

1 DRAFT MINUTES

2
3 **California Connect**
4 **Equipment Program Advisory Committee (EPAC) Meeting**

5
6 February 13, 2026
7

8 California Connect’s Equipment Program Advisory Committee (EPAC) held a
9 hybrid public Committee Meeting on Webex and at the Oakland City Center,
10 500 12th Street, Suite 105, Oakland, CA 94607.

11
12 **EPAC Members Present**

13 Antoinette Warren, Senior Citizen Community Seat, Vice Chair (in-person)
14 Danyelle Cerillo, Blind/Low Vision Seat (in-person)
15 Janice Armigo Brown, Hard of Hearing Community Seat (in-person)
16 Monique Harris, Mobility Impaired Seat (in-person)
17 Steve Longo, Deaf Community Seat, Chair (in-person)
18

19 **EPAC Members Absent**

20 Judy Viera, Deaf Community Seat
21

22 **EPAC Non-Voting Liaisons Present:**

23 Mark Bella, Communications Division
24

25 **CPUC Staff Present:**

26 Matthew Reinig, Committee Coordinator, Communications Division (in-person)
27 Tyrone Chin, Communications Division (WebEx)
28 Charles Abeghe, Communications Division (WebEx)
29

30 **In-Person Attendees:**

31 Amanda Whyrick, California Connect Division President
32 Ryan Klock, Testing Manager, CSD
33 Chong Vang, Equipment Processing Center Operations Director, CSD
34

35 **Others Present on WebEx:**

36 Jennifer Minore, Field Operations Program Director, CSD
37 Aida Cerda, Outreach Director, CSD
38 Molly Miller, Marketing Director, CSD
39 Loulia Miller, Maximus
40 Erin Anhouvy, RAID Manager, Maximus
41 Abby Magtoto, Relay Services Account Manager, Hamilton Relay

- 1 Angelia Davis
- 2 Antonio Serna
- 3 Arianna Anaya-Calderon
- 4 ASL Interpreter|Catherine
- 5 ASL|Catherine
- 6 Grace Sovenski
- 7 Heidi Tillman
- 8 Kerrie D
- 9 Kim Fisher
- 10 Leigh Ann Hubbard
- 11 Michael Abramowitz
- 12 Riva Usher
- 13 Sam (She/They) ASL interpreter
- 14 Sam M
- 15 Sara Starr
- 16 stephen
- 17 Tamara Paul-Reeff
- 18 Theresa Emig
- 19 Yazmine
- 20 Yazmine McNair-Turner

21

22 **I. Administrative Business**

23 **A. Roll Call of EPAC Members**

24 EPAC Chair Steve Longo performed a roll call at 10:25 A.M due to
25 delays with AV's sound not working. Judith Viera was absent.

26

27 **B. Agenda Review and Approval**

28 Moved by Monique Harris, seconded by (names not listed in transcript),
29 and with no opposition, the Agenda was approved, as stated.

30

31 **C. Approval of EPAC Meeting Minutes from January 16, 2026**

32 Due to audio inconsistencies, the members who motioned and
33 seconded to approve the minutes were not captured in the transcript.
34 However, the minutes were approved as stated.

35

36 **D. EPAC Action Items from January 16, 2026**

37 **Action Item #33: Test Learning Management System (LMS) Courses**
38 **and Community Platform.**

39 During the February 13, 2026 EPAC meeting, there was a live demonstration
40 and walkthrough of the LMS and CP platforms. Members provided feedback
41 during the session.

1 **Action Item #34: Evaluate and complete surveys for member’s selected**
2 **equipment.**

3 Members provided feedback during the meeting; however, members are still
4 required to complete the online surveys for data tracking purposes.

5
6 **II. California Connect/DDTP Update**

7 Tyrone Chin provided updates on the Proposed Decision and CRS-6
8 RFP.

9 **Proposed Decision:** A proposed decision was issued for the 23-11-001
10 proceeding pertaining to the modernization of DDTP or California Connect.
11 Opening comments were due on February 4, 2026; comments were submitted
12 by Center for Access Technology, TURN (The Utility Reform Network), and
13 Cal Advocates. Reply comments were due February 10, 2026.

14
15 **CRS-6 RFP update:** CPUC is currently evaluating the proposals
16 received for CRS-6.

17
18 **III. Community Platform (CP) and Learning Management System (LMS)**

19 Mark Bella and Amanda Whyrick led the Community Platform (CP) and
20 Learning Management System (LMS) live demonstration. Mark Bella
21 emphasized the importance of engaging with both platforms. Full transcript
22 available upon request.

