

Corporation for National and Community Service
Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
September 7, 2017
3:15 p.m. ET

The Board of Directors for the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) convened in Washington, DC on September 7, 2017. The following members were present:

Victoria Hughes, Chair

Dean Reuter

Mona Dixon

Eric Liu

Rick Christman (by telephone)

Chair's Opening Remarks

Board Chair Victoria Hughes called the meeting to order and welcomed fellow Board members Dean Reuter, Eric Liu, and Mona Dixon. Rick Christman participated by telephone. Vice Chair Shamina Singh was unable to join the meeting, as she was on international travel.

Ms. Hughes thanked the Board members for continuing to provide their time, insights, and expertise to the agency. She thanked the dedicated and hardworking CNCS staff for their excellent work supporting and overseeing the thousands of national service grantees that engage millions of citizens in service across the country. Service has become even more important in the last two weeks since Hurricane Harvey left devastation in its wake as it struck southeastern Texas as a Category 4 hurricane. Over 100,000 homes were damaged. She noted that CNCS has an outstanding record, and an important role to play, in disaster response and recovery. Together with other federal resources and employees, and under the strong leadership of President Trump

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and his team, CNCS is already working with partners to provide critical support to disaster survivors in mass care, sheltering, and volunteer coordination. The CNCS role will only grow as the years-long rebuilding process begins. Just as we saw with Katrina, national service members will be there years later, long after the cameras have gone. Ms. Hughes also noted that as the Board meeting was occurring, Hurricane Irma – the strongest hurricane ever recorded in the Atlantic Ocean – was devastating the Caribbean and could strike Florida the following weekend. It hit Puerto Rico the previous day as a Category 5 hurricane, the worst storm in Puerto Rico since 1928. Our thoughts and prayers are with those suffering from Harvey and with Irma.

Ms. Hughes previewed the meeting’s agenda: she would summarize the Board retreat and share some exciting news about the Board officers. Acting CEO Kim Mansaray would provide her CEO update, followed by a report from the Acting Director of NCCC, Gina Cross. The meeting would then be opened for public comments. Ms. Hughes noted that the Board had already approved the minutes for the May 2017 Board meeting.

Ms. Hughes recognized Dean Reuter, whose term would expire the following week, for his dedication and contributions on the CNCS Board. Since joining the Board in 2015, he had provided excellent insights, advice, and guidance as a member and as Vice Chair. His prior service included being in the CNCS Office of the Inspector General and in the Legal Services Corporation. He was also the general counsel of the Federalist Society. The other Board members echoed the Chair’s comments. Mr. Reuter emphasized how much he appreciated the

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opportunity to work with his fellow Board members and the dedicated and hardworking staff of the agency.

Ms. Hughes then recognized several of the new Administration's appointees to CNCS. She first recognized the Director of Senior Corps, Deborah Cox Roush, who will lead the Foster Grandparent, Senior Companion, and the RSVP programs that successfully engage 245,000 older Americans each year in service to meet pressing local needs. Ms. Cox Roush has more than 30 years of professional experience in management, events, advocacy, and volunteer coordination. Most recently she served as the Assistant Director of Public Events, Volunteer Coordinator for the 58th Presidential Inaugural Committee and as Special Assistant to the Secretary at the U.S. Department of Education. She has a long history of involvement with community, non-profit, and philanthropic causes.

Ms. Hughes then recognized Chester Spellman, the new Director of AmeriCorps State and National. He was for five years the executive director of Volunteer Florida and brings extensive experience, knowledge, and leadership in the national service and non-profit sectors. At Volunteer Florida, he oversaw more than \$32 million in annual funds supporting AmeriCorps and other volunteer programs and led the state-wide coordination of volunteers and donations for disasters.

