

# Volunteer!

ServeNebraskaWeek

[www.serve.nebraska.gov](http://www.serve.nebraska.gov)

April 20-26  
2014 Toolkit



South Sioux City Council members show pride in their community by volunteering to pick up trash



Next Generation Kiwanis in Columbus prepare the concession area at Bradshaw Park for the 2013 Little League Season



Middle & High School volunteers make 300 sandwiches in 1 hour to help feed the hungry at YWCA Adams County

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## ServeNebraska Week: April 20-26, 2014

### THINGS TO KNOW

ServeNebraska is excited to help you get started with your volunteer activity. Use this toolkit, to find essential messages and resources needed to effectively encourage and acknowledge volunteer participation, ideas, and volunteer resources during ServeNebraska Week 2014.

During this signature week, all Nebraskans of all ages are being asked to **Get Involved** and **Give Back** to demonstrate the power of volunteerism in our state. **Governor Dave Heineman and First Lady Sally Ganem are serving as honorary champions for ServeNebraska Week.** Show your volunteer spirit and make a difference in your community. The week-long service effort will provide all Nebraskans with flexibility as to when you volunteer and for how long. Give your time whether it's an hour, a day, or a week – no amount is too big or too small. Everyone can volunteer! Individuals, kids, families, groups, schools, students, nonprofit organizations, faith-based groups, businesses and government entities can come together to serve and promote volunteer commitment in their communities.

Volunteer service has the power to impact serious community issues in a cost-effective and proven way. In 2012, according to the Volunteering and Civic Life in America report, Nebraskans donated over 50 million hours of service. This service was estimated to be worth \$900 million in service contributed. People volunteer for all kinds of reasons. The easiest way to get involved is to simply find a need in your community that you're passionate about. Need help identifying your reason to volunteer?

**Here are just a few suggested ideas to get you started:**

#### Restoration or Repair Work

- Paint walls for your church
- Plant a garden
- Clean up a playground
- Develop a nature trail
- Plan a yard clean-up for your elderly neighbor
- Pick up trash at your school or along the road
- Build an accessibility ramp

#### Recreation

- Plan a fun activity at a local daycare or Head Start
- Play games & read stories to children at school/library
- Play bingo with seniors at your local nursing home

#### Meeting a Need

- Assist elderly with groceries or a ride to the doctor
- Help at your local soup kitchen or homeless shelter
- Help with bulk mailing at a nonprofit or church
- Sort food at a food pantry
- Write letters to military personnel & families

ServeNebraska mobilizes Nebraskans to build a culture of service in their communities through volunteering, collaboration and national service programs.

- In 2014, ServeNebraska granted more than \$2 million in federal funds for national service and volunteer programs and activities that benefit local communities.
- ServeNebraska funds 13 AmeriCorps programs across the state which engages a total of 250 AmeriCorps members providing community service.

To learn more about ServeNebraska visit [www.serve.nebraska.gov](http://www.serve.nebraska.gov).

## GET INVOLVED & GIVE BACK

### Step 1: Get Your Community Involved

- Provide opportunities for all members of your community to participate in ServeNebraska Week volunteer activities and efforts as individuals or as a group.
- Reach out to a ServeNebraska Ambassador to learn more about volunteer opportunities in your county or community, visit <http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/ambassador-map.html>.

### Step 2: Register

- To register your individual or group volunteer service activity for ServeNebraska, visit [www.serve.nebraska.gov](http://www.serve.nebraska.gov) and click on the ServeNebraska Week logo.
- Why register? So we can share your efforts to show how you made a difference in your community by volunteering.

### Step 3: Share Your Stories

- Please make note of the highlights of your volunteer efforts and take photos of the event and send to us to post on our social media during the week of service. Following ServeNebraska Week a follow-up survey will be sent requesting stories and photos of the volunteer projects that took place in Nebraska communities.
- Utilize the toolkit resources to publicize ServeNebraska Week volunteer activities in newsletters, local newspapers, local media and social media.

### Step 4: Recognize and Thank Volunteers

- Volunteers are our state's unsung heroes. While they may not seek it, they deserve recognition for their efforts.
- Celebrate and recognize the efforts of volunteers that participated in ServeNebraska Week. For a group or individual that has done an outstanding service effort you can submit a nomination on their behalf for a quarterly *Governor's Points of Light Award*. To learn more visit: [http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/awards/awards\\_governor.htm](http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/awards/awards_governor.htm).
- Send thank you letters to donors, sponsors, volunteers, speakers, and others who have contributed to your activity and include a picture of your volunteer effort.



