



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES**

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MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 18, 2023

Location #1: DPSS Administration – Human Resources
12851 Crossroads Parkway South – CR 201
City of Industry, CA 91746

Location #2: Manhattan Beach Library
1320 Highland Avenue Room B
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

Please note this is a summary of the meeting not a “verbatim” transcription.

1.0 CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / ESTABLISH A QUORUM

Adele Andrade-Stadler, Chairperson

Meeting was called to order at 10:38 a.m. The Chair opened the meeting stating the following, we acknowledge the First peoples upon whose land the County of Los Angeles now sits at public meetings is a first but meaningful step that we, as a County family, can take to build positive relationships and advance truth, healing, and transformation with the County’s local Tribes and American Indian and Alaska Native community.

A quorum was established at 10:48 a.m. Pursuant to AB 2449, I am required to state when a commissioner is participating via teleconference. Today, Commissioner Sue ElHessen has met the requirements of AB 2449 under “special circumstances” and will be participating via teleconference under that exception: (1)(2)(3). Does anyone object? There were no objections.

Commissioner Booker Pearson attended the meeting from an alternate location (Manhattan beach Library – Room B) under Brown Act Teleconferencing rules.

Roll Call/Commissioners Present:

Adele Andrade-Stadler (Chair)	Summer McBride
Yvonne Chan	Booker Pearson
Michael Flood	Andrew Yam
Mihran Kalaydjian	Sue ElHessen
Pollyanna Lee	Dynasty Taylor

Commissioners Excused / Unexcused:

Joe Brown (E) Mary Galvan Rosas (E)
Veronica Lewis (E)

Commission Staff:

La France Toliver
Tina Phan

Introduction of Guests

Jackie Contreras, Ph.D., DPSS
Michael Sylvester, DPSS
Carrie Miller, Ph.D., PAI
Luis Ontiveros, DPSS

Regina Adkins-Williams, DPSS
Lisa Hayes, DPSS
Julia Almanzan, County Counsel

2.0 REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM APRIL 20, 2023, MEETING

Adele Andrade-Stadler, Chairperson

The Chair for a motion to approve the April 20, 2023, minutes. Commissioner Yam approved and Commissioner Kalaydjian seconded the motion. The Chair called for the vote and the minutes were approved by majority vote with one abstention as follows:

Adele Andrade-Stadler - Aye	Summer McBride - Aye
Yvonne Chan - Aye	Booker Pearson - Aye
Michael Flood - Abstained	Andrew Yam - Aye
Mihran Kalaydjian - Aye	Sue ElHessen - Aye
Pollyanna Lee - Aye	Dynasty Taylor - Aye

3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT (Non-Agenda Items) / (Agenda Items)

Adele Andrade-Stadler, Chairperson

Ms. Li Chia of NLSLA provided comments on Agenda Item 5.0 (General Relief Program). Chairperson Andrade-Stadler asked Ms. Chia if she could provide a written statement on her comments. Ms. Chia stated she would.

4.0 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Jackie Contreras, Ph.D., Director

Dr. Contreras provided the following Board and Departmental updates on Evolving from Mandated Reporter to Mandated Supporter, Partnering to Address Food Insecurity during CalFresh Awareness Month, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Older Americans Month, Armed Forces Day, Older Americans Day, EBT Skimming update, DPSS Strategic Plan 2022-27, and CalFresh Awareness Month Update. Handout was provided.

5.0 **CONTINUED BUSINESS**

Presentation: General Relief (GR) Program Overview: Discuss the impact Department's collaborative efforts with community partners to increase stability for homeless GR participants; Identify and analyze the impact evidence-based outcomes of DPSS' partnerships with local homeless providers; and Discuss service delivery for GR/TAY participants.

GR & CF Division - Homeless Services Section
Luis Ontiveros, Human Services Administrator III
Regina Adkins-Williams, Human Services Administrator III
Lisa Hayes, Human Services Administrator III

Mr. Ontiveros, Ms. Adkins-Williams and Ms. Hayes provided the following information:

Mr. Ontiveros provided an overview of the GR Program, including basic eligibility requirements, funding and supportive services to indigent adults who do not qualify for state or federal public assistance programs. Most GR cases consist of a single person household and report no income or property.

