

Take Action!

A Successful Ascent To Adulthood

Extending services and support to age 21 would throw a rope to young people transitioning from foster care to adulthood by giving them the resources they need—like caseworker support, housing assistance, and healthcare access—to help them overcome barriers they are more likely to encounter and climb to a bright future.

Bright Future



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Action Guide:

How you can help pass
LB 216 and the Extended
Services and Support program

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LB 216 Program Overview

Overall Highlights

Here are a few key things to know about LB 216:

- It is voluntary. Eligible young adults who choose to participate sign an agreement with DHHS to receive services.
- It is flexible. Eligible young adults can choose to opt in and/or opt out any time before turning 21.
- Periodic administrative/permanency reviews and monthly caseworker visits would help ensure young adults are safe and that their needs are being met.

Services and Support for Young People:

Services for youth who age out of foster care would include:

- Housing support
- Youth-directed case management services
- Medicaid coverage

Services for youth who were adopted or who entered a guardianship at age 16 or older would include:

- Continued adoption/guardianship subsidies
- Medicaid coverage

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Who Could Participate:

To participate in the program, young adults would need to:

- Be doing at least one of the following:
 - Completing high school or an equivalent program
 - Enrolled at least part-time in post-secondary education
 - Employed at least 80 hours per month
 - Participating in a program/activity to remove barriers to employment
 - Unable to do any of these things because of a medical condition
- Meet monthly with a case manager
- Attend informal permanency and case reviews
- Participate in other program requirements

LB 216 Talking Points

The current system results in poor outcomes for too many young people who age out.

- We're missing out on human potential and a stronger workforce.
 - Youth who age out are significantly less likely to get a college degree or a stable, well-paying job than their peers.

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- We're paying more money in the long run.
 - These young people re-enter our prison systems and rely on our welfare systems at alarming rates due to homelessness, unemployment, lack of health insurance, and overall poverty.

LB 216 is a proven program.

- Fifteen other states have plans that are approved by the federal government, and many more are showing interest.
- National research shows that similar programs improve long-term outcomes by:
 - Decreasing homelessness, unplanned pregnancies, and incarceration rates.
 - Increasing lifetime earnings and college attendance.

LB 216 is a good investment in the future of our children and our state.

- It is cost effective.
 - The financial benefits outweigh the cost by a factor of approximately 2 to 1.
- It is supported by federal funding.
 - The federal government covers nearly half of the cost.

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How to find your State Senator

You can look your Nebraska State Senator up online at neappl.es/senatorlookup or by using your smart phone to scan the QR Code on the right.



There, you can type your address into the search box on the bottom left-hand side of the map. Once the map pulls up your address, you will need to click next to the pin to see your State Senator. You can then click “More Info” under your Senator’s picture to find his or her contact information.

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Tips for Calls and Letters

Calls and letters help State Senators know that constituents in their districts care about a given issue. While all letters to state senators are valuable, in a campaign to get a piece of legislation passed there are times where a letter or call to a particular Senator, or group of Senators, can be especially influential.

- Tell a personal story. Your story provides your Senator with insight about the real problems we face everyday. Additionally, personal stories create a sense of urgency in getting our Senators to take action.
- Be brief when calling. Senators' aides get a lot of calls, and they appreciate it if you can convey the reason behind the call succinctly.
- Make sure to include your own contact information (e.g. mailing address, phone number, or email address) in case your Senator wants to get into contact with you.
- Include one or two facts that you think are important. Check out our suggested Talking Points on pg. 3 for ideas.

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Sample Call Script

Leave a voice message with your state senator sharing your support for the new Medicaid program:

“Hi, my name is _____ and I live at _____. I am calling to urge Senator _____ to support LB 216, the Young Adult Voluntary Services and Support Act. Our current foster care system results in poor outcomes for far too many young people who age out. LB 216 is a proven program utilized in several other states. It is cost effective, with the support of federal funding. It is a good investment in the future of our children and our state. Thank you.”

Mailing a letter to your State Senator

Handwritten letters are very effective at capturing a State Senator’s attention. Use the suggested tips on pg. 5 and send your letter to:

Senator’s Name
District #___ State Capitol
PO BOX 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

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Letters to the Editor

Letters to local newspapers from concerned citizens are important because they:

- Reach a large audience.
- Are monitored by elected officials and other decision makers.
- Help show there is widespread support for an idea.
- Give you a voice and only take about half an hour to write and email to your local paper.

Tips:

- **Be direct.** Make one point (or at most two) in your letter. Because letters are often edited, state the point clearly in the first paragraph. Start with a catchy opening and use the active tense.
- **Be timely.** It is often helpful if you are addressing an article, editorial, or letter that recently appeared in the paper (e.g. article about foster care) or a recent event (e.g. hearing, upcoming floor debate).
- **Support your facts.** If the topic you address is controversial, consider sending documentation along with your letter (like a weblink), but don't

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overload the editors with too much info. Refute or support specific statements, address relevant facts that are ignored, and avoid blanket attacks on the media.

- **Show a local angle.** Connect the issue to the local level. You are the expert and opinion leader.
- **Maximize use of the letter.** Don't just send the letter to your local paper. Send your letter to church, niche/specialty (e.g. knitting club newsletter), and college papers. The smaller the publication, the more likely it will get published. Ask your friends to also write letters. If your letter doesn't get published, someone else's letter on the same topic might.
- **Know the rules.** Each paper has different rules (listed on their websites) for how long your letter can be and how many times you are allowed to submit each year. It can take as long as two weeks or as little as two days for a paper to publish your letter.
- **Know your audience.** Familiarize yourself with the coverage and editorial position of the paper to which you are writing. This is not a letter to a friend, so be professional.
- **Make sure to include your full contact information, or they may not publish your letter.**

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Action Alert Template

Action alerts are a great way of mobilizing the public and calling for action. You are welcome to use and/or alter the following language to send an action alert from your agency or yourself:

“Nebraska’s current foster care system results in poor outcomes for too many young people who age out of foster care. We miss out on their human potential and a stronger workforce because of the barriers they face in becoming successful adults.

LB 216 would remove these barriers by creating an age-appropriate, youth-focused system of voluntary services and support to 21 for young people who age out of foster care. National research has shown programs like this improve long-term outcomes in a number of areas, including education, employment, and housing stability.

The Health and Human Services Committee has advanced and prioritized LB 216, but the fight is far from over. The full Legislature must now vote on the bill.

Please [call or write your senator](#) and ask them to support LB 216. Tell them that LB 216 is a good investment in the future of our children and our state.”

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**For more info and resources, visit:
NEAppleseed.org/takeaction**

Thank you for taking action!



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