



Arizona
Governor's
Commission
on **Service** and
Volunteerism



Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism
Wednesday, March 6, 2024, 1:30 PM

A general meeting of the Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism (GCSV) convened on March 6, 2024, notice duly given.

Members Present (11)	
Chair Donna Davis	Felipe Garcia
Robert Ashcraft	Ariel Barber
Kimberly Rice	Michael Hammett
Wynn "Chris" Gibbs	Carla Nuñez (Ex-Officio)
Helain Day	Victoria (Tori) Carlson-Foscz
Sandra Ballaster (proxy for Thomas Winkel)	
Members Absent (3)	
Tyler Butler	Donna Martin
Alex Gabaldon	
Staff and Guests (6)	
Emily Litchfield, GOYFF	Kainoa Spencer, GOYFF
Alana-Jasmene Little, GOYFF	Jessica Deery, GOYFF
Grace Kuruvilla, GOYFF	Ann Carver, GOYFF

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commission Chair Donna Davis called the Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism meeting to order at **1:32 PM** with **ten** members and **six** staff/guests present.

2. WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

With a quorum met, **Commission Chair Davis** welcomed attendees, asked the Commissioners and the [Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family \(GOYFF\)](#) staff to introduce themselves, and conducted an icebreaker with each person sharing their volunteer activities and involvement in the community.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commission Chair Davis requested a review of the **January 17, 2024** meeting minutes.

- **Commissioner Day** moved to accept the meeting minutes.
- **Commissioner Barber** seconded the motion.
- **Commissioner Carlson-Foscz** clarified that she only attended a portion of the January 14, 2024, meeting, noting being unsure of including it in the minutes.
- The motion passed with no dissenting votes at 1:45 PM.

4. BUSINESS

Commissioner Carlson-Foscz shared an overview of the [Southern Arizona Volunteer Management Association \(SAVMA\) Awards](#) held on January 18, 2024, in Tuscon. She thanked the GOYFF's AmeriCorps Director, Emily Litchfield, for her advocacy to secure the GOYFF as the event's presenting sponsor and for providing the opportunity for the Cabinet Executive Officer (CEO) Tonya Hamilton to deliver welcome remarks at the event. The SAVMA Awards is an annual event, and those interested can find additional information on the website and enroll in the mailing list to stay updated about future events, programs, and awards.

- **Commission Chair Davis** asked if organizations similar to SAVMA exist in other parts of the state.
 - **Commissioner Ashcraft** recommended [The Association for Volunteer Administration of Central Arizona](#).

Commissioner Robert Ashcraft shared the [2023-2024 Independent Sector Listening Tour](#) event hosted by [the Arizona State University \(ASU\) Lodestar Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Innovation](#). The Independent Sector is a coalition of nonprofit organizations, foundations, and corporate giving programs focused on strengthening communities.

Commissioner Ashcraft emphasized the importance of the presence of the Commission, the Governor's Office, and AmeriCorps Director Emily Litchfield at the event, showcasing the state's investment in volunteerism. Arizona was one of ten in-person stops on the State Listening Tour, with one virtual session coming up on March 20, 2024; individuals interested in attending can register [here](#). The ASU Lodestar Center will release stories soon, sharing the voices and thoughts from Arizona. There was an emphasis on rural work and what resources individuals and organizations need to improve the well-being of communities through the lens of the nonprofit philanthropic sector.

- **Emily Litchfield** added [Dr. Akilah Watkins](#), president and CEO of [Independent Sector](#), noted the diversity of the Arizona event compared to other listening sessions, including various ages, ethnicities, and communities.
- **Commissioner Ashcraft** reaffirmed **Emily Litchfield's** comment about the diversity in the room and added he assumed this was the case in other states, which may not always be true.
- **Commissioner Carlson-Foszcz** asked **Commissioner Ashcraft** what he thought the key ingredient was to ensure the representation of various voices and experiences in conversations.
- **Commissioner Ashcraft** responded that intentionally distributing invitations is essential, but also not resting on laurels; constantly re-evaluating who might be missing from the room and how to get invitations to those individuals or communities.
- **Commissioner Ashcraft** also shared the 'fish bowl' discussion technique used during the Listening Tour and wondered if this might be used at the Arizona Summit on Volunteerism and Civic Engagement, noting that this could be a breakout session. **Emily Litchfield** added that a feeling of safety needs to be built among the group so that individuals feel comfortable participating or sharing.

