



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Lincoln Action Program Receives Stimulus Funds to Expand
Head Start and Early Head Start Programs**

Lincoln, Ne – January 25, 2010 – Thanks to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, also known as the federal stimulus, the Head Start and Early Head Start programs at Lincoln Action Program will serve more than an additional 100 children in 2010.

Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler announced that Lincoln Action Program, which administers the Head Start program serving Lancaster and Saunders Counties, received \$294,204 in stimulus funds for expansion.

Head Start Director Susan Powers-Alexander said the funds, which will be paid for two years, have allowed the program to open two new classrooms that serve 36, 3- to 5-year-olds. Six new positions were created to serve the children.

The two new classrooms are located within delegate Lincoln Public Schools -- one at First Presbyterian and one at Calvert Elementary. The new program began on December 7, 2009.

Prior to the expansion, Lincoln Action Program provided Head Start services to 504 preschool-age children and their families in Lancaster and Saunders Counties. At the time of application for expansion funding, there were 712 children on the waiting list to receive Head Start services.

“Lincoln Action Program has a long commitment to Head Start and early childhood education. We continue to learn more and more about the huge impact these programs can have on children for the rest of their lives. And those programs must be available to families with limited economic and social opportunities if we are to have a community in which everyone can contribute,” said Mayor Beutler.

Early Head Start also received federal stimulus money: \$645,902 to be provided for two years. The Early Head Start program serves pregnant women and children to age 3.

The stimulus money will allow the program to serve 78 more women and children through a home-based program option. Prior to expansion, the program served 140 children, 117 through a home-based option and 23 through a center-based option, all within the City of Lincoln. Expansion funds will allow the program to serve more families within the city of Lincoln, as well as to offer services to families living in all of Lancaster and Saunders Counties. At the time application for expansion funding, there were 155 families on the waiting list to receive Early Head Start services.

Lincoln Action Program's Early Head Start was one of 8 in the state to receive the competitive funding, said J. Todd Hall, President of the Lincoln Action Program Board of Directors. A total of 297 Early Head Start openings were funded statewide, with Lincoln Action Program being awarded 26% of those openings.

Powers-Alexander said Early Head Start expanded services will take place in the home. The families are assigned a family advocate who makes weekly home visits that are devoted to making gains toward achieving the specific goals of the child and family. All home-based Early Head Start families are invited to two socializations a month, which offer them an opportunity to participate in activities with other Early Head Start families at no cost.

“Head Start and Early Head Start services at Lincoln Action Program provide invaluable benefits not only to the children and families participating in the programs, but the overall community,” said Vi See, Executive Director of Lincoln Action Program.

Research has shown that Head Start children experience increased achievement test scores and favorable long-term effects in terms of less grade repetition, special education, and improved school graduation rates. In addition, the results of a longitudinal study of more than 600 Head Start graduates in San Bernardino County, California, showed that society receives nearly \$9 in benefits for every \$1 invested in Head Start children. Benefits include increased earnings, employment, and family stability and decreased dependency on public benefits, crime costs, and educational costs relating to class repetition and special education.

“We’re excited to be able to extend the benefits of Head Start and Early Head Start to Lancaster and Saunders Counties,” said See.

Lincoln Action Program, the Community Action Agency serving Lancaster and Saunders Counties, is a private, non-profit agency that has been helping families faced with the challenges of poverty for 44 years.

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