



NEBRASKA

APPLESEED

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

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FOR ALL OF US



REBECCA GOULD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The work to build a more just Nebraska is nothing if not a collective effort. Together we celebrate victories toward this goal and offer hope to sustain the fight when new challenges arise. More than ever before, Nebraskans are reaching out to ask how they can join the fight to tear down obstacles that stand in the way of a brighter future for their neighbors and a stronger tomorrow for our state.

This past year, we've seen people rally around their communities, advocate for their children and their neighbors' children, stand up for those in need of critical health care, and use their voice, their time, and their energy to shape Nebraska into a state where The Good Life is within reach for all of us.

Facing actions intended to create fear and separate families, Nebraskans made thousands of calls to our elected officials to advocate for policies that uphold our values, bring stability to our state, and create a process for immigrants to become citizens of the country to which they contribute so much. We witnessed an outpouring of support for families impacted by raids in O'Neill. Motivated by an unwavering conviction in the power of united communities, cities and towns statewide held events in the fall to welcome immigrants and refugees and stand in solidarity with their neighbors.

This year, our friends endured the rain and the heat, collecting 135,000 signatures from every county in our state to provide health care to 90,000 of our fellow Nebraskans. They continued to canvass communities to encourage their neighbors to make their voices heard at the polls. In November, seven years of hard work culminated with voters approving Initiative 427 to expand Medicaid, marking an incredible victory for justice and taking an essential step toward a healthier future for our state.

And when a building fire in February 2018 displaced the Appleseed team for seven months, we again saw the care of community. Many opened their doors to our staff and shared resources and words of encouragement that were a constant source of strength.

The path to a just, inclusive, and thriving Nebraska is not always smooth, yet we are making strides because we walk it together. Ultimately, the cause we are fighting for is a Nebraska that works for all of us. And with all of us, we know we can succeed.

Thank you for standing with us.

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

LEGAL TEAM FIGHTS FOR CRITICAL RIGHTS

ROBERT McEWEN, JD
LEGAL DIRECTOR



Appleseed's Legal Team dedicates itself to unraveling systemic injustices to protect Nebraskans' rights. No one should be denied essential services necessary for their well-being, and we worked to address flawed policies that are causing suffering in Nebraska's correctional facilities and child welfare system.

In 2018, Appleseed attorneys advocated for the right of young Nebraskans with Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) to access health care and participate in the Bridge to Independence (B2I) Program, which helps youth aging out of foster care successfully transition into adulthood. SIJS allows children in the foster care system to apply for lawful permanent status that we believe entitles them to both health care and B2I.

In a July victory, a judge ruled our client could remain in B2I, though a later unfavorable decision determined her immigration status made her ineligible for Medicaid. In a second adverse decision, the court upheld a determination that another client with SIJS status is ineligible for B2I. We are appealing these decisions and will continue fighting systemic issues in the immigration system that challenge young people's ability to access benefits to which they should be entitled.

Also in 2018, in conjunction with the ACLU of Nebraska and other legal partners, Appleseed advanced a lawsuit filed against the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services over dangerous conditions in state prisons. Our attorneys undertook an intensive discovery and investigation process, including expert witness consultation to gather further evidence on this crisis. It is clear that deficient mental and physical health care, and the inappropriate and overuse of solitary confinement is causing undue trauma. Extreme overcrowding underpins these human rights violations.

These efforts will help lay groundwork for a class-action status motion, showing specific, widespread issues are causing inhumane conditions to persist for a significant portion of Nebraska's incarcerated population.

RULING IMPROVES SAFETY, STABILITY FOR IMMIGRANT YOUTH

The Nebraska Supreme Court ruled that county courts can decide whether young immigrants are eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status to obtain lawful permanent residence. Appleseed supported this important case with an amicus brief.

