



2013 Annual Awards Entry Form
(Complete one for each entry.)

Entry Name Open Door Mission - Building a Bridge from Homelessness to Hope

HFA Nebraska Investment Finance Authority

Submission Contact Steve Peregrine

Phone 402-434-6930 **Email** steve.peregrine@nifa.org

Program Contact Teresa Kile

Phone 402-434-3916 **Email** teresa.kile@nifa.org

Entry form with description, check(s), and visual aids (optional) must be received by NCSHA by **Monday, July 1, 2013**.

Use this header on the upper right corner of each page.

HFA Nebraska Investment Finance Authority

Entry Name Open Door Mission – Building a Bridge from Homelessness to Hope

Communications	Homeownership	Legislative Advocacy	Management Innovation
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Report <input type="checkbox"/> Promotional Materials and Newsletters <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Media	<input type="checkbox"/> Empowering New Buyers <input type="checkbox"/> Home Improvement and Rehabilitation <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging New Production	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal Advocacy <input type="checkbox"/> State Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources <input type="checkbox"/> Operations <input type="checkbox"/> Technology
Rental Housing	Special Needs Housing	Special Achievement	Are you providing visual aids?
<input type="checkbox"/> Multifamily Management <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation and Rehabilitation <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraging New Production	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Combating Homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> Housing for Persons with Special Needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Achievement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

HFA: Nebraska Investment Finance Authority
Entry: Open Door Mission – Building a Bridge from Homelessness to Hope

Category: Special Needs Housing
Subcategory: Combating Homelessness

On any given night in October, 2011, there were 1,568 homeless people in Omaha, Nebraska. On one of those October nights, the Open Door Mission (Mission) served 510 people. But 697 persons sought shelter at the Mission that night. The Mission was at maximum capacity, and this meant 187 homeless were left out in the cold. The Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA) and the Mission were determined to ensure that warm beds be made available each night to those in need.

Working as a team, NIFA and the Mission were able to access valuable federal resources which, together with funds raised by the Mission through a successful capital campaign, have resulted in a 143% increase in the facilities and services of the Mission. They are now able to serve 816 individuals each night. While homelessness continues to be an on-going issue with which we struggle, NIFA is proud to have participated in building the bridge that successfully provides safe, affordable housing combined with supportive services to help combat homelessness in the Omaha community.

I think NIFA, as much as we did, wanted to see people's lives changed, wanted to see people have opportunities, wanted to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty and see safe, affordable housing. They believed in what we did; they saw the lives that were being changed, and they wanted to be a part of it.

Candace Gregory, President & CEO of Open Door Mission

Originally located in the downtown area of Omaha, the Mission has several times been relocated and is now a bus ride from the city proper. Beginning as a single building providing emergency shelter, the Mission has added to the campus over the years to address the increased needs of the homeless. By 2006, the need for overnight shelter in Omaha greatly exceeded the space available at the Mission. To assist those it was then unable to serve, the Mission, together with private partners, kicked off the "Rebuilding Lives Campaign." The campaign strategy was to carry out a definitive, phased plan to meet the rising needs of Omaha's homeless men, women and children. Both the critical shortage of beds and a need to provide services to Omaha's homeless population were targeted. The campaign would turn into an unprecedented effort to raise \$32 million and ultimately change the Mission from a **homeless shelter** into a campus offering a **bridge from homelessness to hope!**

In early 2006, NIFA staff met with the staff at the Mission to discuss opportunities to address the Omaha metro area's growing homeless population. NIFA saw a unique opportunity to assist the Mission in accomplishing its goals by combining a number of programs and funding sources. To that end, NIFA allocated federal resources for the Mission's project from the Tax Credit Assistance Program (T-CAP) and Midwestern Disaster Area (MDA) Credits as part of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program through the Collaborative Resource Allocation for Nebraska (CRANE) – a process among NIFA and other collaborating resource providers to accomplish difficult projects. The result of the dedication of resources by NIFA would be a revitalized campus with an increased capacity to serve the area's most vulnerable population.

