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VOICES FOR CHILDREN IN NEBRASKA
IMPACT REPORT

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***A LOOK BACK ON
STEPS FORWARD
FOR NEBRASKA KIDS***

FRIENDS OF CHILDREN:

A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In 2019, your support of Voices for Children made a huge impact on kids across the state! You helped us keep fighting for the things our kids and families need like paid family and medical leave, affordable child care and the ability to save for college. You also continued working with us to reform our broken juvenile justice system to ensure that no child in Nebraska is left without hope and opportunity. We're proud of our progress over the past year, but there's so much at stake for kids and families in 2020 and we hope you'll continue to join us in making Nebraska a better place for kids and families. Here are just a few of the big things ahead:

INCREASING FAMILY ECONOMIC STABILITY BY ENDING PREDATORY LENDING: For years, we've heard stories of families who were driven to the edge of financial ruin by payday loans. We're fighting for a current ballot initiative to end predatory lending in Nebraska in 2020 and we hope you will join us in these efforts.

PUTTING MORE YOUNG PEOPLE ON A PATH TO SUCCESS BY REFORMING OUR YOUTH PRISONS: Last year, Nebraska youth were still being held in solitary confinement - a practice the United Nations has likened to torture. Through our advocacy efforts, we were able to pass a bill early this year to eliminate extended solitary confinement of youth in our government-run facilities. We know we have so much farther to go to make our juvenile justice system one that heals rather than harms youth and communities. Every young person's life has value and we need your help to continue fighting for and beside youth who have been treated inhumanely in our youth prisons.

IMPROVING CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING BY EXPANDING ACCESS TO SAFE AND AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE: Nebraska was recently ranked one of the least affordable states for child care. Children and working families need access to safe and affordable care and we hope you'll join us in continuing to push for access to child care for Nebraska families.

EDUCATING VOTERS AND CANDIDATES ABOUT CHILDREN'S ISSUES: We're working to ensure that voters and candidates have the information they need to put kids and families first in the 2020 election. Keep an eye on our website and emails for resources in the coming months.

As always, the work we do each day is inextricably tied to data and research. The annual Kids Count in Nebraska Report remains a vital and trusted resource for educators, community leaders, and policy makers.

For 33 years and counting, supporters like you have stood with us as champions for Nebraska kids. 2020 is already proving to be a critical year for all of us and we need your help to continue fighting for a future that values children and prioritizes their needs. We're ready to continue working to put kids and families first, but we can't do it without you.

We thank you for all you did to support and advocate for kids last year and we hope you will continue to join us in standing up for our kids in 2020 and beyond!

Best regards,



Aubrey Mancuso, MSW
Executive Director

RESEARCH

In 2019, we published the 26th annual Kids Count in Nebraska Report. This publication serves as a trusted resource for Nebraska researchers, service providers, and educators and provides pertinent information on the well-being of all Nebraska children in areas of health, child welfare, education, economic stability, and juvenile justice. A special commentary highlighted Nebraska county rankings on overall child well being. Congratulations to Greeley County! Based on Voices for Children's methodology and analysis of the data, the children in Greeley County have the best opportunity for success on their pathway to adulthood.

All the data contained in the hard copy of Kids Count is also available on *NEteractive* - a searchable, easy to navigate online tool optimized for use on the go. You can explore *NEteractive* by visiting kidscountnebraska.com.



4,204

NEBRASKA PARENTS QUIT, DID NOT TAKE, OR GREATLY CHANGED THEIR JOB DUE TO CHILD CARE PROBLEMS IN 2016.

60.0%

OF UNINSURED CHILDREN IN NEBRASKA WERE LIKELY ELIGIBLE FOR MEDICAID OR CHIP, BUT NOT ENROLLED.

44.7%

OF NEBRASKA STUDENTS WERE ELIGIBLE FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE SCHOOL MEALS IN SY 2016-2017.



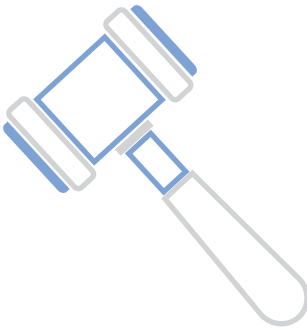
POLICY VICTORIES

Thank you to all who stood with us to urge our policymakers to put Nebraska kids first. Here's a recap of some of our pro-kid victories in 2019:



COLLEGE SAVINGS ACCOUNTS FOR EVERY

NEBRASKA BABY. Lawmakers approved the Meadowlark Act, which creates a college savings account with an initial seed deposit for every Nebraska baby starting in 2020. LB 610, which also includes an incentive match payment for college savings contributions made by low-income families, advanced unanimously and was signed by Governor Ricketts.



ADDRESSING THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE.

LB 390, introduced and prioritized by Senator Pansing Brooks, reduces school-based arrests that contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline, by ensuring law enforcement officers stationed in schools have roles and duties clearly defined. They will also receive training in adolescent development, responding to students with disabilities, and implicit bias. The bill advanced nearly unanimously and was signed by Governor Ricketts in April 2019.



ALLOWING JUVENILES IMPACTED BY OUR YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM A CLEAN SLATE THROUGH RECORD SEALING.

LB 354, introduced by Senator Pansing Brooks, requires automatic sealing of juvenile records at the time probation or court orders are successfully completed and provides for a number of other clarifications and protections for young people who deserve a clean slate when exiting the juvenile justice system. The bill had broad support from system stakeholders, including youth, at its hearing and moved swiftly through debate on the floor. Governor Ricketts signed it into law in March 2019.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

REVENUE

Grants	\$416,800.00
Special Events	\$129,140.00
Individual Donations	\$65,052.24
Organization Contributions	\$20,781.79
Other	\$2,296.86

REVENUE

TOTAL | \$634,070.89

EXPENSES

Research, Education, & Community Engagement	\$307,804.74
Management & Administration	\$177,422.71
Fundraising	\$93,848.89
Lobbying	\$3,301.12

EXPENSES

TOTAL | \$582,377.46

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

As we work to build a brighter future for kids and families, the voices of young people are critical to informing how to create a future that works for them. In 2019, we worked with youth to help ensure that their voices were heard by policymakers and other community leaders on the issues that impact them. We held our 4th annual youth fellowship program working with youth in our juvenile justice system. The semester long program trains young people on advocacy methods, policy change, and strategic storytelling and prepares them to engage in real-time advocacy efforts as opportunities arise. Ten fellows completed the program with a graduation event where they shared their proposals for change with system stakeholders and leaders. These young people testified at hearings, participated in meetings with key stakeholders and lobbied State Senators to share their ideas on how to make our juvenile justice system work better for the kids it serves.



COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS HONORED AT 2019 SPOTLIGHT GALA

On Friday, October 4, 400 supporters and friends of Voices for Children gathered to raise over \$120,000 to support our mission. We were thrilled to honor those in our community who are making a difference on behalf of kids. We presented political and civic leader Brenda Council with the Champion for Children award, college student James Moseman with the Youth Award, and fellow nonprofit Education Rights Counsel with the Youth Group Award. Kate and Roger Weitz served as the Honorary Family. The program was led by two energetic and young masters of ceremony, Eloise White and Dominic Torres. Guests were also treated to a special performance by youth singer, Naomee Tiebi. We are grateful for the continued support of our friends in the community!





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A SINCERE AND SPECIAL THANKS

to our 2019 Children's Circle members for helping strengthen our work on behalf of kids.

Cindy Heider

Collette Lozier

Deborah Macdonald

Barbara Weitz

Katie Weitz, PhD