

CSBG

Community Services Block Grant

FEDERAL FISCAL YEARS 2009 and 2010 State Plan

State of Nebraska

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Services**

Chief Executive Officer of Designated Lead Agency

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I. Federal Fiscal Years Covered by the State Plan and Application

Federal Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010 State Plan

II. See Cover Letter

III. Executive Summary:

A. CSBG State Legislation: There is no state statute governing the Community Services Block Grant program in Nebraska.

B. Lead State Agency: The Governor has designated the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to act as the lead state agency for administration of the Community Services Block Grant. (see attachment A) Christine Z. Peterson is the Chief Executive Officer of this agency.

C. Public Hearing Requirements:

(1) Public Hearing: A public hearing for the Federal Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010 CSBG State Plan was held on July 3, 2008. The public hearing was advertised in the Lincoln Journal Star and Omaha World Herald which have statewide distribution. (See Attachment B)

(2) Legislative Hearing: The last legislative hearing was held on September 29, 2006. (See Attachment C) Nebraska's Legislature is not in session during the time of the writing of the CSBG State Plan. In conjunction with the writing of this plan, the Department will hold a legislative hearing in September 2008 on the Federal Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010 CSBG State Plan, as required by law. An amendment to the plan will be requested if the Legislature requests changes.

(3) Public Inspection of the Plan: The plan was sent to community action agency offices for comment. In July, Nebraska made the CSBG Federal Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010 State Plan available for public review and comment by placing public notice advertisements in the State's two newspapers which have statewide distribution: the Omaha World Herald and the Lincoln Journal-Star. The plan was also posted to the DHHS web site for the benefit of all interested parties. Copies are provided to anyone upon request. (See Attachment B)

NEBRASKA

IV. Statement of Federal and CSBG Assurances

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT ACT as amended (42U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)
STATUTORY ASSURANCES

The designee of the chief executive of the State of Nebraska certifies that the State of Nebraska hereby agrees to the Assurances in Section 676 of the Act, as follows:

A. Programmatic Assurances

1) Funds made available through this grant or allotment will be used:

- (a) To support activities that are designed to assist low-income families and individuals, including families and individuals receiving assistance under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), homeless families and individuals, migrant or seasonal farm workers, and elderly low-income individuals and families to enable the families and individuals to:
 - (i) remove obstacles and solve problems that block the achievement of self-sufficiency (including self-sufficiency for families and individuals who are attempting to transition off a State program carried out under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act);
 - (ii) secure and retain meaningful employment;
 - (iii) attain an adequate education, with particular attention toward improving literacy skills of low-income families in the communities involved, which may include carrying out family literacy initiatives;
 - (iv) make better use of available income;
 - (v) obtain and maintain adequate housing and a suitable living environment;
 - (vi) obtain emergency assistance through loans, grants, or other means to meet immediate and urgent family and individual needs; and
 - (vii) achieve greater participation in the affairs of the communities involved, including the development of public and private grassroots partnerships with local law enforcement agencies, local housing authorities, private foundations, and other public and private partners to document best practices based on successful grassroots intervention in urban areas, to develop methodologies for widespread replication; and strengthen and improve relationships with local law enforcement agencies, which may include participation in activities such as neighborhood or community policing efforts;

- (b) To address the needs of youth in low-income communities through youth development programs that support the primary role of the family, give priority to the prevention of youth problems and crime, and promote increased community coordination and collaboration in meeting the needs of youth, and support development and expansion of innovative community-based youth development programs that have demonstrated success in preventing or reducing youth crime, such as programs for the establishment of violence-free zones that would involve youth development and intervention models (such as models involving youth mediation, youth mentoring, life skills training, job creation, and entrepreneurship programs); and after-school child care programs; and

(c) To make more effective use of, and to coordinate with, other programs (including State welfare reform efforts). [676(b)(1)]

(2) To describe how the State intends to use discretionary funds made available from the remainder of the grant or allotment described in Section 675C(b) of the Act in accordance with the community services block grant program, including a description of how the State will support innovative community and neighborhood-based initiatives related to the purposes of the community services block grant program; [676(b)(2)]

(3) To provide information provided by eligible entities in the State, including:

(a) a description of the service delivery system, for services provided or coordinated with funds made available through grants made under Section 675C(a) of the Act, targeted to low-income individuals and families in communities within the State;

(b) a description of how linkages will be developed to fill identified gaps in services, through the provision of information, referrals, case management, and follow-up consultations;

(c) a description of how funds made available through grants made under Section 675(a) will be coordinated with other public and private resources; and,

(d) a description of how local entities will use the funds to support innovative community and neighborhood-based initiatives related to the purposes of the community services block grant, which may include fatherhood initiatives and other initiatives with the goal of strengthening families and encouraging effective parenting. [676(b)(3)]

(4) To ensure that eligible entities in the State will provide, on an emergency basis, for the provision of such supplies and services, nutritious foods, and related services, as may be necessary to counteract conditions of starvation and malnutrition among low-income individuals.[676(b)(4)]

(5) That the State and the eligible entities in the State will coordinate, and establish linkages between, governmental and other social services programs to assure the effective delivery of such services to low-income individuals and to avoid duplication of such services, and State and the eligible entities will coordinate the provision of employment and training activities in the State and in communities with entities providing activities through statewide and local workforce investment systems under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; [676(b)(5)]

(6) To ensure coordination between antipoverty programs in each community in the State, and ensure, where appropriate, that emergency energy crisis intervention programs under title XXVI (relating to low-income home energy assistance) are conducted in such communities. [676(b)(6)]

(7) To permit and cooperate with Federal investigations undertaken in accordance with section 678D of the Act. [676(b)(7)]

(8) That any eligible entity in the State that received funding in the previous fiscal year through a community services block grant under the community services block grant program will not have its funding terminated under this subtitle, or reduced below the proportional share of funding the entity received in the previous fiscal year unless, after providing notice and an opportunity for a hearing on the record, the State determines that cause exists for such termination or such reduction, subject to review by the Secretary as provided in Section 678C(b) of the Act.[676(b)(8)]

(9) That the State and eligible entities in the State will, to the maximum extent possible, coordinate programs with and form partnerships with other organizations serving low-income residents of the communities and members of the groups served by the State, including religious organizations, charitable groups, and community organizations. [676(b)(9)]

(10) To require each eligible entity in the State to establish procedures under which a low-income individual, community organization, or religious organization, or representative of low-income individuals that considers its organization, or low-income individuals, to be inadequately represented on the board (or other mechanism) of the eligible entity to petition for adequate representation. [676(b)(10)]

(11) To secure from each eligible entity in the State, as a condition to receipt of funding, a community action plan (which shall be submitted to the Secretary, at the request of the Secretary, with the State plan) that includes a community- needs assessment for the community served, which may be coordinated with community-needs assessments conducted for other programs; [676(b)(11)]

(12) That the State and all eligible entities in the State will, not later than fiscal year 2001, participate in the Results Oriented Management and Accountability System, another performance measure system for which the Secretary facilitated development pursuant to Section 678E(b) of the Act .[676(b)(12)]

(13) To provide information describing how the State will carry out these assurances. [676(b)(13)] (This is the Narrative CSBG State Plan)

B. Administrative Assurances

The State further agrees to the following, as required under the Act:

(1) To submit an application to the Secretary containing information and provisions that describe the programs for which assistance is sought under the community services block grant program prepared in accordance with and containing the information described in Section 676 of the Act. [675A(b)]

(2) To use not less than 90 percent of the funds made available to the State by the Secretary under Section 675A or 675B of the Act to make grants to eligible entities for the stated purposes of the community services block grant program and to make such funds available to eligible entities for obligation during the fiscal year and the succeeding fiscal year, subject to the provisions regarding recapture and redistribution of unobligated funds outlined below. [675C(a)(1) and (2)]

(3) In the event that the State elects to recapture and redistribute funds to an eligible entity through a grant made under Section 675C(a)(1) when unobligated funds exceed 20 percent of the amount so distributed to such eligible entity for such fiscal year, the State agrees to redistribute recaptured funds to an eligible entity, or require the original recipient of the funds to redistribute the funds to a private, nonprofit organization, located within the community served by the original recipient of the funds, for activities consistent with the purposes of the community services block grant program. [675C (a)(3)]

(4) To spend no more than the greater of \$55,000 or 5 percent of its grant received under Section 675A or the State allotment received under section 675B for administrative expenses, including monitoring activities. [675C(b)(2)]

