

## **Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism**

May 21, 2024, 10:30 AM – 1:30 PM  
5600 Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060

Board Members Present: Kim Luckabaugh, Vanessa Diamond, Sam Parham, Joy Parker, Jamie Seagraves, Julie Strandlie, Sheila Williamson-Branch, Clifford Yee, NaQuetta Mitchell, Cynthia Downs-Taylor, Elizabeth Schultz, Dominick Rascona

Board Members Absent: Naila Alam, Jason Ascher, Enid Mpumwire Machayo, Mark Fero, Clovia Lawrence, Peppy Linden, Reagan Polarek, Shane Roberts-Thomas,

Ex-Officio Members Present: Jillian Winters, Carol Ayars

Serve Virginia Staff Present: Kathy Spangler, Analise Gammel, Alexander Vanik, Jae-Young Choe, Samantha Lukasiewicz, Sarah Lawson, Christina Dumas

Guests: Joel Morgan

The Board Meeting was called to order at 10:38 AM by Board Chair Clifford Yee.

### **Adoption of Agenda and Minutes**

Chair Clifford Yee called for the adoption of minutes from November 13, 2023. The motion to adopt the minutes was made by Sam Parham, Sheila Williamson-Branch seconded, and all were in favor except for Kimberly Luckabaugh. Luckabaugh abstained from the vote since she was not present at the last board meeting. The November 13, 2023 minutes were adopted.

Chair Clifford Yee called for the approval of the agenda. Kim Luckabaugh motioned to adopt the agenda, Julie Strandlie seconded, and all were in favor.

### **Chair's Remarks**

Chair Cliff Yee reported that several board members have been engaged in various projects and activities which included serving on the AmeriCorps awards panel, site visits, outreach, and other events.

Some board members are either rotating off the board due to term limits, or their terms are ending. The Chair thanked the members who have served and expired all of their reappointments and will be rotating off of the Governor's Advisory Board: Vanessa Diamond, Mark Fero, Julie Strandlie, and Sheila Williamson-Branch. Gubernatorial appointments are pending for new and current member reappointments to the Board. Each board member is eligible for two consecutive terms and must reapply in order to be reappointed. Board members whose terms expire in 2024 and eligible for reappointment are: Cynthia Downs-Taylor, Enid Mpumwire Machayo, Jamie Seagraves, Joy Parker, Kim Luckabaugh, Naila Alam, NaQuetta Mitchell, Peppy Linden, Clovia Lawrence, and Elizabeth Schultz. Board members whose terms expire in subsequent years are Reagan Polarek (2025) and Clifford Yee, Dominick Rascona, Sam Parham, Shane Roberts-Thomas, and Jason Ascher (2026).

Board members interested in serving a leadership position for next year are asked to inform the Chair or Kathy Spangler.

## **Mission Moment**

Chair Cliff Yee introduced Joel Morgan, Executive Director of Virginia Recovery Corps, an Ampact national direct AmeriCorps grantee operating in Virginia. Joel shared background information about the Virginia Recovery Corps program which recently hosted First Lady Youngkin and AmeriCorps CEO Michael Smith at Caritas in Richmond.

## **AmeriCorps Report**

Vice Chair Sheila Williamson-Branch reported that Serve Virginia utilized American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding to expand two key areas: 1) to strengthen the National Service Criminal History Checks monitoring process, thereby developing an ongoing monitoring plan and identifying policy gaps for the Commission and subgrantees; and 2) ARP funding was utilized to develop a “pipeline” of potential AmeriCorps programs statewide in partnership with America’s Service Commission (ASC) and resulted in the largest pool of AmeriCorps Formula applications in many years.

Last year more than 3,000 Americans of all ages and backgrounds united to meet local needs, strengthen communities, and expand opportunity through national service in Virginia. AmeriCorps invested more than \$14.2 million in federal funding to support cost-effective community solutions, working with local partners to empower individuals to help communities tackle their toughest challenges. 611 AmeriCorps members served in 188 service sites while 56 VISTA members provided capacity building support in 35 service locations. 78 National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) members served in 10 service locations and 2,296 AmeriCorps Seniors served in 130 locations. The impact of this national service capacity in Virginia results in 4,623 individuals connected with substance use intervention services, 1,040 individuals connecting with job training or placement supports, and 18,892 children and youth who received support through a variety of programs and services.

