

Community Playbook

INTRODUCTION

[COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVES](#) are local, membership-based coalitions of service providers, educators, health care professionals, law enforcement, government agencies, nonprofit organizations and individual community members that believe strong and thriving families are the result of collaborative efforts on prevention strategies, before families are in crisis.

There are [22 collaboratives](#) in Nebraska, serving 75 counties. Each collaborative is different—organized around the unique needs of each individual community. The collaboratives are led by their own community members, because they best understand the needs and resources available. When assessing needs due to the pandemic, organizations surveying the state, including the Nonprofit Association of the Midlands, found that the collaboratives were experiencing the same critical issues and gaps in services statewide.

In order to respond to these emergent needs and to develop and coordinate strategies to help children, families, and communities, the collaboratives created playbooks—summaries of needs and gaps in services. With contributions of more than 1,000 stakeholders and community partners, the [playbooks](#) are also intended to help guide local and state leaders and partners as they make decisions about how federal pandemic funds should be spent.

The community collaboratives have utilized their Community Response systems to quickly respond to the pandemic-created crisis by relying on the collective resources of partners to develop plans, coordinate activities, and communicate to ensure funds were effectively utilized. A great deal of work has been done to remove barriers to accessing services, and significant needs have been met through their efforts. Descriptions of the solutions the collaboratives have implemented can be found [here](#).

Even with these efforts, collective response with partners, and use of public/private partnerships, each collaborative is in need of additional response and recovery assistance. The greatest needs and gaps in services, and therefore the priority areas for the collaboratives, include issues related to 1) early childhood; 2) food insecurity; 3) physical and mental health; 4) housing; and 5) workforce.

The specific concerns in each area are described in the playbooks. The collaboratives have also expressed that immediate support and remedies are needed for systemic and procedural matters. Long-term solutions to these issues are imperative towards reaching the community collaboratives' core goal of strong and thriving families using collaborative prevention strategies before a family is in crisis.

- Solutions are needed to improve the infrastructure of our services system, because after pandemic funding is gone, the same needs will still exist
 - A solution is needed to the barriers created by not being able to easily access required documentation and identification
 - Support should be provided for a one-stop entry system for information and assistance with all needed
 - Assistance is needed to streamline the process of getting money out
- Resources are needed to address language barriers, as those with language barriers have difficulty getting services
- Services for undocumented population must be addressed
- Long-term affordable housing is a statewide problem that must be addressed, as Nebraska has no extended plan on post-pandemic housing—**median income does not match the cost of rent in many communities**
- Long-term solutions are needed to make child care more affordable