**Governor Heineman & First Lady Sally Ganem volunteer at McPhee Elementary School, Lincoln during ServeNebraska Week 2013**

### ServeNebraska Week Honorary Champions Governor Dave Heineman & First Lady Sally Ganem

*“The Good Life we enjoy and the high national volunteerism ranking we honor will only continue if the ethic of service and commitment to community we all have is continued in future generations of Nebraskans.” ~First Lady Sally Ganem*

## MARKETING RESOURCES

The following marketing resources and ServeNebraska Week brand logo have been created to help you generate awareness and excitement regarding your volunteer efforts and activities.

### ServeNebraska Week of Service Logo

- Utilize the logo and post to your website and social media sites for a consistent message to boost involvement and awareness of service and volunteerism during ServeNebraska Week.



### Key Messages

- ServeNebraska Week, April 20-26, encourages families, students, congregations, employees, and individuals of all ages and backgrounds to volunteer their time and give back to their communities.
- ServeNebraska Week provides Nebraskans with an opportunity to join a statewide effort and show how volunteerism can make a difference in their communities.
- Nebraskans are quick to volunteer. Our state ranks in the top 5 in volunteerism among the 50 states and Washington, D.C.
- The beneficiaries of ServeNebraska Week will be those served by the organizations where our state's volunteers direct their efforts. A goal for ServeNebraska Week is to have volunteers participate in all 93 counties.
- ServeNebraska is a resource for volunteerism in Nebraska. ServeNebraska coordinates AmeriCorps programs, and supports community involvement by and for all Nebraskans.

## Template Press Release *(General Activity Announcement Release)*

To be sent in advance of your volunteer activity or effort, to let journalists know it's happening. Send to journalists and media outlets 3-8 weeks in advance.

[Please customize the below press release as needed and distribute to your local media to highlight your volunteer activity and the impact of service to meet community needs.]

SAMPLE HEADLINE:

[ORGANIZATION NAME] Nebraskans Encouraged to Join Statewide Volunteering Initiative

SAMPLE SUBHEAD:

Get Involved and Give Back during ServeNebraska Week April 20-26

[CITY/STATE, MONTH DAY, 2014 – ORGANIZATION NAME, ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION], Nebraskans from Otoe County to Dawes, Kimball to Burt and everywhere in between, are encouraged to join the 2014 ServeNebraska Week, April 20-26. ¶The week-long service effort will provide Nebraskans of all ages with flexibility as to when they volunteer and for how long. ¶Register your volunteer activity for ServeNebraska Week by visiting [www.serve.nebraska.gov](http://www.serve.nebraska.gov). Individuals or groups may participate. ServeNebraska has volunteer ambassadors in all 93 counties who can suggest opportunities for volunteering. Following the week of service, ServeNebraska will release data on the scope of participation and the volunteer impact across the state.

[INSERT SERVE NEBRASKA WEEK VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY OVERVIEW HERE: WHAT IS TAKING PLACE? WHERE IS IT HAPPENING? WHO IS PARTICIPATING? WHAT IS THE IMPACT?]

[“INSERT ORGANIZATIONAL QUOTE HERE RE: SERVE NEBRASKA WEEK VOLUNTEER SERVICE ACTIVITY AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO THE COMMUNITY DURING SERVE NEBRASKA WEEK.” INSERT PROGRAM DETAILS HERE: HOW CAN INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS LEARN MORE OR GET INVOLVED.]

¶According to the recent Volunteering and Civic Life in America Report, Nebraska ranks in the top 5 in volunteerism among the 50 states and Washington, D.C. In 2012, over 500,000 Nebraska residents volunteered. They donated a total of 50 million hours of service worth \$900 million in service contributed. ¶First Lady Sally Ganem, a ServeNebraska volunteer commissioner, and her husband, Governor Dave Heineman, are serving as honorary champions for ServeNebraska Week. “Volunteerism in our state is one thing that sets Nebraska apart. Nebraskan’s are quick to step up to help others. Dave and I are honored to be a part of this effort to encourage everyone in the state to lend a hand,” said First Lady Ganem. ¶ServeNebraska’s mission is to mobilize Nebraskans to strengthen their communities through volunteering, collaboration and national service programs.

[About INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME, INSERT ORGANIZATION BOILERPLATE INFORMATION]

Contact: ADD ORGANIZATION CONTACT HERE (NAME, PHONE, EMAIL, WEBSITE)

## Template Media Advisory *(For Group and Individual Activities)*

Media advisories alert media to event details and specific coverage opportunities. You're inviting the media to attend your event. Advisories are typically sent 2-5 days in advance of your event to reporters, news desks and photo desks.

[Please customize the below media advisory as needed and distribute to local media in your community to build awareness and participation for your event.]

