

Agenda (Note: All times are tentative)

I. 10a Chair Rebecca Harbage Welcomes and Opens Meeting

- a. Roll Call, Anastasia Matheison **Indicates attendance on Zoom*
 - i. Commissioners Present: Chair Rebecca Harbage, Vice Chair Morgan Hubbard*, Commissioners Donnie Wetzel Jr., Rob Lawler, Vicki Turner, Kami Kirchberg, Thomas Risberg, Zach Hawkins, Kevin Myhre, Jim Larson, Kelly Ackerman, Jim Swan*, Don Jones*, Dawn English*, Clifford Kipp*
 1. Commissioners Absent: Dylan Davids
 - ii. GOCS Staff Present: Director Sarah Sadowski, Keena Irby, Alyssa Mathieu, Elaine Dahl, Elly Fisher, Anastasia Matheison, Josie Howlett
 - iii. Guests Present: Amy Busch AmeriCorps Agency Staff, Becca Beckham AmeriCorps Agency Staff, Adrienne vanHeumen MTCC, Callye Foster MTCC, Kate Primmer MTCC, Jono McKinney MCC, Byran Wilson MCC, Stephanie Reynolds Richland County Health Dept., Darby Bramble FWP.
- b. Opening Activity, Chair Harbage
 - i. Commissioners and guests responded to the question: What scent brings you right back to high school?
- c. Group Picture, Alyssa Mathieu
- d. Approval of [December 14, 2023](#) Minutes – Minutes Approved as drafted.
- e. Commissioner Reports & Updates: Please share recent volunteer engagements
 - i. Vice Chair Hubbard: Had the opportunity to travel to D.C. for youth commissioners convening. There was a day of training and met Senator Coons. There is an opportunity to initiate a service project and received a \$1,500 stipend to help with startup costs.
 - ii. Commissioner Kipp: Had the opportunity to meet a group of 25 MCC AmeriCorps members and lead them in taking the AC pledge.
 - iii. Commissioner English: The 25th anniversary of AmeriCorps Seniors was this year. 125 people attended their event, and the volunteers were very excited so many people joined.

II. 1025a Regional Office Update, Amy Busch, Deputy Administrator, Mountain Region

- a. AmeriCorps VISTA, Summer Associates & AmeriCorps Seniors Updates
 - i. Amy Busch and Becka Becham are doing site visits around Montana.
 - ii. President Biden has released the FY25 budget, but we are under continued resolution until April.
 - iii. Impact reports are on the website which are good resources for programs.
 - iv. Modernization with eGrants is ongoing. There will be a new system coming out at the end 2024.
 - v. The agency is reviewing competitive program applications and programs will be notified in April.
 - vi. Foster Grandparents has a grant competition open – the service area includes Montana. The agency is trying to get outreach to communities to support this effort.
 - vii. The agency is working with VISTA programs as their funding has been cut this year.
 - viii. Current funding opportunities with NCCC, VISTA, and Native Nations.
 - ix. AmeriCorps has now been registered as a federal apprenticeship.

III. 1035a AmeriCorps Office of the Inspector General, [Stephen Ravas](#)

- a. Stephen is trying to reset the relationship with the agency and its programs. He has three goals:
 - i. Put out high quality products and experiences.
 - ii. Build an arms-length relationship with the agency. OIG's goal is to treat programs, the agency, and commissions with fairness, objectivity, and accountability.
 - iii. Provide outreach by visiting external stakeholders to convey to them that OIG's goal is to make AmeriCorps successful and effective and to have the funds spent in an appropriate way.
- b. Stephen read reports from previous investigations so programs can see mistakes of other programs and how to avoid these mistakes.
- c. Question from Jono McKinney: As a major grantee, does OIG meet with grantees as a way as education instead of just investigating?
Answer from Stephen: At this point he is to meet with all Commissions for each state. OIG does not usually get involved in programmatic work.

IV. 1050a Director's Update, Director Sadowski

- a. FFY2024 & 2025 federal budgets, Memorial Fiscal, Commissioners, AmeriCorps Week & AmeriVersary
 - i. Welcome our newest Commissioner, Zach Hawkins who is a MCC Alum, 1997.
 - ii. Commissioner Wetzel and Director Sadowski were selected to go to D.C. to learn about workplace development and innovation grants.
 - iii. Thank you, Commissioner Turner, Ackerman, and GOCS staff who volunteered during MLK Day.
 - iv. Director Sadowski went to the AmeriCorps Service Commission Leadership Convening in D.C. Vice Chair Hubbard attended the Youth Commission training in D.C.
 - v. GOCS is in the process of partnering with Helena Area Community Foundation for fiscal sponsorship on HB 585, the Organ Donor's outdoor memorial. We have until October 21, 2028, to raise funds and complete this project.
 - vi. One commission vacancy remains for a person who has worked with youth development.
 - vii. There is multiple Commissioners whose service is done 7-1-2024. Please consider renewing.
 - viii. State Service Plan is a three-year plan with goals and objects for GOCS and the Governor's Office. This will be implemented on 1-1-2025.
 - ix. Several programs have been selected to be monitored by the agency as well as GOCS. GOCS's monitoring will happen on April 30 & May 1.
 - x. AmeriCorps is celebrating their 30th anniversary. VISTA is celebrating their 50th anniversary. An event will be held after dinner on Thursday to celebrate.

