



**NC Human Trafficking Commission: Appropriations Committee
Meeting
Monday, August 28th, 2023
WebEx through the NC Judicial Center / Cypress room (C1-1225)**

1:06 PM – Call to Order & Roll Call Attendance

Committee Member, Joseph Kyzer

Committee member Joseph Kyzer opened the meeting and called to order. Kathy conducted a verbal roll call to document attendance. Committee members in attendance were Amy Auth, Danielle Carman, Joseph Kyzer, Jasmine McGhee, Alex Herring, and Nancy Hagan. Also in attendance were Commission Executive Director, Christine Long, Grants Administrator, Kathy Estrada, Grants Managers and Data Manager, Kristen Howe, Jacqueline Kehinde, Ellen Chupik Smith, Ashawntee Cabello, and Courts Management Specialist, Ashley Tauscher. Members of the public were also able to view or listen to the meeting via WebEx.

1:07 PM – Ethics Statement

Approval of the Minutes

Committee Member Joseph Kyzer

Committee member Joseph thanked all in attendance and read the required ethics statement. He then stated that Kathy sent out the last two meeting minutes on Friday and we will be voting those as a block. Joseph asked if anyone had questions or comments about the minutes that were distributed Friday. Amy stated that she flagged Kathy regarding a typographical error where votes of “aye” were listed as the letter “I” versus “aye”. Joseph stated that staff will make that change, so we will add that to our motion to approve the minutes that the change will be made by staff. Voting of the minutes was done by voice vote or like sign. The minutes were passed unanimously.

1:08 PM – Meeting Agenda/16.20 Update

Kathy Estrada

Kathy stated that she will be giving updates on 16.20, 16.22, 16.23, 16.21, a Data Manager update, and a monitoring update. We are excited to say that with 16.20 we are 100% obligated. We have 15 agencies that have been approved already for 16.20A and 2 for 16.20B. The last four contracts are in DocuSign. Kathy stated that we have another disbursement list that is with finance. It might have gone out last week, but if not, it will be out this week. Big thanks to Jaqueline for getting the internal controls reporting packages sent out.

1:09 PM – 16.22 Update

Christine Long

Christine stated that for our facility improvement grants, we are in the process of reviewing quarter 4 reports right now. We still have 10 agencies that have not turned in their reports, and we sent a final notice to them

requesting they be sent in. Of the 72 awards in this section, 32 have requested an extension. We are waiting on an approval of the state budget to be able to formalize those extensions through a contract amendment. Closeout documents are being finalized and hopefully once those quarter 4 reports are approved, we will be able to move to closing out 34 agencies grants. There is 1 agency that we've talked about in every committee meeting that we're going to have to initiate noncompliance procedures with. We are working on those drafts now. In this group of 72 awards, we have 15 that will need to have site visits for different reasons before closing out. Most of those 15 are on the extension list, so we do have more time with those.

1:10 PM- 16.23 Update

Kathy Estrada

Kathy stated that for 16.23 we had a big push the last two weeks to get the remaining agencies that haven't had a complete application to submit missing/revision documents to complete the application. Thank you to Kristen and Ellen, they have managed to get 14 more awards voted on between this list and the last list which was for 9 agencies. We've been working since November to try and get these applications completed. As of right now we have 141 awards total, contingent on the vote today. Of those awards, 67 are sexual assault awards and 74 are domestic violence awards. Their hard work has gotten us a little over a million more dollars approved and obligated. Kristen and Ellen held a reporting webinar to go over the forms and make sure the agency's understood how to report, which forms to include, and answer any questions. They offered this meeting on August 9th and offered two different times. They had an amazing turnout, 93 people at the 10am session and 46 people at the 2pm session. For 16.23, even with the push, we're only about 90% obligated. We are in discussions now to figure out what to do with that remaining 10%. There will be more to come on that. Kathy stated that she included the agencies that declined funding (displayed on slides). There are three for sexual assault grant; Promise Place, Real Crisis Intervention, and Infinite Possibilities. The agencies that have declined for domestic violence grant are: UCARE, and Infinite Possibilities. As far as payments that have gone out, Kathy will be drafting another payment list based on the contracts that have been fully executed between last list and this list. We are going to try and push the agencies on this list to be done hopefully this week to get these on the Sept 1st list that she plans to put out to finance. So far, we have dispersed a little under four million dollars (3,879,945.92).

