



Business and
Professional
Women's
Foundation

June 25, 2014

CCSWG Commissioners
CA Commission on Status of Women & Girls
900 N Street, Suite 390
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear CA Commission on the Status of Women and Girls Commissioners:

Business and Professional Women's (BPW) Foundation wanted you to be aware that the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls (CCSWG) has not fulfilled its financial and legal obligations to BPW Foundation for the development and use of the CA Joining Forces Mentoring Plus web portal and mentorship program. We ask you to review the history, events and actions of this joint project and resolve the outstanding payments as soon as possible. BPW Foundation acted in good faith and specifically developed the custom portal for California women veterans under agreement with and for CCSWG, Executive Director, Rebecca Blanton, to assist and support California women veterans of all eras/ages, military spouses and women caregivers of wounded warriors (and now, in addition, female survivors of fallen service members) as they transition from military to civilian careers or improve their current employment/career situations.

With a BPW history of almost 100 years, BPW Foundation began in 1956 and is a 501(c) (3) research and education organization dedicated to improving the workplace through women, family, and veteran-friendly practices. Our mission is to empower women to achieve their full potential and assist employers to establish successful workplaces through education, research, information, and policy. BPW has a grassroots reach with Legacy Members located in 47 states, including the state of California. Our social media reach has exceeded 600,000.

BPW Foundation's Joining Forces for Women Veterans and Military Spouses Mentoring Plus® (JFMP) is a nationally recognized program with more than 70 organizational partners that support the aspirations of women veterans, military spouses, caregivers of wounded warriors and survivors of fallen service members as they seek meaningful careers. Its successes have been documented by testimonials from our volunteer working women mentors and mentees, including U.S. Congressional testimony and major media stories. Public and private sector program partners engage volunteer working women mentors and subject matter experts from the base of partner employees, supporters, legacy members and networks of women's coalitions.

On Veteran's Day (November 11) 2013 CCSWG and BPW Foundation co-launched the California Joining Forces Mentoring Plus portal/program at a public press conference attended by First Vice Chair of the Executive Committee of the CCSWG Commission, Lupita Cortez Alcala of Sacramento, Executive Director of CCSWG, Rebecca Blanton, Roslyn Ridgeway, Chair of the BPW Foundation Board of Trustees and BPW Foundation CEO Deborah L. Frett. CCSWG Commissioner Alcala, CCSWG Executive Director Blanton, BPW Foundation Chair Ridgeway and a California-based JFMP mentee provided spoken remarks. Additionally, a letter of welcome from CCSWG Commissioner Chair Davis was posted on the homepage of the CCSWG CA JFMP website/portal. There was press coverage of the event and the White House sent a communique conveying First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden's congratulations on the launch. (See accompanying Select Supporting Documents to letter and timeline.) Since that time the CCSWG Joining Forces Mentoring Plus portal has been promoted on our website and in written materials, and referenced in our Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) report and in Congressional

testimony. We have also been approached by the National Association of Commissions for Women to present at their July 2014 conference and we were hoping to be able to share the CCSWG-CA JFMP portal as a model for other states.

Executive Director Blanton requested that CCSWG take the lead with the state of California paperwork authorization process in order to ensure proper CCSWG procedures and accommodate its intent to access more than one revenue stream. It was explained to us that CCSWG would fund the initial launch of the portal, and seek additional private sector support to fund this important initiative for California's women who have served our country. Over the course of numerous months, Ms. Blanton represented project approval, indicated permission for BPW Foundation to receive funds and provided the necessary paperwork and processes demonstrating that the project was CCSWG compliant. At no time were any procedural impediments raised or mentioned. (See accompanying Select Supporting Documents to letter and timeline.)

As of today, we have not received a payment in any amount for the one-time acquisition from a sole-source provider of portal design and set up services, and the on-going monthly subscription service and support fees for the mentoring program. We developed and delivered the custom portal as mutually agreed and until just recently (May 2014) the link to the portal was featured on the CCSWG website when it was removed (unbeknownst to us) without even the professional courtesy of notifying BPW Foundation. It also appears that other previously posted references to the CA JFMP portal and launch have recently been removed as well without notice. However, it is important to note that the CA JFMP portal website is still live and accessible through other mutually agreed upon venues determined and implemented with the original launch. In fact, CA mentees and other constituents continue to sign up.

Since last year we have been working in good faith with CCSWG staff to secure payment to no avail. The Executive Director assured us in numerous emails that the (to-date) total invoices payment of \$70,000 was in the mail and that the remaining \$30,000 balance would be paid after June 2014. We are well over the 45 day CA Prompt Payment Act clause for the initial \$70,000 and we still have no clear understanding of what steps are being taken by CCSWG to resolve this matter in fairness to BPW Foundation. (See accompanying Select Supporting Documents to letter and timeline.)

