



IMPROVING LIVES

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

PROMOTING JUSTICE

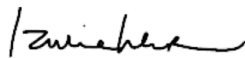
ANNUAL REPORT **2022**

Advancing equal justice for 60 years and beyond

For over six decades, Legal Aid of Nebraska has been a steadfast champion in its mission to promote equal justice and provide crucial legal assistance to those in need. Since its inception, we have worked tirelessly to break down barriers and ensure that justice is accessible to all individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic status or background. As we reflect on our journey through the decades, you will see our commitment to equal justice remains unwavering, making a profound impact on countless lives. We are excited to be on this journey with you.



Amy Van Horne,
Board President



Laurie Heer Dale,
Executive Director



Our mission...

Legal Aid of Nebraska promotes **justice, dignity, hope, and self-sefficiency** through quality civil legal aid for those who have nowhere else to turn.

Legal Aid of Nebraska staff live our mission through our core values of justice, impact, respect, empower, community, inclusiveness, and collaboration.

WE
MAKE
EQUAL
JUSTICE
HAPPEN

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Where it all began...

1963

A legal aid clinic opened in the basement of Creighton Law College for low-income clients to receive free legal advice. The Omaha Bar Association, Omaha Barristers Club, and Creighton Law College supported the clinic while third year law students worked part-time providing legal services to clients. The clinic only lasted three years before it closed and the Omaha Legal Aid Society was created with full time staff to fill the need for free legal services.

The Omaha Bar Association, the Junior League, National Legal Aid, and the Defenders Association originally funded the Omaha Legal Aid Society, which 40 years later grew to become Legal Aid of Nebraska's Omaha branch.

1970s

Landmark Landlord Tenant Case

DIELEN V. LEVINE, 344 F. SUPP. 823 (D. NEB. 1972)

In 1972, the Omaha Legal Aid Society represented Rose Dielen. In this case, the District Court of Nebraska found that Nebraska's Landlord Lien Law, which allowed a landlord to take and hold property of a tenant for failure to pay rent, was unconstitutional.

IN 2005, LEGAL AID OF NEBRASKA ASSISTED AN ESTIMATED 3,853 CLIENTS.

IN 2022, LEGAL AID OF NEBRASKA'S HOUSING JUSTICE PROJECT ASSISTED 2,573 CLIENTS ALONE.



Scott Mertz, Managing Attorney and Housing Justice Project Director consults with a client before eviction court.

“THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH WORDS THAT I COULD SAY HOW GRATEFUL AND THANKFUL I AM FOR ALL THE WORK THAT JENESSA DID. I FELT EXTREMELY RESPECTED AND HEARD...I WASN'T JUST WRITTEN OFF AS SOMEBODY WHO WAS POOR OR NEEDED HELP.”

- April, Housing Justice Project Client 2023

1980s

Legal Aid of Nebraska staff retreat from 1987. Pictured (Left to Right): Pat Carraher, John Milligan, Margene Timm, Sarah Fullerton, Greg Hanchett, Audie Wise, and Carol Boyer.



Rural Response Hotline is established in 1984

The Rural Response Hotline was created in 1984 during the 1980s farm crisis to provide resources to farmers, ranchers, and rural residents who experience financial and legal challenges. **In its inception, the Hotline served approximately 75-100 clients. As of today, the Hotline has served 13,054 individuals with behavioral health vouchers.** Monthly clinics are held for specialized topics such as succession planning and farm loan programs. The Hotline is administered by the Rural Response Council and the Farm and Ranch project in Legal Aid of Nebraska's Bancroft office.



**FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE**



**DISASTER
RELIEF**



**LEGAL
ASSISTANCE**



**EMOTIONAL
SUPPORT**

1-800-464-0258

FARMHOTLINE.COM

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

The Rural Response Hotline is the longest running hotline of its kind in the nation. It has assisted with and served as a model for other states creating their own hotlines.

8,224

**FREE MENTAL HEALTH VOUCHERS WERE
ISSUED TO RURAL RESIDENTS IN 2022.**

372

**CLINICIANS STATEWIDE CURRENTLY
PARTICIPATE IN THE MENTAL HEALTH
VOUCHER PROGRAM.**

1990s

CLEMENS V. HARVEY, 247 NEB. 77 (1994)

Protected the rights of more than 5000 caretaker relatives from being eliminated from eligibility for medical assistance benefits.



