DRAFT MINUTES

**California Connect**
**Telecommunications Access for the Deaf and Disabled Administrative Committee (TADDAC) Meeting**

June 26, 2026

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

**TADDAC Members Present**
Jesse Acosta, At Large Seat - Veterans Community
Louie Herrera, Disability Community-Blind/Low Vision Community Seat, Vice Chair
Katie Wright, Late-Deafened Community Seat, Chair
Darren Blackburn, CPUC Public Advocates Office Representative (WebEx)
Kevin Siemens, Disability Community-Speech-to-Speech User Seat (WebEx)
Eve Reiland, Disability Seat IV
Scott Hostetler, Proxy for Kenneth Rothschild

**TADDAC Members Absent**
Robert Sidansky, Deaf Community Seat
Kenneth Rothschild, Deaf Community Seat

**TADDAC Non-Voting Liaisons Present:**
Brent Jolley, Communications Division, CPUC

**CPUC Staff Present:**
Matthew Reinig, Committee Coordinator, Communications Division
Tyrone Chin, Communications Division (WebEx)
Karen Luong, Communications Division (WebEx)
Charles Abeghe, Communications Division (WebEx)
Mark Bella, Communications Division (WebEx)

**Others present in-person:**
Kerrie Danielsen, Maximus

**Others Present on WebEx:**
Aida Cerda, Outreach Director, CSD
Molly Miller, Marketing Director, CSD

Genelle Sanders, Testing Manager, CSD
Loulia Miller, Maximus
Abby Magtoto, Relay Account Manager, Hamilton Relay
Tamara Paul-Reeff, Maximus
Kevin
5102****00
5628****46
89012
ALI AYALA
Ally Park
Amit Chhabra
Anonymous
Antonio Serna
Ashley Alvarado
ASL interpreter (Aaron Brace)
ASL Interpreter Aimee A.
ASL Interpreter Kay Feuerborn
Bella Lopez
Captioner-Brenda Perin
CH
Cody
Colin Krasnoff
Daisy Sheard
Dan Mabashov
Janett Serpa
kc
Matthew Bitter
Melody Lujano
RH
Rhiannon Kuffler
Roger Pflieger
Safavi, Gelareh
Sara Starr
Silvia
stephanie shaw
Steve Longo
Theresa Emig
Zdavis

TADDAC Chair Katie Wright called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM.

## I. Administrative Business

### A. Roll Call of TADDAC Members

TADDAC Chair Katie Wright performed a roll call. Scott Hostetler is Kenneth Rothschild’s proxy. Robert Sidanksy was absent.

### B. Agenda Review and Approval

Moved by (inaudible), seconded by (inaudible), and with no opposition, the Agenda was approved.

### C. Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 24, 2026

Scott Hostetler suggested one correction: his last name was misspelled on page 9. Kevin Siemens motioned and (inaudible) seconded, and the minutes were approved without opposition as corrected.

### D. Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 15, 2026

Kevin Siemens motioned and Jesse Acosta seconded, and the minutes were approved without opposition, with Scott Hostetler abstaining.

### E. EPAC Update/Report

Steve Longo delivered a brief report on the most recent EPAC meeting held on June 12th. He highlighted that the committee focused on reviewing and updating their charter, addressing outdated references and making necessary revisions. The updated charter was subsequently forwarded to Matt for his review, with the aim of finalizing changes before the November deadline. Steve also drew attention to the need for updating the program name from DDTP to California Connect in both the EPAC and TADDAC charters.

Steve discussed several ongoing action items. The VRI mobile pilot remains open, with the committee eager to secure CPUC approval to initiate the pilot, emphasizing its potential benefits for communication access in California. Another open action item involves the ongoing review of the Community Platform, a process that involves regular updates and communication with Matt. Additionally, the committee continues its work on reviewing and updating the charter, a task scheduled for completion by November. Steve noted that the action item related to completed surveys had been closed.

Further, Steve reported that EPAC had interviewed and approved two candidates for committee membership—one specializing in software and the other in hardware, both with substantial professional experience. Since there were two vacancies, both candidates were approved to join the committee.

### F. TADDAC Action Items from May 15, 2026

**Action Item #68: Committee members to assist CTAP and CRS Vendor outreach efforts by emailing information or reporting on community events to the DDTP Committee Coordinator.**
No updates.

