



## **Regular Meeting Minutes**

### **City of Los Angeles Commission on Disability**

**Thursday, November 20, 2025**

**2:00 P.M.**

Edward R. Roybal Board of Public Works Session

Room 350

Los Angeles City Hall

200 North Spring Street

Los Angeles, CA 90012

Zoom Video Conference

#### **Commissioners Present**

Akiko Tagawa, President  
Myrna Cabanban, Vice President  
Iran Hopkins, Commissioner  
Alisa Schlesinger, Commissioner  
Robert Bitonte, Commissioner  
Robert Williams, Commissioner  
Louis Herrera, Commissioner

#### **Commissioners Absent**

Mary Grace A. Barrios, Commissioner  
Jorge E. Acevedo, Commissioner

## **City Staff Present**

Stephen David Simon, Executive Director, Department on Disability  
Alison Everett, Assistant Executive Director, Department on Disability  
Heather Aubry, Assistant City Attorney, City Attorney's Office  
Kayvon Wroten, Department on Disability  
Salina Goytia, Department on Disability

### **Item One (1) - Request for Remote Participation Option Pursuant to Government Code Section 54953(e)(2)(a)**

Action Taken: There were no Commission members attending the Commission on Disability meeting remotely. No action required by the Commission on Disability.

### **Item Two (2) - Multiple Agenda Item Public Comment**

Public comment was provided on the following topics applicable to the Commission's scope of work:

- Concerns about the homelessness crisis and alleged violations committed by the Church of Scientology against the disabled and elderly. Noted lack of sufficient response by the City regarding Scientology actions in the public right of way.
- Suggested mandatory training for City personnel regarding intervention and prevention of elder abuse perpetrated by "high-control groups."
- Concerns regarding access and cost barriers to virtual public comment (CPRA/SB 707 Compliance).
- Obstacles to effective code enforcement due to removal of public information
- Requirement for comprehensive synopsis of public comments within the official minutes of City public meetings.
- Addressing the needs of unhoused individuals with Disabilities as a priority.

No action taken, information purposes only.

**Item Three (3) - Approval of the October 16th, 2025, Regular Minutes**

The Commission reviewed the October 2025 Regular Meeting minutes.

Action Taken: President Tagawa moved, and Commissioner Bitonte seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the October 2025 Regular Meeting. The motion passed.

**Item Four (4) - Presentation by Nathaniel Vergow, Deputy Chief Program Officer, from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) about people with disabilities experiencing homelessness in Los Angeles.**

Nathaniel Vergow discussed how the the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) is working to address homelessness, facing an "Outreach Imbalance" where expanded outreach exceeds the availability of interim and permanent housing. The standard System Pathway for unhoused individuals moves from Outreach to Interim Housing/Shelter, then Housing Navigation, and finally to Permanent Housing (including Permanent Supportive Housing). Data shows the unhoused population has a high rate of disability, with about 25% experiencing serious mental illness and 14% having a physical disability. LAHSA's accessibility efforts include tracking features in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), addressing restrictive housing unit requirements, creating a Universal Housing Application, and simplifying In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) access in shelters.

Questions from the Commissioners followed.

No action taken, information purposes only.

**Item Five (5) - Presentation by Victoria Jump, Assistant Director from the Los Angeles County Regional Coordinating Council on Aging and Disability's Community Engagement and Communications Workgroup on their Communications Guide.**

Victoria Jump discussed the new Communications Guide, developed by the Regional Coordinating Council for Aging and Disability, which is a short, succinct resource for professionals in the disability and aging fields. Its purpose is to promote accessible and positive communication, reduce ageism and ableism, and offers best practices, definitions, and specific tips for various communication challenges, including those related to different disabilities and language access. Commissioners viewed it as a quick reference tool for providers. A plan is being developed for training and disseminating the guide to all providers and a suggestion was made to partner on a separate reference material aimed at the media. Commissioners were asked to send any feedback on the guide to Kayvon by the end of December for a potential final draft and publication in January.

No action taken, information purposes only.

**Item Six (6) - Commission on Disability FY 2025-26 Work Plan Updates**

The Ad Hoc Committees provided the following updates:

- Ad Hoc Committee 1 (LA28 Games Support):
  - No updates given.
- Ad Hoc Committee 2 (Disability Cultural Impact):
  - Commissioner Cabanban identified a potential candidate for the first Betty Wilson Humanitarian Award.
- Ad Hoc Committee 3 (Healthcare and Social Security Access):
  - Commissioner Bitonte informed the Commission that he would like to invite LA Care to a future meeting to discuss how many enrollees they are expected to lose due to diminished healthcare subsidies scheduled to go into effect after the first of the year.
- Ad Hoc Committee 4 (Affordable and Accessible Housing):

- The Committee reported that it completed its objective of receiving a presentation from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA).

No action taken, for information purposes only.

### **Item Seven (7) - Department on Disability Executive Director's Report**

The Department on Disability (DOD) Executive Director, Stephen David Simon, provided the following information as part of his Executive Director's Report:

- Encouraged Commissioners need to think about a topic for the Commission's March public hearing and to agendaize a discussion on it for the January meeting
- Noted there is no meeting in December.
- Noted that a presentation on the City's accessibility plan for the LA28 Games will be given in February.
- Noted the COD FY 24-25 Annual Report was approved and needs a cover letter from the President then will be submitted to the Deputy Mayor.
- Highlighted the Department's Durable Medical Equipment program recently held a successful event, and that the program is expected to exhaust its FY 2025-26 funding by December.
- Noted the Department's budget and stated a comprehensive, \$6.2 million budget (including funds for the Games) was submitted to the CAO's office.
- Noted the Department's Reel Abilities Film Festival hosted a community forum to find a new lead and support for the festival. A smaller event is being planned for the coming year, and they are seeking community partners.

No action taken, for information and discussion only.

### **Item Eight (8) - Announcements**

Announcements from Commissioners and City staff and requested agenda items for future Commission meetings.

- Commissioner Bitonte noted that the recent Mayor's meeting dedicated time to the Games but had little mention of disability access.
- Commissioner Tagawa agreed with Commissioner Bitonte, adding that the Paralympics were not mentioned alongside the Olympics, and the meeting venue itself had accessibility issues. Also shared a positive experience with accessibility

in a Mongolian art museum. Took a moment to formally recognize the passing of disability rights activist and writer Alice Wong on November 14th, 2025.

- Commissioner Williams: Asked if the persisting issues in Hollywood (sidewalks, planters) need to be agendized.
- Commissioner Cabanban: Suggested inviting LA28 to speak to the Commission, as accessibility was barely addressed in a recent transportation meeting they attended.

No action taken, information purposes only.

### **Item Nine (9) - Adjournment**

Action Taken: President Tagawa moved to adjourn in remembrance of Alice Wong and Commissioner Cabanban seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:28 P.M.