

WE ARE

RISING

FOR
OUR

DEMOCRACY

WE ARE

BUILDING

YOUNG LEADERS

WE ARE CREATING AN INFORMED & ENGAGED **NEBRASKA**

WE ARE ✓✓✓✓✓

PROTECTING THE VOTE

WE ARE TURNING IDEAS

INTO

ACTION

WE ARE

CIVIC NEBRASKA



WE ARE



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THE WHY OF OUR WORK

Our democracy doesn't build and sustain itself. That is why with your support, Civic Nebraska creates a more modern and robust democracy for all Nebraskans.

We protect democracy through innovative civic engagement and civic health programs, and we defend Nebraskans' voting rights through nonpartisan voter education, observation, litigation, and legislation.

Civic Nebraska stands with you in our streets, in our neighborhoods, and in the halls of government to fight for democratic ideals.

CivicNebraska.org

Civic Nebraska is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

CIVIC NEBRASKA

Dear Friends,

This all began as a straightforward idea: A modern and robust democracy does not create itself. It takes Nebraskans young and old equipped with the skills and prepared to get involved in their community. A democracy is not responsive if it is not representative and that's why the right to vote stands above all others — and if the right to cast a ballot is not protected, our democracy has limited legitimacy.

That idea led to a vision, that vision became a plan, and in 2008 that plan became a reality. That's when we added our voices to a burgeoning movement to make our democratic institutions more open and accountable. Today, we proudly continue our mission as the state's leader in uniquely Nebraskan civic leadership programs and voting rights.

We have put our innovative spirit to work by bolstering democracy from the ground up. In schools and clubs, our youth initiatives build the next generation of leaders. On our streets, we strengthen the state's civic fabric. It all adds up to a more modern and robust democracy for all Nebraskans.

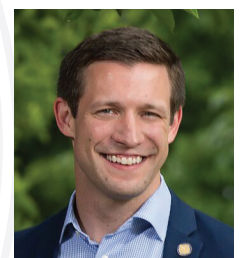
As our mission has grown so have our successes, many of which are featured here, in Civic Nebraska's 2018 Annual Report. In 2018:

- Our Youth Civic Leadership programs served more students than ever. That means more Nebraskans with essential civic leadership, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.
- Our data-based Civic Health Program increasingly linked communities and Nebraskans of all ages to strengthen social connectedness, confidence in institutions, community engagement, and political participation. At a time when our civic society is seen as strained, Civic Nebraska is sought after for

David C. Solheim, J.D.
Chair, Board of Directors



Adam Morfeld, J.D.
Executive Director and Founder



civic education, civil discourse, media literacy, and understanding our government.

- Collective Impact Lincoln, a Civic Nebraska-led initiative creating resident-led investment and change in Lincoln neighborhoods, completed its first year. Through our canvassing, events, and Community Builder Workshops, neighborhoods are examining their natural strengths and are taking up new ways to improve.
- Our Voting Rights team trained and deployed over 100 nonpartisan election observers to ensure 2018 elections were fair, modern, and accessible. At the Legislature, we defeated voter ID legislation and stopped other harmful bills.

Reflecting upon our first ten years, it is clear that Civic Nebraska was a good idea — and the right idea. But we knew this task would be a long undertaking. Ultimately, Civic Nebraska will be measured by whether it endures as a hub for statewide commitment to democracy. There is much work still to be done.

We appreciate your support as we continue this essential charge, and we are honored to count you as partners in this calling. We are Civic Nebraska. And we can't wait to see what ideas come to life in our next decade.

WE ARE RISING

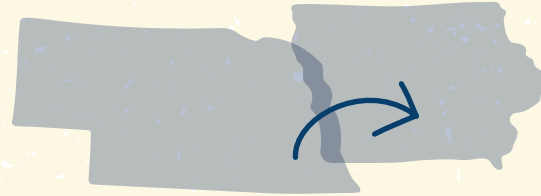


Civic Nebraska celebrated 10 years of defending democracy in 2018. Here's a look at our journey (so far).



2008

Joining an emerging nationwide movement for more open, responsive, and transparent government, Adam Morfeld and fellow University of Nebraska students establish **Nebraskans for Civic Reform**.



