



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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MINUTES

Disability and Communication Access Board General Board Meeting

Location: Virtual and 1010 Richards Street, Room 118
Date: September 18, 2025
Time: 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Charlotte Townsend, Chairperson; Anthony Akamine, Dayne Green, Violet Horvath, Gerald Isobe, Michael Nojima, Gerald Ohta, Teri Spinola-Campbell, LisaAnn Tom, Board members; Kristine Pagano, Elizabeth Delovio, Bryan Mick, Jarrett Okutsu, Susan Rocco, Mylynn Simon, Justin "Pono" Tokioka, Staff

ABSENT: Ron Awa, Rosanna Daniel-Kanetake, Scott Fleming, Board members

PUBLIC

PARTICIPANTS: Peter Fritz, Donald Sakamoto, Ryan Tamashiro, Fanny Yeh

SIGN LANGUAGE

INTERPRETERS: Jordan Kotani and Sabina Wilford

REAL TIME

CAPTIONERS: April Chandler and Kelly DeCamp

I. Chairperson Charlotte Townsend called the meeting to order at 11:09 a.m. She provided an overview of public testimony or comments, and remote meeting procedures.

II. Roll was called, and Board members introduced themselves.

III. Statement from Public and Written Testimonies Submitted

Chairperson Charlotte Townsend reported that the Board did not receive any written testimony for this meeting.

IV. Approval of General Board Meeting Minutes of June 5, 2025 and Annual Planning Meeting Minutes of August 26, 2025.

The minutes of the June 5, 2025 General meeting were approved as circulated. (M/S/P Akamine/Ohta). The minutes of the August 25, 2025 Annual Planning meeting were approved as circulated (M/S/P Akamine/Ohta).

VI. Executive Director's Report

Kristine Pagano reported for Kirby Shaw, who is out on leave.

A. Personnel

1. DCAB Program Specialist and DCAB Program Support Technician I positions filled.

Welcome to Mylynne Simon as the DCAB Program Specialist for the Parking Program. She started on July 18, 2025 as the Program Specialist to oversee the statewide parking program for persons with disabilities.

Joanne Kealoha is the DCAB Program Support Technician I. She started on August 28, 2025. Her responsibilities include processing renewal applications and answering phone calls relating to the parking program.

These two positions complete the parking program, which is now fully staffed.

2. Vacant Facility Access Unit Office Assistant position.
Position announcement will be advertised on multiple websites.

The Facility Access Unit Office Assistant position remains vacant. The position announcement is still under review with the Department of Health (DOH) before advertising on multiple websites. The position's responsibilities include answering phone calls and routing to appropriate staff, and responding to walk-ins. The Facility Access Specialists are covering until the position is filled.

B. Report on staff attendance at trainings, conferences, and events.

Kristine Pagano reported on the following:

1. ADA 35th Anniversary Rally at the State Capitol, July 25, 2025.

DCAB co-sponsored with the Statewide Independent Living Council and Assistive Technology Resource Center of Hawaii the Statewide 35th Anniversary of the ADA on July 25, 2025. There were two hundred seventy (270) individuals statewide who attended including elected officials, public, and private entities.

Proclamations were presented by Representative Terez Amato for Governor Josh Green, City and County of Honolulu Deputy Managing Director Krishna Jayaram for Mayor Rick Blangiardi, County of Maui Director of Human Concerns Lori Tzuhako for Mayor Richard Bissen, Jr. The Honolulu City Council also recognized the ADA 35th anniversary at a Council meeting.

2. Opportunities and Resources, Inc./ORI Anuenue Hale Inc., July 29, 2025.

Staff provided a one hour Deaf Culture and Awareness training to seventeen (17) employees, including managers, directors, supervisors, and human resources personnel. The training focused on increasing Deaf awareness, how to achieve effective communication, and shared information on technology that supports accessible communication. Participants learned about American Sign Language (ASL) and other sign languages, workplace challenges faced by Deaf individuals, and how to resolve workplace issues. The training aimed to dispel common stereotypes and promote inclusive hiring and employment practices.

