

NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Mission.

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



Jim Pillen, Governor

July 15, 2025

Mr. Brandon Metzler
Clerk of the Legislature
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509

Subject: YRTC Activities for the Previous Fiscal Year

Dear Mr. Metzler:

Nebraska Revised State Statute § 83-102 requires the Office of Juvenile Services, Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers (YRTC) Hastings, Kearney, and Lincoln to electronically submit a report of its activities for the preceding fiscal year to the Clerk of Legislature on or before July 15 of each year. The annual report shall include, but not be limited to, the following information:

- Data on the population served, including, but not limited to, admissions, average daily census, average length of stay, race, and ethnicity;
- An overview of programming and services; and
- An overview of any facility issues or facility improvements.

I am submitting this report to fulfill the above requirements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alyssa L. Bish".

Alyssa Bish, Ph.D.
Director, Division of Children and Family Services

Attachment

Division of Children and Family Services: Office of Juvenile Services

YRTC Activities for the Previous Fiscal Year

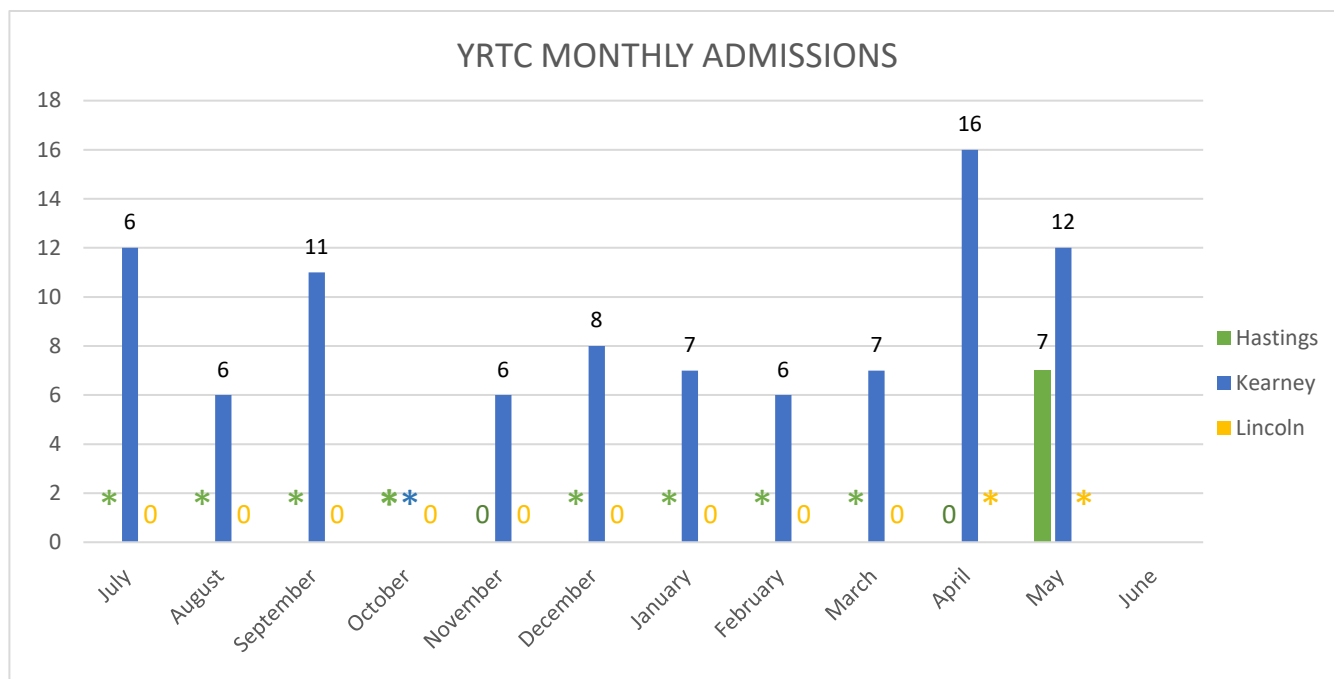
July 2025

Neb. Rev. Stat. § 83-102

Data of Population Served

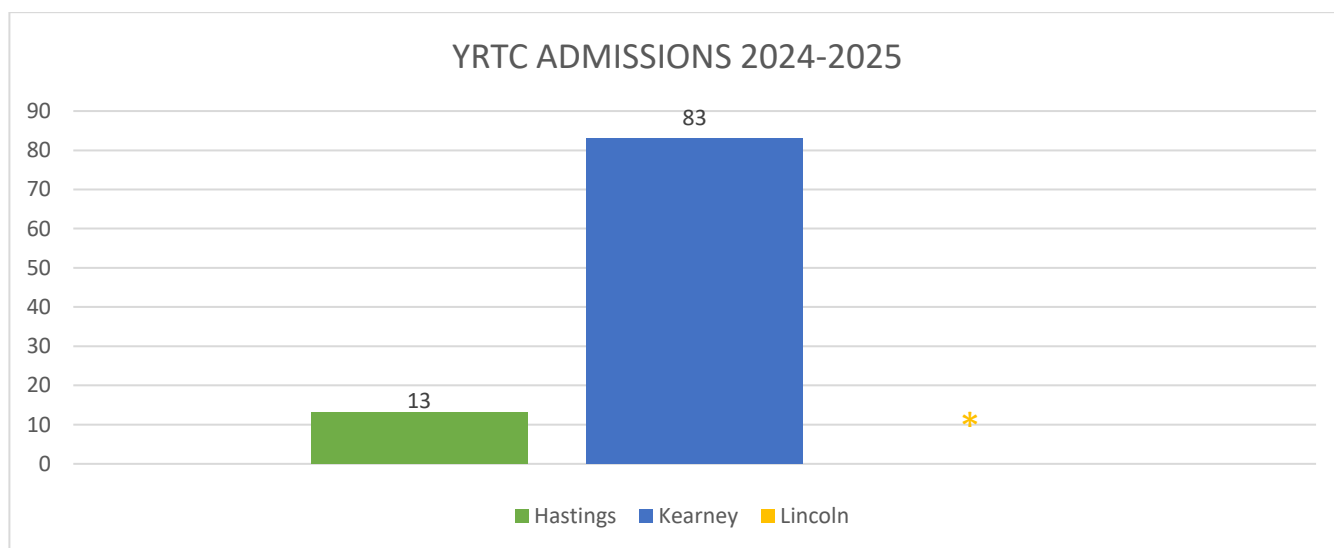
This data is for all three YRTC Facilities: YRTC-Hastings, YRTC-Kearney, and YRTC-Lincoln.

