

Nevada Department of Education

Nevada Commission on Mentoring

Friday, October 6, 2023

2:00 PM

Office	Mode	Platform
Department of Education	Teleconference/Livestream	Zoom

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION MEETING

COMMISSION MEMBER PRESENT

Karl Catarata, Chair

Katie Membreno, Vice Chair

Brigid Duffy, Commissioner

Dr. Laura Davidson, Commissioner

Raja Mourey, Commissioner

Andres Estrada, Commissioner

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT

Sarah Thomas, NDE Staff

Rose Cota, NDE Staff

Amber Reid, NDE Staff

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance, and Land Acknowledgement:

Chair Karl Catarata called the meeting to order on Friday, October 6, 2023 at 2:05 p.m.

Rose Cota, conducted a roll call. **Quorum was established** (6 Members present).

Chair Karl Catarata led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance and acknowledged the land.

2. Public Comment

Chair Karl Catarata opened the floor to public comment. There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Flexible Agenda

The Commission **acquired quorum** and therefore could vote on approval for any objective in this meeting.

Motion: To approve a flexible agenda

By: Katie Membreno

Second: Raja Mourey

Vote: Passed unanimously

4. Welcome and Introduction (Mission Statement)

Vice Chair Membreno thanked the Commissioners for attending as this was not a regular meeting, noting that there is a lot to go over regarding the grant process. The Vice Chair indicated for new Commissioners that questions, comments, concerns are welcome throughout the meeting and acknowledged that the process is new to some people, so it is important that everyone has a good understanding of how the process works.

5. Chair's Report:

Chair Karl Catarata informed the Commission that he is home sick with COVID, and apologized for attending the meeting remotely rather than in person. The Chair thanked Commissioner Estrada for his patience, noting that he knows that they are having a one-on-one soon, to which the Chair is looking forward. Chair Catarata acknowledged Commissioner Mourey's suggestion in the previous meeting regarding an orientation, and assured the Commissioner that they will be doing that over coffee once the Chair is less symptomatic. The Chair concluded by indicating that he is looking forward to NDE's Amber Reid's presentation regarding grants in today's meeting.

6. NCOM Development updates:

a. NV Mentoring Organizations - Active Contact Sheet

Vice Chair Katie Membreno indicated the importance of looking over the contact sheet as NCOM does need to work on its outreach and ensuring that grant opportunities are shared out to the entire state and not just in the south. Vice Chair Membreno asked for confirmation that this list contains the organizations to whom NCOM has reached out in the past and who applied on the last grant cycle.

Rose Cota, NDE, confirmed that this was correct, and that this list was for FY'23. Ms. Cota indicated that there were some on this list that did not meet the guidelines for the application, but that it would be viable for the Commission to reach out to them again this cycle, invite them to the workshop, and perhaps help them in filling out a successful application.

Vice Chair Katie Membreno indicated that this is an active sheet that can be updated by all Commissioners at any time, and requested at least two points of contact for each organization listed.

Commissioner Laura Davidson asked about the deadline to update this list.

Vice Chair Katie Membreno indicated that her goal is to have the list completed by the

following NCOM meeting. The Vice Chair noted that she will send the list again to all Commissioners and requested that everyone input five or so before the next meeting.

Rose Cota, NDE, asked how the list will be used.

Vice Chair Katie Membreno indicated that it will be used to invite all those listed to the workshops as well as to provide as many options as possible to reach out to the Commission prior to submitting applications in hopes of a higher success rate for the applicants.

Rose Cota questioned if the Commission would like her to include all of the people on this list along with those on the other share list in the invite to the upcoming workshop on the 12th of October.

Vice Chair Katie Membreno indicated that this would be very helpful.

Chair Karl Catarata suggested that each Commissioner be assigned three to five organizations to whom they would reach out and inform what the Commission is doing and that there is a grant cycle. The Chair noted that the Commission normally does a press release and some light outreach, but indicated the importance of doubling down on these efforts to diversify and expand things.

Commissioner Laura Davidson questioned if a press release has yet gone out, noting that it is helpful for recruiting if an original press release can be forwarded to organizations as part of the packet, which would also include a grant application and the link to sign up for the workshop.

Rose Cota indicated that the press release is still in progress and hopes that it will go out this coming week.

Chair Karl Catarata questioned if the Commission is able to get the document for the list following today's meeting so that they could begin writing in which Commissioner would be overseeing or helping with outreach to a specific organization so as not to duplicate efforts among members.

