Proposed Letter to CWRT/MCST DRAFT for Subcommittee Review 10/11/23

Jennifer Reiman, Mental Health Program Coordinator

Alondra Thompson, Health Program Manager

Dear Jennifer and Alondra,

I hope this finds you well. This letter is in follow up to recent discussions regarding disability access in the CWRT/MCST programs. We were excited to learn that your department has reached out to the Disability Compliance Office and has scheduled training for staff on program accessibility for people who are blind or low vision. We appreciate your commitment to providing equitable and inclusive services.

As you know, the mission of the Disability Advisory Commission’s (DAC) is to review County programs, services and facilities, and advise on matters of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other Federal and State disability civil rights laws, and usability and inclusion for people with disabilities. After learning more about the two programs, we had the following questions regarding accessibility:

1. Have the facilities that are being used by program participants been assessed for compliance with Title 24, Chapter 11B of the California Building Code, and accessible to and usable by people with disabilities?
   1. Does your program have on staff a Certified Access Specialist or a contract with such a specialist who has evaluated the facilities used by your staff and/or clients?
   2. If not, how are staff trained in reviewing facilities for accessibility, or what assessment tool or checklist are they using?
2. How have you or your staff been trained in Deaf culture, and to effectively communicate with people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing?
   1. Are any of your staff fluent in American Sign Language, and/or
   2. have knowledge of resources available for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing?
3. How have you or your staff been trained in the overall Disability culture (i.e., the shared social and the political history of the Disability Community) as it pertains to your work?
4. What housing and shelters have you found that meet accessibility standards for those with disabilities?
   1. How did you or your staff know where to look for accessible housing and shelter?
   2. How did you keep track of the locations of accessible units?
   3. and how have you kept track of availability?
5. What would you say are the most surprising findings you have encountered through serving the disability community?
   1. How have you overcome any challenging feedback and solved the problem?
6. When gathering demographic data on program participants, was any information obtained on participants with disabilities?
   1. What categories of disabilities did you use?

We would like to review and discuss the responses with you and/or your designees at an upcoming DAC Programs and Services Access Subcommittee meeting. The next scheduled dates are Wednesday November 8 or December 13 at 4:30 PM, at 700 H Street Hearing Room 1, or via Zoom. Please let us know which of these dates you prefer.

In closing, we see the dedication and desire of those working on this project to serve the community in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive way. We appreciate the level of trust and transparency you have created with your community partners. We honor and celebrate this! We want to have that same type of relationship with you too and believe we are off to a good start.

Please let us know how we can continue to forge a stronger, collaborative working relationship with everyone involved in the Community Wellness Response and Mobile Crisis Support Teams.

Sincerely,

DRAFT

Angela Talent, Chair

DAC Programs & Services Access Subcommittee

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Randy Hicks, Chair

Disability Advisory Commission