

Serve Alaska
Commission Meeting Minutes

A regular meeting of the Serve Alaska Commission was held Friday, February 17, 2012 in Anchorage at the Robert B. Atwood Building. Chairman Dawn Grossmann called the meeting to order at 8:50 a.m.

Roll Call – Commissioners present: Dawn Grossmann, Ron Yeager, Kirsten Vesel, Becky Judd, Tracey Burke, Denise Morris, Steve Ricci, Justin Fantasia, Joelle Hall, Melora Gaber, Leona Grishkowsky, Lebron McPhail, Jeff Wheaton, Kathryn Dodge and Elaine Dahlgren
Excused Absence: Rory Schneeberger, Kirsten Franklin-Temple, and Judy Bredberg
Absent: Myrna Gardner and Barb Nickels
A quorum was present.

Staff present: Nita Madsen, Patricia O'Neil, Tenaya Lamon-Anderson and Colleen Stuvick

Guests present: sub-grantees Ruth Schoenleben from Nine Star Education & Employment; Cathie Clements from RurAL CAP; Evelyn Edson, from Joel's Place; and Faith Lee from Sitka Community Schools. Chad Davis, CNCS Alaska State Program Office.

Chairman Grossmann welcomed and introduced new Serve Alaska Commissioner Justin Fantasia; new Program Coordinator from Joel's Place, Evelyn Edson; new VISTA serving the Commission, Tenaya Lamon-Anderson; and Dianne Blumer, Special Assistant to Governor Parnell.

Approval to adopt the meeting agenda: Chair asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda as written. Commissioner Dodge moved. Commissioner Yeager seconded. With no further discussion the **Motion Passed** unanimously.

Approval to adopt the November 16, 2011 Commission meeting minutes: Chair asked for a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Commissioner Burke moved. Commissioner Morris seconded. With no further discussion the **Motion Passed** unanimously.

Executive Committee/Chair Report – The Executive Committee met and worked on the meeting agenda for today. No other business was conducted. Chair Report *is attached to these minutes*.

Staff Reports - *reports are attached to these minutes*. Nita Madsen, Executive Director – FY12 Budget revisions to CNCS grant awards, SAGA update and Outstanding AmeriCorps Member Awards. Recommendation to consider mailing a certificate to each Member serving in Alaska and not have an AmeriCorps awards event was presented. The Commission discussed possible other options to recognizing Members and agreed that it would be more meaningful if each Member received a letter from Alaska's Congressional Delegation. Chair asked for a motion to no longer have a competitive Outstanding AmeriCorps Member Awards event but to facilitate recognition of each Member serving in Alaska from the Congressional Delegation, Governor and/or Legislators. Commissioner Judd moved. Commissioner Dodge seconded. With no further discussion the **Motion Passed** unanimously.

Patricia O'Neil, Grants Administrator – Formula Funding Recommendations and 1% usage - Chair asked for a motion to adopt the recommended formula funding pool policy. Commissioner Dodge moved. Commissioner Gaber seconded. After debate and amendment Commissioner Dodge moved to amend the motion by striking out the word "required" and inserting the word "encouraged". Chair called for a vote on the amended motion to accept the amended formula funding policy. With no further discussion the **Motion Passed** unanimously.

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Chair asked for a motion to debate the recommendation to retain 1% of the administrative costs of the AmeriCorps grants. Commissioner Dodge moved. Commissioner McPhail seconded. Commissioner Dodge moved to take an advisory vote on the recommendation. Commissioner Burke seconded. Chair asked for a motion to approve the recommendation. With no further discussion the **Motion Failed**.

Committee and Task Force Reports

Commissioner Yeager reported on behalf of the Bylaws Task Force; *report is attached to these minutes*. The task force presented their recommended by-law revisions. Commissioner Yeager moved that the Commission suspend the use of Robert's Rules of Order and maintain the autonomy currently being utilized. Commissioner Dodge seconded. With no further discussion the **Motion Passed** unanimously. The By-laws Task Force has completed its obligations and is dissolved.

Commissioner Vesel reported on behalf of the Finance Task Force; No written report. The task force recommended suspending the non-profit research for a few months.

