



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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MEETING MINUTES via TELECONFERENCE

Thursday, March 17, 2022
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

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 10:33 a.m. A quorum was established.

Roll Call/Commissioners Present:

Adele Andrade-Stadler
Veronica Lewis
Frank G. De Balogh
Sue ElHessen
Michael Flood

Mihran Kalaydjian
Booker Pearson
Paige Pelonis
Lori Stein
Dynasty Taylor

Commissioners Absent:

Joe Brown (U)
Yvonne Chan (E)
Summer McBride (E)

Raúl Estrada (E)
Mary Galvan Rosas (U)

Commission Staff:

La France Toliver
Tina Phan

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Delfino Neira, DPSS
Regina Adkins-Williams, DPSS
Julia Almanzan, County Counsel

2.0 **REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 2022 MEETING**

Adele Andrade-Stadler, Chairperson

MOTION: Commissioner Pearson moved to approve the minutes and Commissioner De Balogh seconded the motion. No changes. No further discussion.

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

Adele Andrade-Stadler -Aye

Veronica Lewis - Aye

Sue ElHessen - Aye

Michael Flood – Aye

Frank G. De Balogh - Aye

Paige Pelonis - Aye

Booker Pearson - Aye

Lori Stein - Aye

Mihran Kalaydjian - Aye

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

Adele Andrade-Stadler, Chairperson

Public Comment: Lily Choi, Staff Attorney, NLSLA submitted a letter to the Commission office regarding the Customer Service Center (CSC). She provided verbal comments regarding the CSCs. Her letter was sent to all Commissioners via email.

4.0 **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Delfino Neira, Chief Deputy Director

Mr. Neira introduced himself to the Commission as the Chief Deputy Director over the Office of Operations and Program. He further stated Ms. Jiménez sends her regrets as she was unable to attend today's meeting and she asked that he provide the Departmental update.

Mr. Neira provided updates on the following topics:

The State continues to approve the issuance of **CalFresh Emergency Allotments**. February emergency allotments will be available to CalFresh customers on Sunday, March 27, 2022. As of February 2022, DPSS has issued CalFresh Emergency Allotments benefits, totaling over \$2.2 Billion.

We were originally scheduled to go live on March 14, 2022, with our new web portal called **BenefitsCal**. We have since learned that the imaging solution is experiencing some performance issues with LA's increasing volume. Our new target migration date is April 25, 2022.

The Department of Public Health released a new Health Officer Order on Thursday, March 3, 2022, lifting the order for **masking requirements** for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. The new Health Officer Order went into effect on Friday, March 4, 2022.

On Friday, March 4, 2022, the L.A. County Chief Executive Officer released a memo to all County Departments advising them that the masking requirements for County employees and members of the public will be lifted effective March 21, 2022. However, the wearing of masks will be strongly encouraged. In preparation for the masking requirement, DPSS will continue to take reasonable measures to ensure the safety of worksites. DPSS is one of the few Departments who have a screening protocol in place for employees and the public. DPSS will also initiate a messaging campaign to allay the fears of staff who may be uncomfortable with the easing of the mask mandate. Lastly, DPSS will continue to provide medical-grade masks or respirators to workers and public who request them.

I understand that you have requested DPSS to provide an update on the \$500,000 of **ARPA Funds** that will be used to increase CalFresh enrollment by targeting under-represented populations. The ARPA update will be provided to you next month as we continue to work on our plan.

Follow up Items: (1) In regard to the transition from YBN to BenefitsCal, will the department provide instructional You-Tube videos on how to access/navigate the BenefitsCal website? Mr. Delfino responded we can provide more information about the transition of videos next month.

5.0 **NEW BUSINESS**

PRESENTATION: TAYPORTUNITY PROGRAM

General Relief & GROW Program Division

Regina Adkins-Williams, Human Services Administrator III

Ms. Adkins-Williams provided updates the following information:

The Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) continues to develop creative and innovative ways to assist General Relief Transitional-Age Youth (TAY) in obtaining employment, with the goal of helping them obtain work experience and put them on path towards economic stability. On March 17, 2021, DPSS launched the TAYportunity Program to serve 150 employable TAY individuals in the General Relief Opportunities for Work (GROW) Program by providing them training, work experience, and employment resources to prepare them to enter the labor market. The TAYportunity Program has a three-pronged approach aimed at: **Employment** – Providing full-time (40 hours per week) subsidized employment opportunities for a period of six months. **Entrepreneurship** – Providing coaching and mentoring opportunities for individuals who want to start their own business. **Apprenticeships** – Partnering with local Workforce Investment Boards, labor unions, and companies who provide pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities with guaranteed employment upon completion and/or connection to potential employers.

As of December 2021, the GROW employable TAY population is on average approximately 8,478 employable TAY individuals.

TAY individuals, or TAYs for short, who are interested in the TAYportunity Program will be heavily engaged by DPSS GROW Case Managers who will provide intensive case management to engage and motivate these individuals. Prior to enrolling individuals in their desired TAYportunity track, they are enrolled in the motivational and job-readiness trainings.

Squarage - DPSS partnered with Squarage to provide a career readiness curriculum that includes work-based activity learning for enhance interviewing skills, job retention, and job search preparation all in a pop culture relevant environment to better engage youth.

