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For further information
Contact: Tom Woods
(402) 436-5971
twoods@woodscharitable.org

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WOODS CHARITABLE FUND AWARDS BREAKTHROUGH GRANT TO LEGAL AID OF NEBRASKA

Woods Charitable Fund's Board of Directors has awarded its second Breakthrough Initiative Grant to Legal Aid of Nebraska to launch a project called UPLIFT, which will offer community-based legal services at four Lincoln cultural centers: Asian Community and Cultural Center, El Centro de las Americas, Good Neighbor Community Center and the Malone Community Center. UPLIFT will focus Legal Aid's services on concerns in the areas of housing, income and benefits, and debt, with a goal to foster better living conditions, decrease poverty and create opportunities for low-income, refugee and immigrant residents.

The grant, approved by Woods Charitable Fund's board at its May meeting, is pledged for \$480,000 over three years. It provides for staffing and related expenses for Legal Aid and case management for the four cultural centers to work with Legal Aid.

"Legal Aid of Nebraska is profoundly grateful to Woods Charitable Fund for awarding the Breakthrough Initiative grant to the UPLIFT collaboration because we know how important bringing the power of the law into low-income communities can be," said Legal Aid Executive Director Milo Mumgaard. "Legal Aid's goal is to reach our clients when they can best be helped, and that's often well before our clients get to us. By working closely with our community center partners, Legal Aid legal staff will be far better able to identify and help people with housing, debt, benefit and income problems. In turn, the planned targeted and aggressive legal advocacy will foster a positive response from landlords, employers, debt collectors and government agencies, significantly improving the quality of life in Lincoln's low-income communities."

In support of UPLIFT, WCF also awarded a three-year \$120,000 grant for legal staffing at the Center for Legal Immigration Assistance (CLIA) to provide these legal services to undocumented individuals.

"CLIA is deeply appreciative to Woods Charitable Fund for awarding the Breakthrough Initiative grant to the UPLIFT collaboration," said CLIA Executive Director Max Graves. "The grant award will enable CLIA to reach out to immigrants who have problems involving housing, debt and other issues in addition to legal immigration assistance. Essentially, this collaboration will open new opportunities to meet a critical need of many low-income immigrants."

"UPLIFT complements Legal Aid's Access to Justice program that provides self-help assistance with criminal set-asides, divorce, protection orders, living wills and power of attorney by dedicating an attorney to protect the rights of Lincoln's low-income individuals and families in regards to benefits, housing and debt," said WCF President Tom Woods. "This program is of great interest to WCF because of its aim to help people achieve and maintain self-sufficiency across Lincoln's culturally diverse low-income, refugee and New American populations."

Woods Charitable Fund's Board of Directors also awarded \$529,000 in grants to 23 nonprofit organizations serving Lincoln at its May board meeting. Including the grants awarded with the Breakthrough Initiative Grant, in 2018, Woods Charitable Fund has approved \$1.129 million in grants to benefit Lincoln. Woods Charitable Fund has paid nearly \$98.6 million in grants and loans since the Fund's inception in 1941.

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 Tom Woods, Kathy Steinauer Smith or Nicole Juranek at 1248 O St. Suite 1130, Lincoln, NE 68508, or at info@woodscharitable.org.