Legal Aid of Nebraska staff outside of the Scottsbluff office in 1995. Pictured: (Back, Left to Right) Eleana Podraza, Mary Gaughan, Roxane Arnold, Paula Ironhorse, Jean McNeil, Rosie Cobos, Olga Olivas. (Front, Left to Right) Vivan Stamann, Richard Deforge, Steve Janis, Bonnie Youngquist

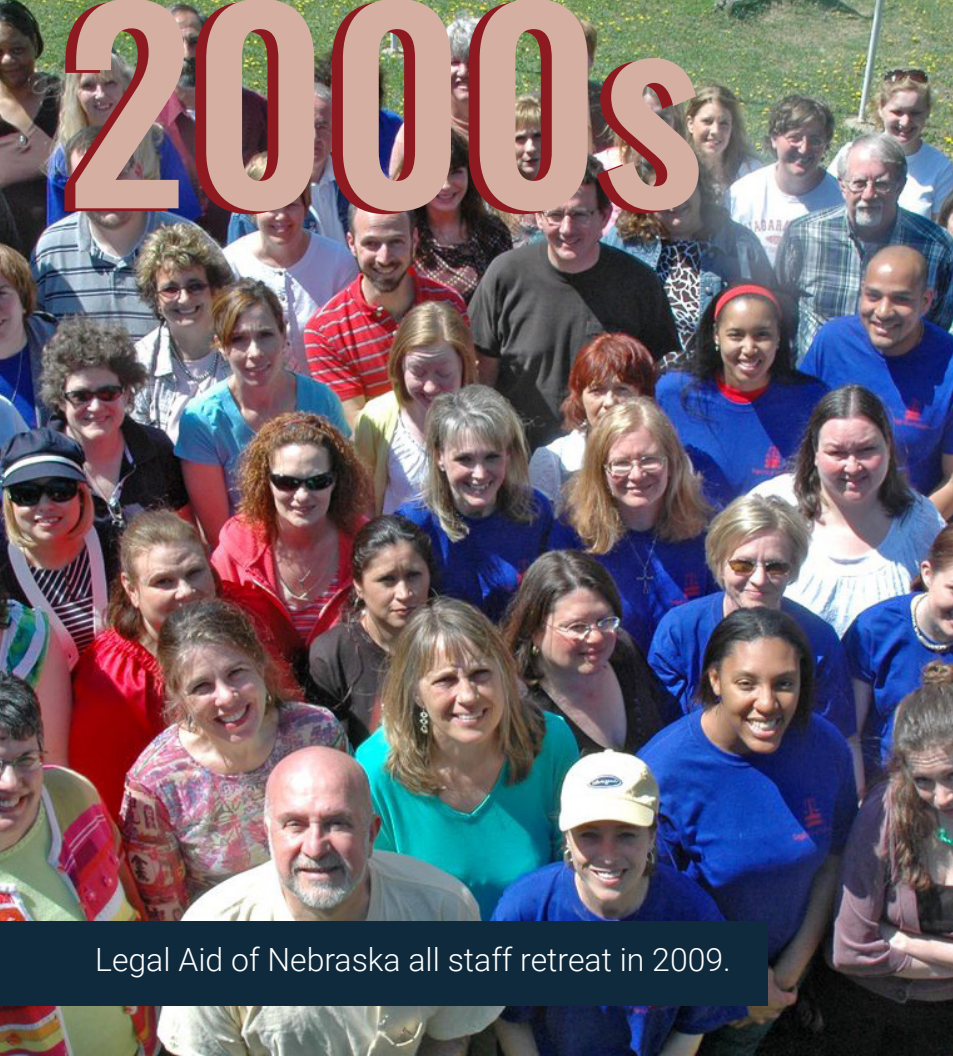
“PRESERVING ACCESS TO INCOME AND BENEFITS HAS A FAR-REACHING IMPACT INTO ALL AREAS OF CLIENT’S LIVES. THE BENEFITS OUR CLIENT’S RECEIVE HELP PROVIDE HOUSING STABILITY FOR RENT AND UTILITIES, FOOD SECURITY, AND ACCESS TO NECESSARY MEDICAL CARE, ALONG WITH MANY OTHER BENEFITS.”

