



2017 ANNUAL REPORT

NEBRASKA APPLESEED

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ROOT DOWN AND RISE UP



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR **REBECCA GOULD**

Roots are the unseen but essential foundation to anything that grows tall and strong. The roots of a 300-foot-tall sequoia tree aren't seen when you're standing next to it, but they might be spread over an acre, every one of them drawing the strength to feed something that will rise up, indomitable.

In the work that we all care about, no policy victory is achieved without the strong roots of a movement made up of advocates, partners, allies, and leaders working together to build a more-just Nebraska.

And in Nebraska, these roots run deep. In a year when old obstacles lingered and new challenges have emerged, we are proud to see a new spirit of advocacy energize our work with more voices than ever.

Action by passionate advocates - many speaking out for the first time - poured into our members of Congress in 2017 to stave off repeated attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

We were proud to stand with Nebraskans in big cities and small towns across the state who recognized the value of our immigrant and refugee neighbors. Together, we called for DACA recipients to have the continued ability to learn, work, and lead in the communities they call home, urged our leaders to continue our proud tradition of providing safe homes to those escaping violence and despair, and stood firm in our belief that Nebraska's best future depends on everyone being welcome to contribute to our communities.

At our State Capitol, community members joined us to fight for investments that ensure basic safety for young Nebraskans in foster care and for hard-working families to have the tools they need to put food on the table and have economic opportunity. Again, we defeated efforts to put barriers to the polling place in the path of eligible Nebraska voters.

From these roots, powerful things are rising. Nothing grows tall on its own or overnight. But with the strong roots of Nebraskans who join us to fight for a more-just society, we can give rise to something special in our home state. It's never been more important that we do.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Gould".



GAINING MOMENTUM FOR LENDING REFORM

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

The Legislature took an important step in considering **LB 194**, a first step in reforming predatory lending. Nebraska payday lenders are allowed to charge interest rates up to 461 percent, one of the highest in the nation.

15
BILLS
MONITORED

54
BILLS AND
RESOLUTIONS
APPLESEED TOOK
POSITIONS ON

VICTORIES FOR FOSTER YOUTH

CHILD WELFARE

Two Appleseed-supported bills, **LB225** and **LB180**, which contained important advances in child welfare and juvenile justice were passed into law by state senators.

APPLESEED'S LEGISLATIVE IMPACT

MEDICAID EXPANSION ADVOCATES CONTINUE FIGHT

HEALTH CARE ACCESS

Senators failed to advance **LB441**, Senator Morfeld's bill to expand Medicaid and provide life-changing health coverage to nearly 100,000 working Nebraskans.

SUPPORT FOR DREAMERS & REFUGEES

IMMIGRANTS & COMMUNITIES

State senators passed a pair of resolutions, **LR 26** and **LR 27**, supporting immigrants and refugees in the final week of the session.

NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE

4

PRIORITIES
PASSED



LB 180
BOLZ

Clarity on when juvenile cases can be transferred to district court.



LB 225
CRAWFORD

Improves access to social, cultural, and extracurricular childhood activities for kids in foster care.



LR 26
VARGAS

Recognized DREAMer Nebraskans as integral to our community.



LR 27
BOLZ

Proclaimed appreciation for refugees and asserted that Nebraska's proud history of welcoming continue.

SEEDS OF CHANGE AT THE CAPITOL

VICTORIES FOR CHILD WELFARE HIGHLIGHT OF 2017 SESSION

KATIE PITTS

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC POLICY



In the 2017 Nebraska state legislative session, state senators took steps to protect and improve the lives of Nebraskans across the state. But many opportunities were missed to positively impact the lives of hard-working low-income Nebraska families and children.

Still, the advocacy of Nebraskans across the state, combined with the strong leadership of outstanding senators in the Legislature, made important strides to increase opportunity for all.

Two of Nebraska Appleseed's priority bills were successfully passed, securing victories for youth in foster care and in the juvenile justice system. Additional bright spots emerged as the Legislature passed resolutions affirming the value of Dreamers and refugees to the fabric of Nebraska's past and future.

On the defense, senators filibustered an irresponsible tax bill that would have restricted investment in our community by giving a large tax cut to a privileged few. In another heartening measure, a discriminatory voter ID bill was immediately voted down.

