



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

12860 CROSSROADS PARKWAY SOUTH, CITY OF INDUSTRY, CA 91746
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<https://dpss.lacounty.gov/en/about/pss.html>



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COMMISSION STAFF

Executive Director
LA FRANCE TOLIVER
Commission Secretary
TINA PHAN

MEETING MINUTES via TELECONFERENCE

Thursday, October 20, 2022
12860 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 11:00 a.m. A quorum was established.

Roll Call/Commissioners Present:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Adele Andrade-Stadler (Chair) | Mihran Kalaydjian |
| Veronica Lewis (Vice) | Pollyanna Lee |
| Joe Brown | Summer McBride |
| Yvonne Chan | Booker Pearson |
| Sue ElHessen | Lori Stein |
| Raul Estrada | Dynasty Taylor |
| Mary Galvan Rosas | |

Commissioners Absent:

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Joe Brown (U) | Paige Pelonis (U) |
| Michael Flood (E) | |

Commission Staff:

La France Toliver
Tina Phan (E)

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Jackie Contreras, Ph.D., DPSS
Julia Almanzan, County Counsel
Nick Ippolito, DPSS
Lily Choi, NLSLA

2.0 REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 2022 MEETING

Adele Andrade-Stadler, Chairperson

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

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

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Adele Andrade-Stadler - Aye | Veronica Lewis - Aye |
| Booker Pearson - Aye | Summer McBride - Aye |
| Sue ElHessen - Aye | Lori Stein - Aye |
| Mihran Kalaydjian - Aye | Dynasty Taylor - Aye |
| Pollyanna Lee - Aye | |

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

Adele Andrade-Stadler, Chairperson

The commission office received four written comments. These individuals were not present. Those written comments were read verbally by Ms. Toliver into the record and submitted to all commissioners by email. Lily Choi, Attorney at NLSLA, was in support of the written comment submitted. She reiterated that the experiences (e.g. unable to get through or long waits on the line) in writing are common at the call centers; getting there is the problem. However, once clients are in contact, their problems are resolved.

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. As of October 16, 2022, over \$3.3 Billion in CalFresh Emergency Allotment benefits have been issued to individuals/families in LA County.

On October 17, 2022, the Governor's Office published a press release announcing that the COVID-19 State of Emergency will end on February 28, 2023. As the State of Emergency is phased out, the Administration has created a SMARTER (Shots, Masks, Awareness, Readiness, Testing, Education, Rx/prescriptions) Plan to guide the state in protecting Californians from COVID-19. The Administration cites that the SMARTER Plan will help maintain the state's operational preparedness in supporting communities and responding to outbreaks as we all navigate towards the next phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Governor recently signed new laws that will take effect on January 1, 2023. These laws are described in more detail in the DPSS Legislative Close-Out Report for October 2022. I would like to highlight some of these new laws for you.

SB 20—(Dodd) Student Nutrition: Eligibility for CalFresh Benefits—The State’s Student Aid Commission will start informing students of their potential eligibility to CalFresh.

SB 768—(Glazer) CalWORKs: Postsecondary Education—Expands the standard payment for college-related expenses to include students attending non-profit schools. Currently, the payment is only made to students attending publicly funded schools. The payment ranges from \$175 to \$500 per semester/quarter.

SB 907—(Pan) Electronic Benefits Transfer Systems: Farmers’ Markets—Directs the California Department of Food and Agriculture to set up a grant program to assist more farmers’ markets in accepting EBT payments. The aim is to enable more families to have access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

SB 950—(Archuleta) CalFresh: Income Eligibility: Basic Housing Allowance—Directs CDSS to file for a federal waiver that could help active military members exclude housing subsidies from CalFresh.

AB 2300—CalWORKs and CalFresh: Work Requirements—Will add a Welfare-to-Work exemption for full-time students. We expect that this will reduce the number of sanctions.

AB 204—Assembly Budget Committee—Starting January 1, 2025, or later, subject to the State obtaining Federal approval, the income limit would be raised so that fewer elderly or disabled Medi-Cal beneficiaries would have to pay a share-of-cost.

