



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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HYBRID MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 19, 2023
12851 Crossroads Parkway South
City of Industry, CA 91746

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 10:30 a.m. A quorum was established.

Roll Call/Commissioners Present:

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

Commissioners Absent:

Raul Estrada (E)	Mary Galvan Rosas (E)
Joe Brown (U)	Paige Pelonis (U)

Commission Staff:

La France Toliver
Tina Phan

Introduction of Guests

Jackie Contreras, Ph.D., DPSS
Julia Almanzan, County Counsel
Kelly LoBianco, DEO
Kristina Meza, DEO
Luther Evans, DPSS
Monica Nguyen, DPSS
Lorraine Sinelkof, DPSS

2.0 REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 2022 MEETING

Adele Andrade-Stadler, Chairperson

MOTION: Commissioner Flood moved to approve the minutes and Commissioner Commissioner Kalaydjian seconded the motion.

CALL FOR VOTE: Minutes were approved by majority vote and one abstention as follows:

Adele Andrade-Stadler - Aye	Mihran Kalaydjian - Aye
Veronica Lewis - Abstained	Pollyanna Lee - Aye
Yvonne Chan - Aye	Booker Pearson - Aye
Sue ElHessen - Aye	Dynasty Taylor - Aye
Michael Flood - Aye	

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

Adele Andrade-Stadler, Chairperson

Genesis Foster-Dyer and Kevin Aslanian commented on their concerns regarding EBT skimming and the amount of time it takes to restore benefits. There were no comments on agenda items.

4.0 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Jackie Contreras, Ph.D., Interim Director

Dr. Contreras provided updates on the following:

The Federal government continues to issue CalFresh Emergency Allotments (EA). As of December 18, 2022, approximately \$3.7 Billion in CalFresh Emergency Allotment benefits have been issued to over 23 million individuals/families in LA County. The EA for December was issued on January 8, 2023. The EA for January 2023 has been approved to be issued on February 5, 2023.

CDSS has informed us that EA will end in March 2023. As a result, the last month of EA issuance will be for the February month to be issued March 26, 2023. As of April 2023, all CalFresh households will only receive their regular CalFresh benefits based on their circumstances (HH size, gross income, expenses). A mass mailer will be sent out to all CalFresh households on January 26 to inform them of this.

On December 3, Robert Luna was sworn in as the new LA County Sheriff. He previously served as Chief of Police at the Long Beach Police Department, the second largest police department in LA County, where he capped a 36-year career. Sheriff Luna replaced the outgoing Sheriff, Alex Villanueva.

On December 5, Lindsay P. Horvath was sworn in as the new Supervisor for the Third District. She previously served as City Councilmember and the longest consecutively serving Mayor for the City of West Hollywood. Supervisor Horvath replaced outgoing Supervisor Sheila Kuehl. Also, on December 5, Supervisor Hilda L. Solis was sworn in as Supervisor for the First District. She was re-elected in June 2022 for her third and last term.

The Board proclaimed Lunar New Year in LA County and recognized the Los Angeles County Asian American Employees Association and the Chinese Employees Association of Los Angeles County for their contributions to Asian American and Pacific Islander residents.

On December 11, Karen Bass was sworn in as the 43rd Mayor of Los Angeles. The next day, she declared a State of Emergency on homelessness. The goal behind this declaration is to be able to mobilize resources more quickly to address the issue of homelessness and move housing projects forward without being delayed by cumbersome red tape. At the December 20, 2022 Board Meeting, the Board of Supervisors passed a motion to support the City of Los Angeles in their State of Emergency.

At last week's Board Meeting, the Board of Supervisors approved a declaration of its own, proclaiming a Local Emergency for Homelessness in the County of Los Angeles. Proclaiming a local emergency to address this critical crisis will provide the County with additional tools to accelerate and expand its response through the Homeless Initiative and strengthen the working relationship with the County's 88 cities.

