COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES
MEETING MINUTES
September 18, 2025

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

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

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

Summer McBride, Chairperson

Meeting was called to order at 11:07 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)
Joni Byun
Yvonne Chan
Michael Flood
Mihran Kalaydjian
Juan Leanos
Pollyanna Lee
Veronica Lewis
Booker Pearson
Genevieve Riutort
Dynasty Taylor

Commissioners Absent:

Adele Andrade- Stadler
Andrew Yam
Sam Joo

Commission Staff:

La France Toliver
Michelle Ung

Introduction of Guests

Michael J. Sylvester, DPSS
Shawn Amiel, DPSS
Kristina Meza, CEO PAI
Shawn Luna, County Counsel
Julia Almanzan, County Counsel

2.0 REVIEW AND APPROVE JULY 17, 2025, MEETING MINUTES

Summer McBride, Chairperson

The Chair called for the vote by roll call and the minutes were approved by majority vote.

Summer McBride, Chairperson - Aye
Sue ElHessen, Ed.D., Vice Chairperson - Aye
Joni Byun - Aye
Yvonne Chan - Aye
Michael Flood - Aye
Mihran Kalaydjian - Aye
Juan Leanos - Aye
Pollyanna Lee - Aye
Veronica Lewis - Aye
Booker Pearson - Aye
Genevieve Riutort - Aye

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

Summer McBride, Chairperson

None.

4.0 DIRECTORS UPDATE

Dr. Jackie Contreras, Ph.D.

Mr. Ippolito provided the following update on behalf of Dr. Jackie Contreras:

The Board made the following Proclamations for the month of September 2025: "National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month", "Childhood Cancer Awareness Month", "Deaf Awareness Month", "Heart Walk and Stroke Month", and "Step Out Walk to Stop Diabetes Month". In addition, the Board has also proclaimed: September 9, as "California's 175th Anniversary of Statehood" and September 11, as "Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance"

On September 2, Maral V. Karaccusian became the interim Director of the Department of Aging & Disabilities. Ms. Karaccusian is an accomplished professional with 20 years of experience in Human Services and Strategic Policy. Prior to this appointment, Ms. Karaccusian served as the Senior Children and Human Services Policy Deputy for the Office of Supervisor Janice Hahn.

Starting with today's update, I will be providing you information on the five different operations managed under our Bureau of Customer Service Centers. This includes the CSC General Inquiry Line, CSC Intake Line, Renewal Line, IHSS Helpline, and IHSS Application Line. The detail of this information is in your packet, but I will go over the high levels and we can go from there. CSC General Inquiry, for June 2025 there was 421,000 calls received by eligibility workers. 212,937 of those calls were handled by EWs.

The 421,000 calls include courtesy calls and abandoned calls. So, if somebody calls us and then hangs up without us picking up, that falls in the calls received bucket and our courtesy calls. We now have that technological capability to give people the opportunity to get a call back and not lose their place in line.

Our average wait time in General Inquiry was 52 minutes. For CSC Intake we had 117,601 calls received, 65,000 handled by EWs, with an average wait time of 28 minutes and of that number, we dispositioned 58% (33,929). Our Renewal Line, which you are familiar with that people don't have to call our regular CSC line if they need to, if they're if they're due for a renewal they can call this this specialized line. For June 2025, 71,720 calls were received to our Renewal Line. We handled 44,740 calls; average wait time 41 minutes and we were able to process 25,274 renewals.

Our IHSS helpline, exclusively for our IHSS Customers and their providers, in June 2025 received 110,614 calls, handled 38,731 calls, average wait time 53 1/2 minutes. The number of consumers that call is roughly 46% of those calls and roughly 40% are providers and it was 14% of other calls with IHSS. The IHSS Application Line, which is dedicated exclusively to those applying for IHSS was 13,384 calls in June 2025, we handled 10,484 of those calls, the average wait time just over 5 minutes. We were able to initiate about 7,456 applications.

We also are happy to report that DPSS won four NACo Achievement Awards. NACo is our National Association of Counties that LA County is a big part of, along with all the other counties across America, and we won four achievement awards. The Oracle Cloud Infrastructure Migration. It was implemented to improve the department's administration of existing IT infrastructure through digital transformation and adopting cloud-based solutions for an optimized system that delivers continuous real time analytics and insights in the most cost-effective manner. Next, we have the Planning and Budgeting Cloud which is established as a centralized secure cloud-based platform to support the department's budgetary and planning processes and ensure that leadership keeps abreast with organizational finances.