Ms. Hughes next shared important news about the fiscal year 2018 budget: the day before the Board meeting, the Senate Labor HHS Education Appropriation Subcommittee passed their

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version of the FY 2018 Labor HHS Education Appropriation Bill. The bill included level funding for all AmeriCorps and Senior Corps programs for FY 2017. In his opening statement the previous day, Subcommittee Chair Roy Blunt said the Subcommittee maintains critical funding for key programs that benefit every state, listing AmeriCorps as one of those key programs. The Senate action follows the House Appropriations Committee, which passed level funding for FY 2018 earlier this summer. Ms. Hughes observed that while the final outcome is still uncertain, these markups show strong bipartisan support for the work of CNCS and its grantees.

Report on the Board's Retreat

Ms. Hughes reported that the Board had a very productive retreat. It started with a report from Acting CEO Kim Mansaray, who presented material on recent accomplishments, operations, personnel updates, and upcoming opportunities. The Board then discussed Board terms and governance. The Board is hopeful that the White House will nominate additional people to serve on the Board and that Congress will move these nominations forward quickly once they are presented.

The Board then held a discussion of agency operations, budget, risk management, and steps to be more effective, efficient, and accountable. Chief Operating Officer Jeff Page, Chief Financial Officer Bob McCarty, Chief Grants Officer Dana Bourne, and Chief Risk Officer Lori Giblin participated in this discussion. Ms. Hughes complimented those leaders and their teams for the work they're doing. While perhaps not glamorous, the work is absolutely essential to the smooth

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functioning of the agency and the stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Ensuring that taxpayer dollars are properly and effectively spent is a key priority of the Board of Directors, and the Board appreciates how CNCS is always looking for ways to strengthen and monitor risk management and accountability.

The Board then heard from Inspector General Deborah Jeffrey. Ms. Hughes thanked the IG and her team for working closely with the agency to strengthen operations and accountability. The Board ended the retreat by talking with the White House appointees, which, Ms. Hughes noted, was enjoyable and valuable. The conversation with these excellent appointees reinforced one of Ms. Hughes' priorities as Chair: to do a better job of showing how CNCS is advancing some of the goals and priorities of the Trump Administration. Ms. Hughes provided four examples from the many ways this is happening.

The first example is workforce development and apprenticeships. There are six million job openings in the United States today, the highest number in history. She said that the barrier to filling these jobs is a mismatch between available positions and prospective employees' job skills. The Trump Administration is working to close that gap. National service and volunteering are pathways to employment that help close the skills gap. AmeriCorps members earn while they learn, gaining valuable career skills and experience to help them get jobs. The skills they learn are both specific to their service and general skills of leadership and problem-solving that all employers look for. Eighty percent of alumni say AmeriCorps benefited their career paths.

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The second example is reform and strengthening in education. The Trump Administration has prioritized school choice, career and technical education, college affordability, and other initiatives to strengthen education outcomes. CNCS advances these goals by engaging nearly 90,000 teachers, tutors, and mentors to help at-risk students stay in school, graduate on time, and prepare for college or a career. Members serve in nearly 12,000 schools, including one in four low-performing schools and more than 720 charter schools. National service is also addressing the student debt crisis – AmeriCorps members have earned \$3.3 billion in education awards to pay for college or technical school or re-pay student loans.

The third example is efforts to combat the opioid crisis. President Trump is committed to battling the substance abuse epidemic and has established the President’s Commission to find a better way for the federal government to treat and protect the American people from this serious problem. CNCS has significantly increased its investment in opioid abuse prevention, education, and recovery programs.

The fourth example of ways CNCS promotes the Trump Administration’s initiatives is revitalizing cities. CNCS works with thousands of mayors, police departments, and local nonprofits to reduce crime, rebuild housing, remove blight, mentor at-risk youth, and expand economic opportunity for people living in urban areas. CNCS is in a strong position to help and is eager to work with the Trump Administration and Congress to meet national and local needs, expand opportunity, bolster civil society, and unite communities.

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Ms. Hughes closed by giving a big thank you to Acting CEO Kim Mansaray and her senior team at CNCS. She also thanked the CNCS staff at headquarters, on the NCCC campuses, and in the state offices around the country. She thanked everyone for their continued dedication and focus on the important matters they are working on for the country. Lastly, she thanked the dedicated staff members and volunteers who are working in the 50,000 service locations around the country. She recognized all those in AmeriCorps, including NCCC and VISTA; the Senior Corps, including Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and RSVP; the Social Innovation Fund; and our vital partners at the state service commissions. Ms. Hughes then invited Acting CEO Kim Mansaray to give her report.

