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January 28, 2016

To: Members of the Health and Human Services Committee

From: Julia Tse, Policy Associate

Re: Support for LB 701 to eliminate a termination date for vocational training opportunities in the ADC program

Voices for Children supports LB 701 because it supports education as a pathway out of poverty by eliminating the termination date on provisions that allow ADC participants to enter into vocational training while still meeting program requirements.

Education has increasingly become inseparable from financial hardship for families in our state and across the nation. In 2014, **the median income of those with some college or an associate's degree was \$3,695 higher than that of high school graduates.**¹ ADC is intended to support very low income families with children, and payments are often the only form of income for participating families. LB 701 would further ensure that families receiving ADC payments are able to seek economic mobility and improved stability.

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, in 2013 **61% (38,726) of Nebraska children whose parents have a high school degree lived in low-income families.**² Keeping this provision in our ADC program supports parents who are taking steps to increase their financial stability by allowing them to pursue opportunities that can increase their earning potential. Furthermore, reducing barriers to self-sufficiency for families is a potential cost-savings for the state. Our state should continue to ensure that all of our public systems are effective, and **LB 701 marks progress in ensuring that we maximize opportunities that promote long-term stability for many families and children in our state.**

We urge the committee to advance this bill and thank Senator Mello for bringing this issue forward. Thank you.

¹ Table B20004, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

² "Low-income" is defined as twice the federal poverty threshold, about \$47,248 for a family of four in 2013. "Nebraska demographics of low-income children," National Center for Children in Poverty.