23
24 **Community Platform (CP):** A free, “Reddit” style forum where individuals can
25 write and read posts about equipment, questions, ideas, and more.

26 **Janice Armigo Brown** suggested separating “deaf” and “hard-of-hearing”
27 as their needs are different. Amanda Whyrick acknowledged her feedback
28 while mentioning the need to review international standards for classifying
29 different challenges people face. For example, instead of focusing on hearing,
30 it could be focused on spoken language reception (how we receive
31 information in terms of the disability). It would focus on the “problem” that the
32 device solves. Janice also struggled with the word “Ideas” that is clearer on
33 what that page is about. “Topic” was a suggestion. Amanda replied the
34 concept behind using the word "Idea" is to gather feedback from the
35 community, those who have disabilities about new products or services or
36 equipment that they would like to see added to the program. “Topics” might be
37 a better fit under the Forums but Amanda is open to feedback.

38 **Danyelle Cerillo** shared two points of feedback. First, after testing the
39 platform, she found it to be voice-over friendly and accessible for users with
40 visual impairments. Second, she noted that on the ideas page, the field for
41 additional information is not labeled. While the 'idea' field is clearly marked as

1 required, the subsequent box where users are expected to provide more
2 details lacks a label, making its purpose unclear. She suggested labeling this
3 second box to improve usability. Danyelle Cerillo also inquired whether users
4 could retain the accounts they created that day. She expressed interest in
5 having ongoing access to practice and familiarize herself with the site's
6 various forms and features. Amanda Whyrick confirmed that all accounts
7 created today are yours to utilize. They plan to recruit 2,500 people to register
8 and test the platforms over the next few months.

9 **Antoinette Warren** commented that the platform will be extremely
10 useful for individuals with disabilities, especially those who do not live near
11 Service Centers, as it allows them to communicate issues remotely. She also
12 asked Amanda about the source of participants who will be testing the
13 platform. Amanda Whyrick explained that Josh, the testing and training
14 director, is coordinating with various community-based organizations such as
15 the Braille Institute to recruit volunteers for platform testing. She encouraged
16 anyone interested in participating to reach out through Matt, who will
17 coordinate with the team. Amanda emphasized their openness to working with
18 any group or organization to gather feedback and improve the platform.

19 On the community platform, individuals can post about a specific device
20 that may solve a challenge or ask questions about a device that would solve a
21 challenge they have. It could be device- or solution-related. Mark Bella added
22 if someone finds a product that California Connect isn't currently offering, you
23 can suggest adding the device for the program's consideration.

24 Amanda shared that at the beginning of March, they will have a full end-
25 to-end accessibility test via a third-party vendor named WECO, a disability
26 owned and operated company.

27
28 **Learning Management System (LMS):** A free, public-facing platform where
29 users can take self-paced courses to learn about the features of existing
30 equipment and how to use the equipment.

31 Danyelle Cerillo complimented the platform's accessibility with screen
32 reader software but expressed difficulty finding the exit course button.
33 Amanda responded that an arrow button to exit the course should be located
34 in the top left corner of the screen and indicated that Mark would assist
35 further. Danyelle Cerillo noted that the 'go back' button was difficult to locate.

36 37 **Equipment Evaluation Progress (Action Item #34)**

38 **Janice Armigo Brown** tested the Amazon Echo Show 11 device and
39 experienced significant challenges. She had difficulty getting online, and once
40 connected, found the Alexa function disappointing due to the lack of volume
41 control and limited caption access. She was unable to download the Alexa

1 app on her phone, rendering that feature unusable. While exploring other
2 features, she enabled captions on a video but found them too small to read.
3 Based on these issues, Janice stated she could not recommend the device
4 without further support or training. Mark Bella offered to arrange a visit from a
5 field operations specialist to provide in-person assistance, which Ryan and
6 FOS have already coordinated.

7 **Monique Harris** shared that the Future Call FC-1204 did not work and
8 sent the equipment back already. Amanda offered for FOS to help with the
9 equipment, which Monique accepted.