Phase I – the Lydia House - 2010

Phase I of the campaign focused on the ongoing needs of homeless women and children. The existing Lydia House served both families and single women with a total of 19 rooms. While there were sufficient restrooms with showers, there was just a single bath tub to serve the many small children housed in the facility. With such a limited number of rooms, the Mission was forced to turn away 150 families and 90 single women each month on average.

The expanded Lydia House opened its doors in 2010 and now provides housing and support services to women and families in need of immediate assistance. Lydia House offers shelter, food, and clothing while addressing other basic needs. The expansion provided space for 46 families and 72 single women, accommodating an average of 300 individuals – a 62% increase in the number of people served.

Lydia House now has two wings – one designed for families and one designed for single women. The family units include a private bathroom, living space with hide-a-way beds for the parents, small kitchen area with a refrigerator and cupboards, and a bedroom with bunk beds for children. The single women's wing houses 2 women per room and has one private bathroom with a shower for every three women.

Lydia House is the only facility in Omaha serving homeless and near homeless families where males over the age of 12 are allowed to stay with the family. It is also the only place where parents are allowed to retain custody of their children while they go through the recovery process for addictions. Elsewhere, the children would likely be placed in foster care until the completion of the recovery process and male family members over the age of 12 would be separated from the family.

Funding for the Lydia House included \$785,250 in Midwestern Disaster Area Credits funded through NIFA's CRANE process. The CRANE allocation was combined with \$1.2 million in tax increment financing from the City of Omaha, \$450,000 from the FHLBank - Topeka, \$700,000 in HOME funds and \$2,283,938 from funds raised by the Mission during their capital campaign.

Phase II – Permanent Supportive Housing Complex – 2011

Phase II focused on facilitating the transition from homelessness to self-sufficiency through the provision of permanent supportive housing. The transition period is a crucial time for those enrolled in the Mission's programs that requires additional support to ensure success. Opening its doors in 2011, the new Permanent Supportive Housing Complex provides a safe, stable place for men, women and families to live during this transition. The facility has 41 two and three bedroom apartment units and residents are able to work or attend school full or part time while living in the units. The building includes classroom space and a computer lab.

Funding for the Permanent Supportive Housing Complex included \$871,054 in Midwestern Disaster Area Credits awarded through NIFA's competitive process for Low Income Housing Tax Credits. In addition, the project received T-CAP funds allocated by NIFA in the amount of \$1,006,225, \$1,100,000 in HUD Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funds from the City of Omaha, FHLBank – Topeka's Affordable Housing Program funds in the amount of \$650,000 and owner equity from the Mission's capital campaign in the amount of \$100,000.

Phase III – Rebuilding Lives Center – 2013

Phase III of the Rebuilding Lives Campaign included the construction of the Garland Thompson Men's Center, a large community service facility that includes a Wellness Center, a large common dining room and kitchen, dayroom, emergency shelter, crisis center, showers and

restroom facilities. Phase III also included the Rebuilding Lives Center which incorporates residential units with designated space for three unique populations of single men - veterans, those in need of permanent supportive housing, and those enrolled in the Mission's life changing programs. The Rebuilding Lives Center and the Garland Thompson Men's Center were completed in 2013 and are the capstone of the Mission's campus. The Rebuilding Lives Center provides a total of 96 units, which represents an increase of 66 units that provide shelter for single men enrolled in support programs at the Mission.

The Rebuilding Lives Center provides housing and support services for single men in three separate programs:

- 32 rooms for single men enrolled in the Mission's New Life Recovery Program and/or Journey to Work Program. The New Life Recovery is a 12-step residential program committed to providing men the tools they need to become self-sufficient, contributing members of the community. The Journey to Work program focuses on breaking the cycle of homelessness and poverty through personal development, money management skills, job training and educational skills including GED classes.
- 32 rooms for men in the Veterans Housing First program which focuses on the Veterans Administration's goals of crises intervention, emergency services, screening and assessments in the area of mental health, chemical dependency, job skills, training and life skills.
- 32 rooms of Permanent Supportive Housing for single men who may benefit from living in a stable environment for an extended period of time. Residents can live in a supportive housing environment while working or attending school full time. The Permanent Supportive Housing units rent for \$280 a month with free utilities, laundry, meals, and basic phone and television.

