

Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism

March 5, 2025, 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
5600 Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060

Board Members Present: Kimberly Luckabaugh, Clifford Yee, Debra Rapone, Dominick Rascona, Joel Morgan, Carl Street, Kimberley Martin, Veronica Evans

Board Members Absent: Joy Parker, Jason Ascher, Clovia Lawrence, Reagan Polarek, Shane Roberts-Thomas, Aaron McClung, Mark Creason, Sam Parham, Amanda Gannon, Victoria Proffitt, Linda Malon-Colon

Ex-Officio Members Present: Carol Ayars

Virginia Service Foundation Members Present: Julie Strandlie, Sheila Williamson-Branch, Maggie Bowman, Clifford Yee, Jennifer Williamson, Kevin Quigley

Serve Virginia Staff Present: Kathy Spangler, Analise Gammel, Alexander Vanik, Jae-Young Choe, Samantha Lukasiewicz, Sarah Lawson, Mackenzie Vuotto (VISTA), Elizabeth Richardson (VISTA)

The Board Meeting was called to order at 10:04AM by Board Vice Chair Kimberly Luckabaugh.

NOTE: A quorum was not met, and all actions will be ratified at the May 22, 2025, meeting.

Adoption of Agenda and Minutes

Vice Chair Kimberly Luckabaugh called for the adoption of minutes from September 26, 2024. The motion to adopt the minutes was made by Clifford Yee, Joel Morgan seconded, and all were in favor. The minutes from September 26, 2024, were adopted.

Vice Chair Kimberly Luckabaugh called for the approval of the agenda. Joel Morgan motioned to adopt the agenda, Clifford Yee, and all were in favor.

Chair's Remarks

Vice Chair Kimberly Luckabaugh welcomed newly appointed members to the Board. Carl Street is the Vice President for Behavioral Health Services at Youth For Tomorrow where he oversees seven regional Behavioral Health Offices located in 4 counties: Prince William, Fairfax, Fauquier and Loudoun Counties. Kimberley Martin, who was a 2023 Governor's Volunteer and Community Service Award recipient, is the founder of KLM Scholarship Foundation which supports college students in obtaining textbooks.

The Vice Chair also welcomed board members of the Virginia Service Foundation Board (VSF), a closely aligned 501c3 nonprofit that supports the Virginia Service Commission's work.

Mission Moment

Vice Chair Luckabaugh introduced AmeriCorps VISTA member Elizabeth Richardson to share her experience in efforts to build capacity for the Virginia Service Foundation. Elizabeth joined Serve Virginia last August and has since been providing support for VSF's activities, including the Days of Service mini grants, the Governor's Awards, and the Volunteerism Summit.

Elizabeth has also been conducting a donor landscape project to assist with grants and sponsorship for the Foundation.

A major highlight in Elizabeth's service year so far involves the River Counties Volunteer Capacity Project which was launched to build a stronger culture of volunteerism, a more united network of partners, and a more robust support infrastructure for the Northern Neck. This region of the Commonwealth faces unique challenges due to the demographics and rural nature of the counties. The Lantz Foundation awarded the Virginia Service Foundation \$75,000 to create a volunteer hub this year, with the promise of an additional two years of funding at up to \$100,000 per year to support the initiative. Work is currently in place to launch a volunteer management portal in September.

State Service Plan

Serve Virginia Director Kathy Spangler thanked the Board for their insights and contributions to develop the strategic direction for Serve Virginia. The State Service Plan, a requirement of the federal funder AmeriCorps, has building upon the work of Serve Virginia over the past three years. The purpose and goal remain the same and is guided by a network of partners statewide: Purpose: to spark change, strengthen lives, and produce lasting impacts for communities throughout Virginia through service and volunteerism. Goal: to inspire more Virginians from all parts of the Commonwealth to engage in service and volunteer experiences to reduce disparities and meet communities' most pressing needs. Serve Virginia's work is guided by three interrelated key strategies: 1) Build a Stronger Culture of Service, Volunteerism, and Civic Engagement; 2) Unite a More Representative, Integrated, and Aligned Network of Partners; 3) Create a More Robust Resource and Support Infrastructure.

Vice Chair Kimberly Luckabaugh opened the floor for questions and discussion, followed by entertaining a motion to adopt the 2025-2027 Virginia State Service Plan. The motion was moved by Joel Morgan, seconded by Debra Rapone, and all were in favor. The vote was in the affirmative, and the Virginia State Service Plan was adopted.

AmeriCorps Portfolio

AmeriCorps Program Manager Samantha Lukasiewicz provided an update of the AmeriCorps portfolio.