Rose Cota indicated that she would begin work on the email.

b. FY24 Technical Assistance (TA) Session

Amber Reid, NDE, explained that she is the Director of the Office of District Support Services, which is within the Student Investment Division. Ms. Reid explained that her office consists of an audit unit and a grants unit, as well as all of the state and federal school finance reporting. Ms. Reid explained that she is part of the process for all of the state education fund, state special education fund, and any sort of other state regular payments that go out outside of a sub-award agreement. Ms. Reid indicated that this is the third fiscal year in which NCOM has been provided \$25,000 in funding to award grants to entities that provide mentoring services. Ms. Reid discussed the importance of getting the sub-awards out as soon as possible,

especially during even-numbered fiscal years. Ms. Reid reminded the Commission that the state fiscal year runs on a July 1 through June 30 calendar, and is designated by the ending fiscal year calendar year, thus the current fiscal year is FY'24 as it will end on June 30, 2024. Ms. Reid explained the importance of even-numbered fiscal years, noting that expenditures from the even-numbered fiscal year are used in budget building for the coming biennium, and for this reason, the goal is to expend all funding during FY'24 because that is the amount that will be used to generate and build the budget for the 2025 legislative session, which would include the amounts allocated for grants for FY'26 and '27.

Amber Reid explained that in the past the Commission has run their own application process, to which they have a right, but noted that there are a few things that needed to be added in order to make the awards yet still be compliant with state and federal regulations. The first of these is a pre-award assessment, which is a requirement that the Office of Division Compliance reviews each applicant's information to determine the level of risk associated with receiving state public dollars and being able to expend those dollars appropriately. Ms. Reid informed the Commission that NDE does have a rubric that can be provided, along with some standard documents that could be included with the application materials, and a NOFO template that NDE uses for any competitive funding application processes facilitated at the Department level. Ms. Reid further noted that NDE would be more than happy to provide technical assistance or supports as the Commission fills out the template, which would then become the Commission's application that they would then publish and post for the potential sub-award ease. Ms. Reid indicated that this does not have to be a complicated application, noting that all of the same components previously included in the application can be dropped into the appropriate place on the NOFO template. Ms. Reid reiterated, however, that NCOM has the right to run the application process according to its own needs, but did stress that the Department has a couple of requests, including the pre-award assessment and rubric materials that would allow NDE to be compliant with its regulatory processes for managing the public dollars on behalf of the Commission. Ms. Reid further indicated that the NDE webpage includes a grant information page that provides information for upcoming competitive application opportunities, and NDE would be happy to post NCOM's grant information on that page to help spread the word. Ms. Reid explained that there is a listserv associated with that webpage so anyone interested in receiving information about funding opportunities supported by NDE would automatically get a notice that something has been added to the grant information webpage. Mr. Reid further requested, on behalf of NDE, that because the process is beginning early in the fiscal year, that NCOM make the funding determinations as soon as possible so as to avoid some of the complications that have arisen in years past with last-minute funding.

Amber Reid next provided the Commission with a review of the process of what happens following determination of who receives funding. Ms. Reid explained that the process works as follows: NCOM would notify NDE who gets the funding; NDE drops that into an allocation memo, an internal document for audit trail purposes that is used to populate the budget templates that are then sent to Rose Cota; Ms. Cota would distribute to the selected entities; each entity would then complete its budget, send it back to Ms. Cota, who would then review it to ensure that it aligns in terms of allowability; Ms. Cota would then sign off on the budget and send it to Ms. Reid's unit, where the grants analysts would review it. Ms. Reid explained that once the budget has been approved, NDE provides Ms. Cota with the budget and the copy of the general state assurances, which is a requirement for all sub-award recipients to agree to the various stipulations associated with the funding. Once NDE has had the budget approved and the general state assurance has been returned and approved, a sub-award packet is then

distributed to Ms. Cota, which includes a notice of award, the scope of work, a copy of the application, the budget, and the general state assurances. Ms. Cota would then distribute this packet to each entity as appropriate, the entities would sign and return, Ms. Cota's director would sign and remit to the student investment division for the Deputy Superintendent for Finance's signature, after which the sub-award agreement is determined fully executed, meaning that it is now in binding and in place. Ms. Reid explained that until the deputy superintendent has provided the final signature, there is no contractual agreement in place, but there is an option for NDE to issue a retroactive memo that says that funding could be reimbursed as of a specific date, even if it takes NDE time to get the sub-award in place. Ms. Reid explained that once the sub-award plackets have been signed and fully approved, Ms. Cota distributes a copy of the fully executed sub-award agreement to each entity for their records. Ms. Reid indicated that with the fully executed packet comes a template that each of the entities uses to request reimbursement for funds. Ms. Reid explained that June 30 is the hard backstop on spending and anything purchased after 11:59 pm on June 30 will not be reimbursed as it is already the start of the next fiscal year. Given that the past two funding cycles this process took place very late in the fiscal year, Ms. Reid commended the Commission for starting the process early for this fiscal year and again offered NDE's support with anything in the process that the Commission may need. Ms. Reid explained that the competitive applications need to have a scoring rubric, indicated that there are some strict parameters in terms of how the grants are collected, scored, and reviewed for funding determination, and offered to support NCOM on all of these pieces should they choose to use NDE's processes. Ms. Reid suggested that applicants be given approximately four weeks or so to submit applications. Ms. Reid explained that it is about a three-to-four-week process, at minimum, for NDE to get the sub-award packets and indicated that it can sometimes be a challenge to get them completed and to get back accurately completed information from the organizations. Ms. Reid further noted that NDE would be more than happy to host a TA session for those entities that are awarded funding to help them with completing the budgeting paperwork so that NDE can very quickly approve it. Ms. Reid reiterated that NCOM has 25,000 to grant out per fiscal year, and anything that does not get spent before June 30 cannot be reimbursed; Ms. Reid clarified that the request for reimbursement can be submitted up to 21 days after the end of the funding period, but monies must be spent by the last day of the fiscal year or anything left unspent will revert back to state general funds and cannot be re-awarded in the following fiscal year. Ms. Reid next indicated that for the next fiscal year, FY'25, applications could be run as early as spring of 2024 so that awards are already in place by July 1, allowing organizations a full 12 months to spend the funds.

