

September 30, 2013

Patrick O'Donnell, Clerk of the Legislature
State Capitol, Room 2018
PO Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Dear Mr. O'Donnell:

Legislative Bill 216 of the 103rd Legislative Session of 2013 requires the Young Adult Voluntary Services and Support Advisory (YAVSSA) Committee of the Nebraska Children's Commission to provide a written report regarding the initial implementation of the Young Adult Voluntary Services and Support program. The report is to be provided to the Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and the Governor by October 1, 2013.

The attached report provides recommendations which are intended to provide thoughtful initial guidance for effective implementation of the young Adult Voluntary Services and Support Act. The recommendations were reviewed and approved by the Nebraska Children's Commission at the September 17, 2013, Commission meeting. Additional recommendations will be provided in a later report that is due by December 15, 2013.

Sincerely,



Karen Authier
Chairperson
Nebraska Children's Commission



Mary Jo Pankoke
Chairperson
YAVSSA Committee

Enclosure:

Young Adult Voluntary Services and Support Advisory Committee – Report on Initial Implementation of the Voluntary Services & Support Act

Young Adult Voluntary Services and Support Advisory Committee
Report on Initial Implementation of the Voluntary Services & Support Act
September 17, 2013

The Young Adult Voluntary Services and Support Advisory Committee (YAVSSAC) was appointed by the Nebraska Children's Commission to make recommendations to the Department of Health and Human Services and the Nebraska Children's Commission for a statewide implementation plan meeting the extended services program requirements of the Young Adult Voluntary Services and Support Act. Six workgroups comprised of Advisory Committee members and other stakeholders were established to cover the following key areas of implementation:

- Policy, Eligibility, and Transition into the Program
- Outreach, Marketing and Communications
- Case Management, Supportive Services and Housing
- Case Oversight
- Evaluation and Data Collection
- Fiscal Monitoring Issues and State-Funded Guardianship

The workgroups generated recommendations with input from a wide variety of stakeholders from throughout Nebraska and in close partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services. The YAVSSAC voted to approve the recommendations from each of the workgroups at their meeting on September 3, 2013. The recommendations are intended to provide thoughtful initial guidance for effective implementation of the Young Adult Voluntary Services and Support Act. The work groups will continue to address issues in their respective areas and will present additional recommendations to the YAVSSAC at their October meeting. Those recommendations will form the basis for the YAVSSAC's next report due on December 15, 2013.

Following are the recommendations approved by the YAVSSAC on September 3, 2013.

Policy, Eligibility, and Transition into the Program

Note: Additional details on outreach materials and ongoing communication with young adults about the program are included in the Outreach, Marketing and Communications section of the recommendations. Section II also recommends that DHHS pursue a public-private partnership to support development of new communication materials and outreach activities to ensure young adults have a smooth transition into the program).

I. Initial Communication and Transition into the Program for Young Adults in the Former Ward Program.

- A. All current and past recipients of the Former Ward Program who have not yet turned 21 (and will not turn 21 prior to implementation of the extended program) should be sent a clear, written notice about the extended program prior to December 1, 2013, informing them of:
1. The rights of eligible young adults to receive extended services and support;
 2. Information about eligibility and program requirements;
 3. The types of services and support young adults may receive in the program;

4. How young adults can access the program;
 5. Other requirements of written notice per NE LB216 Sec. 17 (6);
 6. An outline of differences between the Voluntary Services and Support Program and the Former Ward Program; and
 7. What will happen with the Former Ward Program (e.g. when services through the Former Ward program will cease to exit).
- B. By December 1, 2013, a representative of the Department (or current Former Ward staff member) will make contact - or attempt to make contact - with all current and past recipients of Former Ward who have not yet turned 21 to provide information verbally and via all available and appropriate channels (e.g. text, Facebook, social media, etc.) about the program and how young adults can sign up, review differences from the Former Ward Program, and ask the young adult if he/she would like to participate in the extended program.
 - C. If the young adult indicates that he/she would like to participate, the department will assess eligibility and, if the young adult is eligible and consents, arrange for the voluntary services and support agreement to be signed and filed with the court in the timeframe necessary to prevent a lapse in services between the transition from the Former Ward Program to the extended program, if applicable.
 - D. Communication with these young adults about the program will include referral to YAVSS orientation class. This is discussed in more detail in the Outreach, Marketing and Communications section. DHHS should explore a public-private partnership to implement this orientation class to help off-set administrative costs to DHHS without compromising the communications experience for critical audience segments.

