

Prosper Lincoln Establishes Community Agenda

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Courtesy Photo

Barbara Bartle, executive director of the Lincoln Community Foundation, addresses a Prosper Lincoln meeting at the Pinnacle Bank Arena last week.

More than 1,000 members of the community met at Pinnacle Bank Arena last week to learn the latest developments with Prosper Lincoln, a community initiative bringing people together to make the city better. A Community Agenda has been established for Lincoln and three priorities identified – Early Childhood, Employment Skills and Innovation. Prosper Lincoln leaders encouraged citizens across the city to get involved and help make a positive difference in each area.

During 2015 an engagement team invited representatives from all sectors of the city to determine what the community could do to ensure youth are successful, the economy grows and the city remains strong and vibrant. Under the leadership of the University of Nebraska Public Policy Center, more than 2,100 ideas were gathered and work groups were assigned to set goals and objectives, which led to the creation of a Community Agenda and three community areas of focus being determined.

Early Childhood – The goal is to help all children, regardless of their background, learn and grow during their early years. According to Lincoln school officials, 700 at risk children are on a waiting list to attend Lincoln Public Schools early childhood programs and one goal is to ensure every child has space to attend a program by 2020. The Nebraska Children and Families Foundation will serve as the support organization for this priority.

Employment Skills – The goal is to have a workforce with the talent to meet the increasing demand from employers for stronger knowledge and capability skill sets. Enhancing job skills will result in more employment opportunities, which can help reduce poverty levels while promoting higher wages and better benefits for local workers. Southeast Community College and the Lincoln Public Schools will serve as the support organizations for this priority.

Innovation – Lincoln strives to be a city of innovation for all sectors, from cradle to grave, which will make things better for residents throughout the community. Prosper Lincoln’s goal is to create a culture of innovation that can be passed on from one generation to the next. Nebraska Innovation Campus, Firespring and FUSE Coworking will serve as the support organizations for this priority.

“The level of community-wide input this past year has been incredible and as a result, three priority areas have been selected for our community agenda,” said Barbara Bartle, President of the Lincoln Community Foundation. “Now it is our turn, every sector of our city – to work together and to coordinate efforts and resources. No single institution or individual can achieve the goals of the community agenda. It will take each one of us working together and supporting each other to make a difference for all of us.”

Bartle said commitments are already being made and implemented. She noted the Lincoln City Libraries will soon start a “15 Minutes a Day” reading program for preschool children to help promote school readiness and success. She also said the following Lincoln businesses and organizations have made commitments to support Prosper Lincoln:

Abel Foundation

Ameritas

Buffet Early Childhood Fund

Firespring

FUSE Coworking

Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development

Lincoln City Libraries

Lincoln Community Foundation

Lincoln Industries

Lincoln Public Schools

Mapes Industries Inc.

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation

Nebraska Innovation Campus

Nelnet

Southeast Community College

Tetrad Property Group

Union Bank

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Individuals, organizations and businesses throughout Lincoln are asked to get involved in Prosper Lincoln and help advance these priority areas. People are encouraged to search for the perfect opportunity to volunteer, stay connected, join the community, give time and make a donation to support young children, employment skills and innovation on the Prosper Lincoln website. More information can be found at www.prosperlincoln.org.

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