

1 DRAFT MINUTES

2
3 **California Connect**
4 **Telecommunications Access for the Deaf and Disabled Administrative**
5 **Committee (TADDAC) Meeting**
6

7 April 24, 2026
8

9 California Connect’s Telecommunications Access for the Deaf and Disabled
10 Administrative Committee (TADDAC) held a hybrid public Committee Meeting
11 on WebEx and at the Hyatt Regency LAX, 6225 W Century Blvd, Los Angeles,
12 CA 90045.
13

14 **TADDAC Members Present**

15 Jesse Acosta, At Large Seat - Veterans Community
16 Louie Herrera, Disability Community-Blind/Low Vision Community Seat, Vice Chair
17 Katie Wright, Late-Deafened Community Seat, Chair
18 Robert Sidansky, Deaf Community Seat
19 Darren Blackburn, CPUC Public Advocates Office Representative
20 Kevin Siemens, Disability Community-Speech-to-Speech User Seat (WebEx)
21 Scott Hostetker, Proxy for Kenneth Rothschild
22

23 **TADDAC Non-Voting Liaisons Present:**

24 Brent Jolley, Communications Division, CPUC
25 Ella Krainsky, Legal Division, CPUC
26
27

28 **CPUC Staff Present:**

29 Matthew Reinig, Committee Coordinator, Communications Division
30 Tyrone Chin, Communications Division (WebEx)
31 Karen Luong, Communications Division (WebEx)
32 Charles Abeghe, Communications Division (WebEx)
33 Mark Bella, Communications Division
34

35 **Others present in-person:**

36 Arianna Anaya, PM-EPC, Maximus
37 Stephen Longo, EPAC Chair
38

39 **Others Present on WebEx:**

40 Amanda Whyrick, California Connect Division President
41 Kyle Miers, California Connect Division Vice President
42 Chong Vang, Equipment Processing Center Operations Director, CSD

- 1 Jennifer Minore, Field Operations Program Director, CSD
- 2 Aida Cerda, Outreach Director, CSD
- 3 Molly Miller, Marketing Director, CSD
- 4 Genelle Sanders, Testing Manager, CSD
- 5 Leigh Ann Hubbard, Project Manager, CSD
- 6 Loulia Miller, Maximus
- 7 Erin Anhouvy, RAID Manager, Maximus
- 8 Abby Magtoto, Relay Account Manager, Hamilton Relay
- 9 Riva Usher, Contract Director, Maximus
- 10 Tamara Paul-Reeff, Maximus
- 11 5102****00
- 12 5625****44
- 13 89012
- 14 Amit Chhabra
- 15 Antonio Serna
- 16 AS
- 17 Ashley Gutierrez
- 18 ASL Interpreter - 5130 BondVRS
- 19 ASL interpreter (Aaron Brace)
- 20 ASL Interpreter 7342 - BondVRS
- 21 Captioner-Brenda Perin
- 22 Eve
- 23 Guen
- 24 Heidi
- 25 Julie Green
- 26 Melissa McMahan - Hamilton Relay
- 27 Melody Lujano
- 28 Probono ASL interpreter- Autumn Thomas
- 29 ProBono ASL-Trani
- 30 Robert
- 31 Roger Pflieger
- 32 Safavi, Gelareh
- 33 Sara Starr
- 34 Selena Flowers
- 35 Shaunee
- 36 Yazmine McNair-Turner
- 37
- 38 TADDAC Chair Katie Wright called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM.
- 39
- 40 **I. Administrative Business**
- 41 **A. Roll Call of TADDAC Members**

1 TADDAC Chair Katie Wright performed a roll call. Scott Hostetler is
2 Kenneth Rothschild's proxy.

3
4 **B. Agenda Review and Approval**

5 Moved by Louie Herrera, seconded by Darren Blackburn, and with no
6 opposition, the Agenda was approved.

7
8 **C. Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 27, 2026**

9 Louie Herrera motioned and (inaudible) seconded, and the minutes were
10 approved without opposition.

11
12 **D. EPAC Update/Report**

13 Steve Longo stated updates will be provided during the Wave Two
14 Equipment Recommendation item on the agenda.

15
16 **E. TADDAC Action Items from March 27, 2026**

17
18 **Action Item #68: Committee members to assist CTAP and CRS Vendor**
19 **outreach efforts by emailing information or reporting on community**
20 **events to the DDTP Committee Coordinator.**

