

Serve Alaska

Commission Meeting Minutes

A regular meeting of the Serve Alaska Commission was held Monday and Tuesday, August 8 & 9, 2011, in Fairbanks at the Alaska Centennial Center for the Arts, Pioneer Park.

Monday, August 8, 2011

Chairman Dawn Grossmann called the meeting to order at 9:22 a.m.

Roll Call – Commissioners present: Dawn Grossmann, Ron Yeager, Kirsten Vesel, Rory Schneeberger, Judy Bredberg, Becky Judd, Mark Kelsey, Tracey Burke, Denise Morris, Kirsten Franklin-Temple, Steve Ricci, Joelle Hall, Barb Nickels, Melora Gaber, Leona Grishkowsky and Lebron McPhail.

Excused Absence: Kathryn Dodge, Elaine Dahlgren and Jeff Wheaton

Absent: Myrna Gardner

A quorum was present.

Staff present: Nita Madsen, Margy Hughes, Patricia O'Neil and Colleen Stuvick

Guests present: Ruth Schoenleben, Nine Star Program Director and Chad Davis, CNCS Alaska State Program Specialist

Approval to adopt the meeting agenda: Chair asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda as written. Commissioner Judd moved. Commissioner Burke seconded. No discussion. **Motion Passed.**

Approval to adopt the May 12, 2011 Commission meeting minutes: Chair asked for a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Commissioner Burke moved. Commissioner Nickels seconded. With no further discussion the minutes were approved. **Motion Passed.** In the future invited guest presentations to the Commission will be summarized and attached to the respective meeting minutes.

Task Force Reports

Commissioner Burke reported on behalf of the Committees Task Force; *the report is attached to these minutes*. The Committees Task Force will write a paragraph that defines the responsibilities of each committee and present them to the full Commission for review prior to the November 16th Commission meeting. The Committees Task Force members are, Tracey, Ron, Kirsten V., Dawn, and Judy.

Commissioner Vesel reported on behalf of the Finance Task Force; *the report is attached to these minutes*. The Task Force will research existing models, like the Friend's of the Alaska Children's Trust and the Minnesota State Commission and others to get more details on what projects they are doing and where their funds go toward. The Task Force will report their findings at the November 16th Commission meeting. The Finance Task Force members are, Kirsten V., Leona, Barb, Dawn and Joelle.

Strategic Plan Work Session – After a lengthy discussion regarding the format of the Strategic Plan everyone agreed to review more closely the content of both the DRAFT and SAMPLE plans overnight and continue the work session the following day.

Business meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m. for the day.

After the meeting Commissioners met at the Fairbanks Rescue Mission for the Commission Service Project. The Service Project was arranged by AmeriCorps VISTA leader Mariah Terhaar. The Fairbanks Rescue Mission is an AmeriCorps VISTA site. Commissioners served alongside AmeriCorps VISTA Members Colin Knue and Mariah Terhaar from 1:00 PM until 3:30 PM.

Later in the evening Commissioners attended AmeriCorps member graduation at Joel's Place.

Tuesday, August 9, 2011

Chairman Dawn Grossmann called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Commissioners present: Dawn Grossmann, Ron Yeager, Kirsten Vesel, Rory Schneeberger, Judy Bredberg, Becky Judd, Mark Kelsey, Tracey Burke, Denise Morris, Kirsten Franklin-Temple, Steve Ricci, Joelle Hall, Barb Nickels, Melora Gaber, Leona Grishkowsky and Lebron McPhail.

Excused Absence: Kathryn Dodge, Elaine Dahlgren and Jeff Wheaton

Absent: Myrna Gardner

A quorum was present.

Staff present: Nita Madsen, Margy Hughes, Patricia O'Neil and Colleen Stuvick

Guests present: Ruth Schoenleben, Nine Star Program Director; Chad Davis, CNCS Alaska State Program Specialist; Megan Gooding and Joyce Hurt from Interior Area Health Education Center; Melissa Stepovich from Governor Parnell's Fairbanks Office; Karen Lidster from Senator Coghill's office.

Chair Grossmann welcomed and introduced Joyce Hurt and Megan Gooding from Banner Health who spoke briefly about what their AmeriCorps program's focus will be if awarded the grant. *A synopsis of their report is attached to these minutes.*

Reports

Commissioner Vesel reported on her trip to the National Conference on Volunteering and Service held in New Orleans.

