



COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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



[PSS Commission Webpage](#)

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 19, 2026

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

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

Location #3: Manhattan Beach Library
1320 Highland Avenue, Room B,
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

Location #4: Adele Andrade-Stadler Home/Office
2956 West Shorb Street,
Alhambra, CA 91803

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

Summer McBride, Chairperson

The meeting was called to order at 11:04 a.m. A quorum was established. The Chair read the countywide land acknowledgement.

Roll Call/Commissioners Present:

- Summer McBride (Chair)
- Sue ElHessen, Ed.D. (Vice Chair)
- Adele Andrade-Stadler
- Andrew Yam
- Booker Pearson
- Genevieve Riutort
- Joni Byun
- Juan Leaños
- Mihran Kalaydjian
- Sam Joo
- Veronica Lewis

COMMISSIONERS

Chairperson

SUMMER MCBRIDE

Vice Chairperson

SUE ELHESSEN, Ed.D.

ADELE ANDRADE-STADLER

ANDREW YAM

BOOKER PEARSON

CHRISTINE SALAZAR

DYNASTY TAYLOR

GENEVIEVE RUITORT

JONI BYUN

JUAN P. LEAÑOS

MIHRAN KALAYDJIAN

POLLYANNA LEE

SAM JOO

VERONICA LEWIS

YVONNE CHAN, Ed.D.

COMMISSION STAFF

Executive Director

LA FRANCE TOLIVER

Commission Secretary

MICHELLE NGO UNG

Commissioners Absent:

Christine Salazar
Dynasty Taylor
Pollyanna Lee
Yvonne Chan, Ed. D.

Commission Staff:

La France Toliver
Michelle Ung

Introduction of Guests

Jackie Contreras, Ph. D., Director, Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)
Michelle Sepulveda, Assistant Director (AD), DPSS

2.0 PSS COMMISSION AWARDS CEREMONY

The PSS Commission recognized the following 36 DPSS employees for their excellence in customer service:

Rocio Quiñones, Administrative Services Manager I (ASM I)
Alisa Lieu, Program Assistant (PA)
Alma Solis, PA
Rina Lee, PA
Lydia Phillips, PA
Yolanda Wyatt, PA
Charles Prudholme, PA
Jeehae Zepeda, PA
Enedelia Ornelas, Administrative Services Manager II (ASM II)
Christine Clancy, Eligibility Supervisor (ES)
Laura Chocano, ES
Talynn Soghomonians, ES
Deborah Carter, Supervising Payroll Clerk IV
Jacqueline Cooper, Administrative Services Manager III (ASM III)
John Cvjetkovic, ASM II
Josefina Encarnacion, Human Services Administrator I (HSA I)
Imani Forster, HSA I
Wesley Chu, PA
Guadalupe Rodríguez, PA
Nathan Che, HSA I
Sharlene Chamchuen, HSA I
Leonardo Brambila, HSA I
Magin Argueta, HSA I
Solía Caballeros, PA

Sonia Gutierrez, GAIN Services Supervisor (GSS)
Edgardo Bautista, PA
Sonia Santana, HSA I
Andrei Oprisan, Principal Information System Analyst
Chi Lam, Senior Information System Analyst
Maria Esquivel, Social Services Supervisor
Michelle B. Serabia, ES
Myesha Luster, ES
Jessica Golfo, HSA I
Ken Cho, HSA I
Maria T. Hernandez, Supervising Clerk
Mayra Ruiz, GSS

3.0 REVIEW AND APPROVE JANUARY 15, 2026, MEETING MINUTES

Summer McBride, Chairperson

Chairperson McBride opened the floor for comments on the minutes, and there were no corrections. Commissioner Lewis moved to approved and Commissioner Pearson seconded the motion. The Chair called for the roll call. The January 2026 minutes were approved by majority vote (11 -Ayes) with 4 abstentions as follows:

