



GROWING North Dakota

North Dakota Workforce Development Council
State Commission on National and Community
Service

"Making Good Things Happen for North Dakotans"

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**MEETING MINUTES
NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
STATE COMMISSION ON NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE
APRIL 16, 2003**

Meeting Date, Time & Place: April 16, 2003, 8:30 a.m., Burdick Job Corps Center, 1500 University Avenue West, Minot, ND 58703.

Members Present: Al Lukes, Cathi Christopherson, Gloria Maragos, Leo Cummings, Lisa Ringstad, Max Laird, Mike Zimmerman, Rosella Grant, Gerry Hegstad (on behalf of Carol Olson), John Polhman, and Jim Hirsch.

Members Absent: Carol Olson, Dave Massey, Dr. David Gipp, Dr. Donna Thigpen, Jim Dahlen, and Wayne Kutzer.

Others Present: Barb Rohn, Beth Zander, Brandy Heckler, Cheryll McDowall, Debra Schiefelbein, Eric Clock, JoLynn Webster, Kathryn Pederson, Kaye Knudson, Linda Howard, Melissa Kelley, and Jill Splonskowski.

Opening Remarks & Introductions: The Chair, Al Lukes provided a welcome to everyone. The Chair proceeded with asking members and guests to introduce themselves.

Agenda: Al Lukes moved for approval of the agenda as presented.

Motion: Rosella Grant made a motion to approve the agenda. Max Laird seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Welcome – Burdick Job Corp Center

Lyn Dockter-Pinnick welcomed everyone to the center. The center is funded by the United States Department of Labor. Serves students ages 15-24; however, the age can be waived for disabled students.

Budget: Jim Hirsch explained the differences between the Administrative Budget and the Professional Development Assistance Training Budget. The match starts out at 15% and increases by 5% each year. We started with a higher match so that we don't get caught short. Jim feels that the budget should be adequate for the first couple of years. Travel has been built into the budget for commission members. The budget is approved as-is. A national conference in Baltimore has been planned in June 2003. Members are invited to attend and they should let Jim know if they are interested.

Policies and Procedures

Cheryll McDowall discussed the request for proposal process. Eight proposals were submitted to the State Commission. Guidelines must be followed and administered. All but 2 programs submitted were rural projects. A timeline was developed to make members aware of deadlines, and a legal notice was posted to all newspapers within the state of North Dakota. An extensive e-mail distribution list was used to reach the schools, nonprofits, state government, the Tribes, faith-based organizations, and other eligible entities. The request for proposal application form and guidelines were put onto our website in February, allowing members a little over a month to submit their applications. The State Commission has drafted policies and procedures since the last meeting in January 2003. Council members are asked to give their input in developing a policy manual that workforce development has already drafted. January 2004 is the proposed deadline to have a finalized policy and procedure manual.

RPP Selection Process

Rosella Grant briefly described how she volunteered for training on how to become a peer reviewer. Training to understand how to score the applications was held on April 15, 2003, and on April 29, 2003, in Bismarck. The final numbers will be completed, and all applications will then be scored. Cathi Christopherson suggested that feedback should be given to rejected applicants so that they realize their strengths and weaknesses in order for them to apply for the next award year (possibly by advertising in a newspaper). Technical assistance training will need to be done in June 2003 for the e-grants program.

Cheryll McDowall touched on the RFP Selection Process which has been drafted for recommendation and approval. Key components involved in the process are:

- Request for proposal process
- Peer review process
- Criteria-based grant selection process

Jim Hirsch recommended putting a question and answer session on the web for applicants outlining the request for proposal process. Discussion between John Pohlman, Lisa

Ringstad, and Cheryll McDowall began on funding cycles of the AmeriCorps and Vista programs, as well as the legality issues associated with the programs.

Motion: Max Laird made a motion that a draft policy proposal be prepared for refunding the grant. Mike Zimmerman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Melissa Kelley also mentioned that the National Service Act requires that any recipient of the federal corporation funds has to have a grievance procedure in place. This grievance procedure should be developed in the policy manual in addition to what is already included in the draft.

Max Laird identified some potential changes that could be made on the peer review procedures as well as peer reviewer responsibilities. Max reviewed some of the funding requests for the AmeriCorps program and their individual applications which include:

- 1) American Red Cross
- 2) Cooperstown Community Activities Authority
- 3) Mental Health Association in North Dakota
- 4) North Dakota Council on Abused Women's Services
- 5) Red River Basin Watershed Improvement Network
- 6) State Board for Vocational and Technical Education
- 7) YWCA of Minot
- 8) Youthworks

Mike Zimmerman questioned what options or clearinghouses are available for applicants who are not successful in the AmeriCorps project. Jim Hirsch said he would look into what options are available (especially in national competitive). Cheryll McDowall commented that she thought there is a website showing other resources, and she could also put together a page of resources. Max Laird thought the letters of intent that we submitted were a great idea.