As of March 2023, the General Relief (GR) caseload consists of 115,743 cases and 116,094 individuals receiving GR benefits. Approximately 79,000 (68%) individuals report as being homeless and approximately 70% of the caseload is designated as employable.

The GR caseload consists of the following employability classifications:

Employable (E) - GR participants who are able to participate in employment related activities are considered Employable. Employable participants are required to participate in the General Relief Opportunities for Work (GROW) Program. An Employable participant may receive GR benefits for a maximum of 277 days out of any 365-day period.

Unemployable (U) - Unemployable participants are not time limited, nor are they required to participate in GROW. Permanently disabled participants must apply for SSI and are referred to a countywide benefits advocacy program for assistance.

Administratively Unemployable (AU) - GR participants who are not able to work due to circumstances other than physical or mental disabilities may be designated as AU.

Needs Special Assistance (NSA) - GR participants with confirmed mental disabilities are designated as NSA.

Unemployable Volunteer (UV) - GR participants designated as Unemployable may volunteer to participate in the GROW program. Participation in the GROW program is limited by the disabilities or restrictions determined by the primary care provider.

Ms. Adkins-Williams presented on the following additional supportive and advocacy services provided to GR applicants /participants:

Mandatory Substance Use Disorder Recovery Program (MSUDRP) - Helps GR applicants and participants recover from alcohol and/or drug dependency. It provides six consecutive months of treatment, plus one three-month extension without regard to employability status or remaining time on GR. Treatment is provided through the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

Countywide Benefits Entitlement Service Team (CBEST) - Social Workers from the Department of Health Services (DHS) and their contractors provide advocacy to help individuals who are physically/mentally disabled apply for SSI advocacy services. These Social Workers also assist GR participants who are disabled and homeless apply for housing assistance. DPSS contracts with a law firm to represent GR participants during the SSI appeal process. Individuals can apply for GR via the following application channels/access points: mail or fax, in person at a local GR district office, telephone, or BenefitsCal.

Tayportunity Guaranteed Income Program - The Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) launched a Guaranteed Income (GI) Program for General Relief Opportunities for Work (GROW), Transitional-Aged Youth (TAY) ages 18-24 on August 31, 2022. The TAYportunity GI Program provides a basic monthly income payment for 36 months to 300 program participants. The TAYportunity GI Program offers participants a monthly GI payment of \$1,000; Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Apprenticeship opportunities; and benefits Counseling services, financial literacy, and money management support. GR income, resource, and time limits are suspended for GI program participants. Additionally, DPSS received approval from the State to waive the GI payment when determining CalFresh eligibility.

To date we accepted 300 GI applications, 293 are currently receiving, 7 were terminated. We contacted 300 participants regarding financial literacy; 73 expressed interest and 56 attended the sessions; 233 were referred to orientation, 170 completed orientation and 97 are enrolled in Tayportunity.

General Relief Housing and Case Management Program - Assists eligible GR participants who are experiencing homelessness or are at-risk of becoming homeless by providing a monthly rental subsidy. The subsidy is a maximum of \$475/month for one person and a maximum of \$950 for couple cases.

The GR participant is required to contribute \$100 each month from the GR benefit toward his/her rent. The \$475 subsidy plus the \$100 contribution, a total of \$575 monthly for a single person or \$1150 (\$950 plus \$200 contribution) monthly for a couple case, is paid directly to the landlord once housing is secured.

GR participants interested in the program are referred to a GR Homeless Case Manager (GRHCM) in the GR district office to obtain additional information about the program and assistance with the application and enrollment process, monitor progress, and offer available resources.

Homeless Services Model for GR Single Adults - As part of the Department's current strategic plan, GR Program is working on the development of a Homeless Services Model for GR Single Adults to reduce the incidences of homelessness among the GR single adult population. This is a multi-year effort, which expected to lead to the implementation of the newly developed program by 2025. The work associated with this project will be conducted over three phases.