1:13 PM- 16.21 Update

Kathy Estrada

Regarding 16.21, we released the RFP on Aug 11th it is posted on the HTC website and the state procurement website formally the IPS website, now it is NC EVP website. It's available to the public, so hopefully we reach the masses since this our competitive grant. Kathy welcomed our new hire, Melony Gilles. Kathy reiterated eligibility criteria just in case anyone from the public was on, to be eligible for this 16.21 grant, you must be a nonprofit corporation. You also must be currently providing direct services to victims of human trafficking and ineligible for 16.23. We have the list that Mel will go through to make sure that everyone is vetted accordingly.

1:15 PM- Data Manager Update

Kathy Estrada

Kathy stated that we all have been busy, but she wanted to take some time to highlight what the Data Manager has been doing. Ashawntee has completed the rest of the risk assessments. She has also created tracking systems on how to report on Senate Bill 105, progress reports, and compiling all the data for the team. She is currently building the interactive schedule for our site visits, which we plan to launch in September. She's created various forms, like our travel policy form and taking over the meeting minutes. She will make that correction that was sent by Amy. Ashawntee will also be putting together the General

Assembly report coming due, we will review and send over.

1:16 PM-Monitoring Update

Kathy Estrada

Regarding monitoring, we have completed all the risk assessments for 16.23 and 16.20. For 16.23 there is only 9 agencies that scored high risk, but we are doing 15 agencies in addition to include the chunk that Christine mentioned for 16.22. For 16.20, that monitoring plan is a little different. For agencies that scored moderate and high-risk Jaqueline will complete site visits. This means that 15 of the 17 agencies will require site visits. The risk ratings can change as we do reassessments, which we'll do annually. Kathy concluded her updates for monitoring, and Joseph asked if there were any questions about the updates. Danielle stated that she had a quick question. She apologized about not being able to keep the sections numbers straight in her head. She asked about the economic assistant's grants and said we stated that we had like 3.9 million distributed if that is right? She asked is that of the total of 15 million. Kathy answered her with a "yes". Danielle asked when do those funds end. Kathy said that the on most of them, the period of performance ends, June 30th, 2024. Danielle said so there is another year to award and for the agencies to use and what's still a chunk of change left on the table. Kathy replied with "yes". Joseph stated that with his understanding, with today's vote, we will have encumbered as the total amount of funding that we'll distribute. The actual distributing is because those are just being drawn down periodically pursuant to the guidelines, we have to release the funds. Joseph asked Kathy for conformation on that statement. We have encumbered the total once we block this of what we will distribute. It's that actual distribution of the checks out is only to 3.9 million. Joseph stated that the period of performance in the contracts is through summer 2024 like Kathy said, but the reversion of the actual grant appropriation is December 2026. We did not want the performance period to run that long, but that's the reversion of the funding through ARPA. Joseph asked if there were any other questions, then asked Kathy to show what we will be voting on and talk through those.

1:19 PM- Vote Summary

Kathy Estrada

Kathy shared her screen for the Vote. She stated that there's 9 awards total to be voted on today. \$705,810 in total, 4 are for the DV funds, 5 are SA funds. For the Domestic Violence it's SAFE in Lenoir County, Alleghany Partnership for Children, REACH of Cherokee County, and Safe Haven of Person County. They are all for \$86,540 dollars. The SA grants are all for \$71,930 dollars. They are REACH of Clay County, Alleghany Partnership for Children, REACH of Cherokee County, Hannah's Place, and Safe Haven of Person County. Joseph asked Kathy to make it so that all the awards will show on the screen. He wanted the group to be able to look at it for any possible conflicts, pursuant to the conflict-of-interest statement. Joseph asked if anyone had any questions or comments about these? He stated that we will do a block vote of all of them together, all 9 awards in 1 approval. Joseph stated that we will do the vote by voice vote and like signs, if that works for the group. He then said all those in favor of approving these 9 grants for SA and DV in section 16.23, please signify by saying "aye" or like sign. There were no opposed. He then stated that the motion carries so these are approved.

