

**2014
Annual
Report**



**“To all the attorneys
in this office who
helped me file a
motion for custody
modification...I could
not have done this
without all of you!”**

Thank-you note from Legal Aid client

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Our mission is to promote

J U S T I C E ,

D I G N I T Y ,

H O P E

and

S E L F - S U F F I C I E N C Y

through quality civil legal aid for those who have nowhere else to turn.

Letter from the President.

Two thousand fourteen was a year of transition for Legal Aid of Nebraska. During this period we have been extremely for-

tunate with the professional manner in which the staff continued to deliver quality legal services to those in our society with legal needs but lack of resources. In addition, Legal Aid's board of directors became a "hands on" board for those months, actively assisting staff in managing the firm during the year. When a nonprofit service organiza-

tion loses its executive director, the board president suddenly is faced with many surprises, decisions, and tasks. After naming an acting executive director from the staff, I appointed an Executive Transition Committee from the board to assist staff in managing the changes to come, and a Search Committee to conduct a search for a new executive director. Each member of the Executive Transition Committee paired with a member of the staff Management Team to provide one-on-one support during the interim period. The staff Management Team, made up of the directors of Legal Aid's divisions plus the Deputy Director, became the firm's executive. They rose to the occasion in grand style, demonstrating commitment and dedication on a

number of fronts, and often worked two-plus jobs during this period. The following section recognizes their commitment.

In addition to the Management Team, all staff came together to work hard for the accomplishment of Legal Aid's mission and objectives, all the while providing compassionate, quality legal representation to our clients. It was a team effort in every sense of the word, and the board is proud of the professionalism and dedication of every member of the staff. As president of the board, I could not have hoped for a better team to manage this interim period for Legal Aid. All are dedicated servants, committed to the mission of Legal Aid and devoted to ensuring that Legal Aid continues to provide equal access to justice in a fashion of which all Nebraskans can be proud. Their efforts demonstrate that Legal Aid is well served indeed, and poised for greater achievements in the future.

Thank you all!

Hon. David Piester, President

**With offices in eight locations
and an extensive network of
volunteer private attorneys,
Legal Aid of Nebraska provides
assistance in all 93 counties.**



Dedicated Staff and Board, Unsung Heroes in a Smooth Interim.



Annette Farnan has served Legal Aid for over twenty years, the last six as Deputy Director. When the Executive Director position became vacant, she was the logical choice to step into that role as Interim Executive Director. Suddenly she was doing two all-important jobs! Despite a slow start because of knee surgery, Annette not only performed the Deputy Director duties with which she was familiar, but she also embarked on a whole new set of responsibilities, from leading the

Management Team in fundraising and maintaining compliance with Legal Services Corporation mandates, to enhancing contact with important “partners” of Legal Aid in providing direct services to clients as well as optimizing access to the courts. Eventually there were simply too many “balls in the air” for one person to handle, and Jen Gaughan became Acting Deputy Director to assume some of Annette’s double duties. Annette did an outstanding job as Interim Executive Director, keeping everything running smoothly in what could otherwise have been a free-fall. We all are deeply indebted to her for her fine leadership in a time of serious need.



Jen Gaughan has served as Director of Litigation for six years. She’s been with Legal Aid for 16 years and knows the organization, its strengths, weaknesses, history, and goals,



Laurie Heer-Dale is Director of Access. That role requires her to supervise the firm’s intake process and all AccessLines®, including the successful implementation of our newest access line, the Nebraska

and all of the major cases pending in the firm. During the interim, she continued those duties in addition to the duties of the Deputy Director and Acting Director during Annette’s recuperation. Daunting as those tasks were, Jen also did an outstanding job broadening her focus from litigation issues to administrative and management issues, too. From mundane, day-to-day administrative jobs to assisting in grant writing

Immigration Legal Assistance Hotline. Laurie also establishes and maintains outreach relationships with other organizations partnering with Legal Aid to expand the availability of legal services. In addition to these duties, Laurie assisted with grant writing. Laurie headed up the job of creating a staff proposal for a salary plan. She and Jen Gaughan created a staff task force to study and analyze the salary structures of other nonprofit and government agencies, then created a

and handling personnel matters, Jen became a go-to person for everything not specifically assigned to someone else. Her caring for Legal Aid’s mission and for our clients helped steer her as she frenetically jumped from one task to another, making it all appear seamless and effortless. The Omaha office manager, Muirne Heaney also stepped in to assist Jen with litigation supervision, providing experience-guided relief.

formal policy that has been presented to the Personnel Committee of the board. The plan will be studied by the committee and presented to the board soon for implementation in 2016.