On Election Day, we road trip to Des Moines with a dozen Nebraska county clerks to learn more about how Iowa conducts **same-day voter registration**. It's one of our first — but certainly not our last — hands-on education efforts regarding upgraded, accessible election systems.

2009

NEBRASKANS FOR CIVIC REFORM

We're official! We file our **articles of incorporation** with the Nebraska Secretary of State. Nebraskans for Civic Reform goes from a volunteer group to a full-fledged nonprofit organization. Also in 2010, we create our first youth civic program with a Lincoln Public Schools work group of civics teachers.



2010

2011

We lead bipartisan opposition to a costly voter ID bill in the Nebraska Legislature. Over the next seven years, our organization successfully leads efforts to turn back harmful voter ID bills **seven more times**.



We monitor election processes in an **expanding number of Nebraska counties**, and continue to seek election reform at the county level after Election Day to ensure barriers to the ballot in the Cornhusker State are minimal.

2012

2013

Kent Day becomes our organization's first full-time employee beyond our executive director, signing on as director of **Civic Engagement Programs**. After-school programs and service-learning clubs take a big leap forward in building our next generation of civic leaders.

We establish our first after-school Community Learning Center: Dawes Middle School in Lincoln. Critical thinking, civil discourse, service learning, and civic engagement skills are infused into students' extended-learning experiences. By 2017, our **Youth Civic Leadership** programs expand into several Lincoln and Omaha elementary and middle schools.





FROM 'CIVIC REFORM' TO 'CIVIC NEBRASKA'



New offices in 2017

Thanks to a three-year, \$1.2 million breakthrough grant from Woods Charitable Fund, we lead the launch of Collective Impact Lincoln with partners Nebraska Appleseed and the South of Downtown Community Development Organization. **Collective Impact Lincoln** lifts up six core neighborhoods in Nebraska's capital city through community building and organizing.

We achieve a service milestone by reaching more than **1,000 students a day** in our youth civic leadership programs. To accommodate our growing capacity, we move into offices in the shadow of the Nebraska State Capitol.

We bolster our voting rights prowess when Bri McLarty of Omaha becomes our first full-time director of voting rights. She is also the **first person in the state's history** to take on such a vital role.



2014

We host Nebraska high-school students at our inaugural **Capitol Experience Day**. Over the next four years, "Cap Days" bring thousands of students, elementary through high school, to the statehouse for a hands-on look at the workings of Nebraska government.



2015

We lead authorship of the **Nebraska Civic Health Index**, which examines Nebraskans' engagement in democracy-building acts like volunteering, voting, connecting with neighbors, political involvement, and confidence in public institutions. Made possible by the Weitz Family Foundation, the Index is a roadmap for the state's civic future.



1,000



2017

2018



New Name.
SAME MISSION.
Nebraskans for Civic Reform is now Civic Nebraska.

In January, as our tenth year of service dawns, we become **Civic Nebraska**. We redouble our efforts to create a more modern and robust democracy for all Nebraskans, with new momentum in civic health, youth civic leadership, and voting rights. In 2018, we serve more Nebraskans than ever before.

2016

Build Up Your Block, our first **neighborhood leadership** and advocacy initiative, is made possible by the Lincoln Community Foundation. Also, we partner with the Nebraska Department of Education and others to sponsor The Presidential Platform Challenge, awarding high school seniors college scholarships for the best "presidential campaign" platforms. And in November, we dispatch dozens of observers to polling sites.

WE ARE BUILDERS

GOAL 1: BUILD THE NEXT GENERATION OF CIVIC LEADERS

Civic leadership is imperative to democracy, and it needs to start early. Too often, we wait until high school; we believe that is too late. Children who are exposed to service learning in school are more likely throughout their lives to be active in their communities and to vote. Civic Nebraska empowers youth with civic leadership, critical thinking, problem-solving, and civil discourse skills that our democracy requires.



No matter the activity, embedding teamwork, execution, and self-confidence into outside-of-school programs are Civic Nebraska hallmarks.

In 2018, we continued our steady growth in the number of students served in our school-based Community Learning Centers. Once again, Civic Nebraska's learning centers outpaced state averages in fundamental outcomes most important to schools, parents, and students themselves – including social and emotional learning, partnerships, and family involvement in their child's educational journey.

We also continued to promote civic leadership through other outlets. Working with teachers in classrooms

across the state, we shared supplemental programs to bolster Nebraska students' civic skills, and we provided key community service project coordination, resources, funding, and training of community leaders to work with schools in urban and rural settings.

