



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



**Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism
Wednesday, January 17, 2024, 1:30 PM**

A general meeting of the Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism (GCSV)
convened on January 17, 2024, notice duly given.

Members Present (9)	
Kimberly Rice (Proxy for Chair Donna Davis)	Felipe Garcia
Robert Ashcraft	Ariel Barber
Donna Martin	Michael Hammett
Wynn "Chris" Gibbs	Carla Nunez (Ex-Officio)
Helain Day	Victoria (Tori) Carlson-Foszcz
Members Absent (4)	
Tyler Butler	Donna Davis (Chair)
Thomas Winkel	Alex Gabaldon
Staff & Guests (5)	
Emily Litchfield, GOYFF	Kainoa Spencer, GOYFF
Alana-Jasmene Little, GOYFF	Antinisha Parker, Guest of Donna Martin
Grace Kuruvilla, GOYFF	

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Rice, proxy for Commission Chair Donna Davis, called the Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism meeting to order at 1:38 PM with nine members and five staff/guests present.

2. WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

With a quorum met, Commission Chair Proxy Rice welcomed two newly appointed members, Ariel Baber and Felipe Garcia. Commission Chair Proxy Rice asked the Commissioners and the GOYFF staff to introduce themselves to the new commissioners and share why they chose to serve on the commission.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Chair Proxy Rice requested a review of the **October 4, 2023** meeting minutes.

- Commissioner Ashcraft moved to accept the October 4, 2023 meeting minutes.
- Commissioner Martin seconded the motion.
- The motion passed with no dissenting votes at 1:42 PM.

Commissioner Chair Proxy Rice requested a review of the **December 6, 2023** meeting minutes.

- Commissioner Gibbs moved to accept the December 6, 2023 meeting minutes.
- Commissioner Garcia seconded the motion.
- The motion passed with no dissenting votes at 1:45 PM.

4. UPDATES

Emily Litchfield, the [Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family \(GOYFF\)](#) AmeriCorps Director, provided updates regarding the AmeriCorps State and National programs that are currently midway into the 2nd quarter of the fiscal year 2023-2024 and the competitive application process. Four AmeriCorps Public Health continuation applications were submitted for the National Competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity, one for year two and three for year three, with an aggregate request of \$1.8 million and 184 members serving across Arizona. In the previous year, three programs had an 80% enrollment rate across all three, and Northern Arizona University (NAU) and Prescott College were close to 100%. Additionally, five AmeriCorps State and National submitted an aggregate request of \$1.8 million and 135 members to serve Arizona. Eleven new/recompete applications to the National Competitive process were submitted, totaling \$7.1 million and 865 members, which is about \$3 million more than

requested last year. The AmeriCorps federal agency makes all final award selections for the National Competitive process, with notifications expected in April 2024.

The AmeriCorps State Formula solicitation will launch in Spring 2024. The GOYFF is seeking grant reviewers for this Request for Grant Applications (RFGA) and three additional solicitations to launch in the next several months. Individuals interested in reviewing grant applications may submit applications via the GOYFF [website](#).

- **Commissioner Garcia** asked if college students are appropriate grant reviewers.
- **Emily Litchfield** responded that college students would be a great group to participate in as long as they are over 18.

AmeriCorps subgrantees have been doing well over the last five months. The GOYFF AmeriCorps team has been working with subgrantees to strategize recruitment and outreach and tell the story of their impact on communities. New research from the [Academy of Arts and Sciences](#) soon related to the language used when describing AmeriCorps service opportunities, particularly to young people, could impact how programs recruit members. This is part of the ongoing implementation of the recommendations in the Academy report, [Our Common Purpose](#), from the bipartisan Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship.

