

CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON DISABILITY ACCESS EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Teleconference Meeting Minutes April 3, 2024

1. Call to Order

Chair Commissioner Dr. 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. The meeting was on Zoom, via teleconference, and held at the CCDA Headquarters, 400 R Street, Suite 312, Sacramento, CA 95811.

Staff Member Strother reviewed the meeting protocols.

Roll Call

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

Committee Members Present:

Dr. Souraya Sue ElHessen, Committee Chair
Rob Bonta, Attorney General, by Deputy Attorney General Ben Conway
Dr. Luciana Profaca
Hector Ramirez
Alicia Chavez
Zeenat Hassan
Arnie Lerner
Stephen Simon

*All Committee Members participated remotely.

Committee Members Absent:

Richard Halloran, Certified Access Specialist
Ashley Leon-Vazquez

Staff Present:

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

Also Present:

No members of the public addressed the Committee.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes (May 17, 2023) – Action

Motion: Commissioner Conway moved to approve the May 17, 2023, California Commission on Disability Access Education and Outreach Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. Commissioner Ramirez

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seconded. There was no public comment on the motion. Motion carried 5 yes, 0 no, and 3 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Committee Members voted “Yes”: Committee Members Conway, Hassan, Lerner, and Ramirez, and Chair Dr. ElHessen.

The following Committee Members abstained: Committee Members Chavez, Dr. Profaca, and Simon.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes (August 23, 2023) – Action

Motion: Commissioner Conway moved to approve the August 23, 2023, California Commission on Disability Access Education and Outreach Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. Commissioner Ramirez seconded. There was no public comment on the motion. Motion carried 4 yes, 0 no, and 4 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Committee Members voted “Yes”: Committee Members Conway, Hassan, and Ramirez, and Chair Dr. ElHessen.

The following Committee Members abstained: Committee Members Chavez, Lerner, Dr. Profaca, and Simon.

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

No members of the public addressed the Committee.

5. Committee’s Focus for 2024 – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated the Committee will be provided updates and asked for feedback and advice throughout the year in terms of education and outreach on the Accessible Parking Campaign Toolkits, Disability Access Education Revolving Fund, CCDA Social Media Pilot Program, and CCDA Listening Forums. She asked for other areas of focus and how staff can better support Committee goals.

Discussion

Commissioner Ramirez commended staff for the Commission’s equity work. They suggested thinking of ways to connect with the different disability commissions and bodies throughout the state.

Chair Dr. ElHessen suggested focusing on employment for individuals with disabilities.

Public Comment

No public comment.

6. Disability Access and Education Revolving Fund – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings reviewed the Disability Access and Education Revolving (DAER) Fund one-pager, which was included in the meeting materials. She noted that the one-pager includes a QR Code about the DAER Fund. She stated \$4.00 from every business license fee goes into the Fund – 10 percent is administrative and is

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managed by the Division of the State Architect (DSA) and 90 percent is to be maintained locally. She stated the main purpose of the Fund is for the education and retention of Certified Access Specialists (CASps) by local jurisdictions but recent legislation allowed for an increase in the use of the Fund so municipalities can set up programs to assist businesses in achieving compliance. She stated this one-pager is being translated into multiple languages and is being taken to CCDA Listening Forums throughout the state.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated the CCDA is partnering with the DSA in sending out a survey to get a sense of what municipalities know about the Fund to better target outreach.

Discussion

Commissioner Dr. Profaca asked about the extent of the Fund, the responsibilities of local municipalities to identify how the Fund is used for CASps and access barrier removal, how the funds are spent, how the Commission tracks this information, what happens to the funds that are not expended, if the Fund is advertised within municipalities for small businesses to use the Fund for access removal, and the percentage of the Fund used for CASp certification and training versus for barrier removal.

Chair Dr. ElHessen stated the DSA produces a report that is posted on their website on how the Fund is spent. The CCDA is not involved in the tracking. The Funding varies based on the number of business license fees or building permits that were issued in each municipality.

Committee Member Chavez asked Commissioner Dr. Profaca to send her the list of questions and stated she will look into them.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated she will check in with Committee Member Chavez and report back at the upcoming Commission meeting.

Commissioner Dr. Profaca stated including specific examples identifying how dollars were used for barrier removal would add depth to the outreach plan.

Committee Member Simon stated he works for the City of Los Angeles Department on Disability. He stated his department partners with Building Safety to use some of the funds to address barrier removal as specifically as possible, mostly around transition plans, build-out, etc. Building Safety uses the Fund internally for staff training.

