

September 14, 2012

Patrick O'Donnell, Clerk of the Legislature
State Capitol, Room 2018
PO Box 94604
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509

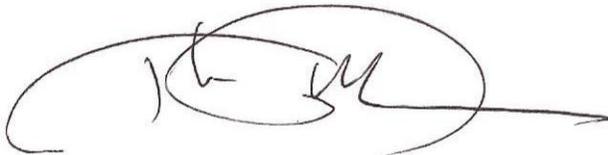
Dear Mr. O'Donnell,

Nebraska Revised Statute 81-3132 requires the Department of Health and Human Services to report to the Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature by September 15, 2012, regarding ACCESSNebraska with information on staffing and contracts with community-based organizations.

This report is attached.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 402-471-1878.

Respectfully,



Thomas D. Pristow, MSW, ACSW
Director, Division of Children and Family Services

81-3132: Update on ACCESSNebraska

Staffing

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has evaluated the need for staff in local offices across the state. The data used to determine staffing locations was number of persons receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps.

Attached is a map showing the number of SNAP recipients per county as well as the number of staff and the counties where they are located. (Attachment A)

In addition to the attached data, Economic Assistance Administrators were asked to provide information specific to their geographic areas. Their input was also considered when determining staffing needs. The same data and information will be used when filling additional positions for LB 825.

As of September 1, 2012, the following staff have been retained, hired or are in the process of being hired.

DHHS retained 22.5 Social Service Workers in the Central and Western Service Areas. These staff were scheduled for layoff in July 2012. Experienced and bilingual staff were retained in the following offices:

- Grand Island -5
- Hastings - 5
- Broken Bow - 3
- Kearney - 3
- Imperial- 1.5
- McCook – 2
- Chadron – 1
- Ord – 1
- Alliance – 1

DHHS added six (6) Social Service Workers in the Eastern Service Area. Some staff were recalled from the employee reemployment pool while others are transferring from other offices. They are or will be in the following offices:

- 3737 Lake St., Omaha - 2
- 5211 South 31st St., Omaha - 2
- 1261 Golden Gate Dr., Papillion – 2

DHHS is in the process of hiring the following positions:

- Pender: 2 Social Service Workers
- Southeast Service Area (Lincoln area): 1 Community Support Specialist
- Fremont Customer Service Center: 2 Social Service Workers will assist walk-ins to the Fremont Customer Service Center as well as travel to itinerate offices in Wahoo and Blair.

It is anticipated that additional staff will be hired by November 1, 2012 to help meet the needs of the local offices. Additional hiring will occur based on available dollars and the needs as identified by SNAP participation numbers and information received from the Service Areas.

Customer Service

DHHS has specialized staff assigned to Spousal Impoverishment and Refugee applications until the application process of the case is complete. This helps to ensure that these complicated cases are properly processed.

DHHS allows every client to ask for an in-person interview. Currently, 99% of interviews are done by telephone.

DHHS assists individuals who walk into a local office where Economic Assistance staff are located. Staff can assist with applying on-line, completing a paper application, answer general questions and accept and scan client paperwork.

DHHS has an email address where questions can be directed. They are responded to by an employee who is well trained in that program area. That email address is dhhs.ACCESSNebraskaquestions@nebraska.gov.

DHHS has kiosks available for client use where clients can apply for services, check case status and provide updates. (Attachment B)

Community Partners

DHHS has over six hundred community partners who provide various levels of service. The level of service is determined by the community partner. An interactive search tool for the community partners is located on the DHHS website at the following link: http://dhhs.ne.gov/children_family_services/AccessNebraska/Pages/Accessnebraska_partnersgrid.aspx.

The Community Partners can participate in a community partner workgroup. DHHS convenes a monthly community partner phone call to discuss concerns and ideas. The Community Support Specialists participate in the monthly phone call.

DHHS currently has eight (8) Community Support Specialists and are in the process of hiring a ninth who will be located in the Southeast Service Area. The Community Support Specialists work closely with the Community Partners to offer support to them.

The Community Partners are not paid for their services nor are they in a contractual agreement.