Civic leadership is imperative to democracy. That's why we start early, empowering Nebraska youth to lead the positive change they seek in their world, and normalizing civic engagement at an early age.

2018 IMPACTS



1,800 Unique students served in our youth programs in the 2017-18 school year, an increase of more than **10%** from 2015-16

On a 1 to 4 scale, the average rank parents gave Civic Nebraska's after-school programs in key result areas

3.78

2,100 Children who have used our new **Think, Make, Create Labs** — mobile makerspaces that encourage critical thinking, innovation, problem solving, and creativity

76 The percentage of regular attendees in our Omaha after-school programs; Lothrop Elementary averages 91 percent



THEY SAID IT

"Civic Nebraska has implemented great ideas that we haven't seen in other communities. It's really important to Beyond School Bells to

have partners who understand the full, lasting impact extended-learning opportunities have on children. They're a fantastic partner because of their creativity and entrepreneurial spirit. They inspire others to move forward in new and interesting ways."

JEFF COLE
Beyond School Bells



I AM CIVIC NEBRASKA

LIZ HUNT, Omaha

As principal and creative director of DayCloud Studios, Liz has built a dynamic branding and marketing company in Omaha. She is a coach for **Circles**, Civic Nebraska's program to connect middle school girls to women in the Omaha area who have succeeded in careers not traditional to women. Liz knows that passing on her life lessons to the next generation is vital to democracy.

Empowering women is among the top things I'm called to do. I grew up with a mom that was a very strong woman. She taught me that strength and independence. It's always been a part of me.

My goal is not to change the minds of men about women. It's to change the minds of women about women. Often, they're not raising their hands or stepping into leadership roles. Maybe because they don't feel confident in their identities, or that society has told them they have to live in an antiquated lane that was selected for them.

I make my own lane. I want to show young women that they're capable of making their own lanes, too.

My main message with Circles is: Don't let other people define who you are. You decide what you want out of life and what you're capable of. Moreover, don't use it as an excuse. In some contexts, being a woman is obviously something you have to overcome, but it's not an excuse for not accomplishing something.

I tell young women, "Don't settle." Raise your ambitions. Don't just be the VP. Be the president. Be the CEO.

All of our lives, we're told we're princesses. But I believe we're meant to be queens. We're meant to rule, not be overlooked.

There's nothing better than when the light bulbs come on. And even if they don't realize it at the time, I hope that some of my words will come back to them during times that matter for their lives.

"I am capable of doing far more than what people tell me I am or tell me I should be." That's what it comes down to — and Circles gives me an avenue to say that to an entire generation of future queens.

WE ARE CONNECTORS

GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITIES' CIVIC, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL FABRIC



Civic health means vital communities. The civic, social, and political strength of our state depends upon organizing our communities to collectively identify and address public problems and concerns such as unemployment, quality of schools, social isolation, and government accountability.



◀ Neighborhoods serve a significant purpose in the state's civic engagement future. Our Civic Health Programs bolster democracy from the ground up. ▶

In 2018, Civic Nebraska led the way in strengthening Nebraska's civic health. New partnerships summoned us farther into rural Nebraska, forging new connections with economic development officials to increase civic connections and vitality across the state. We also continued our role in the Rural Civic Action Project, which engages rural high school students in critical thinking about community strengths and areas of improvement. And we immersed hundreds of Nebraskans — from middle- and high-school students across the state to recently naturalized adult Americans — in the workings of state government through Capitol Experience Days.

Individuals, families and communities are integral to civic health. We connected with thousands of Lincolniters during the first full year of Collective Impact Lincoln, a partnership to lift up six of the city's core neighborhoods. Our listening sessions rapidly developed into action plans on housing affordability and the rehabilitation of public spaces to spur community connection. Meanwhile, ONE Omaha has solidified itself into a hub of neighborhood connectivity in our state's largest city. ONE Omaha led planning and execution of September's inaugural

NeighborFest, which linked together hundreds of Omahans seeking positive local change.

Civic health means vital communities. That's why we bring Nebraskans together in our streets, in our schools, and in our neighborhoods.



