LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Access for All UsCC Minutes
October 9, 2024
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Microsoft Teams Meeting

Attendees: Amy Kay, Cody Hanable, Deysy Donis-Santos, Guadalupe Montano, Héctor Manuel Ramírez (co-chair), Isabella Rodriguez, Jaime Young, Lia Kolangian, Lourdes Rabello, Maria Elena Arauco, Margaret Mendenhall, Maria N. Tan, Racquel Decipeda (co-chair), Richer San, Rosy Tellez, Valentina D'Alessandro, Wendy Cabil, Yvette Baharyans

DMH staff: Alex Elliott, Blanca Gonzalez, Dr. Evelyn Espinoza, Dr. Jennifer Alquijay, Keianna Crenshaw, Laura Kerr, Martha Ortiz, Martin Jones, riKu Matsuda, Tracy Tisino

Microsoft Team: John Palacio

Interpreters and captioners: Alex (Spanish), Claudia (Spanish), Mara (ASL), Sharon (ASL), Tia Ely (CART)

Agenda Items	Discussion and Recommendations
Welcome and Disability Etiquette	Co-chair Héctor Manuel Ramírez welcomed all and reviewed the disability etiquette.
Land Acknowledgment	Héctor Manuel Ramírez gave the land acknowledgment
Introductions	Co-chairs Racquel Decipeda and Héctor Manuel Ramírez introduced themselves along with DMH liaison riKu Matsuda.
Approve September Meeting Minutes	Héctor called for motion to approve the September meeting minutes. Amy Kay motioned to approve, seconded by Héctor Manuel Ramírez. The motion passed with no objection.
Co-Chair Update: Nominations and Elections Discussion	Héctor shared that on October 23, there will be a meeting with the State Commission on Disabilities. The event will feature accessible meeting technologies and opportunities to meet representatives. Héctor is part of a new mental health body in Sacramento, which will hold its first stakeholder meeting.

DMH Update	Dr. Alquijay shared a brief update on the AI Policy and the new name of the Anti-Racism Diversity and Inclusion (ARDI) Division is Antiracism, Inclusion, Solidarity, and Empowerment (ARISE).
	Alex Elliott mentioned that the Access Board, a federal agency promoting equality for people with disabilities, is requesting community feedback on AI. The deadline for feedback is October 31, 2024, and a resources page is available to help people provide informed responses. He also shared the program for mailing out free COVID-19 tests is back in action, with more accessible options available. Libraries are offering programs for digital skills training and digital literacy assistance. Programs like "Cybernauts" connect participants to tech support.
	Keianna Crenshaw shared about "Beyond the Walls," an exciting new initiative to engage folks who are unable to attend meetings during regular work hours. The program holds sessions in the evenings and on Saturdays. Upcoming events include:
	   o 11/9- 11AM-1PM Carson Library
	   o 11/12- 6-8PM, Artesia Library
	   o 2/8/25- 11AM-1PM, Lancaster Library
	   o 2/22/25- 11AM -1PM, Culver City Julian Dixon Library

Presentation from Valentina D'Alessandro (LA v Hate)	Senior Human Relations Consultant, Valentina D'Alessandro, from the LA County Commission on Human Relations, presented on the L.A. Versus Hate program, an initiative designed to support county residents who have experienced hate incidents. • Key Services: Residents can report hate incidents via 211 or online. They can also opt to receive care coordination for support, including counseling referrals and guidance through legal matters. • Partnerships: The program has expanded its network from 15 to over 60 agencies and has supported more than 50,000 residents. It also works closely with law enforcement and has developed a training video for officers on how to respond to survivors of hate incidents. • Murals for Solidarity: Valentina shared photos of murals created for various communities. These murals serve as both a form of healing and a platform to raise awareness about identity-based hate. • Combatting Anti-Blackness Training: Valentina highlighted an upcoming six-day training on understanding the roots of anti-blackness, with limited spots still available. • Voter Encouragement: To increase civic participation, the program is promoting voting with buttons and posters placed at strategic locations like beaches and sports events. • Participants asked how L.A. Versus Hate interacts with the disability community. Valentina explained that their network includes organizations that provide support for

