



**Governor’s Commission on Service and Volunteerism**  
**March 12, 2025 | 2:00 PM**  
**Second Floor Conference Room**  
**1700 W. Washington St, Phoenix, AZ 85007**

A general meeting of the Governor’s Commission on Service and Volunteerism was convened on March 12, 2025 at the Second Floor Conference Room, 1700 W. Washington, St, Phoenix, AZ 85007, notice having been duly given.

Members Present (10)	Members Absent (4)
Donna Davis, Chair - here	Alex Gabaldon
Helain Lewis	Thomas Winkel
Robert Ashcraft	Michael Hammett
Luis Vivaldi (Ex-Officio)	Tyler Butler
Donna Martin	
Felipe Garcia	
Ariel Ackerman	
Victoria (Tori) Carlson-Foszcz	
Chris Gibbs	
Kylie Chamblee (proxy for Kimberly Rice-Gentry)	
Staff and Guests Present (4)	
Emily Litchfield, GOYFF	Alana-Jasmene Little, GOYFF
Jessica Deery, GOYFF	Conrad Lindo, GOYFF

**Call to Order**

- Donna Davis, Chair**, called the Governor’s Commission on Service and Volunteerism Council meeting to order at **2:10 PM** with **nine** members present, **four** members absent and **four** staff/guests present. Commissioner Gibbs arrived at **2:18 PM** during introductions, increasing attendance to **ten** members.

**Welcome/Introductions**

- Donna Davis, Chair**, announced that a quorum had been reached before welcoming attendees, asking commissioners and the [Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family \(GOYFF\)](#) staff to introduce themselves, and conduct an icebreaker.

- Each person shared plans or activities they were looking forward to in the Spring season with warmer weather.

### Approval of Minutes

- **Donna Davis, Chair**, requested a review of the **January 15, 2025** meeting minutes.
  - **Donna Davis** mentioned her name was not included in the members' present section of the January 15, 2025 minutes; she noted that she had arrived late.
  - **Chris Gibbs** motioned to accept the January minutes with the amendment.
  - **Robert Ashcraft** seconded the motion.
    - The motion passed with no dissenting votes at **2:22 PM**.

### Business

- **Donna Davis, Chair**, welcomed and introduced commissioners **Felipe Garcia**, and **Ariel Ackerman** with AmeriCorps Director **Emily Litchfield** to share their key takeaways from their experience at the annual [America's Service Commissions Leadership Convening](#) in Washington, DC on the week of February 24.
  - o **Felipe Garcia** highlighted seeing the true and broad scope of work conducted within the sector. Felipe engaged with other youth commissioners from various states, including Utah, New Jersey, and South Carolina, gaining insight into education initiatives and collaboration with lawmakers happening in those states that might be replicated here in Arizona. The main takeaway was the exploration of adaptable models to meet specific needs, along with discussions on the different approaches states take to achieve their goals.
  - o **Ariel Ackerman** observed the importance of providing a forum for state commission leadership to discuss key issues such as network priorities, and requests from the AmeriCorps federal agency, while leveraging commission expertise.
    - State-level efforts to build local support for AmeriCorps initiatives were highlighted. Capitol Hill discussions centered on AmeriCorps, including local initiatives like environmental and education programs. The [States for Service Coalition](#) was on hand to discuss budget needs. Informational packets were distributed with the commission's annual report and the AmeriCorps State profiles for Arizona.
    - The new [ASC strategic plan](#) was approved at the board meeting on February 24, 2025, and its highlights were reviewed with convening attendees. Priorities include public policy, capacity building, and support for state commissions during this uncertain time.
    - The AmeriCorps interim agency head, [Jennifer Bastress Tahmasebi](#), outlined key priorities such as modernization efforts, the need for waivers to address audit failures, and strengthening relationships with Senate advocates and the new administration.
    - Lastly, many commissions in other states have policy subcommittees that support AmeriCorps initiatives, engage local and state representatives, and meet with governors to advance policy and service efforts.
  - o **Emily Litchfield** emphasized the importance of connecting with counterparts from other states to share insights and best practices. Six new states have joined the [Service to Careers Pathway](#) initiative with the [National Governors Association](#), expanding efforts to integrate national service into career development. Serve Colorado has established a new partnership with their National Guard to fill AmeriCorps member positions. There are many opportunities to learn from other states and assess how similar initiatives might work for Arizona.
- **Emily Litchfield**, the GOYFF Director of AmeriCorps, provided an update on AmeriCorps Week & National Volunteer Month.

