



**1600 East Century Avenue, Suite 2
P.O. Box 2057
Bismarck, ND 58502-2057
Phone (701) 328-5345
Fax (701) 328-5320
E-Mail: jhirsch@nd.gov**

**MEETING MINUTES
NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
STATE COMMISSION ON NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE
SEPTEMBER 12, 2007**

Meeting Date, Time & Place: September 12, 2007, 9:30 a.m., North Dakota Job Service, 1601 E. Century Ave, Bismarck, North Dakota 58503.

Members Present: Helen Funk (on behalf of Carol Olson), Charles Axtman, Wayne Kutzer, Dr. David Gipp, Gloria Maragos, Jackie Velk, Joseph Harr, Rosella Grant, Dr. Joseph McCann.,

Members Absent: Dave Massey, Leo Cummings, Lee Lampert, Carol Olson, T. J. Russell.

Ex-Officio Members Present: Jim Hirsch, Deb Schiefelbein

Guests Present: Julie Eikamp, Paula Messmer, Sara Lepp, Jerry Houn, Cornelius Grant, Ryan Volk, Senator Tim Mathern, Alan Klein, Brad Williams, Bette Grande, Rene Gonzalez

Opening Remarks & Introductions: Rosella Grant welcomed all members and guests and introductions were made around the room.

Administrative Announcements: Lunch will be served at 12:00 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Rosella Grant requested that the “minutes” for April 18 and June 13 be stricken from the Agenda since there was no quorum for a meeting and these were not actual meeting minutes. Rosella Grant asked for approval of the September 12, 2007, agenda, with changes.

Motion: Gloria Maragos moved to approve the September 12, 2007, agenda, with changes. Wayne Kutzer seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: Rosella Grant asked for a motion to approve the January 10, 2007, minutes.

Motion: Charles Axtman moved to approve the January 10, 2007 minutes. Jackie Velk seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Chair’s Report

Reviewed Mission Statement:

Rosella Grant reviewed the Mission Statement, Article III with the Commission.

OIG Audit:

Jerry Houn stated that OIG (Office of Inspector General) is in the process of auditing the State Commission. They have completed their preliminary steps and plan to return in a few weeks. They will review the State Commission’s expenditures for administrative funding, training funding, and the disability funding. The auditors intend on also visiting some of the sub-grantee offices. OIG’s two concerns included information that was contained in the files (an informal time sheet of a project coordinator and the way costs were being documented). OIG has not announced when they will be returning and intend on selecting two projects to review. Currently, there are 6 active projects that are receiving funding under AmeriCorps. Of those 6 projects, 2 of them will not be back next year.

State Commission Bylaws:

Rosella Grant stated that before reviewing the bylaws, there is a correction noted under Article IV – Membership. She reviewed a letter distributed by Jim Hirsch, which stated, *“The enclosed bylaw changes are intended to expand the membership of the State Commission and to create a separate, permanent standing committee for the Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives Advisory Committee. The changes will be acted on during the September meeting of the North Dakota State Commission. Copies of the proposed bylaws are enclosed for your review. Of the proposed changes, they include Article 4, which would change the voting members from 16 to 19.”*

Jim Hirsch stated that Article VII was new and came out of the state legislative that created the Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives and identifies the purpose of the Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives. It identifies the required membership of the advisory committee and the terms of office and reappointment. It also includes the responsibilities of the committee that also came out of the legislation. Jim Hirsch stated that the Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives aligned very closely with the State Commission and all of its objectives. Jim Hirsch stated that the Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives met earlier and Brad Williams was voted in as Chairman of that Committee. The funding provided to the Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives is about \$25,000 per biennium. Jim Hirsch further stated that it made sense to bring them under the umbrella of the State Commission and be able to use those dollars that are not federally matched to leverage additional federal dollars. He stated that it would help move both the Office of Faith Based and the State Commission forward and hopefully, give them a better position by having two members on the Commission from the legislature. He stated that there are advantages in combining the State Commission with the Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives.

Wayne Kutzer stated he had concerns regarding whether or not the Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives would be a permanent committee. Jim Hirsch stated that the formation of the Office of Faith Based was a legislative order, so it is not going away. Rosella Grant stated that this would make 3 new openings on the State Commission, all of which would be permanent members.

Rosella Grant stated that she needed a motion to approve the bylaw changes, which would include incorporating the Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives.

Motion: Joe McCann moved that the Bylaws be approved with changes. Wayne Kutzer seconded the motion.

Rosella Grant asked if there was any further discussion regarding incorporating the Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives with the State Commission. Being none, Madam Chair requested a vote. All in favor. Motion carried. Madam Chair welcomed in the Faith Based Community to the State Commission.

Brad Williams questioned whether or not the Office of Faith Based and Community Initiative committee members should be voting during the State Commission meetings. Jim Hirsch explained that now that the State Commission Bylaw changes have been approved, the actions made today will go back to the Governors office, where another appointment will be made and from there, the Office of Faith Based and Community Initiative members will be full members of the State Commission as well as full voting members.

