



# State of Nevada - Advisory Council on Federal Assistance

## Meeting Minutes

Prepared by the Nevada Office of Grant Procurement, Coordination, and Management (Grant Office)  
406 E. Second St. Carson City NV 89701 | 775-684-0156 | <http://grant.nv.gov>

**March 05, 2020 at 1:00 pm**  
By Videoconference

**From:**  
Legislative Council Bureau Building  
Room 2135  
401 S. Carson St.  
Carson City NV

**To:**  
Grant Sawyer Building  
Room 4401  
555 E. Washington Ave.  
Las Vegas NV

### 1. Call to Order (*For Possible Action*)

John Ritter called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm.

### 2. Roll Call

#### In Attendance -

#### Las Vegas

John Ritter, Chairman  
Assemblywoman Shea Backus  
Senator David Parks  
JoVon Sotak, Secretary

#### Carson City

Zanny Marsh  
Tiffany Greenameyer for Susan Brown, Governor's Finance Office

#### Absent

Kathi Thomas-Gibson, Vice Chair

#### Also in Attendance

Laena St-Jules, Attorney General's Office  
Sharon Usher, Grant Office  
Erin Hasty, Grant Office  
Catherine Bartlett, Governor's Finance Office  
Miles Dickson, Treasurer's Office

### 3. Public Comment

A. None

#### 4. Approval of Minutes (*For Possible Action*)

Senator David Parks: **Motion** to approve January 29, 2020 minutes.

Assemblywoman Shea Backus: **Seconded. Carried.**

#### 5. Agenda Items (*For Possible Action*)

##### A. Council Travel Budget (JoVon Sotak)

A discussion of available funds for council members to receive travel reimbursement was discussed. JoVon Sotak suggested that it might be worth adding as an agenda item and let the members know that they are entitled to travel reimbursement, however they don't have a budget. If council members think that some changes are needed to the budget when the Grant Office is preparing the budget for the biennium it might be worth adding to the agenda. JoVon Sotak asked that we get it on the agenda for the June meeting if this was an issue. John Ritter stated it was not an issue for him. Senator David Parks said he would certainly support making a request for future booked travel and allocation of funds for training purposes especially for the council. JoVon Sotak said Sharon Usher had sent out some board specific training to all council members. JoVon Sotak said she can investigate further training for the council members.

##### B. Grant Office Update (JoVon Sotak)

A review of Grant Office activities related to council priorities.

- i. Streamline review and authorization process for grant work plans by the Interim Finance Committee – JoVon Sotak stated that the Grant Office was working with the Governor's Finance Office on a draft document tentatively titled "Speedy Grant Work Program and Best Practices" and documented what the Governor's Finance Office has implemented to help state agencies and to establish best practices for state grant work programs. It is expected to be released this spring.
- ii. Eliminate budgetary disincentives by looking at some training resources to help state agencies differentiate between supplementing and supplanting.
- iii. Continue to support the budget enhancement for the statewide grant management system. JoVon Sotack discussed how multiple data points indicated that the \$200,000 annual budget we were given for vendor services is actually a barrier for procuring a full lifecycle system being implemented across all state agencies and subrecipients and how the office is staying committed to using that budget towards the goal of removing barriers for state agencies and subrecipients.
- iv. Expand technical assistance, training, capacity building and coordination related to federal grants. JoVon Sotack talked about how the Grant Office grant training program is launching a three-part series on grant fundamentals training on YouTube so that it is available for free throughout the state, providing leadership training to leaders within state agencies, utilizing community grants experts in some of the

trainings, and sharing how they utilized a grant expert to provide a budget training to some agencies, and the office has developed and distributed a training library of free or low cost grant training resources.

- v. Standardize Nevada's many policies and procedures related to federal grants. JoVon Sotak stated that the Grant Office doesn't have a policy in place that would require the agencies to use standardized processes or forms. The agency is working on the process by which they can revise the existing policies. A discussion was had regarding possible legislation, bill drafts, agency fiscal budget concerns and the legislation timelines. John recommended they talk about this in item six, future meetings dates and agenda items.
- vi. Increase statewide grant reporting. JoVon Sotak spoke on how largely the efforts around this is the Grant Management System, which she already updated the council on.
- vii. Investigate solutions for increased grant accountability. The Grant Office is in discussions with Illinois after their presentation during the last meeting, on how we might utilize what they already have and what resources would be required to bring one or more of the tools they have into Nevada.

**C. History of Council Activities Related to the Authorization Process for Grant Work Programs (JoVon Sotak)**

A review of previous council recommendations, meetings, minutes, and surveys to provide context for the council's current biennial priority regarding the authorization process for grant work programs. JoVon went over NRS 353.220(4)(5)(c) and NRS 353.335(5)(a-b). September of 2018 finds of the subcommittee were presented, along with surveys that were sent to over 5,000 people in Nevada, grant professionals and stakeholders. Through these surveys what was learned was the factor that most negatively impacted an organization to apply for grants and manage federal funding was the state's fiscal and budgetary requirements procedures. The surveys indicated that many agencies were not applying for 12-month grants because the approval process could take at least four months.

After hearing the information, the report recommendation was an idea of creating a path for provisional approval for work programs.

**D. Governor's Finance Office (GFO) (Catherine Bartlett for Susan Brown)**

A summary of Authorization process challenges and recommended solutions. Catherine Bartlett spoke of the challenges that agencies have in getting work programs through the process in a timely manner and having multiple people involved in the process as to not miss any deadlines.

Discussion ensued on if the requirement of having a reasonable expectation of funding was prohibiting many from applying for the work program at the time of application. John Ritter said he was grateful for the GFO in creating solutions, but

wondered if the concern the GFO had of being inundated with work programs would be realized or if agencies would be prohibited from applying and would not use the solution because they did not know if they had a reasonable expectation of being awarded. JoVon Sotak said the Grant Office could send out a survey to receive feedback on the reasonable expectation and gather data to report back to the council and to GFO.

E. Reading of council correspondence (Sharon Usher)

None

**6. Future Meeting Dates and Agenda Items (*For Possible Action*)**

A. June 24, 2020 Meeting (Sharon Usher)

The meeting date for the June 24, 2020 was confirmed by council members and items discussed for agenda were budgetary disincentives section ten of the expenditure act, possibly that the statewide grant reporting be required and receive a report from the subcommittee. Annual Report for 2019 items five Standardize Nevada's many policies and procedures related to federal grants, item seven investigate solutions for increased grant accountability and item six increase statewide grant reporting. Look for legislature solutions.

B. September Meeting (Sharon Usher)

The meeting date for September was discussed and September 24, 2020 was chosen.

Members also discussed the possibility of having additional meetings to form a subcommittee to focus on the priorities of the council which were discussed in 5.B.iv. of this agenda. The priorities being, item five standardize Nevada's many policies and procedures related to federal grants, item seven investigate solutions for increased grant accountability and item six increase statewide grant reporting. The date of Friday, March 13, 2020 was chosen for the next council meeting to form a special projects subcommittee.

**7. Public Comment**

None.

**8. Adjournment (*For Possible Action*)**

A. Assemblywoman Shea Backus: **Motion** to adjourn at 3:00. Senator David Parks: **Seconded. Carried.**