

Governor's Advisory Board on Services and Volunteerism

September 30, 2021; 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

VIRTUAL

Board Members Present: Lily Beres, Jessica Bowser, Elizabeth Childress Burneson, Vanessa Diamond, Mark Fero, Priscilla Martinez, Jenné Nurse, Bryan Pearce-Gonzalez, Jamie Seagraves, Julie Strandlie, Sheila Williamson-Branch, Clifford Yee

Board Members Absent: Zachary Leonsis

Virginia Service Commission Staff Present: Kathy Spangler, Roxanne Saunders, Analise Adams, Gail Doyle, Kimberly Brown, Christina Dumas, Samantha Lukasiewicz, Shannon Girouard, Jae-Young Choe

AmeriCorps Regional Representative Present: Lora Grady

The Board Meeting was called to order at 1:05 PM by Board Chair, Julie Strandlie.

Adoption of Agenda and Minutes

The floor was opened for the adoption of minutes from the meeting on July 22, 2021 by Julie Strandlie. The motion to adopt the minutes was made by Clifford Yee, Lily Beres seconded, and all were in favor. The floor was opened for approval of the agenda. Liz Childress Burneson motioned to adopt the agenda, Cliff Yee seconded, and all were in favor.

Bylaws Approval

Chair Julie Strandlie presented the updated bylaws per Article XIII Section B. Any board member may make recommendations for proposed changes to the Bylaws by presenting proposals to the board at least one month prior to the next regular meeting and proposed amendments will be presented at the next full board meeting. If accepted, the proposed amendments will be voted on at the next regular meeting of the full board and receive a two-thirds majority of those board members voting at the meeting to be adopted. The bylaw revisions meet these standards as changes were first introduced at the May 20th meeting followed by a draft set of revised bylaws at the July 22nd meeting.

Chair Julie Strandlie entertained a motion to adopt the revised bylaws. The motion to adopt the revised bylaws was made by Bryan Pearce-Gonzalez and seconded by Sheila Williamson-Branch. The vote to adopt was unanimous which passed the two-thirds threshold; thus the bylaw revisions were adopted.

Election of Officers

The Virginia Service Commission Director Kathy Spangler announced the slate of officers nominated for 2022: Julie Strandlie for Chair and Vanessa Diamond for Vice Chair. Ms. Spangler reported that board member reappointments have not yet been announced by the Governor's office, but confirmation that Vanessa Diamond and Julie Strandlie would be reappointed for another term was received.

Chair Julie Strandlie opened the floor for any additional nominations for Chair or Vice Chair. There being none, the Chair entertained a motion to vote by acclimation to accept the slate as

proposed for election. The motion to vote for Julie Strandlie as Chair and Vanessa Diamond as Vice Chair was made by Bryan Pearce-Gonzalez and seconded by Lily Beres. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Special Resolution

Chair Julie Strandlie reported that the long time Governor's Award mistress of ceremonies, Lisa Schaffner, passed away suddenly last month. She was a tremendous advocate for service and volunteerism. To honor her, a special Board resolution was prepared to present to Lisa Schaffner's family. The special resolution was read to the Board and highlighted a commitment to uplifting her community through Ms. Schaffner's work in journalism and public relations over her thirty-year career.

Chair Julie Strandlie:

Whereas throughout her 30-year career Lisa Schaffner showed a commitment to uplifting her community through her work in journalism and public relations;

Whereas Lisa Schaffner used her public platform in the Richmond community for more than 25 years to serve as an advocate and supporter of various causes, especially organ sharing through her work with UNOS;

Whereas, since 2014, Lisa Schaffner has volunteered her time and talents to recognizing outstanding service in the Commonwealth as part of the Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Awards;

Whereas Lisa Schaffner put a face on real need in our community as one of the first Virginia journalists to partner with non-profits to help raise their awareness;

Whereas Lisa Schaffner has been recognized by numerous organizations and awards, including the Central Virginia MS Society and the Virginia Association of Press Broadcasters for her community support;

Whereas Lisa Schaffner, as a Virginia columnist in Boomer Magazine, covered a wide diversity of topics – from small organizations to national nonprofits, children to seniors, veterans to LGBTQ youth, medical services, education, social justice, environmental issues, and animal welfare;

Whereas her unique talents as a communicator, warmth, kind heart, love of community, sense of humor, energy and graciousness has enriched those fortunate enough to know and work with her;

Now Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Virginia Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism recognizes Lisa Schaffner for her contributions to the Commonwealth of Virginia and for making a significant difference to our community; and

Further Be It Resolved that the Virginia Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism expresses its appreciation and gratitude for these contributions and extends its sincerest condolences to her friends and family at this time. Adopted unanimously and signed this 30th Day of September, 2021.

