The Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission
was established in 1994 to promote, mobilize, and support the efforts of all Nebraskans who are united in strengthening their communities, state, and nation through volunteer and community service.
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Dear Friends:

Ten years ago the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission answered the call to service through the AmeriCorps program-- a national, structured service program for individuals interested in devoting a year or two of their lives to meet their communities' needs. AmeriCorps is the bedrock of what we do, but it is not all we do. The Commission does much more.

Read on to see where our journey has taken us and how the Commission leverages federal dollars to more than double their value in Nebraska communities. See how community challenges are met, young people are engaged in civic service, and volunteers are thanked and honored for their work.

The Commission offers resources to Nebraska communities in the form of partnerships, funding, technical assistance and information.

We invite you to join us as we continue our journey and look to the future. We will continue to provide leadership for volunteerism and community service and strengthen our state's security and disaster preparedness in partnerships with the Citizen Corps and others. The Commission will continue to help communities address problems by allocating AmeriCorps members and funds to leverage other resources. We will grow citizen service in Nebraska.

In Service,

Jamesena Grimes Moore
Chair

Debra Hartmann
Executive Director
The Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission...

...What it is

The Commission is 100 percent federally funded through the Corporation for National and Community Service. The Commission oversees the AmeriCorps service program in Nebraska and promotes volunteerism and service statewide. AmeriCorps programs provide participants (called “members”) with a full or part-time service experience, a living stipend, and an education award following successful completion of service.

No State General Funds are used to support the Commission. In addition, the Commission broadly supports and recognizes volunteers statewide. In 2003, the Commission’s AmeriCorps grantees contributed thirty-eight percent of the cost of their programs. In addition, the Commission annually raises more than $150,000 in in-kind donations to support the Commission’s administrative work.

Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission
2003 Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formula Programs</td>
<td>$485,484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Award Only Programs</td>
<td>$203,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td>$153,939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Support</td>
<td>$89,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Support</td>
<td>$24,689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive Programs</td>
<td>$830,735</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
...How it works

The Commission is made up of 15 - 25 Governor appointed volunteers who set policy and direction for its work. Three Commission Committees (Outreach, Programs, and Organizational Development) work with staff support to plan and implement the Commission’s work:

- The Outreach Committee develops and expands resources and awareness of the Commission and its mission.

- The Program Committee builds a strong Commission AmeriCorps program portfolio by facilitating a strategic grants process and offers continuous support for program excellence.

- The Organizational Development Committee builds a solid Commission made of individuals actively involved in its mission and in ensuring its success by building leadership, continuous improvement and excellence from within.

Each year, the Commission publishes a Request for Proposal (RFP) for new and continuing AmeriCorps grants. It supports the ongoing training and monitoring of AmeriCorps grantees to ensure that the state maintains the highest quality of AmeriCorps programs possible.

In addition to sponsoring AmeriCorps programs, the Commission holds an annual signature event, The Governor’s Conference on Community Service. The Conference brings together traditional and national service volunteers and community leaders to network and learn about the latest in community volunteering and development.
...And its impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success by the numbers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>27,053</strong> Volunteers organized by</td>
<td>Volunteers organized by AmeriCorps members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18,262</strong> Students participated in</td>
<td>Students participated in service-learning activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8,462</strong> People received independent</td>
<td>People received independent living assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2,818</strong> Individuals received job</td>
<td>Individuals received job development or placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2,349</strong> Community education activities performed</td>
<td>Community education activities performed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2,173</strong> K – 12 students received tutoring assistance</td>
<td>K – 12 students received tutoring assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1,280</strong> Students were mentored,</td>
<td>Students were mentored, counseled or provided with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>counseled or provided with out-of-</td>
<td>of-school enrichment activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school enrichment activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>888</strong> Individuals benefited from</td>
<td>Individuals benefited from conflict mediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conflict mediation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>635</strong> Adults benefited from Adult GED</td>
<td>Adults benefited from Adult GED training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>601</strong> People received computer</td>
<td>People received computer literacy training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>literacy training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong> Houses built by YouthBuild</td>
<td>Houses built by YouthBuild AmeriCorps members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AmeriCorps members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nine AmeriCorps programs served Nebraskans in 2003.

**. . . Alternatives in Retention**

*College of St. Mary*
*Douglas County -- Omaha*

This AmeriCorps program provided direct assistance to "at risk" students through mentoring, tutoring, problem solving, special programs, referrals to campus and community resources, and other intervention services increasing student retention. Retention rates are now higher than the national average for a school of this size and makeup.