During AmeriCorps week, Serve Virginia renewed an agreement with AmeriCorps NCCC and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management to respond quickly to any emergencies or disasters in the Commonwealth. Additionally, five projects have been approved by NCCC for this summer. These projects include building and repairing energy efficient homes in Southeast Virginia, rehabbing historic sites and children’s areas at Natural Bridge State Park, supporting climate resiliency in the stewardship of urban trees in Richmond, restoring Stroubles Creek, and reducing wildfire risks in southwest Virginia.

Serve Virginia is one of 11 state commissions receiving a special planning grant from the Shultz Family Foundation and Pinterest to develop a Youth Mental Health Corps in Virginia. Inspired by First Lady Youngkin and supported by Governor Youngkin and the Secretaries of Education and Health and Human Resources, Serve Virginia has received a \$100,000 planning grant. Serve Virginia will lead a multi sector effort to develop a Youth Mental Health Corps to address the youth mental health crisis and the mental health workforce shortage through service-to-career pathways. This program has the potential for both in-school and out-of-school applications, and any connections or suggestions as the planning grant develops over the next few months are welcome. The goal will be to develop a program model, identify potential program partners, and establish credential pathways to submit an operational grant request for the 2025-2026 program year.

The Board reviewed the May 17<sup>th</sup> Formula Grant submission by Serve Virginia to the federal agency AmeriCorps. The Commission submitted one competitive proposal on behalf of the Rectors and Visitors of the University of Virginia for their Virginia College Advising Corps. The Commission will accept \$1,299,766 on their behalf which will support 52 MSYs (Member Service Years), which equates to 52 full-time members. This award is 20% less than requested, and UVA and the Commission will be working to secure additional no-cost slots from AmeriCorps to maintain current program levels.

The Commission received notification of its Formula Funding allocation with \$4,415,912 available for the 2024-2025 program year cycle. Twenty-seven (27) organizations applied for Formula funding. The Vice Chair thanked the board members who served on the application review panel.

### Executive Session

Chair Cliff Yee reported that Formula applications for funding from State Commissions require ratification by the Governor's Advisory Board in advance of the final notice of award. Per Article 5- Section 3 of the bylaws, the Board considered and acted upon grant applications for funds provided by AmeriCorps through Serve Virginia as required. The Board was asked if anyone believed that there was a departure from the requirements, and there were none.

Chair Cliff Yee read the official motion:

*"I move that the Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism convene in closed session to discuss the results of the procurement processes for investing public funds in AmeriCorps programming opportunities pursuant to the investment of public funds exemption at Section 2.2-3711(A)(6) of the Code of Virginia, and the possible award of public contracts involving the expenditure of public funds and discussion of the terms or scope of such contracts, pursuant to the award of contracts using public funds exemption at Section 2.2-3711(A)(29)."*

The motion was moved by Elizabeth Schultz, seconded by Julie Strandlie, and all were in favor. The vote was in the affirmative to enter executive session.

During executive session, the Chair entertained a motion for the Governor's Advisory Board to approve the recommended Funding awards and placeholder funding from AmeriCorps as presented in executive session. The motion was moved by Elizabeth Schultz, seconded by Sam Parham, and all were in favor. The vote was in the affirmative to approve the funding recommendations.

At the conclusion of the Executive Session, the Chair entertained a motion to conclude the closed executive session and reconvene the open session. The motion was moved by Sam Parham, seconded by Joy Parker, and all were in favor to close the executive session.

Chair Yee stated: *"Consistent with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, we will conduct a roll call affirmation in which each of us is asked to certify the appropriateness of the content of the closed session. Prior to that, however, I must ask whether any member of this body believes that there was a departure from the requirements of the FOIA. If so, please share that information now, and identify the substance of that departure.*

*Thank you. We will proceed with a roll call.*

*The question here is for you to certify that to the best of your knowledge*

*(1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements AND  
(2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed, or considered in the meeting by the public body. When Jae-Young calls your name, please answer, 'I so certify.'”*

The roll call proceeded, and all members present at the meeting so certified.

Chair Cliff Yee entertained a motion for the Governor’s Advisory Board to concur with and support the recommended Funding Plan for the 2023 distribution of formula funds from AmeriCorps as presented in executive session. The motion was moved by Kim Luckabaugh, seconded by Julie Strandlie, and the vote was in the affirmative.

