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**College Possible Receives \$396,000 in AmeriCorps Funding to Help Improve Access to College Education in Omaha**

**Omaha, NE** – ServeNebraska and AmeriCorps announced today that College Possible Omaha has received a \$396,000 grant from AmeriCorps, the federal agency for national service and community volunteerism. The College Possible AmeriCorps program has operated since 2014 and with this renewed funding they will continue to provide quality mentors to students in and beyond the Omaha metro.

This grant will support 33 AmeriCorps members in Omaha who serve as mentors and track the progress of students' education, college preparation and success. The program strives to improve access to higher education and empower students to take control of their education.

There are College Possible AmeriCorps coaches serving students in nine schools across the Omaha metro. They serve high school juniors and seniors at Benson High Magnet, Bellevue East, Millard South, North High Magnet, Northwest High Magnet, Papillion-La Vista, Ralston, South High Magnet and Westside schools.

AmeriCorps coaches meet with students twice weekly, help them prep for ACT testing, educate them about applying for financial aid and much more. The program stands out among other mentoring programs by continuing to support students throughout their undergraduate college careers.

When the COVID-19 pandemic began in early 2020, most of College Possible's services were transitioned to a virtual space to maintain safety for both AmeriCorps members and their student mentees. Their services remained critical to students particularly during the challenges faced in 2020.

"The College Possible AmeriCorps program makes a significant impact on the students they serve, as well as their families," said Cathleen Plager, executive director for ServeNebraska. "Many of these students are the first in their families to go to college or the first to graduate. AmeriCorps members offer experience and knowledge that students whose families attended college may take for granted."

AmeriCorps will provide an additional \$207,000 in Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards for the AmeriCorps members funded by these grants. After completing a full term of service, AmeriCorps members receive an award of approximately \$6,300 that they can use to pay for college or to pay off student loans.

For the past year, thousands of AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps Seniors members across all 50 states and U.S. territories have continued their service, quickly adapting to meet the changing needs caused by the pandemic. Dedicated members have persisted to support communities as they respond and recover from the impact of COVID-19, developing new ways to deliver the same services to keep both themselves and those they serve safe.

The recently passed American Rescue Plan includes an additional \$1 billion for AmeriCorps. The agency will use this investment to expand national service programs into new communities and increase the opportunity for all Americans to serve their country.

Every year, 75,000 AmeriCorps members serve through thousands of nonprofit, community and faith-based organizations across the country. These citizens have played a critical role in the recovery of communities affected by disasters and helped thousands of first-generation college students access higher education. They also tutor and mentor young people, connect veterans to jobs, care for seniors, reduce crime and revive cities, fight the opioid epidemic, and meet other critical needs.

As the federal agency for volunteering and service, AmeriCorps brings people together to tackle the county's most pressing challenges. Since the agency's inception in 1994, nearly 1.2 million AmeriCorps members have served the nation.

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### **About ServeNebraska**

ServeNebraska is governed by a 24-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 Governor's Step Forward Awards, and provides training and technical assistance. To learn more, visit [www.serve.nebraska.gov](http://www.serve.nebraska.gov).