YRTC MONTHLY ADMISSIONS 2024-2025



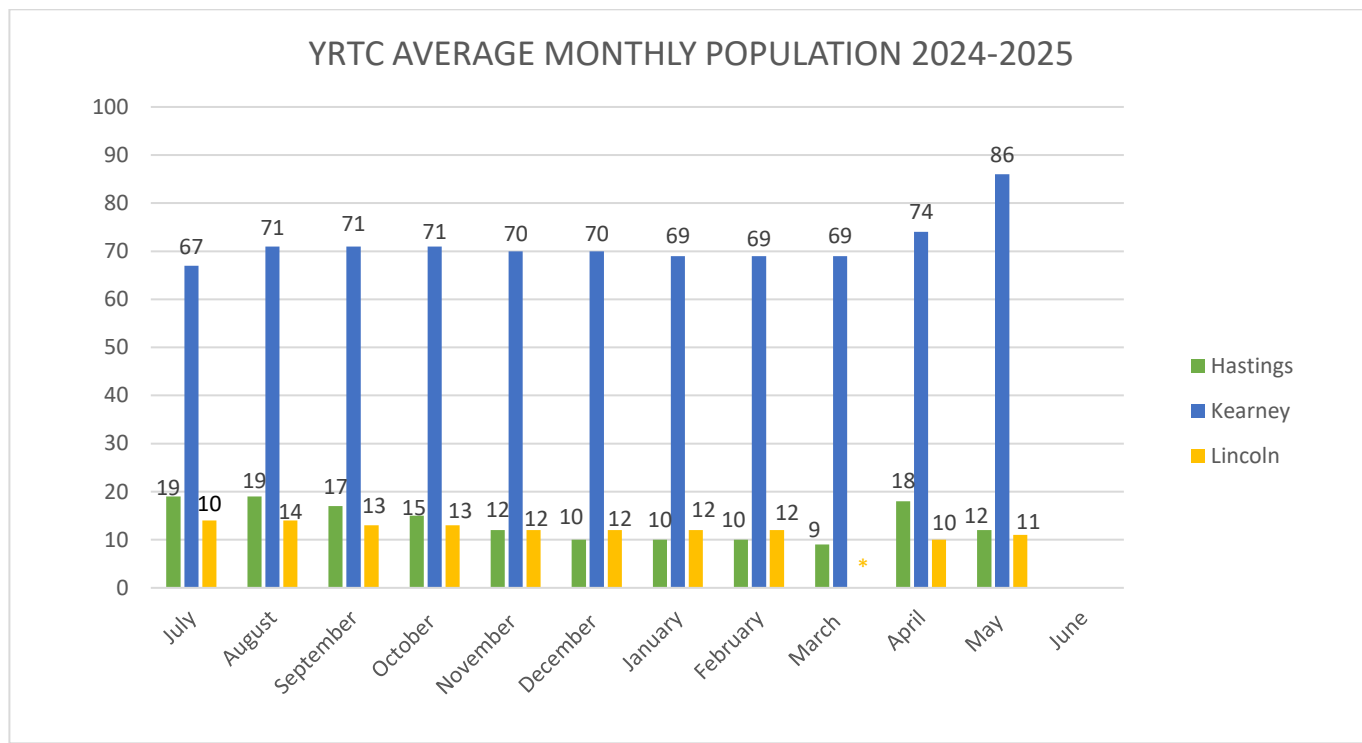
* Values 1-5 are suppressed for privacy protection

YRTC ADMISSIONS 2024-2025



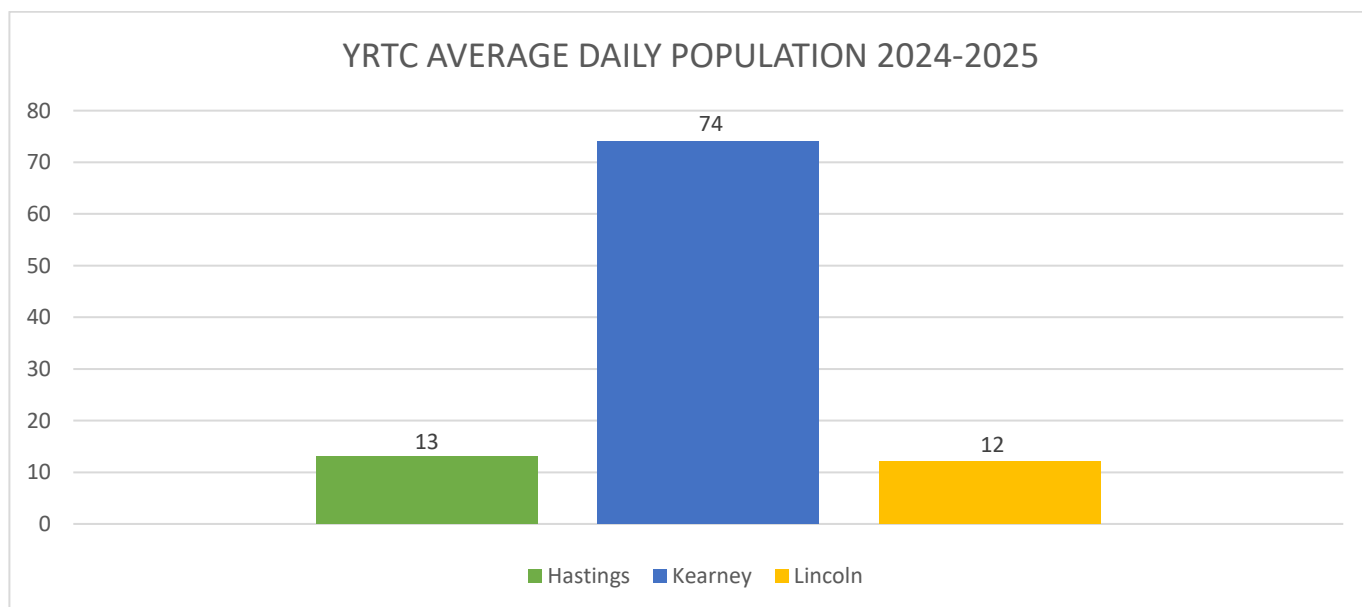
* Values 1-5 are suppressed for privacy protection

