Annual Report
Core Values | Common Ground | Equal Justice

www.neappleseed.org

BUILD A NEBRASKA
WHERE ALL PEOPLE HAVE A REAL CHANCE TO ACHIEVE THE AMERICAN DREAM
These are Nebraska Appleseed’s guiding principles, and have been since our non-profit, non-partisan law project started “sowing the seeds of justice” in 1996. Nebraska Appleseed focuses on advancing policies and practices that promote self-sufficiency for Nebraska’s working poor families, promote the integration and participation of immigrant populations in communities across Nebraska, provide safe and adequate child welfare services to children who need protection, increase low-income people’s access to the legal system and support democracy by removing barriers to low-income people’s participation in the electoral and public policy decision-making processes.
A MESSAGE FROM REBECCA GOULD
Executive Director

Three years ago our staff moved into a new office, which included space an architecture firm had used for many years. When we moved in, many of the firm’s drafting tables still filled the large room we turned into a conference room. It was their drafting room where big ideas took the form of concrete plans to help create beauty and function for their clients and their community. When we moved in, we decided to continue to call that space "the drafting room."

Now, three years later, “the drafting room” and the idea it conjures is a nice metaphor for our work. If you’re going to tackle some of the toughest issues facing our state, you need to have big ideas, big dreams of what the form and function of the public structures in our state could be. You need to bring to the table people who hold a variety of perspectives to help shape that vision. Most importantly, you need to be able to transform that big vision into concrete plans and next steps that allow your partners and colleagues interested in building strong communities to bring their hearts, minds, and hands to the effort.

In 2009, we saw many of our big dreams and goals become a reality–expanded health care access for low-income children, major progress toward federal health care reform that ultimately passed in early 2010, renewed attention to unsafe working conditions in the meatpacking industry, rights of Native American children in foster care protected to maintain cultural connections with their Tribes, and the rights defended of hundreds of low-income parents wrongfully denied Medicaid. There is so much our small staff of thirteen and our strong base of community allies and supporters have to celebrate from 2009.

But there is still more hard work ahead.

The continued recession, eroding child welfare system, growing pressure on our state budget, and increasing intensity around immigration policy have enhanced the need for the unique expertise and skill of Nebraska Appleseed’s staff. In 2009 we spent many hours gathered around the drafting room tables, dreaming big about a Nebraska that comes out on the other side of these challenges stronger and better and putting concrete plans into action that will provide a solid foundation for the work ahead in 2010 and beyond. I hope you will join us in this work as we seek to build a Nebraska of which we are all proud and which embodies not only the concepts of form and function, but of beauty and justice.

Sincerely,

Rebecca L. Gould
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Poverty and inequality go hand in hand. Poverty, discrimination, lack of health insurance, and a failing child welfare system haunt the lives of thousands of Nebraskans. These challenges keep so many Nebraska families and children from reaching their full potential. These challenges shatter dreams.

But these challenges cannot deter the spirit of Appleseed’s mission: core values, common ground, and equal justice. With this spirit, Appleseed not only protects and advances the rights of all Nebraskans, but also inspires leadership and action in the people and communities it serves. Appleseed’s work empowers everyday, hardworking Nebraskans to become champions for their families and communities.

BUILD a NEBRASKA WHERE ALL PEOPLE HAVE A REAL CHANCE TO ACHIEVE THE AMERICAN DREAM. ENSURE ALL NEBRASKANS HAVE ACCESS TO QUALITY, AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE. PROMOTE STRONG, VIBRANT, ENGAGED AND INTEGRATED COMMUNITIES. CHAMPION A CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES SAFETY, STABILITY, AND A STRONG FUTURE FOR NEBRASKA’S CHILDREN. ENERGIZE ALL NEBRASKANS’ CIVIC PARTICIPATION.

