



California Connect

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



California Public
Utilities Commission

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Executive Summary

California Connect began a major transition in 2023 as part of a multi-year process of modernization to address the changing needs of all people with disabilities in California as well as the changing marketplace. This effort included simplifying the consumer experience through all language phone number consolidation, website consolidation, and a new marketing campaign with exciting new videos featuring California Connect equipment and how it can be used to communicate. The program also launched a fundamental redesign of its operation and order fulfillment model, which will continue through 2024/25.

Program Mission and Overview

PROGRAM MISSION

California Connect is a public telecommunications program that provides Californians who are deaf or have disabilities to connect with the world using state funded specialized equipment and services to communicate on their own terms. The program's mission is to support its community members' needs so they can live fulfilling lives without compromise.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The California Connect Program is a state-mandated program of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) that provides Californians who have disabilities with enhanced equipment, relay services, and speech assistance programs that improve quality of life and create pathways for independent communication by engaging consumers via community-based partnerships.

California residents who have hearing, speech, physical, cognitive, visual, and memory disabilities benefit from the program's equipment and services because they are empowered to communicate more confidently and live more independently.

California Connect's goals are rooted in achieving equity by providing people with the resources they need to connect with their loved ones, access unfettered communication access to critical services such as healthcare or emergency services, and accomplish daily tasks on their own, like interviewing for a job or hiring a maintenance worker to complete home repair. The program's equipment and services, including Relay Service and Speech Generating Devices, also referred to as Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), also provide access to potentially life-saving services such as 911 and 988. Without specialized devices, individuals who have disabilities or encounter challenges communicating via telephone may have no other means to make critical or medical calls.

The CPUC is advised by two customer advisory committees to assist in its program oversight: Telecommunications Access for the Deaf and Disabled Administrative Committee and Equipment Program Advisory Committee. For more information, please visit the program website at www.CAConnect.org.

This annual report is submitted pursuant to California Public Utilities Code Section 914.5 (a) by the CPUC to summarize the accomplishments of the California Connect program during FY 22-23.

Legislative Background

In 1979, the California Legislature enacted Public Utilities Code Section 2881, codifying the CPUC's existing program for the deaf and disabled. Section 2881 required the CPUC to design and implement a program to provide telecommunications devices to deaf and hard of hearing customers. Subsequently, the Legislature expanded the program's scope, creating additional requirements for the CPUC. California Connect, previously known as the Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program, performs several functions mandated by Section 2881 et seq.

Provides telecommunications devices to certified deaf and hard of hearing users (Public Utilities Code Section 2881 (a)).

Directs that wireless equipment become a permanent part of the Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program (Decision 10-11-033).

Provides a dual-party relay system, now called the Relay Service, to connect Teletypewriter users with any other telephone user (Public Utilities Code Section 2881 (b), added in 1983).

Provides specialized telecommunications equipment to individuals certified with hearing, vision, speech, cognitive, and mobility disabilities (Public Utilities Code Section 2881 (c), added in 1985).

Provides Speech Generating Devices as a provider of last resort and adds Speech Language Pathologists as Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program certifying agents (Public Utilities Code Sections 2881(d) and 2881(e)(1), added in 2011 through Assembly Bill 136 (Ch. 404, Beall)).

Provides authority for the CPUC to transfer advisory oversight of the Teletypewriter Placement Program to the Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program and its advisory committees (Public Utilities Code Sections 279(a) and 2881.2, added in 2003 and 2001, respectively).



In 1989, pursuant to Decision 89-05-060, the CPUC established a structured framework for California Connect. This framework serves to ensure effective oversight of the mandated programs, which include both the Equipment Distribution Program and the Relay Service, facilitating telephonic communication between individuals with hearing abilities and those who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-disabled through operator-assisted relay telephone conversations.

The administration of California Connect by the CPUC is accomplished through contractual agreements with multiple vendors. These vendors are tasked with providing services mandated by the Public Utilities Code. It is noteworthy that the selection of vendors follows a competitive bidding process, adhering to the contracting and procurement requirements of the state of California.

California Connect on behalf of the CPUC maintains a contract for a Primary Program Administrator and Contractor Administrator, to diligently oversee the compliance of policies and directives set forth by the CPUC. This entails overseeing administrative, financial management, and operational efficiencies to ensure positive consumer experiences.

All policy decisions and discretionary determinations related to California Connect are the sole prerogative of the CPUC.

Program Highlights

In FY 22-23, the California Connect program continued to provide Californians who have vision, hearing, speaking, mobility, or cognitive disabilities with effective and costless tools that allow them to connect authentically with the world around them. This government-mandated program is led by people who understand that access to communication is not a privilege, but a right. In an increasingly digital world, cutting-edge technologies have made it easier than ever to connect with people. However, these technologies are generally not designed to include specialized accommodations for people with disabilities, leaving millions of people out of conversations.

California Connect provides a variety of adaptations specific to individual communication needs such as video relay services, amplified phones, speech assistance, captioned telephones, and other modified communication devices including three distinct programs:

The Equipment Distribution Program

A service where specialized communications equipment is distributed to support specific needs for people with disabilities that fall within five disability categories – vision, hearing, speaking, mobility, or cognitive. In FY 22-23, the program provided equipment for 3,633 new customers.

The Relay Service

A service that connects competent operators with people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-disabled, where the operators relay conversations back and forth over the telephone. In FY 22-23, the relay service was used for approximately 599,000 calls.

The Augmentative and Alternative Communication Program (AAC)

A program that includes Voice Options, which provides iPads with speech apps, and provides funding for speech-generating devices and accessories to people with speech disabilities. In FY 22-23 the program provided 1,114 long-term loan iPads and 1,170 short-term loan iPads to Voice Option participants.

This fiscal year the program worked to simplify the consumer experience by consolidating all English and non-English language phone numbers into one with an easy-to-use phone tree which directs consumers to their language of choice. Additionally, work began to consolidate CaliforniaPhones.org, DDTP.org and CAConnect.org into one easy-to-use website.