Committee Member Simon noted that there is a shortage of CASps. He asked to include a discussion on this item at a future Committee meeting to consider how cities and the state can jointly support getting the public more involved in the path to become a CASp. He stated his department was working with community colleges prior to the COVID-19 pandemic on a test-prep angle for individuals who are activists in the disability community space plus the coursework to targeting becoming a CASp. There are examples throughout the state where this is happening. The community college system is designed to do this kind of training. It is important to consider how the Fund can be utilized by cities and counties to achieve that goal.

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Chair Dr. ElHessen suggested, along with community colleges, partnering with the Cal State system through their Continuing Education Program.

Commissioner Ramirez agreed that there are not enough CASps in Los Angeles County. Part of the problem is that individuals are not familiar with how to utilize this benefit. He suggested using the City of Los Angeles Department on Disability as a model on how to partner with municipalities for outreach.

Chair Dr. ElHessen stated the city managers for Bellflower and Norwalk were unaware of the DAER Fund. She suggested beginning by connecting with and educating chambers of commerce on the DAER Fund. She volunteered to provide an update on the Fund at a local chamber of commerce meeting in her area and suggested inviting a CASp to join her. That would be a great outreach effort to educate city managers and chambers of commerce.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated there was a suggestion in the Chat Section to engage with the Centers for Independent Living about CASp certification for members of their team.

Public Comment

No public comment.

7. Accessible Parking Campaign Toolkit – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings reviewed the Accessible Parking Campaign Toolkits: Guide to Accessible Parking for Business Owners and Operations and Guide to Accessible Parking for the Construction Industry, which were included in the meeting materials. She stated the Commission approved the toolkits at the March Commission meeting with the caveat that staff continue to solicit feedback during the outreach phase to ensure that these toolkits continue to be accurate. The plan is to post the toolkits on the website, translate them into multiple languages, and showcase them at upcoming Listening Forums. Webinars and modules will be created from these toolkits in the future.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated the Contractors State License Board offered to partner with the CCDA to distribute the Construction Industry Toolkit to its members. Meetings are forthcoming to discuss how best to reach their members.

Discussion

Commissioner Dr. Profaca commended staff and Work Group members for creating these excellent toolkits. They are readable and usable but not overwhelming. She suggested contacting architectural firms and associations for distribution of these toolkits.

Committee Member Lerner asked about the first sentence of the second paragraph on page 3 of the Business Owners and Operators Toolkit. The sentence reads “Under the ADA and California law, both the property owner and the tenant/business owner are responsible for ensuring facilities are accessible.” He stated his experience with the San

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Francisco Accessible Business Entrance Program, business owners can be contacted but not tenants.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated she will take this back to the Work Group. She stated the intent of that sentence was to recognize that everyone plays a role in access.

Committee Member Hassan stated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and California disability rights laws allow a person with a disability to sue the landlord, business owner, or both. California law allows the parties to pass liability onto the other party through contract. She suggested leaving the sentence in the toolkit. It is important for business owners to know that, even if they have a contractual relationship with the landlord, if there is an accessibility violation, they could still both be named as defendants in a lawsuit.

Committee Member Simon agreed that the language should remain in the toolkit because it is often confusing about who is responsible at the local level. He agreed that neither party can get out of it.

Chair Dr. ElHessen asked if responsibility depends on the violation, such as architectural versus program barrier removal.

Committee Member Hassan stated it depends on several things. Also, California state law has protections that are not in the ADA.

Commissioner Ramirez suggested asking legal counsel to review the toolkits to ensure accuracy and that they include links to the appropriate Code sections.

Chair Dr. ElHessen asked if the DSA will also post the toolkits on their website.

Committee Member Chavez stated she will look into this and report back. She suggested that the toolkits be posted on local building department websites.

Committee Member Hassan stated appreciation to staff for their hard work on this effort and for including accessibility requirements for electric vehicle charging. She suggested sharing the toolkits with chambers of commerce and asking them to send the toolkits to their member lists.

Committee Member Simon agreed and stated the need to directly send the toolkits to smaller chambers of commerce, such as chambers of commerce for communities of color, the LGBTQ community, etc. He stated sending the toolkits to city departments has one advantage but mayors' offices, building and safety, and others receiving the toolkits directly from the state has a different advantage. He offered to work with staff on this offline.

Chair Dr. ElHessen suggested asking county commissions on disability to post the toolkits on their websites.

Commissioner Ramirez agreed and suggested an outreach strategy to work with both city and county commissions on disability. They suggested including Native American, Latino, and women's chambers of commerce focusing on small businesses.

Public Comment

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No public comment.