The Private and Security Agreement, Contractor Awareness and Compliance Campaign ensured compliance with the 2024 Department of Health Care Services Privacy & Security Agreement by updating approximately 300 contractual agreements. So those are mostly for our community partners. We just like any of the other large government agencies that work with the state we have confidentiality requirements that we have to adhere to, and we need to make sure that our community partners do so as well and finally promote Language Justice for Indigenous Communities designed to remove language barriers that have historically prevented indigenous language speakers - many who do not speak English or Spanish from accessing essential services in Los Angeles County.

These are languages of people that don't speak English or Spanish that might be an indigenous population. In Mexico, there's a wide array of different languages and dialects and? our folks in the Civil Rights Section are partnering with a group called CLO which works exclusively with those populations.

The Quality and Productivity Commission, in partnership with the Board of Supervisors and the Productivity Managers Network, recognizes county employees and departments for their achievements in improving quality and productivity in county services. I am pleased to announce that DPSS has been selected for the Quality and Productivity Commission Special Award from the Chair. This award is in the Customer Service Award category. The project award is for our In-Home Supportive Services Chat Bot.

It is a real person exchanging and we have a chat feature where there's real person real people exchanging on chat. The chat bot provides automated responses on general information, but they're not going to go into the particulars of your case or something like that. But oftentimes people have sort of general information. What do I need to do to apply for services? Or what's my different particulars like that? So, the chat bot work helps us with general information.

On August 6, DPSS Toy Loan Program celebrated its 90th anniversary with a ribbon cutting for its new headquarters and first-ever stand-alone, DPSS-operated Toy Lending Center in Lincoln Heights.

I was pleased to welcome Commissioner Pollyanna Lee, colleagues, community partners, and local families, reflecting on the Toy Loan Program's history, impact on children's learning and creativity, and vision for its future. Each speaker shared powerful stories about how the program has shaped lives across L.A. County.

The Toy Loan Program has faced major challenges in recent years, including the COVID-19 pandemic and a 2022 fire that destroyed its downtown L.A. warehouse and toy inventory. Today, 30 Toy Lending Centers continue to serve thousands of children, with the Lincoln Heights location symbolizing a renewed commitment to families in underserved communities throughout the county.

Lastly, I want to add that our DPSS Executive team volunteered one day of service at Commissioner Flood's LA Regional Food Bank which is around the corner from our headquarters. This location is their flagship location. We put together boxes and did all kinds of stuff. It was a tremendous opportunity and personally a very enriching experience. For instance, there was a gentleman who was showing myself and the Director of Human Resources how to organize a pallet of food properly and he was once a GAIN participant.

He was referred there through our GAIN program, and he is winding his way up in the ranks at the food bank. It is a tremendous, impressive operation and they provide up to 1 million meals a month across LA County and I encourage you to reach out Commissioner Flood who will very quickly put you to work.

Follow up Item: Commissioner Chan asked if DPSS had a resource library on its website that identifies the various awards it has received.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

Presentation: General Relief Housing Subsidy and Case Management Program

Lisa Hayes, HSA III, Homeless Services Section
Luther Evans, Division Chief, CalWORKs and GAIN Division
Crystal Elizarraras, HSA I, CalWORKs Program Section

Ms. Hayes provided the following information on the latest GR homeless updates:

The General Relief (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 either be disabled and pursuing Supplemental Security Income or be deemed employable and participating in the START Program (formerly known as GROW). The housing subsidy is a maximum of $475 for one person and a maximum of $950 for a couple. The GR participant is required to contribute $100 from their GR grant towards the housing subsidy. A total of $575 for a single person or $1,150 for a couple is paid directly to the landlord once housing is secured.

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.

The funding sources are Measure A receiving $10.415 million filling 1,927 subsidies and Net County Cost (NCC) we receive $8.120 million filing 1,055 subsidies.

Mr. Evans provided the following information on the latest CalWORKs Homeless updates:

There are four State Homeless Assistance Programs available which are outlined within the following slide. These programs are entitlement programs. These programs are available to all CalWORKs families once every 12 months. The exceptions for homelessness more than once are due to domestic violence; prior residence is uninhabitable; a medical or mental illness; or a disaster.