- (5) In states with a charity tax credit in effect under state law, the State agrees to comply with the requirements and limitations specified in Section 675(c) regarding use of funds for statewide activities to provide charity tax credits to qualified charities whose predominant activity is the provision of direct services within the United States to individuals and families whose annual incomes generally do not exceed 185 percent of the poverty line in order to prevent or alleviate poverty among such individuals and families. [675(c)]
- (6) That the lead agency will hold at least one hearing in the State with sufficient time and statewide distribution of notice of such hearing, to provide to the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed use and distribution of funds to be provided through the grant or allotment under Section 675A or 675B for the period covered by the State plan. [676(a)(2)(B)]
- (7) That the chief executive officer of the State will designate, an appropriate State agency for purposes of carrying out State community services block grant program activities. [676(a)(1)]
- (8) To hold at least one legislative hearing every three years in conjunction with the development of the State plan. [676(a)(3)]
- (9) To make available for the public inspection each plan or revised State plan in such a manner as will facilitate review of and comment on the plan. [676(e)(2)]
- (10) To conduct the following reviews of eligible entities:
 - (a) full onsite review of each such entity at least once during each three-year period;
 - (b) an onsite review of each newly designated entity immediately after the completion of the first year in which such entity receives funds through the community services block grant program;
 - (c) follow-up reviews including prompt return visits to eligible entities, and their programs, that fail to meet the goals, standards, and requirements established by the State;
 - (d) other reviews as appropriate, including reviews of entities with programs that have had other Federal, State or local grants (other than assistance provided under the community services block grant program) terminated for cause. [678B(a)]
- (11) In the event that the State determines that an eligible entity fails to comply with the terms of an agreement or the State plan, to provide services under the community services block grant program or to meet appropriate standards, goals, and other requirements established by the State (including performance objectives), the State will comply with the requirements outlined in Section 678C of the Act, to:
 - (a) inform the entity of the deficiency to be corrected;
 - (b) require the entity to correct the deficiency;
 - (c) offer training and technical assistance as appropriate to help correct the deficiency, and submit to the Secretary a report describing the training and technical assistance offered or stating the reasons for determining that training and technical assistance are not appropriate;
 - (d) at the discretion of the State, offer the eligible entity an opportunity to develop and implement, within 60 days after being informed of the deficiency, a quality improvement plan and to either approve the proposed plan or specify reasons why the proposed plan cannot be approved;
 - (e) after providing adequate notice and an opportunity for a hearing, initiate proceedings to terminate the designation of or reduce the funding to the eligible entity unless the entity corrects the deficiency. [678(C)(a)]

(12) To establish fiscal controls, procedures, audits and inspections, as required under Sections 678D(a)(1) and 678D(a)(2) of the Act.

(13) To repay to the United States amounts found not to have been expended in accordance with the Act, or the Secretary may offset such amounts against any other amount to which the State is or may become entitled under the community services block grant program. [678D(a)(3)]

(14) To participate, by October 1, 2001, and ensure that all-eligible entities in the State participate in the Results-Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) System [678E(a)(1)].

(15) To prepare and submit to the Secretary an annual report on the measured performance of the State and its eligible entities, as described under '678E(a)(2) of the Act.

(16) To comply with the prohibition against use of community services block grant funds for the purchase or improvement of land, or the purchase, construction, or permanent improvement (other than low-cost residential weatherization or other energy-related home repairs) of any building or other facility, as described in Section 678F(a) of the Act.

(17) To ensure that programs assisted by community services block grant funds shall not be carried out in a manner involving the use of program funds, the provision of services, or the employment or assignment of personnel in a manner supporting or resulting in the identification of such programs with any partisan or nonpartisan political activity or any political activity associated with a candidate, or contending faction or group, in an election for public or party office; any activity to provide voters or prospective voters with transportation to the polls or similar assistance with any such election, or any voter registration activity. [678F(b)]

(18) To ensure that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin or sex be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under, any program or activity funded in whole or in part with community services block grant program funds. Any prohibition against discrimination on the basis of age under the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.) or with respect to an otherwise qualified individual with a disability as provided in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 12131 et seq.) shall also apply to any such program or activity. [678F(c)]

(19) To consider religious organizations on the same basis as other non-governmental organizations to provide assistance under the program so long as the program is implemented in a manner consistent with the Establishment Clause of the first amendment to the Constitution; not to discriminate against an organization that provides assistance under, or applies to provide assistance under the community services block grant program on the basis that the organization has a religious character; and not to require a religious organization to alter its form of internal government except as provided under Section 678B or to remove religious art, icons, scripture or other symbols in order to provide assistance under the community services block grant program. [679]

C. Other Administrative Certifications

The State also certifies the following:

(1) To provide assurances that cost and accounting standards of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB Circular A-110 and A-122) shall apply to a recipient of community services block grant program funds.

(2) To comply with the requirements of Public Law 103-227, Part C Environmental Tobacco Smoke, also known as the Pro-Children Act of 1994, which requires that smoking not be permitted in any portion of any indoor facility owned or leased or contracted for by an entity and used routinely or regularly for the provision of health, day care, education, or library services to children under the age of 18 if the services are funded by a Federal grant, contract, loan or loan guarantee.. The State further agrees that it will require the language of this certification be included in any subawards, which contain provisions for children's services and that all subgrantees shall certify accordingly.

Signature
Christine Z. Peterson, Chief Executive Officer
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
Designated Lead Agency

Date

V. STATE PLAN NARRATIVE

A. Administrative Structure

(1) State Administrative Agency -- The Governor has designated the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to act as the lead state agency for administration of the Community Services Block Grant.

The mission of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services is to help people live better lives.

The goals and objectives of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services CSBG Program are as follows:

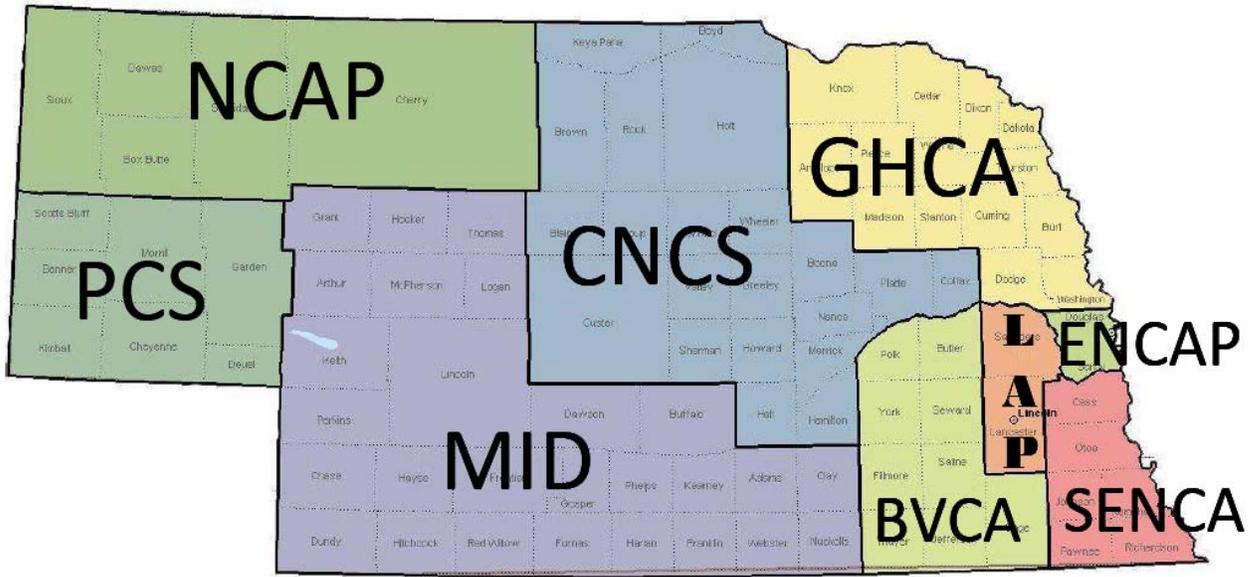
- Partner with local agencies to create an integrated service delivery system for Nebraska's families.
- Provide technical assistance to Community Action Agencies.
- Engage in cooperative planning with non-profit, local government and other State agencies to improve the capacity of agencies to serve Nebraskans.
- Monitor eligible entities and discretionary subgrants.
- Further develop Nebraska's review process as needed.
- Participate in meetings with Community Action Agencies and other agencies in order to support the ability of the State of Nebraska to help people live better lives.
- Continue to work with Community Action Nebraska and the Outcomes Management Committee to further develop and utilize ROMA and the National Indicators in Nebraska.

The State will work in partnership with Community Action Agencies to create and sustain programs and initiatives that strengthen families and communities using the six national ROMA goals to guide them.

- Low-income people become more self-sufficient
- The conditions in which low-income people live are improved
- Low-income people own a stake in their community
- Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low-income people are achieved
- Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results
- Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems.

(2) Eligible Entities -- Those entities eligible for community services block grant funds are:

- Blue Valley Community Action Partnership(BVCA)
- Central Nebraska Community Services (CNCS)
- Goldenrod Hills Community Action (GHCA)
- Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership (ENCAP)
- Lincoln Action Program (LAP)
- Community Action Partnership of Mid Nebraska (MID)
- Northwest Community Action Partnership (NCAP)
- Panhandle Community Services (PCS)
- Southeast Nebraska Community Action (SENCA).



(3) Distribution and Allocation of Funds -- The State of Nebraska is distributing funds in the following manner:

- 90% Restricted Funds to Nebraska's nine CAAs
- 5% Discretionary Funds
- 5% Administrative Funds

B. Description of Criteria and Distribution Formula

The criteria for the State distribution of funds are as follows:

- Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements of 676B of the CSBG Act and subsequent amendments and any related federal regulations.
- Applicants in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, A-122, and Generally Accepted Accounting practice must maintain fiscal accounting procedures adequate control systems, and have to ensure the proper disbursement and accounting for all funds received under this Act.
- Applicants must submit an annual work plan and budget
- Applicants must submit required reports as stated in their CSBG Subgrants.