2007 Budget Update

Jim Hirsch stated that the budgets with the State Commission are not in sink with the State biennium. The reports that are received regarding the biennium budget do not reflect how we are doing in relations to the Grants we receive. The budget authority that we get from the legislature runs from July – June and the grants we receive from the Corporation for National and Community Service run from January – December. The AmeriCorps subgrantee dollars run through October – September. When the reports are received the monthly charges are calculated against the year to date charges. With the close of the biennium, they were not able to get the reports to us. Jerry Houn stated that the June 30 reports were delayed due to some apply-back issues and that he didn't want to provide inaccurate information so the reports were not included with the agenda. Jim Hirsch stated that he will distribute the budget reports via email once they are received.

CNCS Project Update:

Deb Schiefelbein, Director of the Corporation, distributed a booklet that detailed the various Corporation programs going on throughout the state, as well as how much money comes to the state through from Corporation. She stated that the information contained within would give everyone a better understanding of how the State Commission fits in with the other Corporation's programs in North Dakota and South Dakota.

Jerry Houn explained that most states have a Corporation state office. North Dakota's State Commission is fairly new and has only been around since 2003. South Dakota does not currently have a State Commission. The Corporation state office is shared with South Dakota.

Deb Schiefelbein stated that changes are being made within their office due to administrative funding that was provided by Congress. Reorganization of staff allowed them to maintain grant funding instead of having to cut it. She reviewed the Corporation statistics as well as the state funding statistics.

Jerry Houn stated that what entices people to get involved with the AmeriCorps program is a living allowance, which is a set amount each month, as well as an education award upon successful completion of their time. If a member signs up to work 300 hundred hours, they can get a \$1,000 education award. The members receive a voucher that they give to their college or university.

Paula Messner, with the Dakota Foundation stated that through July, they had 72 foster grandparent volunteers that were working throughout western North Dakota. These volunteers put in over 47,000 volunteer hours. She stated that they tracked their service on 765 children, between Head Start and various daycares. She stated

that there is a need to do more expansion throughout western North Dakota and that they are hoping to be in every county throughout North Dakota.

Deb Schiefelbein asked members of the committee if they knew of any schools that wanted to be involved with the foster grandparent program, and if so, they could contact Paula Messner. She further stated that they were looking to fill several slots within North Dakota and that there are not enough volunteers. If there are not enough volunteers to fill the needed vacancies, federal funding will be given to other agencies.

RSVP/VISTA Mentoring Update:

Julie Eikamp with North Dakota State University RSVP/VISTA Mentoring Program stated that keeping the volunteers active and keeping them mentally engaged really was valued by the communities. She stated that RSVP is a volunteerism program for people 55 years or older. She stated that people contact them and they find an agency for them to work with. They connect the volunteers with the volunteer opportunities. Currently there are 1,100 volunteers in Bismarck, working with approximately 180 agencies in town. On average the volunteers will spend 800-1,000 hours per month in each of the hospitals and various other locations. She stated that last year the volunteers throughout Bismarck volunteered donated 168,000 hours of volunteering. She further stated that a new program that they have added in the past couple of years is a mentoring program called Mentoring CHIPS. The Mentoring CHIPS program stands for Children Having Incarcerated Parents. There are 7.3 million children in the United States who have one or both parents incarcerated. These children are not positively influenced or don't have positive influences in their lives or roll models. Seventy-percent of these children will end up in prison themselves. She stated that this can all be changed by having one adult mentor for a child, one-hour per week for a year. She distributed a brochure with further information. She went on to say that in Bismarck, there are 11 children that are in the mentoring program.

FirstLink:

Sara Lepp with FirstLink stated that they are a clearing house for volunteerism. They offer a suicide prevention hotline, volunteer referrals, volunteer education, volunteer promotion, a resource library, disaster services, where they promote disaster preparedness.

At 11:10 a.m. Dr. Gipp joined the meeting.

2007-2008 RFT & Grants Committee Report:

Jerry Houn updated the Committee on 2007-2008 RFP & Grants Committee Report. He stated that the Grants Committee obligated the full \$500,000 again, starting October 1st. He stated that there are seven projects that will be coming up. He further

stated the Fargo-Moorhead YMCA has requested to expand their program. They will move from 29 members to 36 members. The funding will accommodate that. The Fargo-Moorhead YMCA will file for competitive funding next year. They have now grown to the point where the Corporation has expressed the interest that they feel comfortable in funding them. Jerry Houn stated that one of the main reasons why the YMCA did not get funding competitively was the last time they applied was because they went from a request of having 8 members to about 36 members. In that request, the Corporation felt that that was a big jump and that they may not be able to handle it and they wanted the project to be able to demonstrate that they can handle that number of members. So the funding was denied. He stated that there is good indication that during the next go-round, they could get funded competitively. If they do get funded competitively, about \$200,000 of funding will be available. Jerry also stated that AmeriCorps formula funding would be funding three new projects.

