

**Cooper Foundation
870 Wells Fargo Center
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Lincoln, NE 68508**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COOPER FOUNDATION AWARDS OVER \$285,000 IN FEBRUARY

A project to strengthen community agencies is among the grants totaling \$283,050 awarded by the Cooper Foundation in February. The Let's Build project of Region V Services is a three-year project to help social service organizations improve organizational effectiveness through training, technical assistance and financial support. "Region V has used community partnerships and modest local funding to leverage over \$1.5 million in federal funds to support a wide variety of agencies in Southeast Nebraska," said Victoria Kovar, Program Officer of the Cooper Foundation. "This kind of project is especially important now, when agencies face both increasing needs in the community as well as increased competition for funding."

Other grants funded by the Cooper Foundation include support for visual and performing arts, the preservation of unique Nebraska landscapes, and educational programs for children and adults. The Cooper Foundation was founded in 1934 and has granted over \$16 million to benefit the people of Nebraska. The Foundation makes quarterly grant awards supporting education, human services, the arts, the humanities, and the environment in Lincoln and Lancaster County, and throughout Nebraska. For more information about grant guidelines and application deadlines visit the Foundation's website, www.cooperfoundation.org.

Grants awarded, February 2008

Grantees are located in Lincoln, Nebraska unless otherwise noted.

Bright Lights - \$20,500

Support for the new position of Fundraising Coordinator and for website upgrades for Bright Lights, a summer learning program that serves over 1,800 students with 110 week-long classes and nine day camps.

El Centro de las Americas - \$30,000

Support for salary costs and for accounting services in 2008. El Centro de las Americas (formerly the Hispanic Community Center) is co-located with the Clyde Malone Community Center and provides education, supportive services, and community programs for the diverse Latino community in Lincoln.

Community CROPS - \$20,000

General operating support for this organization that works to improve food security and provide economic opportunities for refugee, immigrant and low-income families in Lincoln through the Community Garden Network and the Urban Farmers Pilot Project.

Community Services Fund - \$3,500

Support for the annual campaign of this fundraising coalition of 24 Nebraska nonprofit organizations.

Lincoln Literacy Council - \$25,000

Support for the English Language Academy, a program to provide English language instruction for refugees and immigrants and their children through a network of community partnerships.

Lincoln Public Schools, Elliott Elementary School - \$3,320

For the original production of "The Who that Horton Heard" for students at Elliott, McPhee, and Clinton Elementary Schools, emphasizing responsible action and the progress toward peace that can be achieved we work together as a group.

Metropolitan Community College, Omaha, Ne. - \$10,000

Support for the 2008 Great Plains Theatre Conference, featuring Pulitzer prize winning playwright Douglas Wright, May 24 - June 31, 2008 at the Fort Omaha campus. The conference focuses on new and emerging playwrights and includes staged readings by over 40 theatre companies, workshops, performances, and master classes where which participants can meet and interact with award-winning playwrights, directors, producers, and actors.

Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest - \$15,000

For the Choosing Education Program, to increase access to post-secondary educational opportunities for recipients of public assistance.

Nebraska Art Association - \$28,000

Support toward new technology to exhibit video art by contemporary artists and to provide enhanced education programming for school students, the UNL community and the public.

Nebraska Land Trust - \$20,000

Second-year funding for an effort to preserve the Schramm Bluffs area in Sarpy County, Nebraska, a biologically unique area that includes eastern hardwood forest, tallgrass prairie, and three kinds of shrubland, providing essential habitat for many species of plants and animals. The Nebraska Land Trust works with local private landowners to obtain conservation easements to preserve the natural amenities and scenic vistas of this area in the lower Platte region between Lincoln and Omaha, used for outdoor recreation by over two million people each year.

Panhandle Resource Conservation & Development, Scottsbluff, Ne. - \$2,500

Support for the Ninth Annual Intertribal Gathering at Fort Robinson State Park, June 13-15, 2008. The Intertribal Gathering provides an opportunity to share, teach and display traditional Native American music, dance, arts, crafts, ceremony and other traditions.

Post Playhouse, Chadron, Ne. - \$8,460

For three internships in performance and technical theatre for Chadron State College theatre majors during the 2008 summer season. Since 1967 the Post Playhouse has provided professional family theatre and educational programs at Fort Robinson State Park.

Prairie Plains Resource Institute, Aurora, Ne. - \$8,750

Third-year funding to support comprehensive fund development and the Development Coordinator/Office Manager staff position. PPRI is a land trust with seven prairie preserves, and provides ecological restoration and management and youth education programs, and promotes the involvement of diverse people in the conservation process.

Region V Systems - \$20,000

Support toward the Let's Build program, a federally funded initiative designed to help urban and rural faith-based and community organizations improve their operations and effectiveness to better meet the social service needs of their clients.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lied Center for Performing Arts - \$20,000

Support for Loop Divers, a project that involves dance, theatre, and interactive technology by Troika Ranch, a New York based multi-media company. In addition to the creation and premiere of an original performance work, the project will work with a diverse constituency including UNL students, hospitals and rehabilitation centers, community centers and schools across the Lincoln community.

YMCA of Lincoln - \$50,000

Second-year support for the development of after school programming at the new Fallbrook YMCA located with Schoo Middle School, currently being built in northwest Lincoln. This unique partnership will allow the YMCA and the middle school to share resources and common facilities and will provide much needed community-based family recreation facilities to this area of Lincoln.

**For clarification or additional information
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