At least 90% of the Federal Fiscal Years 2009-2010 CSBG funds will be distributed by the State to the nine CAAs based on a formula that uses a \$125,000 base plus poverty population to determine allocations. Poverty is determined using the federal census figures. The formula is re-examined when new census information is available.

Community Action Agencies are required to submit a request to carry-over funds. They are required to report on those funds until they are expended.

C. Description of Distribution and Use of Restricted Funds

Following is the current distribution formula for CSBG funds:

Blue Valley Community Action Partnership	6.77
Central Nebraska Community Services	11.81
Goldenrod Hills Community Action	12.05
Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership	25.33
Lincoln Action Program	13.84
Community Action Partnership of Mid Nebraska	13.03
Northwest Community Action Partnership	5.14
Panhandle Community Services	6.69
Southeast Nebraska Community Action	5.34
Total	100.00

Nebraska's CAAs will continue to offer a wide range of anti-poverty programs to further the stated purposes of CSBG for the two fiscal years covered by this plan. A strong focus will be placed on family development and case management as CAA program services help individuals and families work towards self-sufficiency.

Nebraska's CAAs will continue to lead in efforts to identify the needs of the communities they serve and to fill gaps in services. The State Office, State Association Office and Nebraska's CAAs realize the need to coordinate services with other local agencies and develop partnerships and will continue to focus on developing new partnerships

The State of Nebraska has not had to recapture and redistribute CSBG funds.

D. Description of Distribution and Use of Discretionary Funds

The State is assessing the current use of discretionary funds and may utilize CSBG discretionary funds in the following manner:

Community Action of Nebraska (CAN) is the state association representing Nebraska's nine CAAs. CAN works in collaboration with the State CSBG office and other statewide entities and organizations to provide a variety of services to the CAAs. CAN assists the State in providing technical assistance to local CAAs; preparing required state and federal data collection and other CSBG reports; conducting peer reviews; organizing the annual EITC project; facilitating statewide meetings and training sessions; participating on the board of the Nebraska Management Information System; supporting the development of IDAs in the State, and other duties as assigned by the State and Community Action of Nebraska Board.

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation to support Nebraska's state-wide Fatherhood Initiative. The mission of the Fatherhood Initiative is to enhance the well being of children and families by supporting responsible and committed father involvement. While these funds focus on fatherhood involvement, the initiative is part of an overall State strategy of parental engagement and collaboration for optimal growth and development of Nebraska's children. Since its inception five years ago, the Nebraska Fatherhood Initiative has made progress in becoming established across the state and developing linkages with programs in Nebraska.

Panhandle Community Services to administer a statewide program to serve the emergency needs of migrant/seasonal farm workers. Although census figures indicate the largest concentration of migrant/seasonal farm workers exists in the panhandle area of the state, all

CAAs may access these funds to meet the needs of migrant/seasonal farmworkers in their service areas. Panhandle Community Services (PCS) is also the recipient of a federal migrant health grant to meet the health needs of panhandle-area migrant/seasonal farmworkers. In addition to migrant health services, PCS provides migrant housing and a migrant Head Start program.

Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska to support the Farm Crisis Hotline. The Hotline provides many forms of support for farm families in crisis, including a toll-free phone number available for family members to call for emergency assistance, mediation services, or simply someone to talk to and give moral support to individuals and families in crisis. The Farm Crisis Hotline program also provides mental health counseling vouchers to families in need. The program is managed by Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska in collaboration with Nebraska's community action agencies.

Nebraska will also utilize discretionary funds for training and technical assistance to Community Action Agencies and for new innovative community and neighborhood-based initiatives, emergency needs, or to support unforeseen future needs of the State's CAAs.

E. Description of Use of Administrative funds

The State will use no more than the greater of \$55,000 or 5% of its annual allotted funds for program administration. Administration funds will be used for salaries, supplies, travel, staff training, support of the CAN office, and other expenditures necessary to fulfill the administrative requirements and improve the implementation of the CSBG program. Administration of the program will include administrative management, technical assistance and training, planning, and fiscal and program monitoring. A portion of the State's administration funds are set aside for local CAA expenditures of an unexpected and/or extraordinary nature or to enhance initiatives through funding discretionary projects. Any unspent administrative funds will be added to the amount available for discretionary awards.

The State of Nebraska has no charity tax credit laws in effect that utilize CSBG dollars.

F. State Community Services Program Implementation

(1) Program Overview

(a) The Service Delivery System

Nebraska's nine CAAs are private non-profit organizations and serve 100% of the counties in the state and several counties in northern Kansas. (map located in Section A(2) Nebraska's two major cities, Lincoln and Omaha are located in the southeast corner of the State along with the majority of Nebraska's population. Nebraska is primarily an agricultural state and rural in nature. Based on geography, it is the 16th largest state in the nation. It is 38th in the nation in population. Though a large percentage of the land is plains, northwest Nebraska has a small area of badlands and the largest area of sand dunes in North America.

Nebraska's Community Action Agencies shall serve as a primary advocate for the reduction of the causes, conditions, and effects of poverty. They shall provide social and economic opportunities that foster self-sufficiency for low-income persons. Services provided by CAAs shall be made available to all eligible persons with the agency's service area.

The State of Nebraska does not mandate what services or activities are provided by eligible entities. Eligible entities select activities based on their assessments of community needs, analysis of their community's service delivery system, agreements with partners, and other local factors. Local agencies are empowered to select services that meet their local conditions. No two eligible entities are organized exactly alike. Most do, however, provide similar types of CSBG services and have similar delivery systems and operate satellite outreach offices. Additionally, Community Action Agencies work together through the Community of Nebraska (CAN) network and in collaboration with the State CSBG office to plan and carry out strategies to address poverty needs statewide. Some examples include: the Nebraska Management Information System (NMIS), the EITC awareness and preparation initiative, IDA planning and development, etc.

The current CSBG eligible CAAs are:

Blue Valley Community Action PO Box 273 Fairbury, NE 68352	Counties Served	Butler, Fillmore, Gage, Jefferson, Polk, Saline, Seward, Thayer and York. Also serving Jewell and Smith counties in Kansas
	FY 2007-8 CSBG allocation	\$276,164
Central Nebraska Community Services PO Box 509 Loup City, NE 68853	Counties Served	Blaine, Boone, Boyd, Brown, Colfax, Custer, Garfield, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton, Holt, Howard, Key Paha, Loup, Merrick, Nance, Platte, Rock, Sherman, Valley, and Wheeler
	FY 2007-8 CSBG allocation	\$481,758
Goldenrod Hills Community Action PO Box 280 Wisner, NE 68791	Counties Served	Antelope, Burt, Cedar, Cuming, Dakota, Dixon, Dodge, Knox, Madison, Pierce, Stanton, Thurston, Washington and Wayne counties
	FY 2007-8 CSBG allocation	\$491,548
Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership 2406 Fowler Street Omaha, NE 68111	Counties Served	Douglas and Sarpy
	FY 2007-8 CSBG allocation	\$1,033,271
Lincoln Action Program 210 "O" Street Lincoln, NE 68508	Counties Served	Lancaster and Saunders
	FY 2007-8 CSBG allocation	\$564,567
Community Action Partnership of Mid Nebraska PO Box 2288 Kearney, NE 68848	Counties Served	Adams, Arthur, Buffalo, Chase, Clay, Dawson, Dundy, Franklin, Frontier, Furnas, Gosper, Grant, Harlan, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Kearney, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Nuckolls, Perkins, Phelps, Red Willow, Thomas, and Webster. Also serving Norton and Phillips counties in Kansas
	FY 2007-8 CSBG allocation	\$531,525
Northwest Community Action Partnership 270 Pine Street Chadron, NE 69337	Counties Served	Box Butte, Cherry, Dawes, Sheridan, and Sioux
	FY 2007-8 CSBG allocation	\$209,673
Panhandle Community Services 3350 Tenth Street Gering, NE 69341	Counties Served	Banner, Cheyenne, Deuel, Garden, Kimball, Morrill, and Scotts Bluff counties. Also provides migrant head start services in Box Butte County
	FY 2007-8 CSBG allocation	\$272,901
Southeast Nebraska Community Action PO Box 646 Humboldt, NE 68376	Counties Served	Cass, Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee and Richardson. Also provides weatherization services in Sarpy County
	FY 2007-8 CSBG allocation	\$217,831

(b) Linkages

Nebraska's CAAs lead the effort to identify the needs of the communities they serve and to fill service gaps. CAAs utilize the needs assessment and case management reports to identify gaps in services. Nebraska's CAAs realize the need to coordinate services with other local agencies and develop partnerships. Nebraska's CAAs participate on advisory boards, coalitions, and continuum of care committees. They collaborate with local, regional, and state partners to meet the needs of the low-income families in Nebraska through the provision of information, referrals, case management, follow up consultations, strategic planning, and implementation of such planning.

(c) Coordination with Other Public and Private Resources

The CAAs are leaders in Nebraska's strategy to create a unified delivery system for publicly funded health and human services that result in better services, better use of resources, and better results for the people they serve. The broad-based CAA board composition makes it very advantageous for CAAs to become an integral partner with county governments, local hospitals and health departments, and others to assure the development and success of new services. CAA Executive Directors and staff, the Association office, and the State CSBG Administrator and Program Manager sit on a variety of local, regional, and statewide Boards and committees in order to coordinate with other public and private partners.

