OFFICE OF THE ILLINOIS LT. GOVERNOR, JULIANA STRATTON

Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) Program Board

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Workgroup

Regular Meeting Minutes

September 29, 2021

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| **A present majority of R3PB member/designee positions shall constitute a quorum, i.e. 3** | | | |
| **Position** | **Name** | **Present (via WebEx)** | **Absent** |
| **R3PB Members/Member Designees** | | | |
| Elected Official | Sen. Celina Villanueva | **X** |  |
| Designee (Dept. of Children and Family Services | Dagene Brown | **X** |  |
| Designee (Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA)) | Charise Williams, Deputy Director | **X** |  |
| Formerly Incarcerated (over 24 years of age) | Marlon Chamberlain | **X** |  |
| R3 Area Resident or Worker | Pablo Mendoza | **X** |  |

Also, in attendance were:

Lt. Governor’s JEO Policy Coordinator Emily Harwell

Lt. Governor’s JEO Program Manager Ariana Correa

Lt. Governor’s JEO Legislative Liaison Kirsten Davis-Franklin

ICJIA R3 Grant Program Manager Mitchell Troup

ICJIA Advance Grant Specialist Rise Evans

ICJIA R3 Program Research Manager Dr. Justin Escamilla

ICJIA General Counsel Karen Sheley

ICJIA Associate General Counsel Blanca R. Dominguez

**A. Call to Order and Roll Call**

1. Mitchell Troup called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

2. Blanca Dominguez took roll

3. Quorum was established

4. Members Sen. Celina Villanueva and Charise Williams joined the meeting at 12:04PM

5. Member Marlon Chamberlain stated he would be leaving the meeting at 12:30PM

**B. Acknowledgement of Need for Videoconference Meeting**

1. Mitchell Troup acknowledged the continuing need to convene by videoconference because the public-health challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic are still present

**C. Motion to Approve the Agenda for September 29, 2021, and Minutes for September 22 and 23, 2021 Meetings**

* 1. Moved by Charise Williams
  2. Seconded by Sen. Celina Villanueva
  3. All in Favor
  4. No oppositions
  5. No abstentions

**D. Old Business—Follow-Up on Capacity-Building Grants**

1. Blanca Dominguez

a. Explained the anti-lobbying prohibition, both in respect to direct and indirect lobbying. Explained advocacy concerning grant activities that would most likely be considered allowable under the scope of the NOFO. Further stated that all planning and capacity-building grant activity would have to tie back into the five R3 program priorities, with the goal being preparing organizations to become service providers in future R3 rounds.

2. Mitchell Troup

a. In response to a question posed by Pablo Mendoza regarding the type of assistance that will be available to prospective applicants to help them determine whether an advocacy-related activity would be within the scope of the NOFO, explained three types of assistance would be available: (1) information/explanation on allowable grant activities will be expressly included in the NOFO; (2) technical assistance webinars that will be held live on YouTube and will then be posted onto the R3 website; webinars include live FAQ sessions; and (3) FAQs based on emailed questions from prospective applicants.

b. Marlon Chamberlain

Asked whether there was a one-page document that could be provided to organizations to provide them with information on R3 and the application process

i. Mitchell Troup indicated that there is a one-page document being worked on as part of the statewide R3 outreach plan.

ii. Emily Harwell confirmed that there would soon be a one- page flyer that describes the ICJIA technical assistance resources to help prospective applicants prepare for applying, i.e., GATA pre- qualification information. There is also another one-page document that would be available once there is more public information on the NOFO.

iii. Charise Williams also responded by providing information on the one-page document used in last year’s R3 press kit; it would contain general information on the statute and the purpose of the R3 grants.

iv. Mitchell Troup referred the workgroup to the R3 website which contains basic information on the R3 program, contains the expired NOFOs that could be used to gain a sense of the program as well as links to various resources (website is <https://r3.illinois.gov/>)

