

Department of Disability and Aging Services (DAS)

Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

DATE: Wednesday, September 17, 2025

TIME: 10-11:30am

PLACE: 1650 Mission St. 5th Floor, Golden Gate Room

To protect the health of the Advisory Council members, DAS staff, and members of the public during the COVID-19 health emergency, the DAS Advisory Council will continue to hold meetings remotely. Members of the public are encouraged to also participate in the meetings remotely.

Members Present: Allen Cooper, Margaret Graf, Chris Dillon, Tia Small, Diane Lawrence, Juliet Rothman, Daisy Jimenez, Ivy Chang, Marcy Adelman, Harry Breaux, Lisa Cook, Morningstar Vancil

Members Absent Excused: Darlene Ramlose, Beverly Karnatz

Welcome: Call to order 10:00 am and welcome all Council Members and guests.

Roll Call/Secretary

Motion to approve the July 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes: Approved.

Director's Report, presented by Executive Director Kelly Dearman:

Community Needs Assessment: A task force is reviewing all commissions and boards to explore opportunities for streamlining.

Staffing Update: Jill Nielsen departed in July. Megan Elliott has stepped in as Acting Director. She previously worked at the Assessor's Office, DAS, and served as Director of IHSS Programs.

July Disability Pride Month Events including a Disability Roundtable at the Disability Cultural Center, attended by the mayor. Mayor was engaged and committed to returning every six months to meet with the group.

General Public Comment:

Member of the public shared that the Dignity Fund Coalition is developing a position related to the upcoming commission restructuring process on October 15th. Emphasized the importance of ensuring that the public continues to have opportunities to participate in this process.

Member of public reported that HomeMatch has informed over 60 individuals about the ongoing survey and expressed interest in receiving feedback from the Commission about their work.

President's Report by President Dr. Allen Cooper:

There was no Commission Meeting in August. In July, the Disability Cultural Center officially opened, a long-anticipated milestone. The new center builds on the legacy of the Van Ness facility and represents a significant step forward in serving the community.

Old Business: none

New Business:

a. Update on 2025-26 Dignity Fund Community Needs Assessment – Cindy Kauffman

Presenter Kauffman spoke on the Purpose of the Dignity Needs Assessment, Survey Details, Community Forums, Focus Groups, and Key Dates:

- Conducted every four years to identify gaps in services and highlight strengths
- Influences planning and funding FY 2025–26
- 11 in-person town hall style events which have been very well attended
- Focus on targeted and underserved communities
- July 2025: DAS and Clarity held initial presentations, December 2025: Preliminary research findings presented, March 2026: Draft report completed, April 2026: Final report issued and presented with DAS Commission.

Council members commented on the inclusion of different populations and accessibility needs for attendees as well.

Numerous comments from the Council as to how to distribute the surveys to San Franciscans that are unaware of its existence.

b. Advisory Council Reorganization – Kelly Dearman, Cindy Kauffman

In response to Proposition E, DAS now proposes merging the Dignity Fund Oversight Committee and the Advisory Council into one council/board.

The proposed consolidation aims to preserve the integrity of both bodies while addressing overlap. The new structure would include representatives from the Commission, Mayor's Disability Council, Board of Supervisors, and the advisory council itself, and will continue AAA-related work, with a decision set for October 15.

Council members spoke and expressed frustration about being labeled inactive and how much community representation this council provides. They also emphasized advocacy, deep concern, and support for the restructuring rather than eliminating the council.

Director Dearman emphasized that site visits and the Annual Plan remain central. She noted the review is about streamlining DAS's many groups, not eliminating their functions.

Members asked how they could contribute at this stage. The presenter clarified that input will be welcomed at the October 15 meeting.

Reports from the Field: None

Announcements/Reminders

Adjournment: 11:30 am

Next Meeting: Wednesday October 15, 2025