



**VOLUNTEER LOUISIANA COMMISSION MINUTES**

Wednesday, December 10, 2025  
 10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.  
 In Person Meeting  
 Food Bank of Central Louisiana  
 3223 Baldwin Ave., Alexandria, La. 71301

<p><b>Commissioners Attending</b>  <b>Voting Members</b>          Kellie Duhon          Matt LaBorde          Karen Burks          Suzanne Harris          Travis Tharp          Brian Davis          Matthew Fairbrother          Patricia Prudhomme          Leigh Hersey          Heather Carpenter          Africa Price</p> <p><b>Commissioners Absent</b>  <b>Voting Members</b>          Tinicia Turner          DeRon Talley          Agnieszka Nance          Scott Green          Micah Nicholas</p>	<p><b>Ex-Officio Members Present</b>          Paul Smith representing Billy Nungesser, Lt. Governor</p> <p><b>Ex-Officio Members Absent</b>          James Lee, Governor Designee</p> <p><b>Staff Attending</b>          Jacob Brumfield          Judd Jeansonne          Breanna Jenkins          Amanda Smith          Stephanie Taylor-Stell          Heather Mazeitis-Fontenot          Lori Pilley          Samantha Hartmann</p>
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**Pre-Meeting Commissioner Education:** A delegation of commissioners conducted a visit to a mobile food pantry in Elmer, Louisiana. During this visit, commissioners interacted with AmeriCorps representatives from the Food Bank of Central Louisiana and observed their engagement with local community members.

**Call to Order**

Vice-Chair Travis Tharp called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. Each participant provided a self-introduction.

**Consent Agenda**

The consent agenda items were approved with a motion by Africa Price and a second by Matthew Fairbrother.

**Commissioner Education**

Director Jayne Wright-Velez provided an update on the Foodbank of Central Louisiana, noting the organization’s start in 1989 and the challenges it recently faced. She explained that the Foodbank has



enhanced its outreach by adding in-person meet and greet opportunities, which have strengthened recruitment efforts beyond just using Facebook and flyers. During the recent government shutdown, many residents who normally receive help from SNAP—the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which provides food assistance to low-income individuals and families—found that SNAP was unable to fully meet their needs. As a result, SNAP began directing clients to the Foodbank for additional support. This sudden increase in demand placed additional pressure on the Foodbank’s resources, leading to the organization running out of canned goods for the first time in its history—a serious situation because canned goods are essential for providing shelf-stable, nutritious food to families in need. The crisis underscored the importance of community collaboration. Thanks to a \$300,000 emergency grant from the Rapides Foundation and cooperation from suppliers and farmers in Texas and southwest Louisiana, the Foodbank was able to replenish its inventory and continue serving vulnerable community members during this challenging period. These partnerships demonstrated how local organizations working together can make a critical difference in supporting those facing food insecurity.

Commissioners went to the Foodbank warehouse to participate in meal-packing food and filling student backpacks. The hands-on opportunity gave commissioners personal experience in how the Foodbank operates while providing a needed service.

### **Executive director report**

Judd explained that the incoming commissioners have not yet been approved by the Governor’s office.

State commissions are still waiting to hear updates about the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). This lack of clarity makes it difficult to make decisions.

The Senate HELP Committee is working on a reauthorization bill for AmeriCorps. This proposed reauthorization may grant state commissions the authority to directly place AmeriCorps staff within local communities. The goal of this change is to streamline the staffing process by empowering state commissions to respond more quickly and effectively to community needs.

The Volunteer Louisiana Commission is working on a partnership with NAMI, funded by the Schultz Family Foundation, to provide needed mental health supports and workforce pathways.

Judd is in conversation with the Colorado Volunteer Commission to learn more about how they maximize an AmeriCorps and a National Guard partnership during natural disasters.

Communication: The annual report will be in print in early February and distributed at the March meeting. The website has to be updated. All PowerPoint presentations posted there must be ADA compliant.

Jacob Brumfield reported that AmeriCorps retention is higher than last year. Staff is increasing regular monitoring of programs and plan to make this oversight a standard practice. They have developed a monitoring calendar so that the practice is applied evenly across all programs.



Lori Pilley shared information from Volunteerism/Disaster Services: Commissioners are encouraged to participate in local volunteer events. Emails are sent out and a calendar is provided to assist commissioners in planning. Commissioners were encouraged to help score the Champions of Service Community Award applications.

Kellie Duhon shared information about the upcoming plans for the Million Meals for MLK. Foodbanks in more foodbank locations are participating statewide which will give volunteers many ways to donate or provide meal packing services. Organizers expect that the event will be even more successful than last year.

Lori shared that the Disaster Volunteer training continues with several markers of success. They exceeded the goal of 750 participants with 1069 participants. Staff provided 39 days of training, and volunteers clocked 12,476 hours of service.

**Committees:**

The AmeriCorps and Volunteerism/Disaster Services Committees met to discuss issues currently impacting each.

**Adjournment**

Matthew Laborde, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 2:00 with a motion from Travis Tharp and a second by Leigh Hersey.