Summer McBride (Chair) – Aye
Sue ElHessen, Ed.D. (Vice Chair) – Aye
Adele Andrade-Stadler – Aye
Andrew Yam – Aye
Booker Pearson – Aye
Christine Salazar – Abstained
Dynasty Taylor - Abstained
Genevieve Riutort – Aye
Joni Byun – Aye
Juan Leños – Aye
Mihran Kalaydjian – Aye
Pollyanna Lee - Abstained
Sam Joo – Aye
Veronica Lewis – Aye
Yvonne Chan, Ed. D. – Abstained

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

Summer McBride, Chairperson

Jacqueline Chavez is the Executive Director of Community Bridge Housing. I respectfully request that this Commission direct DPSS policy staff to present clear information and an informal report on the department's two-person-per-bedroom occupancy limit. As it is applied to the general relief housing subsidy and case

management program, this limit is not set by statute, regulation, or published program guidance. Nonetheless, it is being used as a decisive basis to deny housing subsidies to otherwise eligible people with disabilities, in our case. These decisions result in people remaining unhoused, people that we care about deeply, not because housing is unavailable, but because an unwritten policy is applied rigidly, without transparency or process. We are asking for facts, clarity, and accountability.

Chairperson McBride thanked her for her public comments. She also reminded the commissioners that they cannot comment on or respond to items not on the agenda, but noted that her comments have been recorded.

5.0 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Jackie Contreras, Ph. D, Director, DPSS

Director Contreras began by thanking the PSS Commissioners for recognizing DPSS staff for all the work each individual does on a day-to-day basis.

State of California Update

Director Contreras began her updates to the PSS Commissioners with the CalFresh Fruit and Vegetable (CF&V) Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Pilot Project. She explained that at the state level, the program is back because it received dedicated funding in the 2025-26 budget. To support the relaunch of the CF&V EBT Pilot Project, the Budget Act of 2025 allocated \$36 million to extend the program temporarily, effective November 17, 2025. CalFresh (CF) recipients can earn a dollar-for-dollar match, up to \$60 per month, when buying fresh fruits and vegetables at participating retailers and farmers' markets. The farmers' markets participating in L.A. County are Food Access Los Angeles and Mother's Nutritional Centers, which have 82 locations in six counties, including L.A. County.

The Board made the following Proclamations for the month of February 2026:

"Black History Month" encourages all residents to celebrate the history, legacy, and contributions of Black Americans and to continue the pursuit of equality and justice for all. This year marks the 100-year milestone for the recognition of organized Black history in the United States. The first commemoration was named "Negro History Week" in 1926 by Dr. Carter G. Woodson through the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH).

"Civil Grand Jury Month" honors the invaluable contributions of past and present civil grand jurors who have strengthened local governance in L.A. County.

February 11, 2026, is "211 L.A. County Day." February 17, 2026, is the start of the "Lunar New Year." February 27 and 28, 2026, are "Rare Disease Day."

L.A. County Updates

Effective November 1, 2025, the Department implemented a six-month hard hiring freeze to manage spending during fiscal uncertainty. The freeze applied to new hires, promotions, lateral transfers, and out-of-class assignments, with exemptions.

Effective February 13, 2026, this changed as the Board of Supervisors approved the implementation of a County-wide hard-hiring freeze, with exemptions. Departmental financial estimates show that at least four County of Los Angeles departments are projecting a deficit at the fiscal year-end, and many other County departments are projecting minimal or no year-end savings, increasing the risk that more departments will begin to show deficits. In addition, the County faces unusual and unpredictable challenges this fiscal year, and in future years, including the AB 218 settlement payments, slower growth in local housing sales, and property losses from the January 2025 wildfires.

On February 12, 2026, DPSS, along with many other County departments, submitted budget requests for 2026-27 to the Board of Supervisors. Director Contreras explained that during the public hearing, she discussed DPSS's priorities, which include the redesign of the General Relief (GR) Program, collaborative efforts to prevent and end homelessness for individuals and families, and the active identification and addressing of disparities across our programs and services. As for budget requests, Director Contreras emphasized we must ensure the sustainability of the CalFresh Program by securing the County's match of the federal costs shift and expressed the ongoing efforts to "right-size" the distribution of funds between CalFresh and GR claiming. Lastly, although the implementation of the "chip card" technology has greatly reduced EBT theft, there is a continuing need to restore funds to our customers impacted by EBT skimming.