Emily Litchfield, the GOYFF AmeriCorps Director, provided news regarding a funding opportunity related to Youth Service Initiatives. [America's Service Commissions \(ASC\)](#), formally known as the Association of State Service Commissions, released a \$30,000 funding opportunity in partnership with the [Mott Foundation](#) called Deepening Youth Service. Only open to state service commissions, this funding focuses on building capacity for youth service and service-learning in the state. The application will be for research, creating a contacts database, and building a Workgroup from the Service and Volunteerism Commission to bring together and build a regionalized Global Youth Service Day project for April 2025. An announcement about notifications for the selection of funding will be at the end of March 2024.

Commission Chair Davis revisited the topic from the January 17 meeting regarding expanding the Commission's work to include volunteerism and service beyond AmeriCorps.

- **Commissioner Gibbs** restated the desire to embrace other service-focused organizations available throughout the state besides AmeriCorps through training on leadership or recruitment/retention, an addition to existing conferences, and the best course of action to link AmeriCorps with existing groups such as veterans, scouts, and civic groups.
- **Commissioner Day** asked Commissioner Gibbs if creating a bridge between service enterprises and organizations and capacity building was the desired outcome. Is he interested in piloting coordination with volunteer groups with an existing organized structure and bridging beyond that as a second step?
- **Emily Litchfield** encouraged Commissioners that this is an open brainstorming discussion; any ideas can be circled back to and assessed later.
- **Commissioner Day** suggested adding schools to understand better the purpose and motivation behind their youth engaging in service learning. It would create a fantastic pipeline for long-term engagement in community service.
- **Commissioner Garcia** noticed an opportunity for Commissioners to tap into their networks and replicate ASC's format of having a phone book of service commissions at a state level. Having a streamlined list of relevant contacts can help people connect to opportunities who may not know where to start, and having the Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism as the nexus of service here in Arizona.
- **Commission Chair Davis** suggested inviting groups to present to the Commission about what the organization is doing and what their membership looks like to begin establishing that relationship between the Commission and said organizations.
- **Commissioner Ashcraft** pointed out that there is a decline in membership, mostly in civic organizations; members are aging out, and it's essential to engage youth.

- **Commissioner Rice** stated that the decline in membership-based volunteerism has not inhibited volunteerism broadly but rather, informal volunteerism. Group membership does not indicate that volunteerism is falling by the wayside; it is transitioning and taking a different shape, meaning the Commission should consider adjusting to and understanding that shape.
- **Commissioner Garcia** noticed that given the political climate, young people on social media engage in activism-based volunteerism and political involvement. He suggested emphasizing how service makes a tangible change to engage more people in volunteerism.
- **Commissioner Barber** relayed her experience with the [Boys & Girls Club of the Valley](#), explaining how the organization had a structured program that actively trains young people to recognize and address needs in their communities through service.
- **Emily Litchfield** noted **Commissioner Barber's** comment connects to the latest AmeriCorps initiative - [Bridge Building and Fostering Civic Engagement](#), adding the [Vitalyst Health Foundation](#) spoke about civic engagement as a [Social Determinant of Health](#).
- **Commissioner Rice** recommended creating a map of Arizona with dots to represent home bases and satellite campuses of volunteer organizations to visually provide information about how individuals could be involved in service. There is no central location for information about volunteer opportunities in Arizona.
- **Commissioner Nuñez** stated this discussion aligns with the [Volunteer Generation Fund](#), a grant opportunity designed to increase volunteer recruitment and retention, helping organizations structure their programs by increasing volunteer management practices and building community connections.
 - **Commissioner Day** suggested utilizing a portion of this funding to provide scholarships that help organizations become service enterprise accredited.
 - **Emily Litchfield** added the Volunteer Generation Fund supported the [Service Enterprise Initiative \(SEI\)](#) pilot for its first three years.
- **Commission Chair Davis** asked how many times the Governor's Office has attempted to capture volunteer opportunities on a website.
 - **Emily Litchfield** responded it has come up as a topic of conversation but has never moved into implementation due to logistical considerations.
- **Commissioner Ashcraft** referenced using artificial intelligence (AI) in the software design.
- **Commissioner Hammett** added that AI tools can help keep systems running to connect people according to needs, desires, and skill sets. It would be worth considering a statewide branding strategy from the Governor's perspective, including rural areas and larger cities, as it would be a long-term focus area.
- **Commissioner Day** emphasized the importance of clarifying the purpose behind each new idea, specifically questioning the explicit purpose of a proposed platform. She suggested that there could be multiple phases. First, a preliminary step that involves creating a map, as suggested by **Commissioner Rice**, to illustrate the options for volunteerism in Arizona. The second is a more in-depth step of providing opportunity listings or data collection using the platform as a marketing tool for Arizona that also guides people towards engaging with hands-on volunteer opportunities and allowing individuals to explore there.
- **Commissioner Day** added that the initiative could tap into the corporate sector of social responsibility campaigns.
- **Commission Chair Davis** reminded members of the initial question, which asks about the primary purpose of engagement and what the different parties could accomplish.
- **Commissioner Day** asked **Commissioner Gibbs** if the discussion satisfies the direction of what he hoped for the topic of expanding volunteerism.
 - **Commissioner Gibbs** commended the topic of spreading volunteerism throughout the state, as there is a responsibility to help people be able to volunteer and serve; the next contribution is putting these actions forward.
- **Commission Chair Davis** suggested the idea of measuring what service is in the state, as there could be a lot that is unknown.
- **Commissioner Rice** suggested a link to a survey form housed on a website where people could register and provide further information about their organization that would populate into an Excel spreadsheet, contributing to a geographical information system, adding it could be a great project for a student organization.
- **Commissioner Garcia** recommended collaborating with [211 Arizona](#) to piggyback off the platform so there is no need to reinvent the wheel and upkeep the administrative side.