A WIN FOR CIVIL RIGHTS LEGAL ADVOCACY

The Nebraska Supreme Court ruled in Appleseed's favor on a child welfare case, ensuring attorneys can effectively advocate for their client's civil rights.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION MAKES STRIDES FOR GOOD LIFE

New Policies Protect Children, Voting Rights, and Nebraska's Future

KATIE PITTS, JD
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC POLICY



During the 2018 Nebraska legislative session, senators advanced bills to improve Nebraskans' quality of life, while defeating several that would have compromised progress across our state. Throughout, advocates and state senators showed tireless determination to build a more-just society for all of us.

Appleseed proudly supported successful bills that will improve safety and accountability in the child welfare system, including the unanimous passage of a bill that increases responsibility for protecting youth by reporting sexual abuse allegations. This legislation responds in part to troubling reports by the Office of Inspector General showing Nebraska's foster care system struggles to adequately provide for children's safety.

We also celebrated the unanimous approval of a bill that takes a small step to address harmful payday lending practices, though more work must be done to end the high cost and short repayment periods that trap people in a cycle of debt.

On the defense, senators stopped a tax plan that would have endangered Nebraska's ability to strengthen our child welfare system and community health while maintaining infrastructure and public safety. Senators also rejected voter suppression bills that would have risked Nebraskans' fundamental right to vote.

Unfortunately, a measure to raise the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program's gross income limit did not advance. This was a missed opportunity to help people move ahead and ensure their families can still get the meals they need.

Setting the stage to tackle the causes of systemic poverty and injustice, senators also introduced interim studies on racial and ethnic disproportionality in foster care, practices of shutting off people's utilities, and needs of working parents who struggle to make ends meet. One study will evaluate implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2017, federal legislation that gives Nebraska an opportunity to strengthen our child welfare system.

46

**BILLS AND
RESOLUTIONS
APPLESEED TOOK
POSITIONS ON**

59

**BILLS
MONITORED**

3

**PRIORITIES
PASSED**

COVERAGE FOR 90,000, A HEALTHIER NEBRASKA FOR ALL

MOLLY McCLEERY, JD
PROGRAM DIRECTOR



We envision a Nebraska where everyone can access quality, affordable health care. Caring people

from across the state moved us closer to that dream by voting for Initiative 427 to expand Medicaid for 90,000 of our hard-working, uninsured friends and neighbors.

This life changing – and lifesaving – victory years in the making shows the amazing progress we can make when we act together. So many people not only voted for Initiative 427 but

went above and beyond to get Medicaid expansion on the ballot so Nebraskans had an opportunity to elect a healthier future.

Across the state, people collected petition signatures and added their own names in support of the ballot initiative. They posted signs in their yards, made phone calls, knocked on doors, and had conversations with friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers about why every Nebraskans should be able to see a doctor. Many shared their personal stories about why health care is critical, showing incredible courage

as they discussed the health and financial setbacks that can arise as a result of being uninsured.

For the 90,000 Nebraskans who have been living in the coverage gap, a degree of security as they work for a better life is in sight.

Our next steps are to ensure that Medicaid expansion is implemented swiftly and effectively, without unnecessary delays or burdensome work requirements limiting Nebraskans' coverage.



Amanda's Story

WHY MEDICAID EXPANSION MATTERS

"The last several years nearly almost no photos of me exist. I fell into the Medicaid gap.



Chronically ill with no health coverage, I was getting worse fast. I felt like I was dying, and I looked like I was dying. I was afraid I wouldn't live and didn't

want to be remembered looking so sick. Most of the time I was too sick to go to family events and holidays anyway.

I was able to get better because I have Medicaid. Medicaid saved my life. There are more pictures that I'm in already this year than in the last two combined. The next picture I'll be taking is my student ID for college. That's something I never thought would actually

happen, but thanks to Medicaid, my health is stabilizing enough to try."

Amanda Gershon, a longtime advocate for Medicaid expansion, co-lead the Insure the Good Life campaign to qualify Initiative 427 on the November 2018 ballot.