**Action Item #99: TADDAC will make an effort to recruit new Members for its seven (7) open seats. TADDAC is seeking a Hard-of-Hearing, Disability I (Mobility), Disability II (Speech-to-Speech), Disability III (Blind/Low Vision), Disability Representative V, Late Deafened, At-Large**
No updates.

**Action item #119: Committee members will provide suggestions and recommendations for updating the current TADDAC Charter.**
Charter review is ongoing. October TADDAC meeting will be dedicated solely to updating the Charter. This action item remains open.

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

Katie Wright opened the discussion by emphasizing the need for emergency shelters to be better equipped for California Connect customers and others with specific needs. She insisted that there should be a clear commitment from CD stating that they must ensure the provision of appropriate equipment and resources at emergency shelters. Wright expressed frustration that she has been advocating for these changes since 2018 and highlighted the urgency by referencing the recent Garden Grove evacuation, where people were displaced for several days, including her own son. She questioned how individuals with disabilities managed during those emergencies, noting that not all have the time or ability to prepare or evacuate with necessary communication devices and support. Wright advocated for practical solutions such as having captioning on screens in shelters for announcements, ensuring those with hearing impairments are not left out. Kevin Siemens and Jesse Acosta joined the conversation, with Siemens raising questions about specific shelter situations in Los Angeles and Garden Grove. Wright admitted not knowing if shelters had the right equipment, explaining her personal circumstances at the time. Acosta pointed out the confusion and lack of coordination between different jurisdictions in LA during emergencies, leading to people being turned away from shelters depending on which city or county they resided in.

Louis Herrera contributed by explaining that CRS did deploy accessible transportation and support during recent emergencies, but he criticized local authorities for lacking proper coordination and prioritization. Herrera underscored that while third-party groups like CRS are always ready to help, the true responsibility lies with the Office of Emergency Services. He highlighted systemic problems, such as outdated databases and a lack of genuine engagement with the disabled community in planning and drills. Acosta and Herrera both agreed that for real progress, there needs to be better communication, updated systems, media involvement, and inclusive planning. Herrera added that people with disabilities also need to self-identify so they can be accounted for during emergencies, making it a “two-way street.”

In summary, Katie Wright, Kevin Siemens, Jesse Acosta, and Louis Herrera all shared concerns about the current state of emergency preparedness for people with disabilities. They called for clearer responsibilities, improved communication, active involvement of relevant agencies, and more inclusive strategies to ensure that all individuals, especially the most vulnerable, are supported during emergencies.

**Action Items #116: Read the book, “Out of My Dreams” featuring a character with a speech disability.**
No additional comments. This action item remains open.

## II. CPUC & CA Connect/DDTP Update

Tyrone Chin provided an update from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). He first addressed the Equipment Processing Center Request for Proposal (RFP), stating that the RFP was released on May 26, 2026. The evaluation period is scheduled from July 6 to July 20, 2026, followed by a negotiations phase from July 20 to July 31, 2026. The contract award date is still to be determined. Planning also includes a six-month transition and extension coordination period to maintain continuity until the RFP is awarded.

Chin then discussed the Enterprise Resource Planning Request for Proposal, noting that solicitation development activities are ongoing in collaboration with the California Department of Technology. He concluded with an update on the CRS-6 Request for Proposal, which is still in the evaluation phase.

Katie Wright asked for clarification about the Enterprise Resource Planning initiative, stating that she had not heard it mentioned before. In response, Chin explained that the initiative, led by Charles Abeghe, aims to create a centralized database for all program information. Currently, information is spread across multiple contractors, such as Hamilton Relay and Communication Services for the Deaf. The centralized system would allow for more comprehensive data analysis, which was previously challenging due to the dispersed nature of the data. The new system would provide access to both contractors and the CPUC, with all data housed in a single location. He highlighted that this setup would enable greater functionality, including the ability to conduct surveys and perform comprehensive data analysis more easily than before.