YRTC AVERAGE MONTHLY POPULATION 2024-2025

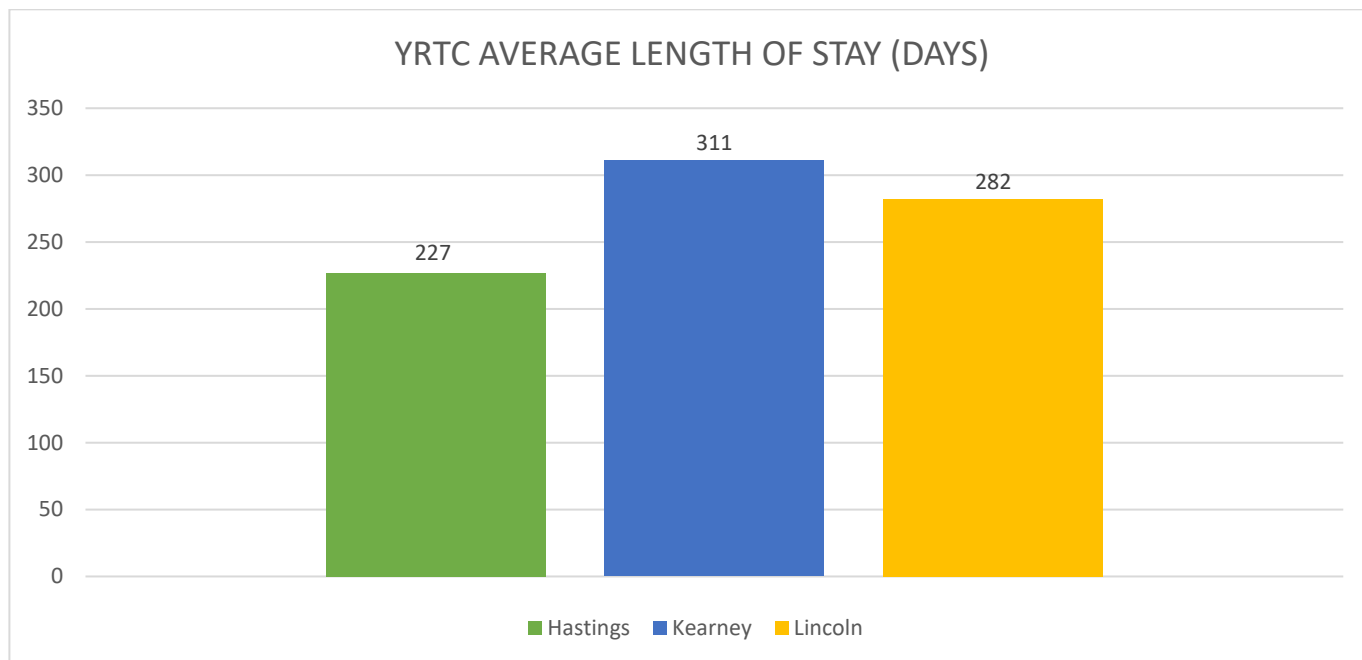


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