



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • TTY (808) 586-8162 • Fax (808) 586-8129

MINUTES

Standing Committee on Communication Access Meeting

LOCATION: Virtual via Zoom and In-Person Location
Kamamalu Building
1010 Richards Street, Rm. 111A and 111B
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

DATE: May 9, 2024

TIME: 11:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Gerald Isobe, Chairperson; Nikki Kepo'o, LisaAnn Tom, Board Members;
Kirby Shaw, Justin "Pono" Tokioka, Bryan Mick, Kristine Pagano, Elizabeth
Pearson, Staff

GUESTS: Ann Ito, Linda Lambrecht, David Simmons, Sherry Shimizu, Brandon Vice,
Jasper Vice, Fanny Yeh

SIGN LANGUAGE

INTERPRETERS: Darlene Baird and Michele Morris

REAL TIME

CAPTIONERS: April Chandler and Kelly DeCamp

- I. Chairperson Gerald Isobe called the meeting to order at 11:13 a.m.
- II. Board members, staff, guests, captioners, and sign language interpreters introduced themselves.
- III. Statement from Public and Written Testimonies Submitted

No written testimonies were submitted.
- IV. Old Business
 - A. Review the proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025 Communication Access section of the Plan of Action and Vote. See Attachment below.

Staff provided a report of the FY 2023-2024 activities.

Committee member Nikki Kepo'o proposed amending objectives 3.2.2, 3.2.3, and 3.3.2. by adding the wording "video description" before audio description as an accessibility feature for deaf persons (M/S/P Kepo'o/Tom).
- V. New Business

- A. Report on Senate Bill (SB) 3290 SD2 HD1 – Relating to American Sign Language. Requires the Disability and Communication Access Board to convene a working group to study the state of American Sign Language interpretation services in Hawai'i. Requires a report to the Legislature.

Pono Tokioka reported that the Senate and House agreed to pass SB3290 with amendments. The bill is currently enrolled to the Governor and is awaiting his signature. Once the Governor signs the bill, DCAB will establish a working group to study the state of American Sign Language interpretation services in Hawai'i.

- B. Establish in-person Quarterly Continuing Education Unit Workshops for sign language interpreters.

Pono Tokioka reported he will email sign language interpreters in Hawaii about topics that they would like to learn more about for the next Continuing Education Unit (CEU) workshops. Topics may consist of interpreting for medical, legal/justice, education, legislature, etc. Staff will establish the first virtual CEU workshop by end of summer.

- C. Organize a State Communication Access Conference by Next Summer.

Pono Tokioka reported that once the proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025 Communication Access section of the Plan of Action is approved by the DCAB General Board in July 2024, staff will begin the logistics, searching for a location, and inviting guest speakers for the State Communication Access Conference in Summer 2025. Going forward, the goal is to have an annual State Communication Access Conference like the Special Parent Information Network (SPIN) Conference which held its 38th Annual Conference last month.

Committee member Nikki Kepo'o hopes to have the State Communication Access Conference every year starting in 2025 and beyond.

- D. Recruit individuals to take the Hawaii Quality Assurance System test and increase the number of interpreters with a Hawaii State Sign Language Interpreter Credentials.

Pono Tokioka reported that he is attempting to recruit individuals to take the Hawaii Quality Assurance System (HQAS) test. He will continue to follow up with interested individuals as well as recruit more individuals who are proficient in American Sign Language interpreting.

VI. Open Forum

Committee member Nikki Kepo'o proposed to have DCAB establish a mentoring program for sign language interpreters to enhance their performance in their daily interpreting jobs.

Guest David Simmons requested DCAB to advocate for a Department of Education (DOE) book for Deaf/Hard of Hearing children and have the Legislature pass a bill to give public access to the DOE's book for Deaf/Hard of Hearing children.

VII. Announcement of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday August 8, 2024, at 11:00 a.m.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/
JUSTIN TOKIOKA

Attachment
(FY 2023-2024 Plan of Action – Communication Access)

3. **Communication Access**

Communication Access includes the provision of auxiliary aids and services that facilitate the effective exchange of information with or by persons with disabilities who require such access. Communication access occurs through communication access providers (individuals) as well as through telecommunication and electronic information devices, auxiliary aids and services.