Effective September 27, 2022, Songhai Armstead was appointed to the position of Interim Director of the Justice, Care and Opportunities Department. Ms. Armstead has over 19 years of experience partnering with various governmental and community agencies to design and implement diversion programs through the justice system.

The Board has proclaimed month of October as:

Domestic Violence Awareness Month - encouraging all County employees and residents to reach out and support agencies throughout the County that provide services to survivors of domestic violence and their families.

Hispanic Heritage Month - recognizing the contributions and achievements made by the Hispanic and Latino community, who make up almost 49% of the County’s population.

Filipino American History Month - recognizing the rich history of Filipino Americans and their many contributions that have made our Country and County stronger.

October 24, 2022, a day to recognize Diwali in Los Angeles County. Diwali or the “Festival of Lights,” is the most important holiday of the year in India. Around the world, there are over 1 billion people who celebrate Diwali including the Indian community here in the United States.

The Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) has opened the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Waiting List Lottery for online applications beginning October 17-30, 2022. HACLA's Section 8 Waiting List has been closed since 2017 and more than 365,000 applications are anticipated to be received during the two-week period.

The simple application, which takes approximately five-eight minutes, must be completed, and submitted online using a smartphone, tablet, computer, or other electronic device with internet access. Families and individuals without internet access, can submit the online application at locations throughout the city that offer free use of their internet access or computers, such as public libraries.

The online application will be available in English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Armenian, and Tagalog. Applying for the lottery does not guarantee a spot on the Section 8 Waiting List. At the end of the application period, a randomized, computer process will be used - together with HACLA's waiting list preferences, to select 30,000 applicants for the official waiting list. To apply online applicants can go to at www.hacla.org.

DPSS will award 12 month, \$20,000 grants to 25 qualified community-based organizations that serve Seniors, Asian/Asian Pacific Islanders or LGBTQ+ individuals, with the goal of raising awareness about CalFresh benefits and to encourage members of these populations to apply. Community-based organization located in and serving Los Angeles County with extensive experience working with Seniors, Asian/Asian Pacific Islanders or LGBTQ+ individuals and have an operating budget of \$250,000 or less are encouraged to submit a proposal.

Organizations that are interested should email to CalFreshOutreach@dpss.lacounty.gov to receive an application package as well as further instructions. Please quote "ARPA Partners" on the subject line of your email. We have promoted this opportunity on our social media as well as at our community engagement meetings. Applications will be accepted through Friday, October 21, 2022, and we expect to issue grants in early November.

Customer Service Center (CSC) Update - You may recall that 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). The data offered to you today is for July, August and September.

[CSC \(July 2022 – September 2022\)](#)

| | July | August | September |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|
| Calls Received by EWs | 636,952 | 699,732 | 626,966 |
| Average Wait Time | 35:42 | 32:55 | 32:53 |

| | | | |
|---|-------|--------|-------|
| Average Handle Time | 17:00 | 17:32 | 15:51 |
| Forced Disconnects (Dropped Calls) | 4,086 | 15,083 | * |

* Data unavailable in time for the meeting.

Intake Call Centers Applications (July 2022 – September 2022)

| | July | August | September |
|---|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| Applications Received (Overall) | 127,774 | 147,828 | 133,759 |
| Same Day Disposition Rate by Program (Overall) | 55% | 55% | 55% |
| *Applications Processed by CSC Intake / % | 48,315 / 38% | 57,479 / 39% | 49,689 / 37% |

I am pleased to announce that our IHSS Division and Staff received a 100 percent compliance processing rate from the California Department of Public Social Services (CDSS) for timely reassessments and recognition for 2020 – 2021.

The accomplishment occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the virus hit the most vulnerable populations the hardest.

IHSS serves over 244,000 aged and disabled consumers who have physical and mental challenges that prevent them from performing everyday tasks, such as domestic services and personal care.

