

1.3 COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN 2011-2015

OVERVIEW

ServeNebraska's 2011-2015 Strategic Plan is a five-year plan setting out the Commission priorities and goals. In implementing this plan, partnerships will be maximized and the Commission's role in furthering the quality of life in Nebraska will be expanded.

Through the programs of ServeNebraska, Nebraskans are investing their time, energy and talent to improve the lives of others and strengthen their communities. By uniting together and forging new community ties, Nebraskans demonstrate strength of character and sense of purpose. When Nebraskans participate in service and volunteering, creative solutions can be found to address critical local needs even in difficult and challenging economic times.

The Commission is a leader for national service in Nebraska and emphasizes that programming should be flexible to meet local needs, strengthen the capacity of communities and organizations to support successful programming and provide meaningful opportunities for Nebraskans to serve and improve the lives of themselves and the people they serve.

In June and July of 2010, ServeNebraska hosted a unique and unprecedented six-city Listening Tour, "Nebraska Voices for Volunteerism." The Listening Tour provided an opportunity for community members and stakeholders to share their thoughts on what the most pressing needs are in their communities and how to expand service and volunteerism to help address these needs – our state's biggest challenges such as hunger, homelessness, unemployment, illiteracy, high school dropout rates, health issues, returning veterans' needs and the environment.

Tour stops included the following cities: Gering/Scottsbluff, North Platte, Kearney, Columbus, Lincoln, and Omaha. People who attended the six-city listening tour represented K-12 schools; aging networks; colleges/universities; faith-based organizations; nonprofit agencies; public safety; community based organizations; community leaders; businesses; healthcare; elected officials; concerned citizens; foundations; corporations; service organizations; state government; media and national service (AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Learn and Serve, VISTA).

Nearly 130 people lent their diverse voices and thoughts to discussions that centered around community challenges and how volunteerism and national service programs can be expanded and utilized more effectively to meet local needs and improve the quality of life for citizens in these and other communities throughout Nebraska.

Complementing the Listening Tour was a broad online survey conducted by ServeNebraska in the fall of 2009 to gauge the perceptions of stakeholders as to the greatest needs of aging Nebraskans and means of inspiring those age 55+ to serve.

The ServeNebraska five-year Strategic Plan is aimed at utilizing service as a strategy to guide Nebraska during these difficult economic times. The valuable community input gathered from the 2010 Listening Tour prepared ServeNebraska and its service partners to be inclusive of a variety of opinions and key issues from a diverse group of voices to be included in the plan. In October 2010, ServeNebraska Commissioners met for two-days in Nebraska City to examine ServeNebraska's prior planning and its current programming to review the Listening Tour voices and begin the work of developing the Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan provides a roadmap for using national service and volunteerism to address critical challenges facing Nebraska communities. It builds on the strong foundation of national service and volunteerism that has developed in Nebraska with the leadership of ServeNebraska. The goals and objectives identified in the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan recognize the critical role that ServeNebraska plays in engaging Nebraskans in service to solve community problems, support our most vulnerable citizens, strengthen the voluntary sector and lead the effort to increase volunteerism while adding to the professional skills of Nebraskans to manage more volunteers.

ServeNebraska's mission is vibrant and alive through participants in Commission programs who mentor and support students in after school programs; assist probationers to improve their education and gain employment; recruit, train and manage community volunteers; expand economic resources and instill community identity; integrate new Americans into their communities; support returning veterans; help youth and adults improve their literacy; provide at-risk youth opportunities to learn skills and help their neighbors; develop inclusive service projects for youth with disabilities; and recognize the extraordinary community service and volunteerism of deserving Nebraskans who continue to demonstrate their willingness to help others.

SERVENEBRASKA PROGRAMS

The Commission's work is carried out primarily through the following programs that engage people from communities across Nebraska and of all ages in service and volunteering.

AmeriCorps – provides opportunities for 200-300 Nebraskans each year to provide intensive results-driven service to meet critical community needs. AmeriCorps members serve in many nonprofit, faith-based and other local and governmental organizations.

Disability Inclusion – provides inclusion training for national service members and programs, facilitates accommodations to make service opportunities possible for national service members with disabilities and cultivates an environment which increases the interest and engagement of those with disability in community service. The Disability Inclusion program further includes mini-grant opportunities to provide successful outreach to communities that are new to this philosophy.