Staff reports were given by: Nita Madsen, Executive Director – the latest VISTA concept paper and VISTA Assignment Description will be sent to the Commissioners; Margy Hughes, Program Coordinator– the Program Funding spreadsheet and Cost/Member Service Year spreadsheet will be sent to the Commissioners; Patricia O'Neil, Grants Administrator; and Colleen Stuvick, Administrative Assistant/Disability Coordinator. *Nita's and Margy's report is attached to these minutes. Patricia's and Colleen's report had no action items.*

Grant Reviewer's Orientation – Nita presented a Power Point presentation. *A copy of the Power Point handout is attached to these minutes.*

PUBLIC COMMENT

David Levy, Executive Director of the Alaska Mobility Coalition commented of how the state, local government and non-profits can coordinate transportation in state and where resources can be shared to provide needed transportation statewide.

OLD BUSINESS

- **2012 Commission Meeting Locations** – the next meeting is a teleconference on November 16, 2011 from 10 a.m. to noon. Commissioner Judd asked for a motion to have the Commission meeting in Anchorage and to send a small Committee to Juneau to update the Legislature on Serve Alaska and AmeriCorps programs. Commissioner Grishkowsky seconded. The motion was adopted after debate. **Motion Passed.** Meeting dates and locations for 2012 are as follows: February 16 & 17, 2012 in Anchorage; May 8 & 9, 2012 in Anchorage; August 7 & 8, 2012 in Anchorage; November 14, 2012 teleconference.
- **Transition Plan** – Chair asked for a motion to adopt the Serve Alaska Transition Plan with added language in the Commission Member section: "Chair provides Executive Director with names of any potential applicants *or re-appointees* identified by Commission." The motion to adopt is with the understanding that the Transition Plan is a living document and at some point additional language will be added. Commissioner Hall moved. Commissioner Nickels seconded. **Motion Passed.** The corrected Transition Plan will be sent to the Commissioners.

- **Commissioner Handbook** – The Handbook will be made available on the Serve Alaska website in the near future. Staff will provide Commissioners with a list of what has been updated in the Handbook but no hard copy of the updated material will be provided.
- **Commission Service Projects** – doing service projects at regular commission meetings was discussed. Commissioners agreed that service projects are worthwhile and made the following recommendations; have service projects after the regular business meeting has concluded; have a clearer understanding of the agency being served; and if possible serve alongside AmeriCorps Members.

Strategic Plan Work Session - The Strategic Plan Committee will work on the DRAFT plan and bring it back to the full Commission for review at the February 16-17, 2012 regular meeting. Chair asked each Commissioner to review the DRAFT Plan and send her any missing information before October 1, 2011. Strategic Plan Committee members are: Kathryn, Dawn, Nita, Barb and Becky.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Standing Committee Members:**
 1. Outreach Committee: Mark, Rory, Kirsten F.T., Ron, Leona
 2. Legislative: Barb, Joelle, Steve, Melora, Kirsten V.
 3. Strategic Plan: Barb, Dawn, Nita, Beck, Kathryn
- **Commission Roles and Responsibilities** will be done by the Executive Director and Chair prior to the February 16-17, 2012 Commission meeting.

Business meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Committees Task Force Report by Tracey Burke

The Task Force met via teleconference in June and is suggesting some changes to the standing Committee structure. If the Commission is on board with the direction the Task Force is heading then it can decide exactly who flushes out specific roles or if that goes to someone else. For the benefit of the new Commissioners, the Standing Committee structure is the Executive Committee which includes the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Leads of the three Committees; Program, Outreach and Finance/Resource.

The Finance/Resource Committee has been basically inactive and the Task Force suggests dissolving it in its current structure.

The Program Committee's role also seems to be very much in flux; reviewing proposals. We suggest dissolving this Committee also because proposal reviews will be done by everybody; we did not address the structure. We suggest keeping an Outreach Committee, but sub dividing it into specific working groups who will focus on media efforts, special events such as the Juneau legislative luncheon (which would be distinct from organizing the legislative fly-in visit), and social networking efforts. The Outreach Committee chair would then be a part of the Executive Committee.