Director Contreras lastly shared with the Commissioners the ability for qualifying L.A. county residents and DPSS customers to enjoy 20 free rides every month on Metro or a discount pass on another participating transit agency. L.A. County residents qualify if they are currently enrolled in CF, EBT, Medi-Cal (MC), reduced lunch program, Social Security, Social Security Disability (SSD), and CalWORKs (CW) Programs. Residents can apply now at the LA Metro LIFE Program Webpage.

Follow-up Item: Commissioner Pearson stated that at some point, he would like to hear about the collaborative efforts and goals, and the results of those efforts, as they relate to preventing homelessness. He stated that there are many people living on sidewalks. Chair McBride stated that she added this topic as a potential future agenda item. Director Contreras did explain that DPSS is working closely with Sara Mahin, the new director of the new L.A. County Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH). They will be administering the dollars for such programs. DPSS is also working with the Department of Aging and Disabilities to ensure both departments are addressing needs.

Follow-up Item: Commissioner Lewis asked when it might be possible to receive actual information on the progress of these efforts. Director Contreras explained that HSH was established on January 1, 2026, but that HSHS will be operational and administering the program on July 1, 2026. The prevention work is transitioning to the Office of Child Protection (OCP). This is also part of a report back that issues to the Board of Supervisors in May 2026. DPSS's focus was on homelessness and housing for transition-aged youth and seniors, and some of that work may go to OCP and some to the new department, HSH, but those decisions have not been made yet. Chair McBride stated that it will also be added to a future agenda for an update.

6.0 NEW BUSINESS

Presentation: Bureau of Customer Service Centers (CSC) Update
Michelle Sepulveda, AD

AD Sepulveda provided a high-level overview of CSC operations and the extensive services that are provided. She explained that the first CSC was established in 2007, and the next two were implemented in 2012. Those three CSCs were responsible for assisting customers with the approved caseloads, but due to the pandemic, the centers had to include intake services to assist customers without the need for them to go into the offices. Later, in 2021, the renewal line was implemented, and they are responsible for processing renewals for all major programs. Most recently, in 2024, the department underwent a reorganization that brought all the CSCs under one umbrella to form the Bureau of Customer Service Centers, which included absorbing the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Helpline.

CSCs are available Monday through Friday, 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, and have access to Self-Service Interactive Voice Response (IVR) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Customers also have IVR services in 11 threshold languages: English, Spanish, Armenian, Mandarin, Russian, Korean, Vietnamese, Farsi, Cantonese, Tagalog, and Cambodian. Customers have access to wait times, so they know how long to expect to wait. They can also replace their EBT card without the need to speak to an Eligibility Worker (EW), and DPSS uses voice biometrics so customers can use their voice to authenticate themselves. Customers can also use the callback feature so they can receive a courtesy call and avoid waiting in the queue, or if they do wait, they will listen to hold messages that provide important program information related to DPSS services. If they do interact with an EW, they will be offered a survey to provide feedback and allow the department to address concerns or praise their good work. Another IVR feature is access to the following helplines: Civil Rights and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), IHSS, Fraud and Prevention, Emergency Services, eICT, and Child Care.

CSC General Inquiry – October to December 2025

Type of Interaction	October	November	December
Calls Received by EWs	404,005	293,309	397,934
Calls Handled by EWs	255,793	193,945	224,845
Average Wait Time	0:46:00	0:35:25	0:52:49
*Non-Serviced Calls	29,891	13,661	38,581

CSC Intake – October to December 2025

Type of Interaction	October	November	December
Calls Received by EWs	404,005	293,309	397,934
Calls Handled by EWs	255,793	193,945	224,845
Average Wait Time	0:46:00	0:35:25	0:52:49
*Non-Serviced Calls	29,891	13,661	38,581
Same Day Disposition Rate by Program	57%	55%	57%
Applications Processed	37,621	29,816	38,705

*Please note that non-serviced calls represent customers who reached the call queues that are currently at max call capacity. Customers receive a high call volume message and are offered to return to the self-service portion of the IVR or end the call. Customers can call us back later to attempt to reach a worker once again.

