

DC Commission on National and Community Service

Commission Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 9th, 2017; 5:00 pm
Conference Call

Welcome

Chair Justine Love called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

Roll Call

Justine Love
Brandon Andrews
Peter Sacco
Edward Jones
Louis Henderson
Barbara Cline
Charice Roper-Williams
Joshua Johnson
Carolina Celnik
Amy Cohen
Lars Etzkorn
Gail Oliver

Events

Upcoming Events

Chair Love asked that every commissioner attend one of Serve DC's listed sites for the upcoming MLK Day of Service on January 16th. She said that it would be helpful to have a commissioner presence at all of the events.

Khadija Ismail, the Executive Assistant for Serve DC, said that Serve DC's main event for MLK Day of Service will be a mentoring breakfast, which will be held from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at Friendship Tech Preparatory High School, 2705 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue SE.

Chair Love asked what the commissioners would help with during the mentoring breakfast. Ms. Ismail said that volunteers would help with passing out breakfast during the event.

Ms. Ismail gave an overview of the complete list of MLK Day of Service events. She said that all of the event information was previously emailed to the commissioners.

Chair Love asked if there was a hashtag for the day to use on social media. Ms. Ismail said that a hashtag had not yet been determined but that she will follow up once one has been determined.

Reading of Past Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Etkorn moved to approve the October 2016 meeting minutes. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion, which was voted on and passed (VOTES: 12-0-0).

CNCS / AmeriCorps

2017 Monitoring and Programmatic Visit Schedule

Pamela Weinberg, the AmeriCorps Program Director for Serve DC, said that she previously sent out the site visit schedule to commissioners. She said that some Serve DC partners are continuing to submit additional site visit opportunities. She added that Serve DC has already conducted several programmatic visits and two monitoring visits. She said that anyone who is interested in attending a monitoring visit should meet with Serve DC staff beforehand for a quick training.

Commissioner Etkorn asked for a quick description of programmatic visits and monitoring visits. Ms. Weinberg said that, during programmatic visits, Serve DC is able to see each site's programs in action. She said that these visits help ensure that sites are carrying out the programs that are listed in their grant applications. She said that Serve DC is also checking to ensure that the sites are collecting real-time data.

Ms. Weinberg said that monitoring visits are more compliance-based. She said that, during the visits, Serve DC is making sure that AmeriCorps members and site staff have completed the correct background checks. She added that Serve DC will also check the financial statements and material inventory for each site.

Chair Love asked how long each site visit lasts. Ms. Weinberg said that monitoring visits last approximately three hours and that programmatic visits last approximately one hour.

Chair Love asked which type of visit Serve DC needs more assistance for. Ms. Weinberg said there is not a particular need for assistance with one type of visit over the other and that commissioners can sign up for whatever they are interested in.

Multiple commissioners expressed interest in attending the site visits.

Chair Love asked when the commissioners should respond to Ms. Weinberg with their availability for the site visits by. Ms. Weinberg said that the commissioners should let her know soon so that Serve DC can schedule a monitoring visit training before the start of February.

Competitive Grant Competition Discussion

Ms. Weinberg gave an overview of the two rounds of AmeriCorps funding that Serve DC administers, the competitive and formula funding rounds. She said that Serve DC makes recommendations for funding to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), which ultimately determines the final funding amounts.

Ms. Weinberg said that that Serve DC is currently going through the competitive grant process. She said that the formula process, which is ideal for smaller, more local organizations, will start in the spring. She added that there are no funding restrictions for the competitive process, while there is a \$650,000 limit on funding for the formula process.

Ms. Weinberg that Serve DC previously asked applicants to submit a logic model for their proposed grants. She said that after reviewing the logic models, Serve DC asked certain applicants to submit a full application in December, and that the office is now reviewing the full applications.

Ms. Weinberg said that nine organizations submitted logic models and that all of the organizations were asked to move forward, with one of the organizations being asked to move forward for a planning grant because the organization did not have the capacity to meet the 20-member minimum set by CNCS.