We suggest having a separate standing Legislative Advocacy Committee who's basic charge would be to put the Juneau Legislative Fly-in together every year. The Committee will also keep tabs on, and nudge Commissioners to have ongoing contact with the Legislature.

We suggest having a standing Strategic Planning Committee to help us move forward and keep us on track, to keep revisiting things and check our progress and hold us accountable for things we are setting up to do. The Strategic Planning Committee would also help us focus or a separate Task Force to really grapple with the question whether we want to focus; target programs we want to fund, programs we fund currently are diverse, we might want to have a Task Force working group related to the strategic planning Committee, a group of people to help us think through and make decision; what do we want to focus on.

The other main thing the Task Force suggests, is if there are other kinds of ad hoc Committees or Task Forces that are not identified within one of the standing Committees, that it be very clear who the point person is that would provide the communication and liaison between the Committee/Task Force/ad hoc and the Executive Committee. It may be a temporary position, but it must be very clear who will be communicating with whom so that the Executive Committee is well informed.

We also suggest that one element of the Vice Chairman's job description is to focus on new Commissioner Development (mentorship).

The Task Force will flush out the job descriptions for these positions so that when a new Commissioner comes on board it will help them choose which Committee they want to serve on. By the November 16 Commission meeting the Task Force will bring job descriptions to the full Commission for refinement.

The Committees Task Force will meet and flush out the job descriptions and then email it to everyone for review and comment before the November 16th Commission meeting teleconference. The job descriptions will start with a summary of what is expected of the Committee member.

END OF REPORT

Finance Task Force Report by Kirsten Vesel

I met with the Alaska Community Foundation (ACF) again and have additional information to share. For the benefit of those who were not at the last Commission meeting, we invited ACF to come and give a quick presentation about who they are and what they do. ACF's goal is to promote philanthropy around the state. There are community foundations in throughout the state to include Juneau, Seward, Homer and a half dozen or more in other locations around the state. ACF has a statewide focus so the Commission naturally started with this particular foundation. The reason why we invited ACF to do a presentation is because there has been a lot of discussion internally and at national conferences about State Commissions who are partnering with community foundations and/or starting up their own 501c3 to have a financial ability to raise funds separate from the State to be able to do various things.

For example, the Louisiana Commission is a 501c3 and is not working through a community foundation. They have become the fiduciary arm of funds when there is natural disaster in their state. What Louisiana found was that when they were faced with natural disasters people throughout the US wanted to help financially, but the Commission did not have a venue to funnel money and or volunteers through, so they started their own 501c3 and now they have "Friends of the Commission" that does fund raising and is a venue for funding in case there is a need to have funds directed to the Commission.

The question we need to answer is whether or not we want to have a 501c3 of our own or partner with ACF? We certainly do not have to do either, it is just an option and there could be some opportunity in doing this. From the beginning I saw an interesting partnership that could potentially be there, but I have also said that I do not want to push this, but I think it is a potential opportunity and something we should continue to explore.

I feel partnering with ACF is the easier option versus starting up our own 501c3. If we start up our own 501c3, then we have to have a Board, meet regularly, have fiduciary responsibilities, there is staff time, we would have to comply with the IRS and do bookkeeping. It is a serious undertaking to be a 501c3.

The ACF has served in different circumstances as an umbrella to be able to have a 501c3 under without having our own 501c3. They would do all the bookkeeping, taxes, and their staff manages the fund. That is why joining the ACF would be the easier of the two options.

ACF charges a low fee 1.5%. However since my initial discussion with ACF they have evolved and have what they call Donor Advised Funds; 501c3s they manage. But ACF is not exactly open armed, at this point to taking additional Donor Advised Funds on, because their mission and focus is on philanthropic growth bequests for large funds, to keep them and grant the interest on those funds.

So the question is does SERVE ALASKA want to pursue one of these two options? If so, which one and we need to define what we intend to do with these funds? Before ACF can answer whether they want to be our funding agency, we need to determine if there is money being left on the table that

we could potentially leverage if we had additional funds, and is there something that really warrants this initiative for us to put in the time and energy.

