



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, June 20, 2024

Location #1: Exposition Park District
3833 S. Vermont Avenue, 3rd Floor - Conference Room B
Los Angeles, CA 90037

Location: #2: Porter Ranch Library
11371 Tampa Ave
Porter Ranch, CA 91326

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

1.0 CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / ESTABLISH A QUORUM/ COUNTYWIDE LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Adele Andrade-Stadler, Chairperson

Meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. Commissioners Kalaydjian attended the meeting from an alternate location under the Brown Act Teleconferencing rules. A quorum was established. The Chair read the Countywide Land Acknowledgement statement.

Roll Call/Commissioners Present:

Adele Andrade-Stadler (Chair)	Veronica Lewis
Joni Byun	Summer McBride
Michael Flood	Booker Pearson
Pollyanna Lee	Genevieve Riutort
Mihran Kalaydjian	Andrew Yam

Commissioners Absent:

Joe Brown	Sue ElHessen, Ed.D. (Vice Chair)
Dynasty Taylor	Sam Joo
Yvonne Chan, Ed.D.	

Commission Staff:

La France Toliver
Stacia Gurr-Osborn

Guests

Jackie Contreras, Ph.D., DPSS	Luis Ontiveros, DPSS	Lisa Hayes, DPSS
Luther Evans, DPSS	Mai Dinh, DPSS	

2.0 REVIEW AND APPROVE MAY 16, 2024, MEETING MINUTES

Adele Andrade Stadler, Chairperson

The Chair called for a motion to approve the May 16, 2024, minutes. Commissioner Pearson approved, and Commissioner Kalaydjian seconded the motion. The Chair called for the vote by roll call and the minutes were approved by majority vote with one abstention as follows:

Adele Andrade-Stadler (Chair) - Aye
Joni Byun - Aye
Michael Flood - Aye
Mihran Kalaydjian - Aye
Pollyanna Lee - Aye

Veronica Lewis - Aye
Summer McBride - Aye
Booker Pearson - Aye
Genevieve Riutort - Abstained
Andrew Yam - Aye

Chairperson Andrade-Stadler welcomed Genevieve Riutort, newest member appointed to the commission and asked her to introduce herself. Commissioner Riutort stated she was the President and CEO at Westside Food Bank. She has been at Westside Food Bank over 20 years, has been CEO for 2 years. She comes to this work with her own lived experience of being on the other side of food and housing insecurity. She grew up in the Bronx, in New York City, with a single mom and benefited from every kind of public social service program New York City has to offer, from childcare to summer programs to scholarships. I have benefited from social services in LA County as well and it's really a pleasure and my honor to serve with this commission body.

Subsequently, attending commissioners introduce themselves and their current work.

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

Adele Andrade-Stadler, Chairperson

None.

4.0 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Jackie Contreras, Ph.D., Director

Dr. Contreras provided the following updates:

The Board Made the following Proclamations for the month of June 2024: Refugee Awareness Month, Pride Month, "Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month, and Gun Violence Awareness Month. In addition, the Board has also proclaimed the week of June 10, 2024, as Arts and Health Week, June 12 as Philippine Independence Day, June 15 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and June 19 as Commemorating Juneteenth: A Commitment to Freedom and Reflection in Los Angeles County.

Effective May 21, 2024, Edward Yen assumed the role of Executive Officer for the Board of Supervisors, Elizabeth Buenrostro Ginsberg was appointed to serve as the Treasurer and Tax Collector, and Michael Owh was appointed to serve as the Director of the Internal Services Department.

On Saturday, June 15th, the Legislature presented the Governor with the Budget Bill (AB 107, Gabriel). The bill reflects the legislative agreement and budget plan that protects key legislative priorities for Senate and Assembly, including restorations to CalWORKs, In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), and other human services: Restores funding for CalWORKs Employment Services, Single Allocation and Supportive Services. Restores IHSS services for undocumented consumers and the Permanent Back-up Provider System. Restores the Work Incentive Nutrition Supplement Program (WINS) and the CalFresh Minimum Nutrition Benefit Pilot Program and Accepts the 2-year delay for the California Food Assistance Program expansion. The bill approves the May Revision caseload updates. The Governor has until June 30th to sign, modify or veto the bill. Also, on Thursday, June 13, DPSS sent the coalition letter requesting that the Governor and the Legislative leadership reject the CalWORKs reductions.