- Brandy Mutehart, Income and Benefits Unit Director

IN 2022, THE INCOME AND BENEFITS UNIT REALIZED \$500,903 IN BACK BENEFITS FOR 2,382 CLIENTS.

93%

OF ALL CASES STATEWIDE HAVE AT LEAST ONE SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME.



Legal Aid of Nebraska all staff retreat in 2009.

“THE NATIVE AMERICAN PROGRAM HAS - FOR DECADES - SHOWN UP AND PUT IN THE WORK TO **ADVOCATE FOR THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUAL NATIVE AMERICANS, THEIR TRIBES, AND TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY.** I ENJOY WORKING AT LEGAL AID BECAUSE IT HAS TAKEN ME INTO THE LIVES AND HOMES OF OUR INCREDIBLE CLIENTS AND WORK WITH PASSIONATE PROFESSIONALS WHO ALSO BELIEVE IN ITS MISSION. OUR WORK MATTERS.”

- Jonathan Seagrass,
Native American Program
Managing Attorney

Native American Program continues to protect Indian Child Welfare Act

IN RE INT. OF SHAYLA H., 17 NEB. APP. 436 (2009)

Protects rights of Native American children and families by requiring the state to allege facts regarding the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), in juvenile court petitions. ICWA provides heightened protections to Native American children and families.



Jacinta Dai-Klabunde (middle) appeared before the Nebraska Supreme Court in 2023 in a case to protect the Indian Child Welfare Act. Pictured are Legal Aid of Nebraska and Nebraska Appleseed staff.

THE NATIVE AMERICAN PROGRAM CLOSED **478** CASES IN 2022. THEY SERVED MEMBERS OF THE FOLLOWING TRIBES:

The Native American Program can help any tribal member regardless of their physical location.

OMAHA TRIBE OF NEBRASKA
PONCA TRIBE OF NEBRASKA
SANTEE SIOUX NATION
WINNEBAGO TRIBE OF NEBRASKA

+
SEVERAL OTHER TRIBES

2010s

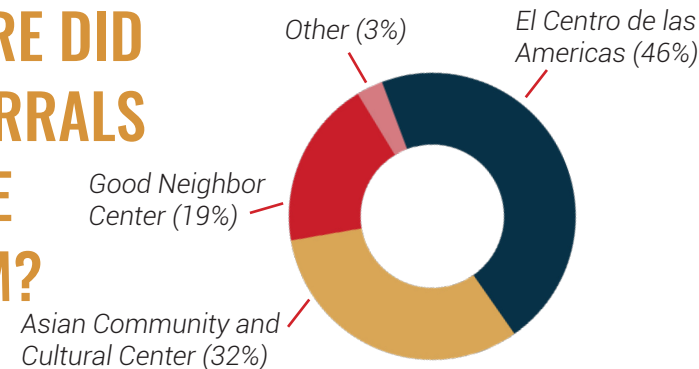


April Kirkendall, UPLIFT Managing Attorney, presents about the collaborative project at a friend-raiser event in 2021.

UPLIFT USING THE POWER OF THE LAW TO INFLUENCE AND FOSTER TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

The UPLIFT project began in 2018 through the Woods Charitable Breakthrough Grant, a three year award that got the program up and running. The project is a collaboration between Legal Aid of Nebraska and Center for Legal Immigration Assistance, plus three Lincoln community centers providing free services to low-income families in high poverty neighborhoods, including the Asian Community and Cultural Center, the Good Neighbor Community Center, and El Centro de las Americas (Centers).

WHERE DID REFERRALS COME FROM?



April Kirkendall, UPLIFT Managing Attorney, visiting the community centers who partner with UPLIFT. Pictured: (top left) El Centro de las Americas, (bottom left) Good Neighbor Center, (right) Asian Community and Cultural Center.

UPLIFT CLIENTS SPEAK NEARLY 20 DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

ARABIC	FARSI	KURDISH (sorani)	PASHTO
BURMESE	KAREN	MADINGO	SPANISH
CANTONESE	KURDISH	MANDARIN	VIETNAMESE
DARI	KURDISH (bahdini)	MONGOLIAN	ZOMI
ENGLISH	KURDISH (kurmanji)	NUER	

2020s



Jazmin Ross and Crystal Schott from the Grand Island Office attend Hastings Pride.