	people facing discrimination due to disabilities, particularly in education and housing. One notable case involved fighting to ensure a child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) was accepted at a school. Valentina also discussed the creation of posters specifically aimed at raising awareness and supporting the disability community, which were designed to be visually engaging. Participants inquired about the accessibility of materials for people who are visually impaired. Valentina acknowledged that this is an area for growth and expressed interest in feedback on improving the accessibility of their content. Valentina encouraged anyone who wanted materials, such as posters or campaign graphics, to contact her directly, noting that many of them can be downloaded and printed. vdalessandro@hrc.lacounty.gov or Campaign Collateral — LA vs. Hate (lavshate.org) A participant shared concerns about how L.A. Versus Hate addresses the intersection of hate and disability. Issues such as violence against people with disabilities, housing discrimination, and the stigma that often leads to homelessness were discussed. Valentina reassured the group that the program does work closely with partners to assist individuals with disabilities, including helping them report discrimination and obtain support. Richer San, API UsCC co-chair, shared his experience working with Cambodian and Filipino communities in Long Beach to educate about hate crimes and encourage reporting via smart-phone apps.
Presentation on Accessible Voting by Jaime Young and Lia Kolangian from the LA County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk	Jaime Young, Assistant Division Manager and Lia Kolangian, Administrative Services Manager I, from the LA County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk presented on efforts to make the voting experience more accessible for people with disabilities. They discussed the framework that was developed to assess the accessibility of voting sites, emphasizing the importance of having voting locations that meet both physical and technological accessibility standards. - Assessment Process: A dedicated team conducts assessments at potential voting sites, evaluating factors like parking accessibility, entrances, restroom availability, ramps, and elevator functionality. Sites must meet specific criteria for accessibility before they can be designated as a voting center. - Geographical Accessibility: To ensure voting locations are accessible, geographical spread was a key focus. The program works to ensure that voters do not have to travel more than 0.7 miles to reach a voting center. This distance was determined based on studies showing typical voting behavior and travel patterns. - Language Accessibility: As part of the effort to serve diverse communities, 19 written languages and 20 verbal languages are supported to ensure that people from different

linguistic backgrounds can participate fully in the electoral process. Special efforts are made to reach language "hot spots" where demand for specific language services is high.

- Mobile Voting Centers: To further increase accessibility, mobile voting centers were introduced. These centers can be deployed to community events or other high-traffic areas to reach voters who may not be able to travel to a stationary voting center. The county has 90 mobile voting centers in operation.
- Innovative Voting Technologies for Accessibility

A major part of the presentation focused on a newly designed voting system that considers the needs of voters with disabilities. Due to the size and diversity of L.A. County, the existing voting systems were not meeting the accessibility requirements for all voters, particularly those with disabilities and language barriers. As a result, the county decided to create a new voting machine system that focuses on universal design principles.

Key features of the new voting technology include:
- Adjustable Screens: The system is equipped with screens that can adjust for different users, including people using wheelchairs or those who are standing. This ensures that every voter, regardless of physical ability, can interact with the machine comfortably.
- Hands-Free Voting Options: The machine is equipped with a breath control feature, allowing individuals with limited mobility to cast their votes without using their hands. This hands-free capability is a crucial component for ensuring full independence for all voters.
- Audio Support: Multiple audio settings are available for voters with visual impairments, including the option for a helper to listen to the process as well.
- QR Code Reader: This feature allows voters to pre-mark their ballots at home using assistive technologies and then scan the QR code at the voting center to automatically input their selections into the system. This enables individuals to review their selections and ensure accuracy before submitting their vote.
- 100% Private Voting: A key feature of the new system is the hands-free, private voting experience. Voters can independently mark their ballots, and once submitted, the ballot is printed with the voter's selections. The system also includes an integrated ballot box, which allows voters with severe disabilities to cast their ballots without requiring assistance from others.
- Knee Space for Wheelchair Users: The machines are designed with adequate knee space to allow users in wheelchairs to approach and vote directly from the machine, avoiding the awkwardness of side-access or leaning over.

	There is a need for further discussion on the importance of continuing to improve accessibility efforts and ensuring that the voting process is as inclusive as possible for all community members. They emphasized that while the county has made significant strides in expanding accessible voting locations and technologies, there is always more work to be done. The efforts are ongoing, with continuous evaluations to ensure the best experience for every voter. There was a call for further feedback from stakeholders to help refine and improve the accessibility of the system. The collaboration between departments, organizations, and the community was celebrated, and everyone was encouraged to stay engaged as the process moves forward.
Labor Acknowledgment	Racquel Decipeda gave the labor acknowledgement.
Closing	Racquel and Héctor closed the meeting and thanked all for attending and supporting the meeting. Next meeting will be on Microsoft Teams November 13, 2024 from 10am to 12pm.