Wolf Connection - In addition, TAYs are also enrolled in Wolf Connection who will deliver an educational and empowerment program aimed at motivating TAYs to achieve healthy living and realize their potential.

Subsidized Employment TAY

Subsidized employment provides TAYs an opportunity to earn income while gaining work experience. The Department leveraged its existing contract with the City of Inglewood/South Bay Work Investment Board (SBWIB) who currently work to place TAYs into emerging labor markets, where the need is great, and the employment field is growing, which include the following employment fields: Clerical; Contact Tracing; Construction; General Office; Los Angeles International Airport; Parks and Recreation; Public Works; Retail and Warehouse. The Department continues to explore additional subsidized employment opportunities, both with SBWIB and without.

Entrepreneurship

In response to our TAYs' interest, the Department partnered with Streetcraft: Cultural Creative to create an entrepreneurial track. Streetcraft: Cultural Creative offers a 9-month virtual training program designed to assist TAYs with identifying post-COVID-19 potential business ideas/products and/or develop skills for in-demand entrepreneurial pathways.

During this training program, TAYs will learn how to create a business plan, obtain the necessary licenses and certifications to run their business, and learn how to monetize their efforts. Streetcraft: Cultural Creative and DPSS will provide employment services, intensive case management services and training supplies (i.e., laptops) necessary to ensure completion of this program. This track is paired with training and resources from the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs' Office of Small Business to ensure TAYs are successful in establishing their business plans.

Apprenticeships and Pre-apprenticeships

DPSS also partnered with SBWIB to provide apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities for TAYs in this program.

SBWIB is currently engaged with local businesses and community colleges to provide labor specific apprenticeship opportunities for TAYs in Los Angeles County. The opportunities were developed to be responsive to the growth in certain labor markets, such as aerospace, healthcare, biomedical, and construction.

The pre-apprenticeships were developed to provide TAYs a sampling of what to expect in that labor market and to ascertain if the TAY is truly interested in that field. Each pre-apprenticeship offers a stipend or wage for the TAYs and is approximately three months long. If successful, they can apply for a full apprenticeship. The full apprenticeships also include a wage and are approximately 18 months long. The Department currently has the following opportunities: **Aero-flex:** Apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships in the aerospace manufacturing field; **Bio-flex:** Apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships in the biomedical and healthcare fields; and **Construction:** Pre-apprenticeships in the construction field. DPSS is actively engaging local unions and employers to add more apprenticeship opportunities for TAYs.

Participation Totals (March 2021 through March 2022)

99 TAYs completed the Career Readiness curriculum with Squarage; 95 TAYs completed the Career Motivation sessions with Wolf Connection; 60 TAYs are participating in Career Pathways. Transitional Subsidized Employment: 14 at a minimum hourly rate of \$15; Apprenticeships: 13; and Entrepreneurships: 33. Although the TAYportunity Program has been implemented, the goal is to continually add new partners and opportunities to provide to our TAYs. By focusing on labor markets with growth potential and ensuring the opportunities are of interest to youth, we hope to engage more TAYs and assist them in obtaining long-term employment that will aide them in achieving economic mobility.

Follow up Items: **(1)** Chairperson Andrade-Stadler made a recommendation to expand “Entrepreneurship” by adding Farmers Markets where TAYs may be able to sell products on site. This is less expensive that trying to open a business in a building. She also encourages more jobs through DPSS. **(2)** Commissioner ElHessen followed up on the career assessment tool she and her agency helped to develop that she shared with the GROW Program staff. Are they using what was shared with them? **(3)** Commissioner Pearson suggested the department to reach out to DCFS’s Independent Living Program for participation in the TAYportunity Program.

6.0 CONTINUED BUSINESS

None.

7.0 COMMISSIONER'S REQUEST FOR FUTURE TOPICS

Follow up Items: **(1)** Commissioner Pearson stated in light of the recent press regarding CalFresh on the dire increase with food insecurity for people who need it most. I know its related to State funding and the need to hire more people. He would like to hear what improvements LA County can make to address this, if possible. **(2)** Commissioner De Balogh requested to hear about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as an agenda item. He is concerned with what ethnic groups are included under the inclusion provision, especially those with disabilities and veterans who constitute 250k in this County. They need to be considered in any implementation that DPSS is considering. He would like a presentation in 3 to 4 months. **(3)** Elhessen suggested a presentation on how GROW resources are provided. As time passes how is information being incorporated and disseminated? She says her main purpose for being on the Commission is to help provide linkages and collaboration so that people don't work in silos with duplication. **(4)** The Chair would like to hear more about the Call Center hear how it is doing. Certainly LA County (DPSS) is the one of the largest social services in the nation. So many in need and on edge more than ever before. If we think about that, it's an incredible job to get our arms around what it is we can possibly do to help. **(5)** Homeless Count and the results, not sure if we can get this information. But I believe the move is to create a new department in the County. **(6)** Report back on ARPA Funding. **(7)** Commissioner ElHessen would like a presentation from the Department for Seniors and Disabilities because we overlap with the same population. She thinks its importation to hear her perspective on coordinating efforts with DPSS and other departments and commissions within the county. **(8)** Commissioner Lewis would like to receive a report on the CSC in the April meeting, including data that helps us understand successful access percentages, overall volume, and general outcomes of the calls.

8.0 CHAIR'S REPORT

Adele Andrade-Stadler, Chairperson

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.