Renewal Line – October to December 2025

Type of Interaction	October	November	December
Calls Received by EWs	70,760	51,532	59,384
Calls Handled by EWs	41,281	27,672	33,140
Average Wait Time	0:57:13	1:04:15	1:06:43
Non-Serviced Calls	3,894	2,401	4,598
Renewals Processed	26,671	24,934	26,151

IHSS Helpline – October to December 2025

Type of Interaction	October	November	December
Calls Received	116,617	88,772	105,237
Calls Handled	73,066	57,428	70,116
Average Wait Time	0:17:27	0:17:06	0:14:23
% Consumer Calls Received	48%	48%	49%
% Provider Calls Received	39%	39%	39%
% Other Calls Received	13%	13%	12%

IHSS Application Line – October to December 2025

Type of Interaction	October	November	December
Calls Received	14,889	10,706	13,170
Calls Handled	10,177	7,826	9,762
Average Wait Time	0:07:27	0:05:36	0:07:43
Average Handle Time	0:10:16	0:10:09	0:10:39
Applications Initiated	6,913	5,223	6,242

Commissioner Joo asked for clarification on the same day disposition rates and why are the primary reasons why applications are not completed at initial contact. AD Sepulveda explained that its due to verifying information on the case or if the individual is unable to upload that information on that same day.

Commissioner Pearson asked if the data captures new people applying for benefits, not renewals. AD Sepulveda explained that there has not been an increase in MC or CF applications, and the data reflect a drop in applications. Director Contreras added that even though we've seen a drop in applications, not all programs are seeing the drop.

AD Sepulveda explained that even though the CSCs offer an array of services, they are always looking for new ways to make things more convenient for customers. Given the current hiring freeze and the changes coming up with H.R. 1 that will require MC renewals to double due to the new semiannual requirement, CSCs must look at the services provided and see how they can be modified to ensure all customers are being assisted. Director Contreras added that DPSS needs to look at all the access points, from coming into a district office to calling on the phone or mailing information, to determine which access point works best for customers. It's not easy to predict which access point a customer is going to select,

so all of those access points need to be staffed. As the demands increase, we're going to have to rethink how DPSS is allocating the staff that is available. As that demand increases, we will need to identify those match dollars for CF because the federal government has shifted the amount that they're going to put in there; they're going from 50% to 25%, so we now have to share with that state at a higher percentage, and that's roughly \$40 million we're losing. Losing that \$40 million means we also lose the state dollars, and it also means we lose the federal dollars. It translates to \$250 million we would lose, which translates into 1,500 staff. Cutting 1,500 staff from the department would have a significant impact on our ability to maintain services.

Follow-up Item: Commissioner Lewis asked if the quarterly reports could include information on the surveys. Specifically, high-level aggregate data on the key category responses. She also asked to discuss the direct access to health lines through IVR.

Commissioner Lewis also stated she noticed the renewal line for MC is a lot longer, and the distribution of staff. She asked if there was a way to shift staff to reduce waiting times. AD Sepulveda explained that we are assessing the situation to share the staff resources and modify the services to aid with that.

Commissioner Lewis lastly asked about the gap in the number of calls that came in versus the number of calls that were handled. AD Sepulveda explained that the data that is not included is that of abandoned calls. So, the non-service calls are not a subset of the calls received, so that is a separate count of the number of calls that do not get through just because we hit our capacity. There is also a category of calls where the customer requested a callback, but they were not successful. Commissioner Lewis asked for clarification if the non-service calls mean the customers were hung up on, and AD Sepulveda explained that they are not hung up on; they are offered self-service.