It is important to ensure that specific changes are clearly communicated to young adults and efforts are made to avoid service interruption as young adults transition from one program to another and/or as the department implements the extended program. For instance, room and board fees are currently covered under the Former Ward program, and these funds are distributed directly to the college once per semester. Under the extended program, the funds may be distributed on a monthly basis.

II. Communication and Transition into the Program for All Young People in Foster Care (age 16 – 19).

- A. The foster care caseworker will provide an annual overview of the extended program including a brochure overviewing service benefits and responsibilities*
- B. As required in NE LB216 Sec. 17 (6) 90 days prior to the final court hearing, young adults should be sent a clear, written notice about the extended program, informing them of:
 1. The rights of eligible young adults to receive extended services and support;
 2. Information about eligibility and program requirements;
 3. The types of services and support young adults may receive in the program;
 4. How young adults can access the program; and
 5. Other requirements of written notice per NE LB216 Sec. 17 (6).

In addition to this required written notice, 90 days prior to the final court hearing, the foster care caseworker will meet with the young adults, determine if they would like to participate in the program, and refer them to an extended program orientation class. This is discussed in more detail in the Outreach, Marketing and Communications section. DHHS should explore a public-private partnership to implement this orientation class to help off-set administrative costs to DHHS without compromising the communications experience for critical audience segments.

III. Communication to Young Adults Ineligible for the Program.

- A. Young adults determined ineligible for the program will be provided with a clear, written notice similar to that cited in NE LB216 Sec. 7 (2) informing them of:
 - 1. The explanation for why they were determined to be ineligible (in a clear and developmentally appropriate way);
 - 2. The process for appealing the decision;
 - 3. Information about the option to sign up for the program once the young adult establishes eligibility; and
 - 4. Information about and contact information for community resources that may benefit the young adult, specifically including information regarding state programs established pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 677.

This written notice should also include information about eligibility and program requirements. Additionally, a representative of the department (or current Former Ward staff member) will make contact - or attempt to make contact a specified number of times - with each of these young adults to provide information through appropriate channels (e.g. verbal, phone text messages, Facebook private message, , etc.) about the determination that the young adult is not eligible. The verbal communication should include an explanation of items 1-4 listed under IIIA. These young adults will be referred to a workshop on becoming eligible for the program. This is discussed in more detail in the Outreach, Marketing and Communications section. DHHS should explore a public-private partnership to implement this orientation class to help off-set administrative costs to DHHS without compromising the communications experience for critical audience segments.

IV. Communication to Young Adults Who Opt Out of the Program.

- A. Young adults are provided an information packet that includes the process for re-enrolling if they change their mind, an eligibility checklist, a resource directory (as per NE LB216 Sec. 7 (1)) and an exit survey. DHHS should explore a public-private partnership to develop these items to help off-set administrative costs to DHHS without compromising the communications experience for critical audience segments.
- B. Young adults receive quarterly check-in messages via Facebook, text or email from YAVSS worker. DHHS should explore a public-private partnership to help off-set administrative costs.

V. Communication to Young Adults Who Become Ineligible for the Program After Participating.

- A. The extended program caseworker provides young adults with the required ineligibility notification (per NE LB216 Sec. 7 (2)) 30 days before services cease. In addition to the required written notice, this communication should be delivered through every available communication channel (email/call/text/Facebook).
- B. There should be an in-person exit meeting with an extended program caseworker 30 days before services cease with an exit packet that includes an appeal information sheet, an eligibility checklist, and resource directory. These young adults should also be referred to a workshop on becoming eligible for the program. This is discussed in more detail in the Outreach, Marketing, and Communications section. DHHS should explore a public-private partnership to implement this workshop and develop these items to help off-set administrative costs to DHHS without compromising the communications experience for critical audience segments.
- C. YAVSS worker makes 90-day eligibility check ins (by all available communication channels).

Note: An option under consideration by the YAVSSAC is the automatic triggering of a court hearing if a young adult in the program is determined to be ineligible, so this section may be subject to further change pending the outcome of that decision.

Outreach, Marketing and Communications

Note: see attachment A, which presents the more detailed communications plan developed by the work plan; details on these recommendations.