Although ACF is steering away from the Field of Interest Funds (Donor Advised Funds) this Commission really resonates with their mission and they like the idea of partnering with us. They do not know what that looks like, but they said that maybe it could be that a Commissioner stands on their Board in an advisory role to their pre-existing Field of Interest Funds for natural disasters. The good thing is that they are interested and are very open to further discussion. My question is do we want to go down this route? Do we want to continue to have a Task Force to discuss our options?

We have already sent a survey to some of the state Commissions, with limited response, and I think we should send out another survey to all state Commissions asking more specific questions than we asked the first time: Do you have a 501c3 or are you a part of a community foundation? Why do you have a 501c3? Who you are targeting to get those funds? What are you doing with those funds? One reason for the survey is that ACF said that if they had a model of what other states are doing it would enable further discuss and there may be a unique partnership with us? I suggest we do this survey and try to get additional input from other State Commissions and then have a follow-up discussion.

Backing up to why the Finance Committee started asking some questions was our original intent when I first got on the Commission was that the Finance Committee was looking for funding partners to be able to help with advocacy, training and travel. We were looking to Alaska Airlines and soliciting their support for airline tickets for additional travel. What we found was that, since we are a state agency, they would not give us funding. So we started asking if there could be another venue to get support like "Friends of the Commission", that could meet some of the unmet needs. This is what led me to seek out ACF. I have seen other groups have these "friends" subcommittees and they are generally very effective.

I am just presenting the information to you and looking for discussion and your feedback.

NEXT STEP: The Task Force will research existing models, like the Friend's of the Alaska Children's Trust and the Minnesota State Commission and other organizations to get more details on what projects they are doing and where their funds go toward.

The Task Force will prepare for the next Commission meeting a one page bullet point of their findings.

Finance Task Force Members: Kirsten Vesel, Leona, Barb, Dawn and Joelle. As the lead, Kirsten will report to the Executive Committee.

Banner Health's vision for an AmeriCorps Program– Joyce Hurt and Megan Gooding

Interior Area Health Education Center is in partnership with Fairbanks Memorial Hospital which is a part of the Banner Health Corporation. In that partnership they do a couple of things, they are funded under a pursa grant and try to build health care workforce for the state of Alaska.

As a state we have a huge shortage of primary health care providers and mid levels as well as nursing. Banner health helps to promote those health care careers, promoting within elementary and high schools. They also place students in rural Alaska as well as in the interior; placing them in clinical rotations and that hopefully plants the seeds that they come back and practice here.

Banner Health is also helping to build health care workforce development through different partners. At the Fairbanks Memorial Hospital they do all their student clinical rotations. They are looking at AmeriCorps to help with a need in rural Alaska. AmeriCorps members can serve with a health care focus corps and meet a need in the community, health care focused. As well as gain what they need for their applications to go on to medical, or mid level or nursing school. Plus they meet their need for developing a health care workforce as well as showing students the rural areas of Alaska and serving in those communities as well as in the interior.

AmeriCorps members would actually help with health care promotion and healthy habit needs in clinics. There are service opportunities and projects already in place but no one to actually do the work. Some of the AmeriCorps members may have an opportunity to travel for extended time in rural and interior Alaska.

Executive Director Report by Nita Madsen

National Conference on Volunteering and Service: for me the most valuable piece when attending the Conference is the networking opportunity. Since the Conference is so large so much of what is offered lacks the depth that is needed to be more than an overview. We need to be aware of what is being offered to assist in determining if it is a good investment of funds. It is a great place to network and learn what is happening in the service and volunteerism community.

Budget Projections - 2012 Travel Costs: travel costs are being looked at very closely and from the States prospective how it relates to the Commission's core mission. We need to make good choices with our travel dollars.

VISTA Project: the agreement has been signed and recruitment will begin August 15th. The VISTA is scheduled to start in November 2012. The recruitment notice will be sent to Commissioners to forward on to potential applicants. Commissioners will be sent the latest concept paper along with the VISTA Assignment Description (VAD). The VISTA's project is to do a gap analysis with assistance from a Commission Task Force.

Disaster Preparedness – disaster response application process involves a lot and I think as we look at our strategic plan this is something that you may also want to consider; because, it is a focus area of the corporation. I think, this will take some partnership development to make sure that we are able to live up to the commitments if we choose to submit an application. Commissioners were given an overview sheet.