Commissioner Laura Davidson thanked Ms. Reid for the information and indicated that NCOM did heed her warning following the last grant process and has created a timeline that will provide NDE a minimum of two months to get the awards out. Commissioner Davidson explained that the application closing date is scheduled for November 21, followed by the NCOM vote on December 1. Commissioner Davidson indicated her support for adding the letter of intent along with the press release, then questioned if those need to be reviewed prior to scoring or during scoring.

Amber Reid explained that NCOM does not have to review them as that is done by NDE's Office of Division Compliance. Ms. Reid indicated that if the applications are going to be posted on the Department's website, the letter of intent can be added as an attachment and clarified that although this does not necessarily trigger a press release, it does trigger an email to all people who have signed up for notifications on the listserv. Ms. Reid further indicated

that there can also be a press release, which is a separate process that would involve Rose Cota working with her director to facilitate. Ms. Reid thanked the Commission for beginning the timeline significantly earlier to make the funding available to organizations well before the end of the fiscal year and again suggested that applications be run in the spring of 2024 for FY'25 grant funding.

Commissioner Laura Davidson concurred that as soon as the first set of awards are completed, it would make sense for the Commission to relaunch the application for FY'25 funds.

Chair Karl Catarata asked if the Commission needs to begin the process in December for the spring grants.

Amber Reid clarified that the Commission could begin the process for FY'25 funds as early as it would like for distribution of funds as early as July 1, allowing organizations an entire year to spend that grant money.

Vice Chair Katie Membreno thanked Ms. Reid, indicating that this is the clearest understanding she's had of the entire grant process up to this point.

Chair Karl Catarata indicated his belief that it would save a lot of time for the Commission to let organizations know whether or not they are qualified to apply for the grant, and questioned if this is already implemented or requires a motion on the Commission's part.

Commissioner Laura Davidson indicated her belief that a motion was not necessary and that the process was well-defined enough that organizations with no positive history of grant writing would be unlikely to be eligible for the grant. As such, Commissioner Davidson indicated that a vote could be taken at the full NCOM meeting in December, after grant awards are decided.

Rose Cota concurred, noting that the process is understood and what is important at this point is that the press release be sent out. Ms. Cota indicated that she will send a reminder to Maria Sauter, Director of the Office of Student School Supports today regarding the press release. Ms. Cota further indicated that she will ensure that the application is up on the website in preparation for the upcoming workshop. Ms. Cota further indicated that she would devise a way to invite everyone on the listserv, past applicants, and anyone else forwarded to her by the Commission to the upcoming workshop. Ms. Cota reminded Commissioners that when the invite is out, Commissioners always have the ability to forward it to anyone they wish.

Commissioner Raja Mourey asked of the 16 organizations listed, how many would be receiving grants.

Rose Cota discussed the process, noting that once the applications are received, the Commission will review each applicant and use the scoring rubric. Ms. Cota indicated that the application is not limited to just these 16 but open to anyone that responds to the press release, and that as many organizations as possible will receive grant funding from NCOM.

Chair Karl Catarata added that in the last grant cycle, the Commission was able to grant six or seven applicants sub-awards, and noted that for each grant cycle, the grantees will be determined by the Commission based on qualification and eligibility. Chair Catarata explained that the subcommittee will ultimately decide on a one-one basis who will receive the grant money, and the number of grantees is determined by the availability of funds as well as eligibility.

7. Agenda Item Considerations

There were no agenda item considerations.

8. Public Comment #2

Vice Chair Katie Membreno opened the second period of public comment. There was no public comment.

9. Adjournment

Vice Chair Katie Membreno adjourned the NCOM meeting at 3:07 p.m.