



2025 Legislative Highlights

109th Nebraska Legislature | First Session

Nebraska Legislature adjourns with key wins for early childhood policy amid ongoing challenges

The first session of the 109th Nebraska Legislature adjourned sine die June 2, concluding on the 89th day of the scheduled 90-day session. Despite a significant budget shortfall, state senators introduced more than 700 bills. The fiscal climate made it especially difficult to advance major early childhood priorities. However, the Legislature successfully passed the state's \$11 billion biennial budget, preserving several critical early childhood initiatives that had been at risk of cuts or rejection. In total, Nebraska lawmakers passed 322 bills, including one constitutional amendment. The remaining bills will be carried over to the 2026 session.

Early childhood and maternal health highlights

This session saw important gains in early childhood and maternal and infant health policy:

- Expanded access to child care assistance for families
- Strengthened incentives to build child care provider capacity
- Streamlined regulatory processes for child care providers
- Enhanced prenatal screening and voluntary home visiting programs

We commend the Legislature for protecting funding for the Early Childhood Education Endowment Cash Fund (Sixpence) and for providing funding to pilot the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS). We are also grateful for passage of [LB22](#) and [LB104](#), which enable evidence-based nurse home visiting programs to bill Medicaid and formally define home visiting services in statute, respectively.

Interim studies

First Five Nebraska collaborated closely with policymakers to advance interim work, including:

- [LR205](#) (State Senator Paul Strommen, Dist. 47): A study to examine barriers and opportunities in data sharing between the Nebraska Departments of Education (NDE) and Health and Human Services (NDHHS) to support the Early Childhood Integrated Data System.

Ongoing interim priorities

- [LB304](#) (Senator Wendy DeBoer, Dist.10): A proposal to remove the sunset on income eligibility provisions for the Child Care Subsidy program.
- [Tax Credits](#): Promoting awareness of the Child Care, Contribution and School Readiness tax credits, and advocating for a more streamlined, equitable application process.

Ongoing interim priorities *(con't.)*

- **LB339** (Senator Bob Hallstrom, Dist.1): Legislation requiring NDHHS to provide a summary Explanation of Payments report to child care providers, facilitating School Readiness Tax Credit applications. FFN will be working with NDHHS to implement this change administratively.
- **Substitute Pools:** Exploring options for substitute pools in the child care workforce, building on background check portability changes in LB874 (2024).

First Five Nebraska will continue to share updates via our website, social media and monthly newsletters in the coming months. As always, we remain committed to working alongside lawmakers, agencies and community partners to promote well-informed policies that support the healthy development of Nebraska's youngest children—laying the foundation for a stronger, more vibrant future for all.

LB13 | Require Department of Health and Human Services to file a state plan amendment relating to child care

- **Introducer:** Senator Machaela Cavanaugh (Dist. 6)
- **Summary:** Adjusts the reimbursement for services provided by the Child Care Subsidy program to pay providers based on enrollment instead of attendance.
- **Bill Status:** The Health and Human Services Committee advanced LB13 to Select File, the second round of debate, but ultimately did not pass due to fiscal constraints. It will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN hearing testimony](#)

LB22 | Allow Medicaid billing for evidence-based nurse home visiting services

- **Introducer:** Senator George Dungan (Dist. 26)
- **Summary:** LB22 requires NDHHS to submit a state plan amendment to the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for targeted case management for evidence-based nurse home visiting for new mothers. This would allow programs like Lincoln's Family Connects program to bill Medicaid and offer 3-4 visits with a nurse in the home at discharge from labor and delivery.
- **Bill Status:** [LB104](#) language was included in LB22 with [AM348](#); LB22 passed Final Reading on a 47-0-2 vote and was signed by the Governor on April 9.
- **Resources:** [FFN hearing testimony](#) | [FFN policy brief](#)

LB41 | Increase access to prenatal screenings

- **Introducer:** Senator Merv Riepe (Dist. 49)
- **Summary:** LB41 updates Nebraska's existing statute for prenatal screens for syphilis from one screening in

the first trimester to the best practice of two additional screenings (at the third trimester and at delivery) to address Nebraska's 1,100% increase in rates of congenital syphilis, or babies being born with syphilis.