8. Multilingual Educational Materials – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated this agenda item specifically highlights equity, but equity is part of all areas of the Commission's work. She stated all education materials are translated into California's top threshold languages and the threshold languages in the regions where each Listening Forum will be held. One of the CCDA's commitments to equity is to contract with a company that does translation in over 200 languages and multilingual interpretation.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated staff has been partnering with the Pacific ADA Center and learning about working with multilingual partners to create programming specific to certain communities. She stated the need to ensure that all events are accessible to everyone, but noted that sometimes it is good idea to create a webinar or event specific to a certain group of people who co-create the webinar or event with the CCDA.

Discussion

Commissioner Ramirez thanked staff for trying to infuse equity in all the work of the Commission. They suggested including distribution of education materials on social media, especially LinkedIn, which is primarily for the business sector. They suggested including LinkedIn along with YouTube and Facebook in the CCDA Social Media Pilot Program.

Public Comment

No public comment.

9. 2024 Webinars – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings reviewed upcoming webinars:

- A virtual webinar on ADA Compliance: Building Blocks for Businesses will be held on April 17, 2024, hosted by the CCDA in partnership with the city of Sunnyvale and the Pacific ADA Center.
- A virtual webinar on the Intersection of Title 1 and Title 3 of the ADA and Service Animals will be held on May 30, 2024, hosted by the CCDA in partnership with the Pacific ADA Center.
- A virtual webinar on How Far We've Come with ADA Compliance will be held on July 18, 2024, hosted by the CCDA in partnership with the Pacific ADA Center.
- A virtual webinar on Customer Service During Busy Seasons will be held on September 5, 2024, hosted by the CCDA in partnership with the Pacific ADA Center.

Discussion

Commissioner Ramirez stated appreciation to staff for putting these webinars together and for partnering with the Pacific ADA Center.

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Chair Dr. ElHessen asked if these webinars will be advertised on social media.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated staff is utilizing social media to advertise CCDA events.

Public Comment

No public comment.

10. CCDA Facebook and YouTube Channel – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings provided an overview of the postings on the CCDA's Facebook and YouTube Channels, which are part of the six-month CCDA Social Media Pilot Project. She stated the hope that YouTube will be used as a library of CCDA education materials. A future goal is the ability to Livestream on YouTube.

Discussion

Commissioner Ramirez stated they are excited about this project because it can provide almost real-time analytics. They stated Livestreaming meetings in the future is a good goal. They also suggested utilizing the Events tab on Facebook. It gives individuals advance notice of upcoming events that can be shared with other Facebook users.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated there was a question in the Chat Section if videos provide ASL interpretation. She stated all full Commission meetings, Listening Forums, and Webinars provide ASL interpretation. Also, future education modules will have ASL embedded into them.

Public Comment

No public comment.

11. 2024 CCDA Listening Forums – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated several regional Listening Forums are being planned throughout California as part of a three-year initiative launched last August. The first Listening Forum was in the city of San Jose, which was followed by a webinar. The idea is to bring municipal governments and members of the disability and business communities in each region together. Municipalities to approach are targeted for this programming by using data from the top-ten alleged disability access violations; however, Listening Forums are also held in areas that request it, such as the city of Sunnyvale, that attended the Listening Forum in San Jose and asked the CCDA to hold a forum in their city.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated the next Listening Forum will be held online via Zoom and in-person at the County of Monterey Board of Supervisors chambers on April 11th in Salinas. ASL, captioning, and Spanish interpretation will be provided. A panel made up of customers with disabilities, small business owners, representatives from the chambers of commerce, a representative from the DSA, and city officials will be available to answer questions.

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Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated a webinar, a mini–Listening Forum, will be held on April 17th with the city of Sunnyvale.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated a Listening Forum will be held on June 26th in Orange County, which will coincide with the CCDA full Commission meeting. Half the day will be the full Commission meeting and the other half will be the Listening Forum. Further information is pending.

Executive Director Dawson-Rawlings stated she scheduled to meet with Committee Member Simon in late May to discuss what programming would look like in the Los Angeles area. She stated a Listening Forum is also being planned in Sacramento. The date is pending.

There were no questions from Committee Members and no public comment.

12. Future Agenda Items – Discussion

Chair Dr. ElHessen suggested a status report and next steps on the CCDA Social Media Pilot Project, attendance at upcoming Listening Forums, and trainings at a future Committee meeting.

13 Adjourn

Chair ElHessen thanked everyone for participating and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion: Commissioner Ramirez moved to adjourn the April 3, 2024, California Commission on Disability Access Education and Outreach Committee meeting. Commissioner Dr. Profaca seconded. Motion carried 8 yes, 0 no, and 0 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Committee Members voted “Yes”: Committee Members Chavez, Conway, Hassan, Lerner, Dr. Profaca, Ramirez, and Simon, and Chair Dr. ElHessen.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00 p.m.