Chair Julie Strandlie entertained a motion to adopt this resolution of Lisa Schaffner.

The motion to adopt the resolution was made by Priscilla Martinez, seconded by Bryan Pearce-Gonzalez, and all were in favor.

Committees

Chair Julie Strandlie requested that each board member complete the interest profile before October 15th so that committee assignments can be made. This interest profile will also be distributed to new members as appointed. The following board members stepped forward to serve as chair of the three committees. Sheila Williamson-Branch will chair the Program Committee, Bryan Pearce- Gonzalez will chair the Communications and Events Committee, and Lily Beres has agreed to chair the Advocacy and Public Policy Committee. These individuals will be officially elected during the committee meetings at the November 18th meeting.

Commission Report

Ms. Kathy Spangler provided an overview of the Virginia Service Commission's (VSC) activities. The 2021 Governor's Awards on Volunteerism and Community Service in-person event scheduled for this evening was cancelled due to lingering impacts from COVID 19. The Commission decided to go virtual with a pre-recorded event at the November 18, 2021 board meeting. All the award winners have been notified.

AmeriCorps programs around the state honored the 9/11 Day of Service with service projects in their communities, including food drives, food pantry sorting and school supply drives, and writing notes to Blue Star Families. A record number of 44 applications for 9/11 Day of Service were submitted, and the Virginia Service Foundation funded 20 mini grants of \$250 each to various organizations across Virginia to honor the 20th anniversary of 9/11. A highlight of the weekend included a visit from U.S. Education Secretary Cardona who volunteered at one of the AmeriCorps portfolio programs alongside Aspire! Afterschool Learning members at the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC). He was joined by Deputy Secretary of U.S. Education Cindy Marten and the General Counsel for AmeriCorps, Fernanco Laguarda. Commission staff members Roxanne Saunders and Kim Brown joined the Commission's newest AmeriCorps program, Enrichmond Foundation, for a day of working to clear brush and debris at Evergreen Cemetery.

AmeriCorps Programs

The Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) is currently the only competitive program and will have 41 AmeriCorps members who will support over 500 upper elementary and middle school student literacy gains; science, technology, engineering and math content knowledge improvements; and gains in social emotional learning in Halifax County, Pittsylvania County, Henry County, and the cities of Martinsville and Danville.

A total of 11 organizations were awarded grants in the Formula Request for Applications (RFA):

- The Aspire! Afterschool Learning Links AmeriCorps Program will have 15 full-time AmeriCorps Members providing critical links to improve the academic performance of 80 3rd-5th grade students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds in Arlington.
- The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lynchburg will have 6 full-time AmeriCorps Members that will serve 72 youth in Academic Programs in Lynchburg & Charlottesville, Virginia.
- Carroll County Public Schools LIFT UP AmeriCorps Tutoring Program of Carroll County Schools and Smyth County Schools will have 38 half-time AmeriCorps members tutoring at-risk students in reading and/or math in Pre-K through 8th grade in 9 schools in Carroll County and in 3 middle schools in Smyth County.

