



**Special Grant Proposal  
Meeting Minutes  
Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males  
Government Center South  
Conference Room 5 Wabash Hall  
302 W. Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
Wednesday, December 6, 2023**

**Call to Order:** A Special Grant Proposal meeting of the Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males (ICSSBM) was held on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, in person at the Government Center South Building, Conference Room 5, and virtually via WebEx. The meeting was called to order at 10:44am.

**Roll call - Commissioners in attendance:** Commissioner Kenneth Allen (Speaker Huston), Commissioner Damein Jones (Proxy FSSA), Commissioner (Chair) Kari Jones (Proxy Div. of Mental Health and Addiction), Commissioner Richard Okello (Proxy ICRC), Commissioner Kesha Rich (Proxy IDOA), and Commissioner Tori Williams (Proxy Dept. of Corrections).

**Via WebEx:** Commissioner Elijah Neal (Senator Bray), Commissioner (Vice-Chair) Dave Rozzell (Senator Bray), Commissioner David Stewart (Proxy to Lt. Governor), and Commissioner Larry Stribling Jr. (Proxy Dept. of Health).

**Commissioners absent:** Commissioner Vaneta Becker (Senator), Commissioner William Durham (Proxy Dept. of Education), Commissioner Shanel Poole (Speaker Huston), Commissioner Dwayne Sawyer (Senator Bray), Commissioner Vernon Smith (Representative), Commissioner Lamar Sykes (Speaker Huston), and Commissioner Greg Taylor (Senator).

Commissioner (Chair) Kari Jones stated a quorum was established at 10:47am.

**Others in attendance:** N/A

**Chair's Report:** Chair Jones opened the meeting by thanking and acknowledging grant subcommittee members, Commissioner Richard Okello for chairing the committee, Commissioner Tori Williams, Commissioner/Vice-chair Dave Rozzell, and Commissioner Damein Jones for their hard work reviewing twenty-three proposals and making recommendations. Following the Chair's announcement, she turned the proceedings over to the ICSSBM Grant Subcommittee to review the 2023 grant proposals.

**Grant Sub-Committee:** Commissioner Richard Okello thanked the subcommittee and Director Giles for their hard work regarding the grant recommendation process. Commissioner Okello stated that the sub-committee recommended that four agencies be funded for 2023. The four applicants were selected out of 23 proposals for \$12,850.00 out of \$13,000.00 the Commission agreed to allocate for this year.

Commissioner Okello presented the first agency recommended for a grant, "Multiple Pathways to Recovery L.L.C." (MPTR) The project, seeks to guide individuals struggling with substance abuse on the Far East Side of Indianapolis toward recovery. MPTR will work primarily with black men in Cumberland, Irvington, Raymond Park, and Warren Township. They will provide one-on-one peer support and facilitate intensive outpatient programs, aftercare strategies, and group sessions of motivational speaking based on the lived experiences of the struggle and recovery from substance use disorder.

The treatment program based on the Five Stages of Change or the Transtheoretical model of addiction recovery evaluates a person's readiness to change negative behavior into a positive one. MPTR will also provide resources for employment, housing, health, food, clothing, and other basic needs. In addition, MPTR will offer internships to black men during their certification process to combat inequality in the recovery community.

Success will be measured by tracking clients' data by following their progress through the Stages of Change. The funding request was for \$10,000, but the subcommittee voted to allocate \$5,250 for job interview support and scholarships to train six recovery specialists (the funds will go directly to the school).

The second proposal presented by Commissioner Okello was the "100 Black Sons Tie Initiative," facilitated by the Elkhart Chapter of the Indiana Black Expo. The project is a three-week program that will teach Black male participants between the ages of 13 and 19 the importance of a tie and its connection to college, career, and other opportunities that can advance their social mobility and enhance their generational wealth.

Black youth will meet three times per week in March 2024 to learn communication skills, the importance of appearance, financial literacy, and career and workplace readiness. In April, participants will visit the State House and meet with elected and appointed officials and state agency leaders to learn how to engage in the legislative process and governance and how decisions that impact their lives and communities are made.

Success for this project will be measured by reviewing academic transcripts, suspension rates, criminal justice involvement, and whether they are drug and alcohol-free. The funding request was \$12,700, but the subcommittee voted to allocate \$2,100 for 50 ties and 50 shirts.

Commissioner Tori Williams presented the third agency, The K.I.N.G.S. Corner, a distinctive proposal that targets a specific audience: Black male entrepreneurs. The project aims to improve the mental health of Black male entrepreneurs by using therapy and self-care as the tools they need to grow their businesses successfully.

This project stems from a private, offline community of Black males across central Indiana who gather monthly to discuss their mental health and self-care. The program consists of wellness walks, yoga and mindfulness sessions, basketball games, and prayer calls. "The K.I.N.G.S. Corner" connects Black male entrepreneurs in central Indiana with a network of Black male therapists, psychiatrists, and psychologists in a culturally relevant way. The program also provides financial support to those Black males seeking therapy.

The project will include quarterly retreats, and success will be measured by pre-and post-assessments (in partnership with providers) to track the qualitative growth of Black males in the area of mental health and gauge the impact and success of this project. The funding request was \$13,000, but the subcommittee voted to allocate \$2,500.

The last grant proposal recommendation was present by Commissioner Damein Jones. The Y.M.C.A.'s "Young Men of Distinction" project is a six-week program for young men of color with one-hour weekly and a five-hour Saturday experience to achieve specific goals. The highly interactive course features guest speakers, leadership development, life skills training, career exposure, and financial literacy for young men of color. The target audience is young men ages 10-17 in historically excluded or underserved neighborhoods primarily in Marion County.

Success will be measured by pre-and post-feedback surveys with program implementation team members and interviews with participants in the program. The funding request was for \$13,000, but the subcommittee voted to allocate \$3,000 for experimental learning (field trips, college tours, overnight retreats, career days, and vocational experiences).

Following the Grant Subcommittee report, ICSSBM Chair, Kari Jones made a motion to recommend grant awards to Multiple Pathways to Recovery L.L.C., "100 Black Sons Tie Initiative," facilitated by the Elkhart Chapter of the Indiana Black Expo, The K.I.N.G.S. Corner, and Y.M.C.A.'s "Young Men of Distinction." The motion was approved by Commissioner Kenneth Allen and seconded by Commissioner Kesha Rich.

Roll-call vote as follows: Commissioner Kenneth Allen (Y), Commissioner Damein Jones (Y), Commissioner (Chair) Kari Jones (Y) Commissioner Elijah Neal (Y), Commissioner Richard Okello (Y), Commissioner Kesha Rich (Y), Commissioner (Vice-Chair) Dave Rozzell (Y), Commissioner David Stewart (Y), Commissioner Larry Stribling Jr. (Y), and Commissioner Tori Williams (Y). The vote passed unanimously.

There being no further business to discuss, the ICSSBM December Special Grant Proposal meeting concluded at 11:02am.