



Governor Pete Ricketts

Growing Nebraska for the Next Generation

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Media Release:

**Governor's Office Encouraging
Nominations for Outstanding
Volunteers for ServeNebraska's 2017
Step Forward Awards**

LINCOLN – The Governor's Office, along with ServeNebraska, also known as the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission, is encouraging private citizens, corporations, service clubs, nonprofits, educational institutions, faith-based organizations, and local government agencies across the state to nominate their outstanding volunteers for statewide recognition by September 1.

Selected and presented by Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts and Lieutenant Governor Mike Foley, the Step Forward Awards is the state's most prestigious volunteer recognition program.

“We're fortunate to live in a state where volunteerism receives the same level of recognition as business and government achievements,” said Cathy Plager, ServeNebraska executive director. “Each year, we are humbled to learn about the everyday impacts our nominees are making in their communities, and we are inspired by their selflessness.”

To be selected as finalists, nominees must have demonstrated leadership, innovation, and dedication to service through special projects or ongoing activities that address community needs. Nominations are being accepted in the following categories:

- Adult Volunteer (age 19 and over)
- Youth Volunteer (age 18 and under)
- Volunteer Group
- Corporate Community Volunteer
- National Service Volunteer (AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, or VISTA)
- Veteran Volunteer
- Disaster Volunteer (individual or group)
- Community Media Partner
- Lifetime Achievement
- Friends of ServeNebraska

Once the nomination period closes on September 1, Governor Ricketts will thoughtfully review submissions and select those deserving of recognition. The award winners will be announced during a luncheon banquet on Friday, October 27, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., at Quarry Oaks Golf Club in Ashland, Nebraska.

To submit a nomination for ServeNebraska's Step Forward Awards, visit www.serve.nebraska.gov.

ServeNebraska's Step Forward Awards is being organized in coordination with the Nebraska Impact Initiative, launched as part of Nebraska's 150th statehood celebration. Recognizing and nurturing Nebraska's longstanding tradition of service to others, the Nebraska Impact website connects users with volunteer opportunities in their areas. Registration gives volunteers a personal volunteering "dashboard" where they can track their volunteer time, add it to state totals, and help promote Nebraska as the top state in volunteerism. To learn more and register, visit www.NebraskaImpact.com.

According to the Volunteering and Civic Life in America Report, more than 71 percent of Nebraskans engage in informal volunteering (neighbor helping neighbor). Nebraska currently ranks sixth in the nation for its state volunteer rate (percentage of Nebraskans who identify themselves as active volunteers). The Nebraska Impact Initiative seeks to demonstrate that Nebraskans'

actual volunteer activities rank the state much higher in national totals. The latest report on volunteerism found that 34 percent of Nebraskans volunteered in 2015. More than 466,000 volunteers provided 58 million hours of service worth an estimated \$1.3 billion. The full report can be found at www.volunteeringinamerica.gov.

About ServeNebraska

ServeNebraska is governed by a 20-member, bipartisan board appointed by the Nebraska governor. Its mission mobilizes Nebraskans to strengthen their communities through collaboration, volunteering, and national service. ServeNebraska oversees AmeriCorps programming, hosts the state's most prestigious volunteer awards, the Step Forward Awards, and provides training and technical assistance. To learn more, visit www.serve.nebraska.gov.

About Nebraska Impact

The Nebraska Impact Initiative is one of a series of efforts launched for the state's year-long 150th statehood celebration. Using the modern web console available at www.NebraskaImpact.com, volunteers are empowered to connect with each other and with organizations in need of service to make a greater impact on their communities in 2017. The effort will total statewide volunteer hours annually to demonstrate Nebraskans' deep-seated commitment to service.

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