Appleseed works for EQUAL JUSTICE and FULL OPPORTUNITY for ALL Nebraskans.
For fourteen years, Nebraska Appleseed has advanced opportunity and broke down barriers in order to build positive and enduring change. Appleseed works in the courtroom, at the Legislature, and in the community to build systems that support the full potential of the low-income parent choosing education as means out of poverty, the immigrant in search of welcoming communities, the child in need of a stable and loving home, and the mother struggling with a health condition without access to health care—without access to hope.

Appleseed responds to these calls for help and change at a critical time in our state and nation. So often, change is slow—with the status quo being the province of the powerful. Appleseed realizes that opportunity and justice cannot flourish—that progress stands still—without courageous, skillful leaders who seize the moment to change things for the better. Appleseed is strongly positioned to be this agent of change in Nebraska. Through its groundbreaking work, Nebraska Appleseed sows and tends the seeds that grow to nourish our shared dream of opportunity and justice for all.
ENSURING affordable, quality health care access for all Nebraskans

Appleseed defends and strengthens Nebraska’s Medicaid program, advocates for vibrant state and federal children’s health programs, and advances comprehensive health reform legislation through its public policy expertise and by leading coalitions of advocates and providers. In 2009, our state stood at the center of the health reform debate and Appleseed was well-positioned to lead the charge for reform. Working with our state reform partners and leading the Nebraska Health Care for America Now! (HCAN) coalition, we called attention to the hundreds of thousands of uninsured or underinsured Nebraska families, the small businesses that struggle to provide their employees coverage, and the increasing number of Nebraskans who can barely afford premiums skyrocketing faster than their wages.

Opportunity and access to quality, affordable health care go hand-in-hand.

In early 2009, we celebrated advances in children’s health care coverage. Appleseed successfully lobbied to expand eligibility for Nebraska’s children’s health program, Kids Connection, to include 5,400 newly-eligible children.

Throughout the year, Appleseed facilitated more than a dozen health reform forums and advocacy trainings across Nebraska in Grand Island, Kearney, Hastings, Columbus, Norfolk, Beatrice, Lincoln, and Omaha. Our health care staff provided community leaders crucial information on reform’s substance and legislative process.

Our staff and volunteers collected powerful health care stories canvassing more than 100 small businesses, talking with Nebraskans at the State Fair, and hosting community meetings with farmers and faith leaders. Appleseed helped send many individuals to Washington, DC to share their stories with Congress.

Appleseed and its partners rallied more than 700 people at the state capitol in August for comprehensive health reform. Later that November, Appleseed cosponsored a candle light vigil and march bringing together 250 Nebraskans urging the Senate to begin debate on health care reform.
IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

PROMOTING strong, vibrant, engaged and integrated communities

Appleseed promotes Nebraskans’ participation in all aspects of community life and strong integrated communities. Through a variety of community and policy strategies, Appleseed advocates for common sense and humane federal immigration reform, effective state and local integration policies, worker safety in meatpacking, immigrant leadership and civic participation, access to mainstream financial services, and the promotion of racial justice.

With a wide range of community partners, Appleseed hosted and cosponsored numerous public events and Congressional visits for common sense and humane immigration reform, collected more than 15,000 postcards with personal messages for Nebraska’s Congressional delegation, and shared new immigrants’ and longtime Nebraskans’ stories to put a human face on our immigration system.

Appleseed and its partners, including faith leaders, small business owners, and community advocates, continue to oppose costly, divisive and unconstitutional policies like Fremont’s city ordinance and Arizona style proposals.

In the fall of 2009, Appleseed followed up on its 2006 meatpacking workers health and safety report “Dignity on the Line” to release a major new study. “The Speed Kills You”: The Voice of Nebraska’s Meatpacking Workers exposed serious health and safety concerns from the perspectives of 455 workers across Nebraska.

The “Nebraska Is Home” welcoming initiatives in Crete, Grand Island, Schuyler, and Fremont helped neighbors get to know neighbors and create more inclusive, integrated communities through education, positive messaging, and community building activities.