The Acting Chief Executive Officer's Report

Ms. Mansaray reported to the Board and public as follows:

- The big story at the moment was the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey and the response to this disaster, and the pending arrival of Irma. The CNCS Disaster Service Unit began working before Hurricane Harvey made landfall to position our resources and provide assistance to the people of Houston and the Gulf Coast. Hundreds of AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers have already deployed to the region in response to this disaster. As with Hurricane Katrina over 10 years ago, the Harvey response will be lengthy and require our services for many years to come.
- The CNCS Disaster Services Unit is behind some of our most visible service across the nation, as it has led national service response efforts to federally-declared disasters such

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as the Deep Water Horizon oil spill, Alabama and Joplin tornados, and Hurricane Sandy, among many others.

- The spirit of service we've seen in Houston and around the Gulf is just the latest example of Americans coming together to support each other in challenging times. We are about to mark the 16th anniversary of 9/11. Congress authorized CNCS to lead the National Day of Service and Remembrance to commemorate this tragic event and remind us that service and patriotism go hand in hand to strengthen the fabric of our nation. This annual commemoration gives our nation a chance to remember the lives lost that day and the heroism of those who served.
- As Fiscal Year 2017 draws to a close, we have awarded funding to support national service programs. In June, we announced \$532 million in funding to support the service of nearly 60,000 AmeriCorps members in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. These grants will bolster national and local organizations, faith-based groups, and educational institutions, as members respond to some of the most critical challenges facing our nation. AmeriCorps is a public/private partnership that makes the most of every federal dollar we are allocated. Those funds include \$230 million in competitive grants and \$174 million for the Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards that our members receive after they complete their term of service to help them repay student loans or continue their education. An additional \$128 million will be allocated through the governor-appointed state commissions. These federal funds will be leveraged with \$642 million from the private sector, foundations, and other sources.

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- In July, CNCS announced more than \$5.3 million in Senior Corps RSVP funding that will support senior service in 50 new communities, expanding the program into previously underserved areas. These new projects will benefit from the experience and skills of more than 7,700 RSVP volunteers who will serve in schools, veterans' organizations, and disaster service initiatives. Grantees will address a variety of local issues and provide support services for disaster response, early childhood education, veterans and military families, homebound adults and caregivers, substance abuse prevention, and more.
- The Senior Corps program also made headlines this summer when new data revealed the health benefits of service for our volunteers and those they serve. We have always known that service benefits those who serve as much as those who receive service, and we are starting to see how great this impact can be. A study of the impact of Foster Grandparents and Senior Companion volunteers and the caregivers of Senior Companion clients found the volunteers reported improved health and wellbeing after just one year of service. Volunteers reported decreased anxiety and depression, decreased loneliness and social isolation, enhanced physical capacity, and higher life satisfaction. Nearly 76 percent of caregivers in the critical needs group reported that Senior Companion respite services helped them a lot with both personal time and household management. Caregivers reported a positive impact on their own health and wellbeing, as well.
- Ms. Mansaray concluded with comments on a crucial part of the mission at CNCS: the support of volunteering across the nation. State commissions are beginning to announce the next round of Volunteer Generation Fund (VGF) grants. CNCS seeks to fund

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effective approaches that expand volunteering, strengthen the capacity of volunteer connector organizations to recruit and retains skill-based volunteers, and develop strategies to use volunteers effectively to solve problems. Approximately \$3.8 million in VGF grants have been distributed to develop and support community entities to recruit, manage, and support volunteers. During Fiscal Year 2016, these grants strengthened 641 organizations by enabling them to recruit, coordinate, or support 255,000 volunteers who provided 3.4 million hours of service. It is a privilege to work with the team at CNCS as we continue to serve those who look to our programs for support. We are proud of the variety of ways our 325,000 AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers are making an impact around the nation.

