KANSAS VOLUNTEER COMMISSION
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Commission Meeting (Virtual)
Tuesday, February 3, 2026
1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Members in Attendance: Ginger Williams, Stephanie Kupper, David Battey, Melanie Haas, Linda Hogg, Cindy Miles, Amy Pinger, Emily Riner (joined later)

Members Not in Attendance: Ben Jones, Barbara Hickert, Caroline Wims-Campbell

Ex-Officio Members in Attendance:

Ex-Officio Members Not in Attendance: Meghan Hines

Staff in Attendance: Amanda Noll, Tierney Kirtdoll, Sarah Nelson, Beth Fultz

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Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by **Ginger Williams**, who welcomed attendees to the first commissioner meeting of 2026. She noted a transition in leadership, with herself and **Stephanie Kupper** organizing the agenda and guiding the meeting. Emphasis was placed on alignment, effectiveness, and strategic direction for the year.

Commissioner Pledge

The group recited the **AmeriCorps Commissioner Pledge**, reaffirming commitment to service, community strengthening, and perseverance.

Opening Remarks

Ginger Williams acknowledged that the commission is operating in a changing and evolving environment.

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by **Tierney Kirtdoll**.

Legislative Engagement Discussion

- **Emily Riner** shared she cannot attend an upcoming legislative event due to a work commitment.
- She offered to:
  - Reach out to legislators via email, text, or phone
  - Support engagement remotely

Suggestion:

- Develop a **standardized email template** for commissioners unable to attend in person.

Response:

- Ginger Williams emphasized that legislative engagement should be **ongoing**, not limited to a single day, and supported leveraging existing relationships.

Legislative Day & Program Recognition

- **Sarah Nelson** shared that during the upcoming **Legislative Day lunch**, commissioners will present **certificates of appreciation** to AmeriCorps programs.
- Purpose:
  - Show appreciation and recognition
  - Reinforce support for programs doing frontline work
  - Foster encouragement during challenging times
- Emphasis was placed on:
  - "Showing love" and appreciation
  - Recognizing that program staff and volunteers are doing critical fieldwork
  - Supporting both programs and Mentor Kansas Advisory Council (MKAC) members

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Collaboration & Engagement Opportunities

- Sarah Nelson proposed hosting a **joint MKAC–Commissioner meeting ("meeting of the minds")** to:
  - Increase collaboration
  - Share updates and challenges
  - Strengthen collective impact
- **Amy Pinger** noted such a meeting occurred many years ago and supported revisiting the idea.

Key Discussion Points:

- Strength in numbers is critical
- Limited funding requires strategic collaboration
- Volunteer-based programs need stronger collective support
- Importance of maximizing time and resources

Strategic Ideas & Future Planning

- Ginger Williams suggested:
  - Creating a **"volunteer think tank"**
  - Leveraging commissioners' diverse expertise
  - Exploring new approaches to sustainability for nonprofits and commissions
- General agreement to include these ideas in the **2026 roadmap**.

Communications & Follow-Ups

- Clarification was made that references to "programs" meant **member programs**.
- **Stephanie Kupper** requested:
  - A list of programs to be shared via group email
  - Commissioners send cards or messages of support where possible

Key Takeaways

- Strong focus on appreciation and recognition of programs
- Interest in deeper collaboration across MKAC and commissioners
- Need for innovative strategies amid funding and resource constraints
- Continued emphasis on relationship-building and engagement

Next Steps

- Develop:
  - Legislative outreach email template
  - Program contact list for commissioner outreach
- Plan potential:
  - MKAC–Commissioner joint meeting
  - Volunteer think tank initiative
- Prepare for Legislative Day recognition efforts

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned with closing remarks from Ginger Williams, who thanked all participants and emphasized commitment to achieving goals for 2026.