We are urging families to file for expanded child tax credit before the November 15 deadline. Because of the pandemic, the child tax credit was significantly expanded in 2021 through the American Rescue Plan.

Parents can now receive \$3,600 per child under 6 and \$3,000 for children ages 6-17. These changes were made for just one year and will be reduced back to \$2,000 per child in 2023. They can fill out forms online at getctc.org. According to the Tax Policy Center, close to 372,000 children in California are at risk of missing out on benefits because their families did not file income taxes in 2019 or 2020. Even if families don't have any income to declare, they need to complete the child tax credit forms, and the IRS forms to get the child tax credit.

The Department has utilized its outreach efforts with several news media outlets in English, Spanish and Chinese languages, to encourage families to take advantage of the child tax credit information. A list of the media outlets can be provided to you.

Each year in the fall, DPSS employees participate in a fundraising event called FunMania. It includes a series of fundraising activities and competitive sport events throughout the month of September, culminating on September 24, with an opening ceremony and employee picnic.

Events included family bike riding, bowling, volleyball, baseball, basketball, softball, and soccer tournaments; cookouts, baking contests, table games, spirit and banner contests and children's activities.

This year we raised over \$22,000, which will go into the year-end campaign pot. Overall, these funds are distributed equally to seven Board approved fund distribution agencies, which are the Asian Pacific Community Fund, Brotherhood Crusade, Community Health Charities, Earth Share California, United Latinx Fund, United Way, and Variety Children's Charity of Southern California.

Commissioner Lewis suggested that the Department provide support for participants that are completing applications for Section 8. Commissioner ElHessen suggested that the organizations DPSS will be providing funding should be more inclusive of organizations that serve the disabled such as independent living centers. Commissioner Lee asked if CSC numbers could be shown on the screen while discussing (in the future).

5.0 CONTINUED BUSINESS

2022 - 2027 DPSS STRATEGIC PLAN (Part 2)

Nick Ippolito, Assistant Director Bureau of Special Operations

Mr. Ippolito shared the following updates:

Since we last spoke, we made some additions, clarifications and want to share a timeline to launch a public review/comment with you on today. We added a new goal under Priority 1: Reimagining Social Services: Goal 1.3 Restructuring the General Relief (GR) Program. This is something that is long overdue. This program has functioned largely the same way for many years and there are well over 113,000 persons in the program relying on this basic public assistance program that the County administers directly. We have some lead way to make some adjustments and changes that best serve the GR population in the community at large.

The Board of Supervisors asked for a workplan and a strategic plan on addressing and alleviating poverty in LA County called the Poverty Alleviation Plan. One of the goals in that plan is to restructure the GR Program, which we wholeheartedly support and eager to work on. We want to ensure that what is in the LA County Poverty Alleviation Plan concerning GR is also reflected in the DPSS Strategic Plan as well.

Bottom line we are looking at ways we can provide more effective supportive services, access to mental health, substance abuse services and how to best leverage them for employment or overall wellbeing.

Next, we restructured our Priority 2, which is essential to our overall efforts to renew our commitment to our communities over the next five years through this strategic plan. We change the title from Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to Embracing Anti-Anti Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion. This is a major priority throughout LA County. This goal is built around 3 goals: (1) Increase equitable access to DPSS programs; There are numbers of persons who qualify for our services, but for whatever reason, they do not approach us. We want to do a community scan across LA County to strategically target and place resources there to ensure they can access in an equitable manner. (2) Develop a needs assessment model; and (3) Conduct an examination of DPSS programs, policies, and services through a lens of anti-racism and inclusion. These are the key components and changes we have made to the plan. Next steps are to do a soft launch to elicit community feedback on Tuesday, October 25. It will go out on Social Media outlets. We will share our strategic plan at community our engagement meetings with a two-week public comment period. We will officially launch the week of November 7. This is a living document that can/will be adjusted or revised as circumstances/issues change moving forward. Ms. Toliver will send the latest draft for you to review and anyone else who would like a copy.

