

June 28, 2024

Brandon Metzler  
Clerk of the Legislature  
Room 2028  
Nebraska State Capitol  
P.O. Box 94604  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

Dear Mr. Metzler,

Attached, please find the report submitted by the “North Omaha ‘Turnback Tax’ Grant Committee,” in fulfillment of the annual reporting requirements outlined in Neb. Rev. Stat. §13-2610. This report includes:

- (i) A description of the projects that were funded during the most recently completed calendar year (p. 2-4);
- (ii) A description of where such projects were located (p. 2-4);
- (iii) A description of the outcomes of such projects (p. 5); and
- (iv) A ten-year strategic plan (p. 6-9).

Sincerely,

The North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant Committee

Commissioner Chris Rodgers  
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Councilwoman Juanita Johnson  
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*This document submitted electronically via Agency Submission Report form at  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/agencies/index.php>*

**North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant  
2024 Report**

2022-23 Award Summary

The North Omaha Turnback Tax Committee made grant awards to the following organizations for the 2022-23 grant cycle.

**BeAmbi & Company**

**\$4,000** awarded for equipment and supplies, marketing and staff for community passion projects for aspiring creatives.

5801 N 90th Street, Omaha, NE

**Busy Vegan**

**\$6,500** awarded to support purchase of a food truck.

3815 N 19th Street, Omaha, NE

**Great Plains Black History Museum**

**\$4,000** awarded to support the Museum's 2023 Community Exhibits and Presentations.

2221 N 24<sup>th</sup> Street, Omaha, NE

**Heavy Hitters Youth Program**

**\$5,000** awarded to support "More than Playing Football," by the Heavy Hitters Youth Program, investing in our youth to build character, mental and physical wellness from participation in team sports.

Youth primarily recruited from zip codes: 68110, 68111, and 68104

**Island Chill**

**\$4,000** awarded to support of expanded mobile food truck service.

7823 Military Avenue, Omaha, NE

**MAYS Foundation**

**\$5,000** awarded to support "Hood to the Woods" a weeklong outdoor challenge trip for gang involved youth.

5020 Grand Avenue, Omaha, NE

**National Community Of The Disadvantaged Enrichment, NCODE IN**

**\$6,500** in support of Project Reconnect IT-LB 551 Research Center of North Omaha.

3946 Kansas Avenue, Omaha, NE

**North Omaha Community Partnership**

**\$5,000** in support of classroom and workshop training to challenged youth and re-entry young adults.

4815 N 148th Circle, Omaha, NE / Davis Contracting, LLC

**Omaha Skills Connection**

**\$5,626** in support of Direct Connect training and career development opportunities.

Bryant Resource Center, Omaha, NE

**Parker Youth Inc.**

**\$5,000** awarded to support "Another Option" program, providing wrestling, mentoring, counseling, and educational direct to youth.

3034 Sprague Street, Omaha, NE

**North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant  
2024 Report**

**Stable Gray**

**\$6,500** awarded to support Access Camera Rental.  
3223 N 45th Street, Building V, Omaha, NE

**The Keys Foundation**

**\$5,000** awarded to support Confidently Me! Mentorship Program.  
Omaha, NE

**Trauma House of Hope**

**\$6,000** in support of trauma therapy and intervention to family and youth.  
2701 North 24th Street (Carnation Ballroom), Omaha, NE

