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It is the vision of Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska (CSS) to inspire hope and love in every encounter and that includes serving **every** client who comes to us in need with dignity and respect. For nearly 100 years, CSS has been giving food to those in need, helping families with rent and utilities, welcoming refugees and immigrants, sheltering women and children fleeing domestic violence, and providing love and support to women in crisis pregnancies – and we will continue to do so.

However, today, I need to give you an important update capturing the uncertainties of what is going on nationally and now locally, and ask for your prayers and financial support.

Since 2015, CSS has participated and benefited from the annual “Give to Lincoln Day” event sponsored and supported by the Lincoln Community Foundation (LCF). Generally, there is a matching grant gifted to the LCF which is then passed on to all participating non-profits in proportion to their total gifts received through Give to Lincoln Day. This annual event has been beneficial to our community and has been instrumental in helping CSS reach our yearly funding goals.

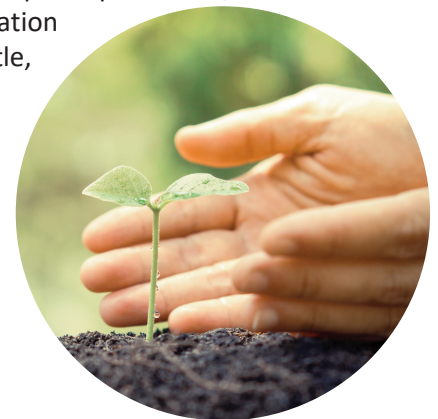
In 2023, the LCF added a new requirement of all non-profits in order to participate. Now, the LCF requires all participating non-profits to agree to a new “non-discrimination affirmation statement.” While the statement has a friendly-worded title, the newly added requirement could require Catholic organizations to adopt policies which are contrary to the teachings of the Church.

For example, the LCF affirmation statement could require CSS adopt policies allowing a male employee who identifies as a female to use the women’s bathroom. Beyond this example, the affirmation statement could be used, in the future, as a sword to strip the Catholicity of CSS.

The LCF affirmation statement reads as follows: *I affirm my non-profit organization does not discriminate as to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ethnicity, marital status, military status, disability, or any other status prohibited by applicable law in the provision of programs and services, or in employment.*

LCF does not permit non-profits to modify the affirmation statement or, in the alternative, insert their own non-discrimination statement. The only accommodation for religious organizations is an acknowledgment that the Nebraska Fair Employment Practices Act permits religious organizations to make hiring decisions based on an employee’s religious affiliation (i.e. Catholic organizations can prioritize the hiring of Catholic applicants over non-Catholic applicants). Notably, the LCF affirmation statement includes gender as a protected class, but does not include sex as a protected class.

In addition to this far-reaching statement, the LCF initially also required all participating non-profits to agree to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) identified “Hate Map,” which labels organizations that do not affirm all sexual orientations and gender choices, and adopt ever-changing policies to this affect, as a hate group. Many trusted and effective faith-based organizations, such as the Alliance Defending Freedom, a non-profit law firm which successfully defends the religious liberty rights of individuals and organizations, have been labeled a “Hate Group” by the SPLC.



While efforts were made to reach a resolution with the LCF so faith-based organizations with concerns about the affirmation statement could participate, the final affirmation statement, while having removed reference to the SPLC, failed to account for the legal rights of religious organizations under the U.S. and Nebraska Constitutions and other laws. As a result, Catholic organizations within the Diocese of Lincoln, including CSS, along with **more than 40 diverse faith-based organizations**, have decided not to participate in the official "Give to Lincoln Day" event this year.

CSS strongly believes that any effort to restrict or diminish our faith's free expression and practice will have a profoundly negative impact on the flourishing of our neighbors and Lincoln as a whole. **As such, we are committed to not taking money from or participating in any program that restricts CSS's ability to fulfill its mission consistent with the teachings of our Catholic faith.**



So, today, we are asking you to **generously support CSS and other faith-based organizations you believe in with renewed fervor through this unexpected challenge.**

We rely exclusively on you and our regular donors to give as they would have during "Give to Lincoln Day" and, if possible, to give sacrificially.

Last year, we raised more than \$100,000 and we would like to meet, or exceed that amount this year so that we can continue to serve all people of the Lincoln community. The attached card highlights some of the exciting projects that we have going on that need your support. **We invite you to grow, nourish, nurture, and sustain Hope in the Good Life with us.**

As Bishop Conley wrote in his recent letter about Give to Lincoln Day, "As Catholics, we are called to engage the world with charity and truth, through Jesus Christ and his Church. Let us continue to collaborate to carry out his work in service to those in our community who are in need, as we have done in the Diocese of Lincoln for nearly 150 years, always remaining true to our mission."

May God bless and keep you always!!

Katie Patrick
Executive Director

P.S.: Thank you again for your past support of CSS during Give to Lincoln Day. Though we are not participating this year, we ask for your continued support by filling out the form below and returning it with your donation in the enclosed envelope, or by donating online at csshope.org or by scanning this QR code. **Thank you for helping us bring Hope in the Good Life!**



Yes! I want to help Catholic Social Services
Grow | Nourish | Nurture | Sustain and bring Hope in the Good Life!

Support Enclosed: __\$250 __\$100 __\$50 __\$25 __\$10 __other \$_____

Please make checks payable to **Catholic Social Services**. Donate by credit card at **csshope.org**. All contributions to CSS are tax deductible as allowed by law.

Phone: _____
Email: _____

PRAYER INTENTIONS

Please remember my intentions at Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska:

Please check this box if you **DO NOT** want a written acknowledgment for this gift (to request a year-end statement email hello@csshope.org).
Note that all single gifts \$250 or over will prompt a written communication from CSS in order to comply with IRS tax laws.