- **Bill Status:** LB41 passed Final Reading with a vote of 47-0-2 and the Governor signed it into law on April 9.
- **Resources:** [FFN hearing testimony](#) | [FFN policy brief](#)

LB51 | Adopt the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact

- **Introducer:** Senator Teresa Ibach (Dist. 44)
- **Summary:** LB51 signs Nebraska onto the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact. The Compact better facilitates federal and interstate background checks, making the process more efficient for professions with background check requirements, including child care.
- **Bill Status:** LB51 passed Final Reading with a vote of 48-0-1 and was signed into law by the Governor on February 25.
- **Resources:** [FFN letter of support](#)

LB71 | Change requirements for child care reimbursement rates

- **Introducer:** Senator Wendy DeBoer (Dist. 10)
- **Summary:** LB71 increases the tiered child care subsidy reimbursement rates available to early childhood programs participating in Step Up to Quality from Step 3 to Step 2 and increases for subsequent levels.
- **Bill Status:** LB71 did not advance from the Health and Services Committee and will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN hearing testimony](#) | [FFN policy brief](#)

LB74 | Authorize certain expenditures under the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act

- **Introducer:** Senator Megan Hunt (Dist. 8)
- **Summary:** LB74 expands permissible campaign expenditures for public officials, including child care services incurred while carrying out the duties of the public office.
- **Bill Status:** LB74 did not advance from the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee and will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN letter of support](#)

LB94 | Adopt the Digital Skills Empowerment Act and change the use of the Workforce Development Program Cash Fund

- **Introducer:** Senator Terrell McKinney (Dist. 11)
- **Summary:** LB94 establishes a grant program to provide digital skills training and apprenticeships in



LB104 sets up strict rules for home visiting programs in Nebraska. To receive state dollars, a program must be evidence-based, meaning it has to be proven to work.

The law says state funding can only go to these proven programs and meet specific, important goals, like building healthy connections between parents and children, promoting children’s cognitive development and lowering the risk of abuse and injuries to children.

Sara Howard
FFN Policy Advisor
Testimony in support
of LB104

qualified Census tracts. The grant program covers child care expenses for participants who receive training leading to a digital skills certification.

- **Bill Status:** LB94 did not advance from the Business and Labor Committee and will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN letter of support](#)

LB95 | Child care subsidy eligibility for the early childhood workforce

- **Introducer:** Senator John Fredrickson (Dist. 20)
- **Summary:** LB95 creates a pilot program to provide categorical eligibility for child care professionals under the federal child care subsidy program for their own children as a workforce benefit.
- **Bill Status:** The Health and Human Services Committee did not advance LB95; it will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN hearing testimony](#) | [FFN policy brief](#)

LB104 | Defining evidence-based home visiting in Nebraska statute

- **Introducer:** Senator Jane Raybould (Dist. 28)
- **Summary:** LB104 defines evidence-based home visiting services in statute and calls on NDHHS to offer annual reports from 2026 to 2028 on the use and impact of state funds for home visitation programs.
- **Bill Status:** Bill language was included in [AM348](#) to LB22 and was signed into law on April 9.
- **Resources:** [FFN hearing testimony](#) | [FFN policy brief](#)

LB153 | Extension of postpartum coverage

- **Introducer:** Senator Dunixi Guereca (Dist. 7)
- **Summary:** LB153 requires NDHHS to submit a state plan amendment to the federal Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services for a Health Services Initiative to offer at least six months postpartum coverage for mothers who receive their prenatal care through the “unborn child” option in the Children’s Health and Human Services Program
- **Bill Status:** LB153 did not advance from the Health and Human Services Committee and will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN letter of support](#) | [FFN policy brief](#)

LB157 | Adopt the Child Tax Credit Act

- **Introducer:** Senator Danielle Conrad (Dist. 46)
- **Summary:** LB157 provides a \$1,000 refundable credit per child who is 6 years old or younger at the end of the taxable year for taxpayers claiming them as a dependent. The bill lowers the amount that can be claimed, depending on income.
- **Bill Status:** LB157 did not advance from the Revenue Committee and will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN letter of support](#)