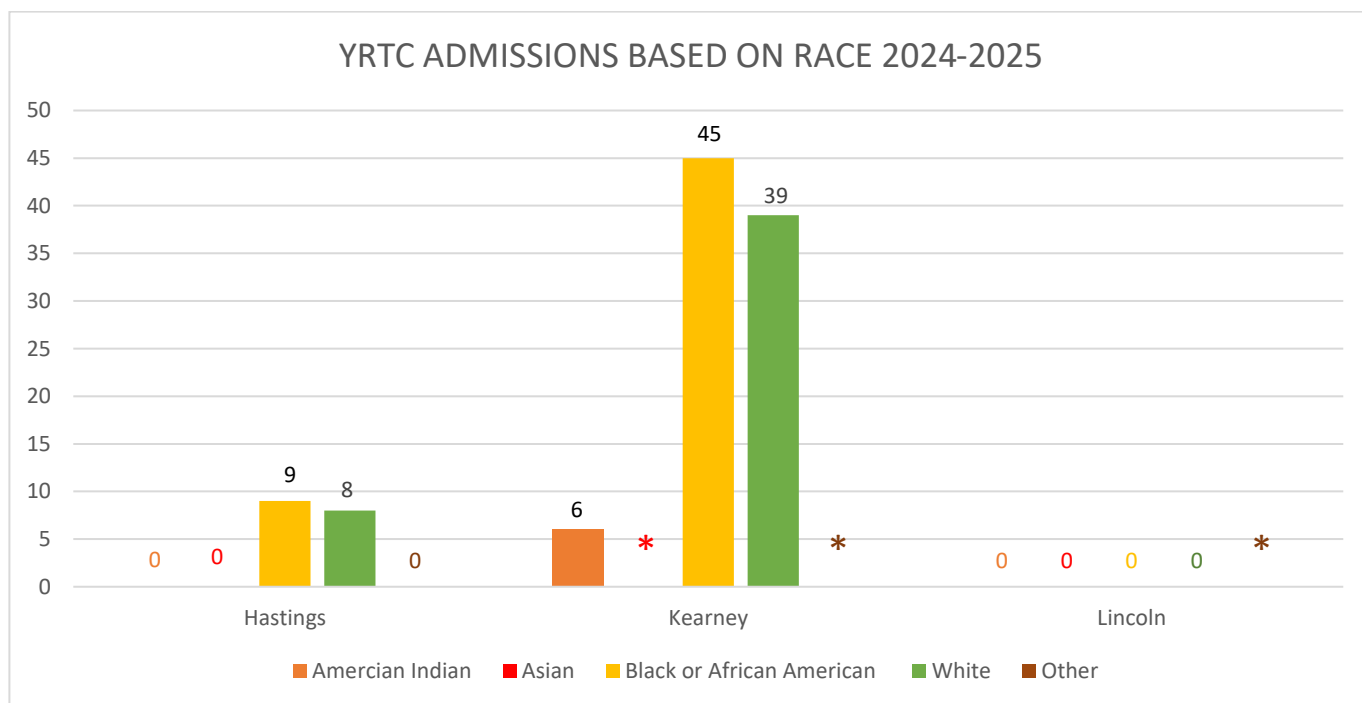
YRTC AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION 2024-2025



