

**Corporation for National and Community Service**  
**Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting**  
**April 22, 2016**  
**11:06 a.m. – 12:31 p.m., ET**

The Board of Directors for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) convened in Washington, DC. The following members of the Board were present:

Shamina Singh, Chair

Dean Reuter, Vice Chair

Rick Christman

Mona Dixon

Victoria Hughes

Eric Liu (by telephone)

**Chair's Opening Remarks**

Board Chair Shamina Singh called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees to the CNCS's new headquarters building. She welcomed all of her fellow board members, and remarked on the diversity and depth of their experience.

Ms. Singh thanked the CNCS staff at headquarters and around the country for their commitment, hard work, and professionalism during a busy time. She also expressed her appreciation to the dedicated staff members and volunteers who are part of the national service and social innovation community.

**Chair Briefing on the Retreat**

Ms. Singh briefed the public on the activities of the Board the prior day during a site visit to Leckie Elementary School. The school is one of more than 50,000 locations across the country where CNCS resources are at work. At Leckie, the Board had the opportunity to see AmeriCorps members in action and participate in a round table with the principal, teachers, parents, and AmeriCorps members who serve at the school with CNCS grantees City Year and FoodCorps. Ms. Singh explained how the site visit was a wonderful opportunity for the Board to see the great work that CNCS funds first hand.

Ms. Singh said that after the Board came back from that school visit, they continued with a wide range of discussions and updates. Ms. Singh then called upon the CEO, Ms. Wendy Spencer, to present to the Board.

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**Chief Executive Officer's Report**

Chief Executive Officer Wendy Spencer thanked Ms. Singh and commented that CNCS was very fortunate to have the Board's expertise guiding CNCS. As she travels the country, she continues to be impressed by the commitment and the accomplishments of AmeriCorps members, Senior Corps volunteers, the Social Innovation Fund programs, and the CNCS programs through the state governors' commissions with which CNCS works very closely.

She then reported to the Board and public as follows:

- She reminded the Board that when they met at the last Board meeting in December 2015, CNCS had just received notice of the bipartisan agreement of the fiscal year 2016 omnibus spending bill. The bill had provided \$1.1 billion for CNCS and its programs, a \$40 million increase over the previous year and the second highest appropriation ever for CNCS. In a tough budget climate when cuts were initially proposed, Congress in a bipartisan way not only maintained but increased funding for CNCS. That result was a testament to the hard work performed by our programs and partners and volunteers and the critical role national service plays in communities. It was also the culmination of intensive efforts over the past few years to demonstrate our impact and explain why service matters.
- Last month she testified on the CNCS budget before the House Labor and HHS Education Appropriations Subcommittee, led by Chairman Tom Cole of Oklahoma. It had been 16 years since a CEO of CNCS had testified before this Subcommittee. The President's Budget would support 88,400 AmeriCorps members, including summer positions for disconnected youth and an expansion of Resilience AmeriCorps. It would also invest in promising approaches to improve the lives of low-income individuals through the Social Innovation Fund. The President's Budget focuses on competitive grantmaking that prioritizes evidence-based models and maximizes the return on federal investment.
- Ms. Spencer briefed the Subcommittee that for the first time in CNCS history, local support has exceeded the federal appropriations used to fund the agency. Last year, CNCS grantees documented \$1.26 billion in private funding at the local level to augment and stretch the federal appropriation. This investment comes from a number of name-brand companies like Google, Microsoft, Walmart, Home Depot, Target, Comcast, and others. This local investment reflects the confidence these and other supporters have in CNCS programs and the great impact these programs have in the community.
- On April 5, 2016, CNCS supported the fourth annual Mayor, County, and Tribal Day of Recognition for National Service. On that day, 3,539 officials from across the country representing 178 million Americans – over half of the country's population – came together in a bipartisan fashion to support national service. Ms. Spencer remarked that the agency has not been able to find another issue where mayors and local officials unite around a single issue—that service is great for America.

