



## CPUC Fact Sheet

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION HEARINGS

### Order Instituting Rulemaking to Consider Revisions and Updates to the Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program (R.23-11-001)

#### What is the Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program (DDTP)?

The Commission established the DDTP through a series of decisions issued in the 1970s and 1980s. DDTP originally provided specialized telecommunications equipment to individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. The Commission later expanded the program to include disability groups that have functional difficulty using the phone. The provisions that govern the DDTP are found in the California Public Utilities Code Section 2881.

DDTP provides three types of services and offerings: 1) the Equipment Distribution Program, 2) California Relay Service (CRS), and 3) the Augmentative and Assistive Communication (AAC) Program. The Equipment Distribution Program provides specialized telecommunications equipment at no cost to individuals with functional limitations of hearing, vision, movement, manipulation, speech, and interpretation of information. CRS is a service offered to individuals with limitations to hearing or speaking and provides access to a specially trained communications assistant that can relay telephone conversations to another individual. The AAC Program provides funding for Speech Generating Devices (SGD) as the provider of last resort, and distributes iPads installed with applications that allow the tablet to function as an SGD, enabling individuals with severe speech impairments to verbally communicate.

#### Why did the CPUC Open this Rulemaking?

Public Utilities Code Section 2881(k) requires the Commission to perform an ongoing assessment of the DDTP in its entirety and, if appropriate, expand its scope to allow for additional access capability consistent with evolving telecommunications policy. To this end, the Commission's Communications Division (CD) staff conducted a needs assessment to collect information on issues faced by the deaf and disabled community. CD staff utilized a three-prong approach to gathering data for the analysis, which included in-person engagements and visits at community-based organizations (CBOs), distributing a CBO questionnaire, and disseminating an online survey for those who were unable to attend the in-person engagements. The data collected through the aforementioned methods resulted in findings and recommendations that were captured in a Needs Assessment Report.

The Commission opened Rulemaking 23-11-001 to enable the public to review and provide comments on the Needs Assessment Report, as well as supply input on how the DDTP can be modernized. This rulemaking considers the need for revisions and updates to the DDTP. Given the changing communications landscape since the inception of the program, participants' needs, and the advancement in telecommunication technologies, this rulemaking looks at whether DDTP should be updated to better serve the needs of the disability community.

#### Who is Impacted?

In its outreach in this proceeding, the Commission seeks to include Californians with disabilities and their friends, families, relatives, and caregivers; as well as CBOs and stakeholders serving the disability community.

## Public Participation Hearings

Public participation hearings (PPHs) provide an opportunity for the public to communicate directly with the CPUC regarding the issues raised in this proceeding. Below are the dates for this proceeding's PPHs:

WHEN	FORMAT	LOCATION
August 15, 2024, 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.	In-person only	Roseville City Council Chambers 311 Vernon Street, Roseville, CA 95678
September 4, 2024, 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.	In-person only	Buena Park City Council Chambers 6650 Beach Blvd, Buena Park, CA 90621
September 11, 2024, 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.	In-person only	Clovis City Council Chambers 1033 5th Street, Clovis, CA 93612
September 17, 2024, 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.	Virtual only	<a href="http://www.adminmonitor.com/ca/cpuc">www.adminmonitor.com/ca/cpuc</a> Phone: 800-857-1917, Passcode: 6032788#

For more details on other upcoming PPHs at the CPUC, please refer to: [cpuc.ca.gov/pph](http://cpuc.ca.gov/pph).

## How can Your Voice be Heard

The CPUC wants to hear whether members of the public believe the DDTP should be updated. You may address any topic specified in the rulemaking, but we are especially interested in knowing whether DDTP rules should be modified, barriers exist that prevent eligible participants from enrolling in DDTP, and if so, how to overcome those barriers.

## Other Ways to Participate

**Subscribe** to receive documents in R.23-11-001 at: [subscribecpuc.cpuc.ca.gov/fpss/Default.aspx](http://subscribecpuc.cpuc.ca.gov/fpss/Default.aspx)

**Submit** written comments electronically to the CPUC using the “Add Public Comment” button on the “Public Comment” tab of the Docket Card for R.23-11-001 at: [apps.cpuc.ca.gov/c/R2311001](http://apps.cpuc.ca.gov/c/R2311001). You can also review other public comments related to this rulemaking. The public may submit multiple public comments throughout the proceeding.

**Contact** the CPUC’s Public Advisor at:

- Phone: 1-866-849-8390 (toll-free) or 1-415-703-2074
- TTY: 1-866-836-7258 (toll-free) or 1-415-703-5282
- Mail: CPUC Public Advisor’s Office, 505 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102
- Email: [public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov)

Please reference R.23-11-001 in any communications you have with the CPUC regarding this matter.

## Other Reference Material and Helpful Links

[Commission Rulemaking - November 2, 2023](#)

[Prehearing Conference \(Virtual\) Transcript - February 9, 2024](#)

[Assigned Commissioners Scoping Memo and Ruling - April 10, 2024](#)

[Website on Deaf and Disabled Telecommunication Program \(DDTP\)](#)