At last week's Board Meeting, the Board of Supervisors also passed a motion to raise awareness of EBT 'Skimming.' Last year, an estimated \$19 million in public benefits were stolen from our customers here in LA County through a process called "Skimming," prompting the Board of Supervisors to pass a motion to take steps to combat and raise awareness of the problem.

Skimming refers to the process of secretly installing card readers at stores, gas stations and ATMs that record and steal information encoded on the cards, including EBT cards. The Board motion calls for the County to advocate at the State and Federal levels for more security measures to protect people using public benefits and instructs the County to develop a multilingual outreach campaign to local businesses and the general public to raise awareness of skimming.

David J. Carroll was appointed to the position of Director of the Department of Youth Development, effective January 23, 2023. Mr. Carroll has 15 years of professional experience working for nonprofit organizations focused on supporting youth development in marginalized communities.

The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) opened its registration for the annual Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count. The 2023 Count will be conducted January 24, 2023, through January 26, 2023.

The annual Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count includes the Unsheltered Count, Youth Count, and Housing Inventory Count (a census of people living in interim and permanent supportive housing). LAHSA will conduct the Youth Count from January 21 through 31 and the Housing Inventory Count on January 25.

Thousands of community members across the greater Los Angeles area will count their neighbor's experiencing homelessness. The Count will help paint a picture of the progress, trends, and shifts in the fight to end homelessness.

Among last year's volunteers, 60 were current DPSS employees, and 29 were either former employees, family members and/or friends of DPSS employees. LAHSA depends on an enormous volunteer base to conduct the Homeless Count

This year, the agency is seeking volunteers to cover 8,000 shifts. For three days and nights, volunteers will count the number of persons experiencing homelessness, identify their demographic characteristics, and the locations where they reside, to increase community awareness, produce new data for planning, stimulate public support for finding solutions, and help garner funding for programs. If you wish to participate, you can register on the LAHSA website at <https://www.theycountwillyou.org/>.

DPSS is joining other California counties observing January National Human Trafficking Prevention Month with the announcement that 43 district offices are now providing a temporary safe space for youth as part of the expanded Countywide Safe Youth Zone (SYZ) Initiative.

In June 2022, the Board of Supervisors directed that the existing Safe Youth Zone initiative be expanded to include DPSS and several other county departments that serve the at-risk youth population. The next time a youth finds themselves faced with the dangers of human trafficking, exploitation, neglect, or abuse, they can now get immediate help at DPSS offices.

Designated liaisons, trained to assist youth that appear to be at risk or in need of help, will also determine if law enforcement or medical care is needed. In addition to DPSS, the initiative has added the Departments of Children Family Services, Probation, Mental Health, Health Services, and Public Health.

The Department's outreach efforts to inform the public about the November 11 deadline for families to claim expanded federal Child Tax Credit (CTC) benefits resulted in approximately \$7.5 million in refunds to low-income households in Los Angeles County.

Families received up to \$3,600 for each child under six years old, and up to \$3,000 for each child between six and 17 years old. Additionally, anyone who had a child with a Social Security number in their household also received the credit, even if they did not have a Social Security number themselves. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) made it possible for families with no recent income, or normally did not file taxes, to qualify for the full CTC refund amount. Families were also able to call 211 to get simple questions answered and obtain limited IRS-certified tax filing assistance or virtual help.

As previously shared with you, the Department’s CSCs manage two operations, one is our General Inquiry Line, and the other is our Intake Line, that accepts applications for our four primary programs (Medi-Cal, CalFresh, CalWORKs and General Relief). Today we are providing our quarterly update.

CSC (October 2022 – December 2022)

	October	November	December
Calls Received by EWs	684,864	589,555	508,733
Average Wait Time	45:59	44:34	27:32
Average Handle Time	14:22	14:09	17:36
Forced Disconnects (Dropped Calls)	35,169	35,685	20,107

Intake Call Centers Applications (October 2022 – December 2022)

	October	November	December
Applications Received (Overall)	138,744	136,618	121,565
Same Day Disposition Rate by Program (Overall)	58%	57%	52%
Applications Processed by CSC Intake / %	49,919 / 36%	44,938 / 33%	42,476 / 35%

Follow up Action: Commissioner Lewis stated it would be helpful to learn next month how and if the end of the moratorium is impacting the department. Dr. Contreras stated she would provide an update in her report.