Marketing efforts also included several video campaigns including two customer support videos, and 11 lifestyle videos making up the Opening Night campaign, produced by Moonshine Experiential. These videos featured two main themes: how California Connect equipment can be seamlessly incorporated into peoples' lives; and how simple it is to communicate with California Connect representatives. You can find each of the videos at CAConnect.org/videos.



The program continued to build upon existing digital marketing efforts through a Search Engine Optimization (SEO) audit and update, Google Ads and organic social media marketing. These efforts resulted in 64,945 new visitors to the California Connect website, an increase of 218% over the prior year. Additionally, the California Connect YouTube channel received 3.7 million views with 41.4 thousand hours of watch time, Facebook and Instagram accounts grew to 4,033 and 218 followers, respectively.



64,945
New Visitors



3.7 Million
Views



41.4 Thousand
Hours of Watch Time



4,033
Followers



218
Followers



To engage with more diverse communities, the program devised targeted and comprehensive marketing strategies designed to establish connections with underrepresented populations through various communication channels. This entailed launching newly branded print advertisements in newspapers serving Native American, Black, Latinx, and Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. These advertisements were thoughtfully crafted in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean. Furthermore, the program also ran radio advertisements catering to Native American, Black, Latinx, and Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, and Tagalog.

By strategically placing advertisements in locations where these communities typically seek trusted and culturally relevant information, and by communicating with them in their preferred languages, the program succeeded in establishing meaningful connections with new audiences who could greatly benefit from its services and resources. This inclusive outreach initiative also included the training of 2,558 participants in Bring Your Own Device smartphone training programs.

For FY 22-23, the Equipment Distribution Program made 1,845 outreach presentations and field visits throughout California.

41.4K Hours of
Watch Time

64.9K New
Website Visitors

2,558 BYOD
Participants

1,845 Outreach
Presentations

FIGURE 1: DATA ON USER INTERACTION WITH DDTP

	'19-20	'20-21	'21-22	'22-23
NEW CUSTOMERS ADDED TO THE EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM	3,821	2,012 ⁱ	3,931	3,633
CONTACT CENTER CALLS HANDLED (INBOUND & OUTBOUND)	142,644	108,977 ⁱⁱ	120,095	122,443
CONTACT CENTER EMAILS HANDLED (INBOUND & OUTBOUND)	6,545	8,026	6,545	7,201
CERTIFICATION FORMS RECEIVED AT THE CONTACT CENTER	8,092	7,182	3,978	3,008
CUSTOMER VISITS TO THE SERVICE CENTERS	8,545 ⁱⁱⁱ	6,166 ⁱⁱⁱ	5,025 ⁱ	4,549
OUTREACH PRESENTATIONS	3,596 ^{iv}	1,306 ^{iv}	2,202 ⁱⁱ	1,845
FIELD ADVISOR VISITS TO CUSTOMERS' HOMES	3,801 ^v	1,246 ^v	3,075 ⁱⁱⁱ	2,984
CONTACT CENTER WEB CHATS HANDLED	303	314	468	441
MARKETING CAMPAIGNS	11	12	12	10
RELAY CALLS, INCLUDES TRADITIONAL RELAY SERVICES, SPEECH-TO-SPEECH, AND CAPTIONED TELEPHONE SERVICES	1,281,814	1,293,716	1,335,624	598,836
BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE TRAININGS PRESENTATIONS	638	266 ^{vi}	298	486 ⁱ
BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE PEOPLE TRAINED	3,402	354 ^{vi}	590 ^{iv}	2,558

i. Due to COVID surges, Service Center visits fluctuated dramatically. Many consumers elected to wait for services.

ii. Outreach activities increased as organizations requested more in-person events.

iii. Field Advisor in-home visits more than doubled from the prior fiscal year due to decreased COVID restrictions.

iv. COVID fluctuations continued to impact on the efforts to conduct in-person BYOD training. However, there was an increase in webinar training, and attendance increased significantly from the prior fiscal year.

v. No contact field advisor drop-offs began in May 2020 and limited in-home visits to only the most urgent requests resumed in October 2020. This resulted in a significant decrease in field advisor numbers.

vi. COVID-19 orders decreased the efforts of community organizations, the primary source of Bring Your Own Device program awareness, which created a decrease in virtual training participation.

Equipment Distribution Program

The Equipment Distribution Program (EDP) is designed to support people whose disabilities affect their day-to-day communications and prevent them from comfortably using a standard telephone. Thanks to the California Legislature-enacted surcharge collected from telecommunications carriers and voice over internet protocol service providers, the program provides specialized telephone equipment and services at no cost to its community members. To keep up with people's ever-changing needs and the evolving communications technologies available, the Program regularly updates its equipment, services, and distribution strategies to effectively meet consumers' needs.



As of June 2023, the program added a new device to the program called CentralAlert Wireless Vibrating Receiver, manufactured by Serene Innovations. The CentralAlert is a wearable device that alerts Deaf and DeafBlind users when a phone call or text message is received on a landline or cellular phone. The program also continued distributing equipment from previous years such as the Panasonic KX-TGM450S amplified cordless phone (273 average monthly distribution) and the Clarity XLC2+ amplified cordless phone (98 average monthly distribution).

In addition, the program administered a pilot program for blind and low vision consumers (a total of 51 participants) to test two different cellular phones for program consideration. The Moto G Power with Synapptic Solution, which is an Android-based smartphone with Synapptic Solution (pre-installed) software that provides a simple accessible interface, and the MiniVision2+, which is a basic cellular phone that speaks everything, uses voice commands, and is a simple accessible phone (no email or web browser). A final pilot report will be available in FY 23-24.

The charts on the next page illustrate the total equipment distributed by the program distribution center to program customers through contact center orders, service centers, field advisors, and outreach.

