



Governor's Advisory Board on Services and Volunteerism

February 27, 2020; 10:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Ashland Library, 201 S. Railroad Ave, Ashland, VA

Board Members Present: Lily Beres, Jessica Bowser, Lisette Carbajal, Elizabeth Childress Burneson, Vanessa Diamond, Ashley Hall, Zachary Leonsis, Tye Davenport Mallory, Jenne Nurse, Seema Sethi, Julie Strandlie, James Underwood, Leslie Van Horn, Leah Dozier Walker, and Sheila Williamson-Branch.

Board Members Absent: John Chapman, Omari Faulkner, Mark Fero, Terry Frye, Gina Lewis, , and Steven Valdez.

VDSS Staff Present: Gail Harris, Roxanne Saunders, Kimberly Brown, Gail Doyle, Christina Dumas, Analise Adams, Shannon Girouard, Vickie Johnson-Scott, Samantha Lukasiewicz, and Jae-Young Choe

The Board Meeting was called to order at 10:32 AM by Leah Dozier Walker in place of Board Chair, Julie Strandlie.

Adoption of Agenda and Minutes

The floor was opened for the adoption of the minutes from the meeting on November 14, 2019 by Leah Dozier Walker. The motion to adopt the minutes was made by James Underwood; all seconded and approved.

The floor was opened for approval of the agenda. The motion to adopt the agenda was made, seconded, and approved.

Introduction

Gail Harris introduced new board members: Lisette Carbajal is Director of Government Affairs, Virginia Health Care Association–Virginia Center for Assisted Living. Lisette also does volunteer work. Jenne Nurse, a Fulbright Scholar newly arrived at the Department of Education, serves as Equity Coordinator for the Commonwealth of Virginia and had fellowed in Leah Dozer Walker's office at the DOE. Leah will begin to roll out of her role and duties as Board member to pass on to Jenne, after which Leah will become an ex officio board member. Leah fully endorsed Jenne to the Board.

New to the Virginia Service Commission as AmeriCorps Program Officer is Analise Adams, an AmeriCorp alum. She comes from Shalom Farms, a Richmond area nonprofit that focuses on increasing access to healthy food.

Gail Harris reported that Tynetta Darden, who is actually an ex officio board member, was accidentally listed as a Board member in previous Board meetings. James Underwood made a motion to approve the attendance listing corrections for the board meeting minutes for February, April, and September of 2019. Tye Mallory seconded and all were in favor of the corrections.

Guest Speaker: the 2020 Census

Leah introduced colleague Kelly Thomasson, Secretary of the Commonwealth. Kelly was reappointed as Secretary after serving since 2017. Kelly Thomasson reported that the launch of the 2020 Census is soon approaching. What is the Census? It only happens every ten years, mandated by the U.S. government to take a population count of every person regardless of citizenship status and age. It's important that Virginia has the correct population count in congressional districts-- it makes huge economic impact on Virginia and its communities since funding is distributed based on population numbers. All funding projects are determined from Census numbers which take the form of elementary schools, fire departments, etc. April 1 is Census Day. If you are living in United States on that day, you need to be counted. Census will start collecting data in mid-March by mailing out an invitation to respond. Unlike the hard copy forms of the past, this year they are encouraging people to submit the Census report electronically, which is preferred most, or by phone. Reminders will be sent thereafter to households that do not respond.

The Census Bureau is hiring mostly for enumerators, those who take the Census counts from door to door. They are good paying temporary jobs, allowing for a flexible schedule and paying \$13-24 an hour. Most of the shifts will be for evenings and weekends. Thomasson encouraged the Board to respond and fill out the Census and asked them to promote it. Countonvirginia is the tag name used in social media.

Many within communities are fearful or reluctant to respond to the Census. In 2018 Governor Northam signed an executive order for a Commission representing different constituent groups and regions. African-American males aged 18 to 24 are typically a challenge to count. Undocumented Latinos are afraid of getting deported if they respond despite the fact that information shared on the Census is confidential by law and protected for 72 years. Data cannot be shared at all even with ICE. Another challenge to count in Virginia and across the nation are young children of 1 to 4 years of age.

Board member Tye Mallory asked the Secretary how the Census is going to reach those who are living in motels or are transient. Thomasson reported that there are partnerships working together in communities talking to motels, service providers, and social workers in an effort to identify them. In addition to the homeless population, all group quarters will be enumerated. This includes those living in group quarters, from college dorms, military bases, to prisons.