5.0 **NEW BUSINESS**

Adele Andrade Stadler, Chairperson

COMMISSION WORK PLAN GOAL 1 – CalWORKs Supportive Services and Key Collaborations (Part 1)

CalWORKs Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Program Supportive Services /
Employment through Transitional Subsidized Employment (TSE) Program
CalWORKs & GAIN Program Division
Luther Evans, Division Chief
Monica Nguyen, HSA III
Lorraine Sinelkoff, HSA III

Dr. Contreras opened by stating the DPSS team is here to provide an update in keeping with the Commission's Work Plan. This is the area that the department will focus on. I also want to highlight that Kelly LoBianco, Director of the Department of Economic Opportunity, is with us today and she will be presenting following the DPSS presentations. Kelly has been an incredible resource to DPSS and an incredible partner with our CalWORKs and General Relief programs.

Mr. Evans introduced his team, Monica Nguyen and Lorraine Sinelkoff. They will provide an update on the overall CalWORKs GAIN Program / Supportive Services and our Transitional Subsidized Employment programs.

Ms. Nguyen provided following update:

The California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program is a time-limited program that provides financial assistance to eligible needy families with (or expecting) children to help pay for housing, food, utilities, clothing, medical care, and other necessary expenses. Generally, families are eligible to receive cash aid and services when the eligible children are deprived of parental support or care due to: Death; Incapacity; Unemployment/underemployment; or Continued absence of one or both parents. The parent/caretaker relative relationship is within the fifth degree. A needy or non-needy caretaker provide care for foster children, as well as children who were placed in their care directly by their parents.

The family's net monthly income (after applicable disregards) must be less than the Maximum Aid Payment (MAP) for family size. Children must live with a parent or relative caregiver. Aided family members must be a U.S. Citizen or eligible legal immigrant. Effective January 1, 2023, the property limit is \$10,888.

If one member of the aided/to be aided household is 60 years or older, the limit is \$16,333. Property and/or resources that are not counted towards property limit include: the home in which the family lives, furniture, appliances, tools needed for employment, and one car, with a value up to \$25,483. The principal wage earner in a two-parent family must not be employed more than 100 hours a month at the time of application.

Some of the basic verification that is requested from the applicant is: identification; social security number; citizenship; birth certificate; income; and resources. Eligibility staff determine eligibility to the program(s); inform and instruct applicants regarding required documents; and provide guidance on how to submit the verification through BenefitsCal document upload, drop-off at offices, or mail-in.

Once case is authorized/approved, applicants are automatically referred to GAIN for participation and to the Child Support Services Department for child support services. The following adults are excluded/exempted from GAIN unless there is a change in eligibility: 60 years of age or older; sanctioned; time-limited; non-needy relative(s); ineligible parent(s) due to citizenship; and parent(s) with a temporary or permanent disability.

Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Program

GAIN is the Department's CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work program and is designed to help CalWORKs participants address barriers to employment, obtain skills and education, and ultimately find employment leading to economic mobility. GAIN Services include but are not limited to: Job Search and Vocational Assessment; Education/Training/Remedial Education; Subsidized Employment; Mental Health, Substance Use Disorder and Domestic Violence Services; Family Stabilization; Support for participants during these activities, such as subsidized childcare, transportation, and ancillary expenses.

Support Services for GAIN Participants

While in activities (including employment) and if needed to attend an in-person meeting at a GAIN Region, GAIN participants are eligible for transportation and ancillary issuances.

Transportation costs include bus, mileage (if public transportation is unavailable or distance to activity is more than 1 hour one-way), and taxi/Uber under exigent circumstances.

