Approved 10/22/2026

City of Scottsdale

Human Services Advisory Commission

Regular Meeting **Minutes**

Thursday, October 8, 2026, 5:00 P.M.

Community Design Studio
7506 E Indian School Rd
Scottsdale, AZ 85251

As a member of the Scottsdale community, I will genuinely listen; speak respectfully; and be accountable for my words and actions.

PRESENT: Chair Lee Cooley, Vice Chair Mary Jung, Commission Members, Roger Lurie, Neal Shearer, and Sheila Roe

ABSENT: Commissioners Cynthia Hill, and Carlee Schexnayder

STAFF: Mary Witkofski, Interim Human Services Director; Traci Wells, Family Resource Center Supervisor; Sheila Williams, Human Services Case Worker; Deanna Owens, Human Services Manager; Jessica Rapp, Human Services Manager; Eugenio Munoz-Villafane, Human Services Manager; Kristy Hahn-McDonald, Human Services Manager; and Nick Molinari, Senior Director

Call to Order

Chair Cooley called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Members present as listed above.

Public Comment

There were no members of the public who wished to speak, nor any written comment cards provided.

Minutes

Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes of September 24, 2026.

COMMISSIONER LURIE MOVED TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 24, 2026, HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETINGS MINUTES AS PRESENTED. COMMISSIONER ROE SECONDED THE MOTION WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (5) TO ZERO (0) BY ROLL CALL

VOTE, CHAIR COOLEY, VICE-CHAIR JUNG, AND COMMISSIONER SHEARER VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

Regular Meeting Agenda

1. Partners for Paiute Presentation

Kevin Stone, Vice President of Partners for Paiute, presented on the volunteer-led nonprofit organization founded in 1995, supported by 15 active volunteer board members and a contracted accountant. The organization provides financial assistance and essential resources to low-income households in Scottsdale with the mission of stabilizing families and preventing homelessness. Their most recent fiscal year included $39,000 in assistance to 62 households, serving a total of 148 individuals (76 adults and 72 children). Assistance supported rent, utilities, transportation, and other critical needs. In the first quarter of the current fiscal year, the organization has already distributed $23,000 to 35 households (42 adults and 35 children), an amount representing 59% of the previous year's total assistance and indicating a substantial increase in community need. The City of Scottsdale's $19,000 grant has been fully exhausted due to the increased volume of requests.

Partners for Paiute also provides a variety of additional community support programs, including after-school science programs taught by the Arizona Science Center, after-school soccer and science-themed community events, ESL classes offered at the Paiute Neighborhood Center, monthly community coffee events, and support for outdoor play space enhancements and other community-based initiatives.

The Chair opened the floor for questions. Commissioner Roe asked whether the organization anticipates having adequate resources given the rapid increase in assistance requests. Kevin explained that the organization started the year strong with grant applications and does not foresee a funding crisis; they will continue pursuing grants and donations as needed. Vice-Chair Jung asked whether day-to-day cost increases were affecting rent stability. Kevin stated that household needs vary widely, with no consistent trend, and noted an increase in single-parent households requesting support. Commissioner Shearer thanked Partners for Paiute and asked whether the assistance provided results in longer-term stabilization. Kevin noted that follow-up is part of their grant reporting process and that they see few repeat requests, suggesting positive long-term outcomes. Chair Cooley asked about demographics, including age ranges served. Kevin stated that they don't routinely collect specific age data and would need to review records; Commissioner Lurie, also the Partners for Paiute Board President, added that a significant portion of clients are seniors but the overall population is mixed. Deanna Owens, Human Services Manager, confirmed increases in both single-parent and senior household requests. Chair Cooley asked how the organization ensures gift cards are used for food; Kevin explained that grocery-store-specific cards are distributed to prevent misuse.

2. Paiute Center Updates – View Paiute Neighborhood Center Presentation – View Family Resource Center Presentation

Deanna Owens, Human Services Manager, provided an overview of the three primary services offered at the Paiute Neighborhood Center, including Social Services, the Family Resource Center, and Community and

Recreation Programs. She reported that Social Services provided approximately $34,000 in internal and external community support through food distribution, gift cards, bus passes, and emergency assistance. ESL classes, offered in partnership with the Scottsdale Public Library and supported by volunteers, resumed in September with 25 participants. Deanna also highlighted the monthly Coffee & Community events held the first Friday of each month, designed to connect residents with resources and community engagement activities; upcoming themes include a drum circle in November and chair yoga in December. She described ongoing partnerships, including legal support services that served 25 participants in the first quarter and NOAH benefits assistance. Deanna also updated the Commission on adult recreation programming, noting that Zumba is temporarily paused while Mah Jongg remains active with 34 participants. Youth recreation programs include science activities, soccer, and Young Rembrandts art classes—offered at no cost through grant support from the Family Resource Center. Family recreation programs continue to grow, and the recreation room renovation, supported by the Elks Lodge, is underway with the goal of opening by November.