Katie Timperley Mock is Director of Development. This is more than grant writing, conducting fundraising appeals, arranging “in-kind” contributions, and planning and implementing special events, although those alone would keep a “normal” person quite busy. It also requires establishing and maintaining relationships within the philanthropic community and continuously advising funders of the role their support plays in providing direct services to clients and equal access to justice, as well as planning for the continuing funding of Legal Aid’s programs. Katie stepped into these roles smoothly. She also created a development plan to be followed in the future to grow Legal Aid’s financial footing and stability.



Ed Brooks is Director of Finance. In addition to being “treasurer,” “comptroller,” “bookkeeper,” “budget manager,” “spending policeman,” “audit facilitator,” “fringe benefit manager,” and “investment adviser,” Ed has the responsibility of managing, in every sense of the word, all the money that comes into Legal Aid and all the money that goes out. With the assistance of the Management Team and the Finance and Audit Committee of the board, he develops the budget presented to the board, and once it is adopted, tracks revenues and expenses to monitor compliance and unforeseen fiscal developments. With Legal Aid’s more than fifty different funding sources, many of which have different fiscal and grant years, Ed’s job is, in

the smoothest of times, complex. During the interim period, it became nearly impossible for one person to handle. Nevertheless, although it required working many extra hours on evenings, early mornings, and weekends (all while commuting from Lincoln), Ed rose to the occasion and maintained regular financial reporting and responsible managing of all Legal Aid’s assets. In addition, he developed a cash flow policy that has been adopted by the board. The recent audit report for the period confirms that Ed’s effort was nothing short of heroic, and it is greatly appreciated.

.....
As stated, Legal Aid’s board of directors also became more involved in the day-to-day management of the firm. While not the ordinary role for a board, in the interim period several board members came forward with extraordinary effort to assist Legal Aid in its time of need.

Doug Murray, Treasurer of the board, spent countless hours meeting with Ed Brooks and assisting in fiscal reporting and planning ahead. In addition to chairing monthly meetings of the Finance and Audit Committee, he met with Ed numerous times to go over budgets, cash flow, reports, and emerging fiscal challenges. His counsel and advice were and continue to be invaluable to Legal Aid.

Carol Gendler and Hon. Pat Lamberty came forward to advise and assist Katie Timperley Mock on resource development and the emerging development plan. They also offered critical advice and participated in maintaining solid relationships with major donors, and they provided advice to the Management Team. Their assistance was truly amazing.

Ron Oleson also did extra duty by reviewing the Strategic Plan with staff to ensure that Legal Aid stayed

on course during the interim, not only with pursuing our objectives, but also ensuring that our grant funds were being spent in accordance with their conditions and the Strategic Plan. Again, Ron demonstrated the commitment of the board to Legal Aid’s mission.

Finally, former board member **Mike Schleich** chaired the Search Committee. He managed the process of conducting a national search for a new executive director, hosting meetings, arranging for résumé screening, and interviewing candidates; he managed the search process efficiently so a new executive director could be named in January and hired in February, 2015. Mike served over twenty years on the board of directors before his “retirement” in January, and this last contribution was one of his many to Legal Aid over the years.