Ancillary costs include Advanced Standard Ancillary Payments (ASAP) for students at public institutions, books, supplies, and fees in excess of the ASAP Clothing/uniforms tools needed for activities, laptops, and internet fees for activities.

Recent augmentations to GAIN Supportive Payments include diaper allowance to all CalWORKs adults with children age 3 and younger; participants are eligible for subsidized childcare regardless of their enrollment in GAIN; as of the onset of the Public Health Emergency, laptop issuances no longer have to be required by an instructor and are not only for educational activities, and policy was expanded to include internet modems and monthly internet allowance.

Mileage policy was changed to a single-tier mileage reimbursement; one time clothing allowance to all newly employed participants; and entrepreneurs and self-employed participants are eligible for ancillary payments to help establish their business/increase the likelihood of their work providing for their family (pending release January 2023).

Transitional Subsidized Employment (TSE) Program

Ms. Sinelkoff provided following update:

TSE Program is a ten-month post-assessment activity for participants who remain unemployed in the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Program. Services are arranged through a contract the Department has with the South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB), who in turn sub-contracts with America's Job Centers of California (AJCCs) located throughout the County. We currently work with AJCCs to deliver services for TSE, and three community-based organizations to deliver Enhanced TSE services. Participants may be placed in public (including county departments), non-profit, or private-for-profit employers.

The populations served are CalWORKs and Welfare-to-Work participants. The contract budget for the TSE Program for FY 2022-23 is \$43.7 million. The funds are exclusively for CalWORKs participants. Single Allocation Funds: \$6 million; Expanded Subsidized Employment (ESE) Funds: \$37.7 million.

DPSS operates three models of TSE: (1) Paid Work Experience (PWE)/ Specialized Work Experience (SWE), (2) On-the-Job Training (OJT) and (3) Enhanced TSE for CalWORKs homeless participants. All TSE participants are required to attend a paid accelerated Job Readiness Training prior to placement in a subsidized assignment.

(1) Paid Work Experience (PWE)/ Specialized Work Experience (SWE) participants are placed in government or non-profit agencies; SBWIB is the employer-of-record; DPSS pays 100% of the costs; Participants are paid county minimum wage and placements are ten months in duration.

(2) On-the-Job Training (OJT) (Employers Contribution) participants are matched to the needs of the employer and are expected to be fully work-ready. They are placed in private for-profit, or non-profit agencies. Participants may work up to ten months, earning at least county minimum wage or employer-selected wage. First five months, DPSS pays 100% of the wages with SBWIB as the employer of record, including coverage of Workers' Compensation. Next five months, the agency pays the employee wages, Workers' Compensation and FICA, and is reimbursed at a rate of 60% of each participant's wage, not to exceed a \$20 per hour wage.

(3) Enhanced Transitional Subsidized Employment (E-TSE) was developed as a response to the Countywide Homeless Initiative in 2016. It assists homeless families in successfully finding and keeping unsubsidized employment to help secure and maintain stable housing. It provides a comprehensive approach in addressing the unique

challenges faced by CalWORKs homeless families when placed in subsidized employment and offers a flexible schedule (20 hours per week to start). CBOs involved are United Automobile Workers of America (UAW); Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) and Goodwill Industries.

County Department Partnerships

The TSE Program partners with various county departments to provide real-world experience for TSE participants, while providing staffing assistance for departmental daily operations. County departments include but not limited to: LA County Public Defender; LA County Registrar - Recorder/County Clerk; Executive Office - LA County Board of Supervisors; Department of Animal Care and Control; Department of Medical Examiner-Coroner; LA County Development Authority; and Department of Parks and Recreation. Successful TSE partnerships have led to many permanent county employments.

Job Sectors

Fiscal Year (FY)	Public/County	Non-Profit	Private for-Profit
FY 2020-2021	177	705	205
FY 2021-2022	157	474	117
FY 2022-2023	63	196	44

Job industries include general office/clerical; building and ground maintenance; food services; retail; health care; manufacturing; security and education.

