



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

12860 CROSSROADS PARKWAY SOUTH, CITY OF INDUSTRY, CA 91746  
(562) 908-8669

<https://dpss.lacounty.gov/en/about/pss.html>



## MEETING MINUTES

### Thursday, May 16, 2024

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

**Location #2:** ElHessen Home Office  
9433 Ives Street  
Bellflower, CA 90706

**Location: #3:** Porter Ranch Library  
11371 Tampa Ave  
Porter Ranch, CA 91326

**Location #4:** 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.

#### **COMMISSIONERS**

**Chairperson**  
ADELE ANDRADE-STADLER

**Vice Chairperson**  
SUE ELHESSEN, Ed.D.

JOE BROWN  
JONI BYUN  
YVONNE CHAN, Ed.D.  
MICHAEL FLOOD  
SAM JOO  
MIHRAN KALAYDJIAN  
POLLYANNA LEE  
VERONICA LEWIS  
SUMMER MCBRIDE  
BOOKER PEARSON  
DYNASTY TAYLOR  
ANDREW YAM

#### **COMMISSION STAFF**

**Executive Director**  
LA FRANCE TOLIVER

**Commission Secretary**  
STACIA GURR-OSBORN

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

Adele Andrade-Stadler, Chairperson

Meeting was called to order at 10:09 a.m. Commissioners ElHessen, Kalaydjian and Pearson 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)	Mihran Kalaydjian
Sue ElHessen, Ed.D. (Vice Chair)	Veronica Lewis
Joni Byun	Summer McBride
Yvonne Chan, Ed.D.	Booker Pearson
Sam Joo	Andrew Yam

### **Commissioners Absent:**

Joe Brown	Michael Flood
Dynasty Taylor	Pollyanna Lee

### **Commission Staff:**

La France Toliver  
Stacia Gurr-Osborn

### **Introduction of Guests**

Kristin Stranger, DPSS

Nick Ippolito, DPSS

### **2.0 REVIEW AND APPROVE APRIL 18, 2024, MEETING MINUTES**

Adele Andrade Stadler, Chairperson

The Chair called for a motion to approve the April 18, 2024, minutes. Commissioner Chan 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  
Sue ElHessen, Ed.D. (Vice Chair) - Aye  
Yvonne Chan, Ed.D. - Aye  
Sam Joo - Aye  
Mihran Kalaydjian - Aye

Veronica Lewis - Aye  
Pollyanna Lee - Aye  
Dynasty Taylor - Aye  
Booker Pearson - Aye  
Andrew Yam - Aye

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

Adele Andrade-Stadler, Chairperson

None.

### **4.0 DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Kristin Stranger, Chief Deputy Director

Ms. Stranger provided the following update:

Good morning, Commissioners, My name is Kristin Stranger and I am the Chief Deputy Director of Operations. Dr. Contreras sends her regrets for not being able to join you today. She had a scheduling conflict this morning and asked that I present the Director's Update on her behalf. The Board made the following Proclamations for the month of May 2024: Mental Health Awareness Month - supporting this work wholeheartedly and encouraging all County Departments to participate in the Take Action for Mental Health Los Angeles County campaign. Promoting Food Equity and Nutrition by Proclaiming May 2024 CalFresh Awareness Month - instructing the Director of DPSS to work with appropriate County Department Heads and community partners to organize the CalFresh Awareness Month Community Kick-off Event and Resource Fair on Wednesday, May 8, 2024, at Mar Vista Park. Celebrating Foster Youth and National "Foster Care Month - encouraging families and other members of the community to consider the benefits and rewards of becoming a resource or adoptive parent by visiting FosterLAKids.org and JuntosConLosNinos.org or becoming a forever friend by visiting ForeverFriendsLA.org.

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month - celebrating Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) heritage, including highlighting employees who exemplify AAPI values and County Department programs and initiatives that support AAPI communities, and promoting the work of our AAPI-related County employee relations for their dedication and service to the 10,000,000 residents of the County. Haitian Heritage Month - reaffirming the Board's commitment to providing the necessary resources and services to support Haitian immigrants who arrive to Los Angeles County, and encourage communities across Los Angeles County to learn more about and celebrate the history, legacy, and contributions of the Haitian community. In addition, the Board has also proclaimed: May 7, as World Asthma Day, May 9, as European Union American Friendship Day, May 18, as Armed Forces Day, May 13 through 19, as Taiwanese American Heritage Week, and May 23, as Take Our Young People to Workday.

