

# CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON DISABILITY ACCESS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes  
October 2, 2024

## 1. Call to Order

Chair Chris Downey welcomed everyone and called the meeting of the Executive 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, California 95811.

Staff Member Groce reviewed the meeting protocols.

### Roll Call

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

#### Commissioners Present:

Chris Downey, Chair  
Brian Holloway, Vice Chair  
Drake Dillard  
Dr. Souraya Sue ElHessen\*  
Scott Lillibridge\*

#### Other Commissioners Present:

Dr. Luciana Profaca\*  
Hector Ramirez\*

\*Participated remotely

#### Staff Present:

April Dawson Rawlings, Executive Director  
Stephanie Groce, Data and Research Analyst  
Phil McPhaul, Operations Manager  
Sabina Nakarmi, Program Technician  
Abigail Ridge, Administrative and Legislative Analyst  
Presley Strother, Marketing and Outreach Analyst  
Amber Thomas, Education and Outreach Analyst

#### Also Present:

No members of the public addressed the Committee.

## 2. Approval of Meeting Minutes (June 5, 2024) – Action

**Motion:** Vice Chair Holloway moved to approve the June 5, 2024, California Commission on Disability Access Executive Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. Commissioner Dillard seconded. There was no public comment on the motion. Motion carried 5 yes, 0 no, and 0 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

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The following Commissioners voted “Yes”: Commissioners Dillard, Dr. ElHessen, and Lillibridge, Vice Chair Holloway, and Chair Downey.

**3. Comments from the Public on Issues Not on This Agenda – Discussion**

No members of the public addressed the Committee.

**4. Executive Director Report and Financial Report – Update and Discussion**

Executive Director Dawson Rawlings presented her report:

Program Highlights

The CCDA conducted a listening forum in July for the business and disability community in Orange County. Attendees included representatives from the area center for independent living and chambers of commerce.

The CCDA partnered with the Pacific ADA Center to conduct two webinar trainings for businesses in July and September.

Executive Director Dawson Rawlings represented the CCDA at a disability pride event at the Governor’s office.

Executive Director Dawson Rawlings attended the Youth Leadership Forum luncheon with Staff Member McPhaul, Deputy Director Brent Jamison and Deputy Director Paul Dixon of the Department of General Services (DGS).

Commissioner Dillard hosted Executive Director Dawson Rawlings for a day this summer in Los Angeles. He gave a tour of the Crenshaw District and introduced Executive Director Dawson Rawlings to a local business owner, Greg Dulan, who had utilized funding to upgrade his restaurant’s accessibility.

Commissioner Vacancies

There is one vacancy on the CCDA representing the interests of people with disabilities. The appointment authority is the Senate Rules Committee.

Reappointments

Commissioner Leon-Vazquez, a Speaker of the Assembly appointee, is awaiting reappointment.

Financial/Operational Highlights

CCDA management continues to meet with DGS Budgets and Contracts monthly.

The 2024-25 approved budget shifted funding for the CCDA from the General Fund to the Disability Access Account. No change was made to the High Frequency Litigant Fund.

Staff is working with the DGS Real Estate Services Division on the lease renewal. The current CCDA lease expires in two years, but the process starts early.

The conference room is being upgraded with integrated Teams equipment that will allow the CCDA to conduct hybrid meetings with stakeholders more efficiently.

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Executive Director Dawson Rawlings reviewed the Fourth Quarter Financial Report.

- The total budget authority for Personal Services for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24 ending June 30, 2024, was \$810,000.
  - At the end of the Fourth Quarter, only approximately \$684,000 was spent, due to salary savings. The amount unspent went back into the General Fund. The CCDA is now fully staffed.
- The total budget authority for Operating Expenditures and Equipment for FY 2023-24 ending June 30, 2024, was approximately \$1.6 million.
  - Year-to-date expenditures and encumbrances for Operating Expenditures and Equipment as of the end of the Fourth Quarter was approximately \$1.2 million. This number should be 10 to 20 percent higher. Staff is meeting with Accounting and Budgets to learn why the expended funding is low.
- The CCDA has started to expend funds from the High Frequency Litigant Fund, which comes from court fees paid by those who are statutorily designated as high frequency litigants. The Fund contained approximately \$942,000 as of the end of June of 2024.
  - To date, approximately \$297,000 has been spent from the Fund. The CCDA is on track to spend down the appropriations from 2022-23 and 2023-24.

Presentations/Conferences/Meetings Attended

Executive Director Dawson Rawlings reviewed her list of conferences and meetings attended since the last Committee meeting.

Discussion

Commissioner Ramirez stated appreciation for the Executive Director. The Governor's Office and state legislators are becoming aware of the way the Executive Director has been included in discussions and discussions. He thanked staff for their efforts to hold meetings in a hybrid format for accessibility. Accessibility is essential.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

**5. 2025 Meeting Calendar – Update and Discussion**

Executive Director Dawson Rawlings reviewed the CCDA 2025 Committee Meeting Calendar, which was included in the meeting materials.

Discussion

Chair Downey asked for spreadsheet documents to be shared in their root form base file system such as in Excel, which is more readable through a screen reader than a PDF of a chart.

Commissioner Dillard stated the Checklist Committee suggested changing the name of the Committee to better reflect the work of the Committee.

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Executive Director Dawson Rawlings suggested the name change be a part of the strategic planning process.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

**6. Annual Report – Update and Discussion**

Executive Director Dawson Rawlings stated the CCDA 2023 Annual Report to the Legislature is pending approval by the DGS Executive Office before it can be released to the public.