LB161 | Redefine formula students under the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act

- **Introducer:** Senator Margo Juarez (Dist. 5)
- **Summary:** LB161 makes changes to the school aid formula to provide a higher weight on prekindergarten students from .6 to 1.0 per prekindergarten student.
- **Bill Status:** The Education Committee did not advance LB161 and it will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN hearing testimony](#)

LB162 | Adopt the Child Care and Safety Act

- **Introducer:** Senator Margo Juarez (Dist. 5)
- **Summary:** LB162 facilitates establishment of community-based partnerships to provide safety and reunification procedures for early childhood programs. The bill includes grants to participating communities to operate an emergency response notification system, emergency preparedness training and materials related to safety and reunification procedures.
- **Bill Status:** LB162 did not advance from the Health and Human Services Committee and will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN hearing testimony](#)

LB182 | Change provisions relating to the Affordable Housing Tax Credit and the Child Care Tax Credit Act

- **Introducer:** Senator Eliot Bostar (Dist. 29)
- **Summary:** LB182 makes banks and insurance companies eligible for a nonrefundable tax credit under the Child Care Tax Credit Act when they make a qualifying contribution to the child care industry.
- **Bill Status:** LB182 passed Final Reading with a 46-2-1



LB162 addresses the need for early childhood programs throughout the state to partner with K-12 and other community institutions in opting into emergency preparedness efforts already in place for schools.

The bill mirrors three components from schools: 1) an emergency response notification system, 2) standardized, age-appropriate training on emergency procedures or protocols, and 3) materials for training and signage to be displayed in early childhood programs.

The safety and security of children under the care of early childhood programs warrant the need for emergency preparedness and response like those that already exist in K-12 schools.

Mitchell Clark
*FFN Policy Advisor
Testimony in support
of LB162*

vote and was signed into law February 26.

- **Resources:** [FFN hearing testimony](#)

LB189 | Adopt the Paid Family and Medical Leave Act

- **Introducer:** Senator Machaela Cavanaugh (Dist. 6)
- **Summary:** LB189 establishes the Nebraska Paid Family Leave Insurance Act, funded through the Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund. This legislation provides eligible individuals with paid leave for qualifying circumstances, such as caring for a newborn or newly adopted child, supporting a family member with a serious health condition or assisting a covered service member who is next of kin. Leave

may also be used for an individual's own serious health condition of pregnancy. The maximum allowable leave is up to 10 consecutive weeks or 60 workdays if taken intermittently.

- **Bill Status:** LB189 did not advance from the Revenue Committee this session and will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN letter of support](#)

LB224 | Require paid maternity leave for state employees

- **Introducer:** Senator Dunixi Guereca (Dist. 7)
- **Summary:** LB224 grants State of Nebraska employees up to 12 weeks of paid maternity leave following the birth of a child or upon assuming a parental role.
- **Bill Status:** LB224 advanced to General File from the Government, Military and Veteran Affairs Committee, but was not taken up for debate due to time constraints.
- **Resources:** [FFN letter of support](#)

LB248 | Exempt certain programs from child care licensing requirements

- **Introducer:** Senator Rita Sanders (Dist. 45)
- **Summary:** LB248 exempts child care programs located on military bases or federal property, as well as those licensed by the military as family child care providers, from state licensing requirements.
- **Bill Status:** LB248 passed Final Reading with a 47-0-2 vote and was signed into law by the Governor on April 7.
- **Resources:** [FFN letter of support](#)

LB264 | Provide, change, and eliminate transfers from the Cash Reserve Fund and various other funds

- **Introducer:** Speaker John Arch (Dist. 14), at the request of the Governor
- **Summary:** LB264 is the Cash funds budget bill. The bill sweeps \$3,250,000 from the Early Childhood Education Endowment Cash Fund, which supports the Sixpence program. The Appropriations Committee restored this funding, which was ultimately affirmed by the legislative body and signed into law. The Nebraska Department of Education's budget request to fund the

Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) was also included in the Appropriations Committee's recommendations and affirmed by the legislative body.