81-3132 Attachment A

MAP

81-3132 Attachment B

Offices open to the public

Attachment B: Nebraska Economic Assistance Offices Open to the Public

| Office Location | Kiosks available | Staff available | Staff Available FT or PT |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Ainsworth – 644 E. 4 th St., (402)387-2523 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 2. Alliance – 411 Black Hills, (308)763-2900 (staff expected to be available in January 2013) | No (space is not available) | Yes | FT (in January 2013) |
| 3. Auburn – 1908 O St., (402)274-4021 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 4. Beatrice – 3000 Lincoln Blvd, 204 Sheridan, (402) 223-6000 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 5. Blair – 597 Grant St., Suite 100 (402)426-2329 (staff expected to be available in October 2012) | No | Yes | PT |
| 6. Broken Bow – 2475 South E. St., (308)872-6700 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 7. Center – 309 Bazille St., (402)288-4226 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 8. Chadron – 1033 E. 3 rd St, (308)432-0537 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 9. Columbus – 2365 39 th Ave., (402)564-1113 | Yes – 2 kiosks | Yes | FT |
| 10. Dakota City – 1401 Pine St., (402)241-0032 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 11. Fairbury – 411 Fourth St., (402)729-6168 | No (space is not available) | Yes | FT |
| 12. Falls City – 1700 Stone St., (402)245-4431 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 13. Fremont – 839 S. Broad St., (402)753-1610 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 14. Fremont – 124 E. 5 th Street, (402)727-3200 | Yes – 1 kiosk | No | PT |
| 15. Gering – 1600 10 th Street, (308)436-6500 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 16. Grand Island - 116 South Pine St., (308)385-6100 | Yes – 2 kiosks | Yes | FT |
| 17. Grand Island – 208 N. Pine St., (308)385-6123 | Yes – 1 kiosk | No | PT |
| 18. Hastings – 300 N. St. Joseph Ave., Room 204, (402)462-1800 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 19. Hebron – 225 N. 4 th St., (402)768-0400 | No (space is not available) | Yes | FT |
| 20. Imperial – 135 W. 5 th St., (308) 882-4791 | No | Yes | PT |
| 21. Kearney – 24 West 16 th St., (308)865-5592 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 22. Lexington – 800 N. Washington, (308)324-6633 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 23. Lexington – 1501 Plum Creek Pkwy, Suite 4, (308) 324-1416 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 24. Lincoln – 1050 N Street, Suite 250, (402)471-7000 | Yes – 4 kiosks | Yes | FT |
| 25. McCook – 108 West D St, (308)345-8420 | No (space is not available) | Yes | FT |
| 26. Nebraska City – 917 Wildwood Lane, Suite A, (402)873-6671 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 27. Neligh – 501 Main St., (402) 887-4196 | No | Yes | FT |
| 28. Norfolk – 209 N. 5 th St., (402)370-3120 | Yes – 4 kiosks | Yes | FT |

Attachment B: Nebraska Economic Assistance Offices Open to the Public

| Office Location | Kiosks available | Staff available | Staff Available FT or PT |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 29. North Platte – 200 South Silber St., (308)535-8200 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 30. Ogallalla – 210 E. 5 th St., (308) 284-8080 | No (space is not available) | Yes | FT |
| 31. Omaha – 1215 S. 42 nd St., (402)595-2665 | Yes – 5 kiosks | Yes | FT |
| 32. Omaha – 3737 Lake St., (402)595-3700 | Yes – 2 kiosks | Yes | FT |
| 33. Omaha – 1313 Farnam St., (402)595-2880 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 34. Omaha – 5211 S. 31 st St., (402)595-1787 | Yes – 2 kiosks | Yes | FT |
| 35. O’Neill – 128 North 6 th St., (402)336-2750 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 36. Ord – 213 S. 15 th St., (308)728-3685 | No | Yes | FT |
| 37. Papillion – 1251 Golden Gate Dr. (402)595-1394 | Yes – 1kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 38. Pender – 415 Main St., (402)385-2571 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 39. Seward – 1313 285 th Road., (402)646-2132 | No | Yes | FT |
| 40. Sidney – 1820 Illinois, (308)254-6900 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |
| 41. Valentine – 365 N. Main St, Suite 4 Courthouse (402)376-1790 | No | Yes | FT |
| 42. Wahoo – 433 N. Chestnut, (402)443-4252 | No | Yes | PT |
| 43. York – 824 Lincoln Ave., (402)362-4471 | Yes – 1 kiosk | Yes | FT |