Legal Aid of Nebraska Board of Directors



Front row

Janice Brown
Eluid “Eli” Aguilar
Amy Van Horne

Second row

Hon. Patricia Lamberty
Hon. Patrick Rogers
Michael Schleich

Third row

Hon. David Piester
Ron Oleson
Carol Gendler

Back row

Nicole Vereen
Michael Willet
Douglas Murray
Larry Baumann

Board Officers

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Hon. David Piester, Lincoln

VICE PRESIDENT
Michael Schleich, Omaha

SECRETARY
Katherine Voorhees, Lincoln

TREASURER
Doug Murray, Omaha

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Larry Baumann, North Platte
Janice Brown, Omaha
Danielle Conrad, Lincoln
Matthew Dunning, Omaha
Carol Gendler, Omaha
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Thanks to outgoing board members

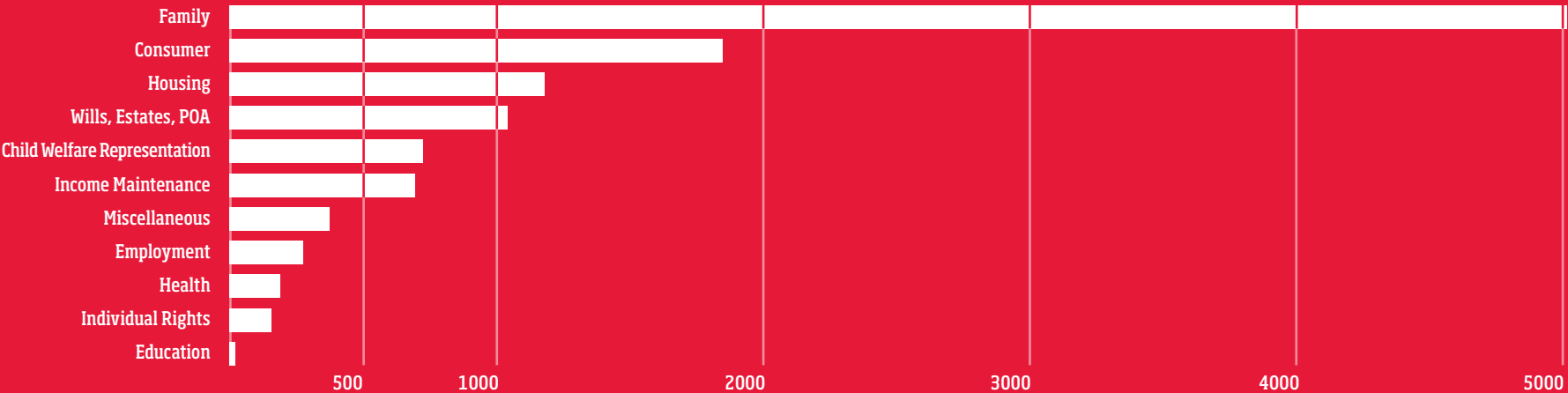
Many warm thanks to our outgoing board members, Michael Schleich and Matthew Dunning, who served our mission with years of dedicated support.

In 2014, Legal Aid of Nebraska closed 11,787 cases, providing access to justice for 23,010 people.

Types of cases closed in 2014:



Number of cases in areas of law:

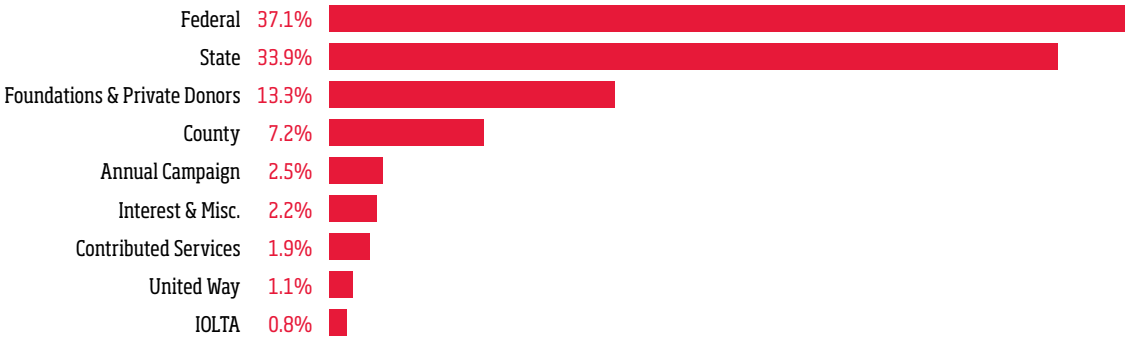


Financial Summary

Revenue

Legal Services Corporation–Basic Grant	1,493,362
Legal Aid and Services Fund	1,333,863
Contributions	924,855
Lancaster County, Nebraska	470,268
National Foreclosure	400,000
U.S. Department of Agriculture	360,983
Civil Legal Services Fund	218,203
Violence Against Women Federal Grant	203,148
University of Nebraska Medical Center	168,332
Miscellaneous Revenue & Donations	132,701
Contributed services	126,608
ElderAccessLine®	124,527
Investment income	110,126
Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts	51,500
Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska	50,000
United Way of the Midlands	42,622
Legal Services Corporation -Migrant Grant	41,410
Department of Justice - Native American Rights Fund	40,534
Legal Services Corporation - Technology Grant	36,000
Northeast Nebraska Area Agency on Aging	33,971
Legal Services Corporation - Native American Grant	32,408
IRS - Low Income Taxpayer Assistance	28,560
Department of Housing and Urban Development	27,122
UNL - North Central Risk Management Education	20,000
Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program	19,846
United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County	19,183
Total Revenue	\$6,510,132
Net Assets at 12/31/14	\$2,073,919

2014 revenue breakdown by percentage:



Best practices for non-profit organizations indicate that the organization should have operating reserves equal to between 3 and 6 months operating expenses. At 12/31/14, Legal Aid of Nebraska had operating reserves of approximately 3.5 months, based on the 2015 budget.

Expenses

Salaries.....	3,687,674
Employee benefits	1,093,204
Rent	385,696
Payroll taxes.....	266,488
Contracted services	213,661
Telephone	147,457
Private attorney involvement contracts	126,608
Donated private attorney involvement	126,608
Depreciation	119,219
Transportation.....	94,105
Development.....	73,671
Tech support	73,595
Insurance.....	65,653
Training	52,876
Supplies	49,674
Library	40,797
Equipment rental	34,773
Dues.....	29,075
Postage and shipping	25,021
Litigation costs	20,316
Miscellaneous.....	12,441
Printing	8,839
Maintenance and repairs	4,952
Recruiting	1,462
Total Expenses.....	\$6,753,865

Functional Expense Breakdown



“I would not have made it through this nightmare without Liliana’s help. Legal Aid is a bright shining star in the dark void of injustice for the low-income. Thank God for you folks.”

Thank-you note from Legal Aid client

2014 Volunteers and Interns

Thank you to our volunteers and unpaid interns for dedicating their time and energy to Legal Aid of Nebraska's mission. For more information on how to get involved with the volunteer/intern/law clerk program, please contact Christine Stolarskyj at **(402) 348-1069 ext. 248** or email **cstolarskyj@legalaidofnebraska.org**.

Interns/Externs

Roselle Agdipa
Rene Aranda-Fregoso
Abel Asmeron
Brandon Baratta
Kayleigh Begley
Taylor Benson
Ronald "Chino" Betita
Andrea Blevins
Chris Buie
Matt Chouinard
Dan Cummings
Tania Garcia-Rangel
Veronica LeDuc
Emilee Higgins
Clayton Hill
John Holz
Tanya Star
Jacqueline Tabke
Zach Taylor
Matt Williams
Rhys William

Law clerks

Tara Gabrielson
Abby Giddings
Jessica Ledingham
Katie Samples

Volunteers

Katee Chance
Lillian Failor
Henry Farnan
James Farnan
Whitney Free
Claudia Fullerton
Joanna Kahiluoto
Drew Mandl
Alexandra Marchuk
Laura Monsees
Jeremy Schwisow
Joan Thelin
TJ Tooley
Zoe Verboon

Pro Bono attorneys

Jean Ambrose
Mike Borders
Annette Burwell
Pat Cohoon
Brandon Dickerson
Joseph Dreesen
William (Bill) Erickson
Scott Hahn
Sara Houston
Chris Hoyme
Kristine Kohlmeier
Jackson Lewis
Cindy Mettlen
Nancy Morrison
Jarrod Reece
Dawn Swanson
Josh Weiner



2014 Private Attorney Involvement

Under the Private Attorney Involvement (PAI) program, Legal Aid recruits private attorneys to assist clients living at or near poverty, pro bono or at a reduced rate with civil legal matters in counties more than one hour's driving distance from a Legal Aid office. For more information on how to get involved with the PAI program, please contact Christine Stolarskyj at **(402) 348-1069 ext. 248** or email cstolarskyj@legalaidofnebraska.org.