The department is cautiously optimistic; however, we are planning for a worst-case scenario and any variation depending on what we ultimately hear. We will move quickly between now and hearing the information on July 1st, mitigating any impact on our staff and also mitigating the impact that may occur on it for our customers.

I am happy to report that we are getting closer to upgrading the EBT card from mag stripe to chip technology. The new EBT printers and cardstocks have been delivered to all district offices. On June 6, 2024, DPSS and the State successfully tested the printing of the new EBT Card at our Metro North District Office. We are now waiting for the State to confirm when we can go live.

As part of a continued focus on improving the delivery of services to customers who identify as LGBTQ+, DPSS joined seven local advocacy organizations in affirming its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, with the raising of the Progress Pride Flag on June 3 at our City of Industry Headquarters. Our DPSS offices joined other County of L.A. facilities flying the Pride Flag throughout the month of June.

Throughout the month of June, DPSS and refugee service organizations are acknowledging and highlighting refugees and asylees who fled war, genocide, and persecution, to start a new life far away from their homeland. Today, the Department is joining its dedicated community partners in celebrating World Refugee Day at El Cariso Community Regional Park in Sylmar. DPSS staff will be onsite to provide enrollment assistance and information about essential programs available to the County's refugee and asylee populations.

This year, DHR and the Department of Arts and Culture partnered with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) to invite County employees to display their artwork and attend the LA County Employee Wellness, Arts, Culture Festival, which was held on May 8, 2024. A total of 25 talented DPSS artists were able to showcase their artwork at this event.

NACo Awards

The National Association of Counties (NACo) has announced the 2024 NACo Achievement Awards recipients and three (3) entries submitted on behalf of the Department were recognized with an Achievement Award! The winning entries are: (1) California Statewide Automated Welfare System Contact Center Migration, (2) Countywide Reporting of

Information Security Incident Robotic Process Automation, and (3) Refugee Employment and Acculturation Services (REAS) Emergency Expansion.

ASPA Award

DPSS received the Tom Bradley Diversity Award for a project involving our Civil Rights and Information Technology Teams, entitled Reasonable Modification Request (RMR) application.

2024 Freshy Award

I am pleased to announce that CalFresh Nutrition Program Manager Diego Fajardo, was announced the winner of the 2024 Freshy Award on May 23 at the annual CalFresh Forum in San Jose.

2023 Charitable Giving Campaign

For 2023, DPSS raised a total of \$52,867.34 for our Charitable Giving Campaign. The raised funds will be distributed among the seven-board approved fund distribution agencies, which include: Asian Pacific Community Fund, Brotherhood Crusade, Community Health Charities, Earth Share California, United Latinx Fund, United Way, and Variety the Children's Charity.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

Presentations: Overview of DPSS Homeless Programs

CalFresh Policy and Homeless Services Section
Luis Ontiveros, Human Services Administrator III
Lisa Hayes, Human Services Administrator III

Mr. Ontiveros provided the following information:

As of April 2024, the GR caseload consisted of 117,031 cases with 80,104 GR participants reporting to be homeless. The GR Housing Subsidy 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. GR participants must also be either disabled and pursuing Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Veterans benefits, or employable and participating in the START Program.

The subsidy is a maximum of \$475/month for one person and a maximum of \$950 for couple cases. The GR participant is also required to contribute \$100 from their monthly GR grant towards their rent. The \$475 subsidy plus the \$100 contribution, for a total of \$575 monthly for a single person or \$1,150 monthly for a couple case, is paid directly to the landlord.

Qualified Program participants may also receive a once-in-a-lifetime move-in assistance payment of up to \$500 to cover costs associated with moving into housing. 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. The GRHCM will contact the participant that is seeking housing on a weekly basis to check on their progress and offer any available resources.

Once the participant is approved for the Program, the GRHCM will make monthly contact via email, phone call, or in-person at the district office to ensure that the participant is still housed in order to remain eligible to the subsidy. As of April 2024, the Program is providing rental subsidies to 1,628 GR participants.

For FY 2023-24, the Program received funding from the following sources: Measure H - \$4.82 million; For FY 24-25, we are happy to report Measure H funding will increase to \$10.415 million; and One-Time NCC Savings - \$1.868 million; Net County Cost - \$6.079 million.