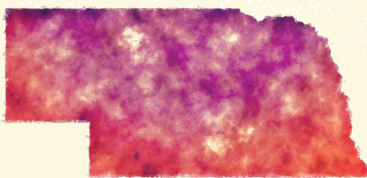
2018 IMPACTS



600 Students from around the state who took part in Capitol Experience Days

Deep conversations at Lincoln homes and community locations as part of Collective Impact Lincoln, as of October 2018 **7,000**

900 Omahans who attended NeighborFest, co-organized by ONE Omaha, on Sept. 2, to celebrate and advocate for their community



16 Counties in which Civic Nebraska deployed civic health training, resources, or materials



THEY SAID IT

"I live and breathe Lincoln neighborhoods, and I know from experience that it takes vigilance, the ability to listen, and a passion for new ideas to keep neighborhoods vibrant. That's why when we formed Collective Impact Lincoln to lift up our core neighborhoods, having Civic Nebraska as a partner along with Nebraska Appleseed went a long way toward success."

SHAWN RYBA

South of Downtown Community Development Organization, Collective Impact Lincoln partner



I AM CIVIC NEBRASKA

MARIE TRAYER, Roca

A retired Spanish teacher, Marie taught in Auburn and Millard schools, earned a Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska, was an adjunct at UNO and later, taught at Nebraska Wesleyan U. An active school, church, and community volunteer, Marie also interprets at Clinic with a Heart in Lincoln.

The political rhetoric right now is extremely difficult.

It's divisive about everything. That's why I took Civic Nebraska's civil discourse class through OLLI (the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Nebraska U.)

I was reminded that part of civil discourse is listening.

Stepping back, listening, seeing where other people are coming from. And helping them see where I'm coming from.

To agreeably disagree. Which is not easy.

Politically, my state senator and I don't align perfectly.

That's often enough to stop a potential conversation with an elected official. I kept my civil discourse lessons in mind when I called for an appointment to meet with (the senator) about a bill. We ended up talking at a coffee shop for two hours.

I wouldn't have even started the conversation had it not been for the course.

It can feel like the situation is hopeless with getting politicians together and respecting one another's views. Especially nationally. It's hard to see movement in that direction. But there are opportunities.

Sometimes (in a politically diverse group) I give examples from my experiences. I talk generally about the lives of those who visit the clinic, to make it real. I stay fact-based. For some, it still might be too far away from their views. But for others, it might make them consider a different view. That gives me hope.

WE ARE PROTECTORS

GOAL 3: PROTECT EVERY NEBRASKAN'S RIGHT TO VOTE

An engaged, informed society deserves fair and accessible elections. Unnecessary barriers to voting damage our democracy, which works best if we all participate. Together with our volunteers and supporters, Civic Nebraska advances voting rights and challenges policies, practices, and legislation that aim to make it harder to vote.

John Cartier (background), Westin Miller (foreground) and the rest of our Voting Rights team are a watchful force in the Nebraska Legislature.



Our Voting Rights team worked diligently in 2018 to expand voting rights through litigation, education, and legislative initiatives. We twice assembled dozens of advocates at the statehouse for “lobby days” during the 105th Nebraska Legislature. Throughout the session, we published 10 pieces of legislation-based research to inform senators, testified on 16 pieces of legislation, and worked with dozens of elected officials to organize opposition to defeat harmful voter ID legislation for the eighth straight year.

To build an election system voters believe in and a democracy in which all Nebraskans feel represented, we trained and deployed more than 100 election observers to monitor polling places around Nebraska during the May primary and November general election. We worked alongside election officials to educate voters through traditional and social media, to address ballot issues, and to modernize voting systems.

An engaged, informed society deserves fair and accessible elections. That’s why we stand guard and actively protect our most sacred of democratic rights.

2018 IMPACTS

8

Years in a row that Civic Nebraska has led the charge against harmful voter ID legislation in the Nebraska Legislature



100+

Nonpartisan election observers trained and deployed in the May 15 primary and the Nov. 6 general election



12

 Counties visited/organized by Voting Rights team members

THEY SAID IT

“Change happens one person at a time, and my job is to empower others and to help them engage in our civic

processes and create that change. Civic Nebraska has been an important and effective partner to ensure that, once people are engaged in their democracy, they have the means to fully participate in it.”

LUCIA PEDROZA
Heartland Workers Center

I AM CIVIC NEBRASKA

BARRY THOMAS,
Omaha



As head of social studies for Omaha Public Schools and a student of history, Barry understands the power of citizen movements.