3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication (CERC), August 12 and 13, 2025.

Kristine Pagano attended on behalf of Kirby Shaw, the training focused on how to respond to a crisis and how to issue a public statement during an emergency event or during a crisis.

4. Maui County Office of Aging Abilities Resources Fair, August 23, 2025.

DCAB participated in the Maui County Office of Aging Abilities Resources Fair which attracted about one hundred twenty (120) individuals who visited the DCAB booth. DCAB donated a soap and kitchen towel set for their raffle.

5. Kokua Council Forum on Accommodations for People with Disabilities, August 25, 2025.

Staff served on a panel and educated about twenty five (25) individuals regarding service and emotional support animals and knowing their rights in condominiums and apartments. The panel included: Bette Baber, a psychotherapist and radio show host from H Hawaii Media, Rebecca Gardner, attorney with the Hawaii Disability Rights Center, Kedin Kleinhans, Senior Condo Specialist with the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, and Chris Thompson, Founder and Owner of Lucky Paws Animal Foundation.

6. Office of Enterprise Technology Services Digital Accessibility Fair, September 9, 2025.

The Office of Enterprise Technology Services (ETS) and DCAB hosted a Digital Accessibility Fair on September 9, 2025. DCAB coordinated three (3) speakers for the ETS Digital Fair and invited Sheryl Nelson, former Executive Director of the Statewide Independent Living Council; Kaili Swan, Emergency Preparedness Officer for the Hawaii Self Advocacy Advisory Council, and Jodi Asato and Jason Julian of Assistive Technology Resource Centers of Hawaii. The event attracted over one hundred twenty (120) website administrators, content creators, document authors, public information officers, ADA Coordinators, IT staff, and others responsible for digital accessibility. The Fair provided the knowledge, tools, and resources to meet web accessibility compliance and create better online experiences for everyone.

With the new U.S. Department of Justice rule and Hawaii Electronic Information Technology Disability Access Standards, digital accessibility is no longer optional, it is a requirement.

7. Hawaii School for the Deaf and Blind, Deaf Awareness Day, September 26, 2025.

DCAB will have a booth to share resources with parents and guardians of students who attend Hawaii School for the Deaf and Blind on September 26, 2025. Last year, there were about fifty (50) parents and guardians who visited the DCAB booth.

8. Hawaii Digital Government Summit 2025, September 30, 2025.

Staff will attend the Hawaii Digital Government Summit on September 30, 2025. The Summit is an event that brings together public sector leaders and

technology professionals to explore innovative solutions to solve government problems. Key themes include cybersecurity, digital transformation, AI implementation, data governance, and fostering collaboration across multiple stakeholders.

9. 2025 White Cane Walk, Resource Fair, October 17, 2025.

The 2025 White Cane Walk sponsored by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Hoopono Services for the Blind will host its first resource fair at the State Capitol rotunda on October 17, 2025. DCAB will participate as an exhibitor to support people with disabilities and their families.

Testimony: Board member Violet Horvath asked about future trainings on digital accessibility. She asked if the trainings can be made mandatory, and set up three to four (3 to 4) sessions on different days and times.

Chairperson Charlotte Townsend asked if staff can inquire if the trainings can go beyond outreach and be mandatory with attendees receiving a certificate, credit, etc., at the end of the training.

VII. Committee Reports

A. Executive Committee

Chairperson Charlotte Townsend said the Committee did not meet, and there no report.

B. Legislative Committee

Chairperson Charlotte Townsend said the Committee did not meet, and there no report.

C. Standing Committee on Communication Access

1. The Committee held a meeting on September 11, 2025.

Committee Chairperson Gerald Isobe reported the Committee met on September 11, 2025.

