



Minutes of the Thursday, January 18, 2024, meeting  
Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)  
Grants Management Advisory Committee (GMAC)

The Grants Management Advisory Committee (GMAC) held a public meeting on Thursday, January 18th, 2024, beginning at 2:00 p.m.

Agenda and/or Materials: [GMAC Mtgs2024 \(nv.gov\)](https://www.nv.gov/gmac)

I. Call to Order: Welcome, Roll Call, and Announcements.

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m. by Stacy York, Chair. Ms. York requested Michelle Shuman, Administrative Assistant III (AAIII), Grants Management Unit (GMU) to proceed with roll call.

**Members Present**

Stacy York  
Fernando Serrano  
Leslie Bittleston  
Shayla Holmes  
Ann Polakowski

**Members Absent**

Tom McCoy  
Ellen Richardson-Adams  
Ali Caliendo  
Lauren Beattie

A quorum of the GMAC members was confirmed.

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Grants Management Unit (GMU) staff present:

Kelli Quintero, Social Services Chief III  
Michelle McNeely, Social Services Program Specialist III  
Tawny Chapman, Social Services Program Specialist III  
Michelle Shuman, Administrative Assistant III

Stacy York, Chair opened the meeting to public comment.

**Public Comment 1**

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There was no public comment.

## II. Approve April 27, 2023, Meeting Minutes (Discussion, Possible Action)

Stacy York, Chair, asked if all those in favor of approving the minutes from the April 27, 2023, meeting please say aye.

Members stated aye. Action – Meeting minutes were approved by Shayla Holmes and Leslie Bitleston.

Ms. York stated that the minutes were approved.

## III. Update on GMAC Membership (Discussion, Possible Action)

Stacy York, Chair, requested to continue with the DHHS Director's Office, GMU updates.

Mrs. Shuman stated that the Grants Management Unit appreciates everyone's patience with the unit's staff turnover and thanked members for their participation. Mrs. Shuman continued to let the members know that the correspondence from everyone was appreciated, but unfortunately proof of appointment or reappointment for the members had not been found. Mrs. Shuman stated that GMU is requesting that everyone reapply to provide the required documentation to DHHS Director's Office. This will include an updated resume to the GMU and for convenience an email with the link to join a board would follow. Mrs. Shuman thanked everyone for their time and patience. Questions followed. Ann Polakowski asked, if recently appointed and could provide the appointment letter, did GMU want all to reapply anyway? Mrs. Shuman replied that it would be easier if everyone reapplied for tracking reasons. Stacy York asked when the apply link was sent, could a list of open positions be provided. Kelli Quintero answered that current open positions could be provided to help recruit new members. Mrs. Shuman stated that GMU would be grateful if anyone had proposed methods for soliciting new members or any recommendations for prospective members.

## IV. Request for nominations and vote for Chair and Vice Chair (Discussion, Possible Action)

Ms. Holmes nominated Stacy York as Chair for the GMAC. Ms. Bitleston seconded the motion and asked if the agenda item needed to be put off until members are reappointed. Ms. Holmes replied that if a chairperson was not appointed at this meeting, we would run into the same situation where a chairperson is needed to open the next meeting. Ms. Holmes inquired if the agenda would allow members to make a motion for a temporary chair so the GMAC can continue to operate until the board positions are filled. Ms. Bitleston seconded the nomination and Mr. Serrano agreed to move forward. Mr. Serrano recommended holding off on the Vice Chair until the next meeting. Stacy York asked if anyone else had comments, if anyone opposed, and all in favor say aye. No one opposed. Ayes from Ms. Holmes, Mr. Serrano, and Ms. Bitleston.

## V. Update on Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for Victims of Human Trafficking Fund 2024

Ms. York, Chair, gave the floor to Ms. Quintero, Social Services Chief, with the Director's Office Grants Management Unit. Ms. Quintero gave an overview of the NOFO that was released December 5, 2023, by the GMU. The Account was strictly focused on Victims of Human Trafficking and the deadline for written questions was December 13, 2023. The written responses to the questions received are posted on the GMU website. The application deadline was January 4, 2024, at 3:00 PM. Eight (8) applications were submitted, evaluated, and scored. The purpose of the grants is to support the development, expansion and strengthening a victim service

programs, specifically again serving victims of human trafficking in Nevada. Nonprofit organizations and political subdivisions of the state, with community-based programs, were encouraged to apply. The total funding requested was \$1.8 million. What we offered was \$800,000 in funding up to 18 months and the most that you could ask for was \$200,000.