Motel Vouchers are not provided: A payment is issued via an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card; and the applicant/participant uses the payment issued via the EBT card to pay for: Temporary Housing: Payment for a motel/hotel, a stay with a family/friend, etc.; or Permanent Housing: Assists families with security deposits, last month's rent, etc. DPSS does not fund bed/units for any of the programs. None of the State Homeless Assistance Programs are impacted due to state and federal decreases/cuts.

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.

Our Funding Source is Federal (29.1%)/State (68.4%)/County (2.5%). Expenditures: Permanent Homeless Assistance: $8,242,307; and Temporary Homeless Assistance: $37,456,240. Ms. Elizarraras provided the following information on County Homeless Assistance Programs:

There are four County Homeless Assistance Programs available which are outlined within the following slide. These programs are discretionary programs. Available only for CalWORKs families who are participating in Welfare-to-Work (WtW)/GAIN. Available once in a lifetime; some exceptions exist. Payment is issued via an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card; and the applicant/participant uses the payment issued via the EBT card to pay for: Temporary Housing: Payment for a motel/hotel, a stay with a family/friend, etc.; or Permanent Housing: Assists families with security deposits, last months rent, etc.

Budget Impact: None of the County Supplemental Homeless Assistance Programs are impacted due to state and federal decreases/cuts.

Temporary Homeless Assistance+14 (THAP+14) – Provides a homeless CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work (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.

Emergency Assistance to Prevent Eviction (EAPE) – 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.

Moving Assistance (MA) – Provides CalWORKs WtW 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.

4-Month Rental Assistance Program (4-Month RA) – Provides formerly homeless or at-risk of homelessness WtW families with a rental subsidy for up to four months (eight months if the family is enrolled in Family Stabilization), after securing permanent housing. Available once-in-a-lifetime, no exceptions.

Funding Source: Federal (70%)/State (30%); Expenditures: THAP +14: $2,538,724. EAPE/MA: $4,934,765; 4 Month RA: $801,828.

The Housing Support Program (HSP) is administered by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA). The Coordinated Entry System for Families consists of eight (8) Service Planning Areas (SPAs) throughout Los Angeles County.

• DPSS Homeless Case Managers are co-located at the FSCs to connect CalWORKs families to benefits and services.

LAHSA subcontracts with homeless providers and Family Solutions Centers (FSCs) located across the 8 SPAs to provide homeless services to CalWORKs homeless families enrolled in the CESF which includes the following: HSP Allocation & Expenditures for Fiscal Year (FY) 21/22 through FY 25/26:

Note: Starting in FY 21/22, the State supported counties to carry over unspent allocations to subsequent FYs which is why there are some FYs where the expenditures exceed the allocation amounts. Starting with FY 25/26, the State shared that unspent allocations cannot carry over to subsequent FYs; they must be spent by 6/30/2026.

Due to the current funding limitations in LA's CESF for FY 25/26:

- LAHSA/FSCs will only serve families with HSP funding who are currently receiving Interim Housing and Time-Limited Subsidy payments.

- HSP will not be used for Housing Navigation and Prevention services.

Commissioner Lewis asked if there was a way that DPSS leadership could really start to think about if there were ways to further equip your workers in the face of knowing that challenging will be coming.

Mr. Evans responded we brought on a consultant to work specifically with DPSS staff for how to interact with those families, and we actually established in the pilot, a random control study with a control group and a treatment group to see what the outcomes are over time and California Policy Lab is doing that. Also, as part of that, there's a team here in this office that are problem solvers that we hired specifically. There are several players that are aimed with trying to keep people out of the CES and out of homelessness.

Follow up Item: Commissioner Lewis offered her support/expertise to the department around homeless families that are unhoused. She is willing to make herself available to discuss possible alternative strategies. She understands there may be some limitations with the unions in terms of what your employees can do.

Follow up Item: Commissioner Lewis asked what's the drop percentage wise from DPSS' previous investment in TLS from last fiscal year if you have that information if you don't I understand but what's the difference between last year and this year?

Follow up Item: Commissioners Taylor and Lewis expressed hoping to hear before the calendar year is out, if it's OK with the chair and? vice chair. Like a report about what kind of communications our department are doing in relation to all the policy and funding shifts and even potential implications to the lives of DPSS participants.

Follow up Item: Commissioner Lewis asked what the communications strategy for DPSS participants.