Outcomes

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic (FY 2018-2019), the TSE Program successfully placed 2,223 participants in subsidized employment. Below is outcome data on TSE placements for subsidized and unsubsidized employment per fiscal year.

Fiscal Year (FY)	Total Placed (PWE/OJT)	Total in Unsubsidized Employment ¹	Retention Rate	Average Hourly Wage
FY 2020-2021	1087	326	50%	\$16.88
FY 2021-2022	748	153	27%	\$17.88
FY 2022-2023	349	4	25%	\$17.75

¹Complete program results will become available in December 2023 for FY 2021-22 and December 2024 for FY 2022-23 as the AJCCs/CBOs are contractually allowed six months post-TSE placement to find participants unsubsidized employment followed by an additional required job retention period. Data is provided by SBWIB as of 12/31/22 based on I-TRAIN System.

Identifying Key Collaborations w/ DPSS

Workforce Development Branch

Kelly LoBianco, Director

I am grateful to be here today. I am joined by Kristina Meza, our Assistant Director of Workforce Development. Today, we will be sharing a little about our Department and the ways we partner with DPSS and answer any questions you may have.

Value and Benefit to Partnering with DEO

We are a brand-new Department, created on July 1, 2022. We launched about 6 months ago and we are adjoined to various parts of the county. The Board of Supervisors sought to align economic and workforce development under one roof. Prior to the Department of Economic Opportunity, there were nearly 40 departments, and this is the Board's attempt to centralize and optimize our support for businesses and workers in one place.

The Workforce Development Board as discussed earlier, falls within our Department. We oversee the County's, public workforce system of 19 American Job Centers of California for 58 cities in the unincorporated areas, and work very closely with our fellow Workforce Development Board, Aging and Community Services Department that came into DEO. Our office also holds the Office of Small Business Commission formerly with the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs.

We also brought over CEO's Economic Development Division, which is a policy and strategy team. They oversaw the Economic Development Score Card, EI FDs, opportunity zones, investment funds, and a lot of incubation of economic development activities. We brought over a team from the Los Angeles County Development Authority, focused on capital access for small businesses, a number of EDA Loans, revolving loan funds improvement loan programs upgrading the corridors of small businesses, and we work with big and small County assets for economic purposes. Our program really runs the gambit of economic development. Our core focus is small businesses and workers that need us the most.

Our Vision: An equitable economy with thriving communities, inclusive and sustainable growth, and opportunity and mobility for all. Our Mission: DEO creates quality jobs, helps small businesses and high road employers start and grow, and builds vibrant local communities and spaces.

Social Services and Economic Opportunity Alignment

DEO and DPSS have shared customers: low-income jobseekers and workers accessing benefits and businesses offering meaningful, family sustaining career pathways in high growth sectors.

The challenges pre-DEO is that there are a lot of folks being served by DPSS and there is a lot of need for career exposure, job training, support services, connection to businesses, and business development activities through the public workforce system that could benefit individuals that are being served by DPSS, and we want to really formalize our connections and scale the level in which we are doing that.

Both of our teams really understand this real continuum of care. When we think about what it takes to upskill and advance in the workforce, we know that it's not just about a training program or credential. There are real opportunity costs to engaging in that way, and we need to make sure that we're providing this holistic, overwhelming support for individuals, making sure that they can keep their income, that they have access to childcare and have other resources that prevents benefits cliffs and being able to invest in themselves and their families' futures.

There is a mutual commitment to economic mobility, connecting folks to the right jobs that offer pathways that pay enough and driving a more equal workforce that is sustainable.

There are many ways in which our departments partner, but I wanted to highlight a couple of them, particularly those that we're working on now which will be realized in the fiscal year. We are in the process of re-RFPing, in our American Job Centers of California. We are really looking to modernize the system as it exists. We have 19 centers across LA County serving tens of thousands of individuals. We serve thousands of public assistance recipients, but we want to really formalize our commitment.