I. Program Name Recommendation.

Bridge to Independence (preferred choice of Young Adults surveyed)

DHHS in partnership with private agencies should implement a communications plan targeting young adults, case workers, services providers, and media/public/policy makers. Any underlined tactics are materials or experiences that must be newly created. DHHS should explore a public-private partnership to develop these items to help off-set administrative costs to DHHS without compromising the communications experience for critical audience segments.

II. Audience Segments Who Should Be Targeted with Communication and Outreach.

- A. Young adults
 - 1. Minors, 16-18, in foster care (YAVSS prep)
 - 2. Young adults 18-19, eligible for and opting into the extended program (YAVSS orientation)
 - 3. Young adults 18-19 who are NOT eligible to enter the extended program (YAVSS ineligibles)
 - 4. Young adults, 19-21, eligible and participating in the extended program (YAVSS retention)

5. Young adults, 19-20, who become ineligible after participation and are dropped from the program (YAVSS drops)
 6. Young adults, 19-21, who opt out of the program, either at the time of initial eligibility or after a period of participation (YAVSS opt-outs)
 7. 21-year-old graduates of the extended program (YAVSS Grads)
 8. Young adults who are currently in Former Ward who need to transition to the extended program (Former Wards)
 9. Young adults, 19-20, who have been dropped from the Former Ward program, but may be eligible for the extended program (Former Ward drops).
- B. Current foster parent/placement adult
 - C. Case Workers and Supervisors
 1. Foster care caseworkers and supervisors
 2. Extended program caseworkers
 - C. Service Providers
 - D. Media/Public/Policy Makers
 1. Communications will be designed to reach the public and policy makers via the media. Policy-maker specific communications will be in the form of periodic program performance reporting.

III. **Communication Strategies that Should be Implemented by Segment.**

Note: Strategies specific to informing young adults of eligibility, determining eligibility, and informing of ineligibility are referenced in the Policy, Eligibility, and Transition into the Program section of the recommendations.

- A. Young adults
- B. All young adults: information about the extended program will be provided on its own web presence. While likely housed on the DHHS site, we recommend a friendly URL and information architecture that's independent from the rest of the DHHS site so that it aligns with web usability best practices.
- C. YAVSS Orientation (See the Policy, Eligibility, and Transition into the Program section for eligibility outreach):
 1. Program Orientation, including overview of eligibility, available services (such as the Network of Care health care document housing system) and how to navigate the program. This is ideally facilitated by a private agency to save DHHS dollars and is put on once a month.
 2. "My Life" binder (given at orientation) including:
 - Orientation materials
 - Resource directory
 - YAVSS required materials (signed agreement, etc.)
 - Tabs for all the other areas of life (health care, housing, finances, education, etc.) so even transient young adults will have one place to keep their materials.
- D. YAVSS Ineligibles (See the Policy, Eligibility, and Transition into the Program section for eligibility outreach)

1. Get Eligible Now Workshop - individual or small group sessions facilitated by a private agency focusing intensively on getting young adults enrolled in school, job training or employed immediately
- E. YAVSS Retention
1. Quarterly eNews sharing resources and events that might be interesting and valuable to them (career nights, college fairs, budgeting classes, etc.) and that provide success stories from other young adults.
 2. Closed Facebook group where updates are shared and young adults can network with each other and ask questions.
 3. Text reminders from the extended program caseworker of meetings, events, etc.
- F. YAVSS Drops (See the Policy, Eligibility, and Transition into the Program section for eligibility outreach))
- G. YAVSS Opt – outs (See the Policy, Eligibility, and Transition into the Program section for eligibility outreach))
- H. YAVSS Grads
1. Exit packet including resource directory and exit survey
- I. Former Wards (See the Policy, Eligibility, and Transition into the Program section for eligibility outreach))
- J. Former Wards Drops (See the Policy, Eligibility, and Transition into the Program section for eligibility outreach))
- K. Current foster parent/placement adult
1. Direct mail package explaining YAVSS and how it allows young adults to stay in some placements, discussing how to talk to young adults about YAVSS and a request for appointment with caseworker
 2. Visit with caseworker and young adult at YAVSS discussions that occur annually when the ward is 16, 17 and 18 years of age
- L. Foster Care Caseworkers and Supervisors
1. YAVSS training session that includes visits from young adults who have benefited (or would have benefited) from the extended program. These young adults will share the struggles of aging out.
 2. YAVSS reference guide.
 3. YAVSS checklist that will enable foster care caseworkers to make sure they're hitting every mandatory point with every young adult they work with.
 4. YAVSS overview brochures to be distributed to YAVSS Prep young adults.
 5. YAVSS exit packets for ineligible and opt-out young adults.
 6. A minimum of once-yearly visits by young adults who have benefited (or would have benefited) from the extended program at a caseworker staff meeting.
 7. Stories on the extended program's successes in any regular department communications (eNews, newsletter, etc.).