### **State Service Plan Update**

State Service Plan Coordinator Alex Vanik reported on the progress of the State Service Plan over the past three years. In the first strategy area to “build a culture of service, volunteerism, and civic engagement,” the Commission raised the recommended full-time living allowance across current AmeriCorps programs, making AmeriCorps a more viable option for individuals considering applying. Furthermore, the Virginia Community Engagement Index (VCEI) was created to provide much needed data for the Commission and its partners, and the Virginia Service Commission re-branded itself as Serve Virginia.

In the second strategy area to “build a more integrated and aligned network of partners,” Serve Virginia strengthened its relationships with numerous strategic statewide partner networks such as the Virginia Funder’s Network, the Volunteer Center Network, VA Engage, and the Center for Nonprofit Excellence. These organizations become involved in all aspects of work from awards to the Volunteerism Summit, and several joined as sites for the VISTA program. Further outreach efforts resulted in more than 400 new contacts engaged in the Commission’s work.

The third strategy is to “build a more robust resource and support infrastructure” to leverage greater levels of investment to scale existing community programming and support the development of new programs. Through a pipeline project and other educational efforts, the number of applications for AmeriCorps operational and planning grant funding increased, and AmeriCorps VISTA members were placed at partner nonprofits in rural areas of Virginia to assist with their ability to serve their communities.

### **State Service Plan 2025-2028**

Serve Virginia Director Kathy Spangler reported that the three interconnected strategies will be maintained as the Commission builds the 2025-2028 State Service Plan. To help inform that approach, general feedback on needs and priorities was received from attendees at the recent Volunteerism Summit. In addition, the Commission will plan targeted interviews with key stakeholders over the summer and refresh tactics based on this constituent feedback and analysis of successes and failures in the past years. Goals will be set and aligned in the next State Service Plan this fall.

### **Statewide Outreach & Communications**

Communications Coordinator Sarah Lawson reported that AmeriCorps Week was the Commission’s most engaging event on social media this spring. The campaign represented a

peak in content creation & engagement across all social media channels. National Volunteer Week was a great opportunity to partner with the Volunteer Center Network to highlight the celebrations in honor of Virginia's volunteers.

Serve Virginia actively promoted the Summit through paid and organic social media from January through May. Further diversified approaches included traditional media (news and radio) and promotion of National Volunteer Week through op eds and radio. The website and newsletter audience continues to grow through outreach, with a recent spike in traffic resulting from paid social advertising.

#### Virginia Volunteerism Summit Recap

Statewide Engagement Officer Analise Gammel reported that the workshops presented at the 2024 Volunteerism Summit on May 15-16 will be available for 2 weeks following the event. The Summit which took place virtually generated a revenue of \$16,621.07 with expenses estimated to be around \$7,478. The 305 paid registrations fell below the goal, but with speakers and guests, there were 250 participants overall. Survey responses from attendees and recommendations for the 2025 Summit will be presented at the June 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.

#### Elected Officials Visits

Serve Virginia has hosted site visits with the goal to cultivate legislative champions and promote the impact of AmeriCorps statewide. Visits have taken place in the Western, Piedmont, and Central regions. While sites that can accommodate summer visits are being sought, the Commission can help schedule visits to VISTA or NCCC sites if a board member is interested.

#### Award Programs and Recognition

Analise Gammel reported that Serve Virginia is partnering with volunteer centers to enhance the recognition of volunteers through their awards programs and the Serve Virginia Honor Roll. Serve Virginia was recognized as a partner at the Fairfax Volunteer Service Awards, thanks to participation in the Volunteer Center Network and as the recipient of mini grant funding. Serve Virginia has also been sharing its work at state and national conferences, including a presentation on planning grants at the National Service training hosted by America's Service Commissions (ASC) and a presentation on the Virginia Community Engagement Index at the Virginia Funders Network Conference.

The Governor's Awards for Volunteerism and Community Service nominations are open now until 5pm on June 25. The Board will be asked to help with the scoring of nominations during the first two weeks of July. Serve Virginia requested the Board's help in spreading the word to prospective nominators before the deadline on June 25.

#### FLOVA Collaboration

A partnership with the First Lady has developed over the past year since the Governor's awards event last fall. In addition to supporting the awards and 211 Virginia, the First Lady has taken an interest in promoting national and community service. Serve Virginia has participated at the "Spirit of Sisterhood" events statewide.

#### Virginia Community Engagement Index

The VCEI continues to engage new partners in the Commission's work. Since the VCEI launched in 2023, there's been a strong engagement with the VCEI resources. An interactive dashboard on the website allows users to use data, filter by region and demographic factors, and

draw their own insights about how this information can expand service and volunteerism in their communities.