Remarks by the Acting Director of AmeriCorps NCCC

Gina Cross, the Acting Director of AmeriCorps NCCC, reported that our national service response to Hurricane Harvey continues as more and more AmeriCorps and Senior Corps volunteers are called up to support a variety of relief efforts across the Gulf Coast region. CNCS is leveraging \$3,700,000 in national service resources for this disaster. Currently 534 national service participants; RSVP “RV Disaster Corps”; Senior Source; Conservation Corps from Texas, Minnesota, Iowa, and Washington State; SVP members; and NCCC and FEMA Corps members are serving.

Ms. Cross expressed tremendous appreciation to our partners, including the OneStar Foundation, FEMA, the American Red Cross, Texas Department of Emergency Management, All Hands,

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NECHAMA, and Volunteer Houston. Without their partnership, our work wouldn't be possible.

Ms. Cross also recognized the housing partners, including many local churches – too many to name – whose basements we are occupying, and the USS Lexington in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Ms. Cross then asked her colleague in Austin, Texas, Chad Stover, to report by phone on the conditions there.

Remarks by Chad Stover

Mr. Stover reported that the FEMA joint field office in Austin, Texas, is now operational. The damage in Texas is extensive – over 30 counties in Texas have been declared disaster areas and millions of people have been affected. Texas looked for us to be a national service responder for this disaster. We've been providing shelter support with our American Red Cross partners, and direct services such as mucking and gutting operations, to help thousands of homeowners do the really hard work of cleaning out their homes from flood damage, do mold remediation, and clear debris. These are some of the less glamorous things that happen after a natural disaster but are vitally important to begin the recovery process. The Joint Field Office is the coordinating body, and it's so important that CNCS continues to have a spot at the JFO. We're seeing an incredible effort by Disaster Cadre employees from throughout CNCS. They support this disaster services mission by addressing budget and procurement issues, and helping us line up important support services for our staff and our teams. We're getting tremendous support from AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, NCCC, and Senior Corps, and many other CNCS staff members. Teams are being deployed this coming weekend and through next week to continue

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helping disaster survivors throughout Texas. Mr. Stover thanked everyone for their support as they continue the mission.

Continuation Remarks by Gina Cross

Ms. Cross provided some specific examples of the efforts underway in Texas:

The Texas Conservation Corps and American Youth Works opened a volunteer reception center and have started mucking and gutting homes. The Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa have begun volunteer coordination, donations management, sandbagging, debris removal, and home repairs. The Washington Conservation Corps is serving alongside FEMA and the State of Texas on volunteer coordination and donations operations. The AmeriCorps NCCC teams are engaged across Texas with the American Red Cross in sheltering, damage assessment, mobile feeding routes, and warehouse support. FEMA Corps teams from across the country are providing disaster survivor assistance, logistics, and planning. The CNCS Disaster Cadre has deployed staff across Texas to help with all of the coordination, in addition to the work people like Chad and our colleagues in the Disaster Services Unit are doing.

As Irma is expected to make its next hit Saturday evening, there is high demand for support. We have requests from the American Red Cross for sheltering in Puerto Rico and the U. S. Virgin Islands, which have already been hit, and for preparation in Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas. Members are pre-staged for deployment as needed. About 400 members are ready to be deployed. Ms. Cross reminded listeners that life and safety is the greatest priority. All of the team members and volunteers must follow the guidance of local emergency management

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officials. In Puerto Rico, where Hurricane Irma is striking, we have a FEMA Corps team serving and sheltering in place. The team is safe and was pre-placed in the FEMA distribution center in the Caribbean. They sheltered in place there overnight, and as soon as they could get to work this morning to start distributing supplies to survivors, they were right on it. It was a tremendous opportunity for them to be in the right place at the right time.

Conclusion of the Meeting

Ms. Hughes concluded the Board meeting by thanking the members of the Board, the CNCS staff, and the members of the public for joining the Board meeting. She adjourned the meeting at 3:57 p.m.