**Awaken** had a score of 96.40. We are recommending not only full funding, but an additional \$50,000 for Direct Services. Awaken specifically serves Washoe County, which includes Reno, Sparks, Incline Village, and requests funding to sustain and expand meaningful services for adults and youth victims of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation by providing trauma informed services. Their request is for a new case manager for 18 months, which includes wages, fringe, and benefits. The objective is to increase and expand direct services for victims by serving 35 program participants. The services activities provided will include crisis intervention, emotional moral support, case management, transportation, education assistance, and social development activities. The agency has more than 12 years of experience working with this unique population and requested \$98,235. We are recommending full funding and an additional \$50,000 for direct services.

**The Embracing Project (TEP)** had a score of 91.8. Their request is for \$200,000 and we are recommending full funding. TEP serves sexually exploited youth and commercially sexually exploited children that have been identified through state services and other agencies in Southern Nevada, TEP or The Embracing Project provides specialized wrap around services to youth aged 12 through 21 at the only youth focus drop-in center in Clark County. To expand services, TEP is requesting \$200,000 to increase the capacity of the already established program designed around holistic case management and trauma, informed services, and an additional advocate recruitment will allow for reduced caseloads and increase home visits and outreach. TEP will provide advanced crisis intervention specialist training.

**Xquisite**, had a score of 89.80. The amount requested was \$199,634. We are recommending full funding. Xquisite has served survivors of sex trafficking since 2012 and has since opened the Diamond Strong Freedom Center in 2022 that served 107 new survivors. The request of \$199,634 is to provide survivors with trauma informed and trained advocates, strength, and resilience for survivors to live free from control and violence, and access to trauma Informed basic medical examinations and care. To accomplish these programs an online Advocate Academy will be developed to provide training to help you quickly equip potential advocate applicants to fully support survivors.

**Washoe County Sheriff's Office (WCSO) Regional Human Trafficking and Exploitation (HEAT) Unit** was application 4 with a score of 89.40. WCSO has requested \$199,802 and we are recommending full funding. The Washoe County Sheriff's Office requests funding of the \$199,802 for the HEAT Unit victim advocate, which serves communities throughout Northern Nevada and neighboring states. The funds requested are for funding a victim advocate, which includes the salary and benefits, training and travel, and a software subscription for a client database. The victim advocate serves as a liaison between victims and HEAT detectives investigating cases and establishes and maintains a network of community support and collaborates with partnering agencies to create programs and develop resources, as well as monitoring cases to provide follow-up.

Ms. Quintero stated that these organizations have the top 4 scores from the Grant Management Unit Evaluation Committee. It is their recommendation to the committee that these four be considered for funding from the Account for Victims of Human Trafficking. She asked if there was any discussion or any questions on the applications or recommendations for funding.

Leslie Bitleston informed that she has two questions. The GMU recommendation for an additional \$50,000 for direct services to AWAKEN, what does direct services mean? Ms. Quintero answered that the extra \$50,000 for direct services for the victims could supply medical care that they need, could supply emergency housing, could supply transportation, clothing, whatever those needs are. In the cases that I have read, those victims are often right off the street, so to speak, with the clothes on their back and nothing more. Some of them (VOHT) have even had their identity taken from them. It could help provide direct services in getting new identification documents and getting them off the street and into a system of help. We all concluded that they were doing so much that they could help with those direct services. It is not a \$100 going to the victim's hand, but those services going to help them.

Ms. Bitleston's second question was for application #3 Xquisite where is the location of the opening of a new center that was mentioned? Ms. Quintero replied the Centers are in Carson City. Mr. Serrano stated he thanked Ms. Quintero for her and her team's work. Mr. Serrano mentioned that Rite of Passage (ROP) is the umbrella TP or thinking for a change under the RPG umbrella. So due to that, he opted to abstain from the actual voting.

Ms. York, Chair, noted this was not on the agenda for possible action, therefore a vote cannot be taken. Ms. Quintero spoke and advised that without Mr. Serrano's vote we did not have a quorum. This was confirmed by Mrs. Shuman. Ms. York suggested sending out potential dates for a special meeting to get more members involved to get a vote on the recommendations. Ms. Quintero stated that it was imperative that we get the funding decisions out as soon as possible. The recommendation from Mr. Serrano was to make a provision for an electronic vote. The decision was made that the GMU would investigate all options to move forward to get a vote on the recommendations.

Finishing up the meeting, Ms. York, Chair, stated to the GMU that it looks like awesome work done by you guys and all those grants sound amazing, so thank you again and I echo what Fernando said about that review process. Ms. York opened the meeting for public comment.

## Public Comment 2

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There was no public comment.

## VI. Wrap-up and Adjournment

Chair Stacy York stated that the GMU team would be sending out dates for our next meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 2:31 pm.