

**Agenda** (Note: All times are tentative)

**I. 1p Chair Harbage, Welcomes and Opens Meeting**

- a. Roll Call, Anastasia Matheison
  - i. Commissioners Present: Chair Rebecca Harbage, Vice Chair Morgan Hubbard\*, Commissioners Rob Lawler, Vicki Turner, Clifford Kipp, Dawn English\*, Donnie Wetzel\*, Kami Kirchberg\*, Jim Swan\*, Don Jones\*, Kelly Ackerman\*, Dylan Davids\*
    1. Commissioners Absent: Commissioners Kevin Myhre, Jim Larson, Thomas Risberg
  - ii. GOCS Staff Present: Director Sarah Sadowski, Program Officer Kristina Jordan, Fiscal Officer Keena Irby, Communications Specialist Alyssa Mathieu, Grants Specialist Elaine Dahl, Training Specialist Elly Fisher, Administrative Specialist Anastasia Matheison, Intern Josie Howlett
  - iii. Guests Present: Morgan Davis, Office of the Public Defender; Pete Buchanan,\* Montana Campus Compact; Harley Ternes,\* Justice for Montanans
- b. Introductions, All
- c. Opening Activity, [donation to Good Samaritan Ministries Thrift Store](#)
  - i. GOCS and the Commission gathered warm clothing for donation to the Good Samaritan Ministries Thrift Store. For those not attending in person, please donate locally. To submit photos of your donations, please send them to [serve@mt.gov](mailto:serve@mt.gov).
- d. Group Photo: Group photo postponed until March 2024 meeting.
- e. Approval of [October 12, 2023 Minutes](#)
  - i. Chair Harbage asked if there were changes the Commissioners thought necessary – no changes, October 12, 2023, minutes approved.
- f. Commissioner Updates
  - i. Commissioner English: AmeriCorps Seniors in Butte do a MLK day Read for Peace event annually. Last year, they read to 30 classrooms in the Butte Public School District. This year they are signed up for 30 classrooms. If Commissioners would like to volunteer to read to kids, reach out to Dawn. The event will take place on Monday January 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - ii. Commissioner Ackerman: Every year, the Department of Veterans Affairs invites volunteers to set holiday wreaths on every grave site in the military cemeteries: Montana State Veterans Cemetery – Fort Harrison, Eastern Montana State Veterans Cemetery – Miles City, and Western Montana State Veterans Cemetery – Missoula. These events happen on December 16<sup>th</sup> starting at 9:00am. Fort Harrison starts their wreath setting at 10:00am. Before this there is a ceremony to honor those who are still on Prisoner of War (POW) or Missing in Action (MIA) status.

**II. 135p Office of Regional Operations Update**, Dylan Davids, Senior Portfolio Manager, AmeriCorps

- a. Dylan is now the Senior Portfolio Manager (SPM) for the Office of Regional Operations Mountain Region. In that role Dylan will soon be the ex-officio Commissioner for AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps is now hiring for a Portfolio Manager to fill Dylan's former position.

- b. This year is the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of AmeriCorps. To see events happening in your area, along with the opportunity to share your own AmeriCorps stories Visit, <https://americorps.gov/about/americorps30>
- c. AmeriCorps Seniors has two new grant opportunities to expand the AmeriCorps Seniors Senior Companion Program, and Foster Grandparents programs. Montana is a priority for these grants so the whole state can benefit from these programs. <https://americorps.gov/partner/funding-opportunities>
- d. VISTA updates: Members now receive an increased living allowance; however, due to this increase, fewer member positions are available. Due to this, the coming year may be challenging for grantees; however, AmeriCorps hopes this will be a better long-term solution as overall, members receive a higher allowance for their service.
- e. NCCC is starting a Summer of Service in 2024. The program will focus on education, trail maintenance, and other community needs. <https://americorps.gov/serve/americorps/americorps-nccc/summer-service>
- f. There are funding opportunities open for VISTA concept papers, AmeriCorps State and National, Native Nations, NCCC concept papers, and AmeriCorps Seniors.
- g. Chair Harbage asked about the American Climate Corps and what Montana can do to start a program and recruit members. Commissioner Davids stated at this time, the regional offices are waiting on information and a timeline as to when these programs may go into effect.
  - i. Director Sadowski clarified the NCCC Forest Corps is in the process of making core objectives. Next week, NCCC, Montana Conservation Corps, and GOCS will meet to discuss Forest Corps.
  - ii. Director Sadowski shared that the Climate Corps has no release date as there is no funding or outcomes at this time. This conversation is ongoing.