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- Recognizing how important it is for Congress to understand the value of CNCS's programs, CNCS staff continues to meet regularly with members of Congress and their staff to explain how national service is a smart, cost-effective strategy that expands economic opportunity and solves problems at the very local level.
- Ms. Spencer explained all that CNCS was doing in the area of disaster response. In January, CNCS deployed 140 AmeriCorps disaster response team members to respond to recent floods in the Missouri. Following a visit to the St. Louis area, Ms. Spencer reported how well the national service participants were supporting the local population and coordinating with emergency management personnel. In March, CNCS deployed 470 national service participants to Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Arkansas in support of recovery from devastating storms in that area. AmeriCorps NCCC and AmeriCorps FEMA Corps members were mucking and gutting flooded homes and clearing debris. Senior Corps volunteers were helping to manage and distribute donations and organize volunteers.
- To better prepare communities for disasters, CNCS is launched the Resilience AmeriCorps initiative to help state, city, county, and non-profit leaders plan for and implement strategies to become more resilient to the impacts of extreme weather and natural disasters. This partnership, initially launched with Cities of Service, the Rockefeller Foundation, and NOAA, as well as with other federal agencies, is off to a great start. Resilience AmeriCorps is operating in 10 cities now; at least 14 more locations will be coming soon. The President's Budget requested additional funds to add another 175 Resilience AmeriCorps positions.
- In Flint, Michigan, CNCS currently has 120 AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers engaged in the response operation in Flint. These national service participants are educating residents on using water filters, installing water filters in some cases, providing information on healthcare and nutrition, managing volunteers and donations, and connecting residents to other services. CNCS has committed additional resources including an additional 90 AmeriCorps members over the next three years, including AmeriCorps NCCC teams and Flint Urban Safety Corps members.
- In addition to significantly expanding AmeriCorps, the agency's 2016 appropriation gave CNCS the authority to increase the support to state service commissions for providing training and technical assistance funding to national service programs. CNCS is providing \$5.8 million in grants to support state commissions in providing training to their grantees in key areas such as performance measurement, monitoring, evaluation, and compliance. The funding is also being used to support the highly successful regional training conferences for over 2,000 grantee staff. The conferences address important issues like compliance, recruiting, and how to build stronger programs.
- The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) continues to fund and develop evidence-based solutions to long-standing issues like chronic unemployment, systemic homelessness, and mental health problems. Using federal funding as the seed, the SIF structure leverages more private, non-

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federal funding than federal funding to identify evidence-based solutions that work at the local level. Over the five year history of that successful program, nearly \$900 million has been provided in federal and private funds, the majority from private sources. The Social Innovation Fund has served 630,000 people since it started, has 89 evaluations ongoing to test the effectiveness of various models, and has spurred 42 Pay for Success projects to date to test innovative programs and scale others with evidence.

- Ms. Spencer briefed the Board and members of the public on the wonderful things being accomplished by Senior Corps, the Foster Grandparents Program and the great effect they are having in our schools. She also briefed the Board on the work that CNCS is doing for veterans and military families, especially easing veterans' transition back to civilian life by recruiting them for volunteering in AmeriCorps or Senior Corps.
- Ms. Spencer commented on the excellent work being done through the Operation AmeriCorps initiative, where nearly 400 AmeriCorps members are serving in 10 communities to address pressing community problems. For instance, in East St. Louis, Illinois, thanks to the support AmeriCorps members provide to middle and high school students, the supported students have had zero suspensions so far this school year.
- On the My Brother's Keeper initiative, CNCS supported the White House launch of [www.mentor.gov](http://www.mentor.gov), a new website that promotes mentoring and includes a mentor connection search engine developed by the CNCS's partner, MENTOR: the National Mentoring Partnership. CNCS funds a substantial number of positions involving mentoring, and Ms. Spencer noted the strong evidence on how mentoring supports good outcomes like lower school absenteeism, less drug and alcohol abuse, and improved college attendance.
- Ms. Spencer also updated the Board on CNCS's Employers of National Service initiative, which was launched at the White House during the AmeriCorps 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. There are currently 386 employers across the country, representing 1.8 million jobs, who recruit alumni from AmeriCorps and the Peace Corps for jobs. The initiative's broad support from private employers, city and state governments, universities, and nonprofits affirms the versatility and value of national service participants.
- Ms. Spencer concluded her report to the Board by commenting on the CNCS commitment to invest resources with the highest level of accountability to maximize the use of taxpayer dollars. CNCS is committed to improving internal controls, oversight, and monitoring. CNCS just hired, for the first time, a Chief Risk Officer. The field continues to focus on performing the important criminal history checks on time, every time, and CNCS has helped make that process easier and clearer. CNCS has added an FBI channeler so that all grantees can have access to a national fingerprint-based check.
- Ms. Spencer closed by noting that this is an important moment for national service. Increased funding, support from partners and the private sector, strong programs delivering