**E. New Business—Equity Scoring Criteria**

1. Mitchell Troup:

a. Began discussion by explaining equity scoring was added to the overall regular scoring of an application in the R3 program. Proposed a variation of the equity scoring used in the summer R3 violence grant program for the upcoming R3 program. Equity scoring would make up 25% of the total points that could be awarded to a grant application. Equity scoring points would be based on the following categories:

i. Agency leadership, such as board members, directors, and managers, reflect the proposed community and residents to be served. 10%

ii. The program includes mentors, credible messengers, or practitioners who are residents of the community being served. 10%

iii. At least a majority of R3 zones served are designated high need (at least 75th percentile on all R3 zone indicators). 5%

b. with respect to the first category in the equity scoring, explained that the intent is to assess whether leadership is from the community as opposed to being from the outside

2. Pablo Mendoza

a. Stated that he recently participated in a research project in which a similar question was asked; explained that unless organizations were asked directly to identify all the individual board members that fit the specified qualifications, the organization would simply offer up one board member that satisfied the criteria without giving additional information on the breakdown of its board.

3. Mitchell Troup

a. Asked the group if they had any suggestions to avoid the situation mentioned by Pablo Mendoza, keeping in mind the legal considerations applicable to a public body discussed in a previous meeting. Proposed asking the organization’s leadership to reflect the community and residents to be served; can ask if the board reflects the community and ask them how they reflect the community.

4. Dagene Brown

a. Suggested changing the weight given to this category, stating that there was more weight given to this area versus the weight for serving the community. Expressed a desire to see more weight given to serving the community versus the makeup of the organization’s leadership or board. Stated that given the legal considerations previously discussed, it would be more advantageous to put more weight on toward serving the community.

5. Pablo Mendoza

a. Stated that he understood Dagene Brown’s point but that there was merit to ensuring that organizations are from the community and not some outside entity; should give more weight to the people coming out of those communities.

6. Marlon Chamberlain

a. Proposed asking the organization to provide community recommendations that the R3 board could then check

i. Charise Williams asked if he meant references organizations could provide with the NOFO (Marlon Chamberlain confirmed); Charise Williams went on to state that the practice of asking for such references tends to be fraught with issues and can often become subjective; as a practical matter, legislative letters are not included in the NOFO application to stave off claims of favoritism.

ii. Sen. Celina Villanueva concurred; stated that she does not provide such letters to state grantees to avoid the appearance of impropriety; went on to state that she understood the desire to know if an organization is doing the great work they claim to be doing; inquired if there was a way to provide for anecdotal stories about the work being done in the community; allowing applicants to provide specific examples of how they assisted in someone’s transition, i.e., X went from being in a gang to being employed.

iii. Dagene Brown remarked that asking for reference letters may lead to a situation like job reference letters where the organization only seeks references that put them in the best light; recognized challenges with framing questions for equity category one.

iv. Mitchell Troup concurred and added that, in the past, he has not found such letters very helpful as they all seemed to say the same thing; stated being in favor of soliciting uniform, fair, and objective feedback about an organization from the community.

v. Charise Williams indicated that she favored the idea of allowing for anecdotal examples but there should also be a way to score such information.

vi. Mitchell Troup suggested allowing for an applicant to present information via local publications, etc. (Charise Williams remarked that not all organizations make the news but that those could be included as acceptable examples of what an applicant could present); Mitchell Troup suggested revisiting this topic in a later meeting.

vii. In response to an inquiry by Charise Williams relating to how the research group addressed this issue, Pablo Mendoza indicated that the research group was not bound by the same legal considerations as a public body.

