**California Department of Rehabilitation**

**Request for State Rehabilitation Council’s Joint Approval**

**of Five Proposed Impartial Hearing Officers**

**February 16, 2024**

The California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) requests the State Rehabilitation Council’s joint approval of the five administrative law judges named below as impartial hearing officers to conduct mediations and fair hearings for DOR.

As background, any applicant or consumer who is dissatisfied with any action of DOR, relating to their application or receipt of services, may file a request for mediation or fair hearing within one year of the decision or action complained of.[[1]](#footnote-1) Fair hearings must be conducted by an impartial hearing officer jointly approved by DOR and the State Rehabilitation Council.[[2]](#footnote-2) The DOR contracts with the California Department of Social Services, State Hearings Division for administrative law judges jointly approved by DOR to conduct both mediations and fair hearings.

Training of impartial hearing officers includes, but is not limited to: (a) information regarding the goals and requirements of the vocational rehabilitation program, the state plan, federal and state statutes, and regulations governing the program; and (b) instruction on how to protect the rights of appellants at administrative hearings with emphasis on assisting, where appropriate, those appellants represented by themselves or an advocate inexperienced in administrative hearings in fully developing the administrative record.[[3]](#footnote-3)

The five administrative law judges named below have successfully completed the required training, are licensed by the California State Bar, and have no record of disciplinary action with the California State Bar. The DOR approves the administrative law judges as impartial hearing officers and requests the State Rehabilitation Council’s joint approval.

1. **Abraham Matsui**

Abraham Matsui is an administrative law judge with the State Hearings Division, Scope of Benefits Bureau. Judge Matsui earned his bachelor’s degree in political science with a minor in Leadership from the University of California Davis, then his juris doctorate from the University of Michigan in 2017. Prior to joining the California Department of Social Services, Judge Matsui worked for four years on the administrative litigation team at the Department of Health Care Services, representing the Department the Health Care Services in mediations, settlements, and administrative hearings. Prior to that, he was a deputy district attorney in Tuolumne County.

1. **David Mazzi**

David Mazzi is an administrative law judge with the State Hearings Division, Scope of Benefits Bureau. Judge Mazzi earned his bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of California Berkeley and a juris doctorate from Golden Gate University School of Law in San Francisco. Prior to joining the California Department of Social Services, he served for over 15 years as an administrative law judge for the Social Security Administration, adjudicating primarily disability cases. He has years of prior experience in private and public sector litigation, including trials, state and federal appeals and mediation.

1. **Bonnie Fong**

Bonnie Fong is an administrative law judge with the State Hearings Division, Scope of Benefits Bureau. Judge Fong earned her bachelor’s degree in political science at the University of Washington, then her juris doctorate from Seattle University. Prior to joining the California Department of Social Services, Judge Fong worked as an administrative law judge in Washington State and a private litigator.

1. **Lisa McLain**

Lisa McLain is an administrative law judge with the State Hearings Division, Scope of Benefits Bureau. Judge McLain earned her bachelor’s degree from University of California Santa Barbara, then her juris doctorate from Loyola Law School in 2006. Prior to joining the California Department of Social Services, Judge McLain worked for 16 years in civil litigation focusing on medical malpractice.

1. **Lotte Colbert**

Lotte Colbert is an administrative law judge with the State Hearings Division, Scope of Benefits Bureau. Judge Colbert was an Attorney IV at the Department of Health Care Services where she worked for 8.5 years. During that time, she advised the Office of Civil Rights on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance issues and she also participated in a structured settlement negotiation with the Department of Health Care Services, California Department of Social Services and Disability Rights California where she worked with Department of Social Services attorneys and the Department of Health Care Services Chief Counsel to successfully negotiate improving access for blind and visually impaired In-Home Supportive Services recipients to verify their provider hours. This avoided a federal ADA lawsuit against both agencies. Judge Colbert also participated in ADA related litigation, settlement negotiations, and mediations when working for an Insurance Bad Faith Plaintiffs’ Class Action firm in Los Angeles, as an Attorney III in the Enforcement Division at the Department of Managed Health Care, and as a civil litigator before joining state service.

1. Welfare and Institutions Code section 19704. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Title 34 Code of Federal Regulations section 361.57(f). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Welfare and Institutions Code section 19705.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)