AmeriCorps Prohibitive Activities – in June CNCS visited the programs that potentially were involved in prohibitive activities. We were one of the sites visited. It was determined the Serve Alaska sub-grantee program reviewed was not engaged in prohibitive activities. As a Commission we had three areas to bring in compliance: re-review all of the Students In Service (sub-grantee program reviewed) training materials and handbooks; make sure all currently serving Member contracts have a signed addendum listing the new prohibitive activities from the Serve America Act. Each one of our sub-grantees has completed this task and is in compliance. The third area was to ensure that the Serve Alaska Program Officer forwards all new regulations and requirements to our sub-grantees, which we have been doing.

Program Coordinator Report by Margy Hughes

At the May Commission meeting staff was tasked with preparing a training presentation for any new programs coming on board. The training would be required and would give them a feel for what they are getting themselves into before they apply for funding.

The training is a living document because information changes. The training details are still being worked out. The draft PowerPoint training was presented to the Commissioners. Training topics include: What is AmeriCorps? The difference between AmeriCorps and VISTA; what AmeriCorps members can do, prohibitive activities. The point of this training will be to inform and help applicants be prepared to have a program.

Margy answered questions about Planning Grants. A Planning Grant, if we have enough money, comes from the Formula funds and gives potential programs money for staff and possibly travel funds to go to national trainings which help better understand their AmeriCorps commitment. The Planning Grant will also allow programs to create community partners, Member training agenda, Member agreements and other necessary information to allow a smoother transition into an AmeriCorps program.

Margy presented a spreadsheet indicating status of program funding. The spreadsheet showed the different Formula Funding amounts for each year, along with respective Program amounts. On another spreadsheet showed the formula for figuring the Cost/Member Service Year (C/MSY) per each Formula Funding Year package. The two numbers combined was the indication if a Planning Grant was allowed by the Corporation. A copy of both spreadsheets will be sent to the Commissioners.

Serve Alaska

Grant Reviewer's Orientation



1

Orientation Objectives

- Familiarity with the AmeriCorps Grant Selection Process
- Understanding the role and responsibilities of a reviewer
- Awareness of the legal issues involving the review
- Awareness of the AmeriCorps Notice of Funding Opportunity
- How to use the Grant Application Review Worksheet

2

Purpose of Review Process

- To provide the Commission with a grant application recommendation
- To ensure that the Commission selects a portfolio of strong AmeriCorps programs in Alaska that meet local needs



3

Roles & Responsibilities

- Read the NOFO and Grant Application Instructions
- Review the grant application review worksheet
- Review applications
- Assign scores based on given criteria
- Evaluate content more than style
- Comment on program quality using specific descriptive phrases
- Attend Review Committee Meeting
- Identify conflicts of interest and maintain confidentiality
- Avoid interjecting your biases



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Legal Issues

- Conflict of Interest
- Confidentiality



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Conflict of Interest

- Did you submit an application
- Are you affiliated with any applicants
- Have a relationship with someone who has personal interest in an application
- Some other affiliation or membership
- Conflict of Interest Form signed



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Confidentiality

- Confidentiality of Applications
- Confidentiality of Reviewers



7

Bias

- Consider your biases
- Avoid interjecting your biases
- Base comments on information provided in application

8

Scoring



Outstanding – 10: Innovative, comprehensive and complete response to requested information

Good – 8-9: Addressed requested information with additional comprehensive detail

Adequate – 6-7: Addressed requested information

Weak – 3-5: Minimally addressed requested information in some areas and adequately in others

Inadequate – 1-2: Minimally addressed requested information

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Helpful Hints



- Read and be familiar with the applications guidelines and other materials provided
- Review proposal packets to determine whether you have any conflict of interest. If so please contact the Commission immediately
- Read quickly through all the applications once before completing the review worksheet. Then return to do a more thorough review and scoring
- Be thorough and objective
- Make constructive comments
- Use specific and descriptive phrases that justify the score
- Write legibly

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The AmeriCorps Grant

Application



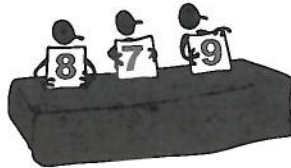
Application Components

- I. SF424 Face sheet (Appendix A)
- II. Assurances and Certifications (Appendix B)
- III. Narrative
 - Executive Summary
 - Summary of Accomplishments (not all)
 - Program Narrative
 - Program Design
 - Organizational Capacity
 - Budget/Cost Effectiveness
- IV. Service Categories (Appendix C)
- V. Performance Measurement Objectives (Appendix D)
- VI. SF424 Budget Form and Worksheet (Appendix E & F)
- VII. Documents

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How is the Application Scored?