The first is the Baptist Home project. They are unique in that they are the first and only program that has approached AmeriCorps for funding that will not offer a living allowance to their members. They will only be offering the education award. Another new project is down in Richland County. Several different school districts will be working together to start up an AmeriCorps project. Many of them have had some affiliation with the AmeriCorps project before. The third new program will be the Grand Forks Housing Authority. They, too, have experience with AmeriCorps. They worked with the Grand Forks Public School Districts project.

Jerry Houn went on to talk about the funding requirements of the AmeriCorps program. He stated that all new projects must go through a project development phase, which is basically an 8 step process that they must complete before they are allowed to enroll members. In that process right now, two of the three projects, the Baptist Home and the Grand Forks Housing are very well into the project development phase even though they are not receiving any funding. The four projects that have come back are the Fargo-Moorhead YMCA, Cooperstown; though they have decided to scale down a bit, Jamestown Public School System, and Youthworks.

Jerry Houn continued on with the financial monitoring. He stated that things are getting much better in this area for our projects. The fiscal findings have dwindled down quite a bit. He mentioned that he included how the projects are drawing their funds down, since this was questioned before. He stated that this is something we need to consider as we move forward with the funding; are they asking for the appropriate amount of funds? He stated that this is something he tries to work with them when they come through with their applications.

Jerry Houn reviewed the timeline for the 2008-2009 formula applications. He stated that the timeline will be as follows:

- September - October, 2007: State-wide workshops (Grand Forks, Fargo, Minot and Bismarck)
- Early December, 2007: AmeriCorps Grant Writing Seminar (Bismarck, Grand Forks and Fargo, based on interest)
- December 21, 2007: Notice of Intent letter due by 4 p.m. CST to apply for AmeriCorps*State Competitive, Tribal or National Direct funding
- December 26, 2007: Legal Notice for Formula funding, Newspapers statewide
- January 2, 2008: Deadline to submit AmeriCorps*State Competitive, Tribal or National Direct funding application on eGrants to State Commission
- January 8, 2008: AmeriCorps*State Competitive, Tribal or National Direct funding application submitted to Corporation
- January 25, 2008: Notice of Intent Letter due by 4 p.m. CST to apply for AmeriCorps*State Formula funding
- February 14, 2008: Applications due for AmeriCorps*State Formula funding on eGrants
- March, 2008 (TBA): Peer Review of formula applications
- April, 2008 (TBA): Grants Committee reviews formula applications
- April 16, 2008: State Commission selects programs to recommend for funding with AmeriCorps*State Formula funds
- May, 2008: Notify applicants of programs selected
- June, 2008: Formula award recipient's applications are forwarded to the Corporation
- August 1, 2008: Notice of Formula awards received from Corporation
- October 1, 2008: Program Start-Up

Chairperson, Rosella Grant asked if there were any questions concerns of the Commission regarding the calendar timeline.

Motion: Dr. David Gipp moved the approval of the timeline. Gloria Maragos seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion was carried.

AmeriCorps Changes Updates:

Jerry Houn stated that at the national convention this year in Philadelphia, the Corporation released some major changes. One of the changes is that the web-based (WBRs) recording system is going to be removed. Some information that is stored in WBRs will be moved to the eGrants system. The eGrants system is currently being used by the applicants when they initially file their applications. He stated that one of the things going away is timesheets, though the State Commission is still responsible monitoring this. He further stated that Ryan Volk is currently developing a system to track timesheets and guidelines and policies will need to be developed once WBRs is no longer in use. He stated that the next few meetings will involve policy updates. As a new system is developed, new policies will need to be created.

At 12:00 p.m. the meeting broke for lunch.

12:35 p.m. Madam Chair called the meeting to order.

State Commission

Commission Sustainability:

Jerry Houn asked the Commission if they felt there was need for him to come to their communities to speak. He stated that information needs to get out to all communities throughout North Dakota. He further stated that AmeriCorps could work with FirstLink, as many organizations aren't aware of other organizations, or their activities in their communities. He further stated that the more we expand, the more help from personnel will be needed and additional funding wasn't allotted for staffing. He continued to discussion volunteerism throughout North Dakota. He stated that we need to start providing leadership in this area and develop partnerships.

Publicity and Recognition:

Jerry Houn stated that the Band Day parade takes place each year and AmeriCorps members are brought to Bismarck for this event in connection with a State Commission sponsored member event. It was suggested that is the member event be brought to other communities. Ways to recognize AmeriCorps members and the service they provide need to be established.

Policy Updates:

Jerry Houn stated that there are no new policies, but that new policies will be developed as new procedures are established with the new eGrants tracking system.

Commission Discussion & Planning

The following dates have been tentatively set for the 2008 State Commission meetings: January 9, April 16, June 11, and September 17.

Adjournment

Rosella Grant asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Gloria Maragos moved to adjourn the meeting. Jackie Velk seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned.

Action Plans:

- **Jerry Houn to develop policies for E-grant tracking, including timesheets.**
- **Jim Hirsch to email budget updates.**