Several Community Action Agencies partner with their communities to provide public transportation in their rural areas. Southeast Nebraska Community Action Council partners with County Commissioners to operate a County Transit. Through this partnership they provide affordable, safe transportation to the general public with priority given to elderly and/or persons with disabilities. Northwest Community Action Partnership coordinates with the Sheridan County Commissioners to provide public transportation in Sheridan County and also with the City of Chadron to provide public transportation in the Chadron area.

Goldenrod Hills Community Action Program partners with Cuming County Extension, Elkhorn Logan Valley Health Department, Wayne State College, Faith Regional Hospital, Franciscan Care Services, and the Northeast Early Childhood Training Partnership on Operation Great Start. This program provides case management to prenatal and post-partum women. To address the growing needs of the Hispanic population, Blue Valley Community Action Program has formed a coalition with the district Health Departments, the Chamber of Commerce, the hospital, and private mental health providers. This group has recently been awarded a planning grant toward the feasibility of a Community Health Center within the area.

Nebraska's CAAs coordinate with public and private resources in many other ways. An example is Southeast Nebraska Community Action who partners with local schools in the Youth Mentoring Project. This program assists middle school age youth to develop a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging and power as they mentor Head Start children. The Head Start children gain positive relationships, opportunities to learn and care about positive role models, and opportunities to prepare them for future success in school. Northwest Community Action Partnership coordinates with several Public Schools to offer pre-school services, including a State College.

To better serve the special needs of the Crete community, Blue Valley Community Action Partnership has formed a coalition with Public Health Solutions Regional Health Department,

Blue Valley Behavioral Health, Hope Crisis Center and the Crete Area Medical Center to convert a former physician's clinic into a site for the organizations to co-locate services.

The Nebraska Energy Assistance Network (NEAN) is a collaboration between utility companies across the State, Community Action Agencies, the Salvation Army, Catholic Social Services, the Nebraska Energy Office, the Department of Health and Human Services and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension with a mission of assisting Nebraskans with their energy needs through education, advocacy, and partnership. Their vision is to: educate to use energy efficiently; assist in meeting basic energy needs; link with financial assistance and energy efficiency resources; and provide voice to identify and address energy needs. These are just several examples of how Nebraska's CAAs coordinate with other public and private resources. Other examples are given in other areas of this plan.

(d) Innovative Community and Neighborhood-based Initiatives

Nebraska's CAAs continue to offer a wide range of anti-poverty programs. A strong focus is placed on total family development through case management in which several programs and services within the agency may be utilized, depending on the needs of the family or individual. Nebraska CAAs, the Association Office, and the State CSBG Administrator and Program Manager will continue to work with their partners to provide new innovative community and neighborhood-based initiatives.

Some of the programs currently offered by CAAs include: Temporary Employment, Experience Works (senior employment), Summer Youth Employment, Job Counseling, Back to School Job Fairs, Career Fairs, On-the-Job Training Programs, Alternative Education Programs, General Education Diploma (GED), Pre-school Education Programs, Tutoring Services, Head Start, Minority Education, Home-based Head Start, Fatherhood programs, Education Fairs, Migrant Head Start, Tax Preparation Counseling, Consumer Education, Budget Counseling, Child Car Seat Loans, Consumer Buying Tips, Financial Planning, Thrift Shops, Weatherization Assistance, Food and Clothing Pantries, Landlord Tenant Mediation, Rental Housing, Home Ownership, HUD Certified Counselors, Security Deposits, Housing Rehabilitation, Individual Development Accounts, Rent and Utility Payments, HUD Lease Program, Disaster/Flood Relief, Home Repair and Maintenance, Domestic Violence Assistance, Homeless Assistance, Eviction Assistance, Transportation, Utility Crisis Intervention, Family Mediation, Individualized Case Management, Drug and Alcohol Counseling, Prenatal Care, Child Care, JOBS Program, AIDS Prevention/Information, and Assistance/Referral.

Specific examples:

Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership (ENCAP) has partnered with Omaha Public Schools' (OPS) to provide substance abuse prevention and education to students suspended from area OPS campuses for drug and/or alcohol usage and/or possession. These students participated in ENCAP's Back on Track program and are highly representative of the population of youth most at risk for juvenile delinquency and dropping out of school. Three therapists from ENCAP facilitate this ongoing 15 hour program that students must complete before re-admission back into their respective school. In addition, ENCAP is in partnership with Omaha Housing Authority (OHA) to supervise Counseling Interns from local colleges/universities who provide mental health and substance abuse counseling services to residents of three residential towers in the greater Omaha area.

Northwest Community Action Partnership – Closer to Home Initiative provides the homeless in Dawes County a hot meal during the lunch hour seven days a week, this is done through a

collaboration with community members. Their Retired Senior Volunteer Program collaborates with Chadron State College in providing a way for Seniors to meet and work with college age students through their aging classes offered at the college.

Working with partners over a seven year period, Community Action Partnership of Mid Nebraska developed The Reach Your Destination Easily Program (R.Y.D.E.). This is the only brokeraged transit system in the State of Nebraska. The program operates 8 full time and 4 part time buses, offering approximately 400 rides per day to residents in Buffalo County. The current partnership includes: the City of Kearney, Buffalo County, the Good Samaritan Health Systems, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, the Area Agency on Aging, Kearney Family YMCA, Pumpkin Patch Child Care Center, Greater Nebraska Goodwill Industries, Kearney Public Schools and various nursing facilities. This program is a great example of how Nebraska's CAA's collaborate with other agencies in their areas to meet a critical community need.

Nebraska continues to work with the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFF) on a Fatherhood Initiative. The mission of the Fatherhood Initiative is to enhance the well being of children and families by supporting responsible and committed father involvement. Since its inception, the NEFI has made progress in becoming established across the state and developing linkages with programs in Nebraska and in other states. In the first 6 months of 2007, the Nebraska Fatherhood Initiative talked with more than 1,000 fathers, grandfathers, brothers, uncles, and mentors and launched programs in 15 schools. Some of the goals worked on by this program works include:

- Provide support to and facilitate community-based collaboration with existing fatherhood coalitions, Community Action Agencies, and through collaboration with Community Learning Centers in targeted communities.
- Provide public awareness education of fatherhood issues.
- Support a policy environment and reach out to partners to expand the pool of resources and funding opportunities available to serve fathers and families.
- Provide practitioners TA to increase their skills and abilities and provide activities for fathers and families.

These are just some of the innovative community and neighborhood-based initiatives taking place in Nebraska.

(2) Community Needs Assessment

As a condition for receiving CSBG funding, all Nebraska's CAAs must submit a work plan that includes a community needs assessment. Nebraska requires agencies conduct a complete needs assessment at a minimum of once every 5 years with yearly updates. They must incorporate data from these sources: low-income residents; local elected officials and other service agencies; and statistical data. The CAAs use a variety of methods to ascertain that local needs are adequately assessed and that funds are targeted to the areas of greatest need. Existing needs assessments are utilized in all service areas.

Nebraska's CAAs have worked together to develop a statewide community needs assessment. The statewide needs assessment has been piloted in three agencies and during the Poverty Tour with 400 community organizations and advocates. Four agencies are currently in the process of completing the needs assessment. Upon completion, this will not just give a picture of community needs, but lead Nebraska toward improved capacity for statewide assessment as well.

(3) Tripartite Boards

The Nebraska State CSBG regulations include provisions for maintaining tripartite boards. In addition subgrants between the State and CAAs for Community Services Block Grant funding require that CAAs have a tri-partite board whose members are chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures to assure that not fewer than 1/3 of its members are representative of low-income individuals and families in the neighborhood served; reside in the neighborhood served; and are able to participate actively in the development, planning, implementation, and evaluation of the programs to serve low-income communities. All CAAs are required to include tri-partite board requirements in the by-laws that govern their agency. The by-laws of all Nebraska CAAs must also include a provision whereby a low-income individual, community organization, religious organization, or a representative of low-income individuals that considers its organization or low-income individuals to be inadequately represented on the board (or other governing mechanism) of the eligible entity to petition for adequate representation.

The CSBG Program Manager requests updates on Board membership in the annual work plan and again during an agency's desk audit or on-site review. Board minutes are also read to monitor Board membership and attendance at meetings. Attendance at agency Board meetings is part of the on-site review process.

(4) State Charity Tax Program

The State of Nebraska has no charity tax credit laws in effect that utilize Community Service Block Grant dollars.

(5) Program Assurance 676(b)(1)(A)-(C):

(a) Assurance '676(b)

(1): Nebraska's CAA's support many activities that are designed to assist low-income families and individuals receiving assistance under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), homeless families and individuals, migrant or seasonal farmworkers, and elderly low-income individuals and families to enable families and individuals.

The State of Nebraska assures these services are provided by including language in all subgrants and through review of work plans, review of ROMA and National Indicator goals, desk audits, on-site visits, attendance at Board meetings, and monitoring of Board Meeting Minutes and fiscal reports.

(i) Remove obstacles and solve problems that block the achievement of self-sufficiency -- Whether providing developmental activities or basic needs, the services provided by Nebraska's CAAs help remove barriers that stand in the way of low-income people achieving self-sufficiency. All CAAs in Nebraska operate case management programs where low-income people can receive personal counseling and support to help with financial and emotional needs, as well as building goals for a promising future.