HEALTH CARE ACC

INSURE

THE GO... LIFE

INSURE

DOUGLAS

INSURE

PERKINS

INSURE

MEDICAID EXPANSION INITIATIVE 427

BY THE NUMBERS

DEMAND FOR QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HEALTH INSURANCE STILL STRONG

Nearly 87,500 Nebraskans' enrolled in the Health Insurance Marketplace in 2018 as the state held steady at sixth in the nation for maintaining enrollment numbers. While the nation's overall enrollment numbers fell slightly, Nebraska's fell less as enrollment assisters and Appleseed's Enroll Nebraska network persisted in getting out the word.

With generous assistance from local and national supporters, Enroll Nebraska conducted outreach to people no longer served by Marketplace Navigators, which have been dramatically reduced by the Trump Administration. Outreach focused on areas with large numbers of uninsured Nebraskans and harder to reach populations.

We continued to weather the threats posed by reduced federal marketing, new insurance products that offer less coverage, and public attacks on the law. Not only did Nebraska maintain enrollment numbers, but coverage costs have declined and premiums after tax credits fell by 70 percent from the year before. Enroll Nebraska's commitment to connecting consumers with the Marketplace persists, as demand for quality, affordable health insurance remains strong across the state.

136,000+

SIGNATURES
collected coalition-wide

17,000+

SIGNATURES
collected by Appleseed's
grassroots network

300+

**APPLESEED
VOLUNTEERS**
collected signatures

53%

**OF VOTERS
APPROVED I-427**
expanding coverage to
90,000+ Nebraskans

CESS

NEBRASKANS SPEAK OUT FOR UNIFIED COMMUNITIES

OMAID ZABIH, JD
FEDERAL POLICY DIRECTOR



Amid chaos created by toxic immigration policies and harsh enforcement, Nebraskans

joined together in 2018 to promote strong, vibrant, inclusive, and engaged communities where everyone can thrive.

Nebraskans' core community spirit was activated as people reached out to offer support in the aftermath of raids carried out by Immigration and Customs Enforcement in O'Neill and surrounding areas in August.

Neighbors near and far rallied with the broader O'Neill community to organize a vigil, spread awareness

of the trauma raids cause to entire communities, and show solidarity with immigrant Nebraskans. We connected pro bono attorneys to families in need and helped coordinate more than 80 organizations, businesses, and civic leaders to call on our federal delegation in Congress to oppose immigration raids and enact policies to prevent future raids.

Through it all, Nebraskans statewide displayed an unrelenting dedication to keeping communities together, reaching out to coordinate Know Your Rights, family safety, and rapid response trainings in partnership with schools, faith groups, community police departments, nonprofits, and others.

SUPPORTING RURAL LEADERS OF COLOR

Eight local organizing teams – led by immigrant Nebraskans and rural leaders of color – grew stronger in 2018, becoming more knowledgeable in advocacy strategies and engaging neighbors in creating positive change.

COMMUNITY IN ACTION

CULTURE OF WELCOMING GROWS STATEWIDE

Welcoming events are taking hold in more communities and connecting more Nebraskans than ever before. In September 2018, Welcoming Week gatherings were held statewide in the spirit of bringing together new neighbors and long-time community members to embrace diversity and celebrate our shared history of building Nebraska together.





2,800

PEOPLE TRAINED
IN KNOW YOUR RIGHTS
AND FAMILY SAFETY
PLANNING

724

WORKERS TRAINED
ON WORKERS' RIGHTS
AND JOB HAZARDS IN
MEATPACKING IN
16 COMMUNITIES

**NEBRASKA
DREAMERS**

TRAVELED TO DC TO
SHARE THEIR STORIES
AND ADVOCATE FOR THE
DREAM ACT

19,390

RURAL VOTERS OF
COLOR REACHED BY
GET-OUT-THE-VOTE
EFFORTS

ENSURING ALL VOICES ARE HEARD AT THE POLLS

During the 2018 election year, our team supported nine locally-led immigrant and Native American organizing teams in an extensive nonpartisan, statewide Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) effort, ultimately connecting with 19,390 rural voters of color. Overall, rural voters of color contacted during our campaign voted 7 percentage points higher than non-contacted rural voters of color (27% compared to 20%), while in-person conversations through the campaign supported a 38% voter turnout rate!

