



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ServeNebraska Awarded \$313,305 to Expand Youth Mentoring Across Nebraska

Volunteer Generation Fund initiative will support mentoring programs in 20 counties and aims to recruit 1,500 new mentors

LINCOLN, Nebraska – ServeNebraska has been awarded \$313,305 in federal Volunteer Generation Fund funding to expand youth mentoring in Nebraska. The initiative will strengthen mentoring programs in 20 counties and help more young people build consistent relationships with supportive adults.

ServeNebraska is partnering with MENTOR Nebraska to manage the subgrant program, which will award funding to 20 mentoring programs to strengthen their ability to recruit, train, and retain volunteer mentors. Applications are expected to open in early October, with ServeNebraska sharing application details and guidance as they become available.

"A mentor can be the person who shows up consistently, listens and helps a young person see what's possible," said Cathleen Plager, executive director of ServeNebraska. "This funding will help local programs build the capacity to create and sustain those relationships for more Nebraska youth."

As part of the partnership, MENTOR Nebraska will also provide training and technical assistance to mentoring programs and develop a statewide mentor recruitment campaign. The campaign will place particular emphasis on inviting older adults to share their experience as mentors.

"Strong mentoring relationships start with well-supported mentors and programs," said Melissa Mayo, executive director of MENTOR Nebraska. "We look forward to helping local organizations welcome new volunteers, prepare them for the role and support them as they make a lasting difference in young people's lives."

The initiative aims to recruit 1,500 new volunteer mentors, retain 1,000 existing volunteers and serve 2,500 young people through mentoring relationships. Its annual goal is approximately 48,000 hours of mentoring.

The project will focus on Dakota, Colfax, Dodge, Hall, Dawson, Douglas, Thurston, Dundy, Kimball, Lancaster, Sarpy, Madison, Buffalo, Platte, Scotts Bluff, Lincoln, Adams, Blaine, McPherson and Loup counties. These counties were identified through an analysis of factors including chronic absenteeism, youth poverty, foster care involvement and juvenile justice involvement.

Nebraskans interested in volunteering as mentors can learn more at mentornebraska.org/become-a-mentor.

About ServeNebraska

ServeNebraska is Nebraska's state volunteer service commission, connecting Nebraskans with

opportunities to strengthen communities through volunteerism and national service. Learn more at serve.nebraska.gov.

About MENTOR Nebraska

MENTOR Nebraska is an Affiliate of MENTOR, the unifying champion of youth mentoring across the United States. For 25 years, we have worked to increase the quality and quantity of mentoring relationships and close the mentoring gap for the one in three young people growing up without a mentor. We provide training, resources, technical assistance, public awareness, and advocacy to strengthen mentoring programs and expand access to quality mentoring across Nebraska. By connecting national research and best practices with local organizations, we help ensure young people have access to safe, effective, and supportive mentoring relationships. Learn more at mentornebraska.org.