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great results, and research that shows that funding for our programs is popular – all of this reflects that this is a turning point for national service and that our programs are providing solutions to communities.

**Guest Speakers**

**Remarks by David Paine**

David Paine is the co-founder and president of the national nonprofit My Good Deed, which annually organizes the 9/11 National Day of Service. He leads a coalition of 25 prominent nonprofits that are preparing to launch Tomorrow Together, a five-year global initiative to promote unity and empathy among young people.

Mr. Paine told the Board and those in attendance about a project that he and Lisa will be doing together, and shared the plans for this year's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11. He co-founded the concept of the 9/11 Day of Service together with a good friend, Jay Winnick, who had lost his brother in the 9/11 attacks. Mr. Paine stated that they are organizing an initiative called Tomorrow Together. One of the goals is to get 35 million people to serve on 9/11. The idea is to get 9/11 to become a day of unity and diversity as well as a day of service.

**Remarks by Lisa Ryerson**

Lisa Ryerson is the president of the AARP Foundation, AARP's affiliated nonprofit arm. Lisa sets the Foundation's strategic direction and leads its social impact initiatives.

Ms. Ryerson told the Board that the AARP Foundation works with AmeriCorps and Senior Corps. They are the proud recipients of two Social Innovation Fund grants. The Foundation works on the persistent social problems that low-income, vulnerable older adults face every day. These include hunger, housing, income, and social isolation. Last year on 9/11, hundreds of AmeriCorps volunteers worked with the Foundation and the Capital Area Food Bank to do one of the largest meal packing events to ever occur on the National Mall. A team of over 4,000 volunteers packed 1.15 million meals in one day. This year, working with My Good Deed, the goal is to package 1.5 million meals for veterans, first responders, and hungry seniors here in the nation's capital.

**Remarks by Eric Li**

High-school student Eric Li is one of the co-founders of We Care Act, which supports disaster relief and engages youth around the world to help others in need. Eric spoke about the ethic of service and what inspired him to start a nonprofit.

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**Remarks by Cheryl Christmas**

Ms. Christmas represents the Foster Grandparent program in the District of Columbia. She urged the Board and CNCS to reach out to the National Charter Schools Board and to the National Alliance of Public Schools to increase the awareness and valuable role of the Foster Grandparent Program. She also suggested providing training funds to give Foster Grandparents digital literacy skills that they lack, to help pass that knowledge along to the students they support.

**Remarks by Steve Culbertson**

Steve Culbertson, the President and CEO of Youth Service America, spoke about the value of national service. Mr. Culbertson has been the CEO for 20 years, and his organization was one of the original architects of AmeriCorps in the early 1990s. The organization works in 125 countries engaging young people in service. Mr. Culbertson credited the September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance and the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service as catalysts for introducing Americans to service in a way that would not be possible without CNCS funding. For instance, CNCS grants generate substantial local investment that helped launch a program aimed at increasing students serving during the semester.