we want to reassure everyone that the rights of children with disabilities remain a top priority. The Nebraska Department of Education, along with our Office of Special Education, is closely monitoring the situation to ensure that all state and federal laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), continue to be fully implemented and enforced.

While the Executive Order introduces new priorities and approaches, it does not alter the core principles that guarantee all students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment. This means that regardless of any new policies, the

needs of infants, toddlers, and students with disabilities will continue to be met according to their Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP).

We understand the importance of clear communication during this time and want to assure you that we are working diligently to keep parents, educators, and stakeholders informed about any potential changes that could impact early intervention and special education services. We remain committed to maintaining an open line of communication and will provide updates as necessary. The success and well-being of Nebraska's children is our primary concern.

At the same time, we recognize that these changes may create some uncertainty. Please be assured that our team is dedicated to supporting schools and districts in adjusting to any new expectations, while always ensuring that infants, toddlers, students, and families continue to receive the necessary accommodations and services they are entitled to.

In the coming weeks, we will be offering resources and information, as we receive it, to help guide families and educators through their concerns. Should you have any specific questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office. We are here to support you every step of the way.

Thank you for your continued trust in our commitment to your child's education. We remain steadfast in ensuring that all infants, toddlers, and students with disabilities receive the high-quality services and education they deserve.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative Report to Council Members

Representative: Jennifer Severe-Oforah
Agency: DHHS, Division of Public Health

1) The Maternal and Child Health Block Grant/Title V concluded the stakeholder portion of 2025 Needs Assessment on April 9th at the Embassy Suites in Lincoln, NE.

An animated video illustrating the process can be found here: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Title-V-Needs-Assessment.aspx>

There were 13 Maternal and Child Health issues nominated; Title V is restricted to 7-10 priority needs. The Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) committee identified:

- 1) Early screening and diagnosis
- 2) Accessing mental and behavioral health services

I am writing this on April 7, I will report the outcome in person on April 11.

2) Recent cuts in staffing at the CDC included the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program. EHDI at CDC provides technical assistance and funds to states to improve documentation, reporting and analysis of diagnostic and intervention data to optimize the impact of the program.

3) Measles has been identified in Kansas, and Colorado. Kansas is an outbreak (more than 3 cases). Measles is highly contagious febrile rash illness that can cause serious illness: 1 in 5 people are hospitalized, 1 in 20 develop pneumonia, and 1-3 in 1,000 people infected will die. Vaccination is the best protection against measles.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative Report to Council Members

Representative: _____

Agency: Medicaid and Long-Term Care

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

- **Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Update:** On January 31, MLTC published [Provider Bulletin 25-02](#) which updates Medicaid Service Definitions (MSDs) for ABA. A couple of the important topics addressed in the provider bulletin include:
 - **Provider Requirements:** Providers expressed concern with the longstanding requirement that Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) must have a bachelor's degree and one year of relevant experience or graduate education. In response to provider and community concerns, we are lessening this requirement. Registered Behavior Technicians must have certification from the Behavior Analyst Certification Board and must be enrolled with Nebraska Medicaid.
 - **Schools as a place of service:** Many providers and members of the community interpreted language in the MSD to exclude ABA services from school settings. We updated the setting language in the final MSD to clarify that schools are an allowed place of service.

The provider bulletin addresses several other concerns brought to our attention by caregivers and providers. DHHS received over 300 comments from ABA providers and members of the community. We want to sincerely thank all the providers who submitted feedback on the draft versions of these MSDs during the open provider review and feedback period. All comments were carefully reviewed and used to inform changes and clarifications in the final service definitions.

Find more information below:

- The MSDs can be viewed at this link: [ABA MSDs](#)
- The provider bulletin can be viewed at this link: [Provider Bulletin 25-02](#)

Current Agency activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD:

- **Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) Update:** Starting May 01, 2025, a significant change will take effect in the HCBS EVV system. Going forward, visits will only be accepted if the selected tasks align with the approved list of task codes. This system update will eliminate the option to select invalid tasks, ensuring that only authorized and validated tasks are recorded. Additionally, these tasks must now be cross-checked against the visit's prior authorization to ensure they are in compliance with the service plan.

