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SERVE WISCONSIN

Wisconsin National & Community Service Board Meeting
October 15, 2020, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

MINUTES

<i>Present:</i>	Christine Beatty (chair), Theresa Clark, Laura Doolin, Anthony Hallman, Latoya Holiday, Paula Horning, Ibrahim Jalloh, James Langdon, Leah Lechleiter-Luke, Benjamin Lehner, Margaret (Jane) Moore, Ben Olsen, Yolanda Shelton-Morris, Patricia Takamine
<i>Not Present:</i>	Angela Ahlgrim (vice-chair), Michael Hinman, Kate Jaeger, Amy McDowell, Donald Placidi, Susan Schwartz
<i>Staff Present:</i>	Jeanne Duffy, Tracey Brent, Kyle Clower, Margie Kriel, Robin Lee, Steven Yule
<i>Program Staff and Guests Present:</i>	Linda Barthels, Brian Blahnik – MCHS AmeriCorps, Cally Ehle – Easterseals Wisconsin, Amy Fink – ECLIPSE, Barb Evans – Portage County RSVP, Anna Korb – Easterseals Wisconsin, Amanda Ross – Be Well Fox Valley, Sarah Wright, Kirstie Yu – Wisconsin HealthCorps

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:02 a.m. by Christine Beatty

Introductions

Christine Beatty had the WNCSB board members introduce themselves.

Christine Beatty also thanked Michael Hinman for eight years of service on the board, as he recently retired from his position at the Department of Military Affairs.

Public Comment – comment period will not exceed 20 minutes in total

No public comment

Minutes

ACTION ITEM – Jane Moore made a motion to approve the May 14, 2020 WNCSB meeting minutes. Second by Pat Takamine. The motion was unanimously approved

Committee Reports:

Executive Committee

Christine Beatty gave an overview of actions by the Executive Committee, including presenting minutes from meetings in March and September. The March meeting covered the changes in the by-laws that were approved by the board during the June meeting. She described that they had two meetings in September to approve some changes to the formula funding for the 2020-21 program year. One of these changes was shifting Marian University and Partners for Community Development shifting from program grants to planning grades, as they were not able to start their programs this year due to COVID-19. The second meeting approved the reallocation of \$36,000 in formula funds now in excess following shifting these programs to WisCorps to expand their disaster/COVID response crews, with the remaining approximately \$4,800 going into a placeholder. Jeanne Duffy explained that some possible uses for the placeholder funds could be planning grants for organizations that have expressed interest in starting programs or for programs that may want to modify/expand their service in response to COVID-19.

Public Policy & Outreach Committee

Christine Beatty described that the Public Policy & Outreach Committee had a brief meeting on August 27 to discuss updates on outreach efforts and public policy issues, including areas of progress and those which were delayed or eliminated as a result of COVID-19.

Program Evaluation & Development Committee

Anthony Hallman described that the Program Evaluation & Development Committee reviews all the applications and makes an advisory recommendation to the board to approve or not approve the program applications. He continued that the committee also looks at policy changes, programmatic development, and issues of the geographic locations of programs.

Committee Assignments & Committee Chairs

Christine Beatty described that both the Public Policy & Outreach Committee and the Program Evaluation & Development Committee can add new members if any board members would be interested in serving on them. Jeanne Duffy also reminded the board that non-voting board members can vote at the committee level.

Yolanda Shelton-Morris and Patricia Takamine indicated interest in joining the Program Evaluation & Development Committee and Theresa Clark, Ibrahim Jalloh, and Leah Lechleiter-Luke indicated interest in joining the Public Policy & Outreach Committee.

ACTION ITEM – Anthony Hallman made a motion to add Yolanda Shelton-Morris and Patricia Takamine to the Program Evaluation & Development Committee and to add Theresa Clark, Ibrahim Jalloh, and Leah Lechleiter-Luke to the Public Policy & Outreach Committee. Second by Paula Horning. The motion was unanimously approved

AmeriCorps Rebranding

Jeanne Duffy gave an overview of the rebranding that was launched by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) in September. She explained that the legal name of CNCS is remaining the same, but they will publicly be using AmeriCorps as the name for the agency. She described how Senior Corps is now being renamed as AmeriCorps Seniors. She then showed the board the new AmeriCorps logo that was released, which is replacing the current logo, and the approved color combinations. She continued by describing that the goal has been to simplify how the national service programs are being promoted and that the only additional items that will be placed by the logo for AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps Seniors is the name of the state, with specific logos not being made for VISTA, NCCC, the three AmeriCorps Seniors programs, or state commissions.

2019-20 AmeriCorps Member Survey Results

Jeanne Duffy gave an overview of the most recent results for 2019-2020 for the survey that Serve Wisconsin sends each year to our AmeriCorps members to see how they felt about their service for the past year. It was sent out to 788 individuals and received 413 responses, which is a bit lower than the responses from last year, which we think is largely due issues reaching people during COVID-19 and those that might have left service early.