YRTC AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY 2024-2025

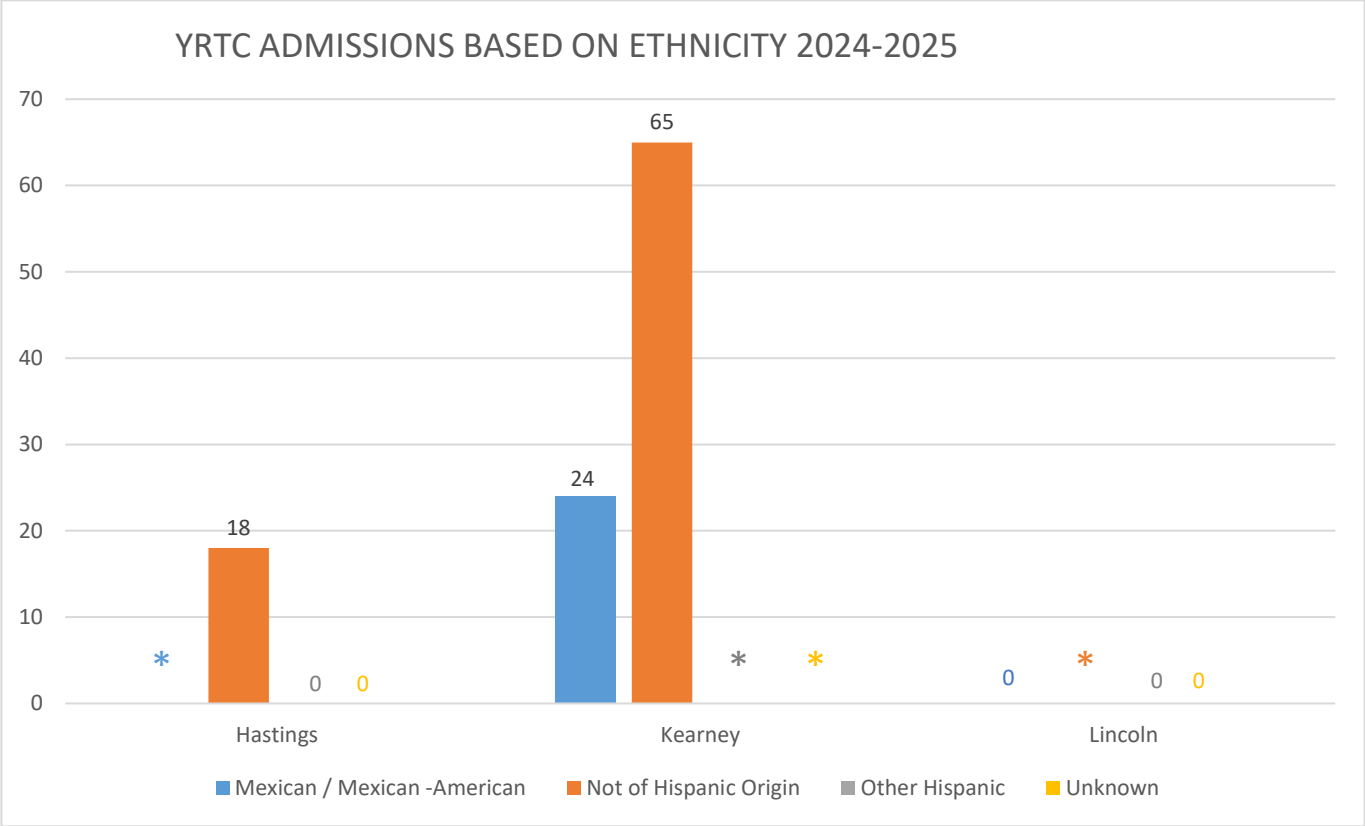


YRTC ADMISSIONS BASED ON RACE 2024-2025



*Values 1-5 are suppressed for privacy protection.

YRTC ADMISSIONS BASED ON ETHNICITY 2024-2025



*Values 1-5 are suppressed for privacy protection.

Overview of Programming and Services

Programming

The Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach (ACRA), utilized by YRTC-Kearney mental health practitioners, is an evidence-based treatment approach with positive research findings that work within the framework and structure of the facility. ACRA is a skills-based approach to treating substance use disorders by increasing family, social, and educational reinforcements that support recovery from substance use. ACRA involves three types of sessions: individual sessions with the youth, individual sessions with the parent or caregiver, and joint sessions with the youth and parent or caregiver. ACRA is utilized in over 270 organizations nationwide and is on the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices.

Aggression Replacement Training (ART) is utilized at YRTC-Kearney. This program has been shown to reduce recidivism in the adolescent population. ART is a 10-week cognitive behavioral treatment protocol that addresses three interrelated components: Social Skills Training, Anger Control Training, and Moral Reasoning. Each component focuses on a specific prosocial behavioral strategy learned through repetitive exposure to the material.

Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) is utilized at YRTC-Lincoln. ABA programming includes evaluating the youth by a Board-Certified Behavioral Analyst who develops an individualized Behavioral Support Plan based on the youth's strengths and areas of need. The youth is provided hourly feedback and ratings on the goals related to their target behaviors. They receive hourly incentive points, which they can use to "purchase" desired items, snacks, or activities.

Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) is an evidence-based cognitive therapy used to treat many conditions. Staff at all YRTC locations have received DBT training and are incorporating these skill sets into their individual, family, and group therapy interventions.

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) is an evidence-based psychotherapy intervention used to address distress associated with past traumatic experiences. Staff at YRTC-Kearney and YRTC-Hastings include one or more mental health staff who are fully trained in EMDR interventions and are incorporating this into their ongoing therapeutic services for youth determined to be appropriate for this type of intervention.

