

# Awards Guide

**MISSION: Mobilizing Nebraskans to strengthen their communities through volunteering, collaboration, and national service programs**

ServeNebraska celebrates and recognizes excellence in community service and volunteerism through quarterly and annual awards programs. These awards recognize the significant contributions of Nebraskans, encouraging outstanding service and inspiring others to better their communities.

This guide is provided to assure clarity and understanding of the awards process. Please let us know how we can better honor those who make the “good life” in Nebraska even better. Ideas for enhancements and award nominations are welcome. To share your insights, please contact Kimberle Hall of ServeNebraska at [kim.hall@nebraska.gov](mailto:kim.hall@nebraska.gov) or 402-471-6228 or 800-291-8911.

## What are the ServeNebraska Awards?

- [Governor’s Points of Light Awards](#)
- [First Lady’s Outstanding Community Service Awards](#)
- [Debra Hartmann Award](#)
- [Impact Awards](#)

ServeNebraska looks to celebrate those honored by other entities in Nebraska. If your organization presents volunteer recognition awards – or you have been honored – please contact us so we can publicize the honor via our marketing efforts.

## Who Can Be Nominated?

Anyone! Specific awards have specific criteria. Awards are open for public nomination. Categories for awards include: *individuals, groups, businesses, service organizations, faith-based organizations, youth, and national service members.*

## Who Can Make a Nomination?

Anyone! You may not nominate yourself, but you may nominate a group or organization in which you have involvement. Nomination forms can be downloaded and mailed or submitted online.

## What Are the Nomination Deadlines?

<u>Award</u>	<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
Governor’s Points of Light	March 15 June 15 September 15 December 15	Quarterly
First Lady’s Outstanding Community Service	*	Annual
Debra Hartmann	*	Annual
Impact	*	Annual

\* Deadlines for the First Lady’s Outstanding Community Service Awards and the Impact Awards are set annually by the ServeNebraska Public Relations Committee. Traditionally the deadline is in early spring.

**Specific Details for Each Award Are Outlined on Subsequent Pages**

## **Governor's Points of Light Awards (3 Categories)**

### **Award Description:**

The Governor's Points of Light Awards are presented *quarterly* and recognize Nebraska volunteers who give their time, talent and energy to help Nebraskans build stronger communities.

**Online Nomination:** Go to this link [http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/awards/awards\\_governor.htm](http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/awards/awards_governor.htm) and click on Nomination Form. All nominations are valid for 1 year from receipt of the nomination or until the nominated individual; youth or group is selected as an award recipient.

### **Categories:**

Adult	Any individual over the age of 19
Group	Any volunteer group or group that performs volunteer service
Youth	Any individual under the age of 19

### **Awards Criteria:**

Points of Light award recipients should reflect the fulfillment of one or more of the following PROMISES for our children, youth, and community:

- Ongoing caring relationships
- Safe places
- A healthy start and future
- Marketable skills through education
- Opportunities to serve community
- Community mobilization

Community service may be focused on the city, county or state-level. The nominated activity should be at least one year in duration. Special consideration is given to service activities that either benefit or involve young people.

### **Judging & Recognition Process:**

- The judging panel may consist of commissioners, previous award recipients or community representatives that the Commission invites to serve as a judge for these awards.
- Each nomination is scored by each judge. After the judges' score sheets are received, scores are recorded into a score spreadsheet. Scores are averaged with the nominee with the highest averaged scores becoming the award candidates.
- If there is a tie with the scoring in a category, a conference call will be held with the judges to arrive at a consensus on the selection of the award candidates.
- The panel of judges is notified of receipt of scores and, later, of award candidates selected.
- References of award candidates are checked and verified.
- Award recipient recommendations are sent to the Governor's Office for approval. In the rare instance a candidate is not approved by the Governor, the next highest average scored nomination is considered.
- Upon approval by the Governor, recipients and nominators are notified by email and letter. Each is invited to the awards presentation held during the Governor's monthly proclamation signing ceremony.
- Awards are ordered and certificates prepared.
- Press releases are distributed.
- Commissioners/staff are invited to attend the proclamation signing to congratulate the recipients.
- If the award winner is not able to attend the ceremony, awards/certificates are mailed.

## **First Lady's Outstanding Community Service Awards (9 Categories)**

### **Award Description:**

The First Lady's Outstanding Community Service Awards are presented *annually* and recognize distinguished volunteer service across the state.

**Online Nomination:** Go to this link [http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/awards/awards\\_first\\_lady.htm](http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/awards/awards_first_lady.htm) and click on Nomination Form.

