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**Kansas Volunteer Commission Meeting  
Virtual Meeting**

**April 2nd, 2024**

**Members in Attendance:** Amy Pinger, Ginger Williams, David Battey, Linn Hogg, Ben Jones, Stephanie Kupper, Cindy Miles, Emily Riner, Carolyn Campbell, Melanie Haas

**Members Not in Attendance**: Selena Eckstrom, Barbara Hickert

**Ex-Officio Members in Attendance:** Mark Stump, Daniel Cruz

**Ex-Officio Members Not in Attendance:**

**Staff in Attendance**: Jessica Dorsey, Kat Seeley, Amanda Noll, Elaine Rodriguez, Tierney Kirtdoll, Haley Matherly, Sarah Nelson

**WELCOME AND COMMISSIONER PLEDGE**

Chairwoman Amy Pinger called the meeting to order at 1:00PM. The Commissioners recited the Commissioner pledge.

**ROLL CALL OF COMMISSIONERS**

Kat Seeley led the roll call.

**ANNIVERSARIES**

Elaine Rodriguez celebrated 3 years

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF**

Kat Seeley – Administrative Specialist

**2024-2025 OPERATIONAL GRANTS**

Acknowledge Reviewers, Tierney Kirtdoll, Haley Matherly, Emily Riner, Ginger Williams, Kelli Bryne

**OPERATIONAL GRANT APPLICANTS RANKED 1-12: PRESENTED BY TIERNEY KIRTDOLL**

**#1 Boys & Girls Club of Manhattan: Focus Area: Education.**

Requested Funds $486,000 - Recommendation Full Funding

**#2 Center for Supportive Communities: Focus Area: Education, Poverty, Social Justice, Youth Development & Mentoring**

Requested Funds $166,746 - Recommendation Full Funding

**#3 Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence: Focus Area: Education**

Requested Funds $725,625 - Recommendation to reduce requested amount to $600,000.

20-21 returned half of their grant funds. $200,000 returned in the last two years.

Q: Did they have a co-grant between Manhattan and Lawrence?

A: Boys and Girls Club added on additional slots to place members in Topeka, Manhattan, Coffeyville, and Hutchinson.

**#4 Kansas Association for Conservation and Env. Education: Focus Area: Education**

Requested Funds $162,000 - Recommendation Full Funding

Site-based programming and development for teacher’s Pre-K and across state.

**#5 USD 260 Derby Public Schools – Focus Area: Education**

Requested Funds $173,745 - Recommendation to reduce requested amount to $100,00 due to unexpended funds in the years past.

Q: When programs return funds is it because recruiting or retention issues?

A: Recruitment and retention are the most common issue.

Q: Which is more of a red flag low recruitment or retention?

A: Retention is a red flag. Returned funds are mostly due to lack of recruitment. $100,000 is more than this program has been able to spend in previous years.

**#6 The Educator Academy – Focus Area: Education**

Requested Funds $107,998 - Recommendation Full Funding

They start in July, and they pay their stipend for the month of July, which is all their training out of a different pot of funds, and then they become Americorps members. They serve their year in the classroom 4 days co-teaching in the classroom and one day doing their teacher preparation coursework. At the end of their Americorps service, they also earn their teaching license. The difficulty with this program is that recruitment really can be a challenge. If they don't have that position filled in July, they won't fill that position at all, because there's no opportunity for someone to come into that program model late.

Q: Have they worked out their licensing concerns?

A: Have had some positive movement but unsure on specifics. When the teachers who are currently serving finish, they will receive a Missouri license.

**#7 Ballard Center: Focus Area: Poverty**

Requested Funds $107,999 - Recommendation Full Funding

Last year was a planning grant year for this program.

**#8 Wichita State University: Focus Area: Education, Poverty, Youth Development & Mentoring**

Requested Funds $278,219 – Recommendation Full Funding.

Internal concerns with program model. Working to bring more focus back to their model. They have great success with retention and recruitment which is why we recommend full funding.

**#9 Emporia State University: Focus Area: Education**

Requested Funds $131,413 - Recommendation Full Funding

**#10 Immunize Kansas Coalition: Focus Area: Poverty**

Requested Funds $156,600 - Recommendation to reduce requested amount to $81,000.