Discussion

Chair Downey stated staff got the draft report out on time. He asked if the slowdown is in the approval process.

Executive Director Dawson Rawlings stated it is.

Chair Downey asked if this is common for other Commissions' annual reports coming through the approval process.

Executive Director Dawson Rawlings stated it is not uncommon for the approval process to take six to nine months. She suggested moving the deadline for the 2024 CCDA Annual Report to the Legislature to the end of the fiscal year to help expedite the approval process.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

**7. CCDA Strategic Plan – Update and Discussion**

Executive Director Dawson Rawlings stated the Scope of Work for the new strategic plan received edits from the DGS Contracts Unit. Those have been incorporated and the Scope of Work is now under DGS management review. Once approved, the Request for Proposals (RFP) for a strategic plan consultant can then go out for bid. A Committee will be created to review the applications received. The goal is to present the three- to five-year strategic plan to the Commission for review before the end of 2025.

There were no questions from Commissioners and no public comment.

**8. Current Projects – Update and Discussion**

Executive Director Dawson Rawlings gave her report:

- The Accessible Parking Campaign is in the outreach phase. Staff presented the Accessible Parking Toolkit for the Construction Industry to the Contractors State License Board. The License Board plans to post the PDFs to their website and are interested in doing a joint press release and trainings with staff. PDFs of the Toolkits are available on the CCDA website; they are currently being translated into 12 languages.

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- The Georgia Statewide Independent Living Centers (SILC) helped to create a movie about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The movie is a good introduction to the history of the ADA and how it applies to today's world. Staff will be partnering with the Georgia SILC to host a Q&A on October 29<sup>th</sup> about the movie. Commissioner Dr. ElHessen will moderate the session.
- Staff is working with the Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) on finalizing the Website Accessibility Toolkit prior to public release.
- Staff is analyzing the drop-down codes in the CCDA Legal Portal and updating the key codes to better reflect the meaning of the submitted complaints for improved data collection. The work will be done in phases with input from users of the Legal Portal.
- The successful CCDA six-month social media pilot has enabled the CCDA to continue to release social media content under its own name.

Executive Director Dawson Rawlings commended Staff Member Strother for her work with the CCDA's social media pilot. She thanked everyone for "liking" the Facebook page and subscribing to the YouTube Channel.

Discussion

Commissioner Dr. ElHessen emphasized that many legislators are unaware of the history of the ADA. She stated the need to learn how to better market or engage legislators to learn more about the ADA.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

**9. Listening Forums – Update and Discussion**

Executive Director Dawson Rawlings stated 2025 Listening Forums are being planned in the areas of Greater Los Angeles, San Francisco Peninsula, Fresno, San Diego, San Gabriel Valley, Sacramento Valley, and in economic development corridors such as Stockton Boulevard. Breakfast Listening Forums are being considered for some of these areas. She stated Vice Chair Holloway and Commissioner Lillibridge have suggested asking businesses for feedback on their needs rather than making assumptions.

Discussion

Commissioner Dr. ElHessen asked for more detail on the target areas around Greater Los Angeles and how Commissioners can best support staff. She suggested holding a forum in the Long Beach area. She stated she will talk with staff offline.

Executive Director Dawson Rawlings stated staff has been having conversations with the city of Los Angeles, Pasadena, and downtown Los Angeles to begin with and then plans to work down to the San Diego region. She stated she welcomes feedback on how best to cover this large area. She stated many communities and municipalities have been contacting staff asking for a webinar or training for their employees. She

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noted that some forums will be virtual while others will be in person to attract the most participation and to best use resources.

Commissioner Dr. Profaca stated she has attended several Listening Sessions the CCDA held in collaboration with the Pacific ADA Center. All were outstanding; they covered much material in a short amount of time.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

**10. Bylaws – Update and Discussion**

Executive Director Dawson Rawlings stated every two years the Executive Committee reviews the Commission's bylaws and makes any necessary updates. She stated, over the past year, staff, in partnership with this Committee and the DGS Office of Legal Services have updated the Bylaws by deleting sections that were no longer relevant, updating code sections, deleting redundant language, and adding missing sections to better reflect how the CCDA does business. She reviewed the proposed draft of the revised CCDA Bylaws, which were included in the meeting materials. She noted that the proposed changes do not fundamentally alter anything but better reflect how the CCDA does business.

There were no questions from Commissioners and no public comment. The by-laws will be presented and voted on at the next full Commission meeting.

**11. Full Commission Meeting – Update and Discussion**

Executive Director Dawson Rawlings stated the next full Commission meeting will be held on October 23, 2024. The meeting is expected to end early as there will be only one guest speaker. She noted that the meeting will include holding elections for Chair and Vice Chair.

Discussion

Commissioner Ramirez suggested inviting local county and city commissions on disabilities to the full Commission meeting.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

**12. Future Agenda Items – Discussion**

No future agenda items were offered.

**13. Adjourn**

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

**Motion:** Commissioner Dr. ElHessen moved to adjourn the October 2, 2024, California Commission on Disability Access Executive Committee

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meeting. Commissioner Dillard seconded. Motion carried 5 yes, 0 no, and 0 abstain, per roll call vote as follows:

The following Commissioners voted "Yes": Commissioners Dillard, Dr. ElHessen, and Lillibridge, Vice Chair Holloway, and Chair Downey.

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