8. Monthly conference calls for caseworkers and supervisors to share experiences and learn from one another and inclusion in existing operations meetings.
- M. YAVSS Caseworkers and Supervisors (outside of job training to be determined)
1. An extended program caseworker website, housing all forms and brochures to be printed or ordered on demand, a peer-to-peer caseworker forum, success stories, training event schedule. This will be housed on the DHHS website, but likely created by a private agency and given a friendly URL to adhere to usability best practices.
 2. Monthly or quarterly eNews.
 3. Extended program caseworker conference calls.
- N. Service Providers
1. Fact sheets to communicate the needs and potential negative outcomes of young adults who have aged out of care, as well as the counteracting benefits provided by the extended program.
 2. Brochures overviewing the benefits of the extended program.
 3. Program launch trainings in all service areas providing detailed, program specific information and materials to service providers.
 4. Quarterly lunch & learns (rotate service area) to train service providers on the extended program, provide materials and let them meet their extended program contact.
- M. Media/Public/Policy makers (non-regulatory communications that will filter through the media to public and policy makers)
1. Program launch press conference
 2. Press kit including:
 - New program vs. Former Ward comparison sheet
 - Costs expected to be avoided by making a better transition to adulthood
 - Goals of the program/purpose
 3. Three months post-launch of intensive pitching around:
 - New training geared toward young adults
 - Increases in enrollment/employment among young adults
 - New program workers and how they differ from traditional caseworkers
 - Interviews with promising young adults
 4. Monthly or bimonthly media pitches by private agencies or other partners thereafter featuring young adult stories.
 5. Annual outcomes stories/program review pitches.

Case Management, Supportive Services, and Housing

- I. **Culture Change**. DHHS must recognize providing services through the Young Adult Voluntary Services (this program) will be a big culture change, not only for DHHS' Children and Family Services but also the legal system.

- A. DHHS is coming from a position of an adversary in the minds of these young adults. Young adults are apprehensive about DHHS being in this role. If DHHS doesn't do well at the beginning, trust will be lost.
- B. DHHS will switch from a compliance role to being a partner with the young adults. Young adults driven. Give up the power. Strength-based. Guide the young adult to help them make decisions.
- C. The role of the people who work with the young adult is hands-on with connections to community services. Relationships are key.
- D. The system must be able to tolerate risk. When scrutinized, the system has to continue to remain true to its principle of youth driven.
 - 1. Media and political scrutiny sometimes result in more rules and DHHS must be able to resist implementing excessive regulations to benefit the young adult by allowing them to make mistakes.

II. Recruitment, Selection, Training and Support of Staff and Supervisors.

- A. Staff who work with the young adults should be titled "Independence Coordinators." The title was created and voted upon by members of Project Everlast.
- B. Independence Coordinators (IC) should be specially trained. They should have specialized caseloads, when feasible. Supervisors should be specialized and trained and may need to work across service areas. Peer support should be provided to the Independence Coordinators.
- C. Care needs to be taken to select the ICs because a different skill set is required than for those who manage child and family caseloads.
- D. Caseload size should range from 15 in rural areas and up to 20 in urban areas. If young adults need more intensive services, such as for mental health services, they may be referred to others, such as the Regional Behavioral Health system.

III. Coordination and Collaboration.

Children and Family Services must ensure other divisions within DHHS, are involved and collaborating regarding this population to ensure their needs are met. Divisions which must be involved are: Medicaid, Adult Protective Services, Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, Access Nebraska. These divisions will have valuable knowledge of resources and programs the young adults in the program may be eligible for.

- A. They may be able to streamline processes for the young adults. Coordination and collaboration with community services and partners is critical because many serve this population and a collaborative approach ensures the most effective use of resources.