Immunize Kansas Coalition is currently a planning grant. They have written an operational grant that scored towards the bottom of the ranking. Lack of staffing or member support for all the areas that they were wanting to address. We did think that the number of members they wanted to start with, which was 7, was too high. Given the concerns about the staffing. The recommendation is to take the member number down to 3. Immunize Kansas coalition wants to disperse the members regionally, and that does create a more difficult element of support.

**#11 United Way of Kaw Valley: Focus Area: Poverty, Rural Intermediary, Social Justice.**

Requested Funds $265,482 – Recommendation NO funding due to vague of information on their application, misalignment with priority and retention issues.

Additional issues are lack of communication between Shawnee County and Douglas County, program director has moved to Texas and has unexpended funds in previous years.

**#12 Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks: Focus Area: Environmental Stewardship**

Requested Funds $227,880 - Recommendation NO funding – possible gap year to regain a clear focus.

Additional issues include lack of staffing, lack of supervision, and had previously been engaged about their misalignment to focus area.

**Comments and Voting:**

The Educator Academy in question regarding teacher licensure in Kansas vs. Missouri.

Motion to vote made by commissioner Ben Jones and seconded by commissioner Amy Pinger. Vote was all in favor 9:0. Motion passed.

**2024-2025 PLANNING GRANT**

Acknowledge Reviewers, Tierney Kirtdoll, Jessica Dorsey, Cindy Miles, KJ Abel Ruch, Cherin Russell

**PLANNING GRANT APPLICANTS**

**Wichita State University: Focus Area: Structured Literacy**

Requested Funds - $100,000 Recommendation Full Funding

Aims to enhance literacy skills of Pre-K through third grade students in the Wichita area.

Very well written application. This could be a way to continue to support Americorps members at Wichita State University, but in a different space than the operation grant which had some concerns regarding lack of focus in their program model.

**Fort Hays State University: Focus Area: Structured Literacy**

Requested Funds $100,000 – Recommendation Full Funding

Looking to address the specific challenges faced by elementary students in western Kansas to ensure that those students improve their reading skills.

They do want to operate a regional model out of the western part of the state by having hub that would serve a few school districts to provide training, not only to staff about structured literacy, but also community volunteers who could then serve as literacy coaches.

**Storytime Village: Focus Area: Education, Poverty**

Requested Funds $100,000 – Recommendation NO Funding due to program model concerns.

Aims to utilize a curriculum that was designed to prepare children in their program to enter kindergarten.

What was different about their program model is that they specifically wrote that they wanted to plan for Americorps members to serve as literacy coaches in their newly built early childhood center. The situation is that they haven't started building their new early childhood center, and we felt like to concurrently build a new structure and have a planning grant was too much. Encourage them to apply again in future.

**USD 491 Eudora: Focus Area: Education, Poverty, Rural Communities**

Requested Funds $100,000 – Recommendation Full Funding

This Program would like to have members serve in the communities by addressing issues with kindergarten readiness for the migratory students. This will be done through appropriate screening as well as through training for parents and guardians and early literacy skills.

This program had a 4 and one vote, and the person who voted no, said it was specifically because this program model does put Americorps members in the home of the migrant families and she didn't feel like the planning Grant had addressed well enough the safety concerns that obviously comes from that. Despite that we felt like it had a lot of promise and potential to grow.

**Family Scholar House: Focus Area: Education, Poverty, Rural Communities, Social Justice, Youth Development & Mentorship**

Requested Funds $100,000 – Recommendation NO funding due to lack of information on member support and supervision.

This program is looking to train Americorps members for success in postsecondary educational institutes to provide direct care in healthcare facilities.

This program model is recruiting Americorps members and then training them in a variety of health, profession, fields and allowing them to serve in rural nursing homes and hospitals across the state. That raised a lot of concerns from the review committee regarding member support and supervision, which was very lightly addressed in the application.

**Comments and Voting:**

Last year that we set aside $200,000 specifically to support structured literacy planning. It was decided that it didn't make sense to start them midway through the cycle, and that we would save those dollars to fund structured literacy Americorps planning grants that would help support the KSDE initiative around structured literacy. Wichita, State University and Fort Hays are both coming in under that very specific sort of supplemental focus area of structured literacy.

When we get our actual formula allocation. Please inform the commission what that amount is.

Thanks to the review committee.

Motion to vote made by commissioner David Battey and seconded by commissioner Ben Jones. Vote was all in favor. Motion passed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Ben Jones made a motion to adjourn the meeting.