Avis Andrews, Fremont
George Babcock, Omaha
Amanda Barron, Blair
Jessica Bauer, Hastings
Ben Beethe, Tecumseh
John Begley, Omaha
Mike Borders, Broken Bow
Lyndsey Canning, Omaha
Patrick Cohoon, Omaha
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Lisa Meyer, York
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Kristine Roberts, Fremont
Kathy Rockey, Norfolk
Patrick Runge, Omaha
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Heather Sikyta, Ord
Ashley Spahn, Benkelman
Gail Steen, Lincoln
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Jim Truell, Grand Island
Adam Tripp, Fremont
Hannah Vellinga, Sioux City IA
James Wagoner, Grand Island
David Wilson, Sidney

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\$20,000 +

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\$10,000 - \$19,999

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Husch Blackwell, LLP
Koley Jessen PC
Lamson Dugan & Murray

\$5,000 - \$9,999

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& Oldfather, L.L.P.
Erickson & Sederstrom, P.C., L.L.O.
McGrath North
Lou Anne Rinn

\$2,000 - \$4,999

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Fidelity National Title Group
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\$1,000 - \$1,999

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Brooke Renard

The Impact of Legal Advocacy

Legal Aid helped assure disability benefits for a man waiting on a heart transplant. Through the process, our efforts helped fix an error in national disability policy.



A left ventricular assist device (LVAD) can mean the difference between life and death for a patient on an organ transplant list. It's a temporary device that helps a patient's weakened heart pump blood while he or she waits for a new heart.

"Tom" was on the waitlist for a heart transplant, and his LVAD was keeping him alive. Both Tom's father and brother had died young because of a genetic heart disorder, and Tom, only in his forties, was facing a similar end. Unable to work on account of his condition, Tom applied for Social Security Disability Income (SSDI). He had worked his whole life and counted on this money to help him get through this difficult period. So, Tom was surprised when he was turned down.

Legal Aid heard from Tom after he had been denied disability benefits. He found out that he'd have to wait two to three years for a hearing about the decision. But Tom didn't have two to three years to wait.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) determined that, despite the LVAD, Tom could work because he could walk. Legal Aid attorney Ann Mangiameli reached out to those who had made the determination to deny Tom's benefits, to explain his situation and what an LVAD is. Legal Aid's advocacy resulted in the SSA reconsidering their decision to deny Tom benefits. After reviewing the case, the SSA granted Tom disability benefits.

Tom's case prompted a review of national LVAD policy in the SSA's Program Operations Manual System (POMS), which is used in the evaluation of disability cases. The LVAD policy was revised. The outcome of this case resulted in a national policy change, effectively making it easier for patients with this device to get their benefits quickly. The sooner someone is qualified for these benefits, the sooner they can receive income security and better access to healthcare.

At over six feet tall, Tom had needed a very large heart. Though the chances of finding a heart that size were small, we are happy to share that Tom underwent his transplant in early 2015 and is doing great.

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Jonathan Seagrass

Legal Aid Outcomes and Sustainable Results

Short-term

- ✓ **REDUCED BARRIERS TO JUSTICE:**
by providing resources, assistance and representation, Legal Aid of Nebraska helps its clients achieve the legal outcomes that they would not otherwise be able to achieve.
- ✓ **SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES:**
reports from clients that services provided helped to reduce anxiety, provided practical and usable information in a timely and efficient way, and were delivered in a professional and caring manner.
- ✓ **LEGAL LITERACY:**
improved understanding of court procedures and legal rights

Long-term

- ✓ **LEGAL EFFICACY:**
improved ability to prevent and handle own legal issues in the future
- ✓ **SAFETY:**
freedom from domestic abuse
- ✓ **COMMUNITY WELLBEING:**
improvements across community wellbeing indicators as a result of the improvements to low-income people's lives.
- ✓ **IMPROVED ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**
- ✓ **HOUSING STABILITY**
- ✓ **REDUCED DEPENDENCE ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE**
- ✓ **IMPROVED HEALTH**

