

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
CONTACT: September 7, 2007

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Five Nebraska Organizations Awarded AmeriCorps Grants

Lincoln, Nebraska—Five Nebraska organizations have been awarded federal AmeriCorps*State grants to implement programs in Nebraska to fill unmet community needs. AmeriCorps is a national service program that engages citizens of all ages in service to local organizations. The organizations that received grants for 2007 – 2008 are the City of Lincoln’s Star City Treasures program, Lincoln Action Program’s CommUNITY program, Nebraska State Probation Administration’s RISE (Rural Improvement for Schooling and Employment), Lutheran Family Services’ LFS AmeriCorps program, and the University of Nebraska Medical Center’s MMI (Munroe Meyer Institute) program.

Two of the organizations – Lutheran Family Services, Inc. and Lincoln Action Program – were among programs receiving funds from a pool of federal dollars that organizations from across the United States competed for grant awards. The remaining organizations will receive funding through a separate pool of federal funds provided to each state on a population-based formula. Both pools of funds are part of a Congressional appropriation, and are granted by the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency. The funds are administered by the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission, which is also responsible for providing oversight and technical assistance to each of the sub-grantees.

“I am excited to witness and support the energy and passion of AmeriCorps members to increase the quality of their fellow Nebraskans,” said Greg Donovan, AmeriCorps Program Officer for the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission. “It is continually inspiring to be part of such a strong, positive movement that tangibly improves lives.”

Of the five programs, four have previously been awarded AmeriCorps*State grants. The new program, Nebraska State Probation Administration’s RISE program, is one of the first such programs in the United States. This program will engage AmeriCorps members in service to eight Probation Administration offices throughout the state. Members will work directly with citizens on probation to assist with completing their education, securing employment and keeping families together.

The City of Lincoln’s Star City Treasures program will continue its work to improve literacy rates, provide homework assistance, recreation and service opportunities for area youth. Members serving this the City of Lincoln’s program will serve at partner host sites that include the Lincoln Arts Council, Community CROPS, the Indian Center and several schools and recreation centers throughout Lincoln.

CommUNITY AmeriCorps members will serve at Lincoln Action Program’s offices, as well as through partner host sites that include Lincoln Lighthouse, Lincoln Regional Center and the HUB. Among the AmeriCorps members’ responsibilities will be to assist refugees and other new Americans to gain citizenship and settle in the United States, provide support for Head Start, academic support and mentoring, and assist Lincoln Action Program’s clients reach self-sufficiency.

Lutheran Family Services' AmeriCorps members will serve at Lutheran Family Services sites and partner host sites throughout Nebraska, including Omaha Habitat for Humanity, Caring People Sudan, Lexington's Welcome Center and Omaha Big Brothers Big Sisters. The members will provide direct assistance for Lutheran Family Services clients in their Refugee Resettlement program, help build homes for low-income families and provide outreach services to individuals and families in need throughout the state.

The University of Nebraska Medical Center will continue a program that has already won a national award for innovation. In the MMI AmeriCorps program, members will work at sites within the University of Nebraska Medical Center network and York College. Their members – many of whom have disabilities – will provide assistance for families and individuals who are impacted by disabilities, particularly autism.

The Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission is also responsible for support and oversight of (1) the Citizen Corps State national disaster preparedness service program; (2) Disability Preparedness efforts for individuals and organizations throughout the state; (3) statewide volunteer recognition through the Governor's Points of Light Awards and First Lady's Awards for Outstanding Community Service; and (4) the annual Governor's Conference on Community Service for community, education, elected, volunteer and corporate leaders.

For more information about AmeriCorps or the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission, please visit www.americorps.org or www.nvsc.ne.gov.

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