2. Preparations for the 2025 Deaf Awareness Day, September 27, 2025 at the Neal S. Blaisdell Center, Pikake Room

Committee members discussed the planning of the event and the schedule for September 27, 2025. Ed Chevy was announced as the keynote speaker. Mr. Chevy will talk about deaf history in Hawaii. There will be a panel discussion, performances, cultural information, and exhibits.

Board member Violet Horvath asked about the number of people registered for the Deaf Awareness event. Justin “Pono” Tokioka said that approximately one hundred (100) have registered to date.

3. 2026 Legislative Proposals for Communication Access.

a. Interpreter Training Program for American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters

Committee Chairperson Gerald Isobe reported the Committee discussed preparations for the upcoming 2026 legislative session including a proposal to secure funding for the establishment of Interpreter Training Program (ITP) for ASL interpreters. The program aims to build a sustainable pipeline of qualified interpreters to meet the growing needs of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community across the State. DCAB staff have met with Senator San Buenaventura to discuss the proposal and are making progress toward introducing a bill.

b. Establish ASL Courses in Hawaii Department of Education High Schools

Committee Chairperson Gerald Isobe reported the Committee reviewed a proposal to introduce ASL courses in public high schools under the Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE). This initiative is intended to promote early exposure to ASL, support language acquisition among students, and encourage local recruitment into interpreting and Deaf-related professions.

4. Review of Establishment of ASL in Elementary Schools
The Committee will collect data regarding an ASL curriculum in Hawaii Department of Education elementary schools.

Committee Chairperson Gerald Isobe reported the Committee initiated a new discussion on the potential introduction ASL into elementary school curricula. This topic was prompted by a public inquiry at a previous Board meeting, asking how DCAB could support such efforts. While the discussion is still in its early stages, Committee members expressed strong interest in exploring the idea further. As a next step, the Committee will begin gathering data on existing ASL curriculum efforts within DOE elementary schools.

D. Standing Committee on Facility Access

Board member Michael Nojima reported the Committee has not met since the last General meeting.

1. Report on the Virtual 2025 Disability Access Conference held on June 26-27, 2025.

Board member Michael Nojima reported the Facility Access Unit (FAU) held its annual Disability Access Conference (DAC) on June 26 and 27, 2025 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. both days. There was no charge to attend the conference.

He provided information on the number of participants for each day of the conference: 193 registrants for all four sessions (vs. 187 for 2024) on Day 1 and 141 attendees for all 4 sessions (vs. 159 for 2024) on Day 2.

Sessions 1 and 3 were presented by the U.S. Access Board and sessions 2 and 4 were presented by DCAB staff. Session 1 covered Accessible Residential Housing; Session 2 covered Scoping Exceptions & Interpretive

Opinions; Session 3 Accessible Transient Lodging; and Session 4 covered Common Areas & Omissions.

Based on the post conference evaluations, all four sessions were well received. Participants found the speakers knowledgeable, information and examples presented were very helpful.

2. Announcement of 2025 Basic ADA Trainings on October 22, 29, November 5, 12, and 19, 2025.

Board member Michael Nojima reported the FAU is preparing to conduct its annual basic ADA training. Registration opened on September 15, 2025, and the registration links were sent out in the Access E-Bulletin.

This year's trainings will occur: October 22, 2025 - Session 1, ADAAG Chapter 3-4; October 29, 2025 - Session 2, ADAAG Chapter 5-6; November 5, 2025 - Session 3, ADAAG Chapter 7-8; November 12, 2025 - Session 4, ADAAG Chapter 9-10; and November 19, 2025 - HODAAG (Hawaii Outdoor Developed Areas Accessibility Guidelines).

E. Standing Committee on Parking

1. The Committee held a meeting on September 8, 2025 and discussed two topics.

Committee Chairperson Violet Horvath reported the Committee met on September 8, 2025.

a. Should accessible parking spaces, all types or if all accessible spaces should be eleven feet in width.

