



# B2I EXTENDS SUPPORTS TO YOUTH WITH JUVENILE JUSTICE EXPERIENCE

## Fact Sheet

LB50 has passed in the Nebraska Legislature and will take effect January 1st, 2025

The Bridge to Independence Program, or B2I, is Nebraska's "extended foster care program." Through B2I, young people like you who have aged out can voluntarily continue to receive supports and services, from ages 19 to 21. This includes a monthly stipend, health care coverage, case management support, and many other services.

### **The B2I program has been expanded to include some young people with JJ experience.**

The B2I program currently includes young people who age out of the foster care system. But a NEW law just expanded the program to allow some young people with juvenile justice experience to participate.

You may be eligible under the new law if you meet the following guidelines:

- Juvenile Justice case
- Living out of home when aging out / leaving the system at age 19\* with the juvenile court's approval
- Juvenile court found it wouldn't be good for you to be in your family home in the 6 months before you turned 19

If you think you might be eligible, here is what to expect:

1. The Office of Probation is required to reach out to you in the 6 months before you turn 19 if you might be eligible and provide you with information about the program.

2. If you are interested in the program, you or your attorney or any other party in your case can request a hearing before you age out. At this hearing, the judge has to make a decision if it would be "contrary to your welfare to return to your family home" and if you need to stay in your out-of-home placement until you turn 19. This seems complicated but it is meant to make sure that you aren't kept on probation for no reason just to participate in B2I and that the program is targeted towards people who may be at risk of homelessness. This decision has to happen before you age out for you to be in B2I.

3. The law requires the judge to consider the following things when making their decision:

- You are facing homelessness
- You are disconnected from family support
- The Office of Probation has made reasonable efforts to return you to your family home before your 19th birthday.

4. If the judge makes the decision, you may be eligible for B2I. Then, the Office of Probation is required to let DHHS know within 10 days. After that, DHHS is required to reach out to you as soon as possible before your 19th birthday so they can confirm your eligibility and you can decide if you want to participate.

5. If you currently have an issue with your probation being revoked in the 6 months before you turn 19, you might not be eligible for B2I.

6. To participate, you will also have to meet the other requirements for the B2I program. This includes attending school or working at least 80 hours per month (unless you have a medical condition or a reason to not attend school or work) and you must live in Nebraska.\*\*

7. Once in the program, the benefits and responsibilities are the same, including a stipend, an optional court-appointed attorney, and monthly visits from your caseworker that you will get. You may receive Medicaid if you are eligible.

\* Or age 18 if you have a case in tribal court.

\*\* Or you might still be eligible for B2I if you were placed outside of Nebraska in your case