In addition, many other types of services such as life skills classes, first time homebuyer assistance, computer labs, weatherization, and job readiness activities are designed to help low-income people make the transition to self-sufficiency. CAAs provide a variety of health programs that aid in the move towards self-sufficiency, including medical and dental screening, immunizations, and mental health services. Nebraska's CAAs

continue to be leaders in the operation of family resource centers; continuum of care projects; family preservation programs; local, regional, and state health and human service coalitions; and other local, regional, and statewide efforts at service provision and coordination for the benefit of low-income families and individuals in areas where proven needs exist and where programs are not available.

All of Nebraska's CAA's provide their communities with free tax return preparation services. They work to ensure that families access their full refund potential. These efforts are coordinated through the Community Action of Nebraska office which also hosts a statewide Free Tax Assistance Hotline; facilitates the statewide EITC Coalition; and maintains a data base of VITA & AARP sites. The Association and State offices have worked together to lead a statewide EITC Coalition that is focused on sharing resources, getting the word out on EITC, and helping communities establish local coalitions. This effort continues to improve collaboration and impact regarding tax assistance and asset building.

Like many communities across the country, Lincoln faces an ever-increasing immigrant and refugee population. Lincoln Action Program's Center for Refugees and Immigrants (CRI) was established in 2004 to support refugees, immigrants, and asylees in achieving self-sufficiency. CRI assists refugees, immigrants, and asylees with reaching their full potential by providing employment, career advancement, and naturalization services. CRI staff are key participants in the community, with active involvement in the New American Task Force, Medical Translation & Interpretation Public Awareness Committee, and Office of Refugee Resettlement Ethnic Self-Help Grant "Fusion Project" at the Asian Community and Cultural Center. CRI is also the recipient of Refugee Social Services and Targeted Assistance funds through the Nebraska Refugee Resettlement Program. Use of these funds facilitate self-sufficiency through employability services for eligible populations as quickly as possible after arrival to the United States.

(ii) Secure and retain meaningful employment – Nebraska's CAAs make every effort to employ low-income people within the agency. Low-income individuals, including senior citizens and youth, are provided opportunities for employment through on-the-job training, job readiness programs, referral to available job listings, assistance with resumes, travel to job interviews, etc. All programs are closely coordinated with other available employment programs in the area and provide referrals to those services.

Although many of the Workforce Investment (WIA) services are provided by other service providers, CAAs are actively involved in WIA through being located at and working with One-Stops, serving on One-Stop Boards, and participating on WIA Boards. They either contract with WIA to provide direct services or make many referrals to these sources. Panhandle Community Services was involved with WIA in the planning and formation of their One-stop Center in Sidney. They partnered with the regional WIA director to form an All Agency quarterly meeting with service workers to share information which helps in streamlining referrals to one another.

Lincoln Action Program's Career Assessment Training (CAT) program is a great example of an agency helping people secure and retain meaningful employment. Lincoln Action Program works in partnership with the University of Nebraska's Facilities Management and Planning Department to coordinate this new program that will provide LAP volunteers and clients with job-readiness training and custodial service experience. CAT participants engage soft skills training classes to learn and practice skills that are essential for success in the workplace, including problem solving, decision making,

conflict resolution management, and communicating. They also provide on-the-job custodial service at the LAP facilitates. This simulates actual employment in the custodial field and gives the participants a chance to develop and practice their soft skills. Each successful participant receives a certificate of completion (to be given to prospective employers), and assistance in applying for full time custodial positions within UNL's Facilities and Planning Department, as well as other employers. UNL's Facilities and Planning Department offers exceptional benefits including health insurance and tuition assistance – an exciting opportunity for many low income workers!

(iii) Attain an adequate education and improving literacy skills –Nebraska's CAA's provide a variety of educational services, including: Bright Starts, CARE, Education Outreach, Even Start, GED tutorial, Partners in Learning, Back on Track, Computer Learning Lab, Love and Logic Parenting Classes, Job Skills Development, Head Start/Early Head Start, and literacy classes. Agencies distribute donated children's books to strengthen family literacy. Each agency works closely with its community partners and makes referrals to agencies that provide other educational services.

Lincoln Action Program's YouthBuild is a youth and community development program that simultaneously addresses core issues facing low-income youth including housing, education, employment, crime prevention, and leadership development. In YouthBuild, low-income young people ages 16-24 work toward their GED or high school diploma, learn job skills, serve their communities by building affordable housing, and transform their own lives and roles in society

(iv) Make better use of available income – Nebraska's CAA's provide a variety of services to enable families to make better use of available income. Among the most common are income tax preparation, weatherization, budget counseling, negotiation of utility payment plans, homeowner counseling, and project first. CAA case management/family development programs focus heavily on budgeting and financial planning.

CAA's, the association office, and the CSBG State office are part of a statewide EITC collaboration that works together to increase public awareness of low-income tax credits and share resources. This collaboration also includes AARP Tax Aide, Voices for Children, the Lincoln and Omaha EITC coalitions, the Mexican-American Commission, the Nebraska Department of Revenue, the I.R.S., and the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation. Just recently, the State Treasurers office has become another partner of the statewide coalition. This collaboration continues to grow and is already planning on new steps to take next tax season.

The statewide CAN Asset Development Committee has identified the current services that are available in the agencies that will contribute to building assets and lead to development of Individual Development Account (IDA) programs. All the agencies provide case management/family development support that assist individuals in meeting their goals for self sufficiency and provide some kind of financial education for clients. The Committee has identified Financial Literacy curriculum that agencies can use to provide comprehensive financial education, common IDA forms that programs can be used, and are sharing strategies to get local financial match. Four of the nine agencies are working on IDA programsThe Asset Development Committee has set other goals addressing additional issues impacting asset development including predatory lender concerns, etc.”

Eight of Nebraska Community Action Agencies conduct Weatherization Assistance Programs. Renters and owners of mobile homes, multi-units, and single-family dwellings, that meet household income guidelines, are eligible to apply for no cost weatherization assistance. Weatherization services include furnace inspections and service maintenance; insulation of attics, sidewalls, and crawl spaces; and general infiltration work, such as glass replacement, caulking, window and door weather-stripping, and blower door guided sealing. These services are designed to permanently lower a resident's energy consumption and utility bills. All eligible properties are provided with energy-efficient lights bulbs and a carbon monoxide detector. In addition, residents are provided with education to understand what role they play in determining the amount of energy and money saved. Through this education, residents also learn how to maintain the effectiveness of their efficiency improvements along with helpful energy saving tips.

Nebraska CAAs are also actively involved in **RentWise-Nebraska**, a tenant education program that helps people find and keep decent, safe, affordable rental housing that meets their needs. Participants are taught communication skills, so they can have positive relationships with landlords and neighbors and a step-by-step process on how to manage and plan for housing costs. Individuals are also taught how to conduct successful searches for rental units and build a positive rental history; the importance of reading and understanding a lease; and a person's rights and responsibilities as a tenant. They are also encouraged to take pride in their home and set a positive example by taking care of their rental unit.

(v) Obtain and maintain adequate housing – Many of Nebraska CAAs are actively involved in providing housing for low-income families in their areas through housing assistance and affordable housing projects; HOME; coalition of Landlords and Tenants; homeowner counseling and household budgeting; Project FIRST; the Homeless Family Program; first-time homebuyer assistance; emergency shelters; migrant housing project; rent and utilities subsidies; and weatherization.

Eight of the nine Nebraska CAAs receive Emergency Shelter Grant Program (ESG) and Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund (HSATF) dollars from the Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program to address homelessness, prevention services or emergency housing needs.

Five of Nebraska's CAAs have met the requirements to be designated a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO). The CHDO designation is required by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development for receipt of HUD's HOME housing assistance funds. The CHDO designation allows these CAAs to buy, sell, build, and manage low-income housing projects or rehabilitate and renovate local housing stock in communities for occupancy by low-income tenants. CHDO/CAAs also provide technical assistance and act as advisors to local housing programs/projects in the communities they serve.

In 2004, Mid was awarded Affordable Housing Program funds to Purchase, Rehab, and Resell (PRR) six properties in Buffalo County. All six properties were completed and funds were awarded in 2006 to complete five additional PRR projects.

Northwest Community Action Partnership uses 80% of the funds they raise through their overseeing of the annual Salvation Army bell ringing event in the Chadron area to help

provide individuals and families obtain and maintain adequate housing. This is done through vouchers for rent assistance, utility assistance etc.

The Representative Payee Program, a nation-wide program of the Social Security Administration, has proven successful in assisting Lincoln Action Program clients in meeting specific financial obligations. The ultimate goal of the program is client self-sufficiency. The Representative Payee Program serves as an effective resource in keeping these individuals safely housed while they work towards self-sufficiency. The majority of the clients utilizing the services of the Representative Payee Program receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and have been identified by the Social Security Administration as incapable of managing their finances due to substance abuse and/or mental health issues. Most of these individuals would not be able to remain housed without an outside party ensuring that their monthly financial obligations are met. By ensuring that a client's basic need obligation, i.e. housing, is addressed, the Representative Payee Program provides low-income individuals the opportunity to address long-term barriers to self-sufficiency.

