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WOODS CHARITABLE FUND AWARDS FIRST BREAKTHROUGH INITIATIVE GRANT AT MAY MEETING

Woods Charitable Fund's Board of Directors has awarded its first Breakthrough Initiative Grant to Nebraskans for Civic Reform as the lead agency on a collaborative project called Collective Impact Lincoln. The initiative is intended to benefit low-income, working Lincolniters through a number of actions including neighborhood revitalization, engagement and advocacy. The initiative will solicit input from community members regarding their needs and opportunities, and advocate for policies or changes to meet those needs.

The grant, approved by Woods Charitable Fund's board at its May meeting, is pledged for \$1.175 million over three years. The two nonprofit organizations collaborating with Nebraskans for Civic Reform on Collective Impact Lincoln are Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest and South of Downtown Community Development Organization.

Collective Impact Lincoln will use door-to-door conversations with residents of Lincoln's most challenged neighborhoods to weave connections between diverse communities, and empower and engage community members in public decision-making processes. The project will develop leadership skills among neighbors and workers to ensure diverse voices are heard and community members' needs are reflected in policy discussions. The project will also conduct broad legal and policy analysis and advocacy on community-identified issues that residents determine can improve quality of life in Lincoln.

"This Breakthrough Initiative Grant is an incredible opportunity to ensure the needs and voices of diverse Lincolniters are heard in policy discussions, empowering them to be local civic leaders in their neighborhoods," said Amanda Barker, Director of Civic Health Programs for Nebraskans for Civic Reform. "We are deeply grateful for Woods Charitable Fund's generosity and support for this unique partnership, and this project."

"Woods Charitable Fund is excited to partner with Nebraskans for Civic Reform, Nebraska Appleseed and South of Downtown Community Development Organization on this promising, transformative project addressing various issues concerning six of Lincoln's most challenged neighborhoods," said WCF President Tom Woods. "The project's strategies of community engagement, neighborhood leadership development and policy advocacy align with WCF's purpose and core values. We look forward to advancing our shared vision of a community that offers a promising future for all, where everyone has the opportunity to participate and thrive."

Woods Charitable Fund's Board of Directors also awarded \$451,000 in grants to 13 nonprofit organizations serving Lincoln at its May board meeting. Including this Breakthrough Initiative Grant, in 2017, Woods Charitable Fund has awarded \$1.626 million in grants to benefit Lincoln.

Woods Charitable Fund makes grants twice a year to tax-exempt organizations seeking funding for Lincoln-focused programs in the areas of Human Services, Civic & Community, Education and Arts & Culture and through its Breakthrough Initiative Grant program. For more information on funding guidelines, call [\(402\) 436-5971](tel:4024365971), visit the Fund's website at www.woodscharitable.org or write to Kathy Steinauer Smith or Tom Woods at 1248 O St. Suite 1130, Lincoln, NE 68508, or at info@woodscharitable.org.