We are disappointed that a commission supporting women and girls, as well as women veterans and military families, would act in such a manner. Public service and those in charge of it should follow and uphold a higher standard.

We urge the Commissioners to take the necessary action to ensure that our agreement is honored and that BPW Foundation is compensated. Following that, we can then move forward together to serve California's women veterans and military families.

We look forward to hearing from the CCSWG Commissioners on the timely and fair resolution of this matter.

Respectfully,



Deborah L. Frett
CEO
BPW Foundation

CC Roslyn Ridgeway, Chair, BPW Foundation

Timeline – (See accompanying Select Supporting Documents to letter and timeline.)

April 2013 – Deborah Frett, BPW Foundation CEO Introduced to Rebecca Blanton, CCSWG Executive Director by Lindsey Sin, Cal Vet Deputy Director of Women Veterans Affairs at CA Black Chamber event in Sacramento.

May 2013 – Blanton requested Frett put together a package of JFMP materials for Blanton to present at her meeting with CA Secretary of State Bowen regarding BPW Foundation's e-mentoring program.

July 2013 – Blanton presented at the annual National Association for Commissions on Women in San Jose, CA. Referenced availability of \$500,000 state of CA allocation monies that would be used, in part, for the purpose of a woman veteran's e-mentoring service. BPW Foundation Trustee and Chair of Hawaii Commission on Status of Women and Girls was in attendance.

August 2013 – Frett attended CCSWG (Mitchell & Davis) and Sony "Friend" Raising event in Culver City, CA. Introduced several attendees and Commissioners to BPW Foundation and JFMP. Prospected with Blanton regarding funding for CA JFMP portal. Talked with Commissioner Davis about CA JFMP concept and funding model, including her confirmation of being briefed on concept by Blanton. Commissioner Davis directed Frett to work directly with Executive Director Blanton.

Blanton and Frett met to review JFMP concept, CA JFMP portal mock-up and discussed objectives and elements of an arrangement.

September 2013 – Presented JFMP at Cal/Vets annual women veterans event. Finalized arrangement with Blanton to move forward with the CA JFMP portal. Provided Blanton with test access to website for Commissioner Davis' review. BPW Foundation agreed to a multiple payment process including opportunity for CCSWG to fundraise specifically for CA JFMP and have all funds raised/collected run-through CCSWG.

October 2013 – Executive Director Blanton indicated that the CCSWG CA JFMP portal and e-mentoring program should be announced and released on Veteran's Day, November 11, 2013. In addition, Ms. Blanton requested that CCSWG take the lead with the state of California authorization paperwork in order to accommodate CCSWG procedures and its intent to access more than one revenue stream, including focused underwriting/fundraising.

BPW Foundation completed prototype, designed, developed, generated content and prepared for start-up and launch on November 11, 2013. Linked CA JFMP portal to CA website.

November 2013 – On November 11, 2013 CCSWG and BPW Foundation co-launched the California Joining Forces Mentoring Plus portal/program at a public press conference attended by news outlets, First Vice Chair of the Executive Committee of the CCSWG Commission, Lupita Cortez Alcalá of Sacramento, Executive Director of CCSWG, Rebecca Blanton, Roslyn Ridgeway, Chair of the BPW Foundation Board of Trustees, BPW Foundation CEO Deborah L. Frett and a California-based JFMP mentee.

CCSWG interviewed by CA televised news station, which was then broadcast.

A letter from CCSWG Chair Davis was posted on the CA JFMP portal homepage.

The November 18, 2013 CCSWG Meeting Notice & Agenda (and related Executive Director's Report), Item VII, New Business, New project – Women Veteran's Mentorship Portal references the program and funding update for the CCSWG Commissioners knowledge.

December 2013 - First set of invoices sent to CCSWG Executive Director, Rebecca Blanton.

February 2014 – Blanton wrote to Frett on February 7, 2014 that she “just got permission this morning to move \$70,000 to your account between now and June.” (See Select Supporting Documents for Email.)

Honored request from CCSWG Executive Director Blanton for a different billing invoice structure to multiple invoices and submitted requested corresponding state of California authorization paperwork and said invoices for payment.

Blanton indicated to Frett that payment would take 45-60 days to reach BPW Foundation.

March 2014 – Still no indication from CCSWG that there were any impediments to the process of BPW Foundation getting paid by CCSWG.

April, May, June 2014 – BPW Foundation notified CCSWG Executive Director Blanton no longer with CCSWG. BPW Foundation working with Interim Director, Chris Wagaman and CCSWG Legal Counsel, Marian Johnston to provide background documents and communications, to resolve CCSWG payment for services already rendered and authorized for payment, and explore future CCSWG participation with CA JFMP portal and e-mentoring program.