Many of Nebraska's CAAs also assist local families with completing requirements for low-interest home loan programs or obtaining rental housing and being responsible tenants. CAAs collaborate with other housing programs and agencies and public housing authorities in the state and coordinate housing activities with the Department of Economic Development to assist low-income families. In some areas the local CAA is the designated housing authority. Some Nebraska CAAs own and operate transitional housing projects where low-income families and individuals are provided affordable housing and other needed services as they work toward self-sufficiency.

Blue Valley Community Action's Lease-To-Own housing program (CROWN) continues to enable families to rent a new home with the option to purchase after a compliance period. Single-family homes were constructed that range from 1,100-1,200 square feet each. As a certified Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO), BVCA was able to obtain HOME funding and incorporated tax credits and bank loans to complete financing of the project. This project helps complete the continuum of care process by taking homeless families into permanent housing and eventually to homeownership. Recently, twelve new homes were constructed bringing the total number of CROWN units to sixty.

(vi) Obtain emergency assistance – Eight of the nine Nebraska CAAs receive Emergency Shelter Grant Program (ESG) and Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund (HSATF) dollars from the Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program to address homelessness, prevention services or emergency housing needs. CAAs have representatives on Statewide Nebraska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness (NCHH) and lead subcommittee work in Continuum of Care's and accessing mainstream resources to address chronic homelessness. Additionally they have been active partners in the development of a State wide unified Management Information System.

Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership (ENCAP) partners with the Bellevue Human Services Department and the Bellevue Ministerial Association to distribute emergency funds in the Bellevue area. ENCAP also provides emergency fund assistance to residents of Douglas County to prevent eviction.

Lincoln Action Program's Housing and Resources Counseling (HRC) program combines emergency assistance with case management in an effort to prevent homelessness

among families while increasing their economic independence. Program participants receive one-time financial assistance for a rent, deposit, or utility payment in addition to short-term case management/follow-up to prevent them from encountering a similar crisis situation in the future.

Nebraska's CAAs all provide emergency assistance. Examples of assistance provided include clothing and household banks, crisis intervention programs, domestic violence programs, emergency shelters, food baskets, food banks, food pantries, youth shelters and youth violence alternatives. Rural outreach is a program that can help with various issues facing rural families or individuals. Homeless Aid provides comprehensive emergency services, including, in some cases, a transportation voucher. CAAs also administer homeless programs and provide other programs that meet the emergency needs of their low-income residents on an as-needed basis. As part of their area's Continuum of Care, coordination is maintained with other resources to avoid duplication and maximize resources to meet the unmet needs of communities.

The CAAs provide food and nutrition assistance to counteract malnutrition. Some of the programs include: Home-delivered Meals, Congregate Meals, Commodities Distribution, Women, Infants and Children and other Maternal/Child Health Programs, Family Nutrition Education Programs, Holiday Food Distribution, and Community Gardening.

(vii) Achieve greater participation in the affairs of the community – The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services strongly encourages, promotes and assists local partnerships to promote and enhance cooperation and collaboration among local organizations. The Department considers Nebraska's CAAs a valuable partner in these efforts. Other partners in these collaborations include local government agencies, law enforcement, faith-based organizations and the education community as well as other human service agencies. Throughout the state, outstanding collaboration has been achieved resulting in stronger and more effective communities as well as more effective use of limited local resources. CAA staff and board members are active participants in such local efforts and in many cases act as the lead agency in the collaborations.

Community Action Agencies across America joined together in a nationwide campaign to significantly reduce poverty. The campaign, *Rooting Out Poverty: A Campaign by America's Community Action Network*, is a call for action to promote economic security for all Americans, especially those who are poor. *Rooting Out Poverty* offers solutions and strategies for promoting quality child care; employment and training opportunities, especially for those lacking basic skills; responsible health, energy, and conservation policies, assistance to those elderly and otherwise most vulnerable of people, and more.

Lincoln Action Program's Free To Grow program is a unique neighborhood revitalization program. Program staff work closely with neighborhood residents, community partners, law enforcement, neighborhood organizations, and local businesses to create stronger communities and connect residents to available resources. Free To Grow program strategies allow neighborhood residents to take ownership of their neighborhood by taking active roles in activities that help to improve the quality of life where they live. Activities such as block parties, Neighborhood Watch groups, neighborhood clean-ups, and community leadership groups provide an opportunity for residents to make a lasting change in their neighborhood. Residents of the neighborhoods are encouraged to take part in identifying concerns and solutions and develop an action plan to address neighborhood issues. Tenants, homeowners, and property owners are provided with the tools to continue and sustain these neighborhood revitalization efforts

Central Nebraska Community Services provides another good example of involvement in community affairs. They continue to partner with law enforcement, schools, health care workers, media, businesses, local organizations and others to provide education and intervention activities with the ultimate goal of reducing the number of fatal and injury-causing crashes.

Goldenrod Hills Community Action partners with Nebraska Traumatic Brain Injury Network to provide a support group for community residents who have a brain injury or have relatives who have a brain injury. The support group provides an outlet for education and advocacy.

Through partnerships, Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership's Behavior Health Services provides mental health, substance abuse, psychological, and psychiatric evaluations and on-going psychiatric treatment for inmates residing in Douglas County Community Corrections. Mental health and/or substance abuse evaluations and treatment are provided at a specific reduced rate for inmates of the Community Corrections Center of Omaha (CCCO). ENCAP is the primary provider for CCCO inmates requiring violence prevention/anger management programming. They have also entered into a verbal agreement with Douglas County Drug Court (DCDC) as a direct referral for health, substance abuse, psychological, and psychiatric evaluations and on-going psychiatric and out-patient substance abuse treatment. In working to build wrap-around services, ENCAP is beginning a monthly employment workshop for ex-offenders seeking employment.

Nebraska's CAAs typically play an active role in, and receive funds from, local United Way organizations. They are also recipients of funding from many private and public (local, state, and national) foundations. Many CAAs also receive county, city and municipal government funding. CAAs have been designated as the local housing authority in some rural areas of Nebraska.

CAA staff, board members, and clients serve on many advisory boards and other state and local boards and commissions that affect the life of Nebraska's citizens. In keeping with the ROMA National Goal 3: Low-income people own a stake in their community, CAAs encourage and have clients they are working with serve on governing and non-governance boards. This helps in educating in board procedure, policy making, and the part they are able to play in making the community a better place to live.

The community members that serve on CAA boards and advisory committees include people from many different facets of the community. Examples include: Head Start Policy Councils, Community/Neighborhood Advisory Councils, Human Services Interagency Councils, Senior/Community Centers, VISTA volunteer services, Youth Councils, Low-income Advisory Boards, Rural Volunteer Bureaus, etc.

(2) Nebraska's Community Action Agencies address the needs of youth in low-income communities through youth development programs that support the primary role of the family, give priority to the prevention of youth problems and crime, and promote increased community coordination and collaboration in meeting the needs of youth. The welfare of children is a major focus in the domestic abuse and homeless services offered by CAAs.

Panhandle Community Services continues to operate a youth shelter and a Youth Service Program called the SOS (Street Outreach Services). This program partners with a faith-based program and is reaching out to runaway and homeless youth in the panhandle of Nebraska. Their Transitional Living Program provides a complete continuum of services for runaway and homeless youth between the ages of 16 and 21 by coordinating with various PCS programs. The special emphasis is to serve pregnant and parenting homeless youth and provide the skills and knowledge necessary to become effective parents and lead productive and independent lives. The PCS Crossroads Mentoring Program is a one-to-one out of school mentoring program that unites young people with a positive role model to help them reach their full potential. PCS's Missing Link program is an intergenerational program matching trained youth to elder residents in nursing homes. Youth are specially trained in disabilities and the frailties that seniors experience as they age.

Central Nebraska Community Services partners with the Teen Moms program to provide education to reduce the incidence of births to teen mothers. To stimulate children's reading, they have developed the "Family of Readers" project in two Head Start Centers which provides books for ownership and a center-based lending library that are available for children and families.

Goldenrod Hills Community Action's WIC program and Operation Great Start program work with teen mothers by providing them with home visitation, case management, nutritional counseling, referral resources, physical/emotional development education for the mom and baby.

Blue Valley Community Action Jefferson County Community Coalition, which is made up of law enforcement, county and city officials, Hope Crisis Center, community groups and business leaders, as well as youth, oversees the Fairbury Youth Involvement Center (FYI Center) with its after school, summer and holiday programming. The programming includes drug and alcohol prevention education, home work assistance, technology lab, community projects, dances, as well as "sleep-over" parties and alternatives to violent or other non-productive behaviors. It has a gym area, a basketball area in the rear of the building, both of which are used to engage youth in acceptable interactions and educational development.

Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership's Youth Program is an after school and summer program that provides mentors, tutoring, life skills training, and community service to at-risk youth. They seek to edify youth educationally, culturally, socially, morally, and ethically. This program is designed to provide youth with the necessary nourishment, encouragement, education and direction needed to reach full maturity. The objective is to build character, provide educational assistance, raise literacy, lower school dropout rates, and teach self-sufficiency. Recent efforts have focused on working with the Omaha Public School (OPS) at risk population by addressing the free time the Back on Track participants experience when the substance abuse education classes at ENCAP end at noon on each of the five school days. A Kid's Café is operating in ENCAP's kitchen and offers all participating youth breakfast and lunch at no cost on a daily basis (Monday – Friday).