### III. 150p Director's Update, Director Sadowski

- a. Staffing, Last Best Alums, Confidentiality Statement
  - i. Staffing: GOCS is now fully staffed. Please welcome new Training Specialist Elly Fisher, and student intern Josie Howlett, who will be with the Office until May.
  - ii. This morning, we hosted a new Commissioner Orientation. Thank you, new commissioners, Dawn English, Clifford Kipp, Rob Lawler, and Vicki Turner. If you have not already, please fill out the confidentiality statement return to GOCS.
  - iii. January 10-11, Director Sadowski will travel to Washington D.C. along with Commissioner Wetzel and a delegate from the Department of Labor and Industry Commissioner's Office. This event is sponsored by the National Governor's Association and focuses on service to careers. At the March meeting, Director Sadowski will report on how this event went and what the takeaways are.
  - iv. State Service Plan Workgroup will be created in March. This workgroup is formed to make the 2024-2026 State Service Plan and will meet regularly. The workgroup will present the draft State Service Plan in October 2024 and the final version in December 2024.
  - v. House Bill 585 for an organ donor memorial on the Capitol Complex was passed through Legislature. No state funds are appropriated for the memorial so GOCS will fundraise for building and maintenance of the memorial along with other expenses.

Contributions are welcome. Please consider \$8 because each donator can save up to eight lives and help countless others. The design, created by Ken VanDeWalle, a Bozeman based architect, has been approved by Capital Complex Advisory Council. This project's goal is to provide sustainable legacy to recognize all who donate their organs, to provide hope for those who are waiting, and to provide comfort for those who have lost their loved ones.

- vi. [Last Best Alums](#) is an effort to create the opportunity for AmeriCorps alumni across Montana to connect and continue to be a part of AmeriCorps. Please like them on Facebook at Montana Last Best Alumni and visit their website.
  - 1. AmeriCorps Alum is a category for the ServeMontana Awards. If you know anyone who is a good nomination for this, please nominate them at <https://serve.mt.gov/commission-initiatives/>. The ServeMontana Symposium engages Alums on a panel to speak on topics relevant to current members and life after service. Shannon Stober and Josh Vanek have been leading the alumni council efforts.

#### IV. 205p Governor's Office of Community Service Updates

- a. ServeMontana, Alyssa Mathieu, Communications Specialist
  - i. Youth Serve Montana Scholarships
    - 1. In partnership with Montana Campus Compact and Reach Higher Montana GOCS offers Youth ServeMontana Scholarships. There is \$125,000 for Scholarships and two tiers: a high school senior who volunteers 50-99 hours are eligible to receive a \$1000 scholarship and a high school student who volunteers 100+ hours eligible to receive a \$1500 scholarship. Students must attend a Montana Campus Compact institution. Scholarship applications opened in November, and will close at the next of January.
    - 2. Please encourage high school seniors to apply for this on our website if they qualify. On the website there is an informational poster. If possible, please put these up in your communities where youths will see them, such as libraries.
  - ii. MLK National Day of Service, Jan 15, 2024
    - 1. GOCS is coordinating a MLK Day of Service Read for Peace in the Helena Public School District. This event will happen Friday, January 12, 2024. Commissioners who are available, please reach out.
    - 2. AmeriCorps Seniors in Butte will be going to several classrooms in the Butte school district on MLK Day, January 15, 2024 for a Read for Peace event.
    - 3. If you are not available or nearby for these volunteer opportunities, please consider serving with local charities, food banks, or other volunteer events on or near this day.
  - iii. ServeMontana Awards, nominate
    - 1. ServeMontana Awards (SMA) opened at the beginning of December and will close April 7th. Please think of volunteers who should be recognized. Each Commissioner should make at least one SMA nomination. The categories are AmeriCorps Alum, Veteran or current Military Personal, Engaged Citizen, Youth,

Young Adult, and Lifetime Achievement for individuals, as well as Group and Business award.

iv. Commissioner Highlight & newsletter

1. GOCS highlights willing members of this Commission in the monthly newsletter. This gives GOCS, program personnel, AmeriCorps members, and the public a chance to get to know the commissioners. Please fill out the short survey on the website to be recognized.