The goals and objectives in the area of **Communication Access** are:

- 3.1 The quantity and quality of communication access providers in the State of Hawaii will be increased. State agencies will be aware of existing communication access providers and their qualifications.

Objectives:

- 3.1.1 Operate and maintain the Hawaii Quality Assurance Screening (HQAS) credentialing program for sign language interpreters who do not possess national certification; develop an instructional video for HQAS applicants. **(Priority 2)**

FY24 Accomplishments: Issued twenty-six (26) Hawaii State Sign Language Interpreter Credentials. Tested one (1) HQAS applicant. No action on development of an instructional video for HQAS applicants.

Recommendation for FY 25: No change.

- 3.1.2 Operate and maintain the Continuing Education Program for State credentialed interpreters, including the secured website tracking system, and provide at least .5 hours of continuing education workshops geared towards Level III sign language interpreters. **(Priority 1)**

FY 24 Accomplishments: There are twenty-three (23) interpreters enrolled in the Continuing Education Program.

Recommendation for FY 25: No change.

- 3.1.3 Provide technical assistance regarding revised Hawaii Administrative Rules, Title 11, Chapter 218, including the Hawaii State Sign Language Interpreter Credential and the recommended fee schedule. **(Priority 2)**

FY 24 Accomplishments: Provided three (3) technical assistance responses regarding the revised Hawaii Administrative Rules.

Recommendation for FY 25: Delete “revised” in objective and change priority to 3. Reword to read as follows: “Provided technical assistance regarding Hawaii Administrative Rules, Title 11, Chapter 218, including the Hawaii State Sign Language Interpreter Credential and the recommended fee schedule. **(Priority 3)**”

- 3.1.4 Update and maintain a registry of current communication access providers and their credentials and post it on the Disability and Communication Access Board's website. **(Priority 2)**

FY 24 Accomplishments: Posted a monthly registry of current communication access providers and their credentials on the Disability and Communication Access Board website.

Recommendation for FY 25: Add the wording (Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and other disabilities) to objective to read as follows: "Update and maintain a registry of current communication access providers (Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and other disabilities) and their credentials and post it on the Disability and Communication Access Board's website. **(Priority 2)**"

- 3.1.5 Keep informed of nationwide efforts on regulation and oversight of American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters or ASL interpreter referral agencies. **(Priority 3)**

FY 24 Accomplishments:

- 1) "The Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission offer professional interpreter development opportunities. For the past three years during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission sponsored a wide range of virtual professional interpreter development opportunities. The Commission plans to offer the professional opportunities again in Summer 2023." Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission. [Sign Language Interpreters - Licensure and Testing \(illinois.gov\)](https://illinois.gov/signlanguage/interpreters-licensure-and-testing)

DCAB will plan to use similar model to host quarterly CEU workshops in Hawaii.

- 2) "Wyoming is the only state in America that doesn't have a committee to advocate for the Deaf community." Wyoming Public Radio. [A Senate bill that would provide services to Deaf Wyomingites is working its way to the House | Wyoming Public Media](#)

Good information to read. Maybe we can use this bill in the future to improve our Deaf services.

- 3) "Utah law requires an individual to hold a state or national certification to provide ASL interpretation services in the state." [Laws and Policies \(utah.gov\)](https://utah.gov/laws-and-policies)

Hawaii law does not require an individual to hold a state or national certification but that's something we can consider to draft a bill. This will help enhance skills for the interpreters and more pay.

Recommendation for FY 25: Recommend to keep the language for next fiscal year plan of action as this may overlap with the SB3290 legislative report. Meaning, while the SB3290 committee does the research, there may be published documents that reflect on regulations or oversight of ASL interpreters.

- 3.1.6 Provide continuing education workshops and trainings for State credentialed interpreters and individuals studying for a credential to gain workforce experience. **(Priority 1)**

FY 24 Accomplishments: No action.

Recommendation for FY 25: Establish quarterly continuing education unit (CEU) workshops.

- 3.1.7 Update the Hawaii State Sign Language Interpreter Credential and recommended fee schedule, as needed. **(Priority 1)**

FY 24 Accomplishments: No action.

Recommendation for FY 25: No change.

- 3.2 Individuals with communication access needs shall be aware of their rights to communication access services and technology.

