



COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

MINUTES

Wednesday, June 12, 2019, 1:00 P.M.

Department on Disability

200 N. Spring Street, Room 350, Los Angeles, California 90012

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Theresa de Vera
Myrna Cabanban
Alisa Schlesinger
Dr. Robert Bitonte
Iran Hopkins
Richard Rothenberg
David Wolf
Robert Williams

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Betty Wilson (excused)
Iran Hopkins (excused)

DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY:

Stephen David Simon, Executive Director, Department on Disability

OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS:

Chris Lee, City Attorney

GUESTS:

Dante Q. Allen, Executive Director, CalABLE Board.

*AUDIO TAPE(S) and CAPTIONING NOTES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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Michelle Wolf, Founding Executive Director, Jewish Los Angeles Special Needs Trust (JLA Trust).

Tiffany Ngo, Advocate/Training Coordinator, Southern California Resource Services for Independent Living (SCRS-IL).

Magdalena Morales-Maithalouni, of Fiesta Educativa Inc.

ITEM NO. (1): APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

President de Vera called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. The Commission had a quorum.

Action Taken: The Commission approved the May 8, 2019, meeting minutes.

ITEM NO. (2): ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: PERSONAL FINANCE AND DISABILITY

Presentation from various organizations from the greater Los Angeles area regarding the history, policy and legal realities, and resources available to the public where Disability and self-determination are involved.

- I. Dante Q. Allen, Executive Director, CalABLE Board - Director Allen briefed the Commission on ABLE accounts which are a new savings option that allow individuals, who became disabled before the age of 26, to save and invest in a tax-advantaged account without jeopardizing their ability to collect SSI. The Federal Able Act establishes the State's ability to have savings and investment programs specifically for the benefit of people with disabilities and allows individuals to save money above the asset limitations for programs like SSI and Medicaid. The individuals that are eligible to join CalABLE are people with disabilities of all types: mobility, cognitive, developmental, ability impaired, sight impaired, or mental health. The Able account allows individuals to open the specialized account and save up to \$15,000 per year or \$100,000 in total before SSI would look at their eligibility. When an individual opens an account online, all of the

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transactions are on their online account. The individuals also have the opportunity to invest across a spectrum of portfolios in order to build wealth in the form of compounded interest. Individuals also get a prepaid debit card where money can be preloaded and used where any debit cards are accepted.

- II. Michelle Wolf, Founding Executive Director, Jewish Los Angeles Special Needs Trust (JLA Trust) – Director Wolf of the JLA Trust shared information on the pooled special needs trust and the populations served. As a pooled trust, they use a Master Trust written by a local attorney Stewart Zimerin that acts as an "umbrella" over individual trust accounts. Funds are only "pooled" for investment and management purposes. The beneficiaries join the trust by signing a legal document called a Joinder Agreement and it's notarized. The individuals are able to pick from three portfolios very similar to the CalABLE for investment portfolios. The difference in a special needs trust there is no age limit, but there is a minimum of 20 thousand. They also have in-depth knowledge of local community resources, social services, and care coordination to help people with disabilities obtain resources. They have 70 enrolled clients with about \$4 million in total aggregate asset, 15 percent of their clients are at a regional center, about 10 percent are younger with parents or other relatives, 30 percent are middle age adult with physical or severe mental health disability, and vast majority of their clients are in SSI.

- III. Tiffany Ngo, Advocate/Training Coordinator, Southern California Resource Services for Independent Living (SCRS-IL) - SCRS-IL is a non-profit organization based in Pasadena and Downey that provides various services, at no-cost, to empower persons with any disability to live full and independent lives. Coordinator Ngo presented information on the new change that will allow Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients to receive CalFresh (Food Stamps) benefits. SCRS-IL supports an individual from beginning to end with filling out benefit applications. If they get denied, SCRS-IL can also help individuals with the appeal process. Beginning June 1st, SSI recipients may now

receive CalFresh food benefits while keeping their full SSI check. CalFresh is based on income and the most that individual can receive is \$130 a month on top of that full SSI check. People can apply at their local CalFresh office or they can also come to their office to complete the online application.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

ITEM NO. (3): ELECTION NOMINATIONS

The Commission Election process will begin with Nominations and Self-Nominations for the following positions: President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary. Open Election voting will be held at the next Commission Meeting on 07/10/19.

Action Taken: Commissioner Rothenberg nominated President De Vera for President, Commissioner Wolf for First or Second Vice President, and Commissioner Williams for Secretary. Commissioner Williams nominated Commissioner Wolf for First for either First and Second Vice President. President De Vera nominated Commissioner Cabanban for either First and Second Vice President.

ITEM NO. (4): EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Discussion on items relating to Department activities, metrics, budget, planning, and/or other relevant issues. Presentation is by Stephen David Simon, Executive Director, Department on Disability. DOD in collaboration with the LA Convention Center Tourism Bureau are working on a plan of expanding the Convention Center to ensure the plans and the space are accessible. DOD is collaborating with the Department of Rehabilitation and Employment Department to provide employment opportunities for youth 16 to 21 with disabilities. DOD will be hosting a Public Policy Form on July 2nd relating to scooters, shared mobility advices, and disability. The Commission

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on Disability has a ratification role with the Los Angeles World Airports Disability Access and Accommodation Access Committee and will aginize the official vote to ratify that position. Kathleen Barajas introduced herself the Commission on Disability. Special Guest Speaker, Magdalena Morales-Maithalouni, of Fiesta Educativa Inc. For the last 40 years Fiesta Educativa's has provided information and training to Latino families on how to obtain services for all persons with disabilities and training for professionals who work with these families. Their mission is having a partnership of families, professionals, consumers, and regional centers to empower families with disabilities. They serve about four thousand families and coordinates over a hundred education and training events. They have free workshops around topics to information others on services, regional centers, Special Education, and how medical system and regional centers work.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

ITEM NO. (5): NEW BUSINESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Suggested items for the next regular meeting's agenda and announcements from Commissioners, DOD staff, and guests. Commissioner Wolf congratulated Stephen David Simon on getting a recognition. President De Vera announced a new ride share company called FlexLA in Downtown Los Angeles.

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

ITEM NO. (6): PUBLIC COMMENT

No Action Taken, Information Purposes Only.

ITEM NO. (7): ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned

MEETING ADJOURNED AT APPROXIMATELY 3:00 P.M.