**“I just want to say
THANK YOU so very
much for all the help
you gave me!
I’m so grateful
for your kindness
and expertise...I’ll
always pray that
God blesses you for
helping others.”**

Thank-you note from Legal Aid client

Donors

\$1 - \$99 (continued)

Barry & Betty Segell
Timothy Shaw
Manya Shorr
Adam Slaker
Brigitte Slaker
Lydia Slaker
Lyndsay D. Speece
Heather Spruill
Georgia Stevens
Brett C. Stohs
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Joy & Randy Youngland
Brian Zdan
Michael Ziskey

Special thanks to the following volunteers on the Access to Justice Annual Campaign Committee:

Brandon Dickerson, Matthew Dunning, Tracy Hightower-Henne, Hon. David Piester, Jarrod Reece, Sean Rensch, Paul Shotoski, Bill Tringe and Amy Van Horne.

In-Kind Donors

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Eagle Hills Golf Course
Fidelity National Title Group
Film Streams
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Grassroots Music Festival
Lotus House of Yoga
Maha Music Festival
Natural Grocers
Old Mattress Factory
Omaha Beer Fest
Omaha Public Library
Omaha Tap House
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Slattery Vintage Estates Vineyard & Tasting Room
Staples
Starbucks
Studio Polymath
Subway
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Varsity Roman Coin Pizza
Wendy Peng
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Foundation Donors

The Lozier Foundation	\$85,000
Susan G. Komen® Nebraska	\$85,000
William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation	\$55,000
Nebraska Lawyer's Trust Account Foundation (IOLTA)	\$51,500
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H. Lee and Carol Gendler Foundation	\$30,000
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The Hawks Foundation	\$19,938
Woods Charitabe Fund	\$15,000
Omaha Community Foundation	\$10,000
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Lincoln Financial Foundation	\$7,500
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Bank of the West	\$2,000
Mid-Nebraska Community Foundation	\$1,500
The Holland Foundation	\$1,000

United Way

United Way of the Midlands	\$42,622
United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County	\$19,183
Heartland United Way	\$7,500
United Way of Western Nebraska	\$2,746

Office Locations

Omaha

209 S. 19th Street, Ste. 200,
Omaha, NE 68102

Lincoln

941 “O” Street, Ste. 825,
Lincoln, NE 68508

North Platte

102 E. Third Street, Ste. 102,
North Platte, NE 69103

Scottsbluff

1423 First Avenue,
Scottsbluff, NE 69363

Norfolk

214 N. Seventh Street, Ste. 10,
Norfolk, NE 68701

Bancroft

415 Main Street,
Bancroft, NE 68004

Grand Island

1811 W. Second Street, Ste. 440,
Grand Island, NE 68803

Lexington

1001 N. Washington Street,
Lexington, NE 68850

Apply online at:

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Access to Justice Self Help Centers (A2J)

Omaha A2J

209 S. 19th Street, Ste. 200,
Omaha, NE 68102

MON-FRI: 1 pm-4 pm

Lincoln A2J

941 “O” Street, Ste. 802,
Lincoln, NE 68508

MON & WED: 1 pm-4 pm

FRI: 9 am-12 pm

Access and Hotlines

Statewide AccessLine®

1-877-250-2016

MON & WED: 9 am-11 am

TUE & TH: 1:30 pm-3:30 pm

Spanish-speaking staff available.

Translation services available.

Native American AccessLine®

1-800-729-9908

MON-FRI: 9 am-12 pm

ElderAccessLine® (Age 60 and over)

1-800-527-7249

MON-THU: 9 am-12 pm

1 pm-3 pm

FRI: 9 am-12 pm

Nebraska Immigration Legal Assistance Hotline (NILAH)

1-855-307-6730

MON & WED: 9 am-11 am

12:30 pm-3:30 pm

TUE & THU: 9 am-12 pm

1:30 pm-3:30 pm

FRI: 9 am-12 pm

Breast Cancer Legal Hotline

1-855-916-4540

MON-THU: 9 am-12 pm

1 pm-3 pm

FRI: 9 am-12 pm

Rural Response Hotline

1-800-464-0258

MON-FRI: 8 am-5 pm

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program Hotline

1-855-660-1391

MON-FRI: 8 am-5 pm

