



COMMISSION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MAY 12, 2025

The Commission for Persons with Disabilities convened virtually on Monday, May 12, 2025. Members and attendees joined the virtual meeting with video conference and conference call.

Commissioners Present:

Anne Kearney, *Vice Chair*
Marcia Perkins, *Secretary*
Willie Johnson Jr., *County Supervisor*
Felicia Clayborne
John Haupt
Sherry Mickelson
Rose Onama
Leon Todd

Commissioners Excused:

Deb Falk-Palec, *Chair*

Commissioners Excused, Continued:

Shaneika Baldwin
Barbara Leigh

Staff Present:

Tina Anderson, *DHHS*
Jacqueline Formanek, *DHHS*
Jessica Kowalski, *DHHS*
Julie Lara, *DHHS*
Rebecca Schmitt, *DHHS*

Attendees from the Public:

Christopher Fox, *MCTS*

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Vice Chair, Anne Kearney called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. Julie Lara, Office Support Assistant II took roll. A quorum was present at the start of the meeting.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 10, AND APRIL 14, 2025, COMMISSION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: To accept the March 10, and April 14, 2025, Commission for Persons with Disabilities meeting minutes

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Todd Moved, Clayborne Second)

III. AGING AND DISABILITIES (ADS) DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR JESSICA KOWALSKI

Jessica Kowalski, the Deputy Administrator for Aging and Disability Services (ADS), introduced herself to the Commission and shared her background, highlighting her ten years of experience working at Milwaukee County prior to her appointment as Deputy Administrator. With a background in Human Resources, compensation, and change management, Deputy Kowalski's primary role is to

support ADS Administrator Tina Anderson. Deputy Kowalski expressed her enthusiasm for getting to know the Commission, understanding its goals and priorities, and collaborating to promote these objectives. Additionally, she provided information about the ADS organizational chart and her position within it.

IV. SPECIAL REPORTS

- a. **Informational Item, Review of 2024, ADRC Listening Sessions, Rebecca Schmitt, Director for ADRC:** Director Schmitt provided an overview of the 2024 Listening Sessions report conducted by the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) in collaboration with the Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD). These listening sessions aim to gather community feedback on ADRC services, identify areas for improvement, enhance referrals, and understand the needs of older adults and individuals with disabilities. The annual sessions are essential for guiding resource allocation and will result in a final report, approved by the governing board, by December 2024.

The 2024 report outlines 20 next steps and recommendations. In 2025, the board will establish two committees focused on outreach and quality, integrating feedback through ongoing meetings and surveys. The 2024-2025 plan is still under development, and the board welcomes the involvement of The Commission for Persons with Disabilities. Vice Chair Kearney expressed interest in partnering with the ADRC Governing Board and ADS to promote outreach and awareness. Additionally, Director Schmitt discussed advanced positions created within the ADRC, which offer higher levels of experience, pay, and responsibility, playing a vital role in training and supporting new staff.

- b. **Informational Item, Transit Plus Report:** Christopher Fox, the Director for Paratransit/Transit Plus, provided an update on transit services in April. Ridership on Transit Plus increased to 32,283 rides, an 87% rise from pre-COVID levels. On-time performance fell to 93.41%, slightly below the baseline required to avoid financial penalties. Connectivity issues with tablets have been resolved by replacing them with devices running the same software.

Transdev ensures compliance with contractual obligations by focusing on timely arrivals and ride duration while addressing connectivity issues. The Transit Plus same-day pilot, managed by Via, saw ridership grow from 29 rides in January to 179 in March, with efforts underway to provide enough vehicles to meet this demand. Transit Plus is also launching an account-based fare collection system using UMO, which will allow drivers to validate fares with their cell phones. While cash will still be accepted, this system aims to streamline fare collection starting in January 2026.

To gather feedback, Transit Plus will conduct a customer satisfaction survey from June 2nd to June 29th, with riders eligible for prize packs for their input.

Fox discussed the new fare system, which aims to charge a flat fee of \$4.00 per ride, allowing riders to load credits onto their accounts. Effective communication with IRIS and community care providers will be essential for the implementation.

The Transdev app is undergoing enhancements; however, the release date for the updates remains undetermined. Commissioner Onama expressed satisfaction with Via and Transdev's services, noting that the current staffing allows for up to 100 rides per day despite not yet reaching that capacity.

- c. Informational Item, Recreation Update, Jacqueline Formanek, Director for the Office for Persons with Disabilities:** Ms. Formanek reported a successful adult prom at Wilson Senior Center on April 25, 2025. Summer recreation will run from June 2, 2025 - August 30, 2025, featuring activities like Bowling Bingo, Friday night Dances, and Saturday outings. Both Underwood and Grant summer respite camps have reached full capacity. Easter Seals is hiring more camp staff to accommodate campers on the wait list. Free Friday Sailing sessions are filling up quickly, with some already at capacity. The Milwaukee Brewers ticket program will be finalized in June, with details shared with the county by May 23, 2025.

V. ACTION / DISCUSSION / INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- a. Informational Item, ARPA Housing Update, ADS Administrator Tina Anderson:** ADS Administrator Tina Anderson announced new housing developments in Milwaukee County, which include projects in Brown Deer and Oak Creek. The Brown Deer subdivision will feature single-family homes, with 5% specifically designed for individuals with disabilities and targeted at fixed-income residents.

The Housing Department is collaborating with the Commission for Persons with Disabilities to ensure that all developments comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. The county is also supporting pre-built homes that can be modified for individuals with disabilities, even though they were not initially designed for that purpose. County dollars and tax credits will provide funding.

There was raised concerns about nearby bus routes and the availability of transportation support for individuals with disabilities. Administrator Anderson confirmed that all developments are conveniently located near public transportation, with two sites situated close to King Drive and Locust

and the remaining sites in Oak Creek, all along bus routes. The Commission will promote these developments and ensure that information is communicated effectively.

The Commission discussed ways to share information about available units for individuals with disabilities, recognizing the challenges in accessing county or state systems. Administrator Anderson emphasized the need for improved communication and proposed the idea of a housing navigator to assist individuals with housing-related inquiries. Vice Chair Kearney requested that this topic be included in a future meeting agenda for further discussion.

- b. Action Item, Business Cards:** Director Formanek and the Commission discussed the potential for commissioners to receive personalized business cards for official use, with a deadline of May 14, 2025, for responses. These cards will assist in networking, outreach, and representation in various roles, including that of the commission. The Commission voted on the motion (Todd moved, Clayborne second), which prevailed with one abstention.
- c. Action Item, Planning June Meeting:** No discussion.
- d. Discussion Item, Public Comments:** Director Schmitt has announced that May is designated Aging and Disabilities Resource Center (ADRC) Recognition Month in Wisconsin. To celebrate this occasion, an event will be held at the Clinton Rose Senior Center on Wednesday May 14, 2025, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event will include delicious food, music, dancing, and information about the ADRC, showcasing the services it provides to the community. The ADRC invites everyone to join in commemorating this special month.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: To adjourn

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Todd moved, Mickelson second)

The meeting adjourned at 2:50 PM

NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

Monday, June 9, 2025, AT 1 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Lara
Office Support Assistant II