## **CALFRESH AWARENESS MONTH 2024**

To promote food equity and nutrition, the Board of Supervisors declared the month of May as CalFresh Awareness Month (CFAM). DPSS kicked off its 13<sup>th</sup> annual CalFresh Awareness Month Community Kick-off Event and Resource Fair, which was held on Wednesday, May 8, 2024, at Mar Vista Park. This event featured fun activities and community awareness events taking place countywide beginning May 8. CFAM is also an opportunity for the Department to partner with the L.A. County, Department of Public Health's CalFresh Healthy Living Program, County departments, and over 25 community-based organizations.

"Eat Better, Live Better" is this year's theme to promote CalFresh to households and individuals facing barriers to accessing healthier food. We are amplifying messaging that is being shared at CFAM events, on social media, local radio, print advertisements, L.A. Metro bus lines, and Electronic Bulletin Boards in DPSS offices. The Department's Medi-Cal Outreach District team is attending countywide events this month to help households and individuals initiate the CalFresh enrollment process. You can stay updated on all CFAM activities by following us on Facebook, Instagram, X, and YouTube, or by visiting the MyDPSS Intranet Portal to view the [Department's community calendar](#).

## **A MOTHER OF A MOVEMENT" 2024 MARCH OF DIMES WALK**

On Saturday, May 18, 2024, the March of Dimes (MOD) will host both an in-person and virtual walk to celebrate 54 years in their mission to raise funds to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature births, and infant mortality. Moreover, this year marks the 40th anniversary of Los Angeles County's partnership with MOD in this significant effort to improve the health of mothers and babies throughout the County. The March for Babies Walk is a three-mile run/walk to raise funds in the hope of ending premature births. The MOD Walk will be held at Grand Park. Registration begins at 6:30 a.m. and the walk begins at 8:30 a.m. For more information, you can visit: <https://www.marchforbabies.org/team/DPSS>.

## 5.0 **NEW BUSINESS**

**Presentation:** Overview of DPSS Access Points  
Kristin Stranger, Chief Deputy Director

Ms. Stranger thanked the Commission for the opportunity to provide information on how the community can apply for and connect to DPSS programs and services. This is an ongoing effort making sure the department is engaged with the community-based organizations, businesses, and the community as a whole to promote the benefits and vital DPSS services we have for those who are eligible and making sure that people are aware of the various ways to access and maintain benefits.

DPSS major programs are CalWORKs program which includes Temporary Cash Assistance for families and GAIN programs, General Relief (GR) which includes Temporary cash assistance for adults without kids and the Skills and Training to Achieve Readiness for Tomorrow (START), CalFresh, Medi-Cal, Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) and Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI).

We have our Online access point called BenefitsCal portal, which all 58 counties in California utilize. By phone - DPSS administers the most robust Customer Service Center in the state of California. The IHSS Help Line is another access point to apply for benefits by phone. In person - DPSS has 27 office locations to apply at and maintain their benefits and lastly, we have US Mail. In terms of frequently requested documents, there are a number of documents that community members will provide to us in order to make those determinations such as identity, income, housing expenses, liquid resources, and property.

**Follow up Item:** Commissioner Mc Bride asked, when there's outreach - and I know that there's a lot of monthly outreaches - and there are eligibility workers that are at community events, I'm assuming that they don't expect people enrolling to have the documentation. How do they follow up? Ms. Stranger responded there will be follow-up to the individual to help them complete the enrollment process. It could depend on the type of event as well, but I will look into a little bit more to give you more specifics.