21 No updates.

22
23 **Action Item #99: TADDAC will make an effort to recruit new Members for**
24 **its eight (8) open seats. TADDAC is seeking a Hard-of-Hearing, Disability**
25 **I – Mobility, Disability II – Speech-to-Speech, Disability III – Blind/Low**
26 **Vision, Disability Representative IV, Disability Representative V, Late**
27 **Deafened, and At-Large.**

28 The Committee interviewed Eve Reiland and approved her for the Disability
29 Representative IV seat.

30
31 **Action item #119: Committee members will provide suggestions and**
32 **recommendations for updating the current TADDAC Charter.**

33 Charter review is ongoing.

34
35 **Action Item #118: Committee members will discuss the processes**
36 **concerning 9-1-1 calls made through Augmentative and Alternative**
37 **Communication (AAC) devices and Speech-To-Speech (STS) calls**
38 **through California Relay Service.**

39 Kevin Siemens was satisfied with the 4/24/26 presentation and outcome of the
40 action item. This action item is closed.

1 **Action Item #117: Committee members will provide CPUC with a list of**
2 **CBOs to enter a collaborative partnership serving Deaf and Disabled**
3 **Californians during emergencies.**

4 Louie Herrera reported contacting California Resource Services for
5 Independent Living, a Pasadena-based organization serving much of
6 Southern California. The organization is proactive in supporting the disabled
7 community during emergencies and is interested in developing plans to
8 provide resources and communication tools, as well as collaborating with first
9 responders. They have a wheelchair-accessible bus, emergency equipment,
10 and a strong interest in further improving their response capabilities. Their
11 website is CRS-IL.org.

12
13 **Action Items #116: Read the book, “Out of My Dreams” featuring a**
14 **character with a speech disability.**

15 No additional comments. This action item remains open.

16
17 **II. CPUC & CA Connect/DDTP Update**

18 Tyrone Chin reported that the CRS-5 contract, originally set to expire on
19 April 16, 2026, has been extended for an additional three months, now ending
20 on July 16, 2026. Chin expressed hope that the CRS-6 evaluation would be
21 completed and a new Relay contract awarded by that date. He stated that the
22 CRS-6 RFP is still under evaluation, with no new updates available at this
23 time.

24 Brent Jolley addressed the TADDAC members to provide an update on a
25 new bill, AB2680, recently filed with the legislature. The bill has two main
26 components. The first seeks to remove the requirement, under CPUC code
27 2881, for applicants to obtain a medical professional's signature verifying their
28 disability before joining the program. This change aims to eliminate barriers in
29 the verification and determination process for program eligibility. The second
30 component of AB2680 focuses on the Speech Generating Device (SGD)
31 program, which currently requires applicants to seek medical reimbursement
32 as a last resort. The bill proposes removing this requirement, streamlining the
33 process for applicants. Jolley noted that the bill would be introduced with Matt
34 and distributed to members for review, with ongoing updates promised as the
35 legislation progresses.

36 Katie Wright asked for clarification on the strikeout provision in AB2680.
37 Brent clarified that the proposed legislation aims to remove the requirement
38 for applicants to obtain a signature from a specific medical professional—such
39 as a doctor, audiologist, or speech-language pathologist—to verify disability
40 for program eligibility. This step was identified as a significant barrier for
41 participants. Brent Jolley explained that the California Public Utilities
42 Commission (CPUC) is also exploring alternative ways to verify disability, like

1 accepting state or federal park passes, but legislative action is required to
2 formalize such changes.

3

4 **III. Wave Two Equipment Recommendation**

5 Stephen Longo (EPAC Chair), Genelle Sanders (Testing Manager), and
6 Mark Bella (CPUC) led the discussion. The accompanying materials are on
7 pages 34 to 68 (Wave Two Recommendations and LMS, CP, and
8 Equipment Survey Results). Equipment was physically shown in-person for
9 members to feel and identify.