10 **Danyelle Cerillo** reported receiving five devices for testing and
11 expressed concern about making the most of the 30-day testing period,
12 particularly given the time required for setup. She sought advice on how to
13 efficiently allocate her time to maximize hands-on use of the equipment. Mark
14 Bella encouraged Danyelle to suggest a testing approach that would be most
15 comfortable and effective for her, such as focusing on a few products at a time
16 or testing one device per week. Danyelle responded that, as a technologically
17 advanced user, she mainly needed assistance with setup. She suggested
18 spending about a week using each device, followed by completing the
19 required surveys. Mark Bella agreed with Danyelle's suggestion and asked
20 Amanda if a field operations specialist (FOS) could assist with the setup.
21 Amanda Whyrick suggested sending a field operations specialist to help
22 Danyelle with the device setup, allowing her to focus on testing. Danyelle
23 agreed to the proposed assistance and explained her availability, asking if she
24 needed to coordinate the visit. Amanda confirmed that coordination would go
25 through Matt and that a visit would be scheduled within the next week.

26 **Janice Armigo Brown** expressed concern about the 30-day testing
27 deadline, suggesting it be extended for those experiencing technical
28 difficulties. Amanda Whyrick proposed starting the 30-day testing period after
29 a field operations specialist (FOS) visit for those needing assistance. Mark
30 Bella agreed with Amanda's suggestion.

31 **Antoinette Warren** reported receiving eight or nine devices, noting that
32 one device may have been missing. She has been coordinating with Matt to
33 organize a demonstration and training session at a senior center in Oakland,
34 allowing individuals with disabilities to try out the equipment. Planning for the
35 event is currently underway.

36 **Steve Longo** reported that he has set up three devices, including the
37 SquareGlow and the Bellman & Symfon Vibio vibrating alert device. He noted
38 the Vibio device is highly sensitive and recommended adjusting alert settings
39 to avoid unnecessary disturbances. Steve plans to set up an Alexa device with
40 a video screen next and aims to complete the required surveys within the 30-

1 day testing period. He looks forward to discussing the equipment and any
2 issues with the group.

3 Matthew Reinig reminded participants that a separate survey must be
4 completed for each device being tested, clarifying that the number of surveys
5 should match the number of devices received. He also noted that all surveys
6 can be accessed through the link previously provided. Amanda Whyrick
7 acknowledged the length of the survey but emphasized the importance of the
8 information collected, as participants represent the daily users of the
9 equipment. She expressed gratitude for their time and effort. Mark Bella also
10 expressed appreciation for the participants' efforts, acknowledging the
11 process can be overwhelming. He stressed the importance of their feedback
12 for ongoing improvements and highlighted the urgency of distributing the
13 equipment to the community. Mark reiterated the team's gratitude for the
14 participants' diligence and contributions.

15 16 **IV. Public Input – AM Session**

17 18 **V. Lunch Break**

19 20 **VI. Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) Feasibility Study**

21 Matthew Reinig presented and the presentation was on page 22.

22 Monique Harris asked whether interpreters who currently travel for
23 assignments would also be the ones performing virtual interpreting, or if the
24 shift to virtual work might result in job losses for those interpreters. Matthew
25 Reinig clarified Monique's question, asking if the change to virtual interpreting
26 would affect traveling interpreters' employment. Monique further inquired if the
27 traveling interpreters could be the ones assigned to virtual interpreting roles.
28 Matthew Reinig responded that while he could not give a definitive answer, he
29 doubted that transitioning to virtual interpreting would negatively affect
30 traveling interpreters' employment. He explained that those who currently
31 travel for assignments could also contract for virtual work, and this shift might
32 even increase job opportunities.

33 Danyelle motioned to vote on recommendation to do conduct a VRI pilot,
34 with Antoinette Warren seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

35 36 **VII. Program Vendor Reports**

37 38 **A. Marketing Report**

39 Molly Miller, Marketing Director, reported on Marketing updates. The
40 presentation is on pages 38 to 44.

1 **B. Testing and Training Report**

2 Amanda Whyrick, California Connect Divisional President, reported on
3 Testing & Training updates. The presentation is on pages 45 to 52.

