

**Wisconsin National & Community Service Board Executive Committee Meeting
March 4, 2021, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

<i>Board Members Present:</i>	Christine Beatty (chair), Angela Ahlgrim (vice-chair), Anthony Hallman, Ibrahim Jalloh, Benjamin Lehner, Leah Moore, Margaret (Jane) Moore, Ben Olsen, Donald Placidi, Yolanda Shelton-Morris, Patricia Takamine,
<i>Board Members Not Present:</i>	Theresa Clark, Laura Doolin, Latoya Holiday, Paula Horning, Kate Jaeger, Leah Lechleiter-Luke, Amy McDowell, Susan Schwartz
<i>Staff Present:</i>	Jeanne Duffy, Ruhamah Bauman, Tracey Brent, Kyle Clower, Robin Lee, Alexis Matthews, Steven Yule, Margie Kriel
<i>Program Staff and Guests Present:</i>	Brian Blahnik – MCHS AmeriCorps, Tom Branen – America’s Service Commissions, Elyse Chay – Public Allies, Joan Dunne – BeWell Fox Valley, Tabitha Echols – AmeriCorps VISTA, Cally Ehle – Easterseals Wisconsin, Bonnie Erickson – PASS, Barb Evans – Wisconsin Senior Corps Association, Amy Fink – ECLIPSE, Steve Frodl – NCCAP, Shayne Gerberding – Chippewa Fresh Start, Joli Guenther – WAHRS, Anna Korb – Easterseals Wisconsin, Megan Meinan – PASS, Amanda Ross – BeWell Fox Valley,

Call to Order

Christine Beatty called the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Wisconsin National & Community Service Board to session at 10:13 a.m. in lieu of the scheduled meeting of the full board due to lack of quorum. The Executive Committee had quorum with Angela Ahlgrim, Christine Beatty, and Anthony Hallman present, with Paula Horning not present.

Christine explained that the Executive Committee would follow the agenda for the board meeting, and if quorum was reached, that they would transition to a full board meeting.

Public Comment – comment period will not exceed 20 minutes

Brian Blahnik from Marshfield Clinic provided an update regarding their newly proposed Rural Intermediary Program planned to begin next fall. They have received 71 host site requests so far and expect that to exceed the number that they have allocated, probably in the range of 90 to 100 requests for 80 AmeriCorps positions.

He stated they are seeing that the number one priority areas that people are asking for support in are mental health and academics, and that reflects what is happening with the pandemic and part of the reason that they are proposing this AmeriCorps program.

Approve Minutes from the December 10, 2020 Board Meeting

ACTION ITEM – Anthony Hallman made a motion to approve the December 10, 2020 WNCSB meeting minutes. Second by Angela Ahlgrim. The motion was unanimously approved.

Presentation by Tom Branen, ASC Chief Policy Officer

Tom Branen from America's Service Commissions gave an update on the AmeriCorps related items in the COVID-19 relief package currently being debated in Congress and the potential reintroduction of the CORPS Act in 2021.

Committee Reports:

Executive Committee

Christine Beatty announced that an executive committee meeting was held to approve the release of the Formula RFP and to approve \$81,958 in additional formula funding for WisCorps.

Public Policy & Outreach Committee

Christine Beatty announced that Angie Ahlgrim will be new chair of the committee. She indicated that there is no further report with the committee not meeting since the last board meeting.

Program Evaluation & Development Committee

Tony Hallman announced that the next PE&D meeting is scheduled for May 3 at 10:00 a.m. He encouraged all board members to attend the meeting, as it will be the review of formula program applications, with board members able to learn more about the programs and ask them questions to review their effectiveness and sustainability.

Board Elections

Christine Beatty described the system that the board has used regarding elections for the board chair and vice chair and their terms and that they are scheduled to take place at the first meeting of the year. She indicated that both she and Angela Ahlgrim are willing to serve for another term as chair and vice chair, respectively.

Christine Beatty opened the floor for nominations to serve as the WNCSB chair and vice chair.

ACTION - Tony Hallman nominated Angela Ahlgrim for WNCSB vice chair and Christine Beatty for WNCSB chair. Second by Jane Moore. Following the close of nominations, both nominees were elected unanimously to their positions.

Board Resolution to retain 2% of the 5% of federal funds available to programs for administrative costs.

Jeanne Duffy provided background on the board resolution, explaining that federal statute allows state commissions to retain 2% of the 5% of federal funds available to programs for administrative costs to fund commission operations. This gives the commissions the capacity to perform monitoring, compliance, and program development work with the programs.

She indicated that as the number of programs in the state have grown significantly and Serve Wisconsin has taken on several new initiatives in the past few years, that the corresponding workload for staff has increased dramatically. The only way to solve that problem is to hire new staff, which requires funding.