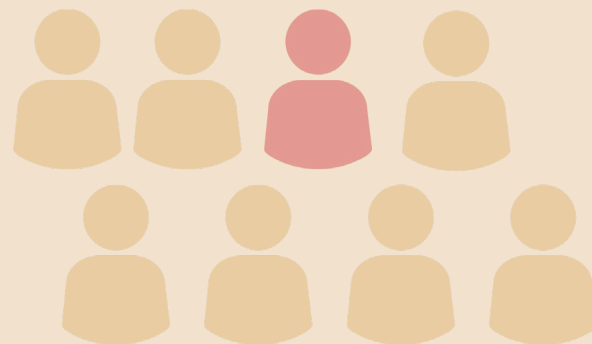
JACOBO V. ZOLTENKO, 30 NEB. APP. 44 (2021)

Protects rights of victims of domestic violence by clarifying a court cannot dismiss a request for domestic abuse protection order if allegations of domestic abuse are made in the affidavit; courts must issue an ex parte protection order or schedule an evidentiary hearing.

Support for survivors

1 IN 8

CASES STATEWIDE INVOLVE ABUSE



CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS



64% OF CLIENTS IDENTIFY AS **FEMALE**
34% OF CLIENTS IDENTIFY AS **MALE**
2% OF CLIENTS IDENTIFY WITH OTHER **GENDERS**

1 IN 4

CLIENTS DISCLOSE
HAVING SOME KIND OF
DISABILITY.

44%

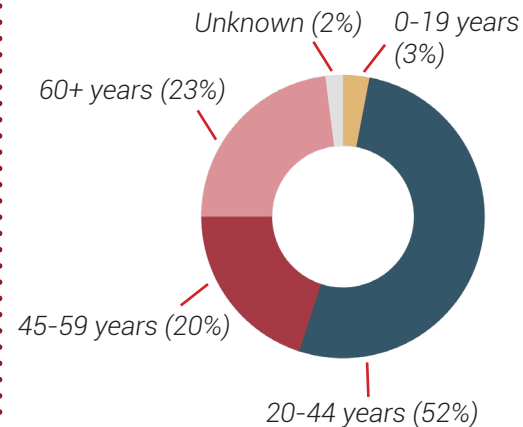
OF HOUSEHOLDS HAVE
AT LEAST ONE CHILD IN
THE HOME.

1 IN 4

CLIENTS ARE
CONSIDERED IN DEEP
POVERTY. THE AVERAGE
INCOME FOR A LEGAL
AID CLIENT IS ABOUT

\$18,225 A YEAR FOR A SINGLE PERSON
\$37,500 A YEAR FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR

AGE BREAKDOWN



RANGE OF IMPACT

IN 2022,
LEGAL AID OF NEBRASKA
CLOSED

12,701

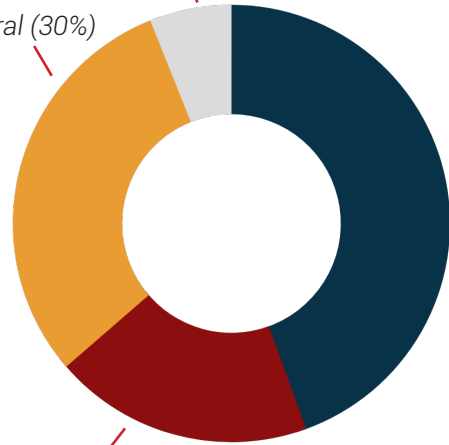
CASES
STATEWIDE.
AN AVERAGE
OF 1,058
CASES PER
MONTH.

WHERE DID CLIENTS COME FROM?