Board member Ashley Hall raised the concern of fears among the undocumented. The Census has PSA's and one-page flyers and commercials with the aim to ease those fears. In addition, the Census forms will be available in 13 languages and the FAQ's page will appear approximately 50 languages.

Thomasson announced the launch of a new digital pledge to be counted. You can text "pledge" to 804-203-0393 and share this reminder to others.

The Census will be working with state agencies and providing 2-1-1 Virginia with resources. Even ABC stores will display PSA information on their storefronts. The Board was encouraged to share information and visit the Census Bureau website.

Seniors pose another count challenge although the Census does not ask for SSN nor bank account information. Unfortunately, there are scammers who pose as Census takers.

Finally, the Secretary of the Commonwealth reported on Restoration rights. If one is convicted of a felony, their civil rights are lost. Virginia has stepped in to use the power to restore their civil rights and help them rejoin their communities. Next year we may see in the General Assembly a proposal to change that law and to also give the General Assembly the power to grant those rights back. Gail Harris added that AmeriCorps members are strictly forbidden from participating in any Census activities during service hours.

AmeriCorps Program Changes

Gail Harris informed the Board that the adding or deleting of AmeriCorps programs usually occur during the funding process; however the Virginia Service Commission (VSC) has two programs that are moving out of the portfolio. The Opioid outreach program of the Hampton Roads Community Action Program (HRCAP) had quickly completed an RFA with the VSC's encouragement and awareness of HRCAP as being a strong community action agency. They were funded \$75,000 for five members, but they were unable to get the program off the ground. By fall they hadn't recruited any members, didn't bill the VSC any program expenses, and by November the VSC came to the conclusion that it was not working out. Gail reported that the blame partly fell on the VSC for not having provided enough support and also on HRCAP as they weren't fully committed. In the end both parties amicably agreed that it did not make sense to proceed further.

The Advancement Foundation (TAF) in Vinton, Virginia is an intermediary program to help small businesses be more successful. They had 12 program members. There were some ongoing issues which started to pile up this year, resulting in financial penalties. It was determined that the risk for the VSC and for TAF was becoming too large. The decision for TAF to depart from AmeriCorps was an amicable agreement and they were offered a two-month notice to have their members stop service. TAF is no longer in the portfolio.

Risk Assessment and Risk Management

Gail Harris turned the floor over to Shannon Girouard, AmeriCorps Fiscal Officer.

To minimize problems in the future, risk assessment is an important process and prelude to the RFA application review. A pre-award risk assessment can prevent undesirable post-award surprises. The risk in selecting an organization can only be estimated as far as how well they may perform, but much ultimately remains unknown. Therefore, the Commission uses a tool to decide some degree of risk and whether or not to move forward with a particular organization.

As part of the 20/21 Formula RFA, a pre-award risk assessment process is required by the Commission and it's also required by the federal government. The first goal is to reduce risk of financial loss to the Commission's portfolio. Next is to increase prospects for performance in the portfolio. Finally, Commission aims to identify administrative demands and reduce administrative burden.

Risk assessments are performed by determining risk threshold across dimensions, evaluating applicant risks with assessment tools and supplemental documents, choosing to avoid the risks altogether or mitigating the risks, and planning and implementing mitigation measures

Message Refresher/Lunch

At 11:40 a.m. Leah Walker shared about her experience working with Teach for America which the Department of Education supports through general funds for the organization. The work of Teach for America ties into national service and it was a great opportunity to see how some of them work and serve in the community.

Leah reminded board members of the important role as messengers for national service and AmeriCorps programs. There's a Board tool kit available on the website as well as a calendar of events, talking points, and an infographic of AmeriCorps programs in Virginia. In addition to resources available on the virginiastate.virginia.gov website, there are other valuable resources on the CNCS website, social media outlets, and the OVCS monthly newsletter. To help each other practice on how to be good messengers for AmeriCorps programs, Leah led the Board into a group activity. She asked: What are

some key phrases, facts, or analogies that you can use to explain and promote AmeriCorps and national service? Board members participated and among the ideas contributed were: personal connection with members of the community, sharing personal stories on the meaningfulness of serving the community, explaining AmeriCorps by comparing it to the PeaceCorps, sharing experiences from AmeriCorps site visits, networking and attending events, and helping to build capacity and strengthen volunteerism. The Board concluded the group activity by breaking up into pairs to do a role play exercise based on scenarios resulting on an opportunity to explain and promote national service.

