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Contact: Danielle Clore

(859) 963-3203 ext. 3

danielle@kynonprofits.org

www.kynonprofits.org

Task force convenes to explore strategies for streamlining state government contracts with nonprofits

LEXINGTON, Ky. - A task force charged with examining ways to cut red tape and streamline state government contracts with nonprofit organizations held its first meeting at the Capitol on Thursday, July 7. First order of business: Identifying the challenges nonprofits and government face with costly and often duplicative contracting practices that hinder delivery of services to citizens.

The Government Nonprofit Contracting Task Force is the result of House Concurrent Resolution 89, co-sponsored by Rep. Addia Wuchner (R-Florence) and Rep. Arnold Simpson (D-Covington) and unanimously passed by the Kentucky General Assembly in 2015. The resolution was spearheaded by Kentucky Nonprofit Network, the state's association of nonprofit organizations.

"As the voice for Kentucky's nonprofit sector, Kentucky Nonprofit Network is eager to get to work identifying solutions that will improve the commonwealth's contractual partnerships with nonprofits," said Danielle Clore, KNN executive director. "This is not just another legislative task force. The General Assembly's bipartisan support sent a strong message about their understanding of the important role of the nonprofit sector and the work of many organizations as vital partners with state government in meeting community needs."

Wuchner, who partnered with KNN as sponsor of the legislation establishing the task force, said the goal is to challenge government and nonprofits to be more efficient stewards of taxpayer dollars. "We have a responsibility to streamline our processes, maintain a commitment to transparency and work to eliminate unnecessary practices and red tape costing government and nonprofits time and money," she said .

Sen. Max Wise (R-Campbellsville) and Rep. Russ Meyer (D-Nicholasville) were selected as co-chairs of the task force. Additional appointments include Wuchner and Simpson, Rep. Dennis Horlander (D-Louisville), Sen. Stephen West (R-Paris), Sen. Danny Carroll (R-Paducah), and Sen. Denise Harper Angel (D-Louisville).

"Bureaucracy and red tape in contractual partnerships with state government are hampering many of Kentucky's nonprofit organizations from doing what they do best – serve Kentuckians," said Meyer. "I look forward to working with the task force to shine a light on the challenges government and nonprofits are facing and identify solutions that will result in improved services for our citizens."

"Efficiency that results in improved services for Kentuckians should be the mutual goals of nonprofit organizations and government," said Wise. "This work provides us with an important opportunity to examine strategies the commonwealth can implement to make the best use of limited resources to provide effective services to Kentuckians."

The legislation directed Kentucky Nonprofit Network to recommend eight nonprofit leaders to serve on the task force, of which House and Senate leadership selected four: Michelle Sanborn, president, Children's Alliance in Frankfort; Cyndee Burton, executive director, Matthew 25 AIDS Services of Henderson; Robert Jones, executive director, Audubon Area Community Services in Owensboro; and Promod Bishnoi,

president/CEO of Mountain Comprehensive Care Center in Prestonsburg. Clore also serves on the task force.

“It’s a testament to the leadership of Kentucky Nonprofit Network that legislators sought out their recommendations that will help thousands of Kentucky nonprofits better achieve their missions,” said Tim Delaney, president and CEO of the National Council of Nonprofits. “Fortunately, Kentucky can benefit from the work of task forces in other states that have successfully worked to eliminate useless red tape and streamline processes to help taxpayers, governments, nonprofits, and individuals receiving vital services.”

Seven executive cabinet officials were also appointed to represent state government in task force discussions.

At the first meeting, Clore and Beth Bowsky, policy specialist in Government-Nonprofit Contracting with the National Council of Nonprofits, presented research findings on the challenges Kentucky nonprofits report in their contractual relationships with state government. The task force identified the key issues facing both nonprofits and government that it would explore further and is scheduled to submit its final report to the Legislative Research Commission and Gov. Matt Bevin by Oct. 31.

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About the Kentucky Nonprofit Network:

Kentucky Nonprofit Network is the state association of nonprofits, existing to strengthen and advance Kentucky’s nonprofit community. The association serves as a resource for nonprofit leaders, board members and other volunteers, an information center on effective nonprofit organizational practices, and an advocate for the nonprofit sector. For more information about the Kentucky Nonprofit Network, visit <http://www.kynonprofits.org>.