Sadly, many damaging budgetary policies were upheld, despite widespread objections from advocates and the community. Among the worst enacted were the Governor's line-item budget cuts. The staggering \$50 million in cuts hit the most-vulnerable Nebraskans the hardest, targeting providers of Medicaid, behavioral health, and child welfare.

Crucial measures to stop predatory lenders and ensure basic rights for formerly-incarcerated Nebraskans were also left by the wayside. And repeated, urgent calls to expand Medicaid for 90,000 hard-working members of our community were ignored by many lawmakers.

Despite these setbacks, we know that every effort, every bill introduced, and every vote for positive change marks a crucial step forward. We witnessed seeds planted in 2017 that may yet come to fruition for Nebraskans down the road.

NEBRASKANS RISE UP TO PROTECT AFFORDABLE CARE

MOLLY McCLEERY
DEPUTY PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Lack of access to affordable health care creates barriers to opportunity. Without a way

for Nebraskans to get the care they need, they struggle to be present at work or with their families, negatively impacting their quality of life.

This year, Nebraskans spoke out for their right to health care as part of a nationwide wave to defend the Affordable Care Act. We organized and mobilized Nebraskans - many of whom had never taken action - to tell lawmakers that every Nebraskan must have affordable health care.

With the ACA, Medicare, and Medicaid under threat, we led dozens of visits to Congressional offices, where advocates urged lawmakers to protect the care of hundreds of thousands of Nebraskans. We collected scores of letters, coordinated town hall visits, and even organized a trip to Washington, D.C. so Nebraskans could meet with lawmakers.

Nebraska was a national health care success story, thanks to the work of Enroll Nebraska, a network of organizations coordinated by Appleseed. Our state had its best Marketplace Open Enrollment period to date with more than 88,000 Nebraskans signing up for coverage.



AMANDA

HEALTH CARE ADVOCATE

"The true cost is in the time lost, too sick to hang out with friends, too tired to celebrate holidays with family, too low to help a neighbor."

**READ AMANDA'S STORY
AT [NEAPPLESEED.ORG/
GOODAPPLEAMANDA](https://neappleseed.org/goodappleamanda)**

ROCK ENROLL TURNS UP THE VOLUME

ENROLL NEBRASKA OUTREACH CUTS THROUGH THE NOISE

In Nebraska, 2018's Health Insurance Marketplace enrollment exceeded last year's total by 6 percent, a new record of more than 88,000 customers. Nebraska ranked 6th in the country for increase year-over-year indicating that outreach by local enrollment assisters and Enroll Nebraska, a pro-

gram led by Nebraska Appleseed, were successful in getting the word out in innovative ways despite challenging circumstances.

Creative outreach efforts, a grassroots media awareness campaign and efforts to educate enrollment assisters in a rapidly changing environment proved key in making up for the Trump administration's

decision to significantly cut advertising and outreach for the open enrollment period.

This increase in enrollment clearly indicates strong demand for quality and affordable health insurance and the Affordable Care Act's ability to decrease costs for consumers.

HEALTH CARE ACC

ADVOCACY SOARS TO NEW HEIGHTS

APPLESEED A LEADING
RESOURCE IN YEAR
OF UNPRECEDENTED
GRASSROOTS
ADVOCACY



50+

**ENROLLMENT
ASSISTERS**
trained statewide.



7

**TELEVISION
INTERVIEWS**
on local stations.



2

**ENROLL NEBRASKA
PHONE-A-THONS**
through local ABC stations,
receiving over 200 calls from
Nebraskans.



1

**ROCK ENROLL
PROMOTIONAL
MUSIC VIDEO**
gaining 3,000 views online.

In 2017, Appleseed engaged advocates new and old in a powerful nationwide response, defending Nebraskans' right to affordable, quality health care.

In 2017, Congress attacked the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid relentlessly, proposing repeal after half-baked repeal that, if passed, would have had devastating impacts on thousands of Nebraskans who depend on the programs for affordable, quality health coverage. Nebraska Appleseed quickly responded to concerned advocates across the state, emerging as a leading resource for Nebraskans who wished to take action and make their voices heard.

Throughout 2017, Appleseed conducted letter deliveries to offices and drove phone calls, urging lawmakers to protect the ACA and Medicaid. Appleseed took Nebraskans to Washington, D.C. to meet with Nebraska's federal delegation, share their personal stories of why the ACA and Medicaid are so important to them, and hand-deliver a book of over 80 similar stories from Nebraskans to lawmakers.