One of the tangible partnerships resulting from the VCEI is the continued pilot with partners in the Central Region. With the support of the Community Foundation for a Greater Richmond and the Bob and Anna Lou Schaberg Foundation, about 40 partners convened to dig into the VCEI data and drew insights from the findings that created this strategic framework for application. Since January, this growing coalition of partners has developed plans for projects in each of the key strategic focus areas and are developing tools and resources that will be available for folks across the state to either implement in their communities or inspire other projects.

Vanessa Diamond of the Community Foundation added that the convening of the core committee, which is comprised of faith-based organizations, nonprofits, corporations, educational institutions, and government leadership, has created internal social capital for the service and volunteerism ecosystem that's been developing.

### Policy Project

Over the past three years, the American Rescue Plan funding has enabled the Serve Virginia State Commission to become a transformative and innovative leader. As outlined in the State Service Plan, several ways policy changes could incentivize participation in AmeriCorps programs were identified. They included State Tax Exemption for Segal Ed Award, In-State Tuition, Increased living allowance funding, or Match funding for qualified programs. Although attempts were made to organize for this project, the Commission has lacked the bandwidth to fully engage. A report on the landscape assessment and positioning review for this scope is anticipated from contractor SIR later this month—it will be shared and discussed with the Board on the June 27 work session call.

Serve Virginia has also been working through the elected officials site visits to identify “champions” to advance policy proposals in the next session of the General Assembly. Kathy stressed the importance of the Virginia Service Foundation board and interested members of this Governor’s Advisory Board to help advance these efforts on policy change.

## **Partner Updates**

### AmeriCorps

Jillian Winters, Acting Senior Portfolio Manager of the Mid-Atlantic Region for AmeriCorps, reported that the establishment of a permanent regional administrator for the Mid-Atlantic region is currently underway. In other news, Virginia received a Youth Mental Health Corps planning grant funded by the Schultz Family Foundation and Pinterest. The grant is focused on members serving within school-age populations. Currently there are four states working on active grants: Colorado, Michigan, Minnesota, and Texas, and now Virginia is among the seven states that have received a planning grant.

On AmeriCorps’ commitment to Climate Corps, an interagency initiative for workforce development, no additional funding currently remains; however, there is an opportunity for programs interested in working within the climate sector to become a part of Climate Corps.

AmeriCorps VISTA has had a challenging budget year. The agency has received at least ten

concept papers/applications in Virginia, but due to budget constraints AmeriCorps hasn't been able to award any of those grants this year. A strategy plan using the VCEI is forthcoming to target needs within the state to get some of the VISTA projects up and running next year.

There has however been a new VISTA project entryway in Fairfax focused on housing assistance in Virginia as well as other metropolitan areas. The Mid-Atlantic region also implemented an AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions competition nationwide for either new coverage or expansion of an existing program, of which the Commonwealth of Virginia was listed as a priority state. Virginia received an award for a new Foster Grandparent project at Virginia Commonwealth University.

#### America's Service Commission (ASC)

Vanessa Diamond reported that she will remain on the ASC Board for another two years. Due to AmeriCorps' limitation in federal funds and staffing, much of ASC's focus has been on advocacy at the state level for local philanthropy, business, and state investment to provide professional development and support for AmeriCorps programs. Vanessa will share more news in June after attending an ASC Board meeting tomorrow.

#### Virginia Service Foundation

VSF Chair Julie Strandlie informed that the Foundation's work includes support of the Governor's Advisory Board, Day of Service Mini Grants, and the annual Volunteerism Summit. There's a great need to recruit more board members for the Foundation—interested members of the Governor's Advisory Board are encouraged to reach out to Julie. There's also been a challenge to find funding. Kathy Spangler is working on getting a VISTA member to assist with foundation development. Some links will be shared again on the Foundation board recruitment and on the MLK and 9/11 Mini Grants.

### **Board Member Recognition**

Chair Clifford Yee reported that four longstanding board members have exhausted their renewal options for continuous service on the Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism: Julie Strandlie, Mark Fero, Vanessa Diamond, and Sheila Williamson-Branch. They were recognized at the meeting and invited to share their reflections on their years of service.

### **Public Comment**

Chair Clifford Yee opened the floor for any public comment, of which there were none.

### **Close and Adjourn**

The Chair reminded the Board of the next meeting which will take place virtually as a work session on June 27, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

Prepared by Jae-Young Choe  
Submitted by Kathy Spangler