Traci Weis, Family Resource Center Supervisor, then provided an update on the Family Resource Center (FRC), which has supported Scottsdale families with children ages birth to five since 2017 through First Things First funding. She explained that referral numbers tracked in the slides represent only families with children ages 0–5, but the FRC provides assistance to additional families as well. The Emergency Pantry continues to offer essential items including food and car seats. Traci also reviewed parenting workshops, adult-child interaction programs, and in-house programs such as Little Reader, a seven-week literacy program that provides six hardcover books for families to build home libraries. She highlighted parent support groups, outreach activities, and seasonal family events such as the Halloween Family Fun event held in partnership with the library. Traci reported that the outdoor play yard, previously closed for the summer, is now complete through Scottsdale Leadership's Project Lead It Forward, which collaborated with Partners for Paiute to fundraise and construct the space. A video clip of the project was shared during the meeting.

During Commission discussion, Commissioner Lurie remarked that the recreation room—previously a drab storage space—now appears refreshed, noting the positive changes he observed during a recent Coffee & Community event. Vice-Chair Jung asked where the recreation space is located, and Deanna clarified it is the former Head Start area, which has been repainted and is awaiting new flooring. Commissioner Roe asked whether the Elks Lodge sponsored the renovation, and Deanna confirmed and offered to share a link for those interested in contributing. Commissioner Lurie expressed interest in sharing the link with Partners for Paiute as well. Chair Cooley asked whether Mah Jongg participation is multigenerational; Deanna continued discussion on program demographics. Commissioner Lurie complimented Traci for her energy and creativity in running the Family Resource Center and noted that First Things First funding comes from tobacco tax revenue, which has decreased due to declining smoking rates. He requested that a letter supporting continued revenue be shared with the Commission for signatures. Chair Cooley asked whether FY26 and FY27 referral trends are consistent, and Traci confirmed they are. She added that the FRC typically has a certified car seat technician on staff but is in the process of training a new employee; in the meantime, families are being referred to the Scottsdale Fire Department or Child Crisis Arizona for car seat installation appointments.

3. Career Services Update

Sheila Williams, Human Services Case Worker, provided an update on the City's Career Services program and highlighted the team of volunteer career coaches who support job seekers through individualized coaching and group services. She explained that the program continues to serve a diverse range of job seekers, including highly educated individuals struggling to secure employment, clients with degrees but little work experience, seniors seeking to supplement their income, newcomers to the country adjusting to the job market, and youth pursuing their first employment opportunities. Sheila noted that although the job market is currently stable, it is not strong, and Arizona's unemployment rate stood at 4.9% in September, slightly higher than the national average. She reviewed the Career Services toolkit, which includes resume development, interview strategies, general career guidance, job search and application support, Career Closet access for interview attire, assistance during the first weeks of employment, and individualized coaching sessions that typically range from three to six per client.

Sheila Williams reported that during the first quarter of FY 26/27, Career Services assisted 79 unduplicated clients and completed 139 coaching sessions. Many job seekers required help refining their application strategies, aligning resumes with job descriptions, and building confidence throughout the job search process.

Sheila Williams also provided updates on the Helping Hub pilot at the Civic Center Library, where she is onsite weekly for four hours. Over the first six months, the Hub served 45 individuals, and the pilot has been extended for an additional six months with support from three rotating caseworkers. Common requests at the Hub include assistance with employment resources, food access, legal support, childcare, housing, and Medicare or Social Security benefits. She further shared upcoming details for Teen Career Day, hosted in partnership with the Boys & Girls Club, scheduled for Thursday, October 15, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Adaptive Recreation Center. The event is expected to host 40 teens ages 14–18 and will feature hands-on activities with multiple City departments.

During Commission discussion, Commissioner Lutire expressed appreciation for the Career Services Center and emphasized the importance of the encouragement and confidence-building the program provides. Vice-Chair Jung commented on the accessibility and value of the Helping Hub for the public. Sheila Williams shared that being located within the library has improved visibility and engagement with residents. Chair Cooley asked whether AI tools help or hinder job seekers; Sheila Willaims responded that AI presents both benefits and concerns but acknowledged that career seekers must adapt to AI-embedded hiring systems, and many find the tools helpful. Chair Cooley inquired about seeking gas card donations to address transportation barriers, and Sheila agreed such support would be beneficial though it is not currently available. When asked about mentorship opportunities, Sheila Williams noted that the program does not have a formal mentorship component at this time. Commissioners' discussion included the importance of supporting community members navigating a challenging job market.

4. Identification of Future Agenda Items

Commissioner Shearer requested an update on Scottsdale Care funding.

5. Adjournment

COMMISSIONER LURIE MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER SHEARER SECONDED THE MOTION WHICH CARRIED A SECTION (5) TO ZERO (0) VOTE. CHAIR COOLEY, VICE-CHAIR JUNG AND COMMISSIONER ROE VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

Meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

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For additional information visit: www.scottsdaleaz.gov/council/meeting-information