V. 1105a Governor's Office of Community Service Updates

- a. AmeriCorps, Director Sadowski for Kristina Jordan, Program Officer
 - i. Grants update
 1. Competitive
 - a. Applications submitted to AmeriCorps in January, two continuations (Montana Campus Compact and Big Sky Watershed Corps) and one recompetete (Justice for Montanans).
 - b. Montana Campus Compact requested and was approved for an Alternative Match Schedule in February for the next program year.

2. Formula
 - a. Letters of Intent due March 22nd and the Notices of Funding Opportunity/Availability posted March 29th. Applications due May 2nd.
 - b. There will be a special virtual meeting of the Commission on May 17th at 12:00pm to vote on the Formula funding recommendation, save the date.
 - c. GOCS anticipates continuation applications from AgCorps and Fish, Wildlife & Parks and likely one or more planning grants.
 - d. Office of Public Defender planning grant closed out in December and will be moving forward as a JFM host site.
 - e. To take advantage of remaining American Rescue Plan funds, GOCS planning to offer Innovation Grants to current AmeriCorps Montana programs.

- b. Financial Status Report, Keena Irby, Fiscal Officer
 - i. The blank spaces and subrecipient lines are intentionally left blank due to the budget not being approved by the federal government yet. Hopefully we will be awarded those grants soon.

- c. Training, Elly Fisher, Training Specialist
 - i. National Service Training
 1. ASC is putting on a service training in April in Minneapolis and a virtual event in May.
 2. Please reach out if you are interested in going or need financial support.
 - ii. AmeriCorps Engagement Opportunities
 1. Encourage all to look through the Symposium booklet and attend if available.
 2. Please engage with program staff to learn more about their programs.
 3. BSWC is having a training in Bozeman 4/30-5/3.
 4. FWP will have their all-member midyear training at Lewis and Clark State Park 6/10-6/13.

- d. ServeMontana, Alyssa Mathieu, Communications Specialist
 - i. Youth ServeMontana Scholarships
 1. The ServeMontana Scholarship applications closed January 31, 2024.
 2. Received 137 applicants and were able to award 100 scholarships which totaled \$125,000. Awarded 50 scholarships of \$1,000 and \$1,500.
 3. On Friday March 8th we notified all the recipients.
 4. School counselors have been contacted and we are getting information about award ceremonies which Commissioners can attend as service opportunities.
 - ii. ServeMontana Award Update
 1. Please nominate more individuals. There are 8 categories, and we are hoping for at least 40 submissions.
 2. The award nominations will close April 7th.
 3. Orientation for this workgroup will be on April 8th to go over rules and requirements for scoring the nominations.
 - a. Question from Commissioner Jim Larson: Is there a way to have a one sheet for commissioners to hand out to people in their communities to spread awareness of the award to those who might not know about them.
Answer from Alyssa Mathieu: We will send out a one sheet to the Commission next week.

- iii. Gift of Life Ceremony, April 19
 1. The event will be held at the Helena Airport at 10:30am please consider attending.
 2. The architect, Ken VanDeWalle will be in attendance with a model of the memorial for the families to see.

VI. 1125a New Business, Chair Harbage

- a. ServeMontana Awards workgroup confirmation
 - i. Commissioners who have previously signed up were Vice Chair Hubbard, Commissioners Larson, Kipp, Risberg, Jones with a backup of Ackerman.
 - ii. The names of the individuals who submitted nominations will not be on the workgroup packets so no one will know who nominated them.
 - iii. Chair Harbage: Those in the workgroup get a packet with all nomination applications and it is the Commissioners will review the nominations on their own time.
- b. Grant Review workgroup
 - i. Chair Harbage: workgroup members read and score applications individually, then come together at the Grant Review on May 15th to discuss with applicants present and consensus score.
 - ii. Chair Harbage and Commissioners, English, Lawler, and Myhre volunteered.
 - iii. Question from Chair Harbage: Do you have a community volunteer to review the applications at this point? Answer from Director Sadowski: Director Sadowski will be asking an alumni from the panel tomorrow to see if they are interested in reviewing the applications this year.
- c. State Service Plan workgroup
 - i. This workgroup will be a series calls and held over a few months. The development of the plan and a draft will be presented ahead of the October 10th Commission meeting.
 - ii. There were just under 1,400 responses last time. We are hoping for a higher number this year. Please send out the Survey Monkey to individuals in your community.
 - iii. Commissioners Hawkins, Swan, Kirchberg, Kipp, Wetzels, and Davids volunteered. Commissioner Turner is also interested.

VII. 1140a Public Comment

- a. Bryan Wilson: Thank you to Commissioners for all that you do and especially the grant review workgroup who provided valuable feedback to better the Competitive applications this fall.
- b. Darby Bramble: Thank you, Commissioners. The Commissioners who are in the grant reviews have this opportunity to see what goes on behind the scenes of each program. Shout out to GOCS and Director Sadowski as a fantastic ambassador for the AmeriCorps programs.
- c. Jono McKinney: The grant review workgroups are very helpful. Our program misses having that feedback as they are now a national direct. MCC has 100 individual placements this year.

VIII. 1145a Adjourn; Lunch provided as part of the ServeMontana Symposium

- a. Meeting adjourned by Chair Harbage 11:45

Next regularly scheduled Commission meeting on Thursday, June 6, 2024