Follow up Item: Commissioner Leanos is interested in partnering with Toy Loan to set up a toy loan center in the Antelope Valley.

6.0 LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Nick Ippolito, Chief of Staff

There are some broad things that I'll talk about and there's some things that would be sort of relevant to Commissioner Lewis's question that I can go into a little bit of detail at the state level just procedurally, the legislative session ended last week.

There were several bills that survived the suspense file that are now with the Governor Newsom for signature. He has until October 13th assigned, veto, or do nothing with the bill, in which case, if he does nothing, it becomes law. There are a few actual bills that are relevant to our department, but nothing of huge significance that that we can talk about.

But one thing I would want to mention is that before the legislature closed, there was several budget trailer bills that were introduced that had some things related to the state's ability to comply with the new HR1 guidelines. Some additional resources to automate some things relative to CalFresh are sort of minor good news.

In terms of Medi-Cal, the Governor decided to cap the number, to cap any those who are undocumented from receiving full scope medical after January 1st which was across the board and legislature created an exception to that for those who are former foster youth up to age 26, who have undocumented status. They will continue to receive full scope Medi-Cal. That's one positive step in the right direction in that regard.

We are now gearing up for the next session, the second year of the legislative session which starts at the beginning of January 2026. A lot of it is around implementing HR1. We're pulling together legislative strategies, working with our County Welfare Directors Association on different things related to streamlining procedures and policies to make it easier for someone on CalFresh or Medi-Cal to meet the work requirements and vice versa different strategies related to helping our workers do their job more efficiently through automating so that we can help people to receive their benefits and move on.

There's also some advocacy happening at the federal level to try claw back some of the provisions of HR1. Dr. Contreras briefed members of Congress last week along with Dr. Galley from Health Services, Dr. Wong from Mental Health and the Chief Deputy for Public Health with regards to some of the real implications of HR1. One of the things Dr. Contreras was advocating for was for members of Congress to restore exemptions to work requirements for CalFresh as it relates to the populations that are now required to very vulnerable groups transitioning out of foster care, individuals that are homeless, veterans and parents with kids older than 14 years old.

It is important to note regarding the question Commissioner Lewis raised, I think an important point about what we're doing to implement HR1 which has a lot to do with communications not only with our customers, but also with the people that work internally and external partners and community-based organizations etc. There are actually two efforts underway that complement each other. Our staff is looking closely at how best to implement these changes in the way to do the least amount of impact to our customers. We are also developing a communications plan that will be working with all of our partners across the spectrum to implement that also includes school districts, community colleges, county department partners, community-based organizations, the business community, and LA Care, which is our managed care partner and others to get the word out to the customers we all have in common.

PSS Commission Annual Report Draft: Ms. Toliver discussed the draft Commissions Annual Report. She asked for commissioners to review the draft as well as reviewing the prospective bio and provide any updates by end of October.

Follow up Item: Commission Lewis stated I hope we can place on the agenda our plan to develop a new annual or multiyear plan as this one expires this year. Vice-Chairperson ElHessen suggested that a committee be established to work on the commission's work goals. Last time we had 3 members including the Chairperson. The Chair suggested that it be agendized for November meeting.

Adopt a Family program – Last year you adopted 5 families. One family per supervisorial district. Do we want to continue with this? If you look at the pictures in the annual report you will see the families that you helped. These families were very appreciative of the commissions help. Chairperson McBride stated she would love to hear from commissioners. Last year, we had a friendly competition among commissioners by supervisorial district. Competition is good.

7.0 CHAIR'S REPORT

Chairperson McBride thanked Dr. Elhessen for presiding over the meeting last month in her absence and appreciated everybody who attended. She read through the minutes and did take note of some of the requests for future topics or follow up information. I will talk to LaFrance about getting some of those things on the agenda or followed up on offline with the individual Commissioners who requested them.

Follow up Item: I want to give you an opportunity ahead of time to review the agenda. Send in your questions that you want with information you want included in the presentation, just to make sure that we're optimizing the time that we're together and the presenters are prepared to share information and not be caught off guard if there's information that is important to you.

If you can do that when you review the agenda, send your questions to LaFrance and of course, we'll always have the discourse here, but just to make sure that we're always able to get those questions in advance that can be asked. Commissioner Lewis also suggested getting a general outline of what will be discussed will be helpful.

8.0 ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned by the Chairperson at 12:55 p.m.