Communities across Greater NE are losing their best and brightest young people. It begs the questions:

- How will we keep our young people here in Greater Nebraska?
- How will we build communities so that people will not only want to stay, but also want to move into?
- How will we create the kind of civic pride that will translate into thriving communities for years to come?
The new Center of Excellence, through a partnership between Beyond School Bells and Civic Nebraska, will serve as a hub for partnerships, information, and resources from across Greater Nebraska to address those questions.
What is the Center of Excellence?

From our new Grand Island office, this collaboration will create a physical and virtual hub for professional development, experiential activities, and community engagement for students, educators, and after school professionals to plan and implement service learning in the after-school space.

The Center of Excellence works to give all stakeholders the opportunity to do meaningful work to support and improve their communities.
Greater Nebraska Center of Excellence

On site collaboration space for teachers, after school providers, community partners, and students

Virtual archived professional development

Live online presentation and professional development
Service-learning is an approach to teaching and learning in which students use academic and civic knowledge and skills to address genuine community needs.

Service-learning is a type of experiential and project-based learning that drives students’ academic interests and passions toward addressing real community needs. The process is a learner-centered cycle of inquiry, compelling young people to answer questions such as:

- What are the true needs in my community?
- What are the root causes of these needs?
- How, where, and from whom can I learn more?
- How can I contribute to a solution?
Standards for High Quality Service Learning

- Meaningful Service: personal and community relevance
- Link to Curriculum: intentional teaching strategy
- Reflection: ongoing thinking and analysis
- Diversity: understanding and mutual respect
- Youth Voice: a voice in planning and implementing
- Partnerships: collaborative and mutually beneficial
- Progress Monitoring: ongoing assessments
- Duration and Intensity: to address community needs
Getting Started in Service Learning

- Identify an authentic community need
- Research and plan
- Identify community partners
- Create a plan
- Implement
- Celebrate
- Reflect throughout
Examples

**Community Gardening**
One program operated 36 raised bed gardens. Students from K-5 took part in every aspect of the garden and provided the equivalent of 1,000 meals of fresh, healthy produce to local families who were living in a food desert.

**Senior Prom**
Students determined that elderly people in their area were often lonely and left out of activities. Students, along with a gerontology class and a retirement home, planned a “Senior Prom.” They had food, music and dancing.

**Mini Pantries**
One student group decided to work on food insecurity in neighborhoods where many families did not have reliable transportation. They partnered with a builder and the food bank and built and filled mini pantries in neighborhoods.
Resources

Civic Nebraska Center of Excellence homepage
https://www.civicnebraska.org/youth-civic-leadership/service-learning-center-excellence/

Beyond School Bells
https://beyondschoolbells.org/

National Youth Leadership Council
https://www.nylc.org/
Meeting #2
What does Service Learning do for your community?

Service-learning has a **positive effect** on students' personal and interpersonal development, leadership, and communication skills.

Service-Learning is part of a national movement to increase civic engagement.

Service-Learning helps prepare students for the job market.

Service-Learning provides useful services in the community addressing authentic issues.
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Today

Conference Opportunity
National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC)
April 14, 15
Free to you
https://www.nylc.org/page/SLCHome

Service Learning Training
NYLC

Progress on group formation and topic selection

Volunteer Nebraska
Place to look for ideas http://www.volunteernebraska.org/
Turn volunteerism into Service Learning
Mary Ingram, Phillips, NE

An opportunity
Watchable Wildlife NE Game and Parks
http://outdoornebraska.gov/watchablewildlifegrants/
Civic NE 24% matching
Next Steps

Planning Your Project
Possible Subgroups
  Partnerships – school or community
  Inventory resources
  Inventory needs - $, tools, transp
  plan steps in the process
Build in Time for Reflection

Teacher/Supervisor’s role
  Oversight – schedule, budget
  Documentation
  Allow for student decisions
Next meeting
reflection
Forming
partnerships