[add your organization logo]

\*\*\*MEDIA ALERT FOR SERVENEBRASKA WEEK\*\*\*

SAMPLE HEADLINE: Get Involved and Give Back for ServeNebraska Week April 20-26

SAMPLE SUBHEAD: More than 200 Volunteers Expected to Gather in Macon Park for Clean Up Efforts

Contact: [insert contact name, your organization's phone and e-mail]

WHO: [list names of dignitaries attending your event]

WHAT: [briefly describe event - sample... Approximately 200 volunteers from surrounding neighborhoods, communities, including local dignitaries, teen service leaders, elementary school children and adults, will gather in Macon Park to help clean up the park in preparation for spring and summer activities that take place in the park.]

WHERE: [event address]

WHEN: [event time and date]

WHY: ServeNebraska Week is about inspiring and encouraging Nebraskans to seek out imaginative ways to get involved and give back in their communities. Volunteerism spans all ages. Anyone can volunteer! It's about working together, to meet our community's needs and accomplish our goals.

Sponsored by ServeNebraska—ServeNebraska Week promotes volunteerism and service across the state. The week-long effort will provide Nebraskans with flexibility as to when they volunteer and for how long. A goal for ServeNebraska Week is to have volunteers participate in all 93 counties, with hundreds of volunteer activities scheduled throughout the week.

ServeNebraska encourages participants to form lasting relationships with the organizations for which they volunteer during the week of service.

For more information regarding ServeNebraska Week, please visit:

[www.serve.nebraska.gov](http://www.serve.nebraska.gov).

[INSERT ORGANIZATION CONTACT INFORMATION HERE (NAME, PHONE, EMAIL, WEBSITE)]

## Public Relations Tips

Outlined below are tips for approaching your local media (TV, radio, newspaper) to help you secure coverage for your volunteer activity during ServeNebraska Week:

- Try to take advantage of current news or trends, if appropriate or helpful. If you can pitch ServeNebraska Week activities to a reporter in the context of a larger news trend you are seeing in your local market, you will increase your chances of coverage by making the pitch seem less commercial. However, do not ever link ServeNebraska Week to stories that might be political in nature, polarizing or overly controversial. The purpose of ServeNebraska Week is to promote volunteerism and service.
- To enhance your relationship with a reporter, you can offer to provide him or her with access to your organization or group and the people you serve before the project begins. Know your story and find an individual to be interviewed as a local interest piece and offer that to the reporter. This will allow them to learn about the activity from the perspective of a participant and the personal impact it made on that individual.
- For TV – Call the television station and ask which producer covers stories related to local charitable organizations and volunteer service events. Ask how you might be included in their coverage. For example, maybe they are open to having an organizational representative on their show to discuss local service projects.
- For Radio – Call your local radio station and ask to be interviewed in the studio about ServeNebraska Week and the activity you're involved in. Bring a volunteer with you.

## Post-Event Release

- A press release to be sent 24-72 hours after your volunteer service activity, along with pictures, to let media outlets know what you achieved.
- Refer to the previous press release as a guide but use in past tense.

## Social Media Tips

Use your website and social media like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to craft your own content, tell your own story, and potentially reach wide audiences without using the news media as an intermediary. Plus, you can get creative and show off photos and videos of your good work and the impact you made in your community!

You can also use social media to raise awareness about your cause or activity, recruit volunteers, connect with likeminded people and organizations, and gain volunteer support.

### Website

- Start with your own website to promote ServeNebraska Week and use the logo to link to ServeNebraska's website, [www.serve.nebraska.gov](http://www.serve.nebraska.gov).



- Like the ServeNebraska page! <http://www.facebook.com/servenebraska>.
- Share informational posts coming from ServeNebraska.
- Use Facebook to inform the community, colleagues, friends and family about your ServeNebraska Week volunteer activity, progress and needs, and to recruit volunteers.
- Post updates and photos about your activity and efforts to tell Facebook friends why this volunteer service activity is important to you, the community and how it affects them.
- Use your mobile apps too.



- Follow us at <http://twitter.com/servene>
- Use Twitter to engage in online conversations about your ServeNebraska Week volunteer service activity.
- Share the details of your activity and efforts with your followers. Attach pictures to your tweets.
- The hashtag for ServeNebraska Week is **#ServeNEWeek**.

### Other

- If you have Instagram or Pinterest feel free to post updates and photos of your service activity during ServeNebraska Week and link to the ServeNebraska website. (We don't currently subscribe to these social media sites)



**SERVENEBRASKA MISSION**

Mobilizing Nebraskans to strengthen their communities through volunteering, collaboration, and national service programs.

**NATIONAL SERVICE PARTNERS**



<http://www.nationalservice.gov/>



**VISTA**  
Volunteers In Service To America



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