Amid confusion about the proposals making their way through Congress, Appleseed served as a trusted resource in the community, conducting quick and accurate policy analyses, over a dozen community presentations, and creating of-the-moment resources.

NEBRASKANS SAY: KEEP OUR COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

DARCY TROMANHAUSER
PROGRAM DIRECTOR



As Congress and the White House spread fear and uncertainty in 2017, we saw Ne-

braskans across the state respond with strength and love. More than 80 Nebraska organizations and local community leaders – including mayors, police chiefs, school superintendents, and chambers of commerce – urged Congress to take action to protect Dreamers and their families. Multiple Dreamer delegations and community supporters traveled to Washington, D.C. We joined local partners to organize rallies, vigils, and letter deliveries where thousands of Nebraskans supported refugee resettlement and a bipartisan DREAM Act so talented youth can continue to call Nebraska home. Through support of local leadership development and organizing teams, we saw a new generation of Nebraskans grow as positive beacons of their communities.

What could have been a dark year was brightened by the passion and courage shown in towns from Scottsbluff to South Sioux City. No matter our background, we are all united by choosing to be Nebraskans.

SUPPORTING RURAL LEADERS OF COLOR

Eight local organizing teams – led by immigrant Nebraskans and rural leaders of color – grew stronger in 2017, becoming more knowledgeable in advocacy strategies and engaging neighbors in creating positive change.

BUILDING WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

LOCAL EFFORTS STRENGTHEN STATEWIDE SUPPORT

In 2017, a rise in anti-immigrant policy and rhetoric created a deluge of requests from Nebraska communities for trainings and information so neighbors could feel safe and prepared. Crete's Mayor, Roger Foster, described the community devastation deportations would cause as "a tornado that would take away people and leave everything else."

In contrast to the national rhetoric, local efforts have steadily grown to create welcoming and inclusive communities. Recognizing that our communities

are strongest when everyone feels welcome, a growing number of Nebraska towns have formed welcoming teams – including schools, city, business, and faith leaders – to plan creative approaches together with community members of all backgrounds.

Working with communities, Nebraska Appleseed trained thousands of Nebraskans in Know-Your-Rights and Safety Planning in 2017, so families could be prepared. Together with many partners, we also facilitated a large Train-the-Trainer event that equipped 200 attendees to reach local communities.

IMMIGRANTS & CO

DREAMERS SPEAK OUT

YOUNG NEBRASKANS
WITH DACA STATUS
LEAD ADVOCACY
EFFORTS

READ JOSELINE, ARMANDO,
AND ALEJANDRA'S FULL STORIES AT
NEAPPLESEED.ORG/DREAMERS-SPEAK

2,000+

PEOPLE ATTENDED
REFUGEE SUPPORT
VIGILS IN LINCOLN
AND OMAHA

THREE
VIGILS IN
RURAL
TOWNS

\$7,500

RAISED FOR
DREAMERS' DACA
RENEWAL FEES

COMMUNITY IN ACTION

42

STATEWIDE
ORGANIZING
LEADERS TRAINED

by Midwest Academy
and womens'
leadership
workshops

2,800
PEOPLE TRAINED

WORKER
SAFETY

KNOW
YOUR
RIGHTS



JOSELINE

"Know we are real people and that if DACA does get taken away, it will affect students like me who have given so much."



ARMANDO

"I will continue to work for what is right and just, so others can pursue their own American dream, just like me."



ALEJANDRA

"I love giving back to [Nebraska,] the place that has given me so much. I have not come this far to stop now."

GIVING NEBRASKANS A CHANCE TO THRIVE

JAMES GODDARD
PROGRAM DIRECTOR



We believe public services can and should allow Nebraskans to find a path out of

crisis. Our job is to ensure those services work the way they should and are accessible to all Nebraskans.

This year, we focused on food security, the most basic need of every family. We partnered with schools to expand their breakfast programs to improve Nebraska's school breakfast participation, which has one of the lowest rates in the country.

We continued our long-standing fight to curb predatory lending practices that trap hard-working

people in a cycle of debt. For the third year, we organized Nebraskans hurt by predatory lending to support a payday lending reform bill in the Nebraska Legislature.

Efforts to fight poverty must come with community-focused solutions. In partnership with other community organizations, we launched the Collective Impact Lincoln initiative. Together, we'll knock 10,000 doors in Lincoln's oldest neighborhoods, hearing what barriers to opportunity residents face.

