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Intergenerational facilities grant program brings together Nebraska seniors, young children

Lincoln, NE—Nursing homes and elder care facilities will now be able to apply for grants to co-locate and share resources with child care facilities thanks to a new grant program established by the passage of LB904. The bill was amended to include LB1178, which creates the Intergenerational Care Facility Incentive Grant Program, introduced earlier in the session by State Senator Anna Wishart (District 27). It passed on Final Reading with a bipartisan vote of 45-0-4 and was approved by Governor Pillen on April 15.

The bill appropriates \$300,000 from the Medicaid Managed Care Excess Profit Fund to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS) for the grant program. The awards can be used for one-time startup costs, capital improvements and to purchase materials and equipment needed to deliver child care services at nursing home and assisted living facilities. The program will prioritize grant applicants in rural areas. Grant recipients will be required to enroll in Step Up to Quality, Nebraska's child care quality rating and improvement program, within three years of the award.

Senior care and child care facilities that co-locate often share essential functions such as food preparation, dining, recreation, housekeeping and other maintenance or back-office functions. The intergenerational care model is already used by several facilities across the state to create operational efficiencies, save money and improve the health and well-being of seniors and children.

Senator Wishart noted the new grant program can help address child care capacity and staffing challenges. "Nebraska has lost 12% of licensed child care programs since 2019, yet the need for these services has only increased," she said. "Combining elder and child care programs makes fiscal and operational sense and can be a powerful incentive for recruiting new employees to grow the workforce needed for these industries."

Intergenerational care facilities can also lead to improved quality of life and better outcomes for seniors and young children, said Jina Ragland, associate director for advocacy and outreach for AARP Nebraska,

which testified in support of the bill. “These programs stimulate skill development, cognition and social connectivity for Nebraskans of all ages and abilities and can be a valuable resource to bring families together in Nebraska communities, especially in rural areas,” she said.

Sara Howard, First Five Nebraska maternal and infant health policy advisor, worked with Senator Wishart to advance the bill. “Senator Wishart has long been a champion of innovative solutions for child care challenges and even brought a version of this bill back in 2020,” she said. “As our state grows, it’s critical to recognize child care as a critical piece of infrastructure that helps support Nebraska families and communities.”

About First Five Nebraska

First Five Nebraska (FFN) is a non-partisan public policy organization established in 2011 to strengthen the state’s early childhood system as a key driver of social, educational and economic opportunity for all Nebraskans. FFN works with officials in local, state and federal government, business and economic leaders, early childhood professionals and other stakeholders to identify, research and promote well-informed, fiscally responsible policies and solutions addressing the care, education and healthy development of young children at home or in out-of-home settings. For more information, visit www.FirstFiveNebraska.org.

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