10 **Motioned by Scott Hostetler, seconded by Robert Sidansky, the**
11 **Committee approved following Wave Two recommendations:**

12 Amazon Echo Dot (5th Gen)
13 Artone 3 MAX Bluetooth Neckloop
14 BeHear SMARTO
15 Bellman & Symfon Maxi Pro Amplifier
16 Bellman & Symfon Vibio
17 Visit Vibrating Pager Receiver
18 Bellman & Symfon Visit Push Button Transmitter
19 BlindShell Classic 3
20 Clarity XLC8
21 Freedom Scientific Focus 14 Blue (5th Gen)
22 Freedom Scientific Focus 40 Blue (5th Gen)
23 Google Nest Mini
24 HIMS Braille eMotion
25 Krown LookOut KNS 360
26 Sonic Alert HomeAware Blink
27 SquareGlow Smart Home Kit
28 Amazon Echow Show 11
29 Orbit Reader 20

30 **On hold or not recommended:** Future Call FC-1204, SmartVision 3,
31 QBraille XL, and Sonic Bomb Alarm Clock with Super Shaker. SmartVision 3
32 was added to the “on hold” list.

33 Steve Longo reported that all devices under review were approved except
34 for three: the Sonic Bomb, Future Call, and Q Braille XL, which were placed
35 on hold. The Q Braille XL was discontinued, which was the primary reason for
36 its status. During the committee discussion, concerns were raised about the
37 Sonic Bomb. Although some users, such as a seventeen-year-old hard of
38 hearing individual, found it effective, the EPAC committee noted two main
39 issues: the very small and difficult-to-use buttons, and the bed shaker's
40 intense vibration, which some found frightening. Comparatively, the Bellman
41 vibrating device was considered more user-friendly due to its adjustable

1 vibration settings. These concerns led to the committee's decision to put the
2 Sonic Bomb on hold.

3 Kevin Siemens raised concerns about the Future Call device, repeatedly
4 asking what was wrong with it and why they did not receive adequate
5 assistance. Mark Bella explained that user feedback highlighted issues with
6 the speech category of Future Call, and users struggled with frequent
7 disconnections. The Field Operations Specialist (FOS) team visited users'
8 homes to help, but the problems persisted. Mark reported that EPAC
9 recommended putting the device on hold, while the CSD testing and training
10 team felt it could proceed for certain user groups.

11 Kevin continued to question why others were helped but they were not.
12 Matthew clarified that the SOS team had visited Kevin's home and tried to
13 help, but the issue remained. Jennifer Minore elaborated that Kevin could
14 make calls, but they disconnected during use. For another user, Monique,
15 calls could not be placed at all, and after the device broke, Monique declined
16 further testing. Jennifer stated that because Future Call relies on voice
17 commands, it may not be suitable for users unable to provide consistent
18 voicing. She also clarified that FOS was originally instructed only to set up
19 devices, not provide usage training, which may have contributed to Kevin's
20 dissatisfaction.

21 Throughout the discussion, Kevin expressed frustration that staff set up
22 the phone but did not test it as they expected. Jennifer acknowledged the
23 original FOS instructions and noted there were later changes but reiterated
24 the initial protocol. The conversation concluded with acknowledgment of
25 Kevin's ongoing concerns about the lack of hands-on help. Katie Wright and
26 the team discussed the challenges of evaluating new assistive devices,
27 emphasizing the importance of assessing their ease of use without external
28 assistance. Wright highlighted that the evaluation aimed to determine whether
29 users could independently operate the products, which is why help was limited
30 to initial setup. She also noted that the current device designs are intended to
31 appeal to a younger demographic and are generally more modern and
32 accessible than previous models. However, she acknowledged that feedback
33 from younger users was limited and suggested this as an area for future
34 improvement.

35 Matthew Reinig clarified that, in a standard rollout, support teams would
36 assist users with setup and training, but the evaluation phase required
37 independent use to identify usability issues. Both Wright and other participants
38 recognized that individuals with physical disabilities may face significant
39 barriers in setting up and using these devices, suggesting that Field
40 Operations assistance is sometimes necessary. The team is continuing to
41 seek devices that are compatible with a range of disabilities and user needs,
42 based on ongoing feedback.

1 Mark Bella announced that Wave 2 devices will be available in Service
2 Centers by May 15th. If equipment from the recent RFP is available in the
3 warehouse, these will receive a soft launch, with priority given to customers
4 already on the waiting list. Upon arrival, field operators will coordinate with
5 consumers for delivery or pickup. The team is targeting a full launch in the
6 summer and will actively promote the initiative.