He is an organizer of Omaha’s Voter Registration Education and Mobilization Collaborative, a coalition of community, civic and social service groups. In April, the group hosted the first North Omaha Political Convention.

I was in Alabama when the Supreme Court ruled (in Shelby County vs. Holder) on the Voting Rights Act. Going through Selma, Birmingham, Montgomery, where those battles were fought – it couldn’t have been more fitting.

After the ruling, I read about voter suppression. People being taken off the rolls. Voter ID laws and so on. When I would tell others about it, often I was the first person they’d heard it from.

It’s not just happening in other places. Obama won an electoral vote in the 2nd District in ‘08, but by ‘12, redistricting changed the game. That was on display again in 2016, which is when it got real for me.

The North Omaha Political Convention was a great success. Hundreds of people and more than a dozen local candidates got together. It was a heck of a way to spend four hours on a Saturday.

When you show how national issues connect with local lives, people have a harder time saying their votes don’t matter.

Why do I do it? I want to make sure that those elected to represent us hear from all of us. That hasn’t been happening effectively for some time.

Out of the debt I owe to my ancestors, I always exercise my right to vote. It’s something for which many have died, just for us to be able for us to exercise this liberty. We can’t take it for granted.

There’s still an electorate that’s not yet the electorate. We need to have those individuals speak, to understand that if you don’t, then those who we elect will continue to think they can do whatever they want.

I have three daughters. I don’t want them to wonder someday, when they think back to this time, whether their father did anything to make things better. I can’t rest knowing I didn’t do anything. That’s the calling.

WE ARE ADVANCING

Great ideas won't wait. There is no magic formula to making an idea a reality; it's simply a matter of being committed to see it through.

WHAT'S NEXT



Our staff innovates across our organization to fulfill our mission. Along the way, we emphasize group and individual strengths while continually finding ways to improve.

Civic Nebraska is poised to take our ideas to new heights. In 2019, we will widen our reach in Civic Health Programs. Collective Impact Lincoln will accelerate into action in the Star City's neighborhoods by transforming spaces to increase community connection and tackling barriers to housing affordability. We will continue to connect more Nebraskans with their state government, expand our Youth Civic Leadership opportunities, and launch new civic initiatives for Nebraska.

That's just for starters. Rest assured that we will continue to make new connections and take untraveled paths forward, toward a strong and healthy democracy in the Cornhusker State. Because when an idea presents itself, there is no notion of later. Together, we're turning those ideas into action.



FOR CIVIC NEBRASKA

IN 2019

Our Voting Rights team will:

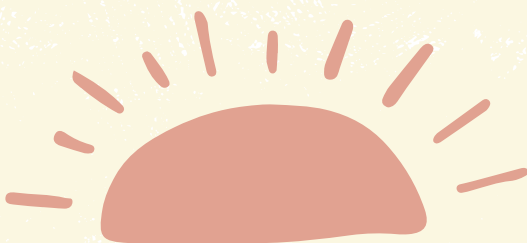
- Work to expand voting eligibility to Nebraskans who are unnecessarily and unfairly disenfranchised
- Advocate for better efficiency and security in the voter registration process
- Prioritize the expansion of vote-by-mail

Our Civic Health Programs will:

- Begin building the 2020 Nebraska Civic Health Index, a data-based roadmap for strengthening engagement throughout the state
- Dedicate program staff to provide resources and training in rural areas
- Host the state's second Civic Health Summit in April

Our Youth Civic Leadership initiatives will:

- Host the first-ever STEM Rodeo with Google and Council Bluffs Community School District Community Learning Centers
- Bring our Urban Campus Field Guides, funded by the Nebraska Environmental Trust, to schools in Papillion and LaVista
- Roll out a new summer program
- Bring robotics teams to three elementary schools
- Add two more **Think, Make, Create** mobile makerspaces



Civic Nebraska staff and board members at Strengthening Democracy Awards, April 2018

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Adam Morfeld, JD, Executive Director and Founder
Amanda Barker, Deputy Executive Director
Julie Ward, Assistant to the Executive Director
Liz Potter, Director of Development
Steve Smith, Director of Communications
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Tracy White, Site Director, Lewis and Clark Middle School Community Learning Center
Equasha Smith, Site Director, Lothrop Magnet Elementary Community Learning Center
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And more than 40 dedicated part-time employees in our schools, on our streets, and in our neighborhoods.

