



Arizona
Governor's
Commission
on **Service** and
Volunteerism



Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism
Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 1:30 PM
Virtual Meeting

A general meeting of the Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism (GCSV)
convened on December 6, 2023, notice duly given.

Members Present (8)	
Kimberly Rice	Victoria (Tori) Carlson-Foszcz
Robert Ashcraft	Michael Hammett
Donna Davis (Chair)	Carla Nuñez (Ex-Officio)
Donna Martin	
Helain Day	
Members Absent (4)	
Tyler Butler	Alex Gabaldon
Thomas Winkel	Chris Gibbs
Staff and Guests (5)	
Emily Litchfield, GOYFF	Kainoa Spenser, GOYFF
Jessica Deery, GOYFF	Katie McCowan, Presenter
Alana-Jasmene Little, GOYFF	

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commission Chair Davis called the Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism meeting to order at **1:43 PM**, with eight members and five staff/guests present.

2. WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Commission Chair Davis welcomed attendees and asked Commissioners, guests, and staff to introduce themselves. A quorum was met at 1:48 PM as two members arrived late.

3. UPDATES

Emily Litchfield, the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family (GOYFF) AmeriCorps Director, shared highlights from the fiscal year (FY) 2022-2023 AmeriCorps State and National programs administered by GOYFF. Organizations received over 17,000 member applications; Environmental Stewardship had the most interest. In addition to AmeriCorps members, programs managed 18,000 volunteers, adding 51,000 service hours to communities across Arizona. Altogether, the AmeriCorps programs served 79,000 children and youth in Arizona communities. The average enrollment across 29 programs was 66%, ranging from 1% to 101%. Public Health AmeriCorps had an 86% enrollment rate across three programs, reflecting these positions are in high demand.

- **Commission Chair Davis** asked how the numbers compared to FY 2021-2022 and whether they are better.
- **Emily Litchfield** responded that the outcomes are slightly better than last year. The Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism Annual Report, coming out July 2024, will have details for a more informed conversation.
- **Commissioner Carlson** asked if the GOYFF received over 1,700 applications for funding.
- **Emily Litchfield** clarified that subgrantees received 17,000 AmeriCorps member applications during the FY 2022 - 2023 program year.

Kainoa Spenser, GOYFF Service and Volunteerism Specialist, updated on the [Governor's Youth Commission \(GYC\)](#). Since August, the 2023-2024 cohort has completed 2,350 community service hours and leveraged 8,827 hours through their peers, family, and community members, an increase from last year due to the addition of virtual options to address the lack of opportunities in some parts of the state. Apache and Greenlee County commissioners need assistance finding

opportunities/seeking ideas to start opportunities in those areas. Commissioners have built 9-month-long projects through their five workgroups to address issues facing Arizona youth.

- **Distracted Driving Workgroup:** Working to partner with a community-based organization on a panel discussing distracted driving resources. Noted there has been difficulty finding partners; students have done outreach to [Mothers Against Drunk Driving \(MADD\)](#) and [Students Against Drunk Driving \(SADD\)](#) but are looking for others.
- **Domestic Violence Workgroup:** Completing a statewide hygiene drive for domestic violence shelters through April 2024.
- **Education Workgroup:** Partnering with the [Arizona Board of Regents \(ABOR\)](#) to promote the FAFSA challenge, sharing resources about post-secondary alternatives such as Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.
- **Mental Health Workgroup:** Expanding awareness of their toolkit for starting a mental health club on high school campuses using material from the [Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program](#); Arizona is four clubs away from being number one nationwide and additionally working to develop a partnership with the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) to collaborate on a community awareness event.
- **Substance Abuse Workgroup:** Planning a video on Arizona Youth Substance Abuse statistics while discussing the benefits of after-school programs and spaces for students such as the Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, libraries, etc.
- **Commissioner Ashcraft** commented that the [Vello Program](#) through [Valley of the Sun United Way](#) provides virtual volunteering around reading mentorship to unite multi-generations in service.

Emily Litchfield introduced **Commissioner Ashcraft** to give an update about the [Service Enterprise Initiative \(SEI\)](#).

Commissioner Ashcraft discussed investing time and resources into events held in Tucson to elevate awareness of the SEI, stating that the midwest and eastern parts of the nation have much more support to help launch and sustain programs such as the SEI. He added that the [Arizona State University \(ASU\) Lodestar Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Innovation](#) Capacity Building Initiatives Program Manager, Sandra Freyer, is talking with foundations and state and local funders about the evidence-based practices integrated into SEI to generate sponsorships/funding for organizations to participate. The core of Lodestar Center's efforts to engage private and public funding partners is to convey that SEI is beneficial as a capacity-building initiative, regardless of the primary focus of funding opportunities, i.e., education, substance use, justice, etc.

- **Emily Litchfield** shared that similarly, there has been a national movement among state service commissions to leverage AmeriCorps funds with other state and national priorities, such as [Serve Colorado's](#) workforce development initiative and the expansion of the Climate Corps in five states (including Arizona) using investments from the California Volunteers Foundation.
- **Commissioner Carlson-Foscz** commented that Sandra's work is appreciated.