- **Emily Litchfield** remembers a scenario where the Commission previously partnered with 211 Arizona as part of the [Arizona Centennial](#) celebration, having individuals commit 100 hours of service to honor the event and track those on 211 Arizona.
- **Commission Chair Davis** suggested outreach to 211 Arizona Leadership and adding them to the agenda for the next meeting.
- **Emily Litchfield** stated that she will make this an action item leading to the next meeting and possibly reach out to the [Center for the Future of Arizona](#) and Vitalyst Health Foundation to see if organization representatives would be interested in presenting on civic health/engagement and the intersection of service and volunteerism and community activism. Lastly, she will create a document outlining the above suggestions and request Commissioners to rank them from easiest to achieve to requiring more legwork.
- **Commissioner Hammett** highlighted that the discussed initiatives could serve a dual purpose by enhancing state-wide communication and establishing Arizona as a state of service, stressing the importance of approaching this with a deliberate concept and ensuring sustainability, such as with the suitable attention or technology that could effectively fulfill both roles.
- **Commissioner Carlson-Foscuz** commented on having a vision that will help propel this initiative forward and how the state could benefit.
- **Commissioner Ashcraft** suggested the upcoming Arizona Summit could be an opportunity for focus groups about engagement and volunteerism.
 - **Commission Chair Davis** agreed, suggesting a panel of people from various fraternal organizations like the Lions Club, but also emphasized the importance of involving the faith community.
 - **Commissioner Ashcraft** responded that there is an extensive taxonomy on how organizations are categorized and offered someone from his office may be available to do some research.

5. UPDATES

Emily Litchfield, the GOYFF AmeriCorps Director, provided updates regarding the AmeriCorps State and National programs that just finished the second quarter of the fiscal year 2023-2024. Across all programs, there is an average enrollment of 68.72% and a retention rate of 95.5%; programs have robust plans to recruit for the summer cohort. Member benefits have improved from comprehensive training and mentoring opportunities to professional development and college credits in some cases.

The [AmeriCorps State Formula Request for Grant Reimbursement](#) is open for applications until March 20, 2024. She thanked the Commissioners who volunteered for or recommended grant reviewers. The thoughtfulness put into having an evaluating committee from different geographic areas and content-area experts is appreciated. Commissioners must vote on the Formula application package for submission to the federal agency at the next meeting. To complete this task, all Commissioners must complete the conflict of interest training and send information of completion to Emily before the next meeting on May 8.