**. . . Child and Family Support Team**

*Lincoln Action Program*
*Lancaster County -- Lincoln*

Members served in teams providing specific support services to clients of Lincoln Action Program. Member activities were structured around meeting the basic needs of children, helping children through education and familial self-sufficiency, and helping children through family development. The overreaching goal of this program was to maximize the productive advancement of children.

**. . . Community Action Nebraska AmeriCorps**

*Community Action of Nebraska*
*Scottsbluff, Morrill, Dawes, Sheridan, Hall, Merrick, Holt, Hamilton, Lancaster, Saline, Gage, Jefferson, Otoe, and Thayer Counties—Cities of Scottsbluff, Gering, Morrill, Hays Springs, Chadron, Gordon, Rushville, O'Neill, Ewing, Central City, Chapman, Grand Island, Lincoln, Beatrice, Nebraska City, Wilber, Crete, Fairbury, and Deshler*

Members worked to reduce youth violence through teaching peaceful conflict-resolution skills, and to increase academic success by tutoring and providing mentoring support to students. Services were provided in primary and secondary schools, Head Start programs, juvenile diversion programs, and several community-based and faith-based organizations.
**Strong Urban Neighborhoods**  
*Lutheran Family Services*  
*Douglas County -- Omaha*

This program implemented a community-based asset mapping plan to address the expressed and evident problems in the neighborhood. SUN provided a multifaceted and multicultural center of activities and services that were relevant, affordable, and convenient to neighborhood residents. Members worked to increase positive family functioning, increase access to economic opportunities and to decrease crime and drug-related behaviors in the community.

**Sustainable Food and Farming Initiative**  
*Sustainable Agriculture Society*  
*Lancaster, Otoe, Johnson, Hall, Webster, Furnas, Phelps, Pierce, and Scottsbluff Counties. Cities and town of Lincoln, Syracuse, Tecumseh, Doniphan, Red Cloud, Guiderock, Cambridge, Holdrege, Plainview, Minden, Gering, and Verdigre.*

This program raised awareness of the benefits of consuming locally-produced food, and increase demand in the area of sustainable agriculture. Members served at several Rural Conservation & Development sites across the state, providing education to consumers and producers on new ways to market local sustainable food products.

**The Nelson Fellows of Southwest Nebraska**  
*The Nelson Institute*  
*Dundy, Chase, Perkins, Hayes, Hitchcock, Frontier, Red Willow, Furnas and Gosper Counties. Towns of Benkelman, Imperial, Wauneta, Grant, Hayes Center, Stratton, Palisade, Trenton, Culbertson, Curtis, Maywood, Eustis and McCook. Profiles & outreach to Indianola, Bartley, Cambridge, Holbrook, Wilsonville, Lebanon, Danbury and Elwood*

This program addressed current social and economic issues faced by rural communities with programs intending to help stabilize demographic and economic trends. Members helped bridge the gaps between service providers and residents, especially in the areas of technical assistance and training. The Nelson Fellows focused on sustainable community development projects, leveraging resources and building development capacity within rural communities.
The Nebraska Teacher Corps' primary objective was to involve students, K-12, in service-learning projects that were incorporated into the classroom curriculum. Members and students recruited the participation of many community volunteers to complete these projects in schools across Nebraska. The variety of projects was diverse, including environment, education, public safety, and other human needs including many projects in response to the 9-11 attack. Nebraska Teacher Corps members connected their service activities to virtually every aspect of the state curriculum.

Urban Revitalization Program
City of Lincoln
Lancaster County
Members increased participation in year-round library programs, enhancing the ability of low-income, minority and refugee children and their families to use library services by establishing partnerships and working with Lincoln Public Schools and Community Learning Centers. Members also increased opportunities for "at risk" youth, via after-school clubs and enrichment activities, to help kids acquire social interaction skills and gain from cross-cultural experiences.
Members of YouthBuild programs are high school dropouts seeking to complete their GEDs and gain job skills. This team collaborated with Habitat for Humanity to build affordable housing for low-income families. YouthBuild members attended GED preparation classes, career planning activities, construction skills classes, and leadership development seminars. In addition, members served through Lincoln Action Program's Victim's Outreach program assisting victims of crime, and domestic violence.
Developing an ethic of service...

The Commission coordinates activities for national service days:

Make a Difference Day
Martin Luther King Day
Join Hands Day
National Youth Service Day.

Whether it's cleaning up a neighborhood, collecting food for a local pantry, helping kids learn to read, or organizing a message campaign to send to U.S. soldiers far from home, the Commission works with community leaders, AmeriCorps programs and interested citizens to honor themselves and their neighbors by doing good.