Presidential Executive Orders

Several executive orders signed by the new presidential administration had the potential to affect programs in the AmeriCorps portfolio. Guidance was received from the AmeriCorps agency on 1/31/2025 that they would be reviewing service position listings, notice of funding opportunities, and current awards for compliance with the executive orders. On February 14, the agency was asked to conduct a review of all current awards and send information to either certify that the activities and language were compliant, or if there was potential for noncompliance, they'd be allowed to make amendments on those awards. All the awards except for the Commission Support Grant had potential for noncompliance, so the Serve Virginia staff worked with subrecipients to amend the awards, certify compliance, and submit them on 2/21/2025. The staff is in frequent communication with America's Service Commissions (ASC) and the portfolio for any potential next steps stemming from agency requirements.

AmeriCorps Portfolio Update

The AmeriCorps portfolio in Virginia, which is midway through the program year, is currently comprised of: 1 competitive program, 2 PHA (Public Health AmeriCorps) programs, 9 formula operational programs, and 11 formula planning grants. All operational programs are at the expected level of funding expenditures for this time of the program year. They are currently between 3-5% below where they should be in their spending, but the fiscal officer is working with each program and program officer to plan for the rest of the year.

The goal of planning grants is to assess if AmeriCorps is advantageous for an organization, with the hope that they apply for an operational program that starts at the end of that planning period. 5 out of 11 planning grants applied to be operational. They will continue working on policies and procedures for their upcoming program, and dependent on their potential funding, will work on recruitment and orientation plans for onboarding members in September. Among those that did not apply to be operational, only one organization decided not to continue into phase 2 of the planning grant process. The other 5 will continue to work on AmeriCorps planning (in different capacities) and a scope of work that includes several deliverables such as participating in summit activities, convening key stakeholders, and completing an asset map of contacts in their communities in order to advance volunteer and service strategies across their geographic regions.

RFA (Request for Application) Response and Timeline

The Formula RFA deadline was on February 10th. Twenty-two responses were received: 2 fixed amount, 16 operational, and 4 planning. The total funding request was \$7.94 million with 327.8 MSY (Member Service Years) and 501 slots. The initial evaluation panel meeting takes place on March 11. Attendance is required to participate on the panel. After the initial meeting, evaluators will receive scoring packets of 5-6 applications to review and score. Evaluation panels will meet again the week of March 24th. After the evaluations, Serve Virginia and programs will enter a negotiation period where clarifications and adjustments may be made to applications and funding requests. The Board will review and approve the funding recommendations at the May 22nd Board meeting. Serve Virginia will then submit the Formula portfolio to AmeriCorps, and programs will begin operating in August and September.

VISTA Project Profile and Timeline

There are currently 11 VISTA members placed at 8 host sites in Virginia. One member is set to onboard in April 2025 with the United Way of Henry County and Martinsville, and Serve Virginia is actively recruiting for two positions with Bay Aging and the Dan River Nonprofit Network. Serve Virginia recently hosted an information session for organizations interested in applying to host a member next year. 52 organizations expressed interest, and 31 of those organizations attended the live webinar. 13 member slots are expected to be available for the upcoming program year. Host site applications will be due March 19th with the goal of announcing site selections by April 14th.

Communications and Outreach

State Engagement Officer Analise Gammel provided an update on communications and outreach efforts.

Youth Mental Health Corps

The Virginia Youth Mental Health Corps will launch this fall, with 75 members to begin service in September. YMHC members serve youth in a mental health capacity, are between the ages of

18-24 (or 18-29 for peer recovery), and are proximate to or from the communities served. The program supports economic opportunity for these members, as well as credential or certification opportunities. Serve Virginia has been working with others to identify training opportunities and other resources for members to build career pathways in the area of youth mental health. An application to the Schultz Family Foundation for funding support of the YMHC program has been submitted. AmeriCorps grantees have shared information about their plans to align the initiative in 2025, and next steps involve identifying program partners and continuing to develop the program infrastructure at the state level.

VCEI (Virginia Community Engagement Index)

The Virginia Community Engagement Index is a key source of data for insights about service and volunteerism. The VCEI survey is currently live and accepting responses until March 9. The insights from the survey have been shared by the Governor, was utilized to inform AmeriCorps funding decisions, and have led to the development of a framework for developing community engagement as an asset that can be leveraged for community resiliency. Analise asked the Board to help Serve Virginia reach the goal of 6,000 responses by taking the survey and sharing the survey link to others.