At 12:58 p.m. the Board broke out into subcommittee meetings.

At 1:45 p.m. Julie Strandlie had the Board reconvene for subcommittee reports.

Committee Reports

Program Committee: Ashley Hall reported that under the applications for competitive funding there currently were two grantees who resubmitted applications and they came back with a couple minor clarifications. The final outcome will arrive in April. Thirteen will be reviewed, including three new organizations. Ashley thanked the three board members involved in the reviewing process. The April meeting will present those recommendations to the Board.

Much of the Virginia Service Commission team is working on compliance updates and desk reviews. So far, they have completed nine programs with the checking of photo IDs, timesheets, background checks, etc., and will be finished by end of March.

Communications and Special Events Committee: Leah provided a recap for the 2020 MLK Day of Service. A little over 1300 hours of service was a little less than previous years. The Governor's Volunteerism awards and board meeting will take place on April 8. Winners selected are going through a vetting project. Localities include Eamherts, Springfork, Norfolk, and Hampton.

Leah reported that the 2020 Volunteerism Conference is almost at capacity. The keynote speaker will be Allison Sampson Jackson discussing informed care, etc. There's a great variety of workshops to be presented and there still remains some open exhibitor spaces. Leah encouraged door prize ideas by early May or better yet at the April 8 board meeting. Sponsor applications are still being accepted.

The National Service awards' nomination window is still open and will close next week. At this time there aren't many nominations so far. AmeriCorps Week takes place March 8 to 14 and National Service Recognition Day on April 7.

Advocacy and Public Policy Committee:

Julie Strandlie reported that she and Gail Harris attended ASC (Americas Service Commissions) Hill Day where they spent a day on the Hill, met with various congress members, and found all kinds of common ground and interests. They had a good meeting with Representative Klein who were invited to visit an AmeriCorps program. Other offices such as that of Bobby Scott were also visited.

Jessica Bowser reported that the subcommittee put together an infographic for each congressional district and that the next step is to write letters to let them know about the AmeriCorps programs that exist in their district along with how the programs are servicing the community. The committee will create a general letter to place on letterhead to send along with the infographic.

Director's Report

Gail Harris reported to the Board about the Leadership Convening conference hosted by ASC, the association to which the Virginia Service Commission (VSC) pays dues and the organization that does lobbying for state commissions. VSC is working with CNCS to increase the living allowance especially in expensive areas and is also making an effort to have the education award be nontaxable.

A large focus of the Leadership Convening was on ways to increase widespread participation in national service. Also shared at the conference was the CNCS transformation, which will involve the relocation of staff supporting commissions to eight regional offices around the country. The move will occur in phases. The office that supports Virginia's commission will eventually relocate to Philadelphia. CNCS also shared a major rebranding of AmeriCorps, NCCC, Senior Corps, and VISTA. It was also reported that every state has been experiencing challenges in recruiting AmeriCorps members. State commissions are taking a larger role in recruiting efforts and outreach.

Gail Harris informed the Board of disclosure forms and required training for board members. They were notified to expect an email tomorrow about a conflict of interest training.

In the upcoming spring season, Vickie Johnson-Scott will be providing regional disaster preparedness training to local governments, volunteer centers, and AmeriCorps program directors.

Gail added that there are terms of Board membership ending this year and that applications to be re-appointed if eligible would be due. The board members whose terms end this year are: Jessica Bowser, Steven Valdez, Terry Frye, Zachary Leonsis, and John Chapman. If interested in serving another term, Board members were asked to go online to the Virginia gubernatorial appointments section and apply. Gail asked Board members who weren't interested in serving another term to let her know. Gail concluded her report with an announcement that she will be retiring at the end of May.

Public Comment

Julie Strandlie asked the Board for any additional comments. Liz Childress Burneson offered an update on the Virginia Service Foundation and that Dominion would once again sponsor the upcoming Volunteerism Conference in May. She solicited from the Board for more gift baskets, gift cards, etc. as giveaways at the conference. Vanessa Diamond added that the Points of Light organization is hosting a national conference in D.C. this year.

Closing and Adjournment

Julie Strandlie offered a motion to adjourn at 2:31 p.m. James Underwood and Ashley Hall seconded, and all were in favor.

Prepared and submitted by Jae-Young Choe