Commissioner Morris reported on the Disability Inclusion Conference she attended in December with Kirsten Vesel, Marilyn Miller Young, Faith Lee and Colleen Stuvick. At the conference this delegation gathered information from other state disability inclusion teams and learned what these teams are doing to promote disability inclusion in their own states. The delegation's recommendations to the Commission are: 1) establish a disability inclusion sub-committee so that work can begin on a strategic plan, 2) have an Ad Hoc commission member; possibly from a veterans group, 3) apply for the FY 13 CNCS competitive Disability Placement Grant with a focus on veterans with disabilities. Sub-Committee members are Commissioners Morris, Vesel, Grossmann, Bredberg and program coordinators Faith Lee and Marilyn Miller Young, and Commission staff Colleen. The sub-committee will meet most often via teleconference and possibly one face to face meeting.

Commissioner Yeager reported on behalf of the Committee Volunteers Task Force; *the report is attached to these minutes*. The task force recommended that everyone on the Commission be active on at least one committee. Committees will continue so long as they are necessary and effective to achieve the original respective intent of the Committee. Chair requested that the Disability Inclusion Sub-Committee be added to the approved list of Committees and Task Force/Sub-Committees. The sub-committee will concentrate on the proposal for funds, focusing on veterans with disabilities.

Commissioner Burke reported on behalf of the Strategic Focus Area Task Force; *the report is attached to these minutes*. The consensus of the task force is that the Commission should make a long-term commitment, which increases the stakes of making the **right** decision in the beginning. Beyond that, the task force reached no conclusions. Commissioner Judd moved to table a decision for one year. Commissioner Grishkowsky seconded. Chair asked a vote on the motion to table a decision on a strategic focus area for one year to see what the federal funding picture will look like. With no further discussion the **Motion Passed** unanimously. The Strategic Focus Area Task Force completed its obligation and is dissolved.

Commissioner Grossmann reported on behalf of the Strategic Plan Committee. The Strategic Plan was adopted at the November 16, 2011 commission meeting with the exception of the timelines. Chair asked for a motion to adopt the timelines recommended by staff. Commissioner Judd moved. Commissioner Hall seconded. With no further discussion the **Motion Passed** unanimously.

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NEW BUSINESS

- Several Commissioners' term of service expire March 10, 2012. Commissioners that want to be reappointed were asked to send a letter of interest to the Governor's Boards and Commissions office.
- Commissioner Ron Yeager's term will expire March 10, 2012. Commissioner Yeager was presented with a certificate of appreciation and recognized for the good work he has done during his term of service.
- Nomination of Vice Chairman – Commissioner Vesel was unanimously nominated to serve as Vice Chair. Commissioner Vesel accepted the appointment.
- VISTA Report by Tenaya Lamon-Anderson; *report is attached to these minutes.*
- AmeriCorps Week activities – Program representatives shared what they will be doing during AmeriCorps Week. Serve Alaska staff will host a book-give-away on JBER at the Airmen's Attic and have an information book at the Southcentral Foundation gathering at the Dena'ina Convention Center in Anchorage.
- Commission Meeting Dates – May meeting is changed to a teleconference; May 9th 1:00pm - 4:00pm; August 7 & 8 is a face to face in Anchorage; November 14 will be a teleconference.
- Commissioner Handbook is now available on the Serve Alaska website. Handbook updates will be in the Month In Review; Executive Director's monthly report to the Commission.
- Commissioner Hall will convene a meeting of the Legislative and Finance Task.

Business meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Chairman's Report by Dawn Grossmann

National Service Federal Funding continues to fight for its very existence. Staff will continue to keep Commissioners updated regarding national service funding. There are times when I am informed of potential actions that can be taken to get the message out to Congress to keep funding National Service. Sadly things do not look good and the first cuts have come at the commission level with our PDAT funding being essentially eliminated. We are going to be changing how we do business and working on creatively trying to continue functioning. Your help will be required in the future.