- **Commissioner Ashcraft** asked about being fully staffed regarding the State and National AmeriCorps teams.
- **Emily Litchfield** responded that the GOYFF AmeriCorps team currently has one unfilled position but is thinking strategically about how best to fill gaps in the skill sets of the current team.
- **Commissioner Ashcraft** commended Emily Litchfield on the remarkable work accomplished by a talented yet skeletal GOYFF AmeriCorps team, commenting that billing infrastructure relying exclusively on AmeriCorps funding and mused about the need for a future staff position funded by philanthropy with [California Volunteers](#) in mind as a model.
- **Commissioner Martin** agreed that the Commission needs to focus on engaging all state citizens in volunteer action beyond AmeriCorps and what that could look like. He discussed the disparities between rural and metro areas and the potential hours spent implementing basic volunteer training for volunteer administrators or outreach across the state before asking **Commissioner Ashcraft** if he had any ideas on the philanthropy end.
- **Commissioner Ashcraft** responded about the kind of funding needed but emphasized that it's about harnessing the power of communities and identifying the current inflection points to amplify volunteerism across Arizona. The [Southern Arizona Volunteers Managers Association \(SAVMA\)](#) and the [Association of Volunteer Administrators of Central Arizona](#) are great examples of leveraging partners and amplifying to assist the commission in expanding its reach.
- **Commissioner Martin** responded by asking what philanthropic organizations or foundations in Arizona are interested in building the voluntary sector, adding commissioners can research this more and revisit it at a future meeting.
- **Commissioner Gibbs** asked why additional funding was necessary because there is currently plenty of volunteer and service happening across Arizona that can be tapped into and mentioned various civic groups such as the Lions and Rotary Clubs.
- **Commissioner Ashcraft** responded that the goal isn't to create new service groups or replicate things already happening in Arizona but to identify those existing groups, amplify their reach, and discern what they see as important in assisting them in continuing their work. There is no systematic data collected across Arizona on volunteerism at the state level, such as how many people volunteer, average hours per week, or how we could increase participation. There's been a decline in formal service and volunteerism, as well as membership in civic organizations nationally; funding could assist in some research around 'why' and establish recommendations and best practices for increasing participation
- **Commissioner Gibbs** voiced frustration about the Commission's efforts focusing, in his opinion, almost solely on AmeriCorps and strongly advised a shift to include other types of service and volunteerism.
- **Commissioner Ashcraft** responded about expanding resources and voiced concerns on recent research citing youth disengagement driven by tech and isolation. He emphasized that there is a need to revisit National Service and Volunteerism regarding civic participation and how the Commission has a role in this.
- **Commissioner Garcia** responded that as a youth member, he can confirm there is a change in attitudes, political presentations, and civic engagement among youth, who can feel disconnected from political leaders and those from other institutions. To increase youth participation, organizations need to meet youth where they are. For example, many adult-focused organizations use Facebook, while more youth are engaged on Instagram. An idea for utilizing funding is to expand the reach of organizations by using marketing strategies that appeal to youth. There are pockets of engaged students; the question is where to find them.
- **Commissioner Day** states the need to expand the service definition to include formal volunteerism, with an organization, for example, and informal volunteerism, such as cooking for a neighbor.
- **Commissioner Martin** questions how to help volunteers have the most impactful experience and support groups and what technical training and assistance look like. [Service Enterprise Initiative \(SEI\)](#) is a great tool, but it can't be the only one. How can the Commission meet those providing the formal and informal structures and help volunteers who want to engage and not

waste effort? Additionally, it's important to remember that some areas of Arizona still have no or very unreliable internet access, along with inconsistent access to telephones, so there must be an in-person component to anything done.

- **Commissioner Day** asks how to demonstrate return on investment (ROI) across broader landscapes, how to be relevant to the public when looking for funding, and donor impact. Story-telling will be important not just in conveying ourselves to funders but also for volunteer recruitment. Why should they care about the work? She emphasized that funding can be highly politicized when connected with statewide initiatives.

Kainoa Spenser, the GOYFF Service and Volunteerism Specialist, updated on the [Governor's Youth Commission \(GYC\)](#). The GYC members must complete at least 5 hours each month but usually accomplish more than the required hours. In December, commissioners completed 472 service hours to their communities and leveraged an additional 1623 hours from friends and families. One of the issues often voiced by rural commissioners is about finding or accessing service opportunities. He discussed that the Domestic Violence Workgroup finished its first Hygiene Product Drive to donate to local domestic violence shelters, sharing some commissioners' struggles in collecting resources. The Mental Health Workgroup is tabling at the [Tempe Unity Regional Walk](#) on January 27, 2024, where they will discuss the work of the GYC and disseminate their Yellow Ribbon Club Toolkit developed for high schoolers to start a mental health club on their school campus. The Substance Abuse workgroup is partnering with the Maricopa County Department of Public Health Youth Advisory Council to plan an event in March to increase awareness of substance abuse issues and provide strategies to use after-school time more effectively. The next quarterly in-person meeting for the GYC will occur on January 27, 2024.