FIGURE 2: SENATE BILL 60 EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTED THROUGH THE LAST THREE FISCAL YEARS*

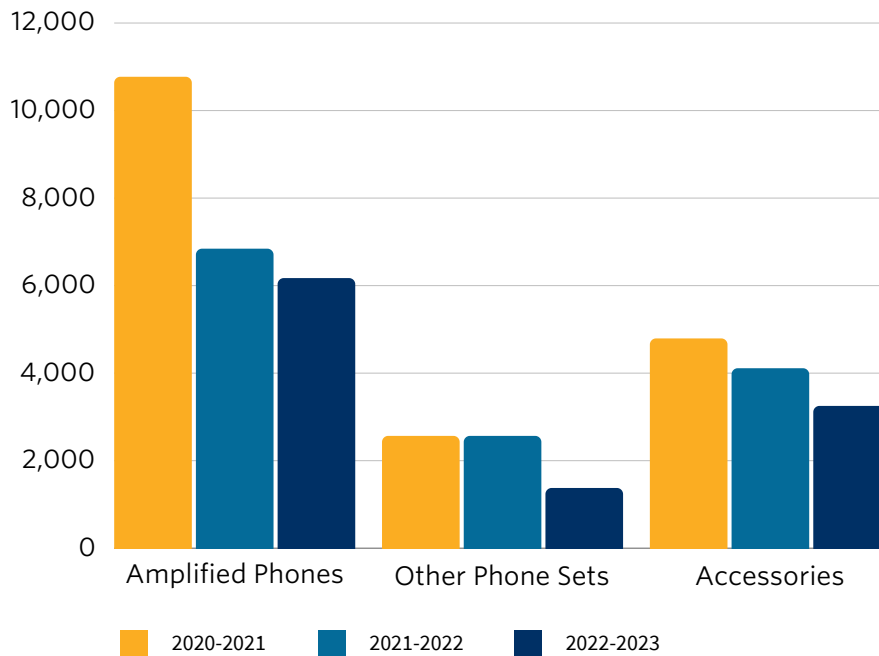
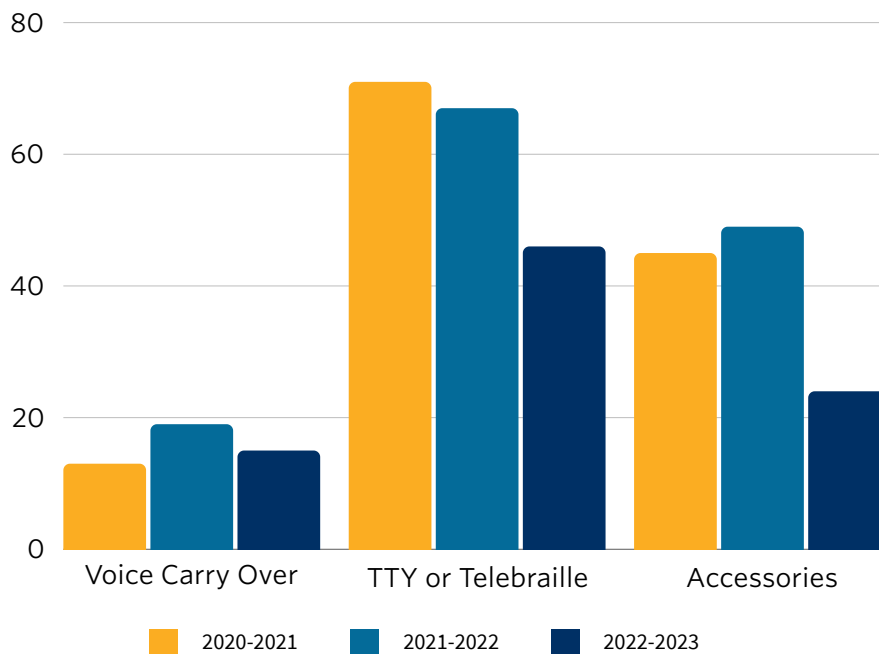


FIGURE 3: SENATE BILL 597 EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTED THROUGH THE LAST THREE FISCAL YEARS*



*Continued concerns over COVID-19, challenges for consumers to go through certification processes, fewer calls to the contact center, fewer certification forms distributed and returned, and a decrease in landline services caused a decrease in equipment distribution.

FIGURE 4: TOTAL EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTED BY THE PROGRAM DISTRIBUTION CENTER TO PROGRAM CUSTOMERS THROUGH CONTACT CENTER ORDERS, SERVICE CENTERS, FIELD ADVISORS, AND OUTREACH

		'20-21	'21-22	'22-23
SENATE BILL 60 EQUIPMENT PUBLIC UTILITIES CODE SECTION 2881 (C) (1985)	Amplified Phones	10,772	6,844	6,172
	Other Phone Sets including cordless, CapTel®, big-button, speaker, and picture phones	2,566	1,711	1,376
	Accessories including switches, cords, headsets, amplifiers, adapters, and Artificial Larynxes	4,793	4,112	3,251
SENATE BILL 60 EQUIPMENT TOTAL		18,131	12,667	10,799
SENATE BILL 597 EQUIPMENT PUBLIC UTILITIES CODE SECTION 2881 (A) (1979)	Voice Carry Over	13	19	15
	Teletypewriter and Telebraille	68	58	46
	Accessories include light flashers, vibrating alerts systems, and large visual displays	45	49	24
SENATE BILL 597 EQUIPMENT TOTAL		126	126	85
GRAND TOTAL		18,257	12,803	10,884

Relay Service

The Relay Service is a no-cost telephone relay service for people who have hearing or speaking disabilities. Callers connect with specially trained operators who relay telephone conversations back and forth between those who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-disabled and anyone with whom they wish to communicate by telephone. To connect to the Relay Service, a person simply dials 711 or uses a designated toll-free number from their landline phones. This intra-state relay service is funded by a surcharge collected by telecommunications carriers and interconnected voice over internet protocol service providers. Relay Service includes five service areas:

