

**Governor's Advisory Board on Services and Volunteerism**

November 29, 2018; 10:15 AM – 2:30 PM

Virginia Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired

397 Azalea Avenue

Richmond, VA 23227

Board Members Present: Lily Beres, Jessica Bowser, Elizabeth Childress Burneson, John Chapman, Tynetta Darden, Vanessa Diamond, Omari Faulkner, Mark Fero, Terry Frye, Ashley Hall, Zachary Leonsis, Gina Lewis, Tye Davenport Mallory, Seema Sethi, Julie Strandlie, James Underwood, Leslie VanHorn, Leah Dozier Walker, and Sheila Williamson-Branch

Board Members Absent: Amy Nisenson and Steven Valdez

VDSS Staff Present: Fran Inge, Gail Harris, Amanda Healy, Roxanne Saunders, Kimberly Brown, Joy Wade, Gay Plungas, Jae-Young Murphy, Gail Doyle, Brendan McDonald, and Victoria Noles

Guests Present: Jennifer Swinson, M. Denise Carl, and Sean Fournia

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The Board Meeting was called to order at 10:12 AM by Board Chair Vanessa Diamond. Vanessa welcomed the committee to the second meeting of the year.

**Adoption of Agenda**

The floor was opened for the adoption of the agenda by Vanessa Diamond. The motion to adopt the agenda was made, seconded, and approved.

**Approval of minutes**

The floor was opened for approval of the minutes from the September 27, 2018. The motion to adopt the minutes was made, seconded, and approved.

**Introduction of new members and staff**

Vanessa Diamond had board members and guests introduce themselves with a brief background. New board member Sheila Williamson-Branch, Treasurer of the City of Danville, was welcomed by the Board.

**AmeriCorps Addressing the Opioid Crisis in Virginia**

CVS Senior Division Director Fran Inge introduced Victoria Noles and Brendan McDonald of the AmeriCorps VISTA Program and explained their roles in building capacity at the state level to address the opioid problem. Other key players in addressing the opioid problem were also introduced: Jennifer Swinson, M. Denise Carl, and Sean Fournia of the Richmond AmeriCorps Healthy Futures Project.

**VDSS AmeriCorps VISTA Program**

Tori (Victoria) and Brendan provided an overview of the opioid crisis with current data on overdoses nationwide and in the state of Virginia. Fatal drug overdoses have been the leading cause of unnatural death in Virginia since 2013. On a national level, CNCS has responded to the crisis by investing more than \$14.9 million in opioid-related AmeriCrops and Senior Corps projects. The Commonwealth has also responded with capacity building to address the issue by involving the Governor's Executive Leadership Team, the VDSS, and AmeriCorps VISTA programs. Some highlights to the VISTA project include the facilitation of listening and training sessions, interagency collaboration, and an intensive treatment and recovery program at the Indian Creek Correctional Center. The presentation was concluded with the

next steps and initiatives for the project and ways board members can help address the opioid issue within their communities.

#### City of Richmond: Richmond AmeriCorps Healthy Futures Project (RAHFP)

AmeriCorps program director Jennifer Swinson introduced second term AmeriCorps members M. Denise Carl and Sean Fournia to the Board, who shared their story and experiences during the presentation. Jennifer provided an overview of program with the involvement of 10 full time AmeriCorps members, peer recovery coaches and mentors, and educational outreach conduits. Implementation of the program is achieved through partners REAL LIFE Community Center, CARITAS – The Healing Place, The McShin Foundation, and VCU Rams in Recovery (RIR). Performance Measurement Results from the first program year 2017-2018 were reported and demonstrated positive impacts with target goals being met. Jennifer concluded the presentation by highlighting various achievements of AmeriCorps members who completed the 2017-2018 program.

At 12:18 p.m. the Board adjourned to lunch session followed by a break out into committee meetings at 12:50 p.m.

#### **Sub-Committee Reports**

At 1:50 pm Vanessa Diamond reopened the session to Committee chairs.

#### **Joint Committee: Outreach and Communications & Volunteerism and Special Events**

Julie Strandlie reported that efforts to promote participation in the Governor's Volunteerism & Service Award nominations continue, especially in the categories of Educational Institution and Small business. Board members were asked to retweet, like, post, and share about the Nomination Awards and the upcoming deadline for submittal. They were also asked to reach out to schools and school personnel. After the nomination process, another round of review of nominees will be added. As for the Volunteerism Conference in May, the board was asked to help with efforts to recruit sponsors and exhibitors. Julie concluded with a discussion on MLK Day of Service on January 21 and Mayor and County Recognition Day and the associated volunteer projects statewide.

#### **Program Committee**

Ashley Hall updated on the Board on the 2018-19 portfolio for AmeriCorps programs. This current program year there are fewer but more bigger programs. An attempt was made to launch a teacher retention corps program with VCU, but due to various factors that could not come into being; therefore an extra \$30,000 is left in the budget. 2019-2020 will be the third year of the three-year funding cycle so all programs, new and returning, will need to compete for the next round of funding (20/21). The three current competitive programs will go through the reapplication review within the next few weeks. In the spring of 2019 the Board will start thinking about guiding principles related to 2020-21 applications.

#### **Public Comments**

Vanessa Diamond elicited public comments at the conclusion of the Committee reports. Liz Childress, Chairman of the Virginia Service Foundation, reported. Liz said the link for the MLK mini grant will be open that afternoon. She reiterated the need for sponsors and exhibitors for the Conference, adding that there will be perks for those that exhibit. Mark Fero told the Board that information will be sent out from the Virginia Service Foundation soon on possible targets to whom to communicate and spread the word for sponsors and exhibitors. Gail Harris emphasized that the Virginia Service Foundation

enables the Volunteerism Conference to take place through the involvement of sponsorship and contracts with hotels and other vendors.

Gail reported that the AmeriCorps community and the program Aspire! is saddened by the passing of Elsa Vasquez Flores, who was a youth member on the Advisory Board two years ago. There's a Go Fund Me page in support of her two younger sisters.

#### **CNCS State Office Director Report**

Gail Harris filled in for State Program Director Tynetta Darden and reported that CNCS is going through a transformation plan which involves restructuring the state office to a regional model. Also, the current two positions of program and grants officer will be combined into a Portfolio Manager, stationed in Philadelphia.

#### **Virginia Commission Updates**

Gail Harris reported that results were received on the Day to Serve initiative (September 11 through October 11) to get those who usually don't volunteer to do just that. Volunteers were gathered, trees were planted, food was distributed, and additional funds were collected.

TTA (Training and Technical Assistance) funding has been established to hire three part-time staff members in the areas of Disaster Readiness and Response, Project Management, and Data Collection Specialist. Recruitment has started.

Gail announced that AmeriCorps Program Manager Amanda Healy has accepted a job with another state agency. Amanda informed the Board that she will start her new position on January 3, 2019 with the VDHCD where she was previously a Community Representative and Program Manager. She will return as Associate Director.

#### **Closing**

The meeting ended with a presentation by Gail Doyle of an outreach video by the Virginia College Advising Corps to recruit AmeriCorps members.

#### **Adjourn**

Vanessa Diamond adjourned the meeting at 2:30 PM.

Prepared by Jae-Young Choe

Submitted by Gail Harris