Annual Summit

The Virginia Volunteerism Summit connects nonprofit and volunteer serving organizations with training, networking, and resources to expand their impact in their communities. Insights from the VCEI, as well as the new state service plan, will be shared at this year's Summit. Early bird registration is open now. Keynote speakers, Dr. Akilah Watkins and Manu Meel from BridgeUSA will speak about building a culture of service and volunteerism and bringing people from all walks of life to conversations about civic action. Analise informed the Board that they have been registered and should have received an email from Airmeet, the hosting platform for the Summit. More communications with information about how to join the event are forthcoming.

National Celebrations

AmeriCorps Week and National Volunteer Week take place in the spring, celebrating and recognizing those who serve and impact their communities. Serve Virginia will be sharing spotlights on social media as well as toolkits that can be used to spread the word. Any board members who would like to assist in submitting an op-ed or letter to the editor are asked to let staff know. This is also a great opportunity to recognize AmeriCorps alum serving in a board member's organization, as well as volunteers in nontraditional positions.

Elected Officials

To promote and increase awareness of AmeriCorps, Serve Virginia will reach out to elected officials during AmeriCorps Week to inform them of the impact AmeriCorps members and volunteers have on communities across the Commonwealth. Each elected official (state and congressional representatives and senators) will be emailed a letter with the latest data on members and volunteers and will be encouraged to coordinate with Serve Virginia to set up a site visit for this spring. The Board is encouraged to help with these outreach efforts, as site visits demonstrate the impact of AmeriCorps programs on the community. Board members will be notified of site visits scheduled for their area as responses from elected officials are received.

Communications

Communications and Outreach Officer Sarah Lawson provided an update on Communications

metrics. At the beginning of the year, Serve Virginia launched the 2025 Communications and Outreach Plan, which builds on strategies from the previous year to define specific goals and objectives, including Expanded Reach, AmeriCorps Communications Capacity, Thought Leadership & Trust, as well as Improved Processes and Sustainability. Underlying these plans, Serve Virginia's primary modes of communication and outreach include ServeVirginia.org; a robust presence on various social media outlets; the monthly newsletter; and three new B-to-C newsletters that launched in 2025, including one for individual volunteers, one for AmeriCorps members and alumni, and one for the Virginia Volunteerism Network and other professionals in the sector.

Serve Virginia continues to monitor and adapt its use of these platforms based on metrics from Google Analytics, social media analytics, and newsletter open and click rates in order to ensure that audiences are engaging with the content. In January there was strong growth across all channels, and traffic and engagement on all four social media platforms and the website remain strong. The monthly newsletter routinely performs significantly over the industry averages for open and click rates, and the new B-to-C newsletters are already performing at almost double the industry average open rate. Sara Lawson can assist anyone interested in knowing more.

Partner Updates

Virginia Service Foundation

Virginia Service Foundation Chair Julie Strandlie reported that the Foundation has renewed the official agreement with Serve Virginia and VDSS which allows for reimbursement for operational expenses and for support of projects such as mini-grants and the Summit. Jennifer Williamson joined the Foundation and became the newest the VSF Board member. In other news, the Foundation received a grant of \$75,000 from the Robert B. Lantz Foundation to develop a volunteer hub and portal for the River Counties; the policy project still needs leadership support to move forward; and although a budget amendment was secured through Delegate Lopez, it did not move out of committee. The Foundation will need to work with legislators to ensure a bill is submitted with bipartisan support for the next legislative session, and Julie can be contacted for anyone interested in working on this project.

AmeriCorps

Agency representative Liz Caporelli of the AmeriCorps Mid-Atlantic Regional Office was unable to attend the Board meeting; however, a written report was provided to the Board (see attached).

Public Comment, Final Remarks, and Adjournment

Vice Chair Kimberly Luckabaugh opened the floor for any public comment, of which there were none. Julie Strandlie extended an invitation to anyone interested in observing or participating at the We the People National Finals, a competition among schools that promotes civic engagement. Kathy Spangler reported that in 211 Virginia Week took place in February, highlighting and celebrating the partnership involved in addressing challenges in the community through information and referral services. Board member Dom Rascona attended the 211 event.

Vice Chair Kim Luckabaugh stressed the importance of attendance at the next board meeting on May 22 which will need a quorum to vote on AmeriCorps grant portfolio recommendations. Kim reminded the Board of the various national service celebration events and the upcoming virtual Virginia Volunteer Summit which takes place May 14-15.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:36 p.m.

Prepared by Jae-Young Choe
Submitted by Kathy Spangler