Wright inquired whether individual sections would still be able to analyze their own data, or if all analysis would now be centralized. Chin asked Wright to clarify what she meant by "each section." Wright elaborated, expressing concern that with centralized data, analysis might shift from individual departments to the umbrella organization, whereas currently, individual departments conduct their own data analysis, as reflected in their reports. Chin acknowledged Wright's point, clarifying that contractors will continue to provide reports to committee members, such as those related to field operations, testing, training, and marketing. However, with the new centralized database, data will be more accessible. For example, instead of requesting marketing data from specific contractors like CSD, users will be able to directly access and analyze information from the centralized platform. Contractors will also be able to use the database for their own analysis.

## III. TADDAC Charter Discussion

The committee began its discussion on the TADDAC charter.

**3.3 Selection of Members:** No comments or objections to suggested changes.

**3.4 Qualifications of Members:** No comments or objections to suggested changes.

**3.5 Terms of Appointment:** Suggested change: A member shall hold office until a successor has been appointed and has assumed office or until the member has been removed in accordance with Paragraph 3.6 or has resigned in accordance with Paragraph 3.7.

**3.6 to 3.9:** No changes.

**3.10 Expenses and Per Diem:**

The per diem shall be $375 for each day of meetings attended by the eligible non-officer members or $275 if the meeting lasts for less than approximately two hours.

For the Vice Chair, the per diem shall be $400 for each day of meetings attended or $300 if the meeting lasts for less than approximately two hours.

For the Chair, the per diem shall be $450 for each day of meetings attended or $350 if the meeting lasts for less than approximately two hours.

Kevin Siemens requested a different way to compensate members who are on government assistance. Matthew Reinig addressed Kevin as another member, Monique, had a similar concern. Members may opt for less per diem but there is no other way to be compensated per state policy. Matthew mentioned CalABLE Savings account where members can open a savings account without being penalized for earning or saving more money.

The Committee stopped at Article 4.

All revisions and comments are made on Microsoft Word.

## IV. Equipment Assignment Expectations

Genelle Sanders presented and the presentation is on pages 60 to 64.

Kevin Siemens expressed concerns about whether someone will help them during the equipment evaluation process. Genelle reassured that a Field Operations Specialist can go to the member's home or you can bring the equipment to the nearest service center. Mark Bella reinforced that Kevin's and others feedback on the testing process was considered and the new cycle of testing will be monitored closely by CPUC to ensure everyone's experience was better than before.

## V. Equipment Survey Expectations

Genelle Sanders presented and the presentation is on pages 65 to 70.

Kevin Siemens expressed frustrations with completing the survey twice (each time taking them 3 hours) due to the first submission not being received. Genelle reassured that Smart Survey does not have a "time-out" feature and it will save your answers even when you're not finished. They hope that the transition to the new survey platform will truly support different testing and survey needs.

CSUN Assistive Technology Conference: Mark Bella explained that the testing and training team has been discussing ways to increase the visibility of the California Connect program at the CSUN Assistive Technology Conference. The team is considering presenting information about their equipment and outlining the program's goals. Another idea is to bring various pieces of equipment to the event, allowing attendees to interact with them and provide feedback. Bella emphasized the importance of raising awareness about California Connect, particularly among California residents. He mentioned that the team plans to submit a presentation proposal by September and is seeking additional suggestions. EPAC members have already expressed support for these ideas. Bella believes that showcasing equipment at the conference could attract more participants and referrals for the program, and he welcomes further input on their plans.

Louis Herrera expressed support for the idea of presenting at the CSUN conference and bringing sample equipment for attendees to examine. He stressed the importance of making it clear that the equipment is only available to those who qualify for the program. Herrera also recommended that any printed materials distributed at the conference should be accessible to individuals with low vision, following guidelines for font and color contrast. He noted that accessible literature would ensure that seniors and others with low vision are able to connect with the program and understand the available resources. Herrera emphasized that California Connect should demonstrate care by providing opportunities for individuals to discover potentially life-changing solutions.

Katie Wright shared enthusiasm for both the presentation and the display of equipment at the conference. They recalled the effectiveness of distributing application cards in the past, which attendees could fill out, have signed by a medical professional, and mail in. While recognizing the program's preference for online applications, they raised concerns about how applicants would obtain the necessary medical approval online. Katie suggested providing paper application cards at the conference to help streamline the process for potential applicants, especially if on-site medical approval is not feasible.