b. Financial, Keena Irby, Fiscal Officer

i. Financial Status Report

1. The second year of a three-year funding cycle is ending at the end of 2023. GOCS new grant year starts January 2024. However, the Commission Support Grant and Commission Investment Fund grants will run January 2024 – June 2025, as AmeriCorps is changing the performance period, this will align with Montana's state fiscal year.

ii. Honorarium end of year report out

1. Keena will send an email to eligible Commissioners asking if they would like to claim, waive, or a combination of waive/claim the honorarium. Waived honorarium is counted as in-kind match for the Commission Support Grant. This will be sent out annually.
2. The 2023 waived honorarium amount is \$1,200. This total does not include additional in-kind donated by Commissioners. \$300 has been paid out by GOCS to Commissioners who requested to receive the honorarium.

c. AmeriCorps, OCS staff

i. Grants update: Competitive & Formula, Kristina Jordan, Program Officer

1. Competitive grant applications were due the end of October and the Grant Review Workgroup met on November 15<sup>th</sup> to review and score applications. Upon funding recommendation approval by the Commission, the applicants will enter a clarification period to make changes and strengthen applications. GOCS will submit applications before the due date of January 4<sup>th</sup>.
  - a. This year GOCS received three competitive applications. These included two continuations: Big Sky Watershed Corps and Montana Campus Compact, and one recompetes from Justice for Montanans. Thank you to the programs for submitting the applications.
2. Formula grant applications will be due in the spring, and more information will be shared at the March meeting of the Commission.
  - a. AgCorps, a planning grant from last year, will start an operating program in January. Currently, AgCorps has 11 positions with six members recruited and two applicants in process.
  - b. Director Sadowski: The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) will not move forward with a program grant at this time due to challenges faced in the planning grant that ended 8.31.2023.

- ii. ServeMontana Symposium call for presenters, Kristina Jordan, Program Officer
  1. The ServeMontana Symposium is GOCS's signature event and brings together most AmeriCorps members serving in Montana across streams of service. This year will be the 15<sup>th</sup> annual and the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of AmeriCorps. Last year, almost 200 AmeriCorps members attended. This is a great opportunity for members, program staff, alumni, and commissioners to network and learn.
  2. The Call for Breakout Session Presenters is now open, [serve.mt.gov/ameri-corps/servemontana-symposium](https://serve.mt.gov/ameri-corps/servemontana-symposium). Typically, there are three concurrent breakout session blocks with five presenters each who speak on relevant topics to AmeriCorps members, including an alumni panel.
  3. GOCS encourages Commissioners to share the Call for Proposals among your networks, and to consider submitting a proposal.

## V. 230p New Business

- a. AmeriCorps Grant Review Workgroup Recommendation, Commissioner English – action item
  - i. Commissioner English: The three competitive grant applications scored. The program representatives listened to the feedback given by the reviewers, were able to answer questions, and took the recommendations from the workgroup to strengthen and improve applications. The Funding Recommendation was attached to the email sent out by Director Sadowski for Commission review.
    1. Commissioner Swan made a motion to accept the funding recommendation as proposed. Vice Chair Hubbard seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously.
- b. ServeMontana Award Workgroup – formation
  - i. Vice Chair Hubbard, Commissioner Kipp, Commissioner Risberg, and Commissioner Jones volunteered for the workgroup. Chair Harbage will be a backup for the workgroup. GOCS will check on availability of the above commissioners in March.
- c. Engagement opportunity, MLK Day Helena, Jan 12, 2023
  - i. Alyssa Mathieu is working with the Helena School District to read at Central Elementary school. The district requested the number of volunteers before they move forward with setting up the details. GOCS needs volunteers to confirm their availability by December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023. The goal is to reach the highest need school first.
    1. Commissioner Turner committed to this opportunity.
    2. Alyssa will send a follow up email to all commissioners.
  - ii. Commissioner English: For the Read for Peace in Butte, most volunteers are students for Montana Tech and they do not get back to her until January 9<sup>th</sup>. If other Commissioners would like to participate in this event, please get back to Commissioner English by the first week of January.

## VI. 245p Public Comment

- a. Harley Ternes, Justice for Montanans Program Coordinator thanked the Commission and GOCS for the support of the JFM program and throughout the recompute process.

**VII. 3p Adjourn**

Adjourned by Chair Harbage

***Next regularly scheduled Commission meeting Wednesday, March 13, 2024...10am!  
ServeMontana Symposium, March 13 -15, 2024***

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