1:23- PM 16.21 Update

Christine Long

Christine stated that we had planned to talk through some discussion on how to score and vote when the section 16.21 competitive applications come in. Christine shared her screen for the discussion. She stated that we have 6 committee members here, so her thoughts were to introduce this and talk in more detail in two more weeks. She stated her idea was to see if the committee wants to move forward

with any decision making. When these applications first come in, the first step will be for the grant staff here to check through them. We will have at least 2 people check each application and make sure all the requirements are met and submitted in the application. They won't be looking at the content or any of that, beyond if they attached the correct things and filled out each section. Those that do have everything would move forward into scoring. The areas shown on the screen are how Kathy and her team weighted the scoring to be. Applications are due Sept 11th, so the Grants Manager will confirm receipt of applications with each agency by email. The Grants Manager and at least one other grants staff will review each application for completeness. Those that are not complete and do not move on to scoring, Kathy will look at before agencies are notified that they will not move on to scoring because of whatever item is missing or incomplete. For scoring, Christine stated that she thinks Jasmine is the only one on this call that was here in 2018 when we scored grants at that point in time. To tell you a little about that, we had a hidden website set up and gave that the website link to Commissioners. At that point in time, all the Commissioners voted that they wanted to review the grants and score them themselves. So, a hidden website was setup that had the PDF links of each application. It was like a Google form where Commissioners would go through the application and fill out their scoring while they went. Christine stated that she cannot remember how many applications were scored, but she does remember that it was a lengthy and time-consuming process for Commissioners. Christine said she wanted to have a discussion today and see if there is a better way, or what you all may suggest with scoring. Do you feel comfortable, have the capacity to score, or potential to designate someone else? We could also open the process to any other commissioners that would like to score or invite others to be a part of the scoring process, not necessarily that they are joining the committee, but they are being asked to help score applications. We could split into smaller groups and assign so many to each group, that way you're not scoring every single one. The next slides talk about conflicts of interest and how to tackle that as well. Christine asked if anyone has any thoughts or preferences, or if anyone has done this before? Amy stated that she has not done this process before and was wondering for training purposes, there might be like 1 or 2 fake applications that we could look at and potentially have the grant staff point out things in the application that would be scored a certain way. She stated she knows one criterion that was listed was geographic reach and she was not sure exactly what that means. Are we looking geographic reach within a county, a region or within the whole state? Amy would like a little more explaining on each criterion regarding what we are looking for as well as providing examples of scenarios and how we would recommend scoring those. Christine replied to Amy's question with suggesting hosting a webinar in the next two or three weeks that shows some samples and examples of what we're looking for in each section. She said we could do some kind of training or guide that can go along with it. Jasmine stated that she must leave the meeting (1:31) but said that she didn't have anything to add in reference to the scoring. She said that it all makes sense, but the only tip she recommends is to have double monitors so that you can have your rubric and your application in 2 different screens. She found that very helpful for this process and for GCC. Nancy also had a comment. She stated that she has done a lot of the scoring and she found that if you want reliable scoring, staying consistent among the scores, the more finite and concrete we can make that rubric the better. It is a heavy lift for people who are doing their full-time jobs. Also, so sort of formal training, or like it was suggested, some sort of pilot practice or run through. Nancy said that she would be in favor of not dividing them by geographic regions. She asked if we have been getting a lot of inquires? Kathy replied with yes. Nancy said that the more specific guidance that can be given to reviewers the better. Joseph thanked Nancy. Danielle had a question. She stated that she is struggling because she has no idea what type of time commitment we are talking about. She said she has no idea how many applications we get, how long it takes to review, and it will also depend on the rubric. She stated that she is not sure if she has the time for that sort of commitment. Also, she does not have any outstanding expertise on Human