[AmeriCorps Week](#) starts on Sunday, March 10, and runs through Saturday, March 16, and the GOYFF will conduct a social media campaign across platforms. The Director of AmeriCorps State and National from the federal agency is visiting Flagstaff to see the [Arizona Climate Resilience Corps](#) at the Northern Arizona University (NAU) and the [Arizona Conservation Corps](#). Lastly, the Arizona Media Foundation is building two new public service announcements (PSAs) and digital content launching in April. These new PSAs will highlight 30 years of AmeriCorps in Arizona. Last year, the campaign was very successful, with 18,500 plays over five months and a fourteen-to-one return on investment, generating over \$1.5 million of in-kind funding for the Commission.

Kainoa Spenser, the GOYFF Service and Volunteerism Specialist, updated on the [Governor's Youth Commission \(GYC\)](#). In January and February 2024, Commissioners completed 1,051 service hours to their communities and leveraged an additional 3,488 hours from friends and families. He shared it has been more challenging for rural communities to access nonprofits that provide many youth opportunities to volunteer. One of the Commissioners has a nonprofit that connects youth with hybrid, in-person, or online volunteer opportunities, which has helped some of the Commissioners in rural communities. March has been a busy month with implementing the Workgroup project plans. The Mental Health Workgroup completed an event last week (March 2, 2024) in partnership with the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) at [Paradise Valley Community College \(PVCC\)](#) with over 200 attendees; later this month, they will participate in the Festival of Tales at PVCC. This Sunday (March 10, 2024), the Education Workgroup will host a webinar on postsecondary education and have speakers who are first-year college students discuss their perspectives on college readiness. The Substance Abuse Workgroup will have an

event on March 23, 2024, with the [Maricopa County Department of Public Health Youth Advisory Council](#). The Domestic Violence Workgroup will partner with [Bloom365](#) at [Estrella Mountain Community College](#) on March 30, 2024, to deliver a curriculum on healthy relationships and teen dating violence. The GOYFF will host Commissioners at the Capitol for their Quarter 4 meeting, which aligns with [Global Youth Service Day](#). The 2024-2025 GYC applications will launch in a few weeks.

Commissioner Ashcraft discussed updates on the SEI. The group is working on promoting the initiative through videos and modes other than oral communication. Additionally, they are working to renew the accreditation of the early organizations that originally participated when GOYFF housed the SEI.

- **Commissioner Day** asked if organizations have shared their rationale for not renewing and how much it costs to renew accreditation.
- **Commissioner Ashcraft** and **Commissioner Carlson-Foszcz** shared that organizational leadership and staff capacity changes have been primary factors for not renewing their accreditation. **Commissioner Carlson-Foszcz** added that continued education could help navigate some of those bridges. Depending on the level of support an organization needs to complete the tasks, reaccreditation can cost anywhere between \$800 and \$3,500.

Carla Nuñez, Senior Portfolio Manager (SPM) from the [AmeriCorps Mountain Regional Office](#), provided an update from the federal agency. The Regional Office no longer has a physical office space in Denver; all staff are fully remote but still live in one of the seven states within the Mountain Region. In funding opportunities, the [Native Nation Opportunity](#) is open until April 5, and there is a meeting in March in Las Vegas, Nevada, to identify selected organizations. The application for the third cycle of Volunteers In Service To America (VISTA) funding is due on March 28. Applications for the National Competitive solicitation are under review, with award decisions projected for April. The [Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion](#) competitive process recently closed, applications are under review, and renewal applications for current grantees are due Monday, March 11, 2024. Next week (March 10-March 16, 2024) is AmeriCorps Week, and she is looking forward to the Director of AmeriCorps State and National visit.

6. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING

Commissioner Chair Davis stated the next Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism will convene on Wednesday, May 8, 2024, at 1:30 PM. She requested agenda item suggestions for the upcoming meeting.

- **Commissioner Garcia** suggested discussing an update to the Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism logo and revisiting the mission and vision statements.
- **Emily Litchfield** responded that she would look into the logistics of adjusting the logo.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Gibbs motioned for adjournment of the meeting. **Commissioner Garcia** seconded the motion. The motion passed without dissenting votes, and the meeting adjourned at **3:19 PM**.

Dated the 7th day of March 2024
Governor's Commission on Service and Volunteerism
Respectfully Submitted By:
Alana-Jasmene Little
GOYFF AmeriCorps Program Administrator