- CASA de Maryland – Moving Forward NOVA AmeriCorps program will have 17 AmeriCorps members that provide financial literacy education, citizenship support, legal support, and youth education in Prince William and Fairfax Counties.
- The City of Richmond will have 17 AmeriCorps members serving 2,000 individuals by providing opioid and heroin use prevention and recovery services and economic opportunities for underserved citizens in Richmond.
- Edu-Futuro Emerging Leaders Program & Parent Empowerment Services will have 19 AmeriCorps members deliver comprehensive youth leadership development and workforce development programming to over 600 students in Arlington County, Fairfax County, and the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church, and Roanoke, Virginia.
- Enrichmond Foundation will have 5 full-time AmeriCorps members serving to provide a healthy ecosystem and sustainable protection for Virginia's rich natural resources at two historic African American Cemeteries: Evergreen Cemetery in the City of Richmond and East End Cemetery in the County of Henrico. Enrichmond's "Conservation Corps" program joins together staff, volunteers, government agencies, and AmeriCorps members to undertake the large-scale task of mitigating environmental threats at these forgotten historical cemeteries.
- International Rescue Commission (IRC) and its partner, ReEstablish Richmond, will have 10 AmeriCorps members providing employment training and placement support, youth development, health navigation and wellness services, and organizational capacity building to refugees, Special Immigrant Visa holders in the City of Charlottesville, Albemarle County, Henrico County, Chesterfield County, and the City of Richmond.
- The Literacy Lab - Virginia Reading Corps will have 70 AmeriCorps members providing 328 low-income kindergarten through third grade students with daily early literacy intervention through the Virginia Reading Corps program in elementary schools across the areas of Greater Richmond, Hampton Roads, and Danville.
- The Rector and Visitors of the UVA - The Virginia College Advising Corps will have 42 AmeriCorps members providing near peer college advising to low-income, underrepresented, and first-generation students in 47 high school locations throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- Finally, The Virginia Service and Conservation Corps has 70 AmeriCorps members protecting over 750 acres of at-risk ecosystems and creating 110 miles of trails to improve experiences in Virginia's State Parks.

The Commission has 2 planning grants this year including the United Way of Southwest Virginia which plans to address education needs by conducting a needs assessment of youth workforce development; developing their program model; and creating a financial plan to implement an AmeriCorps program. The Volunteer Hampton Roads' planning grant focuses on designing an AmeriCorps intermediary program to improve school readiness and academic success for children of low-income families.

The Commission has added the management of a VISTA capacity building project to the portfolio. One VISTA leader is in place and the Commission is currently in recruitment for fourteen (14) VISTA Members to service in six Department of Social Services offices. They will be serving in the Healthy Futures priority area addressing the opioid epidemic priority area, food insecurity, child care subsidies, supporting the strengthening and expansion of statewide networks for immigrant services and volunteer centers, and expanding the implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives across the service sector statewide.

ARPA Funding

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 invests approximately \$1 billion above FY 2021 fiscal year appropriations in AmeriCorps to remain available through September 30, 2024. This funding in federal resources will be used to increase and support the agency's core programming of grants and resources to communities over an approximate three-year period and allow for the agency to offer more national service and volunteer opportunities to the American public through AmeriCorps programs. The total amount Virginia has been allocated is \$5,347,384. State Commissions have the ability to award funds based on 3 categories: increasing the living allowance, replacing grantee share dollars with federal ARP match, and expanding programming by funding additional member slots.

All but two of the formula sub-grantees chose to use ARP funds to increase their living allowances above the required max of \$16,000 for a full-time member. The average amount of the living allowance for a Full-time member in the portfolio will be \$18,200 – some less, some more depending on the program and geographic area members are serving. Two programs, IRC and the City of Richmond requested expanding their program with the addition of 2 and 2.8 member service years (MSY) respectively. All members, even those currently enrolled, will be receiving an increase in the living allowance. It is the Commission's hope that this translates to increased recruitment and retention. Programs will be able to obligate organizational funds that were originally identified as AmeriCorps match dollars to other initiatives or needs with use of cash match replacement, and there's room to grow their programs that may not have been an opportunity through the formula process and allocation.

To continue efforts to expand national service across the Commonwealth, a virtual tour is being planned to reintroduce the Virginia Service Commission (VSC) to partners across the state. Two webinars are being planned for government organizations and two webinars for non-profit partners for October and November. VSC is also working with the AmeriCorps regional office to promote new funding opportunities through Public Health AmeriCorps.

Upcoming Events

AmeriCorps Opening Day is scheduled for October 4th as a virtual event focused on professional and personal development. The keynote speaker is Delegate Jay Jones of 89th district speaking on culture of service. Delegate Jones will also lead the members in the AmeriCorps pledge as they are sworn in for service. Topics for the day include Trauma Informed Care, Resiliency, Diversity equity and Inclusion and Social Intelligence.

