Dear (Senator or Candidate):

I am following up on an invitation you recently received to a Candidate Forum sponsored by the Coalition for a Strong Nebraska (CSN) and the Nonprofit Association of the Midlands (NAM). The forum will be held on October 13, 2020 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. via a Zoom webinar and broadcast on Facebook live. The original email sent is copied below.

We are expecting a great turnout of candidates to hear from nonprofit organizations that operate statewide to provide an update on how nonprofits and the constituents they serve are meeting their essential needs. Representatives from these organizations, including Foodbank for the Heartland, Legal Aid of Nebraska, Grand Island YWCA, and Heartland Workforce Solutions, will also describe, based on their work, what poverty looks like in Nebraska and how people in every part of the state are experiencing poverty. This is an important educational forum which will provide each candidate with an opportunity to introduce themselves and to show their interest in the work nonprofits do throughout the state for our citizens.

More than 600 nonprofits, their staffs and boards of directors statewide will be invited to tune in. I hope you will accept my personal invitation to attend the forum. I would be grateful if you could the organizers, listed below, know whether you will attend.

Thank you!

 ORIGINAL E-MAIL INVITATION

The Coalition for a Strong Nebraska (CSN [Coalition for a Strong Nebraska](https://strongnebraska.org/)) and the Nonprofit Association of the Midlands (NAM [Nonprofit Association of the Midlands](https://www.nonprofitam.org/)) are co-hosting a legislative candidate forum on **Tuesday, October 13, 2020, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**  The purpose of the forum is to provide each legislative candidate with an opportunity to introduce themselves to the hundreds of nonprofit entities we represent and to learn about the work being done and the resources provided by the nonprofits in your legislative district, for the constituents in your district.

The forum format is a zoom webinar that will be broadcast on Facebook live. All nonprofit members of both associations will be invited, including their boards of directors, to listen in.  A list of all nonprofit members and other materials, and a Zoom link and calendar invitation will be provided to the candidates prior to the forum.

A snapshot of poverty in each legislative district will be given during the presentation. Questions may be submitted anonymously by the candidates to the moderator to be answered as time allows after the presentations. At the end of the webinar, each candidate, if they wish, will have an opportunity to briefly introduce themselves.

CSN and NAM do not endorse candidates or promote or endorse any political party.  Our goal is to educate candidates by making them aware of the impact of the nonprofit sector, to provide a picture of what poverty looks like in Nebraska, and to educate voters about candidates and their interest in nonprofit work and the populations they serve.

Please let us know as soon as you are able if you will be joining us.  Please contact Laurie Ponce at [laurie@strongnebraska.org](mailto:laurie@strongnebraska.org) or 402-310-3652, or Hannah Young at [hannah@nonprofitam.org](mailto:hannah@nonprofitam.org) or 417-827-3065.  Thank you!

Ground Rules

* The forum is nonpartisan, and no endorsements of any candidate will be made.
* Candidates should submit a short bio to the sponsors at least 5 days before the event to be distributed to our members.  Please send to [laurie@strongnebraska.org](mailto:laurie@strongnebraska.org) or [hannah@nonprofitam.org](mailto:hannah@nonprofitam.org).
* Substitutes for the candidate will not be allowed.
* Information about the participating organizations and the presentations will be provided to the candidates ahead of time.
* To preserve a non-partisan atmosphere during the forum, no campaign backgrounds or clothing may be used or worn by any person.
* The press will be informed of the event and invited to attend, but no questions will be asked of candidates.
* Candidates, presenters and moderators should enter the online forum at least 5 minutes before the event begins.
* The event will begin promptly at the starting time.
* The webinar screen will show the moderators, presenter, and the candidates.
* The moderator will conduct the event and has the authority to enforce the event’s ground rules and format.
* All dialogue will be politically neutral.
* Time will be reserved for candidates to ask questions of any of the presenters at the conclusion of the event.
* The forum will be recorded and posted on websites and social media.
* A follow up candidate questionnaire will be sent to candidates and results will be published and distributed to our members.

Tentative Agenda:

1. Introductions - sponsors, candidates and presenters
2. Overview of pandemic-era nonprofits in Nebraska - Hannah Young, Nonprofit Association of the Midlands
3. Poverty in Nebraska - snapshots of what poverty looks like in different parts of the state and how it affects the people who live there
4. Nonprofit work throughout Nebraska - where they operate and contact information
5. Q & A from candidates to panel

**Laurie Ponce, Coalition for a Strong Nebraska**

**Hannah Young, Nonprofit Association of the Midlands**