Trafficking to contribute. She proposed that we have a couple of plans in place because everyone on this call is very busy with their daily workload. Joseph thanked Danielle and let staff respond to her comments. Joseph stated that for the committee's awareness a couple of points he would like them to address is, some of that scope, how many grantees will there be, how large will the awards be, is likely dependent upon how many we gather through Sept 11 pursuant to section 16.21. The question for staff is, will that be the case? Will we need to wait and see what we get in of how many it will be, or can you speak to when we'll have more certainty of this for what we're discussing. Christine said she thinks it was a good point. We are two weeks away from the deadline of Sept 11 and it does depend a lot on how many applications we get. Christine said that what she remembers from 2018 that some were very well written and straight forward and you could move through them rather quickly. Others were not necessarily in the order that you sent them out in, or you found yourself going back and forth in the paperwork a lot. Christine stated that our committee of 11 is probably too small for the task. We have some conflict of interest like Dana Joy, who will have to abstain from any that are child advocacy centers. There may be others on the committee that have to abstain as well. It would be nice to have maybe three different teams reviewing, so you could work through those conflicts of interest. Maybe with more Commissioners joining we could get it down to a smaller number. Danielle had a question of how many reviewers you want for each proposal? Christine responded that we could brainstorm and circle back on Sept 11th with preferences and some ideas. We are willing to do whatever the committee prefers and feels like would be a better score system. She also thinks that if we were to meet again after Sept 11th, that is the day they are due, and we would have some more information put together and it would probably take a week internally here for us to do our part before they would be ready. Danielle stated that she thinks it would be helpful to think through things like how fast of a turnaround you need. Also knowing all the moving parts as much as possible would be helpful. Joseph thanked Danielle for her comments and stated that we will get more certainty on that, just for the Commission awareness. He stated that the difference for 16.21 from the rest of what we've done, is that there is not a finite pool of applicants that's been determined by the general assembly. Instead, it says we shall open it to a competitive process for nonprofits that fit a description. So, it's more difficult for us to forecast that. It also contemplates a 2nd round of grants potentially, if all the funds are not dispersed in the 1st round. That is a matter that we have been working through in other sections. It has been a great amount of work getting the 1st rounds out, and when the 2nd rounds are also delineated and how those are to be administered, that entails extra work as well. This is something that the Commission can help us forecast for commission members about the scope of this project as we get more applications in. Amy had a question for Christine. She asked about the three different groups that would be evaluated based on region perhaps. Her question is if those three groups reach consensus on how they score, are those three groups in competition with each other? Joseph asked Kathy and Christine for a response to Amy's question. Christine responded with clarification on the "groups". She stated that each reviewer would still be individually reviewing each application themselves. So, it is not necessarily that the people assigned to the same ones would talk with each other about how they're scoring or how strong an applicant is. It will all still apply the same review to each one in the group. For her purposes she thought of grouping applications because of the conflicts of interest that potentially could be there. But that is also a great way to decrease the number of applications. If every committee member must score every application, that could be a lot. But you are correct, that would be the most equal way to do it. We are willing to do this, however the committee prefers or however you think would realistic. Amy had another question. She stated if it was possible instead of having everybody evaluate each application for all the categories that you could divide into teams? For example, having the same group look at each application, just for two or three of those items. It will be the same scrutiny by the same people going through all the applications on the same items. Joseph responded and asked the commission to note

that suggestion. Danielle also had a couple of comments. She suggested that having people on a specific area, and as accurately as they can, assess that application. She was not sure the best way to split it out because of other factors. Joseph thanked Danielle for her comments. He stated that this is a helpful discussion. He said a couple of other points while he is reading through this grant, he was glad we got the change from the general assembly to strike a demonstrated economic loss from COVID, because now three years later, we see how complex this section already is without that. He also noted that it says in 16.21 C.3, that the commission shall set the maximum amount of each grant based upon availability of funds. So, kind of to your question, it doesn't say they have to be equal. It does say the commission shall set a maximum amount. Of course, that would be dependent on the proposals and the number of proposals. That also raises the question for me to think through what if we set the maximum amount based on that pool of applicants and then we do a 2nd round. How does that inform the maximum? He stated that was just another wrinkle that he did not think through. Joseph asked if there were any other questions or comments. He stated we also have our public comment period to cover unless Christine and Kathy have anything else for the group. Christine said we will work internally and see what we can build to propose for next time and take all these considerations into our plan. She thanked everyone for the feedback. Joseph second Christine's statement and said we look forward to the summary of proposals we get and the request for the proposals is shared to the commission. He encourages others to apply for them.

1:50- PM Public Comment

Committee Member, Joseph Kyzer

Joseph asked if there were any questions or comments for the public comment period. Nancy had a question. She asked do we have a deadline for when we want those decisions to be made. Kathy replied that it was one of the things that we were going to discuss internally. Joseph thanked everyone for their time and their work on these grants, especially the commission team.

1:51- PM Adjourn

Committee Member, Joseph Kyzer

Joseph stated that without objection, we'll stand adjourn.