Our work is motivated by hope and confidence. We believe most Nebraskans can reach financial independence if the path out of poverty is clear.



PRISON LAWSUIT DEMANDS JUSTICE

OVERCROWDED PRISON SYSTEM A DANGER TO ENTIRE COMMUNITY

The ACLU of Nebraska, the ACLU National Prison Project, Nebraska Appleseed, and additional legal partners filed a class-action lawsuit on behalf of eleven prisoners in Nebraska state prisons.

The Nebraska prison system is at 159% of capacity, housing over 5,000 people in a system meant for 3,275. Prisons have been under-resourced and over-capacity for more than 20 years and have

hit emergency levels. The result is a system in perpetual crisis.

Nebraskan inmates are denied access to minimally adequate health care, held in extreme isolation, exposed to violence, and denied disability accommodations. Violations of incarcerated Nebraskans' constitutional rights have caused severe and irreversible damage to inmates' health, resulting in violence and death.

"We cannot wait any longer for the actions needed to address the systemic failures of Nebraska's prison system," Executive Director Becky Gould said. "This case is not only about protecting the constitutional rights of Nebraskans in our prisons, but ensuring urgent action to restore a safe and effective corrections system that benefits our entire community."

ECONOMIC JUSTICE



EMPOWERING LOW-INCOME NEIGHBORHOODS

Collective Impact Lincoln, a collaborative project with lead agency Civic Nebraska and South of Downtown Community Development Organization, was brought to life in 2017 by a generous Breakthrough Grant from the Woods Charitable Fund. The three-year project will work to identify and address issues facing Lincoln's lowest-income residents through community engagement, neighborhood revitalization, and advocacy.



SCHOOLS RISE AND SHINE WITH BREAKFAST

FIGHTING CHILD
HUNGER BY MAKING
ACCESSIBILITY A
PRIORITY

MEET THE SCHOOL BREAKFAST
CHAMPIONS AT [NEAPPLESEED.ORG/
BREAKFASTCHALLENGE](http://NEAPPLESEED.ORG/BREAKFASTCHALLENGE)

Breakfast is critical to childhood learning and health, yet many children start the school day hungry. In 2014, more than 1 in 5 children in the U.S. lived in households that struggled with hunger. Yet, many low-income children who are eligible for a free or reduced-price school breakfast are not receiving it.

Breakfast in the Classroom eliminates barriers to school breakfast by making it more accessible. Appleseed co-led the Breakfast for All Coalition along with partners Hunger Free Heartland and Action for Healthy Kids, coordinating outreach for the Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom (PBIC) grant in Nebraska.

The coalition's efforts resulted in five new communities applying for the breakfast grant. One school, Grand Island Senior High, was awarded over \$100,000 through the grant in mid-2017. Appleseed assisted Grand Island with outreach, media, and technical assistance. As a result, they saw their breakfast participation increase by over 400 percent!

In addition, seven schools in South Sioux City took up the Community Eligibility Provision to serve free breakfast and lunch to all students no matter their income. We are excited for more schools to follow South Sioux City's lead and end child hunger in Nebraska.

A SAFE AND LOVING HOME FOR EVERY CHILD

SARAH HELVEY
PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Our 2017 work focused on strengthening systems in Nebraska that should ensure

all of our youth have their best chance to grow into healthy, successful adults.

We won a legal victory confirming young Nebraskans who age out of foster care have the right to health coverage, which can make or break their chances of starting adulthood on solid footing both medically and financially. As part of a group of committed advocates, we won

a fight to restore funding to foster care providers that ensure safety for children and families. We also were proud to see a coalition of stakeholders, with whom we've worked for several years, solidify into an effective force to keep Native youth in the child welfare system connected to their family and culture.

And by developing a new youth fellow program, we were proud to empower Nebraska youth who have foster care experience, bringing their voices and views to the table to make essential contributions to the decision process when policies which impact their lives are made.



NATIVE ADVOCATES FORM NONPROFIT

THE NEBRASKA INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT COALITION SEEKS TO EXPAND REACH AFTER DECADE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE.

Since 2007, the Nebraska ICWA Coalition, a group of dedicated grassroots advocates from four Nebraska tribes, has fought to create a more equitable child welfare system in Nebraska.

Formed with capacity support from Nebraska Appleseed, the ICWA Coalition has had

resounding successes, including passing the Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Act in 2015, improving compliance, training partners, and building a stronger relationship with the Department of Health and Human Services.

