

Agency Name Changes, State Board Replaced

Effective July 1, 2012, per statute the State Foster Care Review Board becomes the Foster Care Review Office (FCRO). The State Board is replaced by the Foster Care Review Office Advisory Committee, which by statute has different duties, serving as a resource tool to the agency. Appointments to the Committee were pending as of June 29th.

Data Coordinator Linda M. Cox, who has nearly 20 years employment with the agency, becomes Interim Executive Director pending the Advisory Committee completing the hiring process. July 2012 also marks the 30th anniversary of the agency's founding.

Under the recent legislation, the FCRO remains an independent state agency not affiliated with the courts or with the Department of Health and Human Services. Although the agency name and some details on its upper level governance were changed, the mission was not changed.

The FCRO's mission remains to ensure the best interest and safety of children in out-of-home care are being met through external citizen reviews, maintaining a statewide independent tracking system, disseminating data and recommendations to the public and Legislature, and monitoring youth placements. According to the Foster Care Review Office's independent tracking system, as of June 25, 2012, there were 4,359 children in out-of-home care in Nebraska.

In a written statement, Ms. Cox noted:

I thank the nearly 300 citizen review volunteers from across the state, and our dedicated staff, for remaining faithful to the work they do for the children through the turbulence of recent months. Together we look forward to the positive things which can occur on a case-by-case and systems level as the Legislature restores the Foster Care Review Office's role as advocates for Nebraska's abused and neglected children, and enables the FCRO to do more to advance improvements to the child welfare system.

Please feel free to contact Interim Executive Director Cox (email: fcro.contact@nebraska.gov) if you have any questions.