**U.N.T.A.M.E.D. LLC**

**\$6,500** in support of supplies for t-shirt printing and podcast equipment.  
4718 Kansas Avenue, Omaha, NE

**Vasser Academy LLC**

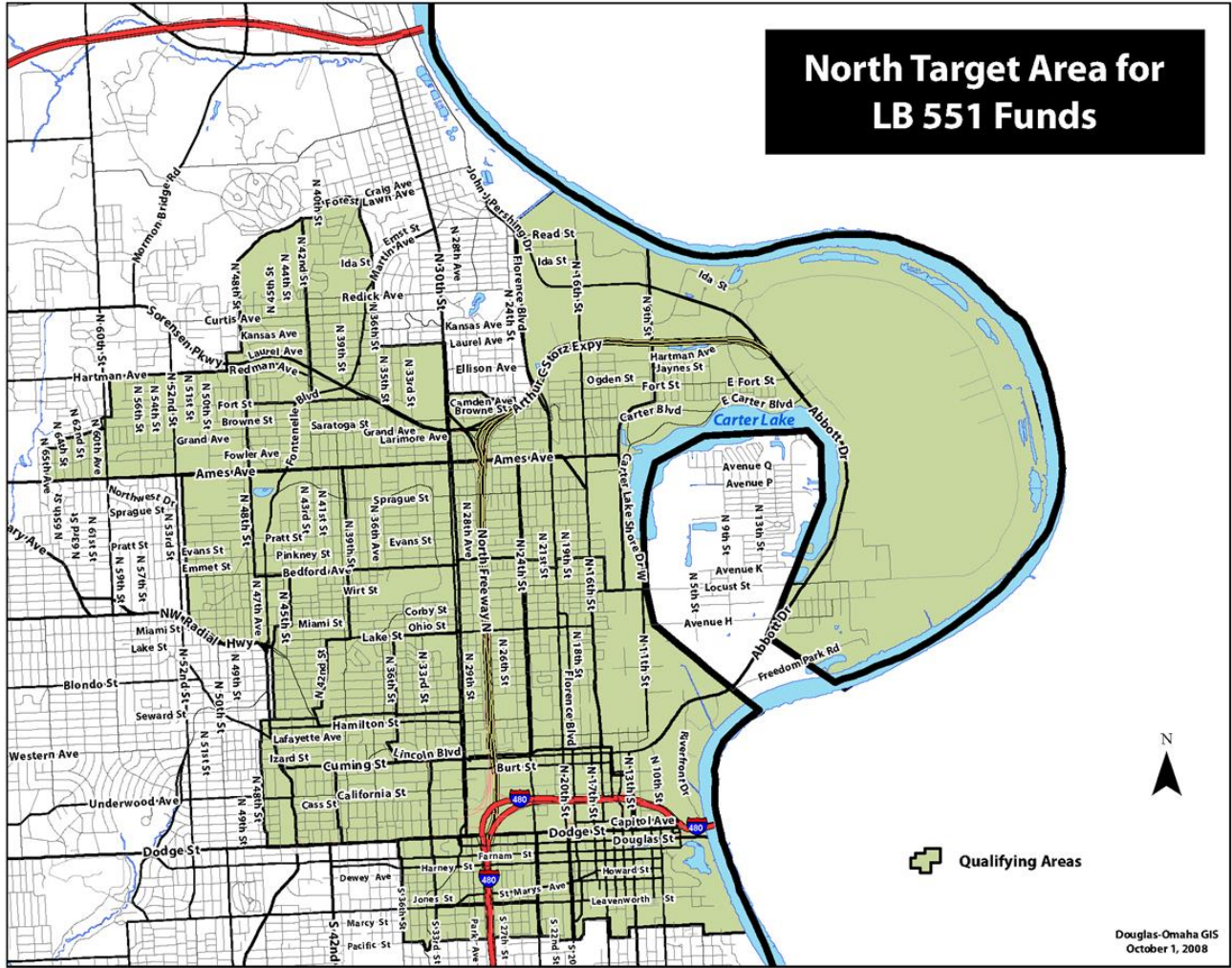
**\$6,500** awarded to support in-home childcare.  
5706 N 40th Street, Omaha, NE

**Victory Psalms LLC**

**\$6,500** in support of assisted living home for female minority veterans.  
6223 Florence Boulevard, Omaha, NE

*Note: Addresses listed are provided by applicant organization and do not necessarily encompass site(s) of project activities. Funds are distributed to areas with a high concentration of poverty and recipients eligible for funding complete projects in the target area highlighted in the attached map on page 4.*

North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant  
2024 Report



**North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant  
2024 Report**

2022-23 Award Final Reports

Final reports submitted by 2022-23 grant recipients are available electronically via the following link:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/17UQLB0jCkSuO6grurzFsrfg2Tyv32xXI?usp=sharing>

# North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant 2024 Report

## Committee Strategic Plan

### **I. Purpose**

Nebraska’s Convention Center Facility Financing Assistance Act provides that ten percent of the collected tax funds “turned back” to the City of Omaha from the State of Nebraska shall be equally distributed to areas with a high concentration of poverty. An “area with a high concentration of poverty,” is defined as an area within the corporate limits of a city of the metropolitan class consisting of one or more contiguous census tracts, as determined by the most recent federal decennial census, which contain a percentage of persons below the poverty line of greater than thirty percent, and all census tracts contiguous to such tract or tracts, as determined by the most recent federal decennial census. Census data designates two distinct geographic areas in Omaha that meet this definition: “North” and “South” regions, respectively. Per statute, each area shall establish a development fund and form a committee which shall identify and research potential projects to be completed in the target area and make final determinations on the use of the funds received for such projects. This document pertains specifically to the practices and strategies of the Turnback Tax Grant Committee serving the region in North Omaha.

Nebraska’s Convention Center Facility Financing Assistance Act further provides that funds shall be used for three purposes: to 1) showcase important historical aspects of an area with a high concentration of poverty, 2) assist with the reduction of street and gang violence in such areas, or 3) assist with small business and entrepreneurship growth in such areas. The Act stipulates that 55% of the funds shall be allocated for the first two purposes while 45% shall be allocated for the third purpose.

The North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant Committee’s strategic plan documents the Committee’s practices, responsibilities, and targets to uphold the purposes of the funds distributed in eligible areas in the community of North Omaha.

### **II. Roles and Responsibilities**

The North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant Committee is responsible for soliciting, reviewing, and awarding grant applications and reports on an annual basis. Statute dictates the Committee’s membership to consist of four voting members and one non-voting member:

## **North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant 2024 Report**

*A. The member of the city council whose district includes a majority of the census tracts which each contain a percentage of persons below the poverty line of greater than thirty percent.*

Councilmember Juanita Johnson, representative of District 2, has filled this appointment since her election to the City Council in 2021.