7 Katie Wright inquired about the availability of the Bellman Symfon Visit
8 Home system in inventory, noting its necessity for testing other devices. Mark
9 Bella agreed to check and follow up.

10 Steve Longo encouraged the team to communicate any new equipment
11 or feature requests promptly for consideration in future waves, emphasizing
12 continuous improvement.

13 Scott raised a question regarding three devices on hold, wondering about
14 their future. Steve Longo and Mark Bella clarified that the Q Braille XL would
15 not return due to discontinued manufacturing, while the other two devices
16 might be reconsidered pending manufacturer upgrades. The team will
17 continue to monitor these devices for potential inclusion in future releases.
18

19 **IV. TADDAC Charter Discussion**

20 The committee began its discussion on the TADDAC charter.

21 **2.1:** Discuss further on appropriate language to use: 1) “collectively
22 known as California Connect” or “though the California Connect program.”
23 Brent Jolley and Matthew Reinig will research on appropriate terminology.

24 **3.1:** The Committee may decide on designated names or seats.

25 **3.2.1:** Brent advised keeping the language general and remove specifics,
26 like TTY. Language was updated to... “CD Liaison shall report on future plans
27 for CA Connect program at each committee meeting...”

28 **3.2.2:** Darren Blackburn explained that having more flexibility would allow
29 the team to determine the structure of reporting. This means not every vendor
30 would need to present at each monthly meeting, and reports could be
31 staggered. Such flexibility would offer more opportunities to adjust the meeting
32 structure as needed. Katie Wright expressed agreement with Darren’s
33 suggestion, noting that efforts had been made to limit reporting time. However,
34 she acknowledged that some reports naturally take longer, and she
35 understood the need for flexibility.

36 The Committee stopped at 3.5.

37 All revisions and comments are made on Microsoft Word.
38

39 **V. 911 calls through Augmentative and Alternative and 40 Communication (AAC) Devices and California Relay**

41 Kevin Siemens stated no discussion necessary as Abby Magtoto’s
42 presentation addressed their concerns and questions.

1
2 **VIII. Interview: Eve Reiland for Disability Representative IV**

3 The transcript of the interview may be provided upon request.
4

5 **IX. Program Vendor Reports**

6 **A. Marketing Report**

7 Molly Miller, Marketing Director, presented, and the presentation is on
8 pages 79 to 86.
9

10 **B. Testing and Training Report**

11 Genelle Sanders, Testing Manger, presented and the presentation is on
12 page 87 to 94. The WeCo Accessibility Audit is on page 95.

13 Scott Hostetler inquired about the location of the actual list of devices for
14 Wave 3. Mark Bella explained that the team is currently focused on
15 completing Wave 2, which was just approved and is expected to be finished
16 by June 30th. He added that discussions about Wave 3 and 4 will occur at the
17 next committee meeting in June, and the list of devices for Wave 3 is not
18 ready yet. The team aims to launch Wave 2 by summer before moving on to
19 subsequent waves.

20 Louie Herrera highlighted the challenges newly blind individuals face
21 when using equipment without accessible documentation or adequate
22 support. He stressed the need for guidelines to ensure product information is
23 available in accessible formats, such as QR codes in standard locations or
24 digital files, so visually impaired users can access necessary documentation
25 independently.

26 Katie Wright then suggested that, as a standard procedure, equipment for
27 blind consumers should be delivered and set up by a field operation specialist,
28 rather than simply being mailed. Louie Herrera agreed but advised that such
29 support should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, since individuals have
30 different levels of independence and support systems. He provided an
31 example of a visually impaired peer who was able to manage independently,
32 highlighting the need for flexible approaches.

33 Genelle Sanders acknowledged Louie's feedback and asked for
34 clarification about using QR codes for product training and how they could
35 help users. Louie explained that QR codes provide instant access to up-to-
36 date documentation through mobile devices, describing how embossed QR
37 codes are easier for blind users to locate. He emphasized that digital
38 documentation helps users stay current and avoids the challenges of outdated
39 or bulky Braille materials. Mark Bella agreed with Louie's concerns and
40 emphasized the need for products and documentation to be accessible for all
41 users, especially those with disabilities. He reiterated the importance of setting

1 clear standards for vendors to ensure documentation is available in accessible
2 formats.