For individuals in CalWORKs or General Relief who are participating in the public workforce system, you will see an RFP come out in the next month. We will be hosting webinars and there will be an opportunity to learn more about it. But what you'll also notice is that we are creating centers of excellence focused on priority populations and high growth industries, and that includes jobs in the public sector. I was excited to hear the TSE presentation about the work to get folks jobs in the county. These are good quality jobs. We are making sure that we are developing formal goals and staffing appropriately within our system to support public assistance recipients when they come to the public workforce system; and that we are actively tracking that, setting the bar high, increasing the numbers that we serve together. We are also thinking about shared business services. In the previous presentations, you heard that we are all talking to workers and businesses, hopefully, we can do this in a joint fashion to keep the industry coming back to us for talent delivering a qualified and diverse pipeline to the industry whether public or private sectors.

We also are thinking about how we expand capacity for quality workforce programs. The County does not do its work alone. Our American Job Centers of California are run by community-based organizations. Many of our training programs, the support that we offer for business and workers, are all run through our community.

In partnership with DPSS, we run the Skill Up LA Program, the CalFresh Employment, and Training Program; essentially by working with social enterprises and non-profits in LA County, who are already serving individuals who are on public assistance or could benefit from referrals and doing job training connecting them to good jobs. There's an opportunity to catalog those agencies enrolled to serve and receive reimbursements that they can reinvest in their own nonprofits, building their own capacity, and ability to serve more LA County residents moving forward.

We're currently working with six social enterprises, and that's up from two or three in the last year. We were at only a couple hundred served per year in our very early stages, but we're excited about ballooning that program and scaling it and seeing about the additional resources that we can reinvest.

I also wanted to mention to you, and this ties to the Expanded TSE, we know we have a homelessness crisis here in LA County. We actively conduct outreach and target individuals with the homelessness experience for our programs, but we also have created a brand-new program, thanks to Care First Community events and our American Rescue Plan dollars, called Careers for a Cause. This is a program that we're running with community colleges all over the County to work with individuals with literal experiences with justice involvement and other barriers to employment connecting them to social services, homeless services, and preparation programs informed by industry learning the case management systems that's needed when you go into work in these sectors.

I'm doing paid stipends and internships and connecting folks to jobs in the sector, and I'm really excited about holistic program models that build a more empathetic workforce. We're still in early stages and are just under 200 participants enrolled. We had a pilot program during the pandemic but launched our expansion in 2022. We're actively working with folks to put them through the programs, get them completed and connected to job opportunities in the sector. I think we just launched Pierce College, early January, and Rio Hondo College is later this month.

And lastly here, we heard a lot right before this about work-based learning, transitional employment, and job connection programs. This is a big area of work for us. We run the Youth at Work Program where we support 10,000 young adults per year with personal enrichment and paid job experience in both sectors. We work closely with DPSS on that through the American Rescue Plan funds, and we've been able to add mentorship and add hours, and we're looking to prove out that model and do it for all 10,000 going forward.

Before I closeout, let me share that we have a lot of things rolling out right now. We are a Department focused on an equitable recovery, and that means we are blessed right now with American Rescue Plan funds that we want to get into the hands of the community. We are about to launch our Economic Opportunity Grant Programs already open for outreach. At the end of this month, we are going to launch the application between January 2023 and December 2024. We will put over \$15 million into the community for micro businesses, small businesses, and nonprofits who've been impacted by COVID. These are grants with no strings attached that will help the region recover.

Chairperson Andrade-Stadler thanked Kelly LoBianco for her very informative presentation.

Follow Up Action: (Flood) In the agenda schedule for the year, we have 3 proposed future topics, and the third one is the EBT theft safeguards in authentication issue. So, I just like to raise that since it's not scheduled and given some of the public comment, we received today, that it be reported on as soon as possible.

7.0 CHAIR'S REPORT

February Agenda Topic: Commission Work Plan GOAL 1 - CalWORKs Supportive Services (Part 2) and PSS Commission Award Ceremony.

8.0 ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.