She described that the results on the whole are similar to past years and that the majority of their responses continue to be positive, with 86.9% responding that they are satisfied with their AmeriCorps experience, which is a slight increase from last year's results by 1.7%. She described that members were most satisfied with providing service to their community, including receiving valuable hands-on experience, gaining a greater understanding of the community, and learning new job or other skills areas. She continued that they were most dissatisfied with how well they were trained to prepare them to serve in the community, although that amount relatively low, with only 5.9% saying they were dissatisfied with their training and orientation.

Public Records Training

Jeanne Duffy explained that in the past that we did the required public records training in-person. This year the in-person training is not being offered due to DOA attorneys' workload. Board members can complete the training remotely. She continued that the instructions to access the online training are in the packet of information sent to board members before the meeting and went through the steps to access the training and to set up an account.

Christine Beatty requested that board members try to complete the training before the next board meeting.

Jim Langdon recommended that if board members ever receive an open records request for documents or for other information, they should reach out to Jeanne, who can then start the process with the legal staff at DOA to process the request and make sure we are complying with all laws regarding personally identifiable information and other similar items before information is released.

Jeanne concluded by indicating that there has been no change to the training or open records law since the previous year. She reminded board members that board business and committee business cannot be conducted outside of board or committee meeting times and of the recommendation that if they are sending emails, that if they include a staff member on the email that it will automatically be retained and reduce concerns regarding being personally responsible for maintaining copies.

State Service Plan Update

Jeanne Duffy explained that every three years our state commission creates a state service plan with goals and a strategic plan for the next three years, with next year being the final year for the current plan and that a new one will need to be developed in 2021. She then gave an overview of progress across the some of the seven main service plan goals and objectives.

Volunteer Generation Funds & VISTA Update

Jeanne Duffy provided an overview of the Volunteer Generation Funding that Serve Wisconsin applied for earlier in the year, with the funding launching on October 1. She continued that Serve Wisconsin is working with Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) to create and enhance local Volunteer/Community Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs/COADs). WEM has divided the state up into six emergency management regions and we are looking at funding a service staff person in each region to help develop the response by volunteer organizations to disasters and build up their capacity. We have formed a steering committee from all the different regions that is meeting in a few weeks. They will work in each region to identify what are the disaster preparedness, response and recovery organizations and the resources in those communities, determine which ones overlap statewide, and then discover where there are gaps, using this information to help these local organizations to develop these resources or a network to existing resources.

She then gave an overview of the initiative to place VISTA members into BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) led organizations to fight poverty and racial disparity, with the hope to get additional grant funding from AmeriCorps (CNCS) to help add an extra staff person for the VISTA initiative. She described that we are starting out with three VISTA members who will hopefully be starting soon and will be placed at three different host sites around the state. The goal of the first year is researching and recruiting the host sites that will host future VISTA members with the hope that next September we will have 15 to 20 VISTA members working in BIPOC-led organizations around the state. She explained that the reason we are doing this through VISTA and not through AmeriCorps members through our programs is because unlike AmeriCorps members, which can do some capacity building but primarily do direct service, VISTA members can do fundraising and capacity building. This is important because we have learned that one of the number one needs for many smaller BIPOC-led organizations was resource development for increasing fundraising. Another potential benefit is the ability to expand those who can serve on this project, as those with DACA status are eligible to serve as VISTA members, while they are not eligible to serve as AmeriCorps members.

Updates from the AmeriCorps Senior Program Association

Barb Evans, the president of the Wisconsin Senior Corps Association, provided an update on the AmeriCorps Seniors programs in the state. She described that they have been having 100% participation from the AmeriCorps Seniors programs in the state, with around 28 program directors participating in their virtual meetings on a regular basis, and that in lieu of the rebranding that they will need to look at potential changing the name of the association.

She described some of the ongoing challenges that some of the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are having being able to serve, particularly with many participants in the Foster Grandparents Program (FGP) and Senior Companions not being able to access their service sites. She described that some of the FGP programs have been purchasing laptops or a product called “grand pads” to help enable their volunteers to serve virtually. She described that they have been grateful that AmeriCorps (CNCS) has allowed the volunteers in these two programs to continue to receive their stipend even though they are often unable to serve at full capacity.

She continued that with the challenges programs are facing during the pandemic, they have been given the opportunity to change work plans during their three-year grant cycle. Typically, these cannot be changed in the middle of the grant cycle, but because they are making so many changes to their service programs, they are able to account for that service by developing different work plans and address it in grant applications. Overall, the programs are being creative to adapt and adjust their service to ensure all of the senior volunteers in their programs are able to serve their communities.

