

# CALIFORNIA COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



**C&EPD**

CA COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT  
OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



# OVERVIEW

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The California Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (CCEPD) advances employment for people with disabilities by making policy recommendations to the Secretary of the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, and the Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency. The CCEPD also supports an annual event for youth with disabilities, the California Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities (YLF).

**Vision:** The CCEPD's vision is through equitable access to services and employment, people with disabilities bring diversity, experience, talent, skills, and value to California's workforce and communities.

**Mission:** The CCEPD evaluates, develops, promotes, and influences policies, systems, and implementation efforts to increase employment and training of people with disabilities.

The CCEPD's vision and mission help guide policy discussions to advance disability equity, inclusion, and access in all programs and systems throughout California serving people with disabilities.

**“From benefits planning to business engagement, the CCEPD addressed many policy topics in 2024 impacting the employment of people with disabilities. Additionally, changes were made to the YLF, which will help youth with disabilities get a head start on educational and career opportunities.”**

**~ Taylor Winchell, CCEPD Chair**



# NEW MEMBERS

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The CCEPD welcomed two new members in 2024 – Harrison Lane, business representative, and Luisa Mesones, person with disability.

Harrison Lane is the coordinator of Meristem’s Transformative Autism Program. He has worked with dozens of employers on state funded best practices training for hiring and retaining neurodiverse employees in the workplace. He also works with job seekers and community partners through the program. Lane is a former Meristem student.

Luisa Mesones is adjunct faculty at Santa Ana College of Continuing Education. Mesones started pursuing higher education in 2016 and received her master's degree in Recreation Administration and Leisure Studies in 2024. She presently teaches in the Older Adult Program at Santa Ana College and uses her lived stories and passion for lifelong learning to inspire her students.



**Harrison Lane**



**Luisa Mesones**

# POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

In 2024, the CCEPD concluded its work leading the ***Benefits Planning Cross-Advisory Body Workgroup*** through the creation of a comprehensive report on benefits planning needs for people with disabilities in California. The report addresses barriers to employment from various income and asset eligibility related to cash, health, and long-term services and supports benefits. The report also provided policy recommendations to the California Health and Human Services and Labor and Workforce Developmental Agency Secretaries in the following four areas: 1) collaboration with the Social Security Administration, 2) development of a consistent benefits planning infrastructure in California, 3) changes to health care policy, and 4) changes to long-term service and supports policy. The report and its policy recommendations were submitted to the Secretaries of the Labor and Workforce Development Agency and California Health and Human Services Agency in November.

The CCEPD also closely followed the development of the California Master Plan for Developmental Disabilities and California Master Plan for Career Education and provided comment letters with recommendations on both. The comments to the Master Plan for Career Education included improving system alignment, better inclusive strategies for people with disabilities, and access to benefits planning and financial literacy. Comments for the Master Plan for Developmental Services included better co-enrollment strategies to improve employment outcomes, and the development of partnership agreements with Regional Centers and Department of Developmental Services with local workforce planning units. As the two plans continue their development and are finalized, the CCEPD will provide additional input to ensure the workforce needs of people with disabilities are adequately addressed.





Additionally, the CCEPD has been following the development of the 2024-2027 California Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan. At the beginning of the year, the CCEPD provided recommendations for improvements to the plan, and in October provided a comment letter with recommendations on the corresponding Regional and Local Planning Guidance. Comments included the need for co-enrollment, common intake and referral systems among workforce and disability-related programs, incorporate benefits planning strategies, inclusion of more information on service delivery methods serving people with disabilities, and the need for partnership agreements with Regional Centers and Department of Developmental Services. The comments were informed by the best practices workforce work that CCEPD conducted in prior years.

Through listening sessions and discussions on business engagement, the CCEPD has begun work on addressing job coaching needs for both employers and employees. Job coaching is important to supporting employment outcomes and allows people with disabilities to learn on-the-job skills by having additional support. Work on the project will continue into 2025 and will likely result in the development of a guide or toolkit.

The CCEPD will continue to monitor state initiatives, workforce trends, and other initiatives as they arise throughout the year ahead.

# YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM (YLF) HIGHLIGHTS



For the first time since the COVID pandemic, YLF was held fully in-person in 2024! From July 15 through July 20, fifty delegates participated in the residential program at California State University, Sacramento.

This year, Governor Newsom welcomed delegates in a video message, shared his lived experience as a person with a disability, and offered a leadership message to the delegates to dream big.

Highlights of the 2024 program included the addition of new panels for delegates to hear shared experiences from young emerging leaders in addition to established leaders with disabilities. Capitol Day included a robust panel on systems change hosted at the California Secretary of State Auditorium. Other highlights of the week included a mentoring luncheon hosted on campus, the return of an in-person resource fair, YLF alumni providing peer mentoring to help them to continue to develop their leadership skills, new partnerships and supporters, and a film crew documenting the moments and memories of YLF 2024.

After recruitment challenges in recent years, YLF had over 150 students apply to participate. Planning for 2025 has already begun.



# REGIONAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

In collaboration with local regional partners, YLF has begun the implementation of regional YLF events. These weekend programs include many of the same curriculum topics covered in the longstanding summer program, but in a condensed manner. Regional YLF delegates will have the opportunity to apply to the summer program.

After holding the initial pilot program last year, Sacramento YLF regional partners held their second regional YLF event October 18-19. The event was held at Sacramento City College and targeted students, between the ages of 16 and 21. Nine students participated in the weekend event and learned about disability identity, goal setting strategies, and community engagement. A resource fair was also created where students could learn about services and resources in the community to help them reach their employment, education, and independent living goals.

Los Angeles partners hosted a regional YLF event in Los Angeles on Saturday, October 26. The event was held at Los Angeles Trade Technical College and targeted students between the ages of 16 and 21. Ten students participated in the event and learned about disability pride and goal setting strategies. Students heard from peers who have successfully graduated from high school and attended college, gained employment, and who are living independently in their communities.

There are plans to add a San Diego program in 2025 and talks will begin for another region.



LOS ANGELES REGIONAL  
**YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM (YLF)**  
FOR STUDENTS AGES 16-21

**FREE ENTRY**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2024**

**PRIDE. ADVOCACY. EMPOWERMENT.**  
LOS ANGELES TRADE-TECHNICAL COLLEGE

QUESTIONS? [YLF@DOR.CA.GOV](mailto:YLF@DOR.CA.GOV)  
<https://forms.office.com/g/q9V4dAhEs>

The poster features a yellow and orange color scheme with illustrations of diverse youth and a QR code for registration.



**INVEST IN Your Future**

**SACRAMENTO REGIONAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM (YLF)**  
FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

October 18-19, 2024  
Sacramento City College

Join us for a weekend of interactive workshops, powerful speeches uplifting disabled voices and youth empowerment.

**YLF SACRAMENTO**

APPLY NOW

<https://forms.office.com/g/cT8nAfrsZ7>

The poster features a green and white color scheme with photos of students at the event and a QR code for registration.

# CONTACT US

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For more information, including current developments and meetings, visit the CCEPD's website or call the Executive Officer, Maria Aliferis-Gjerde, at (916) 558-5698.



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