



# DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
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## 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: June 19, 2025  
TIME: 11:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Gerald Isobe, Chairperson; LisaAnn Tom, Board Member; Kirby Shaw, Bryan Mick, Kristine Pagano, Justin "Pono" Tokioka, Staff

ABSENT: Nikki Kepo'o, Board Member

#### SIGN LANGUAGE

INTERPRETERS: Keri Lee and Laura Safranski

#### REAL TIME

CAPTIONERS: April Chandler and Kelly DeCamp

- I. Chairperson Gerald Isobe called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m.
- II. Board members, staff, captioners, and sign language interpreters introduced themselves.
- III. Statement from Public and Written Testimonies Submitted.  
  
No written testimonies were submitted.
- IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes of May 22, 2025.  
  
The minutes of the May 22, 2025, meeting were approved as circulated (M/S/P Tom/Isobe).
- V. Old Business
  - There are no items for Old Business.
- VI. New Business
  - A. Update on the 2025 Communication Access State Conference.

- Registrations: A total of one hundred twenty two (122) participants have registered to date. The target is one hundred thirty (130) attendees, with expectations for additional late registrations and same-day walk-ins.
- Planning: DCAB staff continue to actively prepare for the event and expressed enthusiasm about its progress.
- Event Details: Complimentary food and lunch will be provided. Ten (10) vendors representing the disability and hard-of-hearing community are confirmed to exhibit at the event.
- Chairperson Gerald Isobe asked whether the previously discussed goal of one hundred fifty (150) participants was still in effect. Staff clarified that the target has been adjusted to one hundred thirty (130) for planning and budgetary reasons.

B. Planning for the 2025 Deaf Awareness Day in September.

- Event Idea: The Committee discussed organizing a Deaf Awareness Day in September 2025.
- HSDB Event: The Hawai'i School for the Deaf and the Blind (HSDB) plans to hold its own event on Friday, September 26, with activities for students, parents, and teachers.
- Potential Collaboration: HSDB invited DCAB to support or partner with their event and requested assistance with lunch sponsorship.
- Board Considerations: Members discussed whether to join HSDB's event or host a separate one for the broader public. Some noted concerns about limited public participation due to the weekday timing.
- Alternative Ideas: Suggestions included partnering with American Sign Language (ASL) programs, hosting a separate Deaf Awareness Day or Week, or holding an event in May, another recognized month for Deaf Awareness.
- Next Steps: Further discussion is needed. The Committee will revisit this topic at the next meeting to decide on a direction.

C. Report on one new applicant for the Hawaii Quality Assurance System (HQAS) Test.

- New Applicant: One new individual took the HQAS test on Friday, June 6, 2025.
- Next Steps: The test footage is currently being edited and will soon be sent to evaluators. Results are expected in about three (3) months.
- Board member LisaAnn Tom asked how many interpreters have taken the test in the past year and a half. This applicant is the sixth to take the

HQAS test during that time. Currently, there are twenty three (23) interpreters with Hawaii state credentials, and some others hold national certifications (NIC).

- Board member LisaAnn Tom said that expanding the interpreter pool is beneficial and welcomed the continued interest in the HQAS test.

D. Review of the proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2026 Plan of Action Communication Access Section including any proposed revisions to goals and objectives for the Communication Access Program.

- New Additions:
  - 3.2.4 Organize or collaborate on a celebration for Deaf Awareness events. (Priority 1)
  - 3.3.3 Provide training for first responders on how to assist Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, and persons with communication disabilities during emergencies. (Priority 2)
- Delete from FY 2024-2025 Plan of Action:
  - 3.4.3 Participation in a working group on accessible government documents and development of electronic information technology accessibility standards (Act 271-22). (Priority 1)
- Revised:
  - 3.1.2 Added the phrase “and make improvements if necessary” regarding operation and maintenance of the Continuing Education Program and secured website tracking system.
  - 3.4.4 Changed from convening a working group to study ASL interpreting services and submit a report, to following up on that report by proposing funding to increase the number of ASL interpreters in Hawaii. (Priority 1)

VII. Open Forum

Text-to-911 Discussion Summary:

- Issue Identified: The Text-to-911 system experienced a temporary outage on June 16, 2025 due to a virus and system errors, confirmed by the Honolulu Police Department (HPD). The system is now operational again.
- Lack of Backup/Notification: Currently, there is no backup system for Text-to-911. Users are not notified if their text fails to go through, which poses a serious risk, especially for Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing individuals relying on the service.
- Concerns Raised:
  - How users can be informed when their message fails to send.
  - Inaccessibility of Real Time Text or voice alternatives for some individuals (e.g., those without iPhones or senior citizens).
  - Need for clear failure messages or alerts.
- Recommendations:
  - HPD should develop a backup communication plan.

- Implement push notifications or emergency alerts when the system is down/restored.
  - Clarify what failure messages are sent and ensure public education on alternative methods (e.g., RTT, Video Relay Services).
  - Ensure Deaf individuals are not left waiting unknowingly in emergencies.
- Action Items:
    - Staff to follow up with HPD regarding what users see when Text-to-911 fails.
    - Consider collaboration with emergency management for further planning.
    - Add topic to the next meeting agenda for continued discussion.

VIII. Announcement of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 16, 2025, at 11:00 a.m.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:59 p.m.

NOTE: All votes were unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/  
JUSTIN TOKIOKA