Probation Service Definition

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS & PROBATION

Service Name	**Professional Foster Care** ☐ **Adult** ☒ **Juvenile**
Category	Out-of-Home (OHP) placement/Non-treatment
Setting	Residential
Facility License	Child Placing Agency License as required by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Division of Public Health
Service Description	Professional Foster Care is a temporary placement that is provided in a licensed foster home when agency based, family or kinship options are not available. The agency is expected to ensure background checks are completed per child placing agency license. The foster home is supported by a licensed agency or through the Department of Health and Human Services to ensure the youth is provided 24-hour care and supervision. The professional foster home and agency is responsive to the youth's needs throughout the day and night, is prepared to intervene in crisis situations and collaborates with the youth's parent/caregiver to provide effective parenting in order to support sustainable success. Professional Foster Care is comprehensive service for youth requiring an elevated intensity of intervention by a team of highly skilled caregivers to maintain consistent behavior management, supervision and crisis support to ensure their access to education, treatment services and family/prosocial supports are not disrupted while more long-term plans are developed. Youth may be considered for Professional Foster Care if they meet one or more of the following criteria: a. Aggressive and non-compliant behavior impacts access to other alternatives. b. Demonstrates a pattern of previously failed placements. c. Displays sexually harming behaviors. d. Diagnosed with intellectual and developmental disabilities or other special needs. e. Has extensive system involvement and long-term institutional placements and is in need of transition supports. Foster families with the support of an agency will provide a safe and nurturing environment and line-of-sight supervision as outlined within the youth's individualized service plan to help youth and their families facilitate change in their behavior, attitudes, and personal interactions with the goal to successfully transition the youth back into the family home.
Service Expectations	• The agency will develop a written individualized service plan with the youth's family, youth, foster family, supporting agency, probation/problem solving court officer and other stakeholders based on the referral

	information (criminogenic risk, needs and responsivity) relevant collateral documentation/assessments and youth/family goals. • The initial plan will be developed within 72 hours of placement, and the goals must be related to the youth's stage of change and the improvement of criminogenic risk to include: a) Behavioral interventions with an intensive focus on coping skills. b) Education. c) Family engagement to include plans for parental skill development and improved family interactions. d) Consistent access to needed treatment/evaluation including medication compliance. e) Increased prosocial supports including building relationships with other supporting adults. f) Transition planning. • The plan shall include approval by the probation/problem solving court officer and/or court to allow youth community access to participate in education, treatment and planned supervised outings, home visits, etc. • Professional foster parents and the supporting agency will: a) Provide a structured living environment with line-of-sight supervision across settings. b) Implement interventions that include evidence-based youth developmental principles (physical, psychological, emotional), community engagement/ support, and family engagement. c) Engage in skill building activities to build youth behavioral, emotional, and social competency. d) Actively engage with the youth, their family, the school, probation, and other formal and informal supports to enhance youth and family functioning and reduce criminogenic risk. e) Build relationships with the youth's parents/caregivers to ensure family voice and choice. f) Collaborate with the youth's parent/caregivers to support the development of effective parenting strategies which support sustainable success. g) Ensure transition planning occurs timely and intentionally. h) Ensure that educational needs are being met. Youth shall attend their home school whenever possible. • Participation in family team meetings by the professional foster parent and the foster care agency to provide necessary information on the youth's behavior and progress in Professional Foster Care as well as assist the family in preparing for the youth's return home or necessary placement. Family engagement shall include regular phone contact and visitation with family members as authorized by Probation/Problem Solving Court Officer and/or the court. Family engagement shall be flexible to meet the non-traditional hours needed by families. Phone contact and visits shall not be tied to behavior management and shall not be removed as a consequence.

	• Intentional home visits should be planned with the youth, youth's family, foster family, supporting agency, and Probation/Problem-Solving Court Officer and shall be utilized to enhance family functioning and in the achievement of service goals. Home visits shall be in the family home and the visits shall not be removed as a consequence of behavior.
	• Professional foster parents shall arrange their schedule to ensure they are in the home at all times the youth is present. One foster parent shall be immediately available at all times to support the youth placed in the home and the foster parent and agency have the primary responsibility to seek and secure appropriate supervision alternatives as a result of a change in daily structure (e.g., suspension, illness). The supporting agency will ensure 24-hour crisis intervention is available to aid in the stabilization of crisis situations established and outlined in the plan.
	• When the foster parent is not available for supervision, the foster care agency will assume responsibility for the youth unless: Pre-planned structure needs are being met through formal and/or informal services.
	• Professional Foster Care is a comprehensive service. Resources to support the youth's success in the foster home and community are included as a part of this service through the elevated intensity provided by the foster parent and agency. Additional services may only be added to address a youth with exceptional needs beyond what would be expected for the target population and must receive administrative approval prior to the initiation of the service.
	• The agency will ensure the development of a respite plan to ensure the provided to the foster parent are provided access to scheduled breaks a minimum of twice per month with access to crisis respite as needed and outlined in the Professional Foster Care plan. Respite may include times the youth is on visits with their parent/guardian, other approved adults or formal respite facilitated by the agency as agreed upon by the team to meet the needs of the youth.
	• Provide transportation as necessary to and from dental and medical appointments, school, court, therapy, home visits and routine day-to-day activities.
	  ◦ Transportation costs within a 25-mile radius of the service placement (service delivery location) will be the responsibility of the Provider at no additional cost to Probation.
	  ◦ Trips beyond 25 miles requires prior collaborative planning with the probation officer and parent/guardian(s) to guarantee attendance at court, home visits, and other required obligations.
	• The agency will ensure professional foster parents are supported by a skilled Foster Care Specialist with at least 2 years' experience working with youth and families who display complex or high-risk behaviors and/or have completed comparable training to professional foster parents.