In 2017, the Coalition took the exciting step of forming a nonprofit

with Nebraska Appleseed serving as the fiscal sponsor. With the increased resources and structure, this new organization will further meet the needs of Native families by keeping Native children connected to their families, communities, and culture.

CHILD WELFARE



AZAR WEBB III

was wrongly denied Medicaid after exiting Nebraska's foster care system. The ruling in his case, litigated by Appleseed, ensures that young adults like Azar can start their adult lives with confidence.

SECURITY FOR THE FUTURE

MEDICAID TO 26 RULED A RIGHT FOR FORMER FOSTER YOUTH

On May 11th, 2017, Lancaster County District Court Judge Susan Strong ruled in favor of Azar Webb, a 22-year-old Omaha college student who was being denied Medicaid eligibility by the State of Nebraska.

Judge Strong's ruling in the case of *Webb v. Phillips*, makes it clear that young adults like Azar who exit Nebraska's foster care system have a legal right to Medicaid coverage to age 26, just like their peers who are able to stay on their parents' insurance until age 26. In addition, Judge Strong ordered the State to reimburse Azar for medical bills that should have been covered by Medicaid.

"Finishing college, getting a job, and giving back to my hometown all would be much harder if I could not get the medical coverage I need to be as healthy as I can be. I'm very grateful for this ruling because it puts me in the best position to achieve all of those dreams," Webb said. "Someday, I hope to be an architect and literally help build my community's future. I'm a step closer to these goals today because of this decision."

"We've come to know Azar as the kind of bright, hard-working, young Nebraskan that will be an extraordinary leader in his community," Legal Director Robert McEwen said. "We are overjoyed that Azar now has the opportunity to finish college without the prospect of substantial medical debt, he now has access to the medical care he needs so he can focus on getting his degree and living the full, promising life we have no doubt awaits him."



SEBASTIAN 2017 YOUTH FELLOW

"I am able to share my perspective and advocate for people in the foster care system to be able to live healthier, happier lives."

READ SEBASTIAN'S BLOG POST AT
NEAPPLESEED.ORG/SEBASTIAN



VIC CHILD WELFARE INTERN

"I chose Nebraska Appleseed because we are committed to ensuring everyone can come home, regardless of race, class, gender, or sexual orientation."

READ VIC'S BLOG POST AT
NEAPPLESEED.ORG/VIC

	FY 2017	FY 2016
SUPPORT & REVENUES		
Contributions	\$292,133	\$231,348
Events	\$59,412	\$55,938
Grants	\$5,258,464	\$1,653,436
Other Revenue	\$65,466	\$391,734
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUES	\$5,675,475	\$2,332,456

EXPENSES

Program Services	\$1,672,609	\$1,603,052
Management & General	\$267,347	\$250,463
Fundraising	\$249,783	\$237,541
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,189,739	\$2,091,056

ASSETS

Cash	\$2,011,399	\$1,114,015
Grants Recievable	\$3,027,581	\$712,451
Other Current Assets	\$168,175	\$81,406
Net Equipment	\$21,129	\$22,160
Investments	\$1,201,184	\$934,251
TOTAL ASSETS	\$6,429,468	\$2,864,283

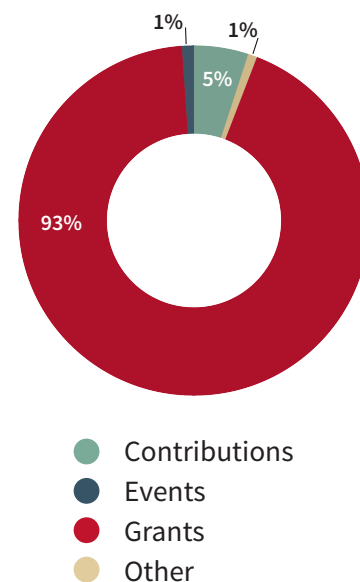
NET ASSETS & LIABILITIES

Unrestricted Funds	\$1,111,506	\$947,713
Unrestricted - Reserve Fund	\$515,500	\$454,500
Temporarily Restricted	\$4,346,246	\$1,114,087
Permanently Restricted	\$228,301	\$199,517
Total Net Assets	\$6,201,553	\$2,715,817
Total Liabilities	\$227,915	\$148,466
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$6,429,468	\$2,864,283