**Categories & Criteria:** Current categories are selected by the First Lady/First Gentleman

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>ELIGIBILITY</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>
Lifetime Achievement in Volunteer Service	A volunteer, manager of volunteers or an individual who fulfills both roles	An individual, over the course of his/her lifetime has made significant contributions to the State of Nebraska through volunteer efforts.
Service-Learning Adult Leader	Individual 25 years or older involved in service-learning program and/or projects.	An individual who, has inspired the service-learning field, positively impacted the lives of young people, and motivated others to take up the banner of community service.
Service-Learning Student Leader	Individual in K-12 or college involved in a service-learning program/project	A student who has positively impacted and is an inspiration to others in the service-learning field.
Service-Learning Program	K-12 and/or college level service-learning programs	Service-learning programs and projects that demonstrate outstanding youth leadership.
Community Partnership in Education	Partnerships among community organizations, schools, government agencies, or others including national service	Partnerships that demonstrate cooperation and combining resources, bringing significant advantages to volunteer service in schools.
Business Support for Education	Business or Corporate Entities	Demonstrated community involvement by encouraging employee volunteerism and active participation in a school and business/corporate partnership beneficial to both.
Student Leader	Student in K-12 school or college age student	A student volunteer who holds a leadership position in a student organization, student council or student service club demonstrating exemplary leadership skills.
Community Service Project	Volunteer Organization	Sponsorship of a community project that impacts and has long-lasting value encouraging youth commitment to volunteering
Community Service Related to Ecology or Environmental Stewardship	Group of volunteers or organizations	Involvement in programs or projects addressing one of the following areas: conservation, reclamation or restoration of air, land, and water; the welfare of animals; or enhancement of natural or man-made environments within a community or geographic area.

**First Lady Awards Judging & Recognition Process:**

- A judging panel is recruited and these individuals represent a geographic cross-section of the state. Strategic thought is given to selecting judges in regards to strengthening partnerships and collaborative relationships. Previous award recipients may be invited to serve as judges. Individuals serving on the judging panel are invited to attend the awards luncheon without cost.
- Nominations received can be placed in more than one category if appropriate.
- Each nomination is scored by each judge. After the judges' score sheets are received, scores are entered into a score spreadsheet. Scores are averaged and the nominees with the highest averaged scores become the award candidates.
- The panel of judges are notified of receipt of scores and, later, of award candidates selected.
- If there is a tie with the scoring in a category, a conference call will be held with the judges to arrive at a consensus on the selection of the award candidates.
- References of award candidates are checked and verified.
- ServeNebraska staff prepare the award candidate recommendations based on the judging panel's selections and send to the Commission's Public Relations Committee for action. In the rare instance a candidate is not approved by the Public Relations Committee, the next highest average scored nomination is considered.
- Upon approval of the ServeNebraska Public Relations Committee, recipients and nominators are notified by email and letter and invited to the annual awards luncheon in the spring.
- Awards are ordered.
- Press releases are distributed.
- All nominations not selected by the judges as award candidates are referred for consideration for the Governor's Points of Light Awards.

## **Impact Awards (4 Categories)**

### **Award Description:**

Honors individuals and groups that go above-and-beyond in addressing the needs of their communities and bettering the quality of life for their fellow Nebraskans.

**Online Nomination:** Go to this link [http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/awards/awards\\_impact.htm](http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/awards/awards_impact.htm) and click on Nomination Form.

### **Categories & Criteria:**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>ELIGIBILITY</b>	<b>CRITERIA</b>
Volunteer Group of the Year	Service clubs, non-profit organizations, faith communities, organizations representing persons with special needs or disabilities, business/corporate volunteer programs, associations, schools, health-care organizations, human service organizations and animal welfare organizations.	A group that strives to make their community a better place to live through a variety of activities or by addressing one issue of primary importance to the community.
Volunteer of the Year	An individual volunteer	Recognizes an individual who improves the lives of neighbors, friends, community or a faith community. The service may be innovative, exceptionally dedicated or accomplished despite significant obstacles.
National Service	National service members or group of national service members who are currently serving in a national service program in Nebraska– including AmeriCorps, VISTA, Learn & Serve, or Senior Corps.	Recognizes outstanding effort to increase the quality of life in one or more Nebraska communities.
Debra Hartmann Award: Professional Commitment to Service	An individual in a professional position in the area of volunteerism or national service.	Recognizes efforts that have significantly improved the quality of life for their fellow Nebraskans or Nebraska communities.

### **Judging & Recognition Process:**

- A judging panel is recruited and these individuals represent a geographic cross-section of the state. Strategic thought is given to selecting judges in regards to strengthening partnerships and collaborative relationships. Previous award recipients may be invited to serve as judges. Individuals serving on the judging panel are invited to attend the awards luncheon without cost.
- Nominations received can be placed in more than one category if appropriate.
- Each nomination is scored by each judge. After the judges' score sheets are received, scores are entered into a score spreadsheet. Scores are averaged and the nominees with the highest averaged scores become the award candidates. ServeNebraska staff is allowed to provide input regarding the candidate for the ServeNebraska Impact Awards.
- The panel of judges is notified of receipt of scores and, later, of award candidates selected.

- If there is a tie with the scoring in a category, a conference call will be held with the judges to arrive at a consensus on the selection of the award candidates.
- References of award candidates are checked and verified.
- ServeNebraska staff prepares the award candidate recommendations based on the judging panel's selections and sent to the Commission's Public Relations Committee for action. In the rare instance a candidate is not approved by the Public Relations Committee, the next highest average scored nomination is considered.
- Upon approval of the ServeNebraska Public Relations Committee, recipients and nominators are notified by email and letter and invited to the awards luncheon.
- Awards are ordered.
- Press releases are distributed.
- All nominations not selected by the judges as award candidates are referred for consideration for the Governor's Points of Light Awards.