IV. Training that Addresses and Helps Professionals to Understand the Developmental Needs of Young Adults.

- A. Intense, comprehensive and focused towards needs, strengths and goals of the young adult. (See list of training topics in attachment B).
- B. Bring in experts from the community.
- C. Use curriculums that are already developed.
- D. Train judges, system partners.

V. **DHHS Case Management Practice for the YAVSS Program.**

- A. Case management should follow an evidence-based model that is developmentally appropriate and respectful of young adults' autonomy.
- B. The terms used by DHHS and others are important. DHHS should refer to housing as "housing options" rather than "placements" and should not refer to young adults as being placed.

The workgroup learned at the beginning of our assignment that Thomas Pristow had decided that DHHS will do case management for this population. As the group answered the Guiding Questions, several key points surfaced. That information is in the longer document from the work group. The work group recognizes and appreciates the open and collaborative process of the Rules and Regulation Work Group. DHHS should continue to be collaborative and invite feedback throughout the development and implementation process. DHHS, caseworkers and outside partners will be working in new territory as this program is implemented, , so continued debate and discussion is critical.

VI. **Housing Options.**

- A. Housing decisions should be directed by the young adult, with case managers being as flexible as possible. Case managers or other case professionals should not immediately decline the young adult's housing plan. Rather, if case professionals have concerns regarding safety, the case manager should first explore the option of developing a contingency plan with the young adult in an effort to allow the decision to be young adult-directed and respectful of the young adult's autonomy while still maintaining safety. It is important that young adults have the opportunity to make mistakes within the safety net offered by this program.
- B. Supervised independent living setting options should include as many options as possible, such as single or shared apartment, house, college dormitory, other post-secondary educational or vocational housing (e.g. sorority/fraternity housing), parental home, scattered site housing, supportive housing, host homes, transitional living programs, halfway housing, three quarter way housing, sober living housing, etc.). Mental health facilities and treatment facilities should also be included as housing options. A wide variety of housing options is necessary to provide for the needs of young adults.
- C. Whenever possible, housing subsidies should be provided directly to young adults. In cases where this is not possible, an informal contract should be developed between the young adult and the third party recipient to clarify how the subsidy will be used. Title IV-E requirements must be met in specific settings. The case manager should help facilitate this process in a way that is empowering to the young adult.

Case Oversight

I. **Case Reviews.**

- A. Recommend that a report or other documentation be completed at the 6-month case review. If an agreement is reached on the status and progress of the case, the report would be

signed by the young adult and the department and submitted to the court. This would give the court background on the 6-month case review for the 12-month permanency hearing or other hearing. If there is a lack of agreement, it would be documented in the report and the young adult can choose not to sign the report if they wish. Regardless of whether they agree or disagree, the young adult should be provided information about how to request a hearing and/or an attorney. There should be further discussion of what this report should look like and how it can be friendly to young adults.

- B. Recommend that the Mediation Centers conduct 6-month reviews in a structure similar to pre-hearing conferences based on recommendations and needs of the young adult. The justification is that the Mediation Centers have an existing process that feeds into court reviews, have statewide infrastructure and trained facilitators that are uniquely qualified to give people voice and could be very young adult-directed. Young adults would be invited and encouraged but not required to attend 6month reviews. Young adults that do not attend the review would have the opportunity to provide input in writing.

1. The workgroup also considered the Foster Care Review Office as an alternative. Benefits of the FCRO include that there is an existing process in place that could be modified to fit this need, the ability to track and disseminate data and that the FCRO is an independent state agency that does not receive DHHS funding.

II. Permanency Hearings.

- A. Recommend that legislation be introduced to require that permanency hearings and other requested hearings in these cases be expedited.
- B. Recommend that a hearing officer be appointed if the young adult makes a request, time necessitates it (i.e., a hearing before a judge would cause significant delay), the young adult does not want the judge to hear their case or the judge believes a hearing officer should be appointed.
- C. Recommend that the Nebraska Supreme Court promulgate a rule on hearing officers in juvenile courts pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 24-230 (5). The Case Oversight workgroup of YAVSSAC will also request to propose recommendations for the rule to the Nebraska Supreme Court.

The workgroup agreed that a form that's friendly to young adults be created and approved to enable the young adult to request a hearing (i.e., a hearing request form).