Love Notes, utilized at the YRTC-Lincoln, is an evidence-based program focusing on building healthy relationships. The program's primary goal is to establish healthy relationship boundaries and prevent unplanned pregnancies by providing teens with information to make wise relationship choices. This program teaches skills to be used in all relationships but emphasizes romantic relationships. Love Notes programming is delivered through group discussion, PowerPoints, workbooks, exercises, role-play, and creative activities over 13 sessions. Love Notes groups are facilitated by clinical staff members who have received special training in this curriculum.

Moral Reconnection Therapy (MRT) is an additional treatment component incorporated into the YRTC-Kearney, YRTC-Hastings, and YRTC-Lincoln facilities. In 2015, the SAMHSA Center for Substance Abuse Treatment granted MRT "Promising Practice Status." Treatment is delivered in an open group format, meaning youth can be assigned to the group at any time. MRT is a cognitive behavioral program that seeks to decrease recidivism by increasing moral reasoning.

Nebraska Youth Engagement Services, modeled after the Missouri Youth Services Initiative, is offered at all YRTCs. This is a unit-based treatment model incorporated in smaller groups with dedicated staff and support staff. Units will be offered the opportunity for youth to support one another through “circle ups” to address unit issues and/or concerns. Youth will act as positive supports and role models to one another throughout the program. All these programs are carried out within identified groups.

Power Source is an evidence-based program designed to empower at-risk youth with the social and emotional skills necessary to forge paths of health development and disengagement from high-risk and offending behaviors. Grounded in a belief in each person's intrinsic dignity and worth, Power Source guides trauma-impacted adolescents and young adults in discovering their resilience while also building the skills associated with health, social, emotional, and identity development. Offering a wide range of tools and resources, Power Source enables facilitators to address youth's unique sociomental needs, risk factors, and protective factors through high-impact, engaging exercises, role plays, discussions, games, and meditation. Staff at all YRTC locations have received Power Source training and have incorporated these skill sets into individual and family therapy interventions.

Trauma Affect Regulation: Guide for Education and Therapy (TARGET) is implemented at the YRTC-Hastings and the YRTC-Lincoln facilities. The U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention endorses the TARGET model. TARGET is a psychosocial intervention that provides education about the impact of complex traumatic stress on the brain's stress response system and strengths-based practical skills for resetting the trauma-related alarms/survival reactions that occur in complex PTSD.

VOICES is a gender-specific program that has been incorporated into the YRTC-Hasting facility and is also being used with the female youth at the YRTC-Lincoln facility. VOICES is based on the realities of girls' lives and the principles of gender responsiveness; it is grounded in theory, research, and clinical experience. This program advocates a strengths-based approach and uses a variety of therapeutic approaches, including psychoeducational, cognitive-behavioral, mindfulness, body-oriented, and expressive arts. All activities are designed to be trauma-sensitive; the VOICES participant's journal utilizes a research-based process called Interactive Journaling, which is listed on SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP).

Services

Education

The YRTCs are comprised of two Rule 10 Special Purpose schools, which have an extension program school at YRTC-Lincoln, each providing a unique platform for youth in grades 9-12 to excel and achieve their educational goals. These three facilities offer a wide range of programs and resources tailored to individual needs. Graduation is a cornerstone of the educational journey at the YRTC, as students are empowered to earn high school credits that seamlessly transfer back to their home schools. The YRTC schools employ a dynamic blended learning approach, combining direct teacher-led instruction with the flexibility of online classes with Acellus and Apex Learning; both are innovative computer programs that enable students to progress at their own pace and level.

With a firm commitment to holistic development, the YRTC schools emphasize academic and personal growth. Beyond the conventional curriculum, these facilities equip students with essential life skills, offer guidance counseling for college and career pursuits, conduct MAP, ACCUPLACER, and ACT testing,

and provide access to vocational rehabilitation and Department of Labor services. Art, physical education, health, media, and technology areas enrich the educational experience.