Brent Jolley explained that the issued decision allows the program and the CPUC to consider alternative types of documentation for verifying an applicant’s disability. He noted that efforts are underway to identify which forms of documentation could be adopted, referencing previous discussions about leveraging existing entities that already provide such documentation. Jolley assured that the CPUC staff are working diligently to implement these changes before the next CSUN conference, with a goal to have the system in place within six months. Jolley further shared that, in the near future, the application process would no longer require only a medical professional’s signature for verification. He acknowledged that this requirement has been a major challenge for both the program and its applicants. The team is progressing toward accepting alternative forms of disability verification and expressed excitement for this upcoming change.

Katie Wright inquired whether individuals present at a booth, such as herself, Matt, or Kevin, could be certified by a professional who may not personally know them, for example, by demonstrating their hearing aids or signing abilities. Jolley responded that self-certification is not yet possible and visual observation alone cannot be used to verify disability. However, he mentioned the possibility of future partnerships with other organizations. For instance, at the CSUN conference, a state disability pass could potentially be photographed and attached to an application as verification. Wright envisioned an ideal scenario in which individuals could be certified for disability verification on the spot at a booth. Jolley agreed that immediate certification could be possible if reliable documentation from a trustworthy entity is available. He suggested that a photograph or scan of certain IDs or documents, such as SSI or SSDI eligibility, might be sufficient. These are among the options being considered as potential forms of disability verification.

Wright also commented that CSUN offers limited resources for individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing compared to those available for people who are blind or have physical handicaps (Kevin Siemens corrected Katie to say disability, not handicap).

## VI. Program Vendor Reports

### A. Marketing Report

Molly Miller, Marketing Director, presented, and the presentation is on pages 71 to 80.

Louis Herrera inquired whether the website banner could be stopped to allow Screen Reader users sufficient time to read it. He expressed concern that the banner might disappear too quickly, making it difficult for users to access its content.

Molly Miller responded that it had been a long time since the issue was last tested, recalling that Louis previously assisted in the process. She stated that, during her current review, the banner remained static unless she interacted with it using her mouse or keyboard. Louis acknowledged his prior involvement with the banner but wanted to confirm whether any changes had been made since then. He emphasized that, for WCAG compliance, the banner must permit Screen Reader users to pause, review, and release the information. Molly assured Louis that she would verify the banner's behavior again. She noted that the banner does eventually rotate if left alone and promised to have the accessibility specialist review its compliance.

### B. Testing and Training Report

Ally Park, Training Manger, presented and the presentation is on page 81 to 88.

### C. Field Operations Report

Melody, Interim Field Operations Director, presented and the presentation is on page 89 to 99.

### D. Outreach Report

Aida Cerda, Outreach Director, presented, and the report is on page 100 to 109.

Scott Hostetler commended Aida for her thorough presentation of the various data points, emphasizing that these details were essential for the Committee. Scott observed that, although Aida had listed several organizational partnerships, there were no deaf service agencies included. He pointed out that there are eight sister agencies across California and questioned why they were absent from the partnership list.

Aida Cerda responded by clarifying that the list she presented was not comprehensive, explaining that there are currently over five hundred accounts in the system. She assured the Committee that partnerships with deaf and hard of hearing agencies do exist and can be found in the full list she previously shared with Matthew.. Aida invited Committee members to introduce additional organizations they believe should be included, emphasizing her openness to expanding partnerships in this priority area.

Matthew clarified that he had not yet distributed the comprehensive list of accounts but would do so after the meeting. He stated that everyone, including Scott, should expect an email from him that afternoon containing the list. Matthew encouraged recipients to review the list and provide feedback about any missing organizations.

### E. CRS-5 Report

Abby Magtoto, Relay Account Manager, presented, and the presentation is on pages 110 to 123.

Katie Wright asked for clarification on what VCO and HCO means. Abby shared that VCO means Voice Carryover and HCO means Hearing Carryover. She will provide a brief overview of each service at the next meeting.

### F. Equipment Processing Center (EPC) Report

Dan Mabashov, Project Manager, presented and the presentation is on page 124 to 135.

Katie Wright requested information about devices distributed by certification. She specifically wanted to know whether the numbers, both for new and existing devices, were increasing each month or remaining static. Wright also asked for a historical perspective on the distribution figures by certification.