Committee Chairperson Violet Horvath reported the Committee discussed if accessible parking spaces should be required to be eleven (11) feet in width or other possible design regulations to improve accessibility.

b. Should the statewide parking program for persons with disabilities develop and issue a disability parking decal for qualified applicants who cannot or do not want to apply for a special license plate.

Committee Chairperson Violet Horvath reported the Committee discussed if a disability parking decal should be offered to permittees whose cars do not have doors or who do not want special plates.

2. Reviewed written testimony regarding the City and County of Honolulu Satellite City Hall Division services for a disability parking permit. Applicants are required to make an online appointment and same day service is not guaranteed without an appointment. The Committee responded to the testimony with a vote for staff to submit a formal letter to the Mayor requesting to modify its procedure to remove the online appointment service at aloha.org to express service which does not require an appointment.

Committee Chairperson Violet Horvath reported the Committee reviewed public testimony regarding the lack of timely appointments at City and County of Honolulu issuing locations, leading to a delay of days or weeks for an applicant to receive their temporary or first time long term placard despite

having a completed application form. Staff was asked to send a letter to the City requesting they revert to its pre-November 2023 policy of allowing applicants to walk in without an appointment.

3. Reviewed an oral testimony to resume the City and County of Honolulu, Mayor's Advisory Committee on Disabilities (MACD). The MACD was formed in 1971 and has not held a meeting since 2012. The Committee responded to the oral testimony with a vote to include a formal letter to the Mayor to resume the MACD's meetings for persons with disabilities.

Committee Chairperson reported the Committee also asked that the letter addressing the lack of timely appointments at City and County of Honolulu issuing agencies include a request that the Mayor to reconvene an Advisory Council on Disabilities which has not been functional in many years.

Board member Teri Spinola-Campbell inquired about the accessible parking space width of eleven (11) feet. Chairperson Charlotte Townsend explained the width is above the minimum requirement of eight (8) feet for an accessible stall. This is starting point for discussion, so there's no schematics or measurements. It's really based on what is existing and how there's a potential solution that would meet everyone's needs.

F. Standing Committee on Transportation

1. The Committee held a meeting on September 8, 2025.
2. Reviewed paratransit service area maps for County of Hawaii; programs offered outside of service area, and ways to advocate for better services.

The Committee reviewed the paratransit services offered in the County of Hawaii and how DCAB might be able to advocate for better service, especially when it comes to geographical gaps in service.

3. Reviewed States existing eBike rebate program and discussed expansion to provide rebates for mobility aid devices.

The Committee reviewed the State's existing program for electric bicycles and how it might be expanded to include mobility aid devices.

4. City and County of Honolulu, Honolulu City Council, Bill 54.

The Committee reviewed the City and County of Honolulu's Bill 54 (2025) which would eliminate the free fare on bus and rail for personal care attendants (PCA) when acting as a PCA for a rider with a disability and delete Medicare card holders from the eligibility list for subsidized fares. DCAB submitted testimony in opposition to both of those sections of the bill.

G. Special Parent Information Network (SPIN)

1. Held Annual Planning meeting, August 6, 2025.
2. 2026 SPIN Conference Planning

Board member Anthony Akamine reported that the SPIN Advisory Committee met on August 6, 2025 to begin planning for the 2026 SPIN Conference. A theme reflecting a 40th Birthday Party was selected to acknowledge and celebrate four (4) decades of SPIN conferences. Recent efforts to secure a venue for an in-person conference include a proposal by the Center on Disability Studies to combine the Pac Rim Conference and the SPIN Conference in late May 2026 utilizing the University of Hawaii Campus Center as a venue.

3. Collaborating with Kauai District to Train Hawaii Department of Education Staff

Board member Anthony Akamine reported that SPIN staff, Amanda Kaahanui, has delivered two (2) virtual trainings this month to Kauai DOE administrators, special education department heads and new teachers on two (2) topics -- "Engaging Families in Transition" and "Engaging Families in the Individualized Education Program (IEP)". She will return virtually on October 2, 2025 to share information with special education department heads on how SPIN supports families, teachers, and how to find resources.