Meeting with Lt. Col. Spear-Bud from National Guard Family Services Department - Serving Veterans and their families is one of the key focus areas of the Corporation. Col. Spear-Bud met with members of SAGA and Rural CAP as well as Commission staff and had a wonderful dialogue about potential partnerships and ideas for expanding our programs into Vets Services as well as utilizing Vets as AmeriCorps members. This has great potential, resources that are available and support. We are presently working on getting this rolling immediately. Former Serve Alaska Commissioner Mike Bridges is now Adjacent General for Alaska National Guard which will help make this all work. This is one of the high priority areas the Corporation is developing and funding. This will help to make those RFPs we push forward much more competitive.

Executive Director Report – Nita Madsen

FY12 Budget revisions to CNCS grant awards:

- Admin-\$200,000
- PDAT-\$22,750
- Disability-\$50,395

Discussion of impact

President's FY13 Budget: for State Commission Admin has a 19% difference from the enacted FY12 Budget; CNCS is planning to use the same allocations from FY12. Alaska receives the small state minimum of \$200,000.

The PDAT and Disability that have previously been allocated to State Commissions by formula will now be competitive and open to others. Others were not defined on last Monday's conference call. All of the details are being developed.

SAGA update:

A new Executive Director has been selected, Beverly Schoonover and will start February 21. Prior to accepting the position with SAGA Ms. Schoonover was the ED with Juneau Watershed Partnership and served as AmeriCorps Member in Estacada, Oregon.

Outstanding AmeriCorps Awards

During the past few years Serve Alaska has recognized outstanding Members during AmeriCorps Week in May. With the seemingly last minute date change to March and budget reduction I propose the Commission consider mailing a certificate to each Member serving in Alaska. The estimated cost of \$625 is significantly less than last year's awards and recognition at \$2,629.36.

Grants Administrator Report – by Patricia O’Neil

Formula Funding Pool

The Formula Funding Pool is open to:

- Programs currently receiving Formula Funding
- Planning Grants
- Proposals from the Competitive RFP that were not moved forward by the Serve Alaska Commission to the national level.
- Applications not funded nationally through Serve Alaska’s Competitive RFP

The Formula Funding Pool is considered a closed Request for Proposals (RFP.) Serve Alaska reserves the right to open the RFP to any program if funding allows.

- First year awarded programs will be allotted three years of funding, to develop and strengthen the programs, if funding is available and the programs remain compliant.
- Programs that have been previously funded and are past their initial three years are considered “established programs.”
 - Established programs are encouraged to compete in the national competition each year.
 - If an established program is not funded through the national competition, they will be encouraged to re compete for Formula Funds.
- There will be an established review committee to evaluate submitted proposals.
- After the review committee has evaluated the submitted proposals, staff will engage in clarification with programs on changes needed within their proposals.
- The Board of Commissioners will vote on which proposals to fund within the Formula Funding Pool.

Administration Fee for Serve Alaska

- Serve Alaska has established the following policy for retaining the 1% of the administrative costs of the AmeriCorps grants. The 1% retained by Serve Alaska will be used in accordance with CNCS rules: to be expended for administrative purpose in support of the programs(s).
- Although Serve Alaska will only retain 1% of *expended* funds, the administrative fee will be calculated for grant budgets as follows:
- Formula and Competitive Grants: For Formula funded and Competitive funded grants, total forfeited fees will be 1% of the 5% Administrative Fees calculated for CNCS Funds awarded. This can be calculated using the Excel spreadsheet Serve Alaska developed. The fee = 1% x Awarded Grant.
- Fixed Grants: Fixed grants do not have an administrative allocation. Because fixed grants do not have an administrative allocation, the funding for fixed grants covers program operations. Serve Alaska will require that programs to set aside 1% of the CNCS funds awarded. The fee = 1% x Awarded Grant. This can also be calculated using the Excel spreadsheet Serve Alaska developed.
- Education Award Programs (EAP): EAP grants are education award grants only. They provide a limited C/MSY/Member for operating the program. Due to the structure of the EAP, Serve Alaska will not require EAP programs to set aside any administrative fees. The fee = \$0.