FINANCIALS

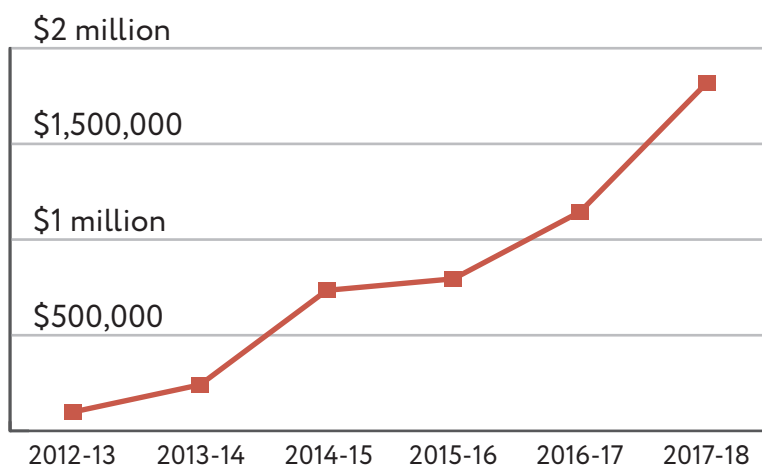
FISCAL YEAR 2017-18

TOTAL BUDGET



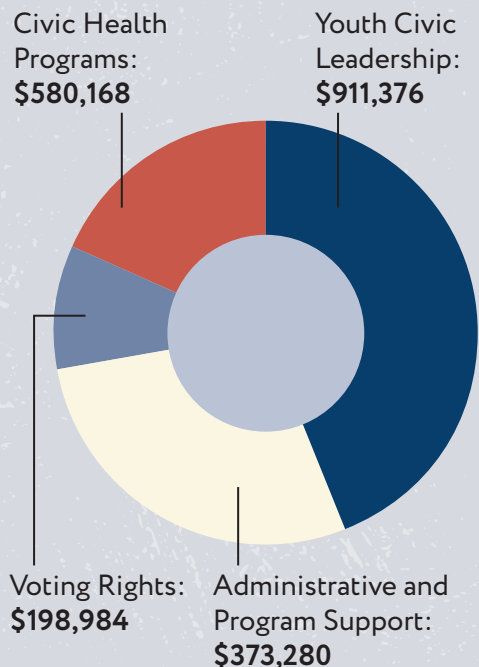
GROWING CAPACITY

Fiscal Year Budgets, 2012-2018



IMPACTS

Funding Allocations, 2017-18 fiscal year



ENSURING DEMOCRACY'S FUTURE WITH PLANNED GIVING

Planned giving means long-term sustainability of our work. Any contribution, large or small, serves to protect democracy for our state for years to come. To learn more about planned giving with Civic Nebraska, contact Director of Development Liz Potter at 402.904.5191 or liz.potter@civicnebraska.org, or visit

CivicNebraska.org/planned-giving.

YOU ARE CIVIC NEBRASKA

WE ARE BECAUSE YOU CARE

We saw many milestones and victories in 2018. They happened because of you. Through your time, energy, and financial support, you have brought civic education to thousands of Nebraska students and helped to build a more engaged, informed society. You have defended Nebraskans' voting rights. You have fostered community connections to build up our cities, towns, and neighborhoods. You make our work to create a modern and robust democracy for all Nebraskans possible.

YOU ARE CIVIC NEBRASKA.



Our amazing partners help us rise for our democracy.



ONE Omaha and friends build vibrant neighborhoods.



Strengthening Democracy Awards and Build Up Omaha allow us to thank supporters.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Join us. Civic Nebraska has volunteer opportunities that fit many schedules, interests, and lifestyles. Text 'VRA' to 402.979.7723 to become a voting rights advocate; email info@civicnebraska.org for other volunteer opportunities.

Share our story. The more people who know about our mission and our impact, the more supporters of a modern, robust democracy there will be in Nebraska.

Donate. To build democracy, we count on our donors' generous support. We immediately put those funds to work in our communities.

2018 ANNUAL REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

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**Creating a more modern and robust
democracy for *all* Nebraskans.**

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