

# Commonwealth Council on Aging

## Best Practices Awards Committee

### IN-PERSON MEETING

March 5, 2025  
10:00 AM to 12:30 PM

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services  
Aging Services Conference Room  
1610 Forest Ave.  
Suite 100  
Henrico, VA 23229

### DRAFT MINUTES

**Members Present:** Tresserlyn Kelly (Zoom), Cleopatra Kitt, Paige Wilson, Tracey Gendron, and Shannon Arnette

**Members Absent:** NONE

**Staff Present:** Sara Stowe, Charlotte Arbogast

#### Welcome and Roll Call of Members

**Sara Stowe, Staff**

DARS staff Sara Stowe welcomed members and confirmed a quorum was present.

#### Review/Approve Agenda

**Tresserlyn Kelly, Co-Chair**

##### *Proposed Action: Approve Agenda*

Chair Tresserlyn Kelly confirmed with members that there were no changes needed to the agenda. The proposed agenda was approved via unanimous consensus.

#### Review/Approve the November 4, 2024 Meeting Minutes

**Tresserlyn Kelly**

##### *Proposed Action: Approve Minutes*

Chair Tresserlyn Kelly asked members to review the November 4, 2024 Meeting Minutes. The members did not have any changes. The draft minutes were approved via unanimous consensus.

#### Public Comment Period

**Sara Stowe**

There were no public comments received.

#### Overview of the Process

**Sara Stowe**

Sara Stowe explained the Best Practices Awards process. Dominion Energy once again committed to sponsor the Best Practices Awards. This year, AARP Virginia also committed to sponsoring the Best Practices Awards. The Awards will provide \$5,500 for first place (Dominion Energy: \$3,000, AARP Virginia: \$500), \$3,500 for second place (Dominion Energy: \$3,000, AARP Virginia: \$500), and \$2,500 for third place (Dominion Energy, \$2,000, AARP Virginia: \$500).

The Request for Nominations for the 2025 Best Practices Awards opened on January 10, 2024. DARS staff shared information about the Request for Nominations with the Council and within its network. Council members were also asked to share the Request for Nominations around and

## Commonwealth Council on Aging

with their networks in order to get the word out as much as possible. Nominations were due on February 12, 2025. The Best Practices Committee is meeting today to make award decisions.

Scoring was based on seven selection criteria: community need and impact, concept of aging in the community, innovation, inclusiveness, goals/outcomes/evaluation, cost-effectiveness/sustainability, and potential for replication.

### Scoring Report

**Sara Stowe**

Sara shared the scoring report with the members. Members received a Top 10 Programs Ranking with the program summaries.

### Working Lunch: Discussion and Determination of Winners      Committee Members

#### *Proposed Action: Vote on Winners*

The Committee held a discussion among the winners on the top ranked programs. Charlotte Arbogast shared that she thought FREE Foundation had been a winner in a previous year. Charlotte reviewed the previous winners and FREE Foundation had been a first place winner in 2014. The currently ineligibility clause which states: “Programs (not agencies or organizations) that have received a previous Best Practices Award (cash award) or Honorable Mention (non-cash award) are not eligible to be considered for the 2025 awards.”

Members stated that 2014 seems like a long time ago. Members were reminded that they could change the ineligibility criteria. Members agreed to wait until 2026 to make a change to the criteria, but noted the currently ineligibility clause.

A tie for 2<sup>nd</sup> place had occurred between Fellowship Fresh and A Beat Goes On: A Community Choir. Members discussed the two nominations and noted a similarity between A Beat Goes On: A Community Choir and Joyful Voices who was a Best Practices Awards recipients in 2023. A Beat Goes On, incorporates an intergenerational piece that Joyful Voices did not have. Members ultimately decided to award Fellowship Fresh with the First Place award and Second Place to A Beat Goes On: A Community Choir.

Members then discussed Honorable Mention programs. Members discussed the importance of a strong program impact, sustainability and replicability, and innovation.

Paige Wilson made a motion to approve the winning and honorable mentions as follows:

- First Place: Fellowship Fresh
- Second Place: A Beat Goes On: A Community Choir
- Third Place: Virginia HEAR- Helping Elders Access Resources
- Honorable Mentions:
  - Meet Me: Community Outings
  - Safety and Wellness for Independent Living
  - AGE (Advocacy for Generational Equity) Program

This motion was seconded by Cleopatra Kitt.

### Next Steps & Award Ceremonies Discussion

**Sara Stowe**

Sara provided an overview of the next steps and planning for the in-person and webinar award recognition events, the website updates, distribution of the funds, press release, and upcoming report to the full Council on Aging at the March 12 meeting.

## Commonwealth Council on Aging

Members discussed the in-person events and some of the challenges programs may encounter when trying to plan in-person events. Members discussed how we may be able to support winners and decided on a public relations (PR) Toolkit for winners. Sara Stowe will create a PR toolkit with resources such as logos, language for press releases, and how to promote their award.

Members also discussed lessons learned such as a change for 2026 to the ineligibility criteria. Members agreed to a 5-year timeframe for renominations. Nominees will have to complete an additional section demonstrating how their program has innovated since the previous award.

Members also discussed the potential of splitting out the section of Replication/Scalability in order to learn more about Lessons Learned.

### **Meeting Adjournment**

**Tresserlyn Kelly**

Co-Chair Tresserlyn Kelly asked if there were any other comments, questions about the awards. Hearing none, Tresserlyn Kelly adjourned the meeting at 11:31 am.

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### **Members Participating Electronically:**

- Tresserlyn Kelly: medical condition or disability provision, Newport News, VA

### **Meeting Handouts:**

1. Proposed Meeting Agenda
2. Draft Meeting Minutes from November 4, 2024
3. Top 10 Programs Ranking and Program Summaries Sheet
4. 2025 Best Practices Dissemination Information Handout