The 2022 Conference will be virtual over a two day period with the name changed to *The Virginia Volunteerism Summit*. The program will focus on the future of service and volunteerism as it relates to thriving communities across the Commonwealth to launch the State Service Plan. The first day will focus on thought leaders sharing content to challenge and inspire attendees, and the second day will focus on skill development through engaging formats collaborating with strategic partners on content.

State Service Plan

Chair Julie Strandlie opened the floor to Andy Bates of Southeastern Institute of Research (SIR) to provide an update on the progress of strategic planning efforts (see attached).

Mr. Bates reported that they are currently in phase 4 of the developing draft plan framework and tactics. SIR worked closely with the Virginia Service Commission (VSC) leadership to develop an eighteen minute online survey and received 395 fully completed responses. The two largest groups represented were nonprofits and government organizations. The survey aimed to see where stakeholders are at and what they feel are the most critical needs to address in their communities. The most critical needs highly focused on socially determinants of health factors such as behavioral/mental health services, affordable housing, domestic violence prevention, healthcare, food insecurity, and job training. Another survey finding revealed where stakeholders' focus areas lie. Many are working on advancing programs and initiatives in Healthy Futures areas. Governmental organizations' responses had a high concentration in environmental health, disaster services, etc.

SIR is looking at how the Virginia Service Commission can be a catalyst between partners/stakeholders to bridge them together and create synergy. This would help overcome barriers to boosting service and grassroots volunteerism such as limited awareness and understanding and a lack of earned trust in marginalized communities.

From the VSC's State Service Plan framework, three topline goals emerge: 1) to build and convene a stronger, more informed network of partners; 2) expand the base of national service members and grassroots volunteers in Virginia; and 3) facilitate the growth and effectiveness of initiatives that can successfully leverage greater levels of service to meet the needs of Virginia's communities.

Updates

Chair Julie Strandlie opened the floor to newly elected Chair of the Virginia Service Foundation (VSF), Cliff Yee. Mr. Yee reported that the VSF is looking forward to realigning with the State Service Plan and helping to expedite the funds for the upcoming year. In the midst of transition, the VSF will be reimagining its role and how to recruit new members to help support the mission. Staff members of the Commission will help provide some staff support to the VSF in an effort to help accelerate operational duties and act as an additional funding source for the Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism.

Vanessa Diamond offered an update from the America's Service Commissions (ASC) Board. Ms. Diamond reported that ASC is looking at appropriation and funding opportunities. The Box Foundation just funded ASC to support after school programs that have AmeriCorps members and released two different technical assistance kits—one for supporting Commission staff and another for supporting program staff in capacity building efforts. Another component of interest are efforts to help volunteer organizations to fund their fund matches.

Senior Program Officer at AmeriCorps Lora Grady offered an update from the Regional Office. Ms. Grady reported on the Public Health AmeriCorps Initiative with 400 million dollars in funding that has been provided through a partnership with AmeriCorps and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The goal over the course of 5 years is to support programming to recruit, train, and support new public health leaders in highly impacted or underserved communities. The two overarching goals are to meet public health needs in historically underserved communities by providing capacity and support and in state and local health settings that advance more equitable health outcomes. Also a longer term outcome goal would be to provide pathways to quality public health careers by providing onsite exposure and training with a focus on recruiting AmeriCorps members who reflect the communities served.

A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is out with a deadline at 5:00 pm on November 8. AmeriCorps is trying to get the word out to any potential applicants whether they be new potential partners or existing partners who may want to expand their programming. Because of the quick turnaround, a variety of technical assistance opportunities are available such as Spanish language support to potential applicants at the program level and a designated staff to answer questions about the application process. There are also some upcoming technical assistance webinars offering a walkthrough of the NOFO; best practices on putting together an effective and competitive budget; and, webinars giving an overview of AmeriCorps programming. Because this is a five year initiative, AmeriCorps expects to fund new and continuing programs going forward. Ms. Grady encouraged the Board to reach out to any potential applicants or programs and share information about the NOFO and the available resources: <https://americorps.gov/funding-opportunity/fy-2022-ameri-corps-state-national-public-health-ameri-corps>.

Public Comments and Adjournment

Chair Julie Strandlie opened the floor for any questions or public comments, of which there were none. The next board meeting date was announced to be virtual on November 18, 2021 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Julie Strandlie adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.

Prepared by Jae-Young Choe
Submitted by Kathy Spangler