- MLTC published [Provider Bulletin 25-03](#) on April 1, 2025, to outline the upcoming changes and inform providers of the steps they need to take moving forward. The provider bulletin includes appendices that list the programs and service codes requiring tasks as well as an approved list of task codes.
- View the provider bulletin at this link: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Medicaid%20Provider%20Bulletins/Provider%20Bulletin%2025-03.pdf>
- View the EVV webpage at this link: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Electronic-Visit-Verification.aspx>
- **MAC and BAC update:** MLTC is currently accepting applications for both the Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) and the Beneficiary Advisory Committee (BAC).
 - The **MAC**, which meets on a bi-monthly basis, is a group that includes Medicaid beneficiaries, advocates, and providers. The board works together to make recommendations for the Medicaid program.
 - There are currently two openings on the MAC, and three more will open in June 2025.
 - The **BAC**, which will officially begin meeting in July 2025, is a group made up of beneficiaries (current and former) and beneficiary family members or caretakers. The BAC will identify critical issues to present to the Medicaid Advisory Committee (MAC) and will provide direct feedback to Nebraska Medicaid to help influence policy and administration.
 - Applications for the two groups can be found on their respective websites (linked below). Questions and completed applications can be sent to DHHS.MACandBAC@nebraska.gov.
 - MAC website: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/MAC.aspx>
 - BAC website: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Medicaid-Beneficiary-Advisory-Committee.aspx>

••••• **APPLY FOR THE** ••••• **MEDICAID BENEFICIARY** **ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Nebraska Medicaid and Long-Term Care (MLTC) is seeking applicants for the new Beneficiary Advisory Committee (BAC). Participation in the BAC provides an opportunity for current or former Medicaid members, their guardians, or their caretakers to share their lived experience with MLTC. BAC members will be compensated for their time.

Scan the QR code or visit

<https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Medicaid-Beneficiary-Advisory-Committee.aspx> to apply.

Send your completed application and any additional questions to DHHS.MACandBAC@nebraska.gov.



••••• APLIQUE PARA EL ••••• COMITÉ ASESOR DE BENEFICIARIOS DE MEDICAID

Nebraska Medicaid y Cuidado a Largo Plazo (MLTC) está buscando candidatos para el nuevo Comité Asesor de Beneficiarios (BAC). La participación en el BAC ofrece a los miembros o antiguos miembros a Medicaid, a sus tutores o a sus cuidadores la oportunidad de compartir su experiencia vivida con MLTC. Los miembros del BAC recibirán una compensación por su tiempo.

Escanee el código QR o visite

<https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Medicaid-Beneficiary-Advisory-Committee.aspx> para presentar su solicitud.

Envíe su solicitud completa y cualquier pregunta adicional a DHHS.MACandBAC@nebraska.gov.

NEBRASKA

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DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

Disability Rights Nebraska Report to Council Members April 2025

Representative: Seamus Kelly/ Tania Diaz

Agency: Disability Rights Nebraska

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

Federal Activity under the New Administration:

The New Administration has issued many Executive Orders that has caused a level of confusion and uncertainty. We are watching actions and events carefully. Specifically, we are concerned with proposed Medicaid cuts, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act Litigation (Nebraska involved), dissolving the Administration on Community Living (who administers 4 of our federal grants) and the Department of Education, reduction of federal workers, some Social Security offices being closed and diminishing diversity, equity, inclusion (and accessibility). We have issued newsletters on many of these issues. If you are interested in signing up for our newsletter here is the link:

[DRNE | Join Our Mailing List](#)

Many lawsuits were filed in response to the Executive Orders. If you are interested in following the litigation. It can be found here:

[Litigation Tracker: Legal Challenges to Trump Administration Actions](#)

Information on proposed Medicaid cuts:

[Medicaid is Under Attack! Tell Your Elected Officials "Hands Off Our Medicaid!" - DREDF](#)

Disability Rights Nebraska Activities:

Brad Meurrens participated in a Resource Fair sponsored by Arc of Lincoln and Lincoln Public Schools.

We have been invited by ConAgra to provide some presentations to their staff. The presentations will take place this summer and will cover the following topics:

- Supported Employment
- Olmstead
- Social Role Valorization/Values Based Education

We were also contacted by a UNL Professor who wants to have a panel discussion on Ableism for her students. She is working with our Community Engagement Director Sharon Ohmberger on this project. Sharon has identified three people with disabilities who are interested in participating in the panel.

Current Agency activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD:

Olmstead

Dianne DeLair presented on Olmstead at the Nebraska Association of Service Providers conference on March 25th.