Follow up Item: Commissioner Lewis asked what type of community event support the department was looking at given a lot of folks are transient and many are unsheltered, in order to make it simpler for them to access. Since DPSS is embedded in the FCS, they're single access and you can be embedded in. There are other places like day shelters, day centers places like that to expand beyond just DPSS offices.

Mr. Ontiveros responded that is something we can look into to increase awareness of our program. As part of our strategic plan, we are working on the development of the homeless services model for DPSS, which will help connect our GR participants to other homeless services. Commissioner Lewis asked to be kept informed about the progress as many in the community are not aware of this program.

Commissioner McBride asked what was the goal of GR? Mr. Ontiveros stated the GP Program is a last resort, where individuals ultimately find themselves in need of General Relief services. This Program has been in place since 1901, and given the current state of things, as part of the DPSS Strategic Plan we are working on a GR redesign. We are looking to see how we can make changes to the Program that will be effective and help people in their current situation.

Follow up Item: Commissioner McBride states she is looking forward to an update on the GR Redesign. Commissioner Lewis asked if there is a timeline connected to the GR redesign.

Given the 68% of the GR population that are unhoused, I hope that the redesign has this front and center in terms of thinking about what is going to make sense. In addition to the economic environment, we are in, and understanding this is a limited resource coming from our local dollars. The other thing I want to flag, given there's a number of people from GR you were helping to transition, a few years back DPSS there was a huge lift to try and transition participants who have been on GR for years to SSI. You mentioned CBEST is going away, the services providers will no longer have money and you will no longer have the liaisons from services providers.

Follow up Item: How are you planning for this effective July 1? Mr. Ontiveros responded he would come back with an update. I know with CBEST we have frozen it going directly to our participants.

Presentation: Overview of CalWORKs Housing Programs / Data on Families Experiencing Homelessness in Los Angeles County
CalWORKs & GAIN Program Division
Luther Evans, Division Chief
Mai Dinh, Administrative Services Manager II

Ms. Dinh provided the following information:

There are two types of CalWORKs housing programs and services. The first is CalWORKs State Homeless Assistance. The programs within that are:

- **Temporary Homeless Assistance** – Provides homeless CalWORKs families \$85-\$145 (depends on the Assistance Unit [AU] size) a night for 16 days of temporary shelter payments to stay in a hotel/motel, commercial establishment, enter into a shared housing agreement, or enter into a short-term lease or sublease. Available once every 12 months with exceptions.
- **Expanded Temporary Homeless Assistance** – Provides CalWORKs applicants who provide a sworn statement of past or present domestic violence and who are fleeing their abuser with up to two 16-day payments equaling a total of 32 days of Temporary HA shelter. If the applicant only used the first 16-day issuance, the second 16-day Temporary HA lump-sum issuance is available in another instance of homelessness, months or even years later, provided the CalWORKs applicant meets all eligibility requirements. Available once-in-a-lifetime.
- **Permanent Homeless Assistance** – Provides homeless CalWORKs families with assistance to pay for security deposit costs and utility turn-on fees. Available once every 12 months with exceptions.
- **Permanent Homeless Assistance Arrearages** – Provides CalWORKs families at-risk of homelessness with assistance to pay up to two months of past due rent to prevent an eviction. Available once every 12 months with exceptions.

The second type of CalWORKs housing programs and services is the CalWORKs County Supplemental Homeless Assistance. The programs within that are:

- **Temporary Homeless Assistance+14** – Provides a homeless CalWORKs W-t-W (Welfare to Work) family who has exhausted or is ineligible to the State's Temporary HA Program up to 14 days of temporary shelter payments. The daily rate is \$85-\$145 per day, depending on the AU size. Available once-in-a-lifetime with exceptions.
- **Moving Assistance** – Provides CalWORKs W-t-W families with assistance to pay for moving costs, including security deposit, truck rental, utility turn-on fees, and refrigerator and/or stove. Maximum payment for the Moving Assistance Program is \$2,500. Available once-in-a-lifetime with exceptions.

- **Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction** – Provides CalWORKs WtW families at risk of homelessness with assistance to pay past due rent and/or utilities to prevent an eviction. Note: The request can include multiple months of past due rent and/or utilities. Maximum payment is \$5,000 for eligible family. Available once-in-a-lifetime, no exceptions.
- **Temporary Homeless Assistance+14** – Provides a homeless CalWORKs WtW family who has exhausted or is ineligible to the State's Temporary HA Program up to 14 days of temporary shelter payments. The daily rate is \$85-\$145 per day, depending on the AU size. Available once-in-a-lifetime with exceptions.