Community Action of Mid Nebraska's "I'm In Charge" program is an interactive program which prepares elementary age adolescents to stay alone, unsupervised for short periods of time. Children are taught basic safety skills such as emergency preparedness, responsibility, and problem solving. The class helps children address and alleviate feelings of uneasiness about being alone, and opens up lines of communication between children and their parents or guardians

The CAAs provide a variety of other youth services and programs, including the computer learning labs, Career Assessment Training, YouthBuild, and others. Many CAAs have expanded and enhanced their Head Start programs, and several operate other child care programs.

The State of Nebraska assures these services are provided by including language in all subgrants and through review of work plans, review of ROMA and National Indicator goals, desk audits, on-site visits, attendance at Board meetings, and monitoring of Board Meeting Minutes and fiscal reports.

(3) The State of Nebraska and the CAAs continually strive to make more effective use of, and coordinate with, other programs. Nebraska's CAAs are leaders in efforts to identify the needs of the communities they serve and to fill those gaps. They are continually working to coordinate CSBG services with other service providers. CAAs have membership on the Statewide Regional WIA Boards. The agencies have strong links with local offices of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. They coordinate and cross-refer with many organizations and businesses in their local service areas. They continue to provide local leadership for continuum-of-care projects, family preservation programs, family resource centers, and other coalitions with a goal of service coordination that provide many benefits to low-income families and results in strengthening the family. All of these activities help enable families and individuals to achieve the objectives described in subsections i to vii above.

The State of Nebraska will also continue to coordinate the Community Services Block Grant program with other public and private resources. The State recognizes that coordination must also take place at the state level. The CSBG state administrator and program manager interact with staff from other DHHS programs and state departments to encourage linkages between state social service providers and CSBG recipients. The CSBG Administrator is also administrator of Childcare, the Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program, the Refugee Resettlement Program, and the Social Service Block Grant for families. CSBG is located in the office of Children and Family services under the umbrella of Protection and Safety. The CSBG Administrator continues to participate in meetings of the Economic and Family Support Unit which oversees Child Support, Medicaid, TANF, Food Stamps and LiHEAP. We partner with many other divisions within DHHS, other State Departments, and agencies including the Department of Education, Interchurch Ministries, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, the Behavioral Health Reform Steering Team, and Tribal Governments on various issues and needs. Our team leads the State Plan to End Chronic Homeless Policy Group.

The State of Nebraska also continues to be involved in a number of statewide initiatives. Through EITC, we partner with the Community Action of Nebraska (CAN), CAAs, AARP, the IRS, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFF), Voices For Children, local community coalitions, and others. We are involved with the Outcome Management Committee (ROMA); Nebraska Management Information System, the Fatherhood Initiative, Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council, Community Learning Center Network, Public Awareness Campaign for Early Childhood, Behavioral Health Reform, Behavioral Health's supported housing program, Stepping Stones to Recovery training for accessing SSI/SSDI, Rentwise, IDA Coalition, Systems Integration Grant for Children's Mental Health, Together for Kids and Families (Early Childhood Coordination Systems), Early Head Start Partnership Initiative, Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports in Early Childhood, and the www.ne.housing data base initiative. These are just some of the partnerships the State of Nebraska CSBG office is involved with to carry out this assurance.

The State of Nebraska assures these services are provided by including language in all subgrants and through review of work plans, review of ROMA and National Indicator goals, desk audits, on-site visits, attendance at Board meetings, and monitoring of Board Meeting Minutes and fiscal reports.

(b) Assurance 676(b)(4) to provide individuals and families financial assistance and other emergency assistance on an as-needed basis.: Nebraska's CAAs will continue to provide for the provision of such supplies and services, nutritious foods, and related services, as may be necessary to counteract conditions of starvation and malnutrition on an emergency basis. This is accomplished through food pantries, eviction assistance programs, homeless assistance programs and other emergency programs. Eight of the nine Nebraska CAAs receive Emergency Shelter Grant Program (ESG) and Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund (HSATF) dollars from the Nebraska Homeless Assistance Program to address homelessness, prevention services or emergency housing needs. Coordination is maintained with other resources to avoid duplication and meet unmet needs of communities. Clothing and household goods are distributed when the situation warrants.

The State of Nebraska assures these services are provided by including language in subgrants and through review of work plans, review of ROMA and National Indicator goals, on-site visits, and monitoring of Board Meeting Minutes and fiscal reports.

(c) Assurance 676(b)(5) and the eligible entities in the State will coordinate, and establish linkages between, governmental and other social services programs to assure the effective delivery of such services: The CAAs will continue to be leaders in Nebraska's strategy to create a unified delivery system for publicly funded health and human services that result in better services, better use of resources, and better results for the people they serve.

Nebraska's CAAs have developed a case management/family development program that has received recognition and support across the state and has acted as a catalyst for the CAAs to collaborate with other human services programs, including the state departments of Health and Human Services and Labor. In 2007, the State sponsored case management training with Beverly Ford. This training was available to all Nebraska Community Action Agencies and various partners. All nine Nebraska CAA's participated in the case management training. The State is considering conducting a follow-up training.

The State also sponsored Pathways to Excellence training for Nebraska Community Action agencies. Pathways to Excellence provides a framework of evaluation and analysis to help CAA's achieve excellence. This is based on the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence tailored to the language and operations of the CAA system. After receiving the training, five of the nine Nebraska CAAs completed the 10 month self-study and submitted an application. All applications were reviewed by a panel of CAA peer experts and each agency received a feedback report that outlined strengths and opportunities for improvement

Nebraska CAAs have developed a strong working relationship with the Department of Labor to provide services under Workforce Investment Programs. All of Nebraska's CAAs actively collaborate with the Department of Labor Workforce Investment in a variety of ways such as serving on the Board, serving as members of the Community Outreach Committee, and providing referrals.

The State of Nebraska assures agencies are coordinating and establishing linkages by including language in subgrants and through review of work plans, review of ROMA and

National Indicator reports, on-site visits, and monitoring of Board Meeting Minutes and fiscal reports.

(d) Assurance 676(b)(6) will ensure coordination between antipoverty programs in each community in the State, and ensure, where appropriate, that emergency energy crisis intervention programs under title XXVI are conducted in such communities.: The success of Nebraska's energy assistance programs is dependent upon collaboration with many local community partners such as utility companies, local health and human service offices, county extension service offices and other local human service providers. The CAAs collaborate with many local partners as they operate weatherization programs that focus on conservation of energy and lower fuel bills.

As stated earlier, the Nebraska Energy Assistance Network (NEAN) is a collaboration between utility companies across the State, Community Action Agencies, the Salvation Army, Catholic Social Services, the Nebraska Energy Office, the Department of Health and Human Services and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension with a mission of assisting Nebraskans with their energy needs through education, advocacy, and partnership.

Nebraska is also conducting its fourth REACH demonstration grant. The goals of the current grant are: (1) Provide families with education on the health risks associated with poor indoor air quality and materials to increase energy efficiency. and (2) Provide energy efficiency education that will decrease energy consumption.

The State of Nebraska assures coordination of services are accomplished through review of work plans, review of ROMA and National Indicator reports, on-site visits, and monitoring of Board Meeting Minutes and fiscal reports.

(e) Assurance 676(b)(7) will, to the maximum extent possible, coordinate programs with and form partnerships with other organizations serving low-income residents of the communities and members of the groups served by the State, including religious organizations, charitable groups, and community organizations.: The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services emphasizes coordination of programs and services to all organizations serving the poverty population. Because of their funding, board composition and broad-based programs, Nebraska's CAAs are leaders in efforts to identify the needs of the communities they serve and fill those gaps. CAAs continue to provide local leadership to coalitions with a goal of service coordination for the benefit of low-income families. Some examples of areas where Nebraska is currently involved in coordinated efforts are hunger and homelessness, tax credits, youth development, and the Fatherhood Initiative.

Community Action Partnership of Mid Nebraska worked with partners to establish Interfaith Caregivers in 1995. This is a faith-based, non-profit, non-denominational organization that coordinates volunteers within churches and the community at large to provide unmet needs in the Kearney area. Service Provided include: Meals during recovery, friendly visiting, light housekeeping during recovery, unmet transportation needs , telephone reassurance, errands for homebound, and commodity delivery to homebound persons.

Many Community Action Agencies partner with the Salvation Army in their annual bell ringing event. Southeast Nebraska Community Services continues to coordinate with the Salvation Army to send youth to Salvation Army summer camps. Northwest Community Action Partnership's Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) program which has more than 500 volunteers coordinates with local faith based organizations and businesses to serve their rural

area. Their Closer To Home Initiative coordinates with the local Hospital, Senior Center, local Ministerial Association, and Neighbors in Need.

Coordination of the Farm Hotline through Interchurch ministries and pantry service through many local churches are two other examples of how Nebraska and its CAA's are involved with faith based organizations. Goldenrod Hills Community Action, Blue Valley Community Action Partnership, and Southeast Nebraska Community Action all partner with a faith based organization to carryout the St. Nicks program which provides gifts to over 125 individuals in Northeast Nebraska during Christmas time. Goldenrod Hills Community Action also partners with Northeast Economic Development District to maximize resources by coordinating weatherization and rehabilitation efforts on area homes. This Agency also coordinates with faith based organizations to provide clinic sites at no cost for Immunization and WIC programs.

The State of Nebraska assures the coordination of programs and forming of partnerships through review of work plans, review of ROMA reports, on-site visits, and monitoring of Board Meeting Minutes and fiscal reports.