The YRTC schools understand that each youth's educational journey is unique. Thus, comprehensive assessments are conducted to determine the most suitable educational path for every student. While pursuing their high school diploma, students can also engage in select college courses, fostering a college-preparatory environment. Importantly, the YRTC schools are attuned to the needs of those preparing for graduation. The YRTC schools offer GED classes and preparation within a traditional classroom setting for those not on track to graduate and may need another option.

Transition services are a hallmark of the YRTC school, ensuring a smooth progression from their facilities to the next phase of their life. Whether through direct instruction of the core content, APEX and Acellus Credit Recovery, or summer school availability, the YRTC schools stand as pillars of year-round education. These institutions are dedicated to guiding youth toward graduation and a future with promise and potential.

Medical

The medical team provides on-site medical services five days a week with 24-hour on-call coverage. Upon arrival at the facility, health-trained staff perform an intake health screening, which a qualified healthcare professional reviews. A nursing team member completes a Comprehensive Nursing Appraisal within the first seven days of a juvenile's arrival at the facility.

All juveniles receive a physical examination from a medical provider within the first 14 days of arrival at the facility. If a juvenile has a chronic medical diagnosis, it is addressed on campus through routine assessment and specific treatment plans. Specialty referrals are ordered based on individual needs as indicated by medical providers. Based on individual treatment plans, the contractual dentist examines juveniles within 14 days of admission and as needed. Juveniles also have dental cleaning on-site or at the nearest exam office every six months. The contractual optometrist provides juveniles with eye exams annually or as needed. Ongoing routine visits or non-emergent illnesses and injuries are seen by one of the primary care providers weekly during a recurrently scheduled clinic visit facilitated by the medical team. Specialty appointments are scheduled on a referral basis, which may include orthopedic care, complicated dental procedures, physical therapy, and diagnostic procedures.

All juveniles may initiate requests for health services daily using a Health Call Form. Should a juvenile need medical care for urgent or emergency situations when a doctor is not on campus, treatment is provided off-campus. Twenty-four-hour emergency medical, dental, and mental health services are available for each juvenile. Juveniles' medical histories and information are requested through a questionnaire sent to each juvenile's parents/guardians by mail. The medical department requests these forms back from the parents and/or guardians so that nursing staff may become aware of any past, current, or ongoing health problems that the juvenile may not have reported during the Nursing Health Appraisal. Juveniles' immunization records are reviewed to ensure they are up to date on immunizations, per the Nebraska Vaccines for Children (VFC) regulation. It is also a goal of the medical department to have juveniles up to date on both required and non-required vaccinations, such as vaccines for the Human Papillomavirus, Hepatitis A, Influenza, COVID-19, and Meningitis. All immunization records are entered and/or updated in the Nebraska State Immunization Information Systems (NESIIS) to promote continuity of care.

Comprehensive health care services start the moment the juvenile arrives at the facility and are provided throughout their stay by licensed nurses and other health care providers. Upon discharge from the facility, a comprehensive Transfer/Discharge Summary is completed on each juvenile to include items such as current medication list, medical and mental health diagnoses, dates of last medical, dental, and vision exams, and any scheduled medical follow-up needs. This information is also entered into the Nebraska Family Online Client User System (NFOCUS).

Overview of any Facility Issues or Facility Improvements

YRTC-Hastings

- I. Exterior cleanup continues, including removing dead and dying trees from the property.
- II. Four youth rooms were renovated, including removing wall coverings and painting.
- III. Upgraded latches of all the youth's room doors for added security.
- IV. Four new cameras were installed outside the chapel area to capture additional spaces that were not covered. An additional camera was installed in the youth kitchen area to provide digital security surveillance.
- V. All youths' rooms had permanently affixed stools installed.

YRTC-Kearney

- I. A new phone system with ALLO was installed throughout campus.
- II. Demolition of the Morton Living Unit was completed; the space was leveled with underground sprinklers installed. This area will be used for youth to enjoy outdoor activities and gardens.
- III. A new living unit is on track for completion, the outside walls are almost finished, and the roof will be the next big part of the exterior construction.

YRTC-Lincoln

- I. YRTC-Lincoln is a leased facility from Lancaster County; Lancaster County addresses all facility issues or improvements.