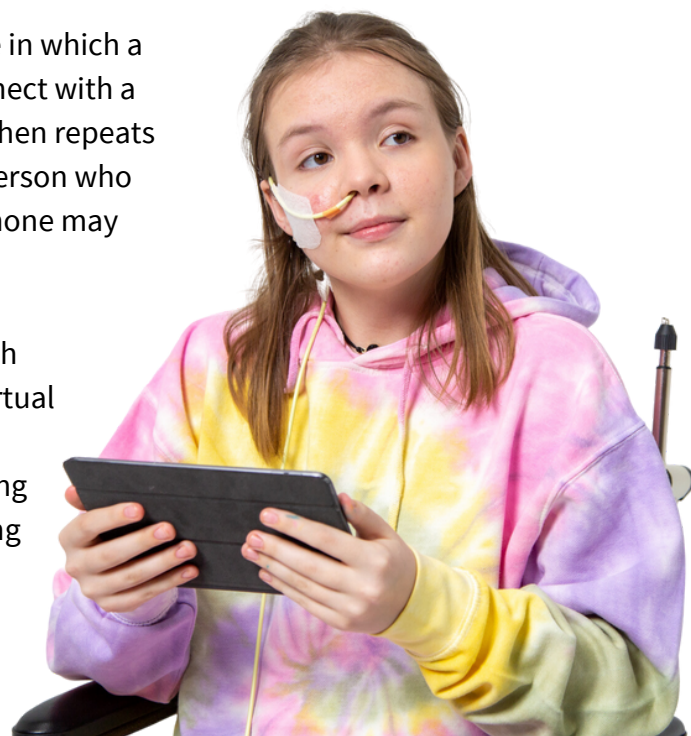
Traditional Relay Service (TRS): a service in which a Teletypewriter (TTY) is used to make telephone calls with the assistance of a specially trained communications assistant. A person with hearing or speech disabilities may want to use this service.

Captioned Telephone Service (CTS): a service in which captions showing what a person is saying are displayed on a screen for someone to read. A person who is deaf or hard of hearing but can speak for themselves may want to use this service.

Speech-to-Speech Service (STS): a service in which a relay operator revoices what a person wants to say in their phone conversations. A person who has speech disabilities may want to use this service.

Visually Assisted Speech-to-Speech (VA STS) : a service in which a person uses a webcam or videophone with Skype to connect with a Communications Assistant at the Relay call center, who then repeats the caller's voiced communications to ensure clarity. A person who has difficulty speaking or being understood on the telephone may want to use this service.

Remote Conference Captioning (RCC): a service in which real-time captions are provided over a screen during a virtual conference call so a person can read the text of what all participants are saying. A person who has difficulty hearing or understanding what is being said over the phone during conference calls may want to use this service.





In FY 22-23, these Relay Services have continued to be essential to the lives of many:

Traditional Relay Service (TRS) served more than
412,000 Calls

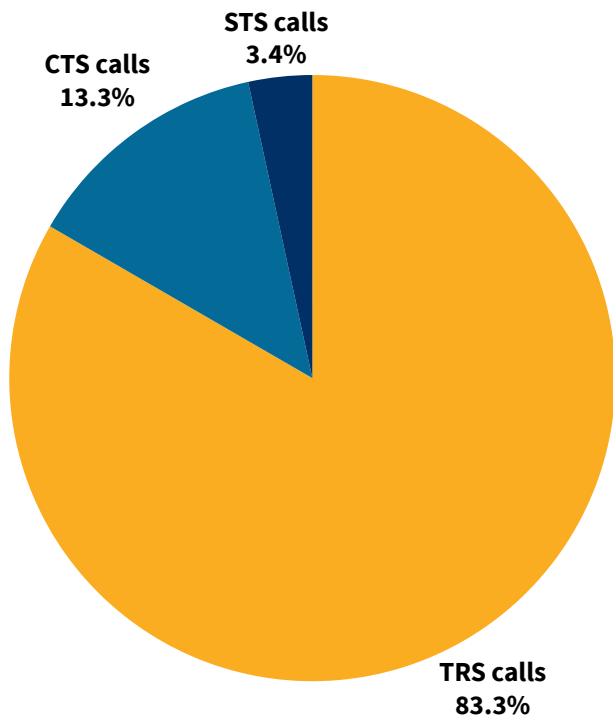
CapTel Service Accounted (CTS) for more than
143,000 Calls

Speech-to-Speech (STS) Processed approximately
43,144 Calls

California Connect implemented an Interactive Response System (automatic call answering) in August 2022 on relay access telephone numbers. This helped to filter out robocalls and misdials and allowed agents to promptly answer legitimate relay calls.

The charts on the following page show a comparison of the Relay Service call breakdown for the previous two fiscal years.