*B. The commissioner of the county whose district includes a majority of the census tracts which each contain a percentage of persons below the poverty line of greater than thirty percent.*

Douglas County Commissioner Chris Rodgers, representative of District 3, has filled this appointment since his election to the County Board of Commissioners in 2005.

*C. Two residents of the area with high concentration of poverty, appointed by the aforementioned two members of the committee, shall be appointed for four year terms.*

Resident Committee Members were solicited in September 2021 and applications were accepted through October 12. Candidates were interviewed by committee members in a public meeting held on November 1, 2021. Ernest White and Rodney Johnson were selected to serve as resident members and public notice of the appointments was made November 12, 2021.

*D. The member of the Legislature whose district includes a majority of the census tracts which each contain a percentage of persons below the poverty line of greater than thirty percent.*

Senator Terrell McKinney, representative of District 11, fills this nonvoting committee appointment.

Each member attends meetings of the North Omaha Turnback Tax Committee and participates in the review of grant applications, reports, and the planning and development of other activities and documents, as needed, in coordination with staff.

### **III. Historical Approach**

Generally, the North Omaha Turnback Tax Committee prepares a grant application document to be released to the public in early fall, in conjunction with hosting a public hearing to solicit project ideas from the public. After applications have been received, committee members individually receive applications for review and then gather as a group to make the final determination regarding the annual distribution of funding to such projects. Applicants are notified about their award status in winter and

## **North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant 2024 Report**

then staff process award payments for recipients. Recipients submit interim and final reports regarding their funded projects. Unique factors, including limitations to public gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic and the appointment of new members, have, on occasion, impacted the timeline of these annual activities.

Application documents have historically been submitted to the Committee in paper form and copies were divided and distributed in paper form to each committee member, while two sets of copies were retained for staff purposes. In 2023, grant applications were submitted online. Applicants completed fields in a web form and uploaded the completed grant application document and supporting documentation as attachments to the form. Applications were organized into a digital drive and Committee members received a direct link to the drive to review all materials submitted by applicants.

### **IV. 2024 – 2025 Approach**

The committee has tentatively targeted August 26, 2024 to release the annual grant application and hold a public hearing. The public will be made aware of the meeting and application availability via notice in *The Daily Record*, posted notices on the City and Douglas County websites, an email to recipients from the previous cycle, and other methods of notification outlined in statute. This hearing may be made available for virtual participation by members of the public.

Applications will be accepted until September 30, 2024 (tentatively). During that time, the application will be available online via the City and Douglas County websites.

Once the application period closes, the committee will review applications individually before publicly meeting on or about November 7, 2024 to review and make the final determination regarding the annual distribution of funding. This meeting will also be publicly noticed via *The Daily Record*, and the City and Douglas County websites and may be made available for virtual participation by members of the public.

After the final meeting, applicants will be contacted regarding the outcome of their application and official notice of award is anticipated to be issued by or during the week of December 9, 2024. Recipient award amounts and applicant documentation will be provided to the City of Omaha's Finance Department for the preparation of award checks.



## **North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant 2024 Report**

This upcoming cycle the Committee continues to refine the content of the application, particularly in terms of gathering relevant information for specific applicant types (e.g., nonprofit vs. business). The application is now implemented as a fully digital, web-based application form accessible by portal login. The Committee intends to continue refining the online application process while also developing a similar process whereby interim and final reports may be submitted by recipients in the same portal as the application. In making changes to the application and reporting process, the Committee weighs considerations, including accessibility for prospective applicants, streamlined administrative activities and recordkeeping, and reduction of waste.

The volume of grant applications submitted to the North Omaha Turnback Tax Grant Committee has increased significantly in recent years (from 19 applications in 2020, to 37 in 2021, 67 in 2022, and 68 in 2023) and the Committee is examining processes to effectively and efficiently review applications and make awards. In particular, the Committee has discussed formalizing and implementing application evaluation criteria to align with funding priorities and compliance with statutory eligibility. The Committee also continues to refine the reporting requirements of recipients in order to gather relevant detail regarding awarded project progress and outcomes.

### **V. Strategic Goals**

The Committee shall solicit project ideas from the public and shall hold a public hearing in the area with a high concentration of poverty. The committee shall research potential projects and make the final determination regarding the annual distribution of funding to such projects. The Committee shall distribute appropriated funds in areas with a high concentration of poverty to showcase important historical aspects of such areas, to assist with the reduction of street and gang violence in such areas, and to assist with small business and entrepreneurship growth in such areas and shall observe statutorily dictated proportions of said funding distribution. The Committee shall ensure awards meet community needs by reviewing reports and maintaining regular communications with recipients and shall annually review recipients to determine whether consecutive funding limit has been reached and whether project is eligible for continued funding based on the statutory criteria. Additionally, the Committee shall conduct an annual review of any amendments to the Convention Center Facility Financing Assistance Act and Committee members shall be (re)elected and (re)appointed, according to their election cycle and term limits.