Phase 1 – The research will be completed by July 2023. We conducted a demographic assessment of the GR homeless population. We initiated a homeless survey among our GR participants to identify levels of homelessness experienced and identify needed services. We conducted interviews with various agencies, to identify how we can connect our participants to housing and supportive services.

Phase 2 – Is targeted for complete development of the program by July 2024. This includes to develop a program based on the research conducted in Phase I, including both homeless assistance and supportive services; engaging community stakeholders in the process of developing the program; identifying county and community partners/agencies that we can directly connect single adults to receive homeless services and draft measurable program outcomes.

Phase 3 – We implement the newly developed program by July 2025, tracking and evaluating data related to the established measurable outcomes; and evaluate the progress and impact of the program post-implementation on the GR single adult homeless population.

Ms. Hayes discussed the impact of the Department's collaborative efforts with community partners to increase stability for homeless GR participants. We have been in collaborative relationships with LAHSA, DMH, DHS, and the CEO, since the onset of COVID. Our homeless team coordinated co-location services and our Med-Cal Outreach team provided the colocation services. Most recently, as a result of the Emergency Declaration, we provided homeless colocation services where they provided us with a roster of their hotel residents that may be impacted by DPSS, and we cleared them through our system to see if they are receiving services. Our primary concern is a secondary population which are those that are not known to DPSS. We want to engage them and try to provide them with the services they need such as GR, CalFresh and Medi-Cal.

As part of the new declaration, we were asked to duplicate the services provided for Project RoomKey, Homekey, and Mainstream and Interim Housing. We have been tasked with reducing homelessness within our own department by 20% and we are also participating in the research study where Luis' team will need to execute a housing for single adult's model. To execute a housing model, one of our areas of concern was to learn who's providing services to the homeless participants that are known to DPSS? What kind of services are they providing? What are the eligibility requirements for homeless services? What kind of funding are they using? What kind of database do they have? Is it something we can leverage to use for our own services? These questions have been asked of LAHSA, and over 27 LA County community agencies. County departments like DMH, DHA Probation, DCBA have some type of program to assist their homeless participants and what we were looking for was entry points.

Now we are analyzing interviews and data collected, and we will make recommendations as to what can be enhanced, added, and created for the homeless participants we serve. Here are some of the outcomes of these services: Approximately 87% of the residents we've cleared are known to DPSS. At the onset of COVID, it was at 70%. Post COVID, we are seeing an increase. We are finding that when these participants are matched to housing through LAHSA or other agencies, DPSS has agreed to provide copies of their ID and birth certificates, Social Security, Legal Residence Cards, which was provided to us for eligibility purposes. This is to help link them to housing, or help LAHSA and other agencies secure housing, so that they are no longer having to live on the street.

We have cleared over 6500 individuals in Mainstream Interim Housing, which started in March 2021 and ongoing. We found that of that group, 867 were unknown to DPSS, 802 were over age 65. Of the services individuals needed to apply for, we had 268 individuals that needed DPSS services; 105 applied for GR, 167 applied Medi-Cal & CalFresh, and 70 applied for Medi-Cal only. We issued 105 EBT Cards, 34 Medi-Cal cards, and 78 Verification of Benefits documents; two needed waivers for DMV to replace their ID; and we had over 400 individuals with existing cases that needed help and our staff were able to assist them to get those issues resolved.

Presentation: CEO - Poverty Alleviation Initiative

Chief Executive Office

Carrie D. Miller, Ph.D., Executive Director

Dr. Miller provided the following information:

I am really happy to be here. I'm the Executive Director of the County Poverty Alleviation Initiative. We were created via board motion in August of 2021, and we were given two charges. One was to create a strategic plan for alleviating poverty countrywide, as well as launch a county wide guaranteed income program for 1000 people to get \$1000 a month for three years.