Training and Professional Development – ServeNebraska's Training Program provides high quality in-person, distance learning and professional development to national service program members and others involved in community and national service. The signature events reflecting the Commission's emphasis on AmeriCorps members are an annual Staff Launch, a member Kick-off / Swearing-In Ceremony and an end-of-year National Service Symposium to highlight reflection on each member's year of service.

Award Recognition – service awards highlight extraordinary service and volunteerism of Nebraskans from all corners of the state through the Governor's Points of Light and the First Lady's Community Service Awards. Photos of the winners are posted on the Commission website to extend appreciation and thanks for their exemplary service to Nebraskans.

Online Resource Library – provide online resources, training, webinars, best practices and links for Nebraska that include professional information in several major topic areas that primarily benefit emerging nonprofits.

GOALS OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

ServeNebraska supports the strategic goals of its federal funding agency, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), and works to integrate them into the fabric of the Commission's work. The Commission receives a majority of its funding from CNCS and appreciates the opportunity this funding provides to introduce and expand the reach of national and community service in Nebraska.

The new CNCS strategic plan emphasizes four goals as a foundation to initiate comprehensive, integrated and innovative approaches to shape solutions that work, and engage citizens at the center of the solutions. To that end, the strategic goals are a clear blueprint to the next five years for CNCS.

CNCS Goal 1 – Increase the impact of national service on community needs that achieve outcomes in Disaster Services, Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Healthy Futures and Veterans and Military Families.

CNCS Goal 2 – Strengthen national service so that participants engaged in programs consistently find satisfaction, meaning and opportunity.

CNCS Goal 3 – Maximize the value we add to grantees, partners and participants.

CNCS Goal 4 – Fortify management operations and sustain a capable, responsive and accountable organization.

In Nebraska, the state Commission will develop innovative approaches, expand collaboration and coordination to increase volunteering, and work with agencies to increase national service programs and members to address key CNCS focus areas to meet local community needs. Within the context of these focus areas, ServeNebraska will contribute to the national outcomes by meeting and/or exceeding performance targets.

SERVE NEBRASKA'S STRATEGIC FOCUS

For the five-year period 2011-2015, ServeNebraska has identified three strategic focus areas where the Commission and its programs are positioned to lead the way to make a difference. Each of these focus areas – AmeriCorps and National Service, Community Volunteering and Sustainable Infrastructure – require that programs and initiatives work together to achieve critical common objectives, especially in similar areas such as promotion and external communications.

The Commission intends to complete a mid-term evaluation review in 2013 to assess the progress toward accomplishing the goals and objectives laid out in this plan. At that point, additional goals may be added; the current goals may be revised, the promising ideas included in this plan may become more prominent, and/or the final years of the strategic plan may take a new direction entirely.

Commissioners and staff have developed goals and objectives for these focus areas that continue the strong leadership of the Commission and target the work of the Commission. Further details are available in the published version of the Strategic Plan. A summary is included here.

STRATEGY AREA A: AmeriCorps and National Services

Goal #1: Increase Number of AmeriCorps Slots (MSYs)

ServeNebraska will have increased the social impact on individuals and communities served through AmeriCorps programs as evidenced by an increase in the number of AmeriCorps members (MSYs).

Objective 1.1: Determine baseline data of AmeriCorps members (MSYs) from 2009-2010 AmeriCorps program year.

Objective 1.2: Build capacity for current and new agencies to receive funding that increases Nebraska's MSYs.

Goal #2: Replicate Strong Performing Programs

ServeNebraska will have increased the social impact on individuals and communities served by AmeriCorps programs as evidenced by programmatic excellence that encourages replication of strong performing programs.

Objective 2.1: Programmatic excellence is monitored through each AmeriCorps program's compliance with federal and state standards.

Objective 2.2: Performance measures for each AmeriCorps program are closely monitored for impact on identified community problems.

Goal #3: Increase Nebraskans' Awareness of AmeriCorps

ServeNebraska will increase the awareness of Nebraskans of AmeriCorps and national service.

Objective 3.1: Commissioners meet more AmeriCorps members and increase exposure to AmeriCorps programs.

Objective 3.2: Publicize AmeriCorps in Nebraska through presentations to local community groups.

Objective 3.3: Publicize AmeriCorps in Nebraska through publications

Objective 3.4: Publicize AmeriCorps in Nebraska through press releases and social media.