Carla Nuñez, Senior Portfolio Manager (SPM) from the [AmeriCorps Mountain Region Office](#), provided an update from the federal agency. The Mountain Region Office is fully staffed, with a 4th and final staff member covering Idaho and Montana. Congress passed a continuing resolution in November extending the AmeriCorps federal agency budget through February 2, 2024; however, a FY 2024 budget has not yet passed.

AmeriCorps State and National Public Health programs are still in continuation of funding discussions with the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). Funding for Public Health AmeriCorps programs is through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) from the CDC, which was returned as part of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, leaving no funding for FY 2024. Arizona currently has four Public Health AmeriCorps Programs, which may or may not remain active in FY 2024 due to the rescission of these funds.

AmeriCorps Seniors Programs - [Foster Grandparent](#) and [Senior Companion Program](#): Grants are open for expansion and replacement for FY 2024. The Foster Grandparent Program is an opportunity to engage older adults in supporting youth, and the Senior Companion Program is an opportunity to engage older adults in supporting other older adults.

[AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps \(NCCC\)](#) is a program administered directly by the federal agency where a team of 10-12 AmeriCorps members support local communities in completing 6-12 week projects, such as summer

programming for youth, the volunteer income tax assistance (VITA) program, and community clean-ups. Current priorities focus on environmental stewardship, affordable housing, and other community activities (previous involvement with cabin and trail maintenance). The NCCC plans to partner with the National Forest Service on a Forest Corps; nationwide, 80 member positions are open for a summer of service (June 21 - August 2, 2024) and seek applications from youth aged 18-24 to participate.

AmeriCorps federal notice of funding opportunities is open for [Tribal Nations](#), [Disaster Response](#), and [FEMA Corps](#).

Emily Litchfield provided a staffing update introducing the new GOYFF AmeriCorps Program Administrator, Alana-Jasmene Little. The GOYFF AmeriCorps Team now sits at four with one open position, hoping to be fully staffed for the beginning of 2024. **Emily Litchfield** added she and the [Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions](#) interviewed candidates for appointment to the Commission.

- **Commission Chair Davis** asked about the duration of GOYFF AmeriCorps staffing.
- **Emily Litchfield** responded that the AmeriCorps team has had nine staff members over the last five years.

4. BUSINESS

Katie McCown, senior manager of rural economic development at [Local First Arizona](#), presented on the grant writing resources offered through the [Arizona Economic Resource Center \(AZERC\)](#). The program started during the COVID-19 pandemic to assist organizations with everything grant-related to help fill the gaps in vulnerable communities, such as Tribal Nations, nonprofit staff that are often overextended, budget constraints prohibiting hiring a grant writer, and a more competitive funding landscape. Starting with a pre-screen call, clients receive an introduction, assistance with grant research, a grant writer, help with application submission, and technical assistance through the life of the grant. AZERC works with any organization based in Arizona at no cost, provided they do not have a grant writer employed. Since the program started in May 2021, AZERC has assisted with obtaining 162 grants worth over \$46 million. AZERC tries to spread resources as evenly as possible, aiming to help with at least one grant in every county. Inquiries can be sent directly to Katie (katie@localfirstaz.com), or there is a free consultation option on the webpage.

- **Commissioner Ashcraft** commented being impressed and would like to discuss how the Lodestar Center can collaborate. He asked if AZERC distinguishes between government and philanthropic grants.
 - **Katie McCown** responded that they help with all grant types, whether they are brought to them by clients or found by the grant writers. She noted that having AmeriCorps members serve with Local First has benefited the organization.
- **Commission Chair Davis** stated this is an excellent resource for rural communities. She recounted meeting Kimber Lanning, CEO of Local First Arizona, when addressing the challenge of AmeriCorps outreach into rural communities, stating the application was complex and more support was needed to get rural programs to apply.
 - **Katie McCown** asked if she found rural communities do not apply because there is no interest or it is overwhelming.
 - **Commission Chair Davis** responded that she didn't know and asked if there was a way for Local First Arizona to help communicate with rural areas.
 - **Katie McCown** stated they work with rural municipalities and can pass on information.
 - **Commissioner Hammett** commented on their impressive and comprehensive approach to expanding various opportunities to communities, including grant writing and economic and workforce development.
- **Emily Litchfield** noted that GOYFF has and continues to host quarterly free grant writing workshops to ensure organizations have the tools necessary to be competitive.
- To view Kate McCown's presentation, click [here](#).

Emily Litchfield updated the Commission about the [FY2024 AmeriCorps National Competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#), stating an issue with the federal grants management portal's delayed application submission. Since the federal agency decides funding and not the state, there is no option to hold any sub-applications back from the competition, and a formal vote is unnecessary; she will share the list of sub-applicants once the information is available.

5. FUTURE MEETING DATES

The next Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism will convene on **Wednesday, January 17, 2024**, at **1:30 PM**.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Robert Ashcraft motioned for adjournment. **Victoria (Tori) Carlson-Fosc** seconded the motion. The motion passed with no dissenting votes, and the meeting adjourned at **2:49 PM**.

Dated the 11th day of December 2023
Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism
Respectfully Submitted By:
Jessica Deery
GOYFF AmeriCorps Program Administrator

FINAL