

CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON DISABILITY ACCESS EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Teleconference Meeting Minutes
August 23, 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 1:31 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 announced a quorum was not yet present, since the majority of the body was not present in person.

Commissioners Present:

Souraya Sue ElHessen, Chair*

Ben Conway*

Hector Ramirez*

Committee Members Present:

Zeenat Hassan*

Arnie Lerner*

*Participated remotely.

Commissioners Absent:

Ashley Leon-Vazquez

Committee Members Absent:

Stephen Simon

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

Also Present:

No members of the public addressed the Committee.

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

Chair ElHessen tabled this agenda item to the next meeting, due to the lack of a quorum.

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

No members of the public addressed the Committee.

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4. Disability Access Education Revolving Fund – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson reviewed the Disability Access Education Revolving (DAER) Fund Quick Reference Guide, which was included in the meeting materials. She stated the DAER Fund is managed by the Division of the State Architect (DSA) and was established by the Legislature to increase disability access and compliance with construction-related accessibility standards. The fund ensures that Certified Access Specialists (CASps) are trained and maintained by the municipality to advise building departments and business owners seeking permits about making their business accessible to the disability community.

Executive Director Dawson stated more information is available on the website. Staff has reached out to several municipalities across the state to offer to present on the DAER Fund, will partner with the DSA on a webinar for municipalities to educate them on the use of the fund in the near future, and will soon reach out to chambers of commerce.

Discussion

Committee Member Lerner asked if staff has reached out to San Francisco.

Executive Director Dawson stated staff has reached out to San Francisco. The plan is to check back with the entities who have yet to respond. She asked Committee Member Lerner for names of individuals to contact in San Francisco.

Chair ElHessen stated she has been working with her local municipality regarding this fund. She asked how the Commission can better support local municipalities and educate local businesses and cities. She asked how to support smaller municipalities that do not know about this fund and may not have an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator.

Executive Director Dawson agreed that different municipalities have different needs. Staff is taking a tailored approach to the presentation. Staff is offering to meet in person with communities that cannot host a webinar and is following the listening forum model of letting the community set the table for what they need as far as what access looks like in their area.

Commissioner Ramirez agreed with visiting local chambers of commerce, along with municipalities. He stated the need to reach out to the cultural and intersectional varieties of chambers of commerce.

Commissioner Ramirez asked if the presentation is available in threshold languages for greater accessibility.

Executive Director Dawson stated the CCDA is finalizing a language translation and interpreting vendor contract. Once that is in place, CCDA documents will be translated into languages other than English.

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Committee Member Hassan asked about the recent changes to the statute that expands flexibility of the funds and adds restrictions on grant programs.

Executive Director Dawson stated municipalities should speak with their city attorney about the changes to the statute. She stated Assembly Bill (AB) 2164 expanded the language to allow for the fund to be used for access remediation, but that does not replace the fact that the fund's main purpose is for the training and retention of CASps. Staff is planning on collecting case studies to be published in the future and posted on the website about how different municipalities have used the funds successfully to stand up grant programs and what those look like.

Chair ElHessen asked staff to email the materials to Committee Members.

Public Comment

No public comment.

5. Business Checklist: Educational Listing – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson stated the full Commission voted for the E&O Committee to develop a business listing at the April 19, 2023, full Commission meeting. The business listing will be a one-pager to educate the business community about access. It will expand on the CCDA Accessible Parking Campaign and provide information related to providing access.

Executive Director Dawson stated prior to developing the business listing, staff is working in partnership with the DSA on the definition of accessible terms being used in the CCDA Legal Portal. The draft business listing will be presented at a future E&O Committee and full Commission meetings for further feedback.

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

6. Webinar with Pacific ADA – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson stated the CCDA will closely partner, share resources, and build community groups with the Pacific ADA Center. The CCDA and Pacific ADA Center are planning a series of quarterly webinars with dynamic speakers. The first webinar will be held on October 2, 2023, on business access and customer service, in time for the National Disability Employment and Awareness Month (NDEAM). It is scheduled at noon in the lunch-and-learn model so more businesses can attend. Subsequent webinars will be held at varying times to provide the opportunity for as many businesses to attend as possible. Participants will learn about the law and compliance from fellow business owners, who will provide a peer perspective. The flyer is currently being finalized.

Executive Director Dawson asked for ideas for future webinars.

Discussion

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Chair ElHessen asked if the webinar will be on the CCDA website and social media platforms.

Executive Director Dawson stated the trainings will be recorded and posted on the website. She stated the hope that the CCDA will have a YouTube channel in the future. The webinar series will be marketed on social media.