Families can reapply again if they meet certain exceptions. The exceptions are: (1) Federal or State declared disaster which caused the CalWORKs family to be homeless. (2) Their home becomes uninhabitable (e.g., fire, or other reasons it is deemed uninhabitable). (3) A family is homeless due to experiencing domestic violence. (4) If the family medical or mental condition caused them to be homeless, they can request for additional housing improvement.

Mr. Evans discussed an overview of CalWORKs Homeless and At-Risk Families Served Data showing the number of cases over a series of fiscal years that received homeless benefits. The dark blue shaded data chart (on page 4) are the state homeless programs that include Temporary Homeless Assistance and Permanent Homeless Assistance programs, and the light blue shaded areas are the county supplemental homeless programs that include THAP +14, Moving Assistance, Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction and 4-Month Rental Assistance programs. Listed are the number of cases that received benefits in each of the fiscal years. The next slide reflects the CalWORKs Caseload and CalWORKs Families Experiencing Homelessness Comparison Chart from 2017 through 2024. The chart shows the year, CalWORKs Caseload, CalWORKs Homeless Caseload and the percentage of families experiencing homelessness.

A homeless family can apply for any of the CalWORKs Housing Program Benefits by telephone at (866) 613-37777, or in person at any of the 19 DPSS CalWORKs offices. In addition, there's a collaboration between DPSS and 211 call the 211 Referral Project. CalWORKs families who contact 211 after 5pm and receive a motel voucher are referred to DPSS the next business day. DPSS staff assess the family for available CalWORKs (CW) Homeless benefits and issue the housing payment on the same day, as applicable.

Eligibility staff refer the participant to the DPSS CW Homeless Case manager the same day the homeless request is initiated. Thereafter, the DPSS CW Homeless Case Manager refers the family to one of the LAHSA Family Solutions Centers (FSCs) for housing and supportive services the same day, no later than the next, as long as the participant agreed to be referred.

GAIN Services (GSWs) have been assigned to CalWORKs district offices as Homeless Case Managers (HCMs) to provide case management to homeless and at-risk families applying for or already receiving CalWORKs. Homeless Case Management is a voluntary program for families who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. The objective is to determine eligibility and appropriate services, assisting families in developing an individualized housing plan that will lead to permanent housing.

The Housing Support Program is administered by LAHSA through the LAHSA/DPSS Contract for the Coordinated Entry System for Families (CESF). The CESF consists of eight (8) Services Planning Areas (SPAs) throughout Los Angeles County. LAHSA subcontracts with homeless providers and Family Solutions Centers (FSCs) to provide homeless services to CALWORKs homeless families enrolled in the CESF which includes Prevention, Crisis Housing and Rapid Rehousing.

Dr. Contreras added that in July the department is planning to address the issue of take up across programs. Specifically, CalFresh and CalWORKs; the State has been looking at these numbers to say how many are eligible and as well as how many we are serving. We've been able to sort of replicate their formula for that. We also know there are reasons why and want to know what is that gap and how to close it. In terms of our services offered, we focus on eligibility to determine is there a benefit we can get out to you. We want to spend a lot of energy in that outreach and closing that gap. We know that we have a very rich environment of community-based providers that are connected to the community that can provide these kinds of services. We are very mindful of not trying to replicate or duplicate services that already exist. I am committed to coming back with what we've learned and to share what that looks like and what we believe what the gap is. Then we can explore with the State, what are the reasons for that.

Follow up Item: Commissioner Pearson asked about 10-million-dollar emergency allocation for family homelessness? Did this go to DPSS? Or is it cut? Dr. Contreras stated we will look into that.

Follow Up Item: Commissioner Lewis stated it would be helpful to add slide listing all exceptions for homeless assistance programs discussed. What is the caseload for Homeless Case Managers? What is the caseload to manager ratio? Can you provide the range from lowest to highest?