7. Mitchell Troup

a. Provided information on local preference (to be discussed in greater detail at next meeting) to show an example of what can be done with respect to equity category two; stated that local preference criterion called for an organization to get points if 50% of their employees resided in an R3 zone; Mitchell Troup suggested that the idea could be used to ask an organization if 50% of its credible messengers or practitioners resided in an R3 zone (Pablo Mendoza agreed with that suggestion).

b. In respect to the local preference criterion of allowing for points if 50% of an organization’s employees lived in an R3 zone, asked the group if that should be further narrowed to residing in the specific R3 zone where services were provided or allowing for the inclusion of employees who resided in any R3 zone.

i. Sen. Celina Villanueva expressed some hesitancy as to this issue; stated that current R3 zones already excluded some areas that she believed should be included (provided the example of Little Village) and did not want to penalize people who might live outside the R3 zone but could be and might be working at one of the local organizations.

ii. Pablo Mendoza agreed; stated that did not want to exclude people or organizations that provided services in one area but resided in another R3 zone.

iii. Sen. Celina Villanueva added that she wanted to encourage people that are coming from the community to be able to get jobs in the community but also work within the community to empower the community but stated that if the specifications were narrowed too much, there was a risk of further excluding some communities.

8. Mitchell Troup

a. Asked for additional suggestions on drafting questions for equity category two relating to credible messengers or practitioners residing in communities being served.

i. Charise Williams suggested the allowance for anecdotal stories.

ii. Karen Sheley noted that the addition would not pose a concern; however, cautioned against making the application overly burdensome with the addition of validators and outside materials.

iii. Mitchell Troup suggested including short questions that would allow for the presentment of responsive information in a less burdensome manner.

iv. Sen. Celina Villanueva agreed with the suggestion to include short questions as it might make it easier for the applicant to quantify this type of success story.

9. Mitchell Troup

a. Moved the discussion to the third equity category relating to points for providing service in a designated high needs R3 area; explained that the determination of high needs areas was based on certain criteria in the statute; explained that the idea behind equity category three was to provide extra points to an organization that is providing service in those areas; asked for feedback from the group.

i. Justin Escamilla provided additional information relating to the configuration of the R3 high needs areas; stated that the determination was based on legislative criteria which included the percentages of gun violence, unemployment, child poverty, admissions to prison, and exits or reentry into communities.

10. Dagene Brown

a. Reiterated her concern for providing more weight to serving the community considering the purpose of the statue.

i. Charise Williams asked for confirmation that the extra points were for those working in high needs areas.

ii. Mitchell Troup confirmed; added the suggestions of including the ability to provide anecdotal examples in this category as well to help some of Dagene Brown’s concerns.

b. Dagene Brown once again noted concern about giving 10 points to categories relating to leadership or organization versus emphasizing service within the community; stated she understood the importance of knowing who is providing services but the greater focus should be on the work within the community.

i. Charise Williams suggested adding more points to equity category three so that all three equity categories were weighted the same, i.e. all of them would be 10 points.

c. Dagene Brown remarked that even if all three equity categories were equal in terms of number of points, the overall points were still too low when it came to focusing on the work being done versus who was doing the work

i. Mitchell Troup reiterated that the group could decide on a different weight for each equity category, i.e., 5-5-10 could be a new weight; stated that the option was open.

ii. Dagene Brown noted that she did not have a specific weight in mind but wanted to make sure the group considered the issue.

iii. Charise Williams and Mitchell Troup agreed that making all 3 equity categories the same points would be a good option regardless of the final point assignation.

**F. Member Updates**

1. Mitchell Troup

a. Reminded workgroup of the importance to meet the quorum of three given the small size of the group and that member updates were an opportunity to provide updates on any scheduling conflicts.

b. No additional member updates provided.

**G. Public Comments**

1. No public comments.

**H. Adjournment**

1. Upcoming meetings will be held on 10/1 from 9:30AM to 11:00AM, 10/6 at 12:00PM, 10/12 at 10:00AM
2. Moved by Sen. Celina Villanueva at 1:19PM
3. Seconded by Dagene Brown
4. All in Favor
5. No oppositions
6. No abstentions