Follow-up Item: Commissioner Lewis requested that the quarterly report show the number of abandoned calls and the number of callbacks that were not successful.

Commissioner Yam stated he did not read the Board of Supervisors' motion for the half-cent sales tax, but wants to know if some of the money is going to DPSS. Director Contreras explained that originally, 5% of that was going to be allocated to DPSS, which would have been \$50 million, but it was identified that outreach was the most critical piece to make sure people can keep their benefits. The other key piece was the ability to track and connect people to employment and volunteer opportunities. This resulted in reducing that to 3%, or \$30 million. If it does pass, we would identify those resources and would optimally contribute to one or both of those two critical areas.

Commissioner Joo also asked whether DPSS has reviewed the average call duration to determine how long it takes to service callers, identify efficiencies, and provide staff training. AD Sepulveda stated that the time varies by type of program and the number of individuals in the household, and oftentimes, we are taking the information from start to finish without any information being uploaded. Staff is manually inputting the information, updating the California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS), and having to capture telephonic signatures, rights, and responsibilities. The other thing that impacts the time is that we offer threshold languages. Using Language Line solutions lengthens the time of the call. The surveys do provide us with feedback on where we can find inefficiencies. Chief Deputy Director Kristin Stranger added that DPSS is looking to continue to promote access points of online or mail areas, particularly where no interview is required. For example, MC gets a significant number of calls to complete a renewal over the phone, but the program doesn't require an interview. She stated she shadowed staff, and a SAR can take 45 minutes to two hours to process, waiting for the customer to upload documents, but one employee was tied up for two hours. AD Sepulveda added that staff also don't hold on to any documents, so after the call is finished, they still take time to process the case, approve it, and authorize it or send out the MC 355 or CW 2200 if something is missing.

Chairperson McBride asked how the different languages are selected and what if someone doesn't fall under those languages. AD Sepulveda explained that the last language was Cantonese, and it's based on a request from an advocate. DPSS worked with partners to make sure it was available, but it's based on the volume of calls received. By far the largest volume is English and Spanish, and they are ordered based on the volume of calls received. Commissioner McBride thanked DPSS for all the work they've done on the CSCs to help hundreds of thousands of callers every month and acknowledged that H.R. 1 will significantly impact and undo so much of that work.

Director Contreras lastly clarified that moving forward, the data will be provided on a different timetable. The data for January, February, and March 2026 will likely be provided in May 2026.

7.0 COMMISSION BUSINESS

Summer McBride, Chairperson

Chairperson McBride asked the Work Plan and Goals Ad-Hoc Committee Chair, Sue ElHessen, Ed. D., to provide an update on the Commission Workplan. Committee Chair ElHessen stated the timeline to present to the commission for review by March or April 2026. They want to align their work goals with DPSS's strategic goals and priorities. She asked Director Contreras if there was a draft of the department's priorities and goals. Director Contreras explained that the

current goals are from 2022 to 2027, so right now she is in the process of refining those goals. She wants to move from a less technical approach to a more adaptive approach, where we think about how we can transform our services, which translates to technical pieces we have to translate. This work is going to happen over the next several months, and it will be to establish goals for the 2027-2032 strategic plan.

Chairperson McBride reminded the commissioners that this commission is an Advisory Commission.

8.0 CHAIR'S REPORT

Summer McBride, Chairperson

Chairperson McBride attended the 2026 Winter Commissioner Networking Summit that was hosted by the Commission Social Services Division and the Executive Office. She was able to meet commissioners from other commissions.

Chairperson McBride also wanted to highlight Commissioner Dynasty Taylor for two huge moments. First, she is the executive director and founder of Dynasty's United Youth Association (DUYA), and they celebrated 12 years of proactive work with the community. Second, Commissioner Dynasty Taylor had her baby one month ago and would like to commend her hard work and motherhood.

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

Summer McBride, Chairperson

The meeting was adjourned by the Chairperson at 01:05 p.m.