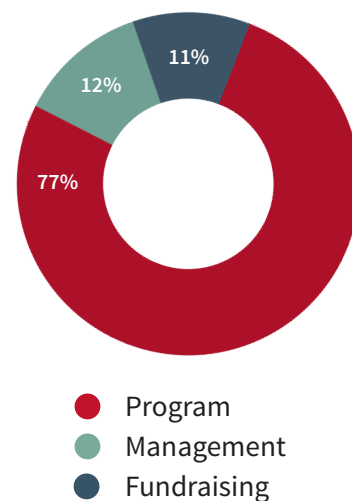
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

Change in Net Assets	\$3,485,736	\$241,400
Beginning	\$2,715,817	\$2,474,417
Ending	\$6,201,553	\$2,715,817

REVENUES



EXPENSES



Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest, Inc. Consolidated Statement of Activities for the year ended December 31, 2017 with summarized financial information for 2016.

FINANCIALS



THANK YOU SUPPORTERS!

For over 20 years, the generosity of supporters like you has made it possible for Nebraska Appleseed to stand strong in the face of adversity and stop the threats that just need to be stopped. That has never been truer than in 2017, as Nebraskans rose up with renewed commitment to the fight for justice in our state.

Because of you, Appleseed took the fight wherever we were needed the most — in court, at the Capitol, and in the community. Together, we stood with advocates and grassroots leaders to speak out for meaningful change.

Your support this year will be applied strategically to build advocacy capacity in the community, amplify our impact, and give rise to real change in Nebraska. It's never been more important that we do.

Thank you.

JOIN THE FIGHT

Donate today at neappleseed.org/donate, or contact Nic Swiercek at 402-438-8853 x110.

EXECUTIVE & ADMINISTRATIVE

CYNTHIA DAVIS
OFFICE MANAGER

REBECCA GOULD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

KRISTINE HULL
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

GLORIA KIMBULU
PROGRAM ASSISTANT

NICHOLETTE SEIGFREID
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

DEVELOPMENT & ENGAGEMENT

RACHEL GEHRINGER-WIAR
FIELD DIRECTOR

KAYLEIGH NEWMAN
GRANT COORDINATOR

EMMA RASMUSSEN
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE

JEFF SHELTON
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

NIC SWIERCEK
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & ENGAGEMENT

ERIC WICKIZER
DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

IMMIGRANTS & COMMUNITIES

REBECCA GONZALES
PROJECT COORDINATOR

JOSÉ JIMÉNEZ
COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

LEE KREIMER
WELCOMING ASSOCIATE

VALERIA RODRIGUEZ
COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

GLORIA SARMIENTO
COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

DARCY TROMANHAUSER
PROGRAM DIRECTOR

CHRISTA YOAKUM
NEBRASKA IS HOME COORDINATOR

LEGAL & POLICY

ROBERT McEWEN
LEGAL DIRECTOR

KATIE PITTS
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC POLICY

OMAID ZABIH
DIRECTOR OF FEDERAL POLICY

CHILD WELFARE

BECCA BRUNE
PROGRAM ASSOCIATE

ALLISON DERR
SENIOR LAW CLERK

SARAH HELVEY
PROGRAM DIRECTOR & STAFF ATTORNEY

ECONOMIC JUSTICE & HEALTH CARE ACCESS

FELIPE BLANCO
COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

BILLIE GALLAGHER
COLLECTIVE IMPACT LINCOLN STAFF ATTORNEY

JAMES GODDARD
PROGRAM DIRECTOR & STAFF ATTORNEY

SELINA MARTINEZ
COLLECTIVE IMPACT LINCOLN COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

MOLLY McCLEERY
HEALTH CARE ACCESS DEPUTY DIRECTOR & STAFF ATTORNEY

TERRELL McKINNEY
HUNGER ACTION ADVOCATE

RAUL NOGUERA-McELROY
WEITZ FELLOW

KEN SMITH
ECONOMIC JUSTICE STAFF ATTORNEY

ERIC SAVAIANO
PROGRAM ASSOCIATE

TRISHA THOMPSON
INTAKE COORDINATOR

STAFF



**ROOT DOWN IN STRENGTH.
RISE UP FOR JUSTICE.**

NEBRASKA APPLESEED

941 O STREET, SUITE 920
LINCOLN, NE 68508

P 402.438.8853
F 402.438.0263

INFO@NEAPPLESEED.ORG

NEAPPLESEED.ORG