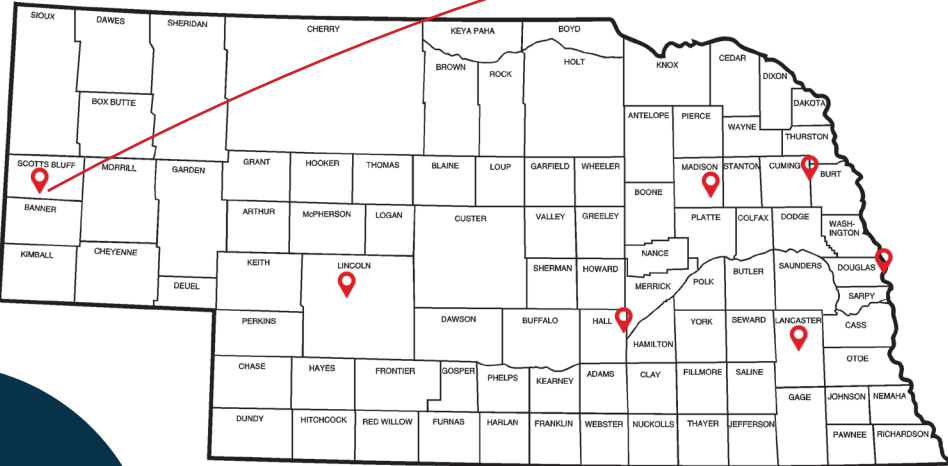
Out of State/Unknown (6%)

Rural (30%)

Omaha Metro (45%)



Lancaster County (19%)



Danny Reynaga
Agricultural Worker Rights
Program Managing Attorney
Location: Scottsbluff

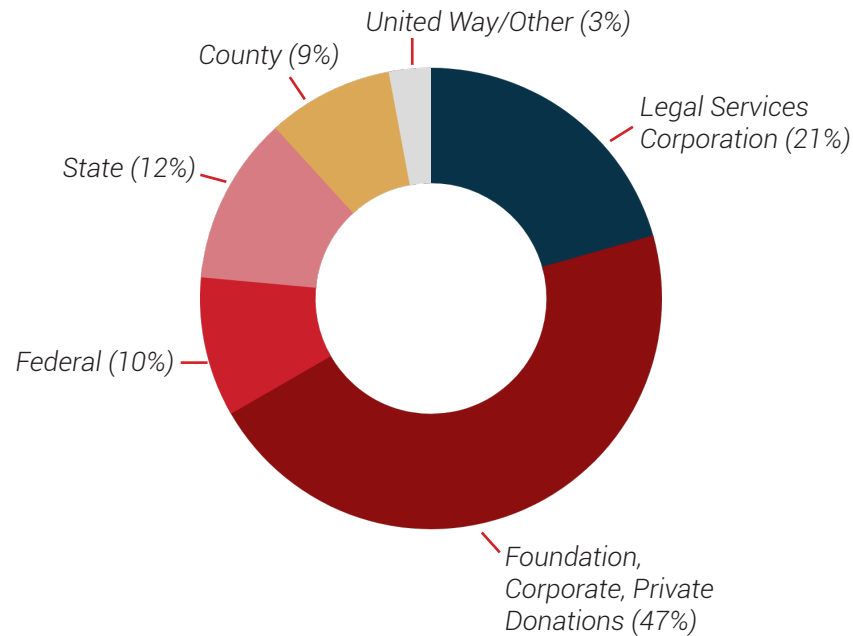
“ THE WORK THAT LEGAL AID OF NEBRASKA DOES IS CRITICAL TO THE PROTECTION OF THE MOST VULNERABLE NEBRASKANS, AND ENSURES THAT OUR JUSTICE SYSTEM IS WORKING FOR ALL PEOPLE BY KEEPING COURTS ACCOUNTABLE. LEGAL AID STANDS IN THE GAP FOR OUR CLIENTS, BOTH IN AND OUT OF COURT, AND SHINES BRIGHT AS A BEACON OF HOPE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO TURN. OUR STATE, AND OUR COURTS ARE BETTER BECAUSE OF THE WORK LEGAL AID DOES. ”