FIGURE 5: CALIFORNIA RELAY SERVICE (CRS) FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022 DATA

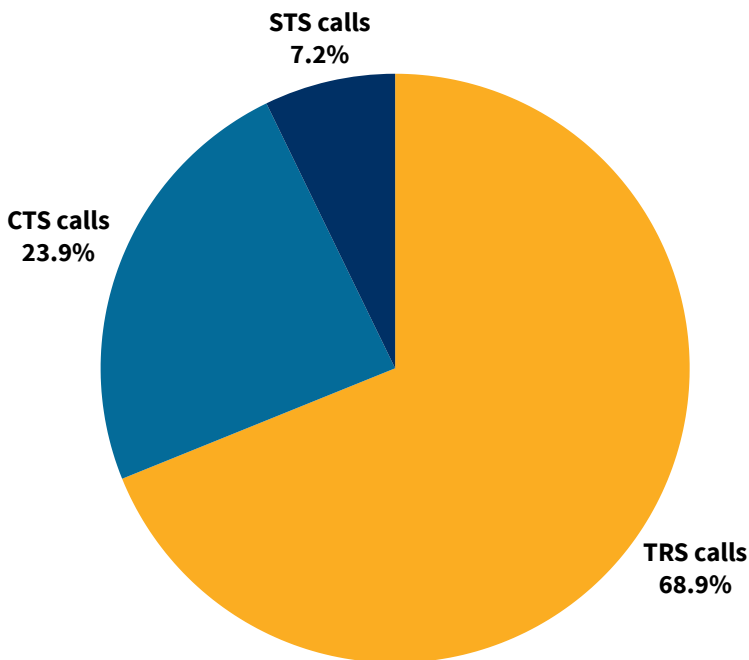


TRS CALLS	1,113,173
CALL MINUTES	603,461
% OF TOTAL RELAY SERVICE CALLS	83.34%

CTS CALLS	176,976
CALL MINUTES	547,446
% OF TOTAL RELAY SERVICE CALLS	13.25%

STS CALLS	45,475
CALL MINUTES	180,698
% OF TOTAL RELAY SERVICE CALLS	3.40%

FIGURE 6: CALIFORNIA RELAY SERVICE (CRS) FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023 DATA



TRS CALLS	412,474
CALL MINUTES	477,909
% OF TOTAL RELAY SERVICE CALLS	68.88%

CTS CALLS	143,218
CALL MINUTES	474,211
% OF TOTAL RELAY SERVICE CALLS	23.92%

STS CALLS	43,144
CALL MINUTES	212,953
% OF TOTAL RELAY SERVICE CALLS	7.20%

Augmentative and Alternative Communications

On October 2, 2011, Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr. enacted Assembly Bill 136, which introduced amendments to Public Utilities Code Section 2881 as it relates to the provision of Speech Generating Devices (SGD), also known as Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). Pursuant to AB 136, the CPUC was mandated to establish regulations for the implementation of the SGD program by January 1, 2014. The revised Public Utilities Code Section 2881 brings forth the following modifications to the Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program:

- Inclusion of Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) among the authorized agents who can certify individuals' eligibility to receive equipment from the program.
- Expansion of the program's scope, allowing for the provision of SGD, accessories, mounting systems, and specialized telecommunications equipment.
- Broadening the range of equipment offered by the program to include SGD, which, due to their medical nature, were previously beyond the program's purview regarding eligible equipment.

Since the initiation of the program in 2014, the program has provided services to over 1,340 individuals with speech disabilities. In the fiscal year 2022-2023, the program received 230 applications and approved 91% of these requests. These applications comprised both partial funding requests, where the applicant's medical insurance covered a portion of accessories, mounting systems, and specialized telecommunications equipment, and full funding requests, which encompassed cases where the applicant's insurance provider had denied coverage or for individuals without healthcare insurance.

Applicants seeking funding for AACs must undergo an evaluation by a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) who, as part of the California Connect application process, provides equipment recommendations. However, recognizing that there may be individuals with speech disabilities who either cannot or choose not to engage the services of an SLP, and instead opt to self-select an assistive device or technology, the CPUC initiated a pilot program in collaboration with the California Foundation for Independent Living Centers, named "Voice Options." This multiphase pilot was initiated on January 11, 2017, and concluded on June 30, 2019, during which approximately 600 iPads were distributed for both short-term and long-term loans through ten demonstration centers.

Considering the positive reception of the Voice Options program, the CPUC, in partnership with the California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) through an interagency agreement, launched a third phase of Voice Options on June 15, 2020, with the objective of distributing 500 iPads annually to individuals who face speech difficulties.

Throughout the Fiscal Year 2022-2023, the Department of Rehabilitation provided 1,114 long-term loan iPads and 1,170 short-term loan iPads to Voice Options participants. The Voice Options program continues to see success after the completion of the pilot program. To date, at least 2,169 people have entered into the short-term loan program since Voice Options has been housed under the Department of Rehabilitation.

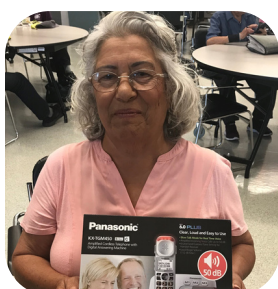
On February 23, 2023, the CPUC issued Decision 23-02-022, which closed rulemaking 13-03-008 and adopted the Voice Options pilot as a permanent part of the DDTP. Since then, the CPUC has been working with DOR to establish the parameters of a permanent program.

Program Testimonials



We are very pleased with the amplified phone provided by California Phones. My mom was able to hear a conversation without any hearing aids and the clarity of the voices was excellent. Trief was awesome with my mom – patient, clear and thorough. We are very pleased with this service.

– **Janis laquinta**



Thank you to California Phones for providing me with this Panasonic phone. This phone is going to change my life, because it is going to help me hear better and communicate with callers.

- **Joaquina Daniel**



My name is Miguel Cortes. Life has taken me to arrive at a surgery in which I was left without the ability to speak for myself and, they told me about a program that helped with a device that helped talk, in which I have had 15 years of use with. It has helped me move forward with daily life. Before using the device, I didn't even want to come out of my house because I felt depressed. I didn't want to socialize with anyone but after using the device I felt that my life continued the same. I give thanks for giving me this type of help, without it I wouldn't be able to continue with my daily life. - **Miguel Cortes**

Program Implementation and Financial Status

In FY 22–23, pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 914.5(a), the CPUC continued to evaluate options to manage program expenses and increase program efficiency.

Surcharges

The program's funding continues to be sustained through a dedicated surcharge, which is assessed and collected by telecommunications carriers. This surcharge is presented on customer bills and is applied to intrastate charges on customer bills of all telecommunications service providers. The CPUC staff maintains active oversight over the fund balance, revenues, and expenses associated with California Connect. This oversight ensures that the surcharge remains sufficient to meet the financial requirements specified in California Connect's budget, in accordance with the Enacted State Budget.

Beginning April 1, 2023, California moved from six separate surcharges to one flat rate for funding California's six Universal Service Programs, including California Connect. As a result, California phone bills are more transparent and include one flat-rate surcharge of \$1.11 per access line. This surcharge applies to all telephone customers regardless of whether they subscribe to traditional wireline phone (landlines), Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) or wireless service.