Chair ElHessen asked if the training will include Section 508, since many businesses have online websites.

Executive Director Dawson stated, as part of AB 2917 compliance, the CCDA will be educating businesses about business access compliance related to websites. The webinars and standalone projects will include this issue, such as a webinar module related to business access and websites and a toolkit. These are in the process of being developed.

Commissioner Ramirez stated appreciation that the CCDA is partnering with the Pacific ADA Center.

Committee Member Hassan agreed that this is an exciting partnership, especially the possibility of the webinars being held quarterly and ongoing. She stated webinars simplify complicated areas of law in a way that is accessible.

Public Comment

No public comment.

7. CCDA Social Media Presence – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson stated the Department of General Services (DGS) has approved a six-month pilot for the CCDA to have its own social media channel, beginning with Facebook and Instagram. The way the CCDA currently gets information out is through its website, word-of-mouth, emails, and mailings. Having a social media channel will allow the CCDA to post things independently and have its own marketing and identity, while still being a part of the DGS. Six-month and one-year social media plans are being drafted. Once approved, the CCDA will be given a password to its own social media handle and will partner with the DGS for the next six months. The hope is to include LinkedIn and YouTube channels in the future.

Executive Director Dawson asked for suggestions on what should be included in the draft social media plans to be submitted to the DGS for approval.

Discussion

Commissioner Ramirez stated Linked In would be a better platform for this Commission than Instagram or even Facebook, given that it is a business sector platform. Members of the business community go to Linked In to learn best practices and business ideas.

Public Comment

No public comment.

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8. Accessible Parking Campaign Toolkit – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson stated the Accessible Parking Campaign Toolkit is in the internal editing phase. A meeting with the consultant is scheduled next week. The Construction Industry Workgroup and the ADA Coordinator, Business Owner, and Operator Workgroups will then review and provide feedback on the updated drafts, which will then be sent back to the DSA and the DGS Office of Public Affairs (OPA) for approval. The final drafts will be presented to the E&O Committee for review and approval in January of 2024.

Discussion

Chair ElHessen suggested review of the video from the Spinal Cord Association on parking. She stated it is a good video about parking spaces, educating the public on not taking the spaces, and sharing the importance of access for the disability community.

Public Comment

No public comment.

9. 2023 Listening Forums – Update and Discussion

Executive Director Dawson stated, now that some of the COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted, staff is planning to resume holding regional Listening Forums throughout the state in 2023. The first Listening Forum will be in-person only and held on August 31st in the city of San Jose from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the San Jose City Hall in collaboration with the city of San Jose. The purpose of the forum is to bring the city, county, and business and disability communities together to discuss how access is working in the community and how to improve it. The hope is that attendees will come away with a deeper understanding of their compliance obligations and how access is good for business.

Executive Director Dawson stated the CCDA is taking a regional approach to these forums and will be hosting at least 15 forums in different parts of the state over the next three years using the High-Frequency Litigant (HFL) Funding. Members of the panel representing the disability community, the business community, and local leaders will discuss challenges in the Silicon Valley region related to access to businesses, solutions, and what the city and regional partners are doing to increase access, bridge gaps, and support local businesses. Commissioner Shapiro will moderate the meeting.

Executive Director Dawson stated captioning, American Sign Language, and language translation in Spanish, Mandarin, Vietnamese, and other languages that are requested will be available.

Discussion

Commissioner Ramirez noted that the work that the Commission is doing today will make accessibility better for children and youth, who are the customers of tomorrow.

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Chair ElHessen asked if the Listening Forums will be videotaped.

Executive Director Dawson stated the Listening Forum in San Jose will not be videotaped so as not to discourage attendance. The purpose is to ensure that small business owners feel comfortable talking about their challenges to access. Other communities may feel differently. Other educational items will be posted on the website with similar information to help businesses.

Executive Director Dawson noted that the San Jose Listening Forum will be held in an in-person only format. Future Listening Forums will be held in-person and virtually. Listening Forums that are held in-person only, like the San Jose Listening Forum, will include an online version that will be held soon after.

Public Comment

No public comment.

10. Future Agenda Items – Discussion

Commissioner Ramirez asked for a discussion on ADA testers.

11. Adjourn

Chair ElHessen stated the next E&O Committee meeting will be held in January of 2024. She asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Lerner moved to adjourn the August 23, 2023, California Commission on Disability Access Education and Outreach Committee meeting. Commissioner Ramirez seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:34 p.m.