In order to put this together, in the first step, I did some listening sessions, mostly because I wanted to hear from people who lived expertise with poverty; either those who had been in poverty were feeling like they could be in poverty or had been in poverty and gotten themselves out. I started with countywide listening sessions. I spoke to 643 people who told me they had some lived expertise with poverty, as well as engaging 148 community partners across the LA County on working with them in terms of their ideas and thoughts. On this slide, you see a sampling of the types of organizations I spoke to, but there are 100 others. I engaged at 23 of our county departments to get input from county employees working in the space and what they thought as well.

The concepts that came out of these listening sessions was that people matter and that we need to show dignity and respect in all solutions going forward. That there was a clear interdependence between equity well-being and poverty. We needed to understand and work within that interdependence that we needed to look at removing systemic barriers, structural racism, oppression, and privilege in the work that we did, that we needed to make sure that our systems were more responsive and had not only just responding to issues but creating opportunities for success.

What I came to believe after talking to everybody and listening to all the folks that I spoke to is really a belief that we can alleviate. This is a solvable problem, but we have to actually care enough to do it, which means we need to actually put our money where our mouth is and walk the walk on how to actually do this and truly prioritize the work going forward.

Poverty Alleviation Model

With this, you'll see this is basically the logic model that supports the purpose of where the strategic framework is going. On the left-hand side are the four main strategies that came out of those listening sessions which are: invest in our communities, strengthening pathways, opportunities expand, access to basic supports, and improve our service to prevent poverty; as well as what are the efforts needed to mitigate poverty, with the ultimate goal of let's get everyone to a level of financial stability across the county defined by them in terms of what they think that means for themselves.

Each strategy has examples of actions to be worked on. The actions in blue are new efforts and the ones that are in the dark gray are existing efforts that need to be expanded or grown more fully. What also came out of these conversations was that there's a need to make sure that we have an advocacy agenda, as well moving forward, since a lot of the rules are governed by both federal and state laws. This is just like a categorization of the types of things that I heard that really require a legislative fix.

We put a plan together and I sent out a draft to everyone who would participate in listening sessions, incorporated feedback from all of 1000 participants, and put the draft together which was submitted it to the Board last summer.

PAI Five Starting Priorities

On July 12th, the Board adopted the plan and asked PAI to come back with five priorities of where to start, with the idea that this is a very comprehensive plan, and it can't all be done at the same time. The first is "supporting grassroots lead community projects." With this, what we're doing is identifying 21 communities where grassroots residents are coming together to decide to receive a grant. The point is for them to decide for themselves what they think is a way to either address a root cause of poverty or the effect of poverty in their community. We're giving them grant dollars to go and execute it and then we will evaluate the results on what happens.

The second priority is "maximizing guaranteed income resources available." As I mentioned, we launch a guaranteed income program called Breathe. We are now in the process of expanding that to include 200 former LA County Foster youth in that program, and that will launch end of June. We think we'll have folks enrolled by August, and then we also are in the process of the launching another guaranteed income program in partnership with DPH for pregnant people. We are targeting between 200 and 400 pregnant people that will launch this fall, with the idea that we believe that the income will also have a positive effect on birth outcomes. We are studying and testing that out as well.

The third priority is “increasing tax filing credits.” We created a collaborative process this year to bring together all the entities working on increasing tax filings, with the idea that we know there's about \$20 million annually left on the table in LA County, for people who are eligible for tax refunds that they're not claiming. The idea was, let's get them to get the word out. Let's help people file their taxes so they can claim those tax credits. We are just in the process of collecting that data now. I am hoping it will be positive, but we'll have more to report on that in the coming months.

The fourth priority is “developing a person-centered service delivery model,” which countless people believe will get us to a better place in terms of being able to serve clients from more a holistic point of view. The way we are starting with this is at the leadership of Dr. Contreras looking at DPSS, and how do we improve customer service throughout the department for all programs as a way to start building us toward person centered service delivery model.

The fifth priority is reforming General Relief Program. You've heard already the existing program, which is on the left (slide) of what currently exists. A lot of what is there, are things that we think we can improve upon or make better. In the right-hand columns where I want you to focus on is what we are going to do to try to reform that.