California Usage Trends

The decline of California Relay Services (CRS) call activity is attributed to intrastate California Relay Services users transitioning from landline services to internet-based services. As a result of this, consumers are switching from state-based services to interstate services which are funded under the Federal Communication Commission (FCC). The FCC provides Internet, wireless services and additional consumer service choices. The diagrams presented on page 15 reflect this trend, showing much of the drop from declining Captioned and Traditional Telephone Relay calls. California Relay Service is fully subsidized and of no cost to the user, who generally pays the same equal access charges for standard telephone service as other customers.

Means Test

California Connect meets the demand of the number of consumers applying for services and equipment. Accordingly, the CPUC does not consider a means test (income qualification) necessary to control program costs.

Efficient Distribution of Equipment

All equipment within the California Connect program is procured in strict adherence to state contracting and procurement regulations, which include the utilization of competitive bidding processes where applicable. These measures are in place to ensure that the state secures equipment at reasonable prices. Furthermore, the program has several initiatives, outlined below, to streamline equipment distribution.

The CPUC's Primary Program and Contractor Administrator hosts public events for participant enrollment and equipment distribution. For example, events held at the Event/Part-Time Service Center in San Jose are conducted in collaboration with certifying agents who can provide certification on-site, expediting the application and distribution processes. This streamlined approach reduces the time between disability certification and equipment receipt. Additionally, California Connect tracks distributed equipment, and provides additional consumer support to minimize returns and exchanges.

For Captioned Telephone equipment, prospective users are required to undergo evaluations prior to receiving the equipment. This evaluation process identifies alternative equipment options, ensuring that customers are matched with the most suitable devices to meet their specific needs. The evaluation is instrumental in preventing the misuse of Captioned Telephone service by individuals who would be better served by amplified phones.

The program remains dedicated to seeking out new and innovative equipment to include in its offerings. For instance, amplified cordless phones with Bluetooth capabilities, compatible with owners' cell phones, have been added to the program. The Panasonic Amplifier Cordless Phone has emerged as a popular choice, with over 39,818 units distributed since its introduction in July 2017.

Additionally, the program has effectively conducted Bring Your Own Device smartphone training to educate consumers and others about accessibility features on widely used smartphones like the iPhone and Android devices. These training events are designed to assess and evaluate specific applications for individual smartphones, with 2,558 participants trained during the Bring Your Own Device this fiscal year. These events, along with other small-scale distribution events, help the program to identify efficient ways to distribute equipment.



“

I was living in South Lake Tahoe, CA 2 years ago when they evacuated for the Caldor wildfire, I had no mobile phone and no TV or radio. So I was terribly lost, so far from my desktop computer and landline phone. It made the whole evac so much worse! I am struggling with my phone, this training will help me so much.

Thank you!

- Mimi Routh

California Connect operates through 13 service centers, six of which are part-time. The service centers provide assistance and support to customers that select their equipment in person. The program has established partnerships with community-based organizations across the state, placing part-time service centers within the community-based locations. This geographic outreach serves to promote the program without the substantial expense associated with establishing independent full-time service centers.

Quality Standards

The Relay Service contract is awarded through a competitive bidding process, and it mandates the inclusion of service quality standards as compulsory requirements. The contracted provider is obligated to not only meet but surpass all federal standards. The Request for Proposal (RFP) that established the existing Relay Service contract goes a step further, imposing additional measures beyond federal standards. These additional efforts are geared towards ensuring the delivery of high-quality relay services and more efficient call processes.

Moreover, the Relay Service contract also stipulates that the provider must undertake initiatives to enhance awareness of Speech-to-Speech services. Speech-to-Speech serves as a valuable resource for users with speech disabilities, enabling them to utilize the relay service more effectively and potentially reducing the time required to initiate a call. To assist consumers in making the best use of Speech-to-Speech, the program has introduced a training line and Visually Assisted Speech-to-Speech.

Tracking Federal Programs

The federal government funds three additional relay services to access the telephone network: Video Relay Service, Internet Protocol Relay, and Internet Protocol Captioned Telephone Service. Currently, the state and federal programs are complementary and funded through separate revenue sources. California Connect continues to leverage federal programs by promoting public awareness and accessibility of federal programs.



“

I think this is very valid and needed education. It helps seniors stay connected to their fam, friends, and med providers, and necessary business interactions.

- Cheri and Ann Nelson and Michel Inaba

Speech Generating Devices (SGD)

Pursuant to Assembly Bill 136, California Connect is the provider and funder of last resort for SGDs considered Durable Medical Equipment. Current access to California Connect program funding for SGDs is limited to those applicants assessed by a speech-language pathologist for an SGD classified as Durable Medical Equipment.

Technology

To keep up with the ever-evolving digital communications landscape, California Connect regularly assesses new technologies to integrate into the program to better serve its consumers. Two committees led by members of the target consumer base evaluate new equipment and submit their recommendations to the CPUC: The Telecommunications Access for the Deaf and Disabled Administrative Committee and the Equipment Program Advisory Committee. During FY 2022-2023, California Connect specifically focused on promoting and testing Real Time Text and Remote Conference Captioning. California remains a national leader in offering Visually Assisted Speech-to-Speech.