Commissioner Lewis added she understands there may be some restrictions that may apply to the HSP Funding which may impact the ability to spend it down. She knows that DPSS is essentially a pass-through agency, but wanted to encourage the department to really examine their policies and make sure that they are person-centered and to allow us to use the resources to support all these families coming through. She'd like for DPSS to get a little more involved in crafting and modifying those policies. Let us know how we can support trying to do as much as we can to not have the money taken out of our County where we have more families in need. I don't know all the details, but I know enough to say there maybe some opportunities for us to rethink how we are using the money.

Mr. Evans responded we've tried to do some amendments where we can modify policy. If there are things that come to mind that aren't on the radar, please share them with us. We want to hear what people are saying. There was a change in the length of time, the duration that went into the amendment, and then there was a change I believe to do with case management around lifting the ceiling of dollars towards case management. I think we were able to remove that.

Dr. Contreras added this is not unique to these dollars. The CWDA works very closely with the state to look at our spending statewide. It is not unusual for us to actually get more dollars through this process. So were committed to working with the CWDA and the state

to figuring this out. We have looked at different ways where we could expand the dollars over the past year.

Commissioner McBride suggested the critical need for public agencies to have long term strategic planning in the event more funds come in being ready to pivot to immediately make sure that we're not sending anything back having plans in place to get those funds to people who need them the most.

Follow up Item: My question is what percentage of your budget was exhausted for 2023-24? Understand what was spent and what carried over. Mr. Evans responded we will need to go back and look specifically. Single Allocation is the primary funding source for CalWORKs which is an annual allocation and I think it's close to what we maximize each year.

Follow up Item: We've received data regarding the hundreds of thousands of phone calls monthly. My question is are prompts that allow someone to indicate that they have a child or minor with them or if they're a senior when they call in that first phone call, is there a priority connection with someone so they're not holding as long, like a system that triages high priority calls sending them to a queue to address their needs. Is there a way where prompts could be made available in the system?

Follow up Item: Commissioner Byun stated we are here as leaders in the community as well as services providers, and that's the thing, a lot of people are saying they don't know about these services. So, how can we as commissioners help connect the dots? I would love to have more like a call to action into the presentation in the future just to figure out how we are listening and asking questions.

Dr. Contreras responded just to manage expectations, when we come back in July, we want to begin to look at the take up rate for different programs and understanding that gap. That call to action I think is a piece of that and that's what we're working on with the state to figure out how do we close that gap. We may not be able to dig down deep in each of these types of programs because this is like a few layers down, but at least starting with the big picture and then we can go from there. I will be sure that we incorporate that as part of the discussion next time.

Commissioner Yam suggested that that there is an opportunity in working together with community-based organizations that are in the community, like health enrollment navigators who are doing like Medi-Cal Outreach. Are we able to tap into these existing programs that are funding community health workers and passing that information along to them. I think maybe the responsibility for the department is compiling resources as subject matter experts regarding what programming exists and what happens when you qualify for programs. I think this is a call to action. Maybe the call to action is to strengthen partnerships that already exist.

Follow up Item: Commissioner Yam suggested a recurring meeting that provides updates on different topics from DPSS to agencies like how the commission get its information.

Ms. Hayes also stated many of the agencies will reach out to her section when they want an overview of DPSS programs and services that we deliver. So those arrangements can be made, and I can set up a meeting live or through Zoom or Teams. We record them for the community agencies and provide a copy to them. If agencies have a large turnover the recording can be used as a learning tool.

Commissioner Lewis added that she thinks there's lots of opportunity for more proactive community engagement. There is a huge need. Given the number of different centers and community groups and the many people they are touching that need these services, actively having something set that's recurring every month or quarter is important where organizations know they can tap into, and we can tell new organizations about this resource as well.

Follow up Item: Commissioner Riutort stated she wanted to extend an invitation to the Department; She serves on the Board of the Westside Coalition for Housing Hunger and Health, and this kind of information would be of great interest to our membership. Their meetings are every Third Thursday from 9:00am to 10:00 am

Dr. Contreras expressed that she appreciated all presenters today. However, she wants to call out Ms. Hayes because for the longest time, she was what we called the Homeless Services Section by herself. But we now actually have positions dedicated to be able to do this work. I just want to thank her for that.

6.0 CHAIR'S REPORT

Adele Andrade-Stadler, Chairperson

Commission Flood extended an open invitation to the Commission to visit LA Regional Food Bank in the City of Industry. He stated just send him an email to schedule.

The next meeting is Thursday, July 18, 2024.

7.0 ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.