**Follow-up Item:** Commissioner Lewis stated at some point it will be good to know if the department was doing active outreach with the CAPI program ensuring the outreach is widespread, we've also talked about concerns and the lack of knowledge possibly around the changes with Public Charge. Ms. Stranger responded I can get information, like a swath of what's currently going on and how that communication looks and provide an update with respect to the policies being uplifted for this population that is still largely underrepresented. Commissioner Lewis stated, specifically for immigrants particularly Haitian immigrants and API (Asian Pacific Islanders). Are they a part of the DPSS efforts this month? Maybe target those communities, coinciding with months that they are being recognized. Ms. Stranger stated she will take it back to the department's communications team.

Our online public-facing portal, BenefitsCal provides access to apply for benefits, complete mandatory periodic reports, view case status, report a change, and request support. BenefitsCal At-a-Glance illustrates how to manage your benefits, how to apply, uploading documents, exploring support and BenefitsCal resources, how to set up an account as a community-based organization and much more. On the back end, we have a system called CalSAWS which the entire state uses as the case management system.

After an interaction on the online portal, the portal creates a task. We have a very detailed workflow, that will read where the individuals are applying from and associate the application to the correct residence. The district office that is the closest to the residence and the team members at that particular office are the ones who actually receive the tasks and process the work on the back end. It is the County offices that are processing the work. This includes in-person services as well. We have a lot of County residents using the online portal, but if they don't have a BenefitsCal account, team members within our district offices will inform them of this resource.

**Follow-up Item:** Commissioner Yam suggested that it might be great to explore computer literacy training to help people get to that first step of being able to access the website, allowing them to make updates to the online case.

The Phone Services access point highlights the Customer Service Center particularly for our major programs, CalFresh, CalWORKs, Medi-Cal, IHSS and other cash assistance programs. We have two RE Line offices. They can call the renewal line and renew their benefits. The RE Line is intended for customers to complete renewal only. Telephonic signature is available as well. Overall, through the Customer Service Center they can apply for benefits, initiate Inter-County Transfers, Complete Semi-Annual Reporting and Renewal, Case Information, Updates, and Inquiries, and there is an Automated Self- Services feature. The business hours are Monday through Friday 7:30am-6:30pm at our 8 CSC locations and 2 RE Line Offices.

Our In-Person Services demonstrates that we have 27 BWS District offices, 7 IHSS Offices, 14 Start offices and 7 GAIN Regions. Our office hours are Monday through Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm. Our Lobby Services offer emergency services (expedited CalFresh, Immediate Need CalWORKs, Temporary Homeless Assistance and Eviction Prevention); Case Management Services (submit verifications, assistance completing forms, replacement of EBT Cards/Benefits; Other Services (ADA accommodations, cashier services, public access computers, safe youth zone and mail services for unhoused customers).

We still receive Mail Services applications and renewal via mail, and we have a centralized imaging center. DPSS offices are equipped with fully functioning mailrooms to prepare incoming and outgoing County mail. Customers may mail documents, recovery account payments, and other case-related materials directly to the home DPSS office or Centralized Imaging Centers. We also provide County business mail for unhoused customers, including mail from other approved County Departments, which is received from the USPS and securely stored for 90 days. Unhoused customers may retrieve their County business mail Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm, by entering their home DPSS office reception area.

Lastly, Connection to Other DPSS Programs and Services. If someone comes in and they are only familiar with CalFresh Program, our team members are trained to encourage individuals to apply for any program or service that they may be eligible for. The individual has their own autonomy to make their decisions, but we are at least making them aware of the DPSS programs and services. We have our own very active mobile outreach unit that is engaged in various community events assisting with CalFresh and Medi-Cal applications, and that collaborates with County Departments and community agencies to assist unhoused with CalFresh/Medi-Cal applications on the targeted homeless initiatives.

Just for reference, the outreach team did over 477 events in a little over a year from January 2023 to April 2024. We are always looking for ways to continue to engage in ways that are culturally relevant, and are meeting the needs of the community.