Dianne is also a member of the following workgroups on Olmstead: Education, Community Supports, Housing, Transportation and Employment. She attends the monthly meetings of each of the workgroups.

Supported Employment

Brad Meurrens was invited to be a member of a committee working on employment and improving the image and opinions of people with intellectual/developmental disabilities as workers. The project to increase employer awareness is supported by NCDD and the UNL Public Policy Center is lead on the project.

Pat Cottingham and Tania Diaz continue to work with subject matter expert Becki Koehler and our DD Network Partners on implementing the Supported Employment Action Plan.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative Report to Council Members

Representative: Mark Shriver

Agency: Munroe-Meyer Institute University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

MMI Website revision is complete!

[Home](#) | [Munroe-Meyer Institute](#) | [University of Nebraska Medical Center](#)

Please take a look at it and let us know what you think at the Survey bottom of this page
[Disability Supports](#) | [Munroe-Meyer Institute](#) | [University of Nebraska Medical Center](#)

2nd Annual Nebraska Connecting Families Summit was held March 7, 2025, at the Community Engagement Center on the University of Nebraska campus. Goal of the summit was to identify next steps for creating systemic supports across Nebraska maximizing funding, resources and information to enhance the accessibility and engagement of families and professionals with needed mental and behavioral health resources and services that have meaningful connections to educational settings. This event was by invitation only and included over 60 representatives from state agencies, education, mental health and caregivers across Nebraska. Amanda McGill Johnson, Director of Nebraska Cures, was keynote speaker. Final report will be written by June 30, 2025. We have been granted an extension of the project for an additional 8 months which will focus on developing technical assistance for schools and communities on engaging families and collaborating on behavioral health services.

Current Agency activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD:

MMI is planning for reductions in state funding and monitoring federal funding closely with goal to maintain our current level of high quality services, training and research.

In our Nebraska EmployABILITY Project started October 1, 2024:

- 64 students are in the program and have completed career inventories, and all have completed at least one work-based assessment related to pragmatics and work strength and endurance. All 64 have started career exploration and training activities.
- One student graduated from the program and into competitive integrated employment (CIE).
- 43 students are currently receiving transition services who have been assigned to a Pre-Employment Transition Services Vocational Rehabilitation (Pre-ETS) (VR) counselor and are

receiving VR counseling services on site. Three of the transition students have signed up for adult VR services and have been assigned to an adult services VR counselor.

- 14 students are working on career training in their preferred career pathways utilizing Virtual Reality (VR) headsets.
- We are collaborating with Metropolitan Community College (MCC) for a Cell Phone Repair Certification program that starts in June for up to 8 students, a General Automotive Certification program for up to 8 students, and a Culinary Arts Certification program for 3 students.
- Planning continues for summer Pre-ETS camps and will offer a variety of career pathway exploration themes including Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), Culinary, and College Exploration for up to 175 participants. We have 7 participants between the ages of 19-21 accepted into a paid summer internship program (Step-Up Omaha) to expand their career training and professional skills.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

We are developing onboarding training for Direct Service Providers in collaboration with DHHS DD Division. This will be an asynchronous online training required of all newly hired Direct Service Providers. Current plan for 6 modules including: History and Systems, Abuse and Neglect, Rights and Respect, Confidentiality and Consent, Individual Support Plans, and Medical Support Plans. Will be implemented sometime 2026.

Tri-Board Meeting June 13, 2025

SOAR conference October 3-5, 2025 in Omaha, NE. See save-the-date flyer.

[SOAR Conference 2025 | Munroe-Meyer Institute | University of Nebraska Medical Center](#)



Register Now for the SOAR Conference

This event brings together self-advocates with disabilities from around the Midwest to exchange ideas and learn from each other about advocacy.

October 3-5, 2025

Beginning Friday evening and ending early Sunday afternoon.

Embassy Suites by Hilton
Omaha Downtown Old Market
555 S. 10th St.
Omaha, NE 68102

Hosted by Nebraska's UCEDD at the University of Nebraska Medical Center's Munroe-Meyer Institute, in partnership with the Nebraska DD Network.



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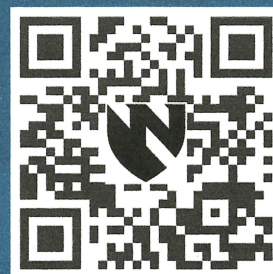
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