Updates from the AmeriCorps Regional Office

Ben Olsen started by discussing the recently released grant competition to expand the Foster Grandparents Program (FGP) in Wisconsin, where every county that is not currently covered by a current Foster Grandparent program is now open in competition, with applications due on February 3. He explained that while it is a challenging time to start a new program during the pandemic, that it is also a fairly unique opportunity to be able to significantly expand AmeriCorps Seniors in Wisconsin, as this level of expansion is uncommon. Ben indicated that he would love to connect with those that have a network working with the aging community, as they are at the beginning of getting the word out to a greater degree about this new competition and would also appreciate help spreading awareness.

Ben then provided some updates on the regional operations by AmeriCorps (CNCS), describing that the third and final phase of opening regional offices across the country has taken place and that all of the old legacy state office structure is now fully closed. He described that for most of the first year of the operations in the Kansas City regional office, which was in the first phase, involved getting staff trained and getting essential processes completed, but that they are now initiating a strategic planning process as they are coming to the close of their first year.

Ben continued by inviting any of the commission members, AmeriCorps State sub-grantees, or commission staff to email him at Bolsen@cns.gov if they have thoughts or input in terms of the regional office can be better support national service across both Wisconsin and the broader North Central Region, including sharing ideas and best practices and how they can refine their technical assistance and training processes in a way to add the most value for their different sponsors and partners across communities.

Updates from the Program Director Association

No report.

Updates from the Commission Members

Anthony Hallman checked in regarding how working at home was going for the staff, provided information about the campaign being done to thank members of Congress for their support of the CORPS Act by States for Service, and spoke about contacts he has had with local county foresters and natural resource foundations regarding the potential for expanded national service funding if the CORPS Act would be passed by Congress.

Christine Beatty provided additional information on the status of the CORPS Act, as well as how its status is also impacted by Congressional negotiations on an additional COVID-19 relief package. She also provided information from the most recent States for Service call about a toolkit that was being offered which would help states to advocate to have the education award be exempt from state income tax, which is one of our state service plan goals.

Pat Takamine described having a positive learning experience attending the virtual 2020 AmeriCorps State and National Symposium, particularly through the commissioner training and meeting with people from across the country.

Updates from the Serve Wisconsin staff

Tracey Brent provided an update on the program risk assessments, which are broken down into both a financial risk assessment and a programmatic risk assessment, which were completed since the last board meeting. She shared that the breakdown is that for financial risk there are 3 high financial risk, 3 moderate financial risk, and 21 low financial risk and for programmatic risk there are 2 high programmatic risk, 4 moderate programmatic risk, and 21 low programmatic risk programs. She continued that two of the high risk programs are the new programs, which staff decided would automatically be initially assigned as high risk so that staff can give them extra training and technical assistance until they get their feet on the ground. She also described that Serve Wisconsin has launched the use of DocuSign and SharePoint for AmeriCorps member documents and that the programs have been using both systems successfully, as they have already gotten the new member files up and ready to review with minimal issues.

Steven Yule started by sharing preliminary news regarding new, follow-up evaluation results on the 2015 evaluation done for the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee SPARK program, with the official publishing of the new results being months away. The 2015 evaluation report showed statistically significant results and the evaluation report was posted to the What Works Clearinghouse. Preliminary data for the follow-up report is showing that kids served by SPARK have stayed on track academically and significantly fewer have required supplemental services. Steven then discussed that Serve Wisconsin is continuing to make EAP services available for the AmeriCorps members with those programs who choose to participate. One statistic from the 2019-2020 program year is that the utilization rate was 5.2%, which is close to the 3% to 5% overall average utilization rate nationally for the EAP providers.

Kyle Clower began by announcing that for those unable to view the Governor's Service Awards that morning, that the link was now posted to view it at their convenience. He continued that the individual clips for each honoree will be posted that afternoon and that over the next few weeks he will be rolling out the extended interviews conducted with each of the honorees. Kyle then provided information about the virtual 2020 Opening Ceremony, which will take place on Friday, October 30 from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. via Zoom. He described that the keynote will be the kickoff to the racial justice training, and that among other elements there will be Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes leading members in the AmeriCorps pledge and videos from Congresswoman Gwen Moore and Alexis Dean, the 2019 Governor's Service Awards honoree for AmeriCorps Member of the Year.

Robin Lee explained that he is continuing to work on the backlog of financial desk reviews and that for programs identified as high financial risk agencies that we are collecting documentation when they submit payment requests, as staff will review this information and then discuss it with them.

Jeanne Duffy offered a special thanks to Kyle for all of the work in orchestrating and producing the Governor's Service Awards virtually this year.

2020 Meeting Dates

Christine Beatty reminded board members that the next board meeting will be Thursday, December 10, with the next Program Evaluation and Development committee meeting taking place the week before on Tuesday, December 1.

WNCSB Executive Committee Meeting, if necessary

Christine Beatty indicated that there will not be a need to hold an Executive Committee meeting due to the high level of attendance of board members.

Adjourn

ACTION – Tony Hallman made a motion to adjourn the WNCSB meeting at 12:25pm. Second by Patricia Takamine. The motion was unanimously approved.