

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Governor Encourages Nebraskans to Nominate Volunteers for the Step Forward Awards**

**NEBRASKA, April 1, 2026** – ServeNebraska is now accepting nominations for the 12th annual Step Forward Awards, the state’s highest honor recognizing volunteer service. These awards celebrate individuals and groups who strengthen Nebraska communities through service.

Award recipients will be selected by the Governor and honored at the 2026 Step Forward Awards Luncheon in October. Nominations are open statewide to individuals and groups, including those affiliated with businesses, civic organizations, schools, and nonprofits. The deadline to submit nominations is June 1.

“Volunteers are essential to keeping Nebraska communities strong,” said Governor Jim Pillen. “They deserve to be recognized, and I encourage all Nebraskans to nominate someone making a difference.”

Award categories include Adult Volunteer, Youth Volunteer Leadership, Mentorship, Senior Volunteer, Volunteer Group, Corporate Community Volunteer, National Service, Veteran Volunteer, Disaster Volunteer, and Lifetime Achievement.

“Each year, we are inspired by the stories of service happening across our state,” said Cathleen Plager, Executive Director of ServeNebraska. “It’s an honor to recognize these individuals and share their impact with all of Nebraska.”

To learn more about the Step Forward Awards or to submit a nomination, visit:  
[www.serve.nebraska.gov/awards](http://www.serve.nebraska.gov/awards)

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#### **About ServeNebraska**

ServeNebraska is the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission and is governed by a bipartisan board appointed by the Nebraska governor. Its mission is to mobilize 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 [serve.nebraska.gov](http://serve.nebraska.gov).