KEEPING THE PRESSURE ON FOR POSITIVE IMMIGRATION POLICY

In 2018, Nebraskans sustained demand for legislation to keep our communities united, while fighting against a wave of harmful family separation policies.

Thousands attended statewide vigils to support immigrants and Nebraskans with Temporary Protected Status (TPS), following the Trump administration's end of the program. Hundreds more pressured Congress to create stability for Dreamers with letters supporting passage of the Dream Act and condemning cancellation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

Nebraska Dreamers traveled to Washington, D.C., to tell leaders their personal stories and fight for the opportunity to continue sharing their skills in the only place they know as home. Dreamer-led letter deliveries to local federal delegation offices, poster displays, and our participation in national media coverage maintained pressure for immigration reform and highlighted the human cost of family separation and need for commonsense laws.

Nebraskans also united to demand an end to the White House's practice of imprisoning asylum-seeking families and separating parents and kids at the border. We organized Nebraskans to submit public comments opposing a harmful census citizenship question and a proposed Public Charge Rule aimed at reducing assistance for immigrant families, and comments to protect children in detention and waivers for naturalization fees.

While we've been horrified as our government has thrown families' lives into uncertainty with anti-immigrant actions, our resolve has only grown, witnessing Nebraskans' ceaseless commitment to defending fundamental community values.

COMMUNITIES

EDUCATION AND TRAINING PAVE WAY FOR BETTER JOBS

JAMES GODDARD, JD
PROGRAM DIRECTOR



In 2018, our efforts to solve the root causes of poverty focused on breaking down

barriers that prevent Nebraskans from accessing the education they need to get a quality job.

Earning a high school diploma or equivalent is more important than ever to ensure personal and professional success, yet while employers struggle to fill jobs that require a high school equivalency, the number of adults with the credential has declined. Through research and conversations

with community members and stakeholders in Nebraska's high school equivalency system, Appleseed pinpointed obstacles for students to complete the GED®. We issued a report outlining opportunities to help more Nebraskans complete their high school equivalency, strengthen the quality of life and job prospects for families, and support our economy.

Only a small number of Nebraskans who receive food assistance are able to participate in the state's Employment and Training program within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP E&T). We are working to expand this job-

training program so more people can access higher education, receive essential benefits, and secure a quality job. In 2018, we partnered with the Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) to plan for the expansion of Nebraska's SNAP E&T program, and recruited Central Community College in Grand Island to launch a third-party partnership pilot program with DHHS, which is anticipated to launch later in 2019.

SAFE IN ALL SEASONS

No family should have to suffer a harsh Nebraska winter without heat or a sweltering summer without cool air, yet in 2018 we received an influx of calls from families who received shut-off notices or had utilities disconnected. Repeated shut-offs have led families to face mounting debt, loss of assistance, and in some cases, removal of children from the home.

Shutoffs can also be traumatic for Nebraskans with disabilities who depend on electricity to power medical devices.

To learn more about this pressing issue, Appleseed held listening sessions in several communities. A few common themes emerged: Nebraskans want clarity from public power companies and security for households at risk of shut-offs.

Based on these priorities, we are supporting communities to bridge the divide between public power providers and customers through collaboration on reasonable policies that protect Nebraskans. Appleseed also supported an interim legislative study to learn more about utility shut-off practices and the risks they create for community members.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE



LINCOLNITES CALL FOR QUALITY HOUSING

HOUSING ADEQUACY,
AFFORDABILITY LEADING
CONCERNS

RENEE JUST, JD
STAFF ATTORNEY

NATASHA NASEEM
COMMUNITY ORGANIZER



In 2018, we engaged in more than 8,000 conversations with residents in six of Lincoln's core neighborhoods through **Collective Impact Lincoln**, a collaborative project with Civic Nebraska and South of Downtown Community Development Organization.