Currently, we're in the process of analyzing the local policy as well as some similar policy of general relief that's in WIC. We are looking at what the differences are between our local policy and WIC. Making an analysis to see what is imposed locally, as well as what is imposed at the State level, to understand where the wiggle room is, and the areas we can make improvements in this program.

We believe that this program, over 100 years old, has had very little reform to it, and has built-in structural racism; has all kinds of negative attributes that don't service our clients in the best way they could be served. The analysis is in progress, and next we want to identify what are the goals that we want participants to achieve, and with that, we are going to create a stakeholder process. We hope to be kicking off in the next few months to bring stakeholders and external partners together with county partners; to talk about and look at this analysis; examine where are those areas and gaps that we want to do differently; come up with a set of recommendations to go to the Board to hopefully be adopted. We think that this will allow us to get GR moving in a better direction instead of just trapping people in poverty. This program can serve as a steppingstone to help people get out of poverty. That is the goal.

What was really exciting about this, is a big part of the push of the strategic framework, was around the idea that we can't get there alone. It is going to take key partners coming together to truly solve poverty. There are 18 other actions where other partners have stepped up to lead, that also are part of implementation of the plan.

Measuring Success

Of course, you must measure it all. This slide is our high-level macro framework for how we're going to measure what we've done with this strategic plan.

We have our goal at the top. We have our three macro level measurements: opportunity and mobility, social inclusion, and well-being; and then the lower level are the programmatic measures. What we were doing in the process is identifying a research team to help us identify what are the right indicators under these high-level measurements, which we will use going forward to measure whether we were successful in this effort.

Between now and July, we are bringing on the researcher. We're implementing the priority actions. We're always looking for additional partners who want to step up and lead other actions in partnership with us, and then we will be reporting back to the board in July on what our progress is.

Chairperson Andrade Stadler thanked Dr. Miller for sharing her presentation with the commission about the Poverty Alleviation Initiative.

Follow up: Commissioner Flood has questions concerning GR and will submit them to La France Toliver by email.

6.0 COMMISSION BUSINESS

Adele Andrade Stadler, Chairperson
La France Toliver, Executive Director

Commission Meeting Start Time / Length of Time

There was a suggestion from Commissioner Lewis for the commission meetings to return to the regular time span of two hours. Currently, the meeting time is for 1 hour and 30 minutes. However, our meetings have been going over the time and presentations are hurried.

The normal duration for our commission meetings is two hours, which started at 10am and ended at 12 noon. In 2019, there was a request by the previous Director of the department, to move the meeting day from second Thursday of the month to the third Thursday of the month; and meeting time change to 10:30am - 12:30pm, due to a scheduling conflict. The Commission approved the request, and the meeting day and time were changed. The meeting day was amended in the By Laws. In 2020, the pandemic hit, and another change was made by the Chair to shorten meeting time for 1-hour updates from the DPSS Director. Later, the time span expanded to 1 hour and 30 minutes, which is where we are today.

We can go back to the 10 am to 12 noon timeframes; we just need to vote on it. Commissioner Chan stated the concern would be for those that have to make a 2-hour drive, depending on the meeting location. We have two possible locations pending. Both are a little closer and more accessible. One is DPW in Alhambra, the other is in LA on Vermont near USC. We are still waiting for the final approval from DPW. Commissioner Kalaydjian suggested rotating from supervisorial district to supervisorial district.

7.0 CHAIR'S REPORT

Chairperson Andrade Stadler announced the Commission's Election of Officers - June 15, 2023, for both Chair and Vice Chair. Elections are held every two years at the June meeting. Chairperson Andrade Stadler asked for a volunteer or two to be on the Nomination Committee to conduct the nominations at the meeting and counting of ballots.

Commissioners Yam and Kalaydjian volunteered to be on the committee. According to the By Laws, at each election, all commissioners are eligible, provided a nomination is made. Nominations can also be made from the floor or sent by email to the Executive Director.

Our Agenda Topic for June is GOAL 3 of our workplan: *To Evaluate In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Program to Improve Coordination Across All Levels of Government to Address Mental Health Needs.*

8.0 ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.