4. Speaking Engagements for Leadership in Disabilities and Awareness of Hawaii Audiences

Board member Anthony Akamine reported that one of SPIN's community partners, Leadership in Disability and Achievement Hawaii (LDAH) holds a traditional traveling mini conference on each island during the Fall on topics related to special education. SPIN staff will present a workshop on "Family Voice and Advocacy" at their conference in Kona and Hilo in September and Oahu in October.

Board member Violet Horvath indicated that this agenda item should be titled: Speaking Engagements for Leadership in Disabilities and Achievement of Hawaii.

5. Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) Annual Report for School Year 2024-2025.

Board member Anthony Akamine reported that SPIN staff researched and drafted a sixteen (16) page Annual Report for school year 2024-2025 to Superintendent Hayashi in August. The Report includes a data infographic on special education statistics, a description of activities, and recommendations to the Hawaii DOE on the unmet needs of children with disabilities and their families. The report can be found on the Special Education Advisory Council website that SPIN maintains at <https://seac-hawaii.org/reports>.

VIII. Old Business

A. ADA Coordination

1. Review statistics of ADA technical assistance program. Update.

Elizabeth Delovio reported that DCAB received thirty (30) requests for technical assistance in the first quarter of this fiscal year on topics such as

service animals in public spaces, digital accessibility, and communication access. She reported: fifty three percent (53%) of those requests came from members of the public (e.g., how to certify an animal as an assistance animal, etc.); twenty seven percent (27%) from state or county entities, and twenty percent (20%) from a private entity (e.g., business, restaurant, etc.). She reported the County of Hawaii specifically inquired about separation of a service animal handler and the service animal, when the individual is under arrest. She provided additional information, and how the County of Hawaii was mirroring the Honolulu Police Department's policy.

She also provided information on a tour guide seeking guidance, and gymnastics studio owner who inquired about ASL interpreter costs and additional support staff for students requesting an accommodation.

2. Making State and counties web content and mobile apps accessible for persons with disabilities training sessions for ADA Coordinators. Update.

Elizabeth Delovio reported that public entities are requesting guidance on web and mobile app accessibility. DCAB collaborated with ETS on a digital accessibility workshop (reported earlier by Kristine Pagano).

Testimony: Peter Fritz said he had concerns on how data is compared from year to year; more coordination with the ADA Coordinators; pdf files not accessible (can't cut and paste); and password protected documents.

Chairperson Charlotte Townsend responded that staff will work on improving data reporting; staff will provide more information on the ADA Coordinators meetings; and she has no response at the moment on manipulation of pdf documents, but will address this issue.

B. Status of the DCAB Programs and Services Reference Manual

Kristine Pagano reported that staff is reviewing the first draft of the updated Programs and Services Manual. The goal is to update the Manual before the next Board meeting.

IX. New Business

A. Draft Governor's Administrative Directive on Accessibility to State Government by Persons with Disabilities

Kristine Pagano reported that staff updated Administrative Directive 12-06 issued by Governor Neil Abercrombie on December 18, 2012 to include the DOJ's new rule on Accessibility of Web Content and Mobile Apps for ADA Title II, State and Local Governments. The proposed Administrative Directive, Accessibility to State Government by Persons with Disabilities is being reviewed by the Governor's Office.

B. Emergency Preparedness Efforts: Tsunami Survey and Results

Elizabeth Delovio reported that DCAB issued a survey to collect data on the statewide tsunami warning issued on July 29, 2025. The information will be used

to advocate for and improve accessibility during emergencies. A total of one hundred fifty eight (158) responses were received. Forty six percent (46%) were received from Honolulu County, thirty nine percent (39%) from Maui County, eleven percent (11%) from Hawaii County, four percent (4%) from Kauai County, and the remaining respondents did not specify a county.

Respondents were asked how would they rate the level of accessibility available to you: forty two percent (42%) responded excellent; thirty two percent (32%) responded good; twelve percent (12%) responded fair; and nine percent (9%) responded poor.

