

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA
ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE
FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 48

Introduced by McKinney, 11.

Read first time January 09, 2025

Committee:

- 1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to public health and welfare; to establish a
- 2 family resource and juvenile assessment pilot program as prescribed;
- 3 to provide an operative date; and to declare an emergency.
- 4 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 **Section 1.** (1) The Department of Health and Human Services shall
2 establish a Family Resource and Juvenile Assessment Center Pilot Program
3 for a period of five years in cities of the metropolitan class areas,
4 that shall operate twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The pilot
5 program shall be developed in partnership with local grassroots
6 organizations, community stakeholders, and advisors representing youth
7 and families impacted by the juvenile justice system.

8 (2) A Family Resource and Juvenile Assessment Center means a
9 facility designed to provide support, assessment, and intervention
10 services for youth and families involved in, or at risk of, entering the
11 juvenile justice system. The goal of the centers is to offer
12 comprehensive, community-based solutions that address underlying issues
13 contributing to juvenile delinquency, including family dynamics, mental
14 health, substance abuse, and educational challenges.

15 **Sec. 2.** The pilot program established pursuant to section 1 of this
16 act shall:

17 (1) Provide comprehensive support resources to prevent youth from
18 entering or escalating within the juvenile justice system;

19 (2) Minimize individual and community harm by addressing issues
20 before they lead to greater involvement with social services, family
21 services, and adult criminal justice systems; and

22 (3) Foster community trust and engagement by integrating culturally
23 relevant services delivered by, and for, the communities served.

24 **Sec. 3.** (1) The Department of Health and Human Services shall
25 establish a designation process for family resource and juvenile
26 assessment centers to ensure adherence to high-quality standards in
27 service delivery, staff qualifications, and organizational effectiveness.

28 (2) A center seeking designation shall complete a comprehensive
29 self-assessment based on the national Standards of Quality for Family
30 Strengthening and Support or a similar benchmark framework and shall
31 submit an application and the self-assessment to the department for

1 review.

2 (3) The department shall conduct site visits and staff interviews as
3 part of the review process to verify self-assessment findings and confirm
4 compliance with designation standards.

5 (4) A center that meets the designation criteria will receive
6 official designation. A center that does not meet the designation
7 criteria shall receive feedback and technical assistance so that such
8 centers may improve and reapply for designation.

9 (5) Four centers shall be selected for the pilot program established
10 pursuant to section 1 of this act.

11 **Sec. 4.** To receive designation as a family resource and juvenile
12 assessment center under section 3 of this act, an applicant shall meet
13 the following criteria: (1) Offer a range of core services, including
14 parenting support, youth counseling, economic success initiatives, early
15 childhood programs, conflict resolution, mental health services, and
16 substance abuse prevention; (2) employ professionals trained in family
17 support principles, cultural competency, trauma-informed care, and the
18 strengthening families framework; (3) develop partnerships with local
19 grassroots organizations to provide culturally relevant services,
20 outreach, and trust-building within the community; (4) demonstrate a
21 clear, effective organizational framework that supports service delivery,
22 continuous quality improvement, and sustainable operations; and (5)
23 implement data collection processes to assess service impact and outcomes
24 for youth and families, ensuring program adjustments based on feedback.

25 **Sec. 5.** (1) Each family resource and juvenile assessment center
26 shall host multiple community providers, grassroots organizations, and
27 embedded community navigators to assess and serve the immediate and
28 ongoing needs of youth and families.

29 (2) Each center shall provide assessments and services free of
30 charge to families and maintain active membership in the National
31 Assessment Center Association.

1 (3) The purpose of the assessment shall be to (a) enable youth and
2 families to discuss a family's unique dynamic, challenges, and goals in a
3 safe, culturally respectful environment, (b) identify the origin of
4 presenting issues and provide comprehensive service referrals in
5 partnership with local organizations and businesses, and (c) engage youth
6 and families in creating tailored action plans for long-term success.

7 **Sec. 6.** (1) Each family resource and juvenile assessment center
8 shall integrate culturally relevant and trauma-informed services,
9 including (a) tutoring, (b) mentoring from community leaders, including
10 those with lived experience in the justice system, (c) conflict
11 resolution and anger management training, (d) mental health and wellness
12 services provided by culturally sensitive professionals, (e) social
13 skills and job-readiness training, (f) financial literacy programs, (g)
14 youth and family counseling, (h) cognitive behavioral therapy, (i) drug
15 and substance abuse prevention and intervention, and (j) food and
16 clothing assistance and resource navigation.

17 (2) Each center shall establish community partnerships to provide
18 apprenticeships, vocational training, and mentorship opportunities with
19 local businesses, trades, and community organizations.

20 **Sec. 7.** Each family resource and juvenile assessment center shall
21 (1) have a youth advisory council and parent advisory board composed of
22 community members to provide ongoing feedback to ensure services remain
23 relevant, effective, and responsive, (2) host regular outreach events,
24 workshops, and open houses in partnership with schools, faith-based
25 groups, and community organizations, to create a bridge for preventive
26 engagement with at-risk youth and their families, and (3) employ
27 individuals with established community ties and lived experience to guide
28 youth and families through available services, act as mentors, and assist
29 with follow-ups to ensure sustained engagement.

30 **Sec. 8.** Each family resource and juvenile assessment center shall
31 implement a data collection system to assess program effectiveness, track

1 youth and family outcomes, and incorporate feedback directly from those
2 served. The data collected shall be used to adjust and refine services,
3 with a focus on measuring progress toward keeping youth out of the
4 juvenile justice system and achieving positive life outcomes.

5 **Sec. 9.** Each family resource and juvenile assessment center shall
6 offer ongoing support to youth after they complete the initial service
7 period. This support may include alumni mentoring programs, periodic
8 check-ins, or additional family resources as youth transition into
9 adulthood or exit from other systems of care.

10 **Sec. 10.** Funding for family resource and juvenile assessment
11 centers shall be allocated to prioritize partnerships with local
12 grassroots organizations and businesses to sustain services and provide
13 direct community investment. Each designated center shall receive up to
14 one million dollars annually from the Health and Human Services Cash
15 Fund.

16 **Sec. 11.** An annual evaluation of the pilot program's impact on
17 youth and family well-being, community trust, and reduction in juvenile
18 justice system involvement shall be conducted by the Department of Health
19 and Human Services to inform future program developments under sections 1
20 to 11 of this act.

21 **Sec. 12.** This act becomes operative on September 1, 2025.

22 **Sec. 13.** Since an emergency exists, this act takes effect when
23 passed and approved according to law.