

ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 480

Introduced by Bostar, 29.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to propose an interim study to examine how public resources for youth development programming are currently distributed across Nebraska, identify gaps in availability and access, particularly in rural areas and communities with fewer resources, and develop recommendations for ensuring those resources work more efficiently and effectively for youth, families, and communities.

In many Nebraska communities, the demand for quality youth development programming far outpaces current availability, leaving working families without reliable options for keeping children safe and supported during out-of-school hours. Nebraska parents of 144,606 children want afterschool programs, yet only 28,828 children are currently enrolled, meaning 4 in 5 Nebraska children cannot access these programs. An additional 1,431 Nebraska youth are currently waiting for a mentor. Without a clearer understanding of how existing public resources are being deployed, this gap will intensify, turning today's shortage into tomorrow's crisis.

Current resources directed towards youth development programming are distributed across multiple funding streams without a comprehensive picture of where they are going, which communities they are reaching, and where critical gaps remain.

The study shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) Mapping existing state and federal funding streams directed toward youth development programming, including funding administered through the State Department of Education, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, and collaborating with organizations already engaged in fiscal mapping or resource distribution

analysis to avoid duplication and leverage work currently underway;

(2) Assessing the availability and geographic distribution of youth development programs across Nebraska;

(3) Identifying gaps between the demand for youth development programming and current program capacity, including the number of youth on waitlists or in communities without available programs;

(4) Examining the impact of accessible, quality youth development programming on working families, local employers, and community economic vitality;

(5) Reviewing best practices from other states regarding public investment in youth development programming and strategies for maximizing the impact of limited public resources;

(6) Evaluating opportunities to better align and coordinate existing funding streams to reduce duplication and improve outcomes; and

(7) Recommending a sustainable, scalable framework for public investment in youth development programming that ensures all Nebraska communities have access to quality programs.

In conducting this interim study, the Education Committee of the Legislature may confer with the State Department of Education, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, youth development program providers, coalitions and organizations serving youth, organizations currently engaged in fiscal mapping or resource distribution analysis related to youth programming, local school districts, employers, working families, youth, and other stakeholders.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, SECOND SESSION:

1. That the Education Committee of the Legislature shall be designated to conduct an interim study to carry out the purposes of this resolution.

2. That the committee shall upon the conclusion of its study make a report of its findings, together with its recommendations, to the Legislative Council or Legislature.