PRIORITY AREA BREAKDOWN

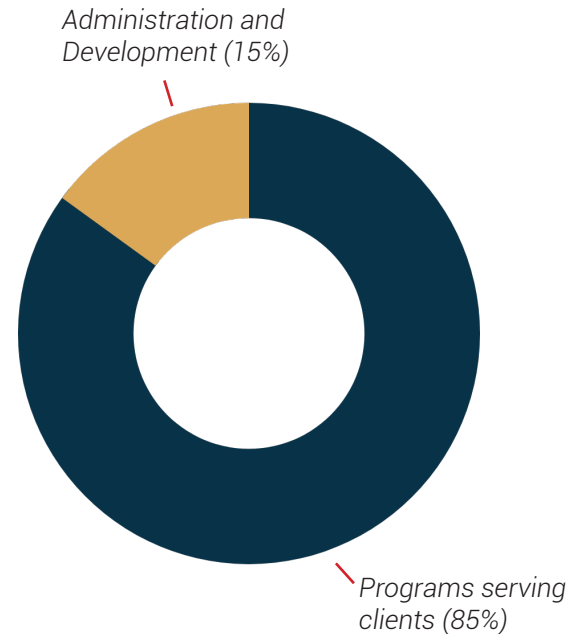
CHILDREN & FAMILIES (50%)	INCOME & BENEFITS (20%)	HOUSING (20%)	DEBT & FINANCE (10%)
Divorce, Custody, Protection Orders, etc.	SNAP, Social Security, Public Benefit Denials, etc.	Evictions, Foreclosure, Unsafe Living Conditions, etc.	Bankruptcy, Medical Debt, Utility Shut-Offs, etc.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION AND IMPACT

REVENUE



EXPENSES



TOTAL FINANCIAL IMPACT ON CLIENTS STATEWIDE:

\$10,545,109

Increased Assets: **\$3,039,534**

Increased Income: **\$2,850,561**

Decreased Debt: **\$4,655,014**

AVERAGE FINANCIAL IMPACT ON CLIENTS PER CASE

Omaha Metro: \$19,206

Lancaster County: \$14,796

Rural: \$25,856

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

**FOR EVERY
\$1 DONATED TO A LEGAL
SERVICES ORGANIZATION,
\$6 IS GENERATED FOR
SOCIETY AS A WHOLE.**

Donor Statement from Carol Russell

“ I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN OMAHA AND THE STATE FOR OVER 45 YEARS AND
I FIND LEGAL AID ONE OF THE MOST COMPELLING TO SUPPORT.

THEY HELP PROTECT THE WELLBEING OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, THE ELDERLY AND THE IMPOVERISHED WHO HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO TURN. I WANT TO HELP LEGAL AID EMPOWER PEOPLE TO GET THE SERVICES THEY NEED IN ORDER TO LIVE A HAPPIER AND MORE SECURE LIFE.”



Give the gift of *equal justice* today...

\$110 provides an initial meeting with a Legal Aid attorney.

\$325 could provide a protection order for a friend who needs safety.

\$500 could keep someone in their home and prevent an eviction.

\$1,000 could help a neighbor keep their Social Security Disability Insurance that they earned.

\$5,500

gives 10 clients a chance to experience a gender affirming name change with all filing and publication fees covered.



**DONATE
HERE**

LOCATIONS

Omaha Office

209 S 19th Street, Suite 200
Omaha, NE 68102
Phone: 402-348-1069

Lincoln Office

947 'O' St, Suite 301
Lincoln, NE 68508
Phone: 402-435-2161

Grand Island Office

1811 W 2nd St, Suite 440
Grand Island, NE 68803
Phone: 308-381-0517

Bancroft Office

415 Main St, P.O. Box 325
Bancroft, NE 68004
Phone: 402-948-7015

North Platte Office

102 E. 3rd St, Suite 102
North Platte, NE 69101
Phone: 308-532-5793

Norfolk Office

214 N 7th St, Suite 10
Norfolk, NE 68701
Phone: 402-644-4761

Scottsbluff Office

1423 1st Ave, P.O. Box 1365
Scottsbluff, NE 69363
Phone: 308-632-4734

Legal Aid of Nebraska acknowledges that its statewide locations are currently on the homelands of Indigenous Peoples. 27 tribes have a connection to the land in what is currently known as Nebraska. We respect and are grateful for the stewardship and conservation of the land that these tribes have managed since time immemorial, and which continues today. Legal Aid recognizes that it is our responsibility as an organization to establish and maintain relationships with tribal citizens of these tribes and members of other tribes currently residing in Nebraska.

NEED ASSISTANCE?



STATEWIDE ACCESSLINE
1-877-250-2016



LEGALAIDOFNEBRASKA.ORG

**KEEP UP WITH LEGAL AID OF
NEBRASKA ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