Center for Disabilities

JoLynn Webster presented on behalf of the Center for Disabilities located at Minot State University. In December they wrote a grant deciphering how they could include people in national and community service. The program has one year's worth of funding, and several forms of publicity have been put out to the public. The program received its funding and began in January 2003. The goal is to have 10 people with disabilities placed by the end of 2003. A regional conference, brochures, a website, and newspaper advertisements will be the liaisons for advertising this program.

Motion: Max Laird made a motion that the staff establish a file of collaborators/partnership organizations who engage in volunteer service. Leo Cummings seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Peer Review Process

Cheryll McDowall discussed the peer review process currently underway. The first process involves a description of peer reviewer responsibilities.

Motion: Max Laird moved to approve the draft policies revising the wording used. Leo Cummings seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Cheryll again began with the second process which is a conflict of interest statement which will be developed among the commission staff. The third process is a peer review rating form. The fourth process is the In-Kind Distribution form. The process involved with this is to send a packet of information to peer reviewers, to hold a training session, and finally rate score sheets and review them. Interviewers will be reviewing the information they were given on April 29, 2003, when they all come together to discuss their scores. Two impartial reviewers will review the budget and review audits. Comments made by peer reviewers will be documented. The grants committee will then rank the proposals. Staff will work with applicants to get their application forms on-line with e-grants. The time frame for the commission to make the final selections of projects to fund and getting the proposals on-line is June 4-12, 2003.

Learn and Serve Update

Cheryll McDowall reported on the Learn and Serve Program. The 3 identified needs of the Learn and Serve program are:

- 1) Foster a support structure for Learn and Serve programs in schools
- 2) Help local agencies develop strong community relationships with the historical community in their area
- 3) Address the needs of at-risk youth through peer mentoring

Some specific requirements for this program are:

- ✓ Must be a public school
- ✓ Provide the required match in cash or in-kind
- ✓ Provide service activities that are of sustained and significant duration with a minimum of 40 hours of service over a school year
- ✓ Where appropriate, tie programs to the North Dakota Curriculum Standards for Social Studies which include an emphasis on student understanding of the role and nature of North Dakota history and the role, rights and responsibilities of citizens in society
- ✓ Identify and develop their service learning opportunities using student input so that the student's have a voice in choosing the programs they will implement
- ✓ A strong connection between the service performed and curriculum being studied.
- ✓ Provide various, appropriate, opportunities for students to reflect upon their service
- ✓ Clear and specific goals outlining the service, knowledge base and eventual impact on the student's knowledge and understanding
- ✓ Provide safe transportation, needed supplies, and training costs, including teacher stipends and substitute teacher pay for training days

- ✓ Submit joint applications with community based organizations
- ✓ Demonstrate private school involvement or participation by private school students
- ✓ Include recognition plan for service activities and service leadership

The amount of funding for the AmeriCorps project is \$500,000. The Learn and Serve funding amount is \$50,000. The federal budget amount for the Learn and Serve program is \$47,306 to date. The local match required is \$5,256. The criteria for sub-grantees were submitted during the week of April 7-11, 2003. There was some discussion and recommendations on how we should handle sub-granting. The committee felt it would be best to wait until next year for the possibility of sub-granting out funds.

Next, Jim Hirsch gave an update on the President's Service Learning Award. Funding is set at \$4,800 through the year 2003. We are submitting a promotional packet and an activity time frame to support volunteerism in different entities. We're trying to expand and promote service organizations who will participate in matching funds. Each high school in the state can award 2 scholarships worth \$1,000 annually to students for volunteerism.

- LUNCH BREAK -

The Standards Project

Melissa Kelley with Project Task reported on project standards. The administrative standards evolved in 1999. State Commissions didn't have any set policies or procedures back in 1993 when National and Community Service began. A group of commissioners developed standards and went through a standards review between 1999 and 2002. Statute-based standards are required by law (Standards 1-5). Mission fulfillment standards outline recommendations in implementing a plan of action (Standards 6-11). With administrative standards there are 4 key components:

- 1) A policy must exist
- 2) A policy is written
- 3) A policy is implemented
- 4) Proof that a policy has been implemented

Standard 2

Standard 2.1 states: The commission communicates to the Corporation sub-grantees about compliance and reporting expectations. This standard identifies what the commission's expectations are.

Standard 2.2 states that the commission adequately monitors program compliance with legal, regulatory, and grant requirements of corporation sub-grantees. Sub-standards of standard 2.2 are:

- 2.2.1. Has and employs a risk-based monitory strategy
- 2.2.3 Uses adequate site visit tools for monitory programs
- 2.2.3 Conducts monitoring site visits to Corporation sub-grantees
- 2.2.4 Provides feedback from site visits

- 2.2.5 Reviews, analyzes, and follows-up on progress reports
- 2.2.6 Assures that programs are meeting match requirements
- 2.2.7 Assures that programs remedy deficiencies within appropriate timeframes

Federal law requires one annual progress report. Many commissions require either quarterly or semi-annual progress reports in addition to yearly reports. Section 2.2.6 assures that programs are meeting their match requirement. The federal minimum is a 15% non-federal cash match for member support costs, and a 33% match (in-kind) from a variety of sources for all the other sections of the budget including staffing, training, administration, evaluation, etc.