By-Laws Task Force Report by Ron Yeager

At the last quarterly meeting in November Nita brought to the Commission's attention that our by-laws are not in alignment with Administrative Order 259. A task force was developed and addressed the issue pending action by the Commission at this meeting. Nita provided a first draft of by-laws that were in alignment with AO 259.

The "By-Laws Task Force" subsequently met and approved of the draft with one clarification needed. Nita commented that, though the by-laws mandate the use of Robert's Rules of Order, the Commission has not made use of the rules. She elaborates: "Since the Commission has not conducted the meetings following Robert's Rules of Order a resolution is needed to suspend the use or use them as stated in the Administrative Order." Otherwise, the task force approved Nita's recommended revisions.

On January 11th the task force disseminated the recommended by-law revisions to the Commissioners soliciting comments, as of today I have received none. Therefore, upon resolution of Commission's use of Robert's Rules of Order and no further request from the Commission, the task force has completed its obligations and may be dissolved.

Committee Volunteers Final Report – By Ron Yeager

The Commission has a variety of different obligations and responsibilities that are addressed through committees or task forces; the difference being task forces are breathed life for specific tasks and are dissolved upon resolution or recommendation to the Commission for further action whereas committees are standing bodies responsible for issues that have sufficiently recurring business to warrant a standing committee.

Outreach Committee: This committee addresses Special Events and Media, with Special Events being a task force. Events qualifying for Special Events include past activities such as the Covenant House Talent Show, the Legislative Luncheon in Juneau, etc. Media will be a responsibility of the Outreach Committee to reach out to our community via social media, radio, etc., such as last summer when Tracey Burke was on the local radio show Hometown Alaska.

Volunteers for this committee: Leona Grishkowsky, Kirsten Franklin-Temple

Legislative Advocacy Committee: This committee was structured similar to the Outreach Committee: it would be primarily composed of a standing committee responsible for maintaining the legislators' knowledge and awareness of Serve Alaska and a task force responsible for coordinating with legislators during Juneau trips. Due to a variety of reasons, the responsibility for legislator awareness was, for the short term at least, shifted away from the Commission to individual commissioners. It is expected that each commissioner will, on his or her own personal time, maintain a level of communication with his or her respective Senator and Representative on Serve Alaska issues.

Volunteers for this committee: Steve Ricci (lead), Barb Nickels, Joelle Hall, Melora Gaber, Kathryn Dodge, Kirsten Vesel, Jeff Wheaton, Nita Madsen

Strategic Planning Committee: This committee is responsible for infrastructure accountability covering a variety of topics concerning the future of the Commission.

Volunteers for this committee: Barb Nickels (lead), Dawn Grossmann, Becky Judd, Elaine Dahlgren, Joelle Hall, Tracey Burke, Nita Madsen

Program Focus Task Force will focus on Programs; how are we directing additional resources in a way that aligns with our Strategic Plans, Mission, etc.

Volunteers are: Kirsten Franklin-Temple, Elaine Dahlgren, Becky Judd, Nita Madsen

Financial Task Force is responsible for developing and making recommendations related to financial structuring and resource development.

Volunteers are: Kirsten Vesel (lead), Barb Nickels, Dawn Grossmann, Joelle Hall, Leona Grishkowsky, Elaine Dahlgren, Nita Madsen

As far as staffing needs for the committees, Outreach will need more volunteers, I anticipate three necessary. The Legislative and Strategic Planning Committees appear to be well staffed as does Finance Task Force. Program focus Task Force will need at least two more volunteers.

I want to encourage everyone on the board to stay active in at least one committee, though you are welcome to participate in as many as your time allows. I anticipate as these committees move forward they will be refined as necessary. That would certainly be welcome as they should always be most effective so long as the goal is to keep the original respective intent.

Addition to the original report – the **Disability Inclusion Sub-Committee** was established at this Commission meeting. The Sub-Committee will focus on preparations to apply for the competitive FY13 Federal Disability Placement Grant with the focus on veterans with disabilities. The grant application is due November 2012.