III. Meaningful Participation of Young Adults.

- A. Recommend that reviews follow best practice recommendations from *the Jim Casey Young Adults Opportunities Initiative Issue Brief*¹ for ensuring young adults are full partners in the process, the venue of reviews are young adult-friendly, and that young adults are prepared for meaningful participation, including:
1. Ensuring the venue is friendly to young adults should include that reviews take place in an informal setting/outside the courtroom whenever possible, that those responsible for reviews have training on how to ask questions to young adults, and that reviews are scheduled at times that allow for the participation of young adults (i.e., physical presence whenever possible and when young adults cannot be physically present or

¹ *Success Beyond 18: Re-Examining the Foster Care Review Process: Extended Foster Care as a Catalyst for Improved Practices and Better Outcomes*, Issue Brief, Jim Casey Young Adults Opportunities Initiative (August 2013).

decline to attend, have an option to participate in reviews using technology or have their voice heard through an appropriate advocate).

2. Preparing the young adult for meaningful participation should start with notice of time; place and purpose of the review, the right to, and role of, an attorney; letting the young adult know how they can initiate a hearing to address problems or concerns that arise between reviews; identification of other people the young adult may want to be present at reviews and help in making arrangements for their attendance; and helping the young adult prepare for how they will respond to issues of concern that may arise in the hearing.

- B. There should be outreach to young adults and developmentally appropriate ways for young adults to be informed about this program and to access information about their rights and the hearing process, including a video and/or brochure, website, Facebook page, a phone number to call for assistance if there is a problem (perhaps associated with the helpline or Project Everlast) and notice and reminders sent via text messages.
- C. Nebraska should further examine how to incorporate a model of peer advocates into this program.

The workgroup agreed that these are only initial recommendations in this area. There should be more discussion to flesh these out, including who is responsible to assist the young adult in the various aspects.

IV. Training.

- A. Recommend training for professionals involved in these cases, including attorneys, judges, CASAs and others. The training for attorneys should supplement the current guardian ad litem training, and should be offered as a webinar for ease of participation. Other training opportunities, such as a more advanced training or training required or incorporated into the GAL Guidelines, should be considered in the future.

The workgroup discussed that training should cover how a GAL should advise a potentially-eligible young adult about the program and the role of the attorney if appointed to represent a young adult in the extended program, and should offer CLE, GAL and ethics credits whenever possible. The workgroup agreed that the Court Improvement Project should provide and/or partner to provide this training. The workgroup also agreed that there should be templates, protocols and forms developed to assist young adults, judges, reviewers, attorneys and other professionals.

Evaluation and Data Collection Recommendations

I. Evaluation Tool.

- A. Currently, federal requirements mandate that all states implement a 22-question National Young Adults in Transition Database (NYTD) survey with all Young Adults in foster care at 17, and then again at 19 and 21. Nebraska implemented this survey with 17-year-olds in Oct. 2010 and will do so again in Oct. of this year (selection occurs every 3 years). States have the option of implementing two more comprehensive versions of NYTD instead of the basic 22-question survey, which are known as NYTD Plus Abbreviated (57 questions) and NYTD Plus Full (88 questions). In order to compare outcomes of young adults in the extended services and support

program to those who are not in the program, we recommend that DHHS switch from the 22-question NYTD survey to a slightly altered version of NYTD Plus Abbreviated. We also recommend that all young adults in the extended program be surveyed at the time of entry and every 6 months after so progress can be tracked. Gathering data every 6 months will also allow for outcomes to be measured for young adults who participate in the program for a shorter period of time, such as 1 year. Surveys from young adults in the extended program can be collected either at two set times per year (similar to how Project Everlast/Opportunity Passport collect surveys) or at regular 6 month intervals, which the caseworker will be responsible for tracking. Surveys may be collected from young adults not in the extended program at 19 and 21, per federal guidelines. Caseworkers can enlist the support of providers in reaching and gathering data from young adults. If possible, we recommend that random ID numbers be assigned to maintain confidentiality.

- B. DHHS should explore the possibility of other providers and stakeholders adding to the data collected from young adults who are not in the extended program by collecting the same altered version of NYTD Plus Abbreviated from their populations served, or by otherwise supporting the collection of this data. For example, the Regions could add a question to their Transition Age Young Adults (TAY) Referral Form asking if the young adult has taken the NYTD survey. If it is not possible for data collected by providers and stakeholders to be stored with DHHS's data, we recommend that there be a way to easily and quickly consolidate data when needed for purposes of analysis.
- C. DHHS should look into private funding streams to explore the possibility of offering incentives to both groups of young adults to encourage participation in the survey.