- **Bill Status:** LB264 passed Final Reading with an Emergency Clause with a 35-13-1 vote and the Governor signed it into law on May 21. It went into effect immediately due to the Emergency Clause.
- **Resources:** [FFN hearing testimony](#)

LB274 | Change requirements under the Child Care Licensing Act for liability insurance coverage and inspections and investigations

- **Introducer:** Senator Megan Hunt (Dist. 8)
- **Summary:** LB274 requires licensed child care providers to hold at least \$200,000 of liability insurance coverage per occurrence, up from the current \$100,000 required in statute. The bill gives licensees three business days to obtain liability insurance if a lapse is discovered at inspection and stipulates suspension of the license if coverage cannot be obtained. LB274 language was amended ([AM947](#)) to [LB257](#), which removed the insurance increase.
- **Bill Status:** LB189 did not advance from the Revenue Committee and will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN hearing testimony](#)

LB283 | Require the Department of Health and Human Services to implement express lane eligibility

- **Introducer:** Senator Ashlei Spivey (Dist. 13)
- **Summary:** LB283 requires NDHHS to submit state plan amendments to the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services for Medicaid and recipients to the federal Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to implement express lane eligibility. Express lane eligibility is when data from one assistance program is utilized to determine eligibility for another program. In LB283, information from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program could be used to determine eligibility for Medicaid or CHIP.
- **Bill Status:** LB83 did not advance from the Health and Human Services Committee and will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN letter of support](#)

LB304 | Eliminate a sunset date for the federal Child Care Subsidy program

- **Introducer:** Senator Wendy DeBoer (Dist. 10)
- **Summary:** Eliminates a sunset on income eligibility provisions for the child care subsidy program.
- **Bill Status:** The Health and Human Services Committee did not advance LB304, and it will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN hearing testimony](#) | [FFN policy brief](#)

LB339 | Require Nebraska DHHS to report on federal Child Care Subsidy program

- **Introducer:** Senator Bob Hallstrom (Dist. 1)

- **Summary:** LB339 requires NDHHS to provide a summary report of claims reimbursed for each licensed child care provider in the previous calendar year. The report is due February 1 each year. NDHHS has indicated that the components of LB339 will be handled administratively at the departmental level.
- **Bill Status:** LB339 did not advance from the Health and Human Services Committee in lieu of anticipated administrative changes, however the bill will still carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN hearing testimony](#)



LB304 maintains income eligibility levels enacted into law under LB485 in 2021 by removing the sunset date of October 1, 2026. The threshold for subsidized care of 185% of the federal poverty level (FPL) and 200% FPL for transitional child care assistance would be retained.

Child care expenses can be a significant challenge to the financial stability of Nebraska families, as well as our state's ability to field a productive workforce. Nebraska's child care subsidy plays an important role in addressing these challenges.

First Five Nebraska, in collaboration with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and other partners, conducted an impact analysis of expanded subsidy access per the provisions of LB485. Key findings included:

More families eligible: Promoting the self-sufficiency of families is the purpose of the subsidy.

Increased employment: The vast majority of families became eligible for the subsidy because they were employed.

Increased infant care: Infants are the most expensive age group to serve through child care, which was a significant barrier for parents seeking to return to work after birth of a child. Proportionally, more infants became eligible for care under LB485.

First Five Nebraska
LB304 Policy Brief

LB346 | Change qualifications of the State Capitol Administrator, provide for termination of boards, commissions, committees, etc.