Commissioner Ashcraft discussed how, since 2015, Commissions in the office have run the Service Enterprise Initiative (SEI) and, over time, thought about how to scale the initiative and arch the organization with additional consideration for the commission's role; is it to run programming? The [Association of Leaders in Volunteer Engagement \(ALIVE\)](#) recently changed the SEI language from organizations earning a 'certification' to 'accreditation,' which necessitates changes to marketing materials, website, etc. Support is given to Sandra Freyer, the Service Enterprise Program Manager at the [Arizona State University \(ASU\) Lodestar Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit](#), to focus on increasing awareness and educating nonprofits on initiatives. The ASU Lodestar Center has stepped into the role of marketing SEI to stakeholders. The goal is to add value and benefits for existing SEI in the state and reach out to prior accredited organizations. **Commissioner Ashcraft** remarked on **Commissioner Martin's** credentials and credibility of knowledge on SEI.

- **Commissioner Martin** shared that organizations earning accreditation as service enterprises are skilled in leveraging volunteers throughout all levels of their organization. She has been an SEI trainer since 2016.

Commissioner Ashcraft states there are four trainers for the SEI, two of whom are **Commissioners Tori Carlson** and **Donna Martin**, who focus on formalized evidence-based practice of volunteerism.

Carla Nunez, Senior Portfolio Manager (SPM) from the [AmeriCorps Mountain Regional Office](#), provided an update from the federal agency. All positions at the office are full, so all states in the region are more supported. The Congressional continuing resolution expires on February 2, but a deal is on the table to extend that date to March 8. Check out the [Labor Health and Human Services and Education](#) platform for further updates. Agency-wise, there are still open competitions and Expansion opportunities for the [Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions](#) program, as applications are due February 1. An AmeriCorps NCCC [Summer of Service](#) opportunity is a short-term team-based program; commissioners are encouraged to share information with their networks. The deadline for concept papers to have NCCC members serving in Arizona communities is February 2. There is no match requirement; the only requirements are that organizations provide the necessary tools to complete the work and space to house the NCCC team.

5. BUSINESS

Emily Litchfield discussed [Governor's Volunteer Service Awards and the Arizona Summit on Volunteerism and Civic Engagement](#).

Given the plethora of events and grant applications from the GOYFF in the next few months, the two events are being pushed back to the first or second week of November. The [Governor's Volunteer Service Awards](#) proposes six categories: Lifetime, Adult, Youth, National Service Member, Disaster Response, and Outstanding Volunteer Engagement Organization (formerly known as Service to Community). For the Arizona Summit on Volunteerism and Civic Engagement, the odd years will host larger events targeted at education for volunteer managers and national service participants. The even years will focus on organizational leadership, boards, and philanthropy topics, such as benefits for supporting volunteerism efforts and defining 'support.'

- **Commissioner Martin** asked if 'small' meant small scale, as in doing a couple of events around the state.
 - **Emily Litchfield** responded no, but this may be a longer-term goal.

- **Commissioner Gibbs** commented on the lack of large organizations invited to participate in nominations to the volunteer awards, mentioning the Lions Club not receiving invitations to nominate anyone. The Commission needs to be bringing additional voices to the table.
 - **Emily Litchfield** outlined nomination outreach efforts, including dissemination through the GOYFF listserv, website, and social media platforms. She acknowledged that this may not reach every volunteer organization, but that is where commissioners can assist in amplifying the reach.
- **Commissioner Gibbs** asked why, if volunteerism is important, activities are not fully funded by the state, referencing the earlier discussion about seeking philanthropic funding.
 - **Commissioner Ashcraft** responded that there is no way to define service as everyone has a different lens on how they view their community. The points are well taken, but find other ways to support the effort.
 - **Commissioner Day** added to the previous point by referencing a previous job role that required asking for funding, working with civic groups, and requiring paid staff members to venture and solicit across the state. She explains how the role required significant staff time to reach, which may not be the most efficient use of limited public dollars.
- **Commissioner Gibbs** commented that as a Commission, he thinks they should share information with more organizations and volunteer programs around the state. Other commissioners agreed with this sentiment.

Lastly, **Emily Litchfield** shared [Governor Katie Hobbs' priorities](#) and how the current service and volunteer initiatives align with nearly all priorities. Additionally, priority inclusion is necessary when considering future AmeriCorps grant awards.

6. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING

The next Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism will convene on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, at 1:30 PM.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Day motioned for adjournment of the meeting. **Commissioner Hammett** seconded the motion. The motion passed without dissenting votes, and the meeting adjourned at **3:01 PM**.

Dated the 22nd day of January 2024
Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism
Respectfully Submitted By:
Alana-Jasmene Little
GOYFF AmeriCorps Program Administrator