

CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON DISABILITY ACCESS EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Teleconference Meeting Minutes
February 22, 2023

1. Call to Order

Chair Souraya Sue ElHessen welcomed everyone and called the meeting of the Education and Outreach (E&O) Committee of the California Commission on Disability Access (CCDA) to order at approximately 1:30 p.m. at the CCDA Headquarters, 400 R Street, Suite 312, Sacramento, CA 95811.

Staff Member McPhaul reviewed the meeting protocols.

Roll Call

Staff Member McPhaul called the roll and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

Commissioners Present:

Souraya Sue ElHessen, Chair*
Ben Conway*
Ashley Leon-Vazquez*
Hector Ramirez*

Staff Present:

April Dawson, Executive Director
Stephanie Groce, Data and Research Analyst
Phil McPhaul, Operations Manager
Abigail Ridge, Administrative and Legislative Analyst
Presley Strother, Marketing and Outreach Analyst

Committee Members Present:

Zeenat Hassan*
Arnie Lerner*

Committee Members Absent:

Stephen Simon

Also Present:

Regina Brink, California Council of the Blind
Geoffrey Straniere, ADA Compliance Officer, City of Los Angeles

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes (August 24, 2022) – Action

MOTION: Committee Members voted to approve the August 24, 2022, California Commission on Disability Access Education and Outreach Committee Meeting Minutes as presented with 4 yes, 0 no, and 1 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Committee Members voted "Yes": Committee Members Conway, Hassan, and Leon-Vazquez, and Chair ElHessen.

The following Committee Member abstained: Committee Member Lerner.

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3. Comments from the Public on Issues Not on this Agenda

No members of the public addressed the Committee.

4. Accessible Parking Campaign – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson provided a brief overview of the status of the Accessible Parking Campaign Toolkit Project. The Business Owners and Operators and Construction Industry Workgroups have been meeting for approximately one year to create drafts of two toolkits that will eventually be utilized by those industries to ensure that parking and exterior paths of travel are accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Executive Director Dawson stated draft toolkits were submitted to the Department of General Services (DGS) Office of Public Affairs and the Division of the State Architect (DSA) for review and feedback. The edits received from the Office of Public Affairs were non-substantive and will be integrated into the toolkits. The DGS edits were more technical in nature and beyond the scope of current staff.

Executive Director Dawson stated Commissioner Clair spoke at the February Workgroup meetings about the DSA's technical edits and will assist staff in finalizing the toolkits, which will then be taken back to the Workgroups and the full Commission for review and approval. Once the editing phase is completed, the toolkits will be made available in multiple languages both in print and online. The E&O Committee will help disseminate the toolkits.

Discussion

Committee Member Lerner stated the need to ensure that the toolkits are distributed to the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection to be included as part of San Francisco's Accessible Business Entrance Program.

Chair ElHessen asked about the jurisdiction for accessible school parking lots.

Executive Director Dawson stated the Accessible Parking Campaign is targeted to private businesses. School sites will not be addressed in the toolkits; however, the Committee can discuss parking at school sites as an issue.

Public Comment

No public comment.

5. Committee's Focus for 2023 – Update and Discussion

a. Discuss the Education and Outreach Committee's Focus.

Executive Director Dawson reviewed the E&O Committee focus for 2023. She stated E&O Committee Members will monitor the effectiveness of the CCDA's outreach plans

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and make recommendations and develop educational modules on disability access for use on social media.

Executive Director Dawson stated Staff Member Strother is an Outreach and Marketing Specialist and is assisting with creating social media and other targeted campaigns to advertise the work of the Commission. She asked for Committee feedback on ways to utilize social media, who should be targeted that the Commission might be missing, and things that may be within the CCDA's purview that have not recently been discussed in the community.

Executive Director Dawson stated staff is in the process of trying to create a social media handle for the CCDA beyond using the DGS social media sites and leveraging partner pages. The CCDA currently does not have access to its own YouTube channel or social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Staff is working through Department channels to try to make this happen but, in the meantime, staff is utilizing partner pages and developing materials that can be disseminated in other ways.

Executive Director Dawson asked for feedback on the two project areas and for suggestions of new project areas for the Committee to focus on.

Discussion

Committee Member Hassan asked for more detail on the second focus area.

Executive Director Dawson stated developing educational modules on disability access for use on social media could include activities such as pairing modules with toolkits, creating fun public service announcements (PSAs), and other ideas that can be included in presentations. She stated she gives quite a few presentations to local municipalities, government officials, and businesses about what the CCDA is and what it does. It would be great to have fun social media graphics or videos to accompany those presentations.

Committee Member Hassan stated this Committee has discussed language access for business owners with limited English proficiency. Providing the education modules, PSAs, and other things in multiple languages is important.

Commissioner Ramirez stated the state of Oregon has a successful PSA disability program called Rooted in Rights. They suggested using Rooted in Rights as a model.

Public Comment

Regina Brink, California Council of the Blind, stated social media is a good idea to create awareness; however, many times, individuals with visual disabilities are forgotten when constructing social media posts. Images are very important, and it is comparatively simple to add "alt text" to add verbal explanation of pictures or images. The speaker noted that it is not necessary to describe every nuance of the scene. The speaker provided the example "person in a wheelchair trying to get through a crowded sidewalk." It is important to verbally capture the message trying to be conveyed in the images.

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Executive Director Dawson stated staff will ensure that all modules are accessible and contain alt text. User testing will also be conducted to ensure that it is not just acceptable by law but usable by the user.

Discussion, continued

Chair ElHessen asked if the process of developing an accessible app for educational modules and literature the Commission puts out falls under the guidelines of the DGS or if that can be done as part of the Commission's website.

