



nebraskachildren<sup>®</sup>  
AND FAMILIES FOUNDATION

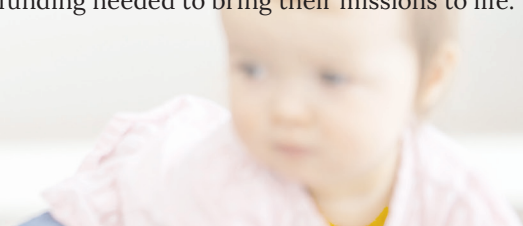
*Cultivating opportunity  
through community.*



## *The challenge we face*

Across the state, there are children, families, and communities with endless potential. When this potential is recognized and maximized, every Nebraskan has the opportunity to thrive.

Government-backed, public resources exist, but they have strict qualifications and limited scope. Private organizations can help on a local level, but they often lack the operational support and funding needed to bring their missions to life.



## *The opportunity*

Children, young people, and families can thrive in a number of different economic and environmental situations. While there is no all-encompassing solution, together we can take an all-encompassing approach to maximize their potential. Research shows that preventive measures and access to education lead to better outcomes for everyone. When we work with families and communities to identify the resources that build on their strengths, we co-create the conditions to thrive.

We know from experience that amazing things happen when you rally all of a community's people—schools and churches, service providers and health care professionals, law enforcement, businesses, government agencies, and especially parents and youth—around the common goal of strengthening families and building well-being.





## *Building well-being*

At Nebraska Children, we combine the power of public and private support, in direct partnership with families and communities, to co-create preventive solutions that are flexible and meaningful. This approach is called **collective impact**. While it's more complex than we can succinctly describe, here's a high-level introduction:

- Communities, children, young people, and families identify opportunities to build on their strengths.
- Based on their firsthand experiences, we co-create solutions that maximize potential through programming, systems change, and other forms of support.
- In partnership with each community, we share feedback and track progress to celebrate successes and evaluate the possibilities we're creating together.

## *This work takes all of us*

Every dollar we receive helps us answer one critical question:  
**What's the life-altering improvement?** The more resources we have, the more we can share with communities.

You can help us build on the strengths of children, young adults, families, and communities across Nebraska.

Together, we can create a state where everyone can thrive.

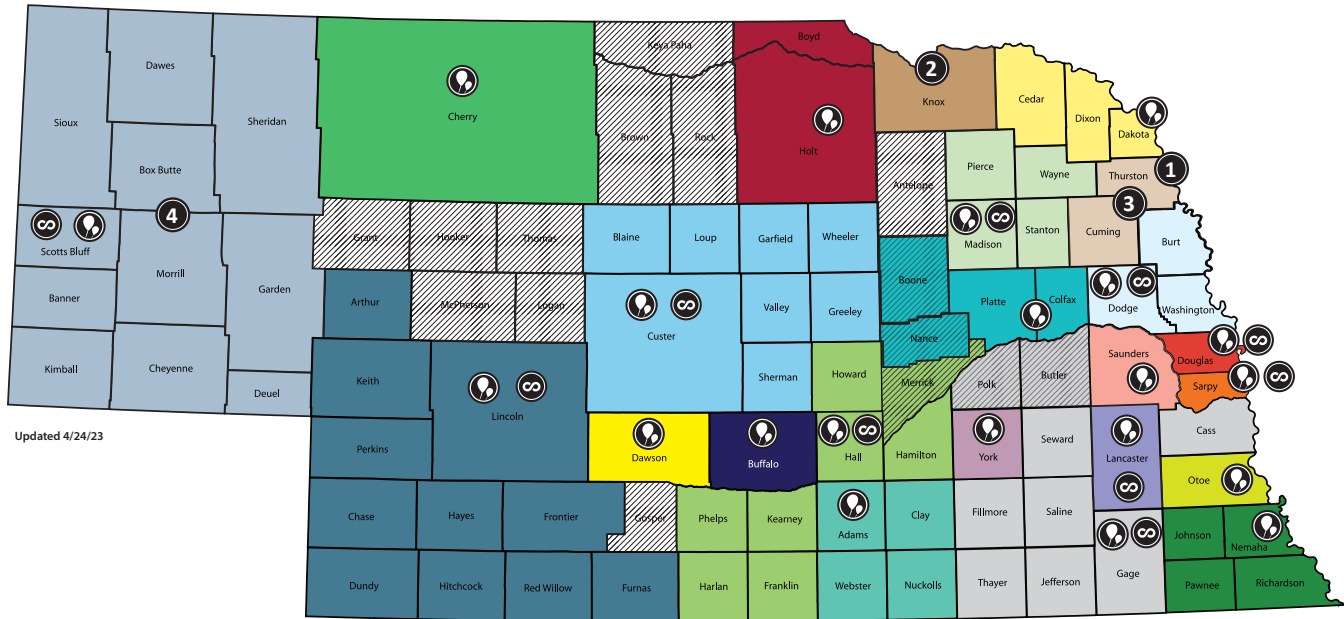
## *From Omaha to the Panhandle*

Nebraska Children has a presence across the state as we partner with community collaboratives. The collaboratives are prevention-focused and community-owned, working toward strengthening families and their communities.