II. Fiscal Accountability.

- A. DHHS should track all expenditures and provide quarterly reports detailing itemized program service costs and program administrative costs, including specifics about administrative costs, salaries, etc., to the YAVSSAC. This should also include itemized adoption/guardianship costs and the state-extended guardianship assistance program costs.
- B. The YAVSSAC should review these reports, provide recommendations to DHHS and the Children's Commission if necessary, and include the financial reports and any recommendations made as a part of their annual report to the Children's Commission, HHS Committee of the Legislature, DHHS, and the Governor of the state of Nebraska.

III. Tracking Supportive Services.

- A. To ensure young adults are receiving the supportive services they need to guide them to success, case managers should clearly document and track specific services provided in the young adult's transition plan and in reports for case reviews and permanency hearings.
- B. Judges or hearing officers or both should utilize a series of age-appropriate questions modeled after those in Through the Eyes' Transition Planning Guide (currently in progress) or in NRCYD's resource during hearings to asking young adults about their transition plan, services they're receiving, etc.
- C. An independent entity should review a sampling of case files for young adults in the extended program to track service provision.

IV. Young Adult Satisfaction.

- A. To assess young adults' experiences with case management, case reviews, attorneys, etc., one-page satisfaction surveys should be provided to young adults just before case reviews and permanency hearings. This would be distinct from, but could be combined with or otherwise accompany, the Young Adults Court Questionnaire.
 - 1. Judges or hearing officers should review these surveys before the hearing, speak one-on-one to the young adult if needed, and use this feedback in making orders regarding service provision. Likewise, the entity in charge of case reviews should review these surveys before the review, speak one-on-one to the young adult if needed, and use this feedback during the case review.
- B. A comprehensive exit survey should be collected from young adults leaving the program to assess the reason for leaving and overall satisfaction with the experience. We recommend that DHHS explore public/private partnerships to make this happen.

V. Public/Private Partnership.

- A. DHHS should seek private funding and explore public/private partnerships to support the implementation of these recommendations.

Fiscal Monitoring Issues and State Funded Guardianship

Note: Recommendations (all committee members strongly agreed or agreed with the following (listed in prioritized order):

- A. DHHS will need to remove barriers to licensure (including educating potential guardians of the benefits of licensure and providing a list of long term care options, educating case workers, non-safety waivers) to ensure that more young adults can be served by the Federal Guardianship Assistance Program.
- B. Information regarding extended services should be provided to all relevant court stakeholders (judges, hearing officers, attorneys) to ensure that orders and petitions are Title IV-E compliant.
- C. DHHS should provide an easy-to-understand document (script?) to all caseworkers, judges, appointed attorneys, applicable young adults, providers, potential guardians and foster parents detailing the eligibility requirements for the Young Adult Voluntary Services and Support program.
- D. DHHS will provide financial support for state extended guardianships to the extent possible with the \$400,000 appropriation, after which the young adult should be transferred to NCCF (or other entity) for money distribution and education/work eligibility. DHHS should continue to maintain NFOCUS records.
 - 1. If the state general fund allocation of \$400,000 is the only funding source permitted to support the state extended guardianship program, extended subsidies should be provided to young adults at the assessed rate until the age of 20 (one year).
- E. An Income Maintenance Foster Care (IMFC) worker should review the financial needs and behavioral risks of the young adult prior to the age of 19 to determine the amount of subsidy to be provided by the state extended guardianship subsidy.

- F. No formal case management services will be provided under the state extended guardianship assistance program. Instead, an IMFC worker should conduct the initial eligibility assessment, with the young adult meeting with the IMFC once every 6 months to verify continued eligibility.
- G. State extended guardianship assistance subsidy payments should be paid directly to the young adult, or as developmentally appropriate, direct payments to the young adult could be phased in over time. A partnership agreement between the guardian and young adult should be considered and other staggering support system should be in place to learn how to budget appropriately.
 - 1. For any young adult whose guardian fails or is unable to distribute the supportive payment to the young adult, DHHS should set forth a grievance procedure.