FIGURE 7: STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND FUND BALANCE IN THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)

	'18-19 ⁱ	'19-20 ⁱ	'20-21 ⁱⁱ	'21-22	'22-23
BEGINNING BALANCE ⁱⁱⁱ	\$43,231	\$54,611	\$39,878	\$37,087	\$64,201
PRIOR YEAR ADJUSTMENTS & FUND ASSESSMENT ADJUSTMENTS	\$12,055	\$8,310	\$15,376	\$7,989	\$4,065
ADJUSTED BEGINNING BALANCE	\$55,286	\$62,922	\$55,254	\$45,076	\$68,267
REVENUE					
REGULATORY FEES (SURCHARGES)	\$42,512	\$33,228	\$30,157	\$42,497	\$61,737 ⁱ
INVESTMENT INCOME - SURPLUS MONEY INVESTMENTS	\$1,290	\$1,007	\$219	\$228	\$2,020
ESCHEAT - UNCLAIMED CHECKS, WARRANT, BONDS & COUPONS	\$0	\$0	\$1	\$24	\$0
TRANSFERS & OTHER ADJUSTMENTS	\$448	\$17	\$3	\$0	\$0
REVENUE TRANSFER FROM CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND				-\$66	\$0
LOAN FROM CHCF-B TO DDTP ^{iv}				\$25,000	\$0
OPERATING TRANSFER TO GENERAL FUND				\$12	\$0
TOTAL REVENUES, TRANSFERS & OTHER ADJUSTMENTS	\$44,250	\$34,252	\$30,380	\$67,695	\$63,757
EXPENDITURES					
CPUC ADMIN CHARGES	\$2,068	\$2,472	\$1,384	\$2,508	\$2,331
CALIFORNIA CONNECT PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR	\$33,220	\$18,983	\$22,657	\$22,380	\$20,152 ^{vii}
CALIFORNIA CONNECT CONTACT CENTER AND WAREHOUSE		\$5,000	\$9,584	\$6,000	\$5,143 ^{vii}
CALIFORNIA CONNECT MARKETING SERVICE PROVIDER		\$3,817	\$4,087	\$2,275	\$2,373 ^{vii}
OTHER CALIFORNIA CONNECT CONTRACTS INCLUDING LEASE PAYMENTS, AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE, FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND ATTENDANTS		\$1,932	\$2,147	\$2,096	\$2,277 ^{vii}
CALIFORNIA RELAY SERVICE ^v	\$2,639	\$17,797	\$2,826	\$7,887	\$3,842 ^{vii}

**FIGURE 7: STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND FUND BALANCE
(IN THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)**

	'18-19	'19-20	'20-21	'21-22	'22-23
EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM	\$2,818	\$2,313	\$1,239	\$1,073	\$1,798 ^{vii}
AUGMENTATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION (AAC)	\$1,147	\$437	\$1,144	\$787	\$815 ^{vii}
VOICE OPTIONS		\$1,603	\$0	\$963	\$2,692 ^{vii}
ADVISORY COMMITTEES- TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS FOR THE DEAF AND DISABLED ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE AND EQUIPMENT PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE	\$70	\$48	\$38	\$23	\$56 ^{vii}
LOCAL ASSISTANCE	\$125	\$107	\$59	\$91	\$54 ^{vii}
CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY	\$552	\$552	\$552	\$552	\$552 ^{vii}
PRO RATA	\$2,262	\$2,213	\$2,767	\$1,902	\$1,604
FINANCIAL INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR CALIFORNIA (Fi\$CAL)	\$7	-\$10	\$0	\$0	\$0
SUPPLEMENTAL PENSION	\$16	\$33	\$33	\$33	\$33
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$44,924	\$57,296	\$48,517	\$48,569	\$48,567
ENDING FUND BALANCE	\$54,612	\$39,878	\$37,117	\$64,202	\$0^{vi}

i. The transition from revenue generated from surcharge collections to a flat rate per access line resulted in the revenue increase.

ii. Source: Preliminary DF303 Detailed Fund Balance Report and Fi\$cal

iii. Due to rounding, Ending Fund Balance for FY 18/19 to Beginning Fund Balance for FY 19/20 is slightly different.

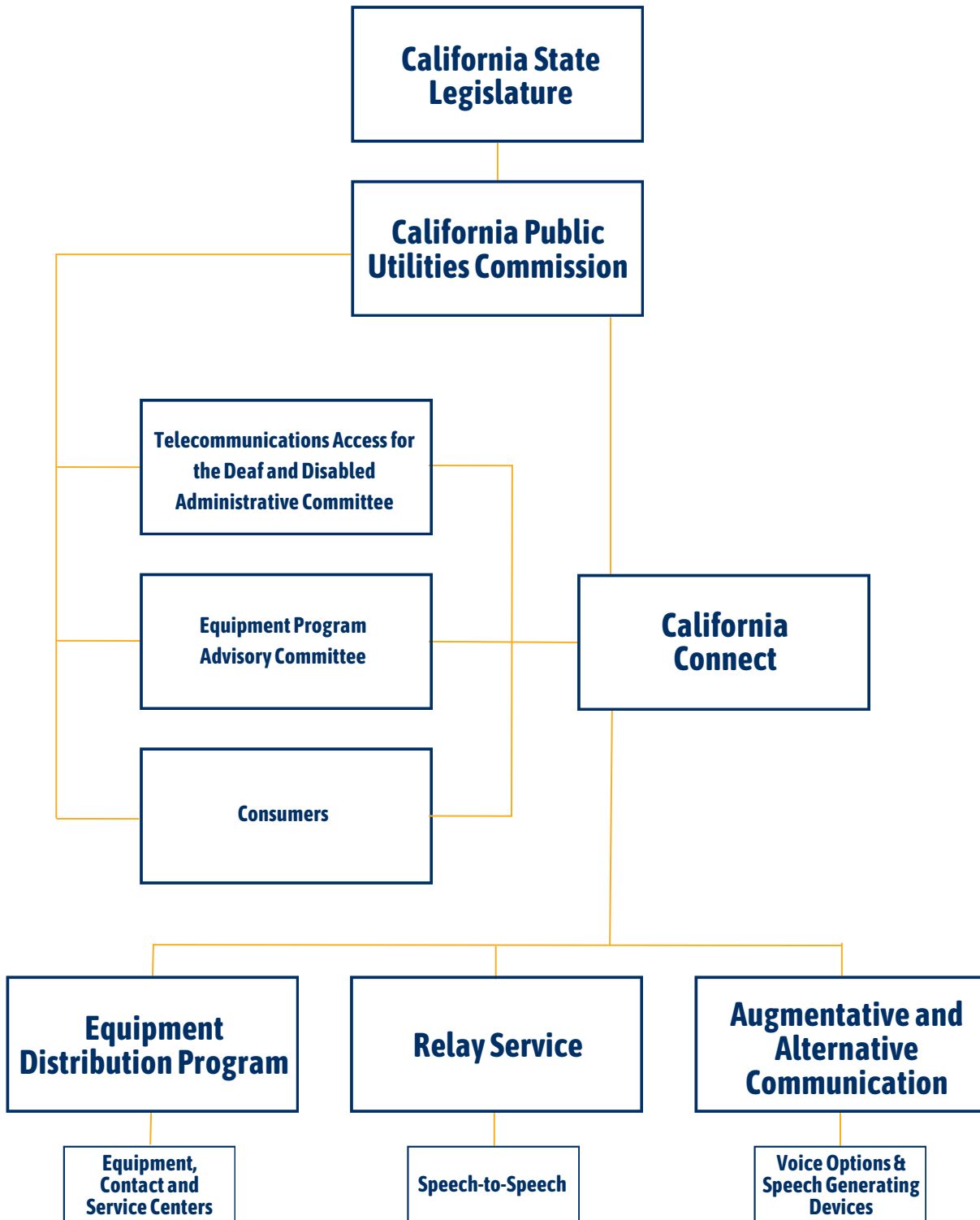
iv. The DDTP experienced a fund balance deficit for the 2021-2022 Governor's Budget due to the declining intrastate revenue base with the surcharge rate set at .5%. Department of Finance approved a one-time loan from the California High-Cost Fund-B (CHCF-B) to DDTP. The surcharge rate was adjusted to 1.1% to address the declining revenue base to maintain a positive fund balance in 2022-2023. DDTP will pay back the \$25M loan to CHCF-B in the coming fiscal year with approval from DOF.