Each of the three floors in the Rebuilding Lives Center includes community living space with a kitchen, television and a telephone for local calls. Each floor has its own laundry facilities and restrooms. The building also includes a fitness center and a learning center with classroom space for providing computer classes, GED classes, and resources for job searches.

The men served in the programs offered by the Mission have seen their lives improved – not just their living situations, but their emotional and physical health as well. On average, two years after completing the programs offered to the residents, 91% of the long-term recovery graduates maintain sobriety and are either currently in permanent housing or in the process of attaining permanent housing. This trend is expected to continue in the new facility.

Funding for the Rebuilding Lives Center included Midwestern Disaster Area Credits allocated by NIFA in the amount of \$659,486, \$410,000 in Tax Increment Financing from the City of Omaha, FHLB – Topeka's Affordable Housing Program (AHP) funds in the amount of \$450,000 and \$335,253 from the Mission's capital campaign fund.

Building a bridge from homelessness to hope takes time, resources, and determination. NIFA is honored, through the allocation of NIFA resources, to have assisted the Open Door Mission in providing the blocks to build that bridge in Omaha, Nebraska.

Click here to view Open Door Mission video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMtnTf_QqK4

Attached Visual Aids: Campus Map; Photos; Supportive Services and Programs

HFA: Nebraska Investment Finance Authority
Entry: Open Door Mission – Building a Bridge from Homelessness to Hope



**HFA: Nebraska Investment Finance Authority
Entry: Open Door Mission – Building a Bridge from Homelessness to Hope**



Rebuilding Lives Center - BEFORE



Rebuilding Lives Center - AFTER

**HFA: Nebraska Investment Finance Authority
Entry: Open Door Mission – Building a Bridge from Homelessness to Hope**



Lydia House - NEW



Lydia House - OLD



Family room kitchenette



Family room sleeping area



Family room living space

Lydia House



Community Kitchen and Dining Area



Learning Center



Fitness Center



Children's Tutoring Lab

Lydia House



Bright Space - children's activity center

**HFA: Nebraska Investment Finance Authority
Entry: Open Door Mission – Building a Bridge from Homelessness to Hope**



Permanent Supportive Housing Complex

This is a 41 (2 & 3 Bedroom) Apartment Complex
Picture below is a 1 bedroom unit



Open Door Mission Support Services and Programs

Open Door Mission offers life-changing programs to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty through numerous programs that assist residents with overcoming addictions, obtaining employment and securing and maintaining permanent house.

Adult Programs:

2911 SuccessNet

2911 SuccessNet is designed to empower individuals with the tools to change their present situation. Individuals learn how to set and meet goals that will improve their future. Opportunities through life skill classes and case management will help individuals pay monthly bills, reduce debt and save for the future. 2911 SuccessNet is a program designed to prevent homelessness before it happens breaking the cycle of homelessness and poverty.

AfterCare Program

Our AfterCare Program is a service available to individuals and families after they graduate from one of our programs. Support is crucial at this time, and the AfterCare Program provides help during the transition to independent living.

Adult Learning Center

Mission residents are given an educational evaluation upon entrance to the campus. The Learning Center uses that evaluation to build a program specific to each resident and includes any necessary classes or training to assist them in securing employment.

The Mission partners with the Omaha Public School system and the Women's Center for Advancement to educate clients on life-skills, domestic violence and General Education Degree courses. G.E.D. classes are provided on-site and are structured to allow individuals to work at their own pace. Once the person is ready to take the test, the Mission pays the fee. The learning center includes a study island complete with computers.

