

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday, August 12, 2020

The meeting of the Equitable Food Oriented Development Work Group Subcommittee convened at approximately 10:00 a.m. on August 12, 2020. The meeting was held by electronic communication means due to the state of emergency issued by Governor Northam as a result of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The meeting was held using Cisco Webex Events. Commissioner Jewel Bronaugh called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

Amy Rose Foll

Chad Martin

Chelsi Bennett

Del. Delores McQuinn

Dr. Patricia Gould-Champ

Elizabeth Borst

Jeanette Abi-Nader

Michael Carter

Norm Gold

Shantell Bingham

ABSENT WORK GROUP MEMBERS

Del. Delores McQuinn

STAFF PRESENT

Heidi Hertz, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry

Jewel Bronaugh, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)

Kendra Shifflett, Director, Office of Administration and Finance, VDACS

Anna Seymour, Administrative Coordinator, Commissioner's Office, VDACS

Katherine Coates, Administrative Coordinator, OPPR, VDACS

Jennifer Perkins, Program Manager, Office of Agriculture and Forestry Development, VDACS

JEWEL BRONAUGH

AVAILABLE FUNDING

Commissioner Bronaugh welcomed the attendees and began her presentation. She went through the meeting agenda. She began with a discussion about the legislation's available funding (\$1.2 million). Approximately \$200,000 was set aside for an outreach and technical assistance position. Up to 10% will be paid over the course of 2 years to the CDFI that is selected to assist the Work Group. This leaves approximately \$900,000 to fund selected projects over a maximum of two years.

EQUITABLE FOOD-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (EFOD) SELF-ASSESSMENT AND CRITERIA

Commissioner Bronaugh discussed the definition of EFOD and key considerations the subcommittee must take into account when developing selection criteria: targeting underserved communities; BIPOC businesses as a priority; and the importance of community engagement.

Commissioner Bronaugh also went through the EFOD Criteria document, as provided by DAISA enterprises. The document details considerations when selecting viable projects which must be characterized as: equity and justice-first; place and people based; use market-based/business

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strategies; community leadership development/community organizing; and community ownership. Subcommittee members discussed their thoughts on the criteria and how it should be implemented.

JENNIFER PERKINS

Jennifer Perkins went into more detail about the EFOD Organization Assessment. She described an assessment structure that allows for organizations to self-identify how they meet the EFOD criteria on a scale. Subcommittee members voiced their approval of this criteria and how the model will aid in selecting projects.

JEWEL BRONAUGH

Commissioner Bronaugh then went into the grant considerations, specifically program development, eligibility of applicants, and grant administration. Subcommittee members shared what they saw as the goal of the funding and what success looks like.

Commissioner Bronaugh then ask how to identify “underserved” and “marginalized” audiences” and took notes based on subcommittee feedback to include food desert areas, income levels, health outcomes, SNAP accepting retailers, and other incentive programs, among others. Members suggested looking at maps on the Virginia Federation of Foodbanks website as a guide to identifying these audiences. This will help to nail down prioritized locations and communities, and to make sure tribal, indigenous, and Hispanic populations are included. Concerns voiced included financial literacy, transportation, and SNAP accessibility.

Commissioner Bronaugh also asked the subcommittee to determine the types of projects they would like to consider (commercial kitchens/commissaries, retail markets, etc.) and what types of projects they should not consider (commercial large grocery stores, traditional food pantries, missions that don't align with the EFOD criteria).

Finally, Commissioner Bronaugh asked the group what their role is in communicating these opportunities to these communities. She noted that this is a new area of work for VDACS. Suggestions included targeting House and Senate members to employ their social media outlets to market the grant opportunities; having objective input/assistance from outside relative to grant writing; keeping the application process simple to engage equitable audiences; and providing a narrative about the business.

JENNIFER PERKINS

Jennifer Perkins discussed grant administration in detail. She posed a few questions to the group regarding whether the application should have deadlines or be rolling; exactly how much will be awarded in funding to applicants; how to hold projects (particularly unsuccessful ones) accountable; what the grant period looks like; and how to measure success. Jennifer also described VDACS's Agriculture and Forestry Industry Development (AFID) Fund and how money is granted in various ways. Group members showed their support for rolling applications, though expressed the time consuming nature of that style. Group members discussed starting with smaller grants for 2020 and then seeing what sorts of projects get funded. Discussions continued regarding what the appropriate funding amount would be for projects.

JEWEL BRONAUGH

Commissioner Bronaugh moved to discuss additional considerations: whether a percentage of food needs to be sourced from Virginia; how to identify which risks to take; should there be a

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portfolio or presentation requirement; should there be a wage requirement for employees; and how to provide a path to sustainability. The group discussed concerns about produce/food availability due to seasonality and type of product to meet a threshold for Virginia goods. They also voiced concerns about the wage requirement for a business that's just starting. Group members also discussed providing a list of additional resources that may assist projects, such as historic tax credits, etc.

Commissioner Bronaugh noted that in advance of the next meeting, she and Jennifer Perkins will draft some guidelines for the group to review.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business was introduced.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments.

FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS

The next subcommittee meeting will take place on August 27, 2020, 10:00 – 12:30 pm. This meeting will also be open to public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Work Group adjourned at approximately 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jewel H. Bronaugh, Ph.D.
Commissioner