**Follow-up Item:** Commissioner Yam asked for the number of staff outreach that is part of the outreach team.

**Follow-up Item:** Commissioner Mc Bride stated she and Commissioner Joo are really interested in the outreach efforts and they attended one of the events together. I was just recently at a healthcare fair where there were eligibility workers and I just stepped in and asked some of the similar questions that we had asked at another outreach event, about their experience. One of the things that I've heard from more than one of the eligibility workers is that the process can be lengthy for a large family if they're doing all the enrollment at that moment. This goes to why I asked earlier if there must be follow-up to provide that documentation and part of our conversation that Commissioner Joo and I had was, you know, are there ways to streamline the process at the point of contact at those events. And they stated sometimes there's a long line of people and people decide not to wait because there are only two employees who are enrolling. One of the employees even mentioned this past weekend, like if we could just have like a tablet that someone could start the process on so that we can capture that initial information and then follow up with them later. But we did also request like a presentation at some point about outreach and I don't want to take up too much time in this conversation.

**Follow-up Item:** My other question is related to connection to DPSS programs and services in addition to services that are offered through other County departments. This individual has a severe speech impediment and has called different offices, she is also temporarily unhoused. She was calling to find out about enhanced care management. It seemed like no one understood the service or what she was asking about. My question is how often is there cross-training about services that may not be managed by DPSS but are managed by other County departments?

We have some electronic resource guides, but not every person may be necessarily aware of everything that's in the guide. We do encourage our team members to inform community members of the County's 211 line. I can also imagine that there are always in every one of our offices, more senior eligibility, the person who has been able to retain more over the years and can say, oh yeah, I know about that program and can help. I am not sure that we do ongoing evaluation efforts of that type of training. I appreciate that someone eventually was able to assist you. Let me take the information and get back with you.

**Follow-up Item:** Commissioner Yam suggested a future topic: Efficiency presentation on the framework for which applications, processes, and questions move through to get where they need to get to the person that might have the knowledge to answer questions. So that the onus is not on the person calling, but the challenge is for the government to then respond to that inquiry (journey mapping). Commissioner Mc Bride asked how is the department utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a way of helping folks navigate non confidential information? Ms. Stranger stated that AI is still unregulated, but it is an excellent tool for connecting services with easy algorithms.

The Chair thanked Ms. Stranger for her presentation.

### **Legislative Update**

Bureau of Special Operations  
Nick Ippolito, Assistant Director

Mr. Ippolito opened by stating I want to couch the information that I am presenting with the idea that this information is flowing and is changing not only in terms of the amount of money in the state budget that is impacting our department. Overall, the decision-making process that's going on in Sacramento could change dramatically and in a week or two or on an ongoing basis. I don't imagine the information itself to be more positive, I think it's generally safe to say that the May Revise was bad for us and our customers.

When Governor Newsom initially released a proposed budget in January, he was assuming roughly a \$38 billion dollar deficit. The Legislative Analyst Office is basically saying that it might be \$37 billion this year, but's probably going to be another \$25 billion on top of that. He was focusing on trying to solve a potentially \$37 billion problem. He got with the leadership in the state legislature and they were able to do some early actions that would have resulted in an agreement on about \$17 billion in cuts. When the tax receipts came back lower than anticipated, the May Revise had to factor in another \$7 billion. We are looking at a two-year deficit issue. It is 27.6 billion this coming Fiscal Year 24-25 which starts July 1<sup>st</sup> and a \$28 billion deficit for Fiscal Year 25-26. This is all due to inflation and lower tax receipts than anticipated. This is very challenging. It's an array of cuts that impact both administratively and specifically programs that clearly assist our customers, but also on our contracted providers.

We are looking at a \$355 million dollar cut statewide. Our County's impact to that is probably roughly 30% of that. This impacts two different areas for CalWORKs & GAIN employment services and eligibility, and those represent our core services. Right now, that consists of a \$272 million dollar cut to the employment services one time and an additional \$41 million cut to eligibility services on an ongoing basis.

There are some specific programs that are proposed to be eliminated completely. It is painful to really talk about some of these cuts because these are essential for programs. The Home Visiting Program is going to be scaled back dramatically. They will keep the program on the books, but at a significantly diminished funding source. There is also a significant reduction of \$126 million starting FY 24-25 for mental health and substance abuse services. This basically eliminates both of those programs completely.

Another two aspects are family stabilization funding and expanded subsidized employment. Subsidized employment is a very powerful program where we were able to offer to supplant, or to add to wages for our customers, to be able to work in the private sector or County jobs and then we would basically supplement the wages so the employer can hire them and keep them on. That program will essentially be eliminated along with family stabilization, which is another key program for our CalWORKs Families.