Executive Director Dawson stated developing an app would be considered the same as social media. Anything the CCDA puts out publicly requires DGS approval. It would also depend on whether someone in the DGS has experience in developing apps.

Chair ElHessen stated the Committee has discussed developing an app as part of a resource tool in the past for DSA guidelines for building and architecture design, accessibility from parking lots to accessing a building, etc.

Chair ElHessen asked if information can be included on the website directing businesses and members of the public to education modules and information, perhaps under the E&O Committee tab. She stated the Committee has also discussed putting out a newsletter directing businesses and the public to locations with current information.

Executive Director Dawson stated educational modules, one-pagers, and other materials can be put posted on the website.

Commissioner Leon-Vazquez suggested having a hub of information on the CCDA website for small business owners, including templates for business websites, and looking into website-building platforms to see what Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance they are already doing, such as Squarespace Website Builder.

Chair ElHessen stated that is a great start but stated the need to ensure that website-building platforms have complete Section 508 website compliance guidelines.

Executive Director Dawson stated the need to ensure that anything the CCDA encourages individuals to use has been vetted and trustworthy.

6. CCDA Response to Assembly Bill 2917: Education and Outreach's Role – Update and Discussion

a. Website Accessibility

- 1. Attorney Compliance**
 - **Upgrades to the CCDA Legal Portal**
 - **Education and Outreach**
- 2. Business Compliance**
 - **Education and Outreach**
- 3. Accessible Parking Campaign Toolkit**

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- **Education and Outreach**

Executive Director Dawson summarized the CCDA requirements as mandated by Assembly Bill (AB) 2917 to collect alleged disability access violations related to websites and to work with the DSA and the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) to develop a toolkit by January of 2024 to help businesses avoid website access violations. The DOR has already developed a comprehensive website geared toward state and local government on how they can ensure that their websites are accessible. They have given the CCDA permission to crowdsource that website to help develop a toolkit that would be geared toward businesses.

Executive Director Dawson stated the need to utilize individuals who are both users of websites that need to be accessible as well as business owners to learn the best information on what is being seen, trends with access, and struggles and challenges being experienced in order to educate them not only on ways to avoid lawsuits but ways to be user-friendly and to attract more individuals to use their businesses.

Executive Director Dawson stated the CCDA will also be collecting alleged disability access violations related to websites to share with the Legislature every year the way it does with other alleged disability access violations related to public accommodations.

Executive Director Dawson stated the CCDA Legal Portal has several category upgrades that would encompass examples of alleged website violations. Staff is working with the California Bar Association to develop social media content for their website to remind attorneys of their obligation to submit their alleged complaints to the CCDA Legal Portal.

Discussion

Committee Member Hassan stated, regarding attorney compliance, the Commission put together a roundtable discussion with attorneys from both sides a couple of years ago. At that time, the Bucannon decision was raised as a conflict for attorneys because it might interact negatively with plaintiff attorney ability to recover catalyst fees. She asked staff to look into this.

Chair ElHessen suggested that staff contact Immediate Past Chair Commissioner Guy Leemhuis, since he was actively involved in the process of creating the roundtable discussion.

Public Comment

Geoffrey Straniere, ADA Compliance Officer, City of Los Angeles, stated he would like to be more engaged with this Committee.

Committee Members and staff stated they would welcome his input and participation.

7. 2023 Listening Forums – Update and Discussion

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a. Location

b. Education and Outreach's Role

Executive Director Dawson stated the idea behind the CCDA Listening Forums is to bring the business and disability communities together with local government officials to discuss gaps in business access, challenges in services being provided, how the CCDA can be of assistance, and how to move forward together to solve concerns. She stated the Listening Sessions were put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic; however, planning has now resumed for the 2023 Listening Forums. Four forums will be conducted in the summer and fall of 2023 in different parts of the state: San Jose, Santa Rosa, and locations to be determined in the Central Valley and in the Los Angeles area.

Executive Director Dawson stated the statewide data will be synthesized in a final forum to review feedback gathered, trends, and current work of the CCDA. The CCDA will try to provide language access at the forums and ensure that educational materials are provided in multiple languages.

Executive Director Dawson stated the Listening Forums will be in-person with some remote sessions in between, or in-person with a Zoom component. She asked for ideas on the format of the Listening Forums in light of access and communication needs.

Discussion

Commissioner Ramirez stated this is an important project. As individuals are recovering and rebuilding, it is the perfect time to engage chambers of commerce and the business and disability communities, both in-person and remotely. County size impacts the way businesses are able to access resources and information. They suggested considering populations that have not been reached out to before, such as the tribal community, and considering cultural needs along with language needs within the presentations. They volunteered to help with the Listening Forums.

Chair ElHessen agreed. She stated, because individuals with multiple disabilities are more comfortable in participating in the virtual space, it is important to be inclusive of that. Many individuals cannot physically attend but want to participate and provide input.

Commissioner Ramirez stated a hybrid Listening Forum would be a fantastic opportunity to highlight lessons learned on how to hold a hybrid meeting effectively.

Chair ElHessen agreed and stated it is important for every voice to be heard and for this Committee to reach out and provide resources and tools for businesses to move forward.

Public Comment

No public comment.

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8. Future Agenda Items – Discussion

Chair ElHessen suggested discussions on outreach media resources, how to expand the CCDA website, and pros and cons to third-party sites for creating websites for businesses.

9. Adjourn

MOTION: Chair ElHessen moved to adjourn the February 22, 2023, California Commission on Disability Access Education and Outreach Committee meeting. Commissioner Conway seconded. Motion carried 6 yes, 0 no, and 0 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Committee Members voted "Yes": Committee Members Conway, Hassan, Leon-Vazquez, Lerner, and Ramirez, and Chair ElHessen.

Chair ElHessen adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:30 p.m.