v. The California Relay Service amount for FY 19/20 includes total contractual obligations while FY 18/19 and FY 20/21 did not include those costs.

vi. California Connect has historically reported only the Revenue and Expenditures budgeted for the fiscal year being reported to calculate the Fund Balances. Beginning with the California Connect Annual Report for FY 22-23, the Revenue and Expenditures reported are those earned/received and incurred/paid, respectively, in the reporting year regardless of the fiscal year for which they were budgeted

vii. The expenditure data is reported by Fi\$Cal KK Report.

Program Structure



Advisory Committee Rosters

Telecommunications Access for the Deaf and Disabled Administrative Committee



Katie Wright
Chair



Louie Herrera
Vice Chair



Devva Kasnitz,
Mobility



Frances Reyes Acosta
Spanish Services



Jesse Acosta
Veteran



Kevin Siemens
Speech-to-Speech



Richard Ray
Deaf



Robert Sidansky
Deaf



Benny Corona,
CPUC Public Advocates
Office Representative

Equipment Program Advisory Committee



Steve Longo
Chair



Antoinette Warren
Vice Chair



Danyelle Cerillo
Blind, Low Vision



Janice Armigo Brown,
Hard of Hearing



Judith Viera
Deaf



Monique Harris
Mobility

CONTACT INFORMATION

Customer Contact Center

Phone lines open Monday – Friday: 8 AM to 6 PM, except holidays

- Phone/VP: 1-800-806-1191
- Email: info@caconnect.org
- Mail: P.O. Box 30310; Stockton, CA 95213
- Fax: 1-800-889-3974
- English Teletypewriter: 1-800-806-4474
- Spanish Teletypewriter: 1-844-867-1135

Consumer Affairs

Call or email your California Connect related feed-back or suggestions about program equipment, policies, and customer service between Monday – Friday 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM

- Voice: 1-877-546-7414
- TTY: 1-800-867-4323
- Fax: 1-510-268-4758
- Email: ddtp@cpuc.ca.gov

Relay Service Dial 711

English/Spanish for all modalities, or call one of the following numbers:

- **Email:** relay@caconnect.org
- **Teletypewriter / Voice Carry Over / Hearing Carry Over:** 1-800-735-2929
- **English:** 1-800-735-2929
- **Spanish:** 1-800-855-3000
- **Speech-to-Speech: English/Spanish:** 1-800-854-7784
- **Voice:** English: 1-800-735-2922 Spanish: 1-800-855-3000
- **Visually Assisted Speech-to-Speech:** 1-800-855-7400
- **Customer Service - Captioned Telephone English:** 1-888-402-4018
- **Customer Service - Captioned Telephone Spanish:** 1-877-330-0156

Relay Service, Caption Telephone, and Speech-to-Speech General Inquiries

- **English:** 1-866-409-0178

Augmentative and Alternative Communication Information

- **English:** 1-800-900-3985
- **Email:** ddtp-sgd-application@cpuc.ca.gov

Service Centers

The full-time service centers are open for an individual appointment Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. (excluding holidays).

- **Berkeley:** 3075 Adeline Street, Suite 260, CA 94703
- **Fresno:** 7525 North Cedar Avenue, Suite 115, CA 93720
- **Glendale:** 425 West Broadway, Suite 105, CA 91204
- **Marina:** 220 Twelfth Street, Marina, CA 93933
- **Orange:** 681 South Parker, Suite 210, CA 92868
- **Redding:** 2861 Churn Creek Rd, Suite A, Redding, CA 96002 *
- **Riverside:** 2002 Iowa Avenue, Suite 106, CA 92507
- **Sacramento:** 1300 Ethan Way, Suite 105, CA 95825
- **San Diego:** 1455 Frazee Road, Suite 406, CA 92108
- **San Francisco:** 1234 Divisadero Street, CA 94115 *
- **San Jose:** 25 North 14th Street Suite 1000, CA 95112 *
- **Santa Barbara:** 3815 State St, Suite G137, Santa Barbara, CA 93101 *
- **West Covina:** 1203 West Puente Avenue, CA 91790 *



* Part-time service center hours are limited.

Visit www.CAconnect.org or call 1-800-806-1191 for more information.