Standard 3

The purpose of Standard 3 is for the commission to monitor member eligibility. Standard 3.1.1 outlines how a commission monitors and verifies member eligibility:

- 1) Age - they need to be at least 17 years old
- 2) Education – they need to have a high school diploma or GED
- 3) Must be United State Citizen – verify birth certificate or other proof of citizenship

Standard 3.2.1 monitors member hours. Actual documented time-sheets need to be kept. Standard 3.3.1 monitors member activities. Commissions must ensure that hours used are meant for AmeriCorps programs and perspectives.

Standard 3.4.1 reviews the grievance procedures. The Commission needs to have a process for reviewing grievance procedures and ensure that procedures meet what is outlined in federal law.

Standard 5

Of the 11 Standards, Standard 5 is most often the least met. This Standard deals with federal taxpayer money. Developing and tracking for Standard 5 is complicated. The majority of commissions are housed in state government, and those commissions need to have some sort of documentation in place to make sure that these funds are managed. Financial status reports needs to be reviewed for accuracy and verify that the dollar amounts reported match each other.

A-133 audits

Any organization who receives more than \$300,000 in federal funding is subject to an audit. It is a single audit whereby in our case the Office of Management and Budget would collect, review, and approve the data.

Grant Close-outs

The Commission needs to have a process whereby for example, after a 3 year cycle, the grant can be closed out before a new grant begins. The Corporation has outlined the steps necessary for grant closeouts.

CNCS Project Update

Foster Grandparent Program

Kaye Knudson is the director of the Foster Grandparent Program. The Dacotah Foundation sponsors this program. In 1998, federal funding began. They started out with a \$40,000 federal grant, but this year they asked for a little over \$241,000. They have 48 foster grandparents in western North Dakota. They service 10 counties including: Adams, Burleigh, Morton, Grant, Sioux, Mercer, Mountrail, Williams, Ward, and will be adding Divide County. Three full/part-time staff are employed by this program. Numbers for volunteers have doubled in the Williston area in the last 8 months. They serve in 27 elementary schools in Western North Dakota. They serve in 5 head-start programs, 2 daycares, and 1 in a residential treatment facility. They are looking at starting a service learning project in one of the schools in Bismarck this summer to provide and develop a family reading system.

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program

Linda Howard reported on the program she directs in Minot. This program starts recruiting at age 55. The program matches the volunteer with the community priority areas. Forty (40) volunteers are currently working in the school system. Some of the priorities involved in the program are:

- Mentoring
- Homeland Security
- Military Support – also supports after-hour case worker programs with the American Red Cross

The program currently has over 300 volunteers in the program involving 40,000 volunteer hours. Other Retired and Senior Volunteer Program offices are located in Minot, Grand Forks, Fargo, Devils Lake, Bismarck, Dickinson, and Jamestown.

Senior Companion Program

Kathryn Pederson reported on the Senior Companion Program. Sponsored by Lutheran Social Services in 1989, the program covers the entire state of North Dakota. They have 110 senior companions in North Dakota. Seventy-five to eighty (75-80) companions reside in the western part of the state. Seniors work with seniors to take care of one another – a friend who comes and visits on a regular basis. The purpose is to help keep the senior in the home as long as possible. They serve 33 counties in North Dakota, 40 communities, and they have 700 clients. A recent report showed that the Senior Companion Program saved over \$4 million dollars in nursing home care. Companions are actually older than the average age of the clients.

AC*VISTA

Eric Clock reported on his program with VISTA involving the Minot Housing Authority whereby he assesses and researches various home ownership programs. He mentioned that another VISTA representative - Brandy Heckler is supervising a computer lab for disabled clients. Two hundred individuals have access to the computer lab and the program is trying to expand the lab. She is also working with the Minot Entrepreneurship Program.

John Pohlman then explained that education, environment, health, human services, and homeland security are the major targeted areas of the above programs.

New Business: None at this time.

Motion: Max Laird made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rosella Grant seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the State Commission on National and Community Service will be held on June 4, 2003, in Bismarck, North Dakota.

Action Plans:

- 1) **Develop a finalized policy and procedure manual by January 2004 (including a grievance procedure).**
- 2) **Give feedback to non-funded applicants and develop a page of resources so that applicants realize strengths and weaknesses for the next program year.**
- 3) **Implement a question and answer session on the website outlining the request for proposal process for applicants.**
- 4) **Prepare a draft proposal policy for refunding the grant.**
- 5) **Staff to establish a file of collaborators/partnership organizations who engage in volunteer service.**