3 4 **C. Field Operations Report**

5 Jennifer Minore, Field Operations Director, presented and the
6 presentation is on page 96 to 106.

7 Darren Blackburn asked about the specific metrics collected regarding
8 the reasons for in-home and site visits, inquiring whether data is gathered on
9 particular reasons behind application statuses, such as medical certification
10 issues. Jennifer Minore explained that while some detailed data is collected at
11 the individual level in the database, the reporting typically condenses these
12 details. The application status can reflect various issues, such as questions or
13 processing difficulties, and more specific reasons are available internally,
14 though not always included in summary reports.

15 Katie Wright inquired whether feedback about application approval or
16 rejection is shared with those involved in designing or modifying the
17 applications. Jennifer Minore responded that feedback from customers is
18 documented and shared as appropriate. Katie Wright further asked whether
19 questions from applicants highlight problems with the application and if that
20 information is communicated for improvements. Jennifer Minore replied that
21 while feedback is provided, many difficulties stem from challenges in obtaining
22 a certifying agent's signature, which is beyond their direct control. Smaller
23 issues, such as missing signatures, can be addressed through feedback if
24 they are due to process errors.

25 Darren Blackburn suggested that collecting data on certification
26 challenges could support legislative efforts to remove barriers for applicants.
27 Jennifer Minore agreed and noted plans to collect more uniform data on why
28 applicants do not complete the process, using follow-up calls and emails to
29 gather these insights.

30 Jesse Acosta asked if there are plans to establish roving or mobile
31 Service Centers to reach areas without existing centers. Jennifer Minore
32 announced the launch of a pop-up Service Center in Indio, operating on the
33 first and third Wednesdays of each month. She also mentioned that efforts are
34 underway, at the request of the CPUC, to explore more remote and mobile
35 service options, particularly in region 5 (San Luis Obispo), with the intention of
36 expanding mobile and pop-up services to other underserved areas based on
37 population and opportunity.

38 Jennifer Minore stated that plans for the exact form of the mobile unit
39 are not finalized, but it may take various forms depending on the needs of
40 each area. A decision will be made soon. She further explained that the
41 mobile unit will primarily be used for transportation and equipment storage,

1 with services being offered either outdoors under accessible canopies or
2 inside accessible partner facilities, depending on the location and weather.

3
4 **D. Outreach Report**

5 Aida Cerda, Outreach Director, presented, and the report is on page 107
6 to 114.

7
8 **E. CRS-5 Report**

9 Abby Magtoto, Relay Account Manager, presented, and the presentation
10 is on pages 115 to 129.

11
12 **F. Equipment Processing Center (EPC) Report**

13 Chong Vang, EPC Operations Director, presented and the presentation
14 is on page 130 to 138.

15
16 **X. Public Input – PM Session**

17 There was no public input at this time.

18
19 **XI. New Business**

20 **A. Nomination and Voting of Successors or New Members**

21 Motioned by Jesse Acosta, seconded by Louie Herrera, the Committee
22 unanimously voted to offer Eve Reiland the Disability Representative IV seat.
23 Katie Wright thanked Frances Reyes Acosta for the recommendation.

24
25 **B. Future Meetings and Agendas**

26 September joint meeting will be on September 11, 2026, in Oakland, due
27 to the venue only being available on the 11th and not the 18th (the original
28 planned date).

29
30 **C. Report from the Chair**

31 No report.

32
33 **D. Member Reports**

34 Louis Herrera will send Matthew Reinig the QR code information.
35 Secondly, Louie mentioned that users of iPhones or iPads should be aware
36 that a recent iOS update may cause files to appear disorganized, as all data is
37 now required to be moved to iCloud. While iCloud is secure and beneficial,
38 some users may need time to adjust to this change and locate their files,
39 which are now stored in iCloud but can be synchronized with their devices. In
40 addition, Microsoft is introducing mandatory two-factor authentication in
41 Windows to enhance security. Users should take note of these updates.

- 1
- 2 **XII. Meeting Wrap up and Adjournment**
- 3 The meeting was adjourned at 3:41 PM.
- 4
- 5 Matthew Reinig prepared the minutes.