- Program Design - 50 points
- Organizational Capacity - 25 points
- Budget/Cost Effectiveness - 25 points



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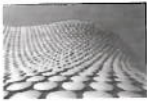
What do I Need to do?



- Make an assessment if focus questions were answered
- Capture strengths & weaknesses of the proposed program design



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Program Design

The application instructions ask applicants to

- Describe the problem(s) they will be working on
- Why they chose this problem
- Provide documentation of the extent/severity of the problem in the target community
- Describe the target community
- Why did they select this population to be served

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Identifying the Problem

Reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant provides persuasive evidence that the identified problem exists in the targeted community(ies).



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Identifying the Problem

Did the Applicant

- Document the problem in the target community
- Use reliable, recent sources to document the problem to the extent possible. Tell the sources of the information or how they identified the problem.
- Document the specific problem to be addressed by the program as much as possible
- Demonstrate not only that there is a problem, but that the problem is compelling
- Avoid circular reasoning



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The Intervention



- The reviewers will assess the extent to which the applicant makes the case that engaging AmeriCorps is the most effective means of solving the identified community problem
- If the applicant is already working on the problem identified in the application, the applicant should describe these efforts and impact to date and describe how the proposed use of AmeriCorps members will add value, i.e., be more effective than what is currently being implemented, or enhance existing efforts.



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The Intervention continued

Application instructions ask applicants to explain the following:

- Why they are proposing to use AmeriCorps to solve the identified problem
- What members will do
- How many members they are requesting
- What types of slots (service terms) are needed for these members
- If requesting different slot types, explain how the different slot types align with the program design and activities



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Explaining the Intervention

- Reviewers will assess how the applicant describes how the activities in which AmeriCorps members will engage will have a measurable impact on the identified community problem
- The applicant should provide an "evidence basis" to demonstrate the intervention they are proposing will be successful



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Explaining the Intervention Continued

- The evidence basis is how the applicant demonstrates that the intervention(s)/member activity they chose is likely to effectively address the identified problem
- The applicant should not simply say that the intervention is likely to be successful, they need to demonstrate through compelling argument with supporting documentation
- If the applicant is proposing an intervention so new and innovative that there is little evidence to support it, they must clearly outline the theory of why this intervention will work, and why it will solve the problem in a way that has not been done before



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The Outcome

Reviewers will Assess the Applicant's Anticipated Outcomes

The application instructions ask applicants to explain:

- What the overall change they want to see by the end of the three-year grant cycle is
- How they will measure impact
- How they will report on their outcomes on an annual basis
- How they will determine their performance measure targets

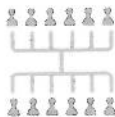


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Organizational Capacity

Sound Organizational Structure

- Overall organizational management structure to support the program
- Multi-site program or statewide model proposals describe site selection criteria, training, and oversight
- Staff capacity to manage the project both financial and programmatic
- Match resources identified



Sound Record of Accomplishments as an Organization

- Volunteer Generation and Support
- Organizational and Community Leadership



23

Partnerships & Collaboration

- Talk about what type of partnerships
- Outline collaborative efforts and how those efforts contribute toward meeting the project's objectives
- Are they involved in the planning and will they be involved in the implementation?



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Special Circumstances

Reviewers of this section may also take into account the following circumstances:

- Age of the organization and rate of growth
- Whether the organization serves a resource-poor community, such as rural or remote community, community with high poverty rate, or community with scarcity of philanthropic or corporate resources



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Budget / Cost Effectiveness

- Corporation Cost per Member Service Year (C/MSY)
- Diverse Non-Federal Support
- Decreased Reliance on Federal Support: Current Sub-Grantees only



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Thank you

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