By forming local community collaboratives where anyone and any organization is invited to the table, we are able to utilize all resources to strengthen family and community well-being. Collaboratives can identify gaps in services, learn from those with firsthand experience, and use the latest strategies and data to develop long-term plans that maximize resources—plans that aren't reliant on one organization or one funding source.

The result is a community-based collaboration that strengthens the efforts of all contributing parties. The resulting inclusive well-being system is an alternative to calling law enforcement or Child Protective Services (CPS) when a family has a challenge.

The results—like the collaborative process—are transformative to Nebraska's communities. Ninety-nine percent of families participating voluntarily in community prevention services have avoided becoming involved with the child welfare system—meaning families are being strengthened and staying together.



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## *Our Work*

### Bring Up Nebraska

Nebraska Children is proud to be the administrative lead for Bring Up Nebraska—a statewide prevention partnership that supports local community collaboratives that keep children safe, support strong parents, and help families address challenges before they become a crisis.

## *Our Initiatives*

Each of Nebraska Children's initiatives is part of a larger well-being model. Initiatives can be connected to community collaboratives to address their needs and priorities.

## *Cradle to Career*

### Community Response

Community Response is one way community collaboratives strengthen families and enhance well-being without the intervention of the child welfare system. By working within communities and bringing all of their strengths and services together in a coordinated way, families can find support before challenges become a crisis.

Community Response partners are nonprofit service providers, medical professionals, mental health practitioners, schools, churches, utility companies, and more. The goal is to listen to families and give them what they need to thrive so they can stay together, remain self-sufficient, and support the health and learning of their children.



## *Early Childhood*

### Sixpence Early Learning Fund

Sixpence provides support to parents of young children and early childhood caregivers so they can create safe, stimulating environments that spark learning through meaningful interaction. The fund, which braids public and private funds, focuses on children ages 3 and under.

### Communities for Kids

Communities for Kids was created in response to requests for assistance with the shortage of high-quality early care and education programs—a shortage that impacts children's development and is a challenge for communities hoping to attract and retain the workforce they need to thrive.

Communities for Kids partners with communities' public and private partners to plan for access to high-quality early care and education for all children from birth to age 8. These partnerships are customized for each community's unique assets and needs—so each community can grow and prosper.

### Rooted in Relationships

This initiative partners with communities to encourage the social-emotional development of children ages 0-8 by supporting caregivers including childcare providers, and improving early childhood mental health systems. Social development is vital to the well-being of children so they can positively interact with others and learn how to manage stress and adversity. Rooted in Relationships promotes the use of evidence-based practices that support the needs of children and families.

## *Middle Childhood*

### Beyond School Bells

Beyond School Bells is a statewide public-private partnership supporting school-community collaborations that provide high-quality afterschool and summer learning opportunities. We work closely with diverse state and local partners to enhance existing afterschool programs and to launch new programming for underserved communities across the state. Over the years, Beyond School Bells has emerged as a national leader in developing rural learning opportunities including hands-on STEM learning and career exploration.

### Together, Better

The Nebraska Department of Education and Nebraska Children are partnering on strategic investments and strategies to better support students as well as engage their families through parental involvement and leadership opportunities. Since 2021, there are four Nebraska schools piloting the full-service community school model under this initiative.

## *Young Adults*

### Connected Youth Initiative/Project Everlast

This innovative, youth-led, evidence-based initiative has achieved success addressing the policies affecting young people with life experiences like foster care, juvenile justice, homelessness, and human trafficking and that are otherwise disconnected from family support. Within Connected Youth Initiative programs, we work with young people to help them increase Protective and Promotive Factors, achieve educational goals, slow dual-generation cycles of systems involvement and poverty through economic stability, and support them to engage meaningfully in their own community.

### Camp Catch-Up

This unique camp allows siblings (ages 8-19) who have been placed in different foster or adoptive homes to reunite and “catch up” during a weekend of fun, adventure, and connection. We give them a safe, enjoyable time together to build memories, laugh, and rekindle their bond.



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