- o The story of AmeriCorps alumni, Brooke, was highlighted, detailing her work with the [University of Arizona Cooperative Extension](#) in Tucson and her involvement in the [Tucson Festival of Books](#), where she helped with community connections and donation processing. Brooke now serves as the Executive and Board Coordinator at [Youth On Their Own](#) while continuing her participation in the festival. Her experience highlights how AmeriCorps fosters professional growth by leveraging network connections for employment while keeping members engaged in community service. She expressed gratitude for her time in AmeriCorps, emphasizing the valuable skills and connections she gained.
- o The GOYFF has requested a proclamation in recognition of National Volunteer Month, which is April 20 - 26, 2025.

## Updates

- **Alana Little**, the GOYFF AmeriCorps Program Administrator, provided an update on the work of the Governor's Youth Commission (GYC), beginning with Workgroup updates.
  - o The Domestic Violence Workgroup is currently hosting its second donation drive from February 24 through March 13, 2025. Their first donation drive from October 1 through December 4, 2024, recorded over \$19,000 in products collected for local shelters. The Domestic Violence Workgroup is hosting an event at United Way of Tucson on April 6, 2025, with [Emerge Center Against Abuse and Domestic Violence](#) to educate the public about healthy teen dating relationships.
  - o The Conservation and Sustainability Workgroup members are finishing conducting individualized community events that aim to educate and inspire their peers toward environmental action. For Earth Day, the workgroup has located various events across Arizona the commissioners will promote across social media and also volunteer at.
  - o The Education Workgroup members are disseminating their Education Resource flyers, which provide information and assistance regarding the FAFSA and Post-Secondary Education. The goal is for commissioners to take advantage of local connections to get the flyers to as many students as possible and increase the percentage of high school students who complete the FAFSA.
  - o The Substance Use Prevention and Mental Health Workgroups are co-hosting a panel discussion at [ASU Preparatory Academy Polytechnic High School](#) on March 29, 2025, aimed at discussing these topics openly to reduce stigma and encourage help-seeking behaviors. Panelists include Sergeant First Class (SFC) Deb Stoks of the [Arizona National Guard Counter Drug Task Force](#), GOYFF [Trauma-Informed Substance Abuse Prevention \(TISAAP\)](#) Program Administrator Yesmina Luchsinger, and Kristina Sabetta, Executive Director of the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#), Valley of the Sun branch.
  - o The fourth quarter meeting of the GYC will occur on April 26, 2025. Commissioners will participate in a service activity for Global Youth Service Day in the morning and use the afternoon to celebrate their accomplishments and work on their annual reports.
- **Robert Ashcraft**, Executive Director at [ASU Lodestar Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Innovation](#), provided an update on the [Service Enterprise Initiative \(SEI\)](#).
  - o The organization is focused on the long-term scale and sustainability of SEI. While there was recognition of the value in SEI, the conversation revealed that investment in it has yet to be made. A March report, which includes a chronology of the initiative, was referenced, highlighting the body of work related to effective voluntary management. However, the issue of achieving scale and developing a long-term business model for SEI remains unresolved.
  - o **Victoria (Tori) Carlson-Foscz** is a certified SEI trainer and enjoys working with nonprofit program participants. They explore new business models for sustainability,

strategize on engaging more volunteers, and support those struggling with financial instability.

- **Emily Litchfield** presented an AmeriCorps State update. As of the close of Q2, programs have enrolled over 960 AmeriCorps members, representing 60% of the total goal, with a target to reach 100% enrollment. Last year, the enrollment achieved 78%. Some programs have filled all their slots and requested more members. Member retention is over 95%, indicating that members are pleased with their service experiences and feel supported. By the end of February, AmeriCorps members had completed over 326,000 hours, involving just under 1,000 individuals.
  - There are currently two open staff positions at GOYFF, with interviews scheduled for next week. Additionally, three names have been submitted to the Office of Boards and Commissions for potential commission membership, with anticipation for the outcome.
  - Upcoming deadlines include the Commission Support Grant and Commission Investment Funds, the administrative funds that support the work of the commission, including staff. Submission is due by April 16, 2025. If Commissioners have ideas on how to allocate funds to training and technical assistance for programs, staff, or commissioners, please direct those to Emily.
  - The State Formula continuation application is due June 13th, 2025, with a vote scheduled for the May 7th commission meeting. Quorum will be essential, so commissioners are asked to find a proxy if they are unable to attend.
- **Luis Vivaldi**, the AmeriCorps Mountain Region Office Acting Senior Portfolio Manager, shared updates from the AmeriCorps Federal Agency.
  - [AmeriCorps Week](#) is currently underway from, March 9 to 15, 2025, which is a period focused on celebrating AmeriCorps members and senior volunteers, with resources available on the website and social media events.
  - A significant amount of work is being done around compliance with the new presidential administration's Executive Orders, including updates to the 2024-2025 general terms and conditions. The 2024 process is nearly complete, and operations are expected to resume in 2025 with resolution items.
  - [The National Service Impact Reports](#), which highlights activities and accomplishments from the previous year, will be launched tomorrow, March 13, 2025.
  - Other updates include VISTA accepting concept papers until March 27 to support organizational capacity needs. Additionally, the [2025 Native Nations Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) is open. Applications are due by April 9, successful applicants are notified by May, and rewards are expected by July.
- **Donna Davis, Chair**, opened the floor for Commissioners to share upcoming events or information relevant to the service and volunteerism sector.
  - **Donna Davis, Chair**, shared information about [Education Forward Arizona's](#) involvement with the Arizona FAFSA Coalition and the [Arizona FAFSA Challenge](#), a coalition working to improve FAFSA completion in Arizona, where the state has struggled and left significant financial aid unclaimed. The state set a 40%

completion goal but currently stands at 27.4%. The state ranks third nationally for the greatest increase in FAFSA completion.