I think you know the four programs I mentioned, home visiting, mental health / substance abuse, expanded subsidized employment / family stabilization. Many of these services are done through our County partners and they in turn subcontract with their partners. This is going to have a big impact on public health and mental health which is already undergoing some significant funding challenges.

I want to couch this by saying that this is the May Revise, the Governor's initial take based on the state revenue that is seen up to this point. This information is all with the legislature. They will have to consider this and perhaps either negotiate some kind of difference or preserve some of these programs. Theoretically, they could accept it entirely, which I don't think that is going to happen based on what we're seeing, but it's generally pretty grim.

Here are a couple of other items of interest. The state proposed an expansion of the CalFresh program to all Californians regardless of immigration status. It is called California Food Assistance Program (CFAP). It was proposed to rollout FY 24-25. They are delaying implementation for two years and that would be FY 27-28.

The Federal government does not pay for services for undocumented individuals, so the state is responsible. There are similar cuts with the Medi-Cal Expansion to those who have undocumented status and included eligibility to announce supportive services, the Governor is proposing to eliminate those services entirely starting July 1<sup>st</sup>. this will save approximately \$95 million.

One aspect to consider here as stated earlier is that the Governor was operating under those numbers I shared with you. However, the legislative office is saying that the Governor might be off by 25 billion meaning the situation, as a whole, is deeper. What normally happens is the LAO reviews all of this then provides a revised analysis. We will see if they agree with the Governor or if they will maintain that there is an additional 25-billion-dollar deficit. By law, they must resolve their side of the budget by June 15<sup>th</sup> and the Governor has until the end of June to sign and make it effective.

I think there are a lot of indications that people are no doubt concerned about these cuts and advocacy is already starting.

**Follow-up Item:** Chair allowed for public comment from Onica Ross of LACOE. She stated under the Family Stabilization LACOE provides the CalWORKs Tutoring Program. I'm assuming if the family stabilization is completely cut, then that would cut services provided under that program, correct? Ms. Stanger responded we will have to investigate that before we're able to reply.

**Follow-up Item:** Commissioner Lewis wants to know how many participants are being served by TSE every year and what the impact would be for that number.

**Follow-up Item:** Commissioner Lewis asked regarding these situations related to GAIN where there's not going to be near as many resources available to move the people to employment, what does that look like practically process-wise on the ground as folks are having to do all these things to demonstrate they are looking for employment especially considering the cuts effective July 1.

**Follow-up item:** The Chair requested that the Executive Director send any updated information concerning impact of the budget prior to the next meeting.

The Chair thanked Mr. Ippolito for his presentation.



## 6.0 **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Adele Andrade-Stadler, Chairperson

The Chair discussed the upcoming agenda topics for the remainder of the year. All topics are subject to change by the Chair.

Chair took a poll of the meeting location to ensure it was ok for everyone. Majority agreed it was a good location for them. The Chair encouraged members to meet in person to the extent possible.

**Follow-Up Item:** Commissioner Chan asked sometime next year can we invite Dr. Tamera Hunter as a guest speaker to one of our meetings to provide the progress in this coordination pushing for prevention.

**Follow-up Items:** (1) Commissioner Lewis requested a legislative report update on June 20<sup>th</sup>. (2) (Lewis) We had lots of conversations through the various presentations over the last three months around concerns related to redeterminations across all programs. The topic has been brought back up. I would like a formal agenda item at some point before the calendar year is over, or from the director's report, I would like to follow up with all the conversations and I think that I would like to hear from the data team related to a lot of the different data pieces that we always ask for that crosses over all of the programs by demographics, for redeterminations and many of the other things we've asked for would be really helpful.

(3) Commissioner Yam is interested in learning more about the unwinding process, and about the metrics. I am curious if there are any disparities that DPSS is showing in terms of redeterminations. It's an understanding a lot of people are falling off due to procedural, I believe like 80-90% and the reasons that folks got Medi-Cal was largely procedural correct and understanding the data behind why that might be the case.

## 7.0 **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.