Through these discussions, housing adequacy and affordability emerged as leading concerns for community members. Neighbors shared their struggles to cover basic needs because they are spending a large share of their income on housing expenses. Moreover, we heard how substandard rental property conditions are infringing on Lincolnites' rights and creating safety risks for their families.

Through continued collaboration with residents, we have begun setting the stage to advocate for a proactive rental property inspection and registration ordinance in 2019. This would be a great first step toward alleviating safety hazards neighbors face in their own homes, as well as strengthening Lincoln for all residents by addressing dangerous code violations to improve the housing stock.

JOINING FORCES TO FIGHT CHILD HUNGER

When kids don't have to worry about hunger, everyone wins. Children who eat breakfast are more likely to do well in school, get the nutrients they need to lead healthy lives, and grow to be successful, contributing community members. In 2018, Appleseed focused on channeling the collective power of advocates to fight food insecurity that exists in every community and prevents kids from getting ahead.

The Go Big Breakfast Coalition brought together education professionals and other child advocates to collaborate on strategies to ensure students get this important first meal of the day. Because hunger doesn't take a vacation, we hosted education events and surveyed parents to encourage participation in the Summer Food Service Program, which provides children with nutritious meals they need when school lets out. Our team also helped distribute 10,000 summer meal vouchers for children to use at local restaurants.

A CHANCE FOR ALL CHILDREN TO REACH THEIR POTENTIAL

SARAH HELVEY, JD
PROGRAM DIRECTOR



All kids deserve the opportunity to have a safe, bright future and a smooth transition

into adulthood. To move closer to this vision, we focused efforts on advocating for equitable, effective child welfare services that meet the needs of Nebraska families.

We continued to partner with the Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Act Coalition, serving as the organization's fiscal sponsor and promoting their efforts to dismantle inequities and improve outcomes for Native children in Nebraska's child welfare system. Addressing disproportionality

requires meaningful engagement with those who are most affected. With partners, we connected with youth and families to learn more about their experiences and root causes of inequity. Findings supported an interim study and recommendations to improve the child welfare system for the diverse communities it serves.

Appleseed also advanced strategies with partners to improve the Bridge to Independence (B2I) program, better setting up our young people for success in adulthood. This included fending off funding cuts and developing recommendations to expand B2I to youth adopted after age 16 whose guardianships were disrupted.

And to help ensure youth can access critical health coverage, we aided in the development of a new federal law that allows individuals exiting foster care in one state the right to access health care through the Medicaid to 26 program in another state. We are also working to bring Treatment Foster Care, a Medicaid service, to Nebraska so youth can receive health and behavioral health care without unnecessary institutionalization.



UNITED FAMILIES, BRIGHTER FUTURES

In 2018, we applauded passage of the Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA), landmark federal child welfare reform that allows federal funds to be used for prevention services that will help more parents and children stay together, overcome challenges, and thrive.

Appleseed closely monitored the FFPSA's passage and acted swiftly to coordinate efforts to bring the benefits home to Nebraska families, advocating for state implementation of the law. We held a training for state officials, child welfare providers, and other advocates to learn about the FFPSA and brainstorm implementation.

Appleseed staff continue to serve on multiple workgroups arising from the effort. We also supported an interim study, helping identify best practices to ensure Nebraska families get the full benefit of this reform and our children's well-being is made the top priority.

CHILD WELFARE



VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

During National Foster Care Awareness Month in May, we hosted a series of blogs and podcasts, sharing perspectives of young Nebraskans who have been in foster care. These passionate individuals know where our foster care system can fall short and offer an invaluable voice in providing solutions that will let every child have a healthy, safe, and loving home.

NEDHAL

2018 APPLESEED YOUTH FELLOW

“... I still never gave up hope that one day it will all get better. That one day I’ll make a difference and help those who are going through or have gone through similar things. I’m now going to college and majoring in Criminal Justice so I can help people get the justice they deserve.”



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

LETTING KIDS BE KIDS

Making sure children are able to participate in everyday childhood activities is essential to their healthy development. We remain diligent in our support for proper state implementation of the federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (SFA), which removes needless barriers that prevent children in foster care from participating in age-appropriate experiences like sports, music, sleepovers, and jobs.