Respondents were asked about barriers experienced and the primary areas were transportation, timely and accessible transportation, individuals with disabilities may need additional time to evacuate; communication access, evacuation zone maps not accessible to individuals who are blind, communication on open shelters, delayed provision of ASL interpretation services during press conferences; and accessible alerts, information not in accessible formats.

She reported respondents recommended for transportation--early warning for individuals needing extra time to evacuate, transportation availability for those without a scheduled paratransit ride; communication access—provide evacuation zone descriptions and shelter openings in plain language with both visual and audible access; accessible alerts—spoken language descriptions of alerts and evacuation zones, increase on screen display time to allow alerts to be fully read, use plain language.

She reported some of DCAB's recommendations include all alerts should be universally accessible including plain language audible and visual communication; early dispatch of ASL interpreters; establish a plan for alternative means of effective communication; evacuation maps include written descriptions in plain language, providing universal access to the same level of information; paratransit services need to develop emergency plans that serve those who do and do not already have a ride scheduled. Evacuation zones should be the priority for paratransit during an active emergency.

Testimony: Fanny Yeh shared what happened to a deaf couple who were on a cruise/tour of the Big Island during the tsunami warning. They didn't know what was happening. She asked about what happens to tourists during a disaster and the need for improving communication access during an emergency.

Community efforts to establish a Disability Integration Specialist/Coordinator within the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency

Kristine Pagano reported that DCAB and the Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD Council) are working on a proposed bill to establish a Disability Integration Specialist/Coordinator within the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA).

HIEMA received funds for the establishment of a full time Limited English Proficiency Language Access Coordinator position and for program support for Limited English Proficiency community projects in July 1, 2024.

There is no position serving the population of people with disabilities.

2. Citizens Advisory Commission Emergency Management

Elizabeth Delovio reported staff provided comments to the Commission relating to the collected data regarding accessibility of the tsunami alert. The comments were reflective of the final report reported on the previous agenda item.

C. Honolulu City Council Resolution 25-202 – Requesting the City Administration and the Hawaii Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission to investigate the feasibility of establishing cooling centers in the City and County of Honolulu

Elizabeth Delovio reported staff testified in support of this resolution as extreme heat conditions can increase life threatening affects for vulnerable populations, including people with disabilities. She said the resolution establishes heat emergency criteria, establishing an official threshold of heat and humidity that would trigger a heat emergency. The goal is to reduce heat related illnesses and ease the strain on emergency services during heat waves.

Testimony: Donald Sakamoto shared that maps are not accessible and he informed City Emergency Managing Director after the tsunami warning. He asked why not use artificial intelligence, as it would resolve the map description to be accessible.

D. Schedule of Board Meetings for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Chairperson Charlotte Townsend asked if the third Thursday, every other month works best for Board members. Hearing no objections; Board meetings will continue to be held on the third Thursday, every other month, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

X. Open Forum: Public comment on issues not on the agenda for consideration for the Board's agenda at the next meeting.

Peter Fritz suggested the Legislative Committee meet soon to review proposals for the upcoming legislative session. He mentioned putting a notation on an individual who is deaf car registration to inform the police that the person is deaf and their waving of hands is not a threat. He'd also like to see a resolution removing the word "impaired", as it is a negative term.

Donald Sakamoto said he attended a Honolulu Authority on Rapid Transportation workshop. He said the flyer that was sent out had no reasonable accommodation statement. He also requested the PowerPoint presentation and a text format, and was told the materials would be done after the meeting was over. He wanted to provide comment on the rail station being built in Kalihi.

Donald Sakamoto also said the sidewalks on Dillingham Boulevard are terrible. He raised his concern with the City and County ADA Coordinator.

XI. The next Board meeting is scheduled for November 20, 2025, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

XII. The meeting was adjourned at 12:51 p.m.

NOTE: All votes were unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/
CINDY Y. OMURA