4
5 **C. Field Operations Report**

6 Jennifer Minore, Field Operations Director, presented, and the
7 presentation is on page 53 to 61.

8
9 **D. Outreach Report**

10 Aida Cerda, Outreach Director, presented, and the report is on page 62 to
11 69.

12 Janice Armigo Brown inquired whether upcoming resource fairs and
13 community engagement events for promoting California Connect would be
14 posted on the community forums for increased visibility to users. Aida Cerda
15 explained that her team is collaborating with marketing to promote events
16 through social media and other channels, while prioritizing which events to
17 attend based on target audience and available resources. Janice suggested
18 that posting these events on the forums would benefit consumers and asked if
19 this could happen in the near future. Aida clarified that the Community
20 Platform is intended primarily for potential customers to ask questions about
21 devices and is managed by the testing and training department, whereas her
22 team focuses on promotion through their website and social media. She noted
23 the initiatives are separate but collaborative. Janice acknowledged the
24 distinction between the departments but suggested cross-posting event
25 information to facilitate networking and outreach. Aida responded that her
26 team collaborates with the testing and training department to promote the
27 platform, sharing information with partners and clients through various
28 channels, even though strategic approaches differ between teams. Mark Bella
29 agreed that Janice's suggestion on cross-posting event information was
30 valuable and said the team would consider further cross-departmental
31 collaboration for improved information sharing.

32 Antoinette Warren asked if the educational workshops and upcoming
33 plans would be held in areas served by the Service Centers. Aida Cerda
34 confirmed the workshops would be hosted at Service Centers and, in the
35 future, potentially at other partner and community-based organizations.
36 Antoinette expressed support for expanding workshops to additional regions in
37 California so more people could benefit from the information. Aida explained
38 that the current workshops mark the beginning of their outreach efforts, with
39 plans to expand to more geographic locations in the future.

1 **E. California Relay Service (CRS) Report**

2 Abby Magtoto, Relay Account Manager, presented, and the presentation
3 is on page 70 to 73.

4
5 **F. Equipment Processing Center (EPC) Customer Contact Report**

6 Chong Vang, EPC Operations Director, presented and the presentation
7 is on page 74 to 83.

8 Steve Longo inquired about the top five pieces of equipment, specifically
9 clarifying whether a Panasonic device was a phone. Chong Vang confirmed it
10 was a cordless phone. Longo then questioned whether the distribution list
11 would change if equipment needed replacement or if there was a transition
12 away from copper landlines. Vang explained that there are currently no plans
13 to replace the Panasonic phone, which is popular and well-received among
14 users. He added that any potential upgrades would likely be evaluated by the
15 testing and training team.

16 Janice Armigo Brown expressed concerns about the transition from
17 copper to digital phone lines, particularly for individuals in rural areas who rely
18 on copper lines. She questioned what alternatives will be available when
19 copper lines are phased out and suggested that phones at California Connect
20 offices should be clearly labeled as digital or analog to help customers
21 understand their options. Brown also asked for confirmation that most phones
22 offered through California Connect are compatible with digital lines. Chong
23 Vang and Jennifer Minore responded by noting that some analog phones can
24 be used with digital lines through converters, and that most equipment now
25 functions on digital lines. Minore explained that Service Centers provide
26 information about phone compatibility and that staff are preparing educational
27 materials to help the public navigate the transition. These materials, currently
28 under review, will clearly outline which phones work with which types of lines
29 and address concerns about emergency use and compatibility.

30
31 **VIII. Public Input – PM Session**

32 There was no public input at this time.

33
34 **IX. New Business**

35
36 **A. Nomination and Voting of Successors or New Members (if
37 necessary)**

38 Both EPAC and TADDAC are actively recruiting to fill several vacant
39 committee seats.

40
41 **B. Future Meetings and Agendas**

1 The VRI pilot program was recently approved by a vote and, pending
2 TADDAC's approval, will move forward to the CPUC for implementation.

3 Katie Wright, TADDAC's Chair, proposed increasing the frequency of joint
4 meetings between TADDAC and EPAC from twice a year to four times
5 annually, alternating locations between Los Angeles and the Bay Area. The
6 group discussed the logistics, including scheduling on the third Friday of odd-
7 numbered months and aligning future meetings with this plan. Members
8 expressed general support for the proposal, and Steve Longo agreed to
9 coordinate further with Katie and Matt.

10 Additionally, Matthew Reinig emphasized the importance of in-person
11 attendance, proposing a proxy system for members unable to attend, and the
12 eventual phasing out of the WebEx option. The aim is to ensure quorum and
13 active participation. The next steps include presenting these proposals to
14 TADDAC at their upcoming meeting, with plans to begin the new joint meeting
15 schedule in May and possibly expand further in September.

16
17 **C. Report from the Chairs**

18 No reports.

19
20 **D. Member Reports**

21 No reports.

22
23 **X. Meeting Wrap up and Adjournment**

24 The meeting was adjourned at 3:08 PM.

25
26 Matthew Reinig prepared these minutes.