Vice Chair Lewis stated she was glad to learn that substance use disorder is being lifted as a priority with all of the fatal overdoses happening. She knows these individuals intersect with the populations DPSS serves. DPSS works with Public Health concerning this issue, but it's not at the level it used to be. She asked, will DPSS re-engage and or explore collocated staff to provide hands-on support for those individuals that are ready to get support for addiction? Mr. Ippolito stated, one of the goals of the strategic plan down the road is reimagining our social services, looking at our agreements with not only county departments, but all agreements, to ensure they are effective in serving our customers and providing the services they need. Substance abuse services is critical support for our populations. If co-location is something that we need, we will focus on it. A big aspect of this strategic plan is to identify what is not working, as looking at what we aspire to do, and making that happen for our customers.

Vice Chair Lewis suggested that listening to customers in advance of releasing the plan is hopefully the direction the Department is moving in. Mr. Ippolito responded that he is open to presenting the plan to community forums and welcomed any suggestions from the commission and asked for commissioners to please submit to Ms. Toliver.

Commissioner Estrada spoke of families not being able to navigate virtually and was happy to hear that the Department is willing to go to communities and meet face to face and appreciates the Department's commitment.

6.0 **NEW BUSINESS**

THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY ANTI-RACISM, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (ARDI) STRATEGIC PLAN FORUM (UPDATE)

Vice-Chair Veronica Lewis

Mihran Kalaydjian, Commissioner

Commissioner Kalaydjian attended the ARDI Forum on September 15. He stated it was complex, but very well organized. They shared critical and important equity tools and how to apply them in our districts.

Vice Chairperson stated Dr. Scorza was the facilitator for most of the meeting. Discussions around racism, disparities, equities, and discriminatory policies is very difficult, and I agree they did a very good job. What was most hopeful for me, is that in these conversations, there is a fair and non-diluted acknowledgement of history and how that directly impacts history today. A lot of time was spent in discussion on how they developed a strategic plan and the different benchmarks put in place for the short, medium, and long term, how they directly tie back to some of the history and understanding discriminatory policies that were intentionally designed to exclude others. Most impactful, we are having honest conversations, because we can't transform without honesty and a willingness for us to sit in that uncomfortable space, until we can figure out a pathway forward. ARDI, as it relates to DPSS and other county departments, the strategic plan is countywide, but they have already began working closely with the designated folks for each department. It is incumbent upon the commission to figure the role we will play and how we will work along with Dr. Contreras and the Department. I think we should have a conversation with the Chair to agenda and discuss how this can take place to move forward.

Commissioner Taylor added that it would be helpful in the future to know who our commission members are. She feels we don't really know each other, the professions nor qualifications each bring to the table regarding commissioner tasks. Commissioner Chan agreed that the commission should refine its role supporting the Department concerning ARDI.

Follow Up Item: Vice Chair Lewis shared there is a Poverty Alleviation Event next week. She encouraged commissioners to attend if they could. She will share the access information with Ms. Toliver to share with commissioners.

7.0 **COMMISSIONER'S REQUEST FOR FUTURE TOPICS**

(1) Defining the Commission's role with ARDI; (2) a drill down presentation on the CSC Call Wait System; (3) Vice Chair would like agenda panel of participants to hear directly from them; (4) a presentation on the projects DPSS is involved in that is justice involved; and (5) a presentation on the key collaborations with DPSS.

8.0 CHAIR'S REPORT

On behalf of the Chair, Ms. Toliver shared about a minor change made to the Commission Work Plan. The original work plan range of time 2021-23 was changed to 2022-25, aligning closely to the DPSS Strategic Plan 2022-2027. Commissioners agreed with the change.

Regarding the Commission Annual Report for 2021-22, commissioners were asked to review and provide any changes, and email to Ms. Toliver by November 3.

Dr. Contreras stated in the interest of transparency for clear and consistent communication, I am of the understanding we are going to weave your request into the workplan and present those key collaborative efforts as we move through topics presented in your workplan. Vice chair stated her preference, however, she deferred to the Department to present in the way they see best.

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.