

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 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](#)

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	March 1, 2012	Annual

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 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 criteria for our communities:

- Community Needs and Solutions
- Building Partnerships & Collaborations
- Community Mobilization
- Impact
- Innovation
- Ongoing Involvement

Community service may be focused on the city, county or state-level. The nominated activity should be at least one year in duration.

Judging & Recognition Process:

- Nominations will be reviewed by a judging panel that may consist of commissioners, previous award recipients or community representatives that the Commission invites to serve as a judge for these awards.
- All nominations are 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 preliminarily 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.
- Media are notified.
- ServeNebraska 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 (11 Categories)

Award Description:

The First Lady's Outstanding Community Service Awards are presented *annually* and recognize distinguished volunteer service across the state. The First Lady's Awards luncheon will be April 18, 2012 in North Platte, Nebraska.

Online Nomination: Go to this link 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

CATEGORY	ELIGIBILITY	CRITERIA
Lifetime Achievement in Volunteer Service	A volunteer, manager of volunteers or an individual who fulfills both roles	An individual, who over the course of his/her lifetime has made significant contributions to the State of Nebraska through volunteer efforts.
Volunteer of the Year	An individual volunteer	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.
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.
Service-Learning Program	K-12 and/or college level service-learning programs	Service-learning programs and projects that demonstrate development of 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 education.
Business Support for Education	Business or Corporate Entities	Demonstrated community involvement by encouraging employee volunteerism and active participation in a school or district.
Student Leader	Student in K-12 school or college age student	A student volunteer who holds a leadership position in a student organizations, student councils or student service clubs and demonstrates exemplary leadership skills.
Community Service Project	Volunteer Organization	A community project that impacts and has long-lasting value building youth commitment to volunteering.

School Volunteer Program	Group of school volunteers or organizations	A school or district that demonstrates community involvement by encouraging and supporting student volunteerism through service clubs, service-learning, civic engagement initiatives or other activities.
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.	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 community service.	Recognizes efforts that have significantly improved the quality of life for their fellow Nebraskans or Nebraska communities.

First Lady Awards Judging & Recognition Process:

- A judging panel is recruited. These individuals will 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 as appropriate.
- All nominations are 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 preliminary 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.