Jeanne stated that she thinks the board should pass the resolution as a means to potentially support increased staffing and that it will also help us if we ever lose federal or state funding. Regarding the timing of potential implementation, she explained that because programs already submitted their budgets for the 2021-22 program year, that this could not be done until the 2022-23 program year. This provision could be added to the RFP starting in the fall of 2021, giving programs the ability to plan for it in their budgets if implemented.

She indicated that if the federal AmeriCorps funding through the American Rescue Plan is passed, we would likely not need to implement this in the near future, as we would likely receive an additional \$300,000 in commission support grant funding. She continued that allowing the retention of the 2% would still be a good tool to have available in our toolbox for our long-term sustainability if the federal funds pass, even if it would not need to be implemented or for the funds to be retained in the near term.

Jeanne indicated that she could provide the board with an organizational chart to understand the distribution of duties as staff has reorganized to have more specialties, such as compliance. She explained that what is currently needed is more general program officers and that with the large increase in federal funding across the board that there may be additional changes in duties.

ACTION ITEM - Anthony Hallman made a motion to approve the board resolution that would provide Serve Wisconsin staff with the ability to retain 2% of the 5% of federal funds available to programs for administrative costs. Second by Angela Ahlgrim. The motion was unanimously approved

State Service Plan –Update and Action: form 2022-2024 State Service Plan Planning Committee

Jeanne Duffy gave an overview of the process to create a new state service plan for 2022-2024. She described that we are required by federal statute to develop a state service plan every three years, with the current 2019-2021 plan ending this year.

She explained that in the past, we have formed a committee to discuss what has gone well, where we want to grow, and what we want to do, and then we do a community survey to get community feedback. Because we should be finding out about additional funding from the COVID relief in the next few months, she recommended waiting until after the next board meeting to form the committee, as with the additional funding we can have more ambitious goals and the staff to achieve them. She continued that she hopes to form the committee at the next meeting and then have it start meeting this summer, and that she can send out a committee job description before the next board meeting. She also asked if there were any board members that would be interested in volunteering at this point, with people having an opportunity to join at the next meeting as well as after receiving the description.

Yolanda Shelton-Morris, Anthony Hallman, and Christine Beatty expressed interest in participating on the committee.

Exempting Segal Education Award from State Income Tax

Kyle Clower described that we have good news to share about our efforts to exempt the Segal Education Award from state income tax, as it was included in the biennial executive budget released in February by Governor Evers. This provision would go into effect in 2022 if passed as part of the budget legislation, and that its first step in the legislative process will be consideration by the Joint Finance Committee.

Volunteer Generation Funds & VISTA Update

Ruhamah Bauman began by providing an update on Serve Wisconsin's VISTA initiative, with two of the initial members having started, as Tabitha started serving in February at Public Allies and Madeline started in January at the Girl Scouts of the Greater Northern Great Lakes. She explained that they are both serving part time with us and part time with their host site organizations.

Ruhamah then provided a Volunteer Generation Fund update, describing that we have successfully awarded funding to organizations in five of the six Wisconsin Emergency Management regions. We have representation now in the Southeast, Southwest, East Central, West Central, and Northwest, and we have extended the application deadline for the Northeast region until March 22. These regional coordinators are helping to support existing COADS/VOADS and develop new ones throughout those regions.

Ruhamah then gave an update on our AmeriCorps Disaster Response Team. They have been meeting monthly with roughly 22 members attending these monthly calls. She continued that it has been a great way to facilitate a conversation and awareness around disaster response here in Wisconsin and nationally.

Updates:

AmeriCorps Seniors – Wisconsin Senior Corps Association

Barb Evans, President of the Wisconsin Senior Corps Association gave an update on the successes and challenges that the AmeriCorps Seniors programs in Wisconsin have faced over the past several months.

- She explained the increase in COVID-19 vaccinations across the state could be a game changer for them, as the average age for their AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers is 72 years old.
- She described that at a previous meeting she spoke about concerns about some AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers having their temporary stipend allowance end on December 31, although that was fortunately extended to March 31.
- She then explained how the RSVP programs have faced some different challenges and needs to try fill within their communities. Several of the RSVP programs have driver programs, which is an area of high need in different communities to transport individuals with no means to get to appointments or other needs, but volunteers for these are limited as it is hard to socially distance in someone's car.
- Many RSVP programs have transitioned some programming to pen pal, E pal, and telephone assurance calls to continue connecting with seniors that have been isolated for a long time.
- Additionally, one of the programs that many RSVP programs have typically sponsored is the AARP tax aide program, with these taking a significant hit this year. Many of the sites are not open this year, with the limited number that are still operating doing a drop off service where people are dropping off their tax forms, and then coming back and getting them submitted.
- Barb explained that the Wisconsin Senior Corps Association has continued an educational series for all of our directors and program staff, offering an educational opportunity twice a month.