Above: Student in costume for theater production coordinated by AmeriCorps members with the Urban Revitalization Project.
Left: Members from YouthBuild, Community Action Nebraska and Teacher Corps helped Commissioner Bruce Trautwein put a roof on the Beatrice Youth Center for Join Hands Day.
Below: AmeriCorps members at swearing in ceremony
Recognizing the value of volunteering…

Volunteers are truly at the heart of Nebraska and “The Good Life” that we enjoy.

Through two awards programs, the Commission recognizes the efforts of seniors, youth, church groups, AmeriCorps members, students, businesses, local governments, neighborhood groups, and concerned individuals who change lives every day through the thousands of small acts of kindness they perform.

…The First Lady’s Awards

The First Lady’s Awards for Outstanding Community Service, awarded at the annual Governor’s Conference on Community Service, honor the outstanding efforts of everyday Nebraskans who have the courage to care, to reach out, and to use their talents to give back to others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2003 First Lady’s Outstanding Community Service Award Winners</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retiree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer in the Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AmeriCorps Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AmeriCorps Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K - 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Learning Higher Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First Lady Stephanie Johanns and Betty Anne Thaut
…The Governor’s Points of Light Awards

The Nebraska Governor’s Points of Light Awards are designed to honor those who have made a commitment to service in Nebraska and are helping to meet critical needs in their communities. In keeping with the spirit of the President’s Summit for America’s Future, service by Points of Light recipients should reflect the fulfillment of one of the following five PROMISES for our children, youth, and community:

- Ongoing relationships with caring adults
- Safe places with structured activities during non-school hours
- A Healthy Start and Future
- Marketable Skills Through Effective Education
- Opportunities to Give Back Through Community Service

Youth Winners
Kimberly Bisanz, Tekamah
Wilber-Clatonia High School Student Aides
Emily Wemhoff, Creston
Brookside Church, Omaha

Group Winners
The Ronald McDonald House Community Dinner Program
Seward County Bridges, Inc.
A & W Youth Group, Osmond
Chadron State College

Adult Winners
Margaret Piper, Brock
Karene Ryan, Blair
Peggy Kirby, Lincoln
Dave Nelson, Gretna

Governor Mike Johanns and Emily Wemhoff
Governor Mike Johanns and Karene Ryan
Nebraska Governor Mike Johanns and students from the Chadron State College
Leveraging dollars and volunteers...

Federal Investment
$1,786,647

Number of volunteers organized by AmeriCorps members
27,053 volunteers

Combined Economic Impact to Nebraska – $4,772,478

Volunteer Hours Generated
63,111 hours

Value of Volunteer Labor
$1,043,856

Educational Awards Earned by AmeriCorps Members
$1,941,975

Impact on Nebraska’s Future – PRICELESS
**Partners in Service...**

The Commission emphasizes service through its funded AmeriCorps programs, supporting, and recognizing volunteers. It also supports other Corporation for National Service funded programs, like AmeriCorps VISTA, and the National Senior Service Corps through training and technical assistance. The Commission works closely with the Corporation State Office, who administers these other service programs. The Corporation State Office has a permanent non-voting position on the Nebraska Commission.

Citizen Corps programs build on the successful efforts that are in place in many communities around the country to prevent crime and respond to emergencies. Programs that started through local innovation are the foundation for Citizen Corps and the national approach to citizen participation in community safety.

The Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission, in partnership with the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, provides administrative oversight for six Citizen Corps Council sub-grantees in the state.

**VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY SERVICE FOUNDATION OF NEBRASKA**

The Volunteer and Community Service Foundation of Nebraska is a companion non-profit to the Commission. The Foundation is separate from the Commission, with its own board and bylaws. Its mission is to provide financial support to the Commission, Commission-funded programs and volunteer recognition activities.
Looking forward!

Recent reports by the U.S. Department of Labor indicate that the percentage of the American population who volunteer has increased to 28.8 percent in 2003, up from 27.4 percent the previous year.

The number of Americans who volunteered following the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, has increased as even more Americans step forward to serve their communities.

The Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission looks forward to strengthening structured service programs, like AmeriCorps, during the upcoming year. The Commission seeks to provide more Nebraskans than ever the opportunity to serve their neighbors, their community and their country through volunteer and community service.

“If someone listens, or stretches out a hand, or whispers a kind word of encouragement, or attempts to understand a lonely person, extraordinary things begin to happen.”

-- Loretta Girzartis

The Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission sponsored this “Support Our Troops” project on Make A Difference Day. Students from Park Middle School LIFT (Lincoln Initiative for Tutoring) Program worked with AmeriCorps members to put messages on an Americorps banner and sent it off to the 4th Infantry Division, Ironhorse Company, stationed in Tikrit, Iraq.