Appleseed is a statewide leader for workable immigration solutions at the federal level that uphold our values and move us forward together.

Gloria Sarmiento, Appleseed’s community educator/organizer, facilitates leadership development with more than 70 key immigrant leaders and encourages civic participation in more than 18 communities across Nebraska.
Appleseed serves as a watchdog over the state’s efforts to reform the child welfare system through contracts with private providers. Amid the current crisis, in which funding issues led two of the five lead foster care agencies to terminate their contracts, Appleseed advocates for solutions that safeguard local community-based agencies and protects foster children’s safety and well-being.

In 2009, Appleseed’s Foster Care Reform Legal Resource Center expanded to nearly 240 attorneys across Nebraska. We provide a new, comprehensive source of Nebraska-specific juvenile law resources for attorneys, including our Policy Briefs series and Juvenile Document Bank with sample legal documents for attorneys.

Appleseed drafted and submitted an amicus brief to the Nebraska Supreme Court on behalf of 11 tribes and organizations to secure Native American children’s right to have their tribe’s advocacy in juvenile court proceedings.

Appleseed recruited pro bono counsel and participated in an experienced legal team in an appeal before the Nebraska Supreme Court which revered a termination of parental rights and articulated strong language regarding children’s best interest when a parent is deported.
BREAKING DOWN barriers to opportunity and building pathways out of poverty

Daily we hear how the recession impacts low-income Nebraskans trying to work their way out of poverty and become self-sufficient. A tough economy and the hard realities of low-wage work, child care problems, insufficient access to health care, and food insecurity are all real challenges in our state. Opportunities for child care and work supports, job training and education leading to living wage work are essential for families to succeed. Our mission is to see that Nebraska has a system of laws, policies, and practices that ensure all families can meet their basic needs, find opportunity, and full participate in our democracy.

Appleseed operates an intake and information line that provides low-income Nebraskans with advice, referrals, and information about public benefits. Our staff helped more than 675 Nebraskans who called for help in 2009.

Appleseed defended 400 low-income parents’ rights in the class action lawsuit Davio v. HHS. The Lancaster County District Court ruled that the Department of Health & Human Services wrongfully denied Medicaid as a sanction under Employment First. The ruling protects low-income parents with chronic health conditions maintain consistent health care and work their way out of poverty.

In October, Appleseed hosted the first annual “Building Nebraska’s Future Workforce Forum.” This event brought together more than 100 business, education, and human services leaders to discuss ways to build opportunity for Nebraska’s low-income families, such as increasing access to child care, Adult Basic Education, and other opportunities and supports.
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*Denotes donation to Nebraska Is Home
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Working Poor Families Project, Chevy Chase, MD

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**2009 Fiscal Summary**

**Income**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>(16%)</td>
<td>$153,556</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundations</td>
<td>(77%)</td>
<td>$724,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>(7%)</td>
<td>$63,495</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$941,651</strong></td>
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**Total Expenses**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; General</td>
<td>(11%)</td>
<td>$82,228</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>(7%)</td>
<td>$53,489</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Services</td>
<td>(82%)</td>
<td>$639,169</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>$774,886</strong></td>
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**Program Expenses**

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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Income Economic Opportunity</td>
<td>(28%)</td>
<td>$180,821</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immigrant Integration &amp; Civic Participation</td>
<td>(35%)</td>
<td>$222,047</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Care Access</td>
<td>(19%)</td>
<td>$122,465</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Welfare System Accountability</td>
<td>(18%)</td>
<td>$113,836</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$639,139</strong></td>
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</table>

**Total Expenses**

11% Management & General
7% Fundraising
82% Program Services

**Program Expenses**

19% **Health Care Access**
35% **Immigrant Integration and Civic Participation**
18% **Child Welfare System Accountability**
28% **Low Income Economic Opportunity**
We thank these members for their service after leaving the Board in 2010:

Susan Jacobs, Lincoln, NE
Mary Pipher, Lincoln, NE
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