AmeriCorps Regional Office

Ben Olsen informed the board that he was recently offered the Deputy Regional Administrator position for the West region with AmeriCorps and that this will be his last WNCSB meeting, as he will be transitioning into that new role on March 15. He continued that it has been an incredible pleasure working with everyone over the past couple years and that he has really learned about the programs and the communities across Wisconsin. He then thanked everyone for being supportive, welcoming him to the state, and helping him learn about the area and build connections. He encouraged the board to never hesitate to reach out and that his email address and contact information will be the same following his transition to the new position, as he will be continuing to support national service just in a new capacity. Ben indicated that

Michael Laverty, our regional administrator, will be briefly stepping into the ex officio role on the commission until a new senior portfolio manager is selected to step into the role and be a more permanent support.

Ben described some of the preliminary funding plans that are being developed for the funding that will be coming from the latest COVID-19 response legislation. One of these is summer associates programming for VISTA, as they can award short-term direct service positions to respond to a wide variety of community needs, which is more flexible than the traditional capacity building VISTA program.

Ben provided an update on the recent Foster Grandparents grant competition that was expanding AmeriCorps Seniors. The application process has closed, but because the competition is under review, he cannot share details beyond that they have received new applicants.

Ben then described that the AmeriCorps Tribal Competition is going to be announced shortly, with it being very similar to the AmeriCorps State program model, but specifically geared towards federally recognized tribes across the country and tribal organizations.

Commission Member Reports

Christine Beatty provided an overview of the Leadership Convening she is currently attending through America's Service Commissions (ASC) and asked Angie Ahlgrim and Alexis Matthews to speak about their experience as well. She related that she appreciated hearing from the new AmeriCorps leadership and the level of energy and synergy she felt from them, with almost everyone at the national leadership level having served as an AmeriCorps member. She continued that there is currently an interim CEO of AmeriCorps, with the person that will take the permanent position not yet named. She greatly appreciated the perspective they are taking and their willingness to listen and extend themselves to commission members and executive directors across the country.

Angela Ahlgrim echoed the feeling of optimism after hearing from the new leadership about their visions and plans for the future and learning about how programs were able to evolve and change in response to COVID-19 and some of the benefits they may experience in the future. Another element she highlighted were the small group breakout sessions, as it has provided the opportunity to do some of the networking with other commissions that has not always happened to the same extent over the past year.

Alexis Matthews discussed that the Leadership Convening typically takes place each year in Washington, DC and that it is usually just the executive directors and board chairs, but because it was virtual this year it was opened up to more people and she was grateful for the opportunity to attend. She described that some of the biggest takeaways from hearing from the new AmeriCorps leadership team was the passion of these new appointees and the evolution of the new leadership team. Part of this was their focus on meeting the needs that are right now, such as the creation of some new positions that did not previously exist, including a specific COVID response position.

Staff Reports

Jeanne Duffy

Jeanne Duffy informed the board that she is on part-time assignment to the Department of Health Service for the COVID Vaccine Task Force as the Deputy Administrator of the Data Management Section. She described that she will be drafting a memo for Jana Steinmetz at DOA to approve regarding temporary staff assignments. She continued that programmatic issues will be funneled through Alexis, financial approvals and responsibilities will go through Steven, VGF and VISTA outreach will be handled by Ruhamah, and outreach on the state income tax initiative will led by Kyle.

Kyle Clower

Kyle Clower informed the board that the next week would be AmeriCorps Week if they would like to share about it on social media and that Governor Evers would be issuing a proclamation to celebrate AmeriCorps Week. He then gave an update on the logo redesign for Serve Wisconsin. Kyle then indicated that he would be working with Angie Ahlgrim to schedule an Outreach and Public Policy committee meeting in the coming weeks.

Steven Yule

Steven Yule provided updates on the rule changes made by the federal AmeriCorps agency for criminal history checks. He explained that public comment was taken a year ago before releasing the final rules and that he is working with the ASC criminal history check work group to provide feedback to the AmeriCorps agency. He indicated one of the new rules will be beneficial to youth corps programs because applicants who will be under 18 on their first day of service will not have to have a criminal history check run and that they are expanding the break in service from 120 days to 180 days before someone is going to need a new set of checks.

Tracey Brent

Tracey Brent indicated that staff just finished the second iteration of program risk assessments. She explained that she started a work group with several people from various programs to talk about any changes we want to make for the next program year with either DocuSign or SharePoint.

Adjourn

ACTION – Anthony Hallman made a motion to adjourn the WNCBSB meeting at 11:43 a.m. Second by Christine Beatty. The motion was unanimously approved.