

ENGROSSED LEGISLATIVE BILL 962

Introduced by McKinney, 11.

A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to public health and welfare; to adopt the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act; and to provide an operative date.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Sections 1 to 8 of this act shall be known and may be cited as the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act.

Sec. 2. For purposes of the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act:

(1) Community-based provider means a nonprofit or local governmental entity contracting with the Department of Health and Human Services, the Office of Juvenile Services, or the Office of Probation Administration to deliver services for youth transitioning from congregate care placements or probation supervision, including mentoring and employment support;

(2) Credible messenger means an individual who has lived experience in the justice or foster care system and who is trained in mentorship and restorative justice practices;

(3) Facility means a juvenile detention facility, group home, residential treatment facility, or a youth rehabilitation and treatment center;

(4) Individualized employment plan means an age-appropriate, customized career plan that:

(a) Is developed collaboratively by a counselor employed by the State Department of Education, the youth, and a representative of a facility or the Office of Probation Administration, as appropriate; and

(b) Identifies employment, credentialing, and job placement steps for the youth;

(5) Transition plan means a written, individualized plan developed as described in section 5 of this act; and

(6) Youth means any individual under nineteen years of age who is exiting or transitioning from a congregate care placement, including at a facility or

residential treatment program, or who is transitioning from probation supervision.

Sec. 3. (1) The purpose of the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act is to ensure youth in congregate care placements receive essential support for successful transition back into their homes and communities.

(2) The Legislature finds that:

(a) Youth and families require intensive support to assist in planning, supervision, and support during the transition phase; and

(b) Planning for discharge upon entry to a facility is the best practice to ensure a successful re-entry.

Sec. 4. (1)(a) The Department of Health and Human Services, the Office of Juvenile Services, the Office of Probation Administration, and the State Department of Education shall collaboratively establish the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Program.

(b) The Department of Health and Human Services shall be responsible for supervision and programming for youth placed in the care, custody, and control of the department by court order pursuant to the Nebraska Juvenile Code. The Office of Probation Administration shall be responsible for supervision and programming for youth placed under probation supervision by court order pursuant to the Nebraska Juvenile Code.

(2) The Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Program shall provide for the following for each youth:

(a) Completion of a transition plan;

(b) Regular reviews of each youth's transition plan. These reviews shall be accomplished by a representative of the facility or the Office of Probation Administration, as appropriate, and shall occur weekly for detention or other short-term placements and monthly for all other placements, including placement at a youth rehabilitation and treatment center; and

(c) Supervision following re-entry by the Department of Health and Human Services, the Office of Juvenile Services, or the Office of Probation Administration, as appropriate, to ensure a successful transition.

Sec. 5. (1) A transition plan shall be developed for each youth upon admission to a facility or admission to another congregate care placement or probation supervision.

(2) The transition plan shall be developed using validated assessment instruments, screenings, and evaluations. The transition plan shall be developed collaboratively with involvement from the youth, the youth's family or guardian, and facility representatives and the Department of Health and Human Services, the Office of Juvenile Services, or the Office of Probation Administration, as appropriate. When possible, development of the plan should include coordinating with local family resource centers, community-based providers, or other community resources in order to support the youth and the youth's family and identify long-term supports.

(3) A transition plan shall include provisions regarding:

(a) Treatment services, including continuity of behavioral health, medical, and medicaid services;

(b) Enrolling eligible youth in programs and services offered by the State Department of Education;

(c) Developing an individualized employment plan identifying career and training pathways for youth obtaining employment upon reentry;

(d) Services from community-based providers, including credible messenger mentoring or in-home supportive or behavioral health services;

(e) Coordinating with family resource centers to align family and community support;

(f) A housing stabilization strategy and safe placement;

(g) A school reentry or educational advancement plan;

(h) Assisting youth in applying for medicaid benefits and maintaining eligibility;

(i) Plans and processes to obtain identification documents and public benefits; and

(j) Family engagement and restorative justice objectives consistent with reforms enacted in Laws 2023, LB50.

(4) During the first ninety days following a youth's re-entry, a family team meeting shall be held at least once every thirty days. Such meeting shall include the youth and the youth's family or guardian and the Department of Health and Human Services, the Office of Juvenile Services, or the Office of Probation Administration, as appropriate.

(5) Youth who are eligible for participation in the bridge to independence program as provided in the Young Adult Bridge to Independence Act shall be referred to that program. Services under the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act shall not duplicate services available under the bridge to independence program.

Sec. 6. (1) Each participating agency shall implement the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act within its existing duties, staff, and appropriations.

(2) The Department of Health and Human Services and Office of Juvenile Services shall integrate transition planning into its existing case management, child welfare, and medicaid resources to support services under the act.

(3) The Office of Probation Administration shall integrate transition planning into probation supervision and existing community-based programs.

(4) The State Department of Education shall deliver vocational rehabilitation and employment services through existing federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and pre-employment transition services funding or other existing federal funds.

(5) The Department of Labor may assist with workforce placement and apprenticeships using existing programs.

(6) Community-based organizations may partner with participating agencies through existing grants, contracts, or volunteer programs without additional state appropriations.

(7) No new General Fund appropriation is authorized under the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act. All participating agencies shall absorb any costs incurred using current appropriations or available federal, philanthropic, or reallocated funds.

Sec. 7. Nothing in the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act shall be construed to require:

(1) The Office of Probation Administration to provide services to a youth after a term of probation has ended; or

(2) The Department of Health and Human Services or Office of Juvenile Services to provide services to a youth after the youth has left the care, custody, and control of the department.

Sec. 8. The Department of Health and Human Services, the Office of Juvenile Services, the Office of Probation Administration, the State Board of Education, and the Department of Labor may adopt and promulgate rules and regulations that provide for:

(1) Defining joint responsibilities in implementing the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act; and

(2) Setting minimum training standards for credible messengers and staff responsible for implementing the Youth Reentry and Transitional Support Act.

Sec. 9. This act becomes operative on December 1, 2026.

PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATURE

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the within LB 962 was passed by the One Hundred Ninth Legislature of Nebraska at its Second Session on the day of 20.....

CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE

Approved:

..... 20....., o'clockM.

GOVERNOR