To help develop best practice recommendations for SFA implementation, our Child Welfare Director serves as co-chair of the Nebraska Children’s Commission Normalcy Committee and participates in its various subcommittees. In 2018, the Normalcy Committee provided educational materials to statewide child welfare and juvenile justice system stakeholders, ensuring they have critical information to support the SFA’s effective implementation. The Committee also provided court-involved stakeholders with details about the role of the child advisor, an important member of a child’s case planning team whom the child selects.

Subcommittees made several strides to support implementation, too, including conducting a stakeholder survey on SFA implementation thus far. Feedback on the survey will guide next steps to support kids’ ability to participate in common activities that help them build lasting relationships and self-identify, explore new interests, and prepare for a successful adulthood.

	FY 2018	FY 2017
SUPPORT & REVENUES		
Contributions	295,761	292,133
Events	65,473	59,412
Grants	2,316,667	5,258,464
Other Revenue	117,553	65,466
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUES	\$2,795,454	\$5,675,475

EXPENSES

Program Services	2,202,444	1,672,609
Management & General	221,433	267,347
Fundraising	280,209	249,783
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,704,086	\$2,189,739

ASSETS

Cash	3,017,544	2,011,399
Grants Receivable	1,800,288	3,027,581
Other Current Assets	118,564	168,175
Net Equipment	43,397	21,129
Investments	1,218,356	1,201,184
TOTAL ASSETS	\$6,483,356	\$6,429,468

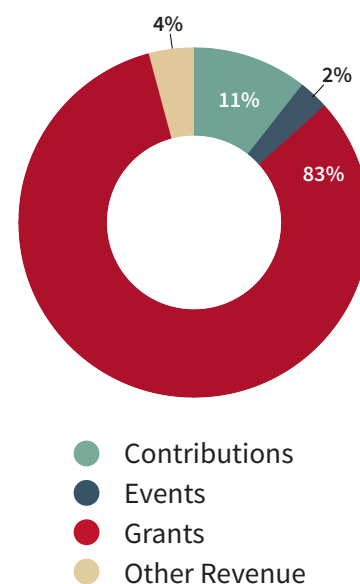
NET ASSETS & LIABILITIES

Without Donor Restrictions	2,272,547	1,221,312
Reserve Fund	585,500	515,500
Net Assets with Donor Restrictions	3,434,874	4,464,741
Total Net Assets	\$6,292,921	\$6,201,553
Total Liabilities	\$190,435	\$227,915
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$6,483,356	\$6,429,468

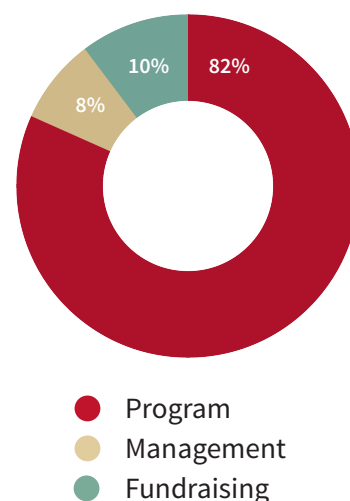
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

Change in Net Assets	91,368	3,485,736
Beginning	6,201,553	2,715,817
Ending	6,292,921	6,201,553

REVENUES



EXPENSES



Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest, Inc. Consolidated Statement of Activities for the year ended December 31, 2018 with summarized financial information for 2017.

FINANCIALS



THANK YOU SUPPORTERS!

Since 1996, the generosity of supporters like you has made it possible for Nebraska Appleseed to use all of the advocacy strategies to fight for justice and opportunity for all Nebraskans.

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

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NEBRASKA IS HOME COORDINATOR

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CHILD WELFARE

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INTAKE COORDINATOR



STAFF



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FIGHTS FOR JUSTICE AND OPPORTUNITY
FOR ALL NEBRSAKANS**

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