Journey to Work Program

The Journey to Work Program focuses on breaking the cycle of homelessness and poverty through personal development, money management, job training and educational skills. GED classes are also offered.

New Life Recovery Program (NLRP)

NLRP is a 12-step residential program committed to providing men, women and families the tools they need to become self-sufficient, contributing members of the community.

Veteran's Housing First Program

The Veteran's Housing First Program focuses on the Housing First and Veterans Administration combined goals of crisis intervention, emergency services, screening, and assessments in area of mental health, chemical dependency, job skills, training, and life skills.

Work Net

The Work Net program provides assistance with resume building, coaching for job interviews and assistance with proper attire for interviews and work. Graduates of Work Net discover opportunities that are fulfilling and lead to gainful employment.

Children and Youth Programs:

Afterschool Program

Afterschool programs provide educational tutoring, field trips, and character building exercises. Summer Bible Day Camp provides 3 hot, nutritious meals, recreational games, field trips, learning activities, educational tutoring, arts and crafts, and so much more.

Bright Space

Bright Space is the play area for children residing at the Mission. Programs provided included play therapy and Arts for All class that teaches parents how to interact with their children, after school programs and activities and a visitation area for those parents who have lost custody of their children prior to arriving at the Mission.

Children's Tutoring Lab

A tutoring lab complete with computers is available to all school aged children of the Mission and tutoring is available 52 weeks of the year. Teachers are provided through a partnership with Omaha Public Schools Title I program and the Celebrate Education Program is provided in partnership with the Southwest Omaha Kiwanis Club. Through the program students receive certificates of honor for achieving academic and character goals in addition to certificates for those making the Honor Roll. Small celebrations are held each quarter, one larger one at the end of the first semester followed by a celebratory picnic at the end of the year.

Lydia House Library

The average reading level for those seeking shelter at the Mission is the 2nd grade level. The Lydia Houses includes a library used to encourage both the adult and youth residents of the Mission to increase their reading skills. Volunteers visit the Mission to read to the children and adults alike.

Youth Center

The Lydia House provides space for older children in residence where they can hold a movie night or play games. Included in the space is the Missions aquaponic garden.

Campus and Community Programs:

Aquaponic Garden

The Mission has two aquaponic gardens – one in the youth center of the Lydia House and one on the Veterans First floor of the Rebuilding Lives Center. This unique garden uses a large tank full of fish (tilapia) that recycles water upward to fertilize a rock "garden" where lettuce grows. This allows the Mission to grow 90 heads of lettuce every 45 days and provides fresh fish and produce to the Mission.

Community Garden

The Missions Community Garden is 14,000 sq ft used to grow vegetables and herbs for the campus. The garden is also used to teach residents gardening skills.

Dining Facility

The Mission serves 2000 meals each day to the Omaha community and campus residents.

Fitness Centers

With the Rebuilding Lives Campaign, the Mission has added three fitness centers located throughout the campus. These centers are used to teach residents healthy living and help fit against obesity.

Transportation

Free transportation to and from the campus is provided to both those residing at the Mission and those who are simply coming for a meal. Residents are also provided transportation to and from necessary appointments.

Timberlake Outreach Center is an extraordinary resource that empowers individuals by providing clothing, personal care items and food. Providing these services helps community members supplement their income and increase their chances of avoiding homelessness. The outreach center serves 6000 people per month from the surrounding and includes individuals from both Nebraska and Iowa. Twenty three percent of those seeking assistance come from rural areas across both states.

Additionally, the outreach center offers a variety of life-skills classes free of charge including GED completion courses, computer training, case management, employment readiness and English as a second language courses.

Wellness Center

Health needs are met through medical partnerships providing nurse practitioners and teaching opportunities for students from organizations such as: Clarkson College School of Nursing, University of Nebraska Medical Center, Visiting Nurses Association, Community Alliance, Heartland Family Services and Lutheran Family Services amongst others.