- o **Robert Ashcraft** shared that ASU Lodestar Center will be hosting an event on March 19, 2025 titled '[Federal Policies and Arizona: Nonprofits and Grantmakers Navigating the New Federal Landscape](#)'. Sponsoring Partners include the [Arizona Community Foundation](#), [Arizona Impact for Good](#), and [Valley of the Sun United Way](#). The primary objective is to discuss the rapidly changing federal landscape and provide a space for solutions-oriented collaboration.
- o **Tori Carlson-Foscuz** mentioned the [Center for Community Mediation and Facilitation](#) in Tucson, a volunteer organization that trains mediators in conflict resolution. On March 18, the Center is hosting a [community convening](#) focused on nonprofit resilience amid the current political climate. Last weekend, they led discussions at the [Donna R. Liggins Recreation Center](#) on feeding the homeless in city parks, bringing stakeholders together to share perspectives. **Tori Carlson-Foscuz** is involved in mediator training for this effort, highlighting the importance of collaborative work.
- o **Felipe Garcia** shared the upcoming [Model United Nations Conference](#), one of the biggest events hosted at the [University of Arizona](#), with many high school students participating. **Felipe Garcia** encouraged following social media for updates and content and also invited interest in attending.
- o **Chris Gibbs** shared that the [Graham County Substance Abuse Coalition](#) is hosting two key events in April. First, "[Dump the Drugs](#)," a rare initiative in the state, takes place in Graham County and collects 150–250 pounds of drugs annually. Second, a [mock car accident](#) is held every two years, simulating a real-time crash for high school freshmen and sophomores at a football stadium. The event, aimed at raising awareness about substance abuse, involves first responders and highlights the dangers of impaired driving, especially during springtime.
- o **Helain Lewis** talked about a community enrichment opportunity with the PBS series [American Muslims: A History Revealed](#), which explores the history of Muslim and Latino families in an intersectional space. The event will be held on April 17 at [Herberger Theater Center](#), sponsored by the [Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce](#) and the [Arizona Muslim Alliance Association](#). Attendees will watch an episode and participate in a discussion.
- o **Emily Litchfield**, on behalf of Commissioner **Thomas Winkel**, announced that the [Arizona Coalition for Military Families](#) is hosting their [2025 Statewide Symposium](#) event on April 16 and 17, 2025. Additionally, on April 10, [Arizona@Work](#) and the [Arizona Department of Economic Security](#) are hosting an [Apprenticeship Summit](#), providing opportunities for workforce development.
- o **Kylie Chamblee** (proxy), a program specialist at the [Arizona Department of Education](#), is working on leveraging [Career and Technical Education \(CTE\)](#) programs, which include over 65 career pathways serving 160,000 students statewide. These programs align with career and technical organizations, each with volunteer opportunities. In July, a [Career and Technical Conference](#) will take place from the 10th to the 16th, offering a great opportunity for groups to participate and set up a table. Kylie is also interested in finding connections with [Teach for America](#) to support educator retention.

- o GOYFF Deputy Director **Conrad Lindo** emphasized that the core of GOYFF is grant-making and writing. The office has released the [Arizona Parents Commission on Drug Education and Prevention](#) grant. The office is awarding \$4 million, with up to \$200,000 per award. The application closes on Friday, April 4, and details are available on the website. Currently, 27 programs across the state are funded through this grant program.
- o **Donna Davis, Chair**, explained how Education Forward Arizona organizes monthly [Power Hours](#), virtual events focused on key education topics. On March 26, the session will cover challenges faced by rural schools, and in April, the discussion will compare dual enrollment, AP, and Cambridge programs. These events are open to everyone.

### Future Meeting Dates

- **Donna Davis**, Chair announced the next meeting date will be **May 7, 2025**.

### Adjourn

- **Donna Davis**, Chair, called for adjournment at **3:31 PM**.
  - o **Ariel Ackerman** motioned and was seconded by **Donna Martin**.

Dated 15th of March 2025  
Governor's Commission on Service & Volunteerism  
Respectfully Submitted By:  
Alana-Jasmene Little  
AmeriCorps Program Administrator, GOYFF