Volunteers are: Denise Morris (lead), Kirsten Vesel, Dawn Grossmann, Judy Bredberg, Marilyn Miller Young, Faith Lee, Colleen Stuvick, Nita Madsen

Strategic Focus Area Task Force Report by Tracey Burke

2/16/12 – Below are the notes from a December teleconference. A follow-up teleconference planned in January proved impractical for too many people.

We might consider rolling discussion of a strategic focus into a broader discussion of formula funds generally. – TB –

12/15/11 Teleconference with Dawn, Kathryn, Becky, Ron, Tracey, Nita

Should Serve Alaska focus its formula funds on one or more strategic priorities? *The consensus answer is Yes, or at least Probably.*

If yes, what should it/they be? *This question was deferred.*

Nita provided some history on how our formula funds (the approx. \$600K over which Serve Alaska has control) have been used. Before her coming on, these funds were generally used for programs that competed unsuccessfully at the national level. More recently they have also been used to help newer programs develop and become ready for national competition; they are used both ways currently.

Kathryn reviewed what she learned at national meetings about some states' choosing to focus their funds. Minnesota's approach is one of the best-developed and has become a national and international model. MN has chosen to focus all of their funds on literacy as one important issue on which they can have a measurable impact. They have significant legislative buy-in and their legislature provides additional funds beyond CNCS formula funds. There was a transition during which they kept the funding of then-current, non-literacy-focused programs steady and then reduced support. We do not know how they decided to focus and how they chose literacy.

The ensuing discussion indicated favor for the idea of focusing, with questions:

- Does “focus” indicate a general topic area (e.g. health) or a narrow outcome/impact (e.g. fewer premature births)?
 - How prescriptive do we want to be with grantees? How do we balance supporting innovation, creativity, and local responsiveness (program flexibility) with our desire to demonstrate impact (fidelity to one or just a few models)?
 - Do we commit to a long-term focus (5-8 years) or give ourselves leave to switch frequently?
- How do we select a focus?
 - To what extent do we align with CNCS priorities, the governor's priorities, and/or “gaps” identified by the gap analysis that the VISTA will start in January? Do we solicit input from current grantees?
 - How do we balance being responsive to other entities with setting our own priorities? (That a gap exists does not necessarily mean it merits filling.)
 - Are we trying to create our own niche or partner with existing efforts?
 - Would we consider a primary focus and one or more secondary foci?
- This would mark a significant shift for us, since currently our programs are quite varied in purpose and activities. How do we meet our moral obligations to our current grantees if they do not fit the focus? What would be the timeline (in years) for implementing such a focus so that current grantees who can't/won't refocus aren't abruptly abandoned?
- What does it mean to make a measurable impact? What are we trying to measure? How do we measure the ephemerals? How do we think about the impacts of our individual programs and the impact of us as a Commission, which should somehow be greater than the sum of our parts?

The consensus on our meeting was that we want to make a long-term commitment – which increases the stakes of making the RIGHT decision in the beginning. Beyond that, we reached no conclusions.

Tasks:

Ron will explore impact measurability. There is a particular book he will read and report on.

Kathryn will further explore the process through which MN arrived at their current model.

Dawn will explore upcoming Governor's priorities.

Nita will provide an update on CNCS priorities.

Tracey will send out this summary for review and send out a Doodle for a January teleconference at which we will further refine discussion topics for the full Commission in February.

VISTA Project Report – By Tenaya Lamon-Anderson

Tenaya Lamon-Anderson introduced the work that her VISTA position will be doing this year. She has so far been orientating herself with the public assistance programs and federal departments exist currently for social programs, and will be working soon to define how poverty exists in Alaska. The next steps to be taking place are having a database of nonprofits and agencies where national service could be utilized by June and a final report to the commission with her findings of the survey and also was announced was the two events which will be occurring with Serve Alaska during AmeriCorps week in March. The first will be an informational booth on national service at the Southcentral Foundation gather on March 10th, and the second is a book give-away at the Airman's Attic on the joint army and air force base in Anchorage for E6 and below ranking officers and their families on March 14th from 10am-12pm, thanks to the donations of Senator Murkowski from their collection and books donated by Scholastic Books. The event is also being coordinated with the Senior Corps members who will be volunteering at the event.