Objectives:

- 3.2.2 Provide technical assistance to individuals with communication access needs on their right to effective communication (American Sign Language interpreting, notetaking, audio description, and captioning) with an emphasis on State and county services. **(Priority 1)**

FY 24 Accomplishments: Provided twenty-one (21) technical assistance responses to individuals with communication access needs on their rights to effective communication.

Recommendation for FY 25: Add the wording “video description” before audio description as an accessibility feature for deaf persons. Reword to read as follows: “Provide technical assistance to individuals with communication access needs on their right to effective communication (American Sign Language interpreting, notetaking, video descriptions, audio descriptions, and captioning) with an emphasis on State and county services. **(Priority 1)**”

- 3.2.3 Produce videos in American Sign Language with captions, and audio descriptions, relating to the legislative process with the Legislative Reference Bureau and the Public Access Room. **(Priority 2)**

FY 24 Accomplishments: No action.

Recommendation for FY 25: Add “ video descriptions” & “and audio transcripts” as an accessibility feature for blind persons. Reword to read as follows: “Produce videos in American Sign Language with captions, video descriptions, audio descriptions, and audio transcripts relating to the legislative process with the Legislative Reference Bureau and the Public Access Room. **(Priority 2)**”

NEW OBJECTIVE:

- 3.2.4 Organize and prepare for Communication Access State Conference **(Priority 1)**

Recommendation for FY25: Add to next year's Plan of Action.

- 3.3 Service agencies, program providers, and consumers will have access to updated information about federal and state laws relating to communication access.

Objectives:

- 3.3.2 Provide technical assistance to covered entities on their obligation to provide effective communication including accessible formats (American Sign Language interpreting, notetaking, audio description, and captioning) with an emphasis on State and county services. **(Priority 1)**

FY 24 Accomplishments: Provided six (6) technical assistance to private entities on their obligation to provide effective communication.

Recommendation for FY 25: Add the wording "video descriptions" before audio description as an accessibility feature for deaf persons. Reword to read as follows: "Provide technical assistance to covered entities on their obligation to provide effective communication including accessible formats (American Sign Language interpreting, notetaking, video descriptions, audio descriptions, and captioning) with an emphasis on State and county services. **(Priority 1)**"

- 3.3.3 Serve on the State Judiciary's Office on Equality and Access to the Court-Committee on Court Interpreters and Language Access and the Department of Health, Language Access Advisory Council; to coordinate with Title II entities to improve communication access services. **(Priority 3)**

FY 24 Accomplishments: Attended three (3) Department of Health, Language Access Advisory Council meetings.

Recommendation for FY 25: Reword to read as follows: "Serve on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Board (DHHAB), Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; the Deaf and Blind Task Force (DBTF); and the Department of Health, Language Access Advisory Council (LAAC); to coordinate with Title II entities to improve communication access services. **(Priority 3)**"

- 3.4 Advocacy efforts shall enhance effective communication for people who have communication access needs.

Objectives:

- 3.4.2 Engage in advocacy efforts involving services, rules, regulations, and other policies to enhance effective communication, including web accessibility and emergency broadcasts. **(Priority 1)**

FY 24 Accomplishments: Revised the Communication Access Chapter in the DCAB Programs and Services References Manual.

Recommendation for FY 25: No change.

- 3.4.3 Monitor, review, and submit comments to the Federal Communications Commission regarding rulemaking and pilot programs on improving accessibility for people with communication disabilities. **(Priority 2)**

FY 24 Accomplishments: Received weekly emails from Federal Communications Commission as we monitor and review the announcements.

Recommendation for FY 25: No change.

- 3.4.3 Pursuant to Act 271-22, participate in a working group on accessible government documents and develop electronic information in technology accessibility standards titled, "Hawaii Electronic Information Technology Disability Access Standards" to be implemented by all state entities with the Office of Enterprise Technology Services. **(Priority 1)**

FY 24 Accomplishments: Routinely met with the Office of Enterprise Technology Services (OTS) to develop the draft Hawaii Electronic Information Technology Disability Access Standards.

Recommendation for FY 25: No change.

NEW OBJECTIVE:

- 3.4.4 Pursuant to Act xxx-24, convene a working group to study the state of American Sign Language interpretation services in Hawaii and prepare a report to be submitted to the Legislature. **(Priority 1)**

Recommendation for FY25: Add to next year's Plan of Action.