Ms. Weinberg said that, out of the nine organizations, seven of them decided to submit the full application, with two of them submitting applications for planning grants and the other seven organizations submitting applications for implementation grants. She said that one of the seven organizations, the Neighborhood Associates Corporation, submitted their application more than a day late and thus Serve DC decided to not move forward with their application, leaving six organizations up for competitive grant review.

Ms. Weinberg said that, out of the six organizations up for competitive grant review, one of them, Sustainable Futures, had a weak application, and thus Serve DC did not rank the organization, leaving five applications with application rankings.

Ms. Weinberg said that the remaining planning grant application, the Reentry Network for Returning Citizens, received low scores because the organization forgot to complete a section of the application. She said that the organization's resubmittal of the incomplete section was very promising.

Ms. Weinberg said that all of the grants fall in the education category, with the one exception being the Reentry Network for Returning Citizens, which falls in the economic development category. She said that the other four ranked organizations were all teacher residency programs.

Chair Love asked about the program model for the Center for Inspired Teaching. Ms. Weinberg said that the organization places teachers-in-training in the classrooms of highly experienced teachers.

Commissioner Etzkorn asked about Serve DC's processes for determining if an application should not be considered because it has been submitted late. Ms. Weinberg said that because the Neighborhood Associates Corporation submitted their application over a day late instead of just a few minutes late and offered no follow-up regarding the reason for the late submittal, Serve DC staff decided to not move forward with the application. Commissioner Etzkorn said that if Serve DC rigidly follows its late submittal policies, it should have a policy for situations where submitted applications can be augmented with additional information after the submission deadline. Ms. Weinberg said that Serve DC viewed the augmented information as a clarification of the application.

Commissioner Sacco said that he is excited that the Reentry Network for Returning Citizens was ranked highly because the organization would help Serve DC diversify its funding portfolio. He commended Ms. Weinberg for her work on encouraging the submittal of non-education focused applications.

Commissioner Johnson asked Ms. Weinberg to explain the meaning of the overall application rankings. Ms. Weinberg said that when Serve DC submits the applications to CNCS, they have to rank the applications based on preference. She said that the Serve DC grant reviewers felt that, because the Reentry Network for Returning Citizens had such an innovative model, the organization should be ranked higher than what their average review score came out to be. She added that Serve DC also provides justifications for its rankings to CNCS.

Chair Love moved to approve the Serve DC competitive funding recommendations. Commissioner Etkorn seconded the motion, which was voted on and passed (VOTES: 10-0-0, Commissioner Johnson recused).

Events (Continued)

Recent Events

Ms. Ismail said that Serve DC held two Presidential Inauguration trainings for Inauguration volunteers, including for volunteers at shelters, warming stations, and family reunification centers.

Ms. Ismail said that Serve DC also partnered with the Mayor's Office of Community Relations and Services (MOCRS), the Department of Human Resources (DHR), the Office on Aging, and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to collect canned goods for Food and Friends as part of World Aids Day. She added that volunteers also passed out HIV information in Columbia Heights and Shaw.

Upcoming Events

Commissioner Johnson said that George Washington University will once again hold its MLK Day of Service program, which will include workshop opportunities and service opportunities. She said that the university is partnering with a number of schools and early childhood centers, and that they would love to have commissioners participate in the program. She added that she will send out more information regarding the program to the commissioners.

Commissioner Roper-Williams said that she is helping to organize a service project on MLK Day at Children of Mine Youth Center. She said that, as part of the service project, volunteers will be feeding the homeless. She added that she is looking for volunteers to help during two shifts from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm.

Ms. Weinberg gave an overview of volunteer.dc.gov, Serve DC's online volunteer portal. She said that organizations can use the portal to list service projects that they are looking for volunteers for.

Committee Updates

There were no committee updates.

New Business / Announcements

There was no new business or announcements.

Adjournment

Commissioner Andrews adjourned the meeting at 5:53 pm.