	• The Foster Care Specialist or equivalent will provide regular and frequent support to the foster parent, youth, and family in the foster home or in the community as outlined in the Professional Foster Care Plan to support the foster parent(s) and family in providing for the complex needs of the youth. a) The support can be a combination of in person and phone, scheduled and crisis contacts as needed but should occur in person at least one time per week. b) A minimum of 2 contacts/month shall include both the youth and foster parent. c) Transportation, check-ins, texts, email exchanges or other similar contacts will occur in addition to but should not replace the targeted contacts. • The foster care agency will provide enhanced support to professional foster parents to manage particularly challenging or complex behaviors of individual youth to prevent placement disruption or ensure community safety. • The agency will document the progress toward the individualized daily program schedule in their reports. Probation/Problem Solving Court Officer will verify with the agency to determine if progress is being made. If progress is not indicated, the agency shall provide a rationale as to what changes will be made to initiate a plan to increase progress. • The foster family and supporting agency will collaborate and proactively plan with probation/problem solving court officer for the discharge of youth from service, this will plan will begin upon placement to the foster home. During this process a trauma informed approach will be utilized to prepare the youth for the transition to ensure the most appropriate post-discharge placement is available for the youth prior to discharge. Criteria for discharge will be individualized, determined by the team, and approved by the court. • When the youth's discharge is not planned, the provider shall give probation/problem solving court officer a fourteen (14) calendar day notice in writing. During the fourteen (14) day period of time, the agency shall use a trauma informed approach to prepare the client for the impending discharge and will work collaboratively with probation to determine the most appropriate transition or post discharge placement for the youth. The court must approve all discharges and placement changes. • Discharges will be thoughtful and planned. If the agency based foster family asks for the youth to be removed from the home, the family shall agree to provide care for the youth for at least 14 calendar days. • If the foster family or supporting agency requests a youth to be removed from the home, a family engagement meeting shall be held within (3) three business days to develop a transition plan for the youth. The plan will include needs related to educational, clinical, living, environment and court approval etc. • A fourteen (14) calendar day written notice is not required when the provider and probation mutually agree that

	it is in the best interests of the client to move sooner. • Probation/Problem Solving Court Staff may make an immediate change in placement without court approval only if the juvenile is in a harmful or dangerous situation (e.g., natural disaster). Approval of the court shall be sought within twenty-four hours after making the change in placement or as soon thereafter as possible. The office shall provide all interested parties with a copy of any report filed with the court by the office pursuant to this subsection. Reference NE Revised Statute 43-297.01. Probation Officers will work collaboratively with facility staff or foster parent(s) to determine if an immediate change in placement is necessary. The team will work collaboratively to execute a plan for the youth's immediate placement. The youth's educational, environmental, and emotional needs will all be addressed in this plan. Program plan required ☒ Yes ☐ No
Service Frequency	24 hours/day, 7 days/week
Length of Service	Up to 6 months.
Staffing	An agency may register to provide the service if: • They are a hold a Child Placing Agency license as approved by the State of Nebraska Health and Human Services (DHHS) Division of Public Health, AND; Have the resources necessary to provide enhanced support to the youth, foster families, and parent/guardians including but not limited to: • Employs highly skilled Foster Care Specialists who have at least 2 years' experience working with youth and families who display complex or high-risk behaviors and have completed comparable training to professional foster parents. • Provides a minimum of 2 days of scheduled respite at no cost to the foster families every month with access to additional crisis respite as needed to stabilize and support the youth's success in the placement/community. • Has an integrated array of supportive services available to assist the foster parents in meeting the complex needs of youth within the program/agency as outlined in the service definition. A foster parent may be considered to provide this level of intervention if they are identified by the agency and probation as a highly skilled caregiver as defined below: • At least one caregiver in the home has documented experience providing care for high risk/high needs

	youth for a minimum of 2 years and/or; • Has relevant experience, skills or training to meet the specialized needs of the youth referred (i.e., licensed therapist, teacher, or experience working with youth in other settings) • Committed to providing an elevated intensity of support and supervision for youth in the target population as outlined in the service definition. • All foster families and foster care specialists will have training on evidence-based youth developmental principles (emotional, physiological), best practice in juvenile justice, and criminogenic risk and needs. • Professional foster homes will complete a curriculum of advanced training to include but not limited to Trauma informed care, EBP, crisis response, family engagement, youth development, safety planning, family engagement, transition planning, motivational interviewing, specialized populations, and juvenile justice/criminogenic risk. This service requires Criminogenic Continuing Education Hours ☐ Yes ☒ No
Staff to Client Ratio	Staffing ratios will be provided based on DHHS, Division of Public Health licensing regulations for foster homes. Foster home and supporting agency will comply with all staffing requirements of the Residential Child Placing Agency license. Related to NE statute 71-1901 to 71-1907. No more than 2 youth per home receiving this level of service. This does not include the foster family's natural children.
Hours of Operation	24-hour/7 days per week
Service Desired Outcomes	• Youth with high risk and/or well-established patterns of behavior will receive highly skilled, structured interventions and line-of-site supervision to maintain community integration and prevent congregate placement. • Youth will stabilize and show improved functioning based on successful completion of individualized plan, including initial goals and reduction of identified criminogenic domains. • Prevention of placement in a more restrictive environment, and a demonstration of improved family functioning. • The primary outcome is to enable the youth to move back home as soon as service goals are met.
Unit and Rate	See rate sheet.