- **Introducer:** Speaker John Arch (Dist. 14), at the request of the Governor
- **Summary:** LB346 changes or removes the powers, duties and membership of boards, commissions and other committees, including the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC). The bill would remove agency representatives and reduce its membership to 11 members. [AM492](#) was adopted to LB346 on General File and incorporates First Five Nebraska's recommendations, including changing the membership of ECICC from 11 members to 16 members.
- **Bill Status:** LB346 passed Final Reading on a 49-0-0 vote
- **Resources:** [FFN letter of opposition](#)

LB363 | Adopt the Apprenticeship Act

- **Introducer:** Senator Teresa Ibach (Dist. 44)
- **Summary:** LB363 creates an apprenticeship grant program for individuals on economic assistance, which would include early childhood apprentices who qualify.
- **Bill Status:** LB363 did not advance from the Business and Labor Health and Human Services Committee and will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN letter of support](#)

LB442 | Establish a state child care subsidy program

- **Introducer:** Senator Ashlei Spivey (Dist. 13)
- **Summary:** LB442 establishes a state child care subsidy program funded through a dedicated payroll tax.
- **Bill Status:** LB442 did not advance from the Health and Human Services Committee and will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN letter of support](#)

LB446 | Change provisions related to release of health data and statistical research information

- **Introducer:** Senator Dunixi Guereca (Dist. 7)
- **Summary:** LB446 opens up Nebraska's vital statistics



The role of the Legislature is twofold when it comes to public health data. First, to ensure that data is available to researchers, the public health community and policymakers to ensure that needed health interventions reach target populations while maintaining that the data is reported in a way that maintains confidentiality. Second, policymakers should be using good data to guide policy to support the best overall health outcomes for their constituents.

Sara Howard
FFN Policy Advisor
Testimony in support
of LB446

statute (71-602) to make three changes: 1) Allow a statewide quality improvement collaborative to have access to the aggregate, deidentified data; 2) Create a clear and expedient process for researchers to apply to access the data, and; 3) Codify the existing vital statistics dashboard and call for its annual updating.

- **Bill Status:** The Health and Human Services Committee did not advance LB446 this session and it will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN hearing testimony](#) | [FFN policy brief](#)

LB457 | Require anaphylaxis policies for school districts and licensed child care facilities, limit payment required for epinephrine injectors

- **Introducer:** Senator Eliot Bostar (Dist. 29)
- **Summary:** LB457 requires early childhood programs to adopt an anaphylaxis policy if they are caring for a child with a known food or other allergy. Programs

have the option of adopting a model policy to be developed by the state.

- **Bill Status:** LB457 passed Final Reading with a 47-1-1 vote and was signed into law April 14.
- **Resources:** [FFN hearing testimony](#)

LB583 | Change provisions relating to the rate and disbursement of the documentary stamp tax, the Child Care Grant Fund, child care grants, the Military Installation Development and Support Fund, the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, the Innovation Hub Cash Fund, the Economic Recovery Contingency Fund, and the Health Care Homes for the medically Underserved Fund

- **Introducer:** Senator Ashlei Spivey (Dist. 13)
- **Summary:** LB583 increases the documentary stamp tax to \$3.30 per \$1,000 of real estate value and distributes the additional revenue to several areas including: child care, military support, innovation hubs, federally qualified health centers, etc.
- **Bill Status:** LB583 did not advance from the Revenue Committee and will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN hearing testimony](#)

LB670 | Require schools to adopt a safety plan and provide and change requirements related to training for staff of child care and schools

- **Introducer:** Senator Dave Murman (Dist. 38), at the request of the Governor
- **Summary:** LB670 reduces annual in-service training requirements for licensed child care providers from at least four hours to no more than four hours.
- **Bill Status:** LB670 did not advance from the Education Committee and will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN hearing testimony](#)



LB457 mandates the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Nebraska Department of Education, establish a model anaphylaxis policy to guide child care programs in caring for children with known allergies. This policy would include guidelines for prevention, individualized health plans, emergency response and communication.

Elizabeth Everett
FFN Public Policy Manager
Testimony in support of LB457

LB710 | Increase the earned income tax credit

- **Introducer:** Senator Eliot Bostar (Dist. 29)
- **Summary:** LB710 increases the rate at which Nebraska matches the federal earned income tax credit from 10% to 20%.
- **Bill Status:** The Revenue Committee did not advance LB710 this session and will carry over to 2026.
- **Resources:** [FFN letter of support](#)