Goal #4: Involve More Nebraskans in National Service

ServeNebraska will increase the exposure and involvement by Nebraskans in national service (AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps*VISTA, Senior Corps, Learn & Serve).

Objective 4.1: Publicize national service in Nebraska.

Objective 4.2: Increase coordination of national service in Nebraska.

STRATEGY AREA B: Community Volunteering

Goal #1: Increase Nebraska Volunteering Numbers

ServeNebraska will have developed strategies to extend service reporting in Nebraska communities by increasing the reporting of the number of volunteers, volunteer hours and organizations involved in volunteerism.

Objective 1.1: Determine 2010 Nebraska volunteering baseline data.

Objective 1.2: Develop an online database for county contacts to report volunteering data.

Goal #2: Develop Nebraska Volunteer Network

ServeNebraska will have developed volunteer partnerships in every county as evidenced by established county volunteer ambassadors.

Objective 2.1: Outreach to United Ways, volunteer centers and other stakeholders in each county to build a volunteer network.

Objective 2.2: Volunteer ambassadors are identified for each county and the Nebraska Volunteer Network (NVN) is organized.

Goal #3: Increase Nebraskans' Participation in Service Day Activities

ServeNebraska will have engaged more Nebraska citizens in volunteering as evidenced by an increase in the number of activities, events and projects completed to promote a new NE volunteer service day and National Days of Service.

Objective 3.1: Develop and promote a new Nebraska volunteering day to coincide with 9/11 Day of Service.

Objective 3.2: Promote National Days of Service.

Goal #4: Increase in Community Partnerships and Evaluation Report

ServeNebraska will have demonstrated a statewide impact of the community volunteerism initiative as evidenced by an increase in community partnerships and an evaluation report summarizing progress from 2011-2013.

Objective 4.1: Demonstrate an increase in community partnerships.

Objective 4.2: Publish an evaluation report to show impact of community volunteerism initiative.

STRATEGY AREA C: Sustainable Infrastructure

Goal #1: Securing Financial Resources

ServeNebraska will have sufficient income from the public and private sectors as evidenced by sustainable resources to match federal administrative grant funds and support full staffing.

Objective 1.1: Support successful growth of Nebraska Volunteer Foundation (NVF) to secure private funding.

Objective 1.2: Develop and promote new Nebraska Day of Service to financially benefit Commission.

Objective 1.3: Build public partnerships that financially benefit Commission.

Objective 1.4: Secure new grants to financially benefit the Commission.

Goal #2: Commissioner Representation and Committee Structure

ServeNebraska will have qualified Commissioners committed to the mission as evidenced by a Commissioner represented in all required categories and committee structure that effectively meets the needs of the Commission.

Objective 2.1: Recruit new Commissioners to fill all required categories and ensure members are well trained.

Objective 2.2: Implement process for leadership succession in officer positions.

Objective 2.3: Commission committee structure is realigned to effectively carry out the strategic plan and maintain policy and organization oversight.

Goal #3: Publicize Commission Programs

ServeNebraska will have a multi-faceted marketing strategy to raise the visibility and communicate the value of the Commission as evidenced by corporate sponsorships and new financial resources for ServeNebraska.

- Objective 3.1: Provide a media package to include video, publications and partnership opportunities to external entities to bring funds or in-kind donations to the Commission.
- Objective 3.2: Strengthen and enhance the Commission's website presence to attract interest from sponsors and re-energize the Commission's Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- Objective 3.3: Apply for grants and creative service award packages to strengthen and improve Commission marketing strategy.

CURRENT COMMISSION INITIATIVES – 2011-2013

- Redesign of ServeNebraska's Online Resource Library
- AmeriCorps Outreach and Awareness Campaign
- Partner with Nebraska Rural Development Commission to Co-Sponsor 2012 Governor's Conference on Rural Development
- Emerging Partnership with Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) / Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)
- Days of Service – New Grant Applications
- New Focus of Commission AmeriCorps/National Service Training
- Special Emphasis for AmeriCorps Programs – Veterans Corps

PROMISING IDEAS – 2013-2015

- Encourage creation of disability inclusion projects and/or programs in new or current AmeriCorps program applications...
- Develop a state Volunteer Management Certification program...
- Develop an online resource of names of Nebraska organizations that use volunteers ...
- Re-energize Commission initiative to increase employee volunteer programs ...
- Coordinate a National Service leadership initiative ...