## VII. Public Input – PM Session

There was no public input at this time.

## VIII. New Business

### A. Nomination and Voting of Successors or New Members

No discussion.

### B. Future Meetings and Agendas

Scott Hostetler informed the group that April 23, 2027, coincides with Passover. At Kenneth Rothschild's request, he proposed moving the meeting to April 16 instead. Katie Wright inquired about previous conflicts with Passover, asking whether the committee had ever encountered this issue before.

Matthew Reinig replied that he did not know if there had been such a conflict in the past. Kevin Siemens commented that there had been no such conflict in the past and added that he had served on the Committee for over twenty years. He reiterated that during his twenty years on the Committee, a Passover conflict had never previously occurred.

Katie Wright acknowledged that this was the first time such a conflict had occurred. She outlined the potential scheduling impact, noting that if the meeting were moved to April 15, there would be just a week between the EPAC and TADDAC meetings, but expressed confidence in the committee's ability to handle the change.

Matthew Reinig pointed out that the dates and venue had already been arranged, making changes more complicated. He suggested that having a proxy, as Ken had in Scott, was an effective solution for members facing scheduling conflicts. However, he emphasized that the final decision rested with the Committee.

Katie Wright initiated the discussion by proposing a schedule adjustment: moving the March joint meeting to April 15th, and making March and May regular meetings. She emphasized that there was still time to decide and sought feedback from the group, particularly from Eve and Jesse, about shifting the 2027 April meeting from the 23rd to the 15th to avoid Passover. She then checked with Louie and Kevin to see if they were comfortable with moving the meeting from April 23rd to April 15th. Kevin Siemens expressed agreement with the proposed change.

Brent Jolley recommended keeping the current meeting date as scheduled. He stressed the importance of proxies for members unable to attend and pointed out that changing the date would complicate other arrangements, including the venue, which Matt must book months in advance. Katie Wright agreed, noting that altering the meeting date affects many logistical aspects, such as hotel rooms and flights. Brent concurred, acknowledging that every detail is impacted by a date change. Katie reiterated the complexity, agreed that proxies exist for such situations, and concluded that the group would leave the meeting on its originally scheduled date, April 23rd.

Katie Wright acknowledged that the group reached a decision after a lengthy discussion. Matthew Reinig then asked whether the current venue would be satisfactory for the 2027 meeting. Katie asked the group if everyone was comfortable with the hotel, especially considering travel distances for members like Eve. The group indicated agreement, with Kevin Siemens confirming his approval of the location. Katie Wright concluded by confirming the group's decision to proceed with the current date and venue.

**C. Report from the Chair**

No report.

### D. Member Reports

Louie Herrera reminded the group about the importance of keeping their mobile devices updated, emphasizing the recent increase in hacking incidents. He encouraged those without passwords on their devices to reconsider, noting that even a basic password offers essential protection. Herrera explained that service providers and manufacturers have a vested interest in customer security, so regular updates are crucial for safety and convenience. Additionally, he addressed Screen Reader users—including Jesse, Danyelle, and himself—highlighting recent improvements and updates for both MDA and JAWS, and encouraged everyone to keep their Screen Readers up to date to benefit from these advancements.

Kevin Siemens reminded everyone not to forget about their homework, and Katie Wright reiterated this, clarifying that the assignment involved reading the designated book. She also asked Matthew Reinig to send out reminders about the reading, joking about making them daily reminders. Matthew Reinig agreed to send out the requested reminders.

Katie Wright welcomed Eve to the meeting in person, expressing happiness at Eve's presence on the committee. Wright acknowledged her own tendency to speak over others and hoped Eve would feel more comfortable over time.

Kevin Siemens explained that in his day program, participants would speak one at a time, especially when meetings included both in-person and online attendees using Zoom. Katie Wright acknowledged the challenges of managing hybrid meetings, particularly ensuring that everyone has a chance to speak one at a time. She mentioned difficulties in hearing online participants and questioned whether there was a 'raised hand' feature available, noting that Kevin Siemens could not access this feature but assuring the group that a solution would be found. Kevin Siemens pointed out that there is a hand icon, specifying its location as the second icon from the exit button on the right.

## IX. Meeting Wrap up and Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:42 PM.

Matthew Reinig prepared the minutes.