G. Fiscal Controls and Monitoring

(1) State Program Monitoring: Evaluation of CSBG grantees is conducted in a variety of ways including the review of financial and progress reports, audits, minutes of Board Meetings, ROMA data and on-site monitoring and peer review. The State of Nebraska continues to work on its monitoring process.

- (a) Nebraska is currently conducting annual desk audits for all 9 agencies and on-site reviews at each agency bi-annually. The on-site review includes attending an agency board meeting.
- (b) Nebraska does not anticipate any newly designated entities, but if one would be designated, the State would conduct an onsite review immediately upon the completion of the first year in which such entity receives funds through the community services block grant program.
- (c) The State will conduct follow-up visits to eligible entities, and their programs that fail to meet the goals, standards, and requirements established by the State;
- (d) The state will conduct other reviews as appropriate of entities with programs that have had other Federal, State or local grants terminated for cause;
- (e) The State will continue to provide training and technical assistance around accounting principles and the OMB Circulars.
- (f) Dates for last audits conducted and the period covered by the audit for the State's eligible entities are as follows:

AGENCY	DATE OF LAST AUDIT	PERIOD COVERED BY AUDIT
Blue Valley Community Action Partnership	01/07/08	October 1, 2006 – September 30, 2007
Central Nebraska Community Services	1/11/08	October 1, 2006 – September 30, 2007
Goldenrod Hills Community Action	12/21/07	October 1, 2006 – September 30, 2007
Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership	5/30/08	October 1, 2006 – September 30, 2007
Lincoln Action Program	4/16/08	October 1, 2006 – September 30, 2007
Community Action Partnership of Mid Nebraska	11/05/07	October 1, 2006 – September 30, 2007
Northwest Community Action Partnership	9/18/07	July 1, 2006– June 30, 2007
Panhandle Community Services	10/27/07	July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007
Southeast Nebraska Community Action	1/15/08	October 1, 2006 – September 30, 2007

(2) Corrective Action, Termination and Reduction of Funding: In the event the State determines an eligible entity failed to comply with the terms of their contractual agreement established with the State or the State plan, to provide services under the CSBG program or to meet any standards, goals and other requirements established by the State (including performance objectives), the State will comply with the requirements outlined in Section 678C of the Act, to:

- a. inform the entity of the deficiency to be corrected;
- b. require the entity to correct the deficiency;
- c. offer training and technical assistance as appropriate to help correct the deficiency, and submit to the Secretary a report describing the training and technical assistance offered or stating the reasons for determining that training and technical assistance are not appropriate;
- d. at the discretion of the State, offer the eligible entity the opportunity to develop and implement, within 60 days after being informed of the deficiency, a quality improvement plan and to either approve the proposed plan or specify why the proposed plan cannot be approved;
- e. after providing adequate notice and an opportunity for a hearing, initiate proceeding to terminate the designation of or reduce the funding to the eligible entity unless the entity corrects the deficiency.

(3) Fiscal Controls, Audits, and Withholding: The State of Nebraska and its nine Community Action Agencies have fiscal controls, procedures, audits and inspections in place to assure the proper disbursement of and accounting for Federal funds paid to the State under CSBG. These procedures ensure that cost and accounting standards of the Office of Management and Budget

apply to the CSBG funds. The State of Nebraska and its nine Community Action Agencies also make appropriate books, documents, papers, and records available to the Secretary and the Comptroller General of the United States, or any of their duly authorized representatives, for examination, copying, or mechanical reproduction on or off the premises of the appropriate entity upon a reasonable request for the items.

Annual audits in accordance with the Single Audit Act are completed by the State and each of the nine Community Action Agencies. The State of Nebraska's last completed audit occurred Feb 29, 2008 and is available to all readers at:

http://www.auditors.state.ne.us/local/pdfSearch/PDF/2007_Statewide_Single_Audit.pdf

A list of dates of the audits of Nebraska's nine Community Action Agencies can be found in section G (1). Nebraska's Grants Management Unit and Program Manager review all agency audits and follow up on any audit findings.

(a) Assurance 676(b)(7): The State of Nebraska and its nine Community Action Agencies will permit and cooperate with Federal investigations undertaken in accordance with section 678D of the Act. Subgrants require agencies permit and cooperate with Federal investigations. The State of Nebraska will seek answers to questions from Federal Project officer when needed. We welcome any visits to our State for purposes of monitoring program Administration and offering any technical assistance to improve operations.

(b) Assurance 676(b)(8): The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services may recommend termination of CSBG funds to any CSBG grantee. The Department will send the grantee and their governing board written notification of intent to terminate funding. The CSBG grantee will be allowed sixty (60) days from receipt of the notification of intent to terminate to present the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services with a plan to correct any noncompliance. If a correction plan is in process or the noncompliance is corrected within sixty (60) days, it will not be necessary to continue with the termination process and all appropriate parties will receive written notification by the State. If the entity continues to be out of compliance after sixty (60) days, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services will send a notification of termination in thirty (30) days which will include the reason(s) for termination and an explanation of the right to appeal. The grantee may appeal the decision to terminate funding. The appeal must be in writing and must be received within thirty (30) days of the date of the notification of termination. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services will issue a notice of hearing on the appeal. The notice will include:

1. Statement of the date, time, place, nature and manner of the hearing;
2. Acknowledgment of the right for representation by a legal or other representative of choice by either party.

All testimony will be recorded. A hearing officer will call the hearing to order and the parties involved will be given an opportunity to present opening statements. Thereafter, the parties shall present their evidence as directed by the hearing officer. After no more than twenty (20) days of deliberation, the hearing officer will offer the proposed decision to the Director of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. If the Director's decision sustains the termination of funding, the grantee may then request a federal review by written notification to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which will review the State's findings and issue a written statement of

determination within thirty (30) days. The U.S. DHHS findings constitute the final decision for termination of CSBG funding. If the U.S. DHHS confirms the State's findings, CSBG funding to the grantee will be terminated.

(c) Assurance 676(b)10: All CAAs are required to include tri-partite board requirements in the by-laws that govern their agency. The by-laws of all Nebraska CAAs must also include a provision whereby a low-income individual, community organization, religious organization, or a representative of low-income individuals that considers its organization or low-income individuals to be inadequately represented on the board (or other governing mechanism) of the eligible entity to petition for adequate representation. The State of Nebraska reviews agency by-laws and monitors board composition annually.

H. Accountability and Reporting Requirements

(1) Results Oriented Management and Accountability: Nebraska was one of the first states to actively focus on ROMA development and implementation. A Nebraska ROMA Task Force was organized in 1977 with all CAAs represented. The task force determined that the true measure of outcomes is measured by the progress in changing the lives of the people served, therefore all CAAs have concentrated on family development and the provision of case management to customers. The task force has recently adopted the new name of "Outcome Management Committee." This committee meets regularly with the purpose of keeping ROMA in the forefront and promoting ROMA at all levels of CAAs.

Nebraska currently has three certified ROMA trainers and a fourth person is scheduled for training in August of this year. These trainers have been providing training to staff and Boards across the State.

All nine Community Action Agencies are required to submit six month and annual NPI reports. Each agency is required to report outcomes for all relevant activities.

Though each agency has been developing ROMA goals for each of their programs, the ROMA task force has developed the following statewide goals:

Goal 1 Low-income people become more self-sufficient (self-sufficiency).

- Families will have more disposable income by accessing allowable tax credits.
- Families will reduce reliance on public assistance through obtaining a job or increase in employment income.

Goal 2 The conditions in which low-income people live are improved (community revitalization)

- CAA weatherization teams will create energy efficient housing.

Goal 3 Low-income people own a stake in their community.

- Families increase volunteer participation with the help and encouragement of CAAs.

Goal 4 Partnerships among supporters and providers of services to low-income people are achieved.

- CAA's will continue current and develop new partnerships to provide needed services to low income families.

Goal 5 Agencies increase their capacity to achieve results.

- Agencies resources will adequately provide services to meet the needs of low income persons and the community.

Goal 6 Low-income people, especially vulnerable populations, achieve their potential by strengthening family and other supportive systems (family stability.)

- Families will not be hungry because they receive emergency food assistance.
- Families will have adequate housing through rent/deposit assistance.

Nebraska's Outcome Management Committee continues to place an emphasis on board and staff training on the ROMA concept. The Outcome Management Committee worked with the State CSBG Program Manager and developed a new annual work plan based on ROMA. This was piloted in 2005 and has been mandatory since 2006.

- (2) Annual Report:** The State of Nebraska submitted an annual report prior to March 31, 2008. For detailed information on the success of Nebraska's CSBG activities, please review the report already submitted (attachment E).

The State of Nebraska will prepare and submit to the Secretary an annual report in March of fiscal years 2009 and 2010 on the measured performance of the State and its eligible entities as described under 678E(a)(2) of the Act. This report will include at a minimum information that is pertinent and comprehensive, and which describes in detail CSBG activities and services as well as addresses outcomes which measure how CSBG funds were used to promote self-sufficiency, family stability, and community revitalization.

Chris Peterson, Chief Executive Officer
Nebraska Dept. of Health & Human Services

Date

ATTACHMENT A

ATTACHMENT B

ATTACHMENT C

ATTACHMENT D

Federal Certifications

ATTACHMENT E