



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
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DRAFT 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: January 8, 2026

TIME: 11:00 a.m.

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

SIGN LANGUAGE

INTERPRETERS: Mala Arkin and Keri Lee

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, 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 October 30, 2025.

The Committee did not take action on the approval of the October 30, 2025 meeting minutes, as the minutes were not distributed to members prior to the meeting. Approval was postponed to the next scheduled meeting.
- V. Old Business

There are no items for Old Business.
- VI. New Business
 - A. Report on speaking engagement with ASL students at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa on November 6, 2025.

DCAB staff attended and presented at two (2) ASL 201 classes at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, reaching approximately forty (40) students. The presentation addressed Hawai'i's ASL interpreter shortage, pathways to becoming an interpreter in Hawai'i, and communication access and accommodation requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students were highly engaged, and several expressed interest in pursuing interpreting careers, with the goal of increasing the local interpreter workforce.

B. Report on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Board (DHHAB) Meeting held on November 8, 2025.

DCAB staff attended the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Board (DHHAB) meeting held on November 8, 2025. The meeting focused primarily on end-of-year updates from various committees, including DHHAB, Hawai'i School for the Deaf and Blind (HSDB), and Comprehensive Service Center (CSC), and included participation from community members.

Discussion included development of a survey and potential statewide camp or gathering for KODAs/CODAs (Kids/Children of Deaf Adults) to gather feedback, build connections, and encourage future involvement in the Deaf community and interpreting profession. Rebecca Bennett (Big Island) will lead the Committee exploring this initiative, with the intent to include participants from all islands, pending funding availability.

The meeting also noted the addition of a new Deaf-Blind staff member within the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Deaf Services section. The next meeting is scheduled for February 21, 2026 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., location to be determined and announced.

C. Report on Deaf Blind Task Force Meeting with Senators held on December 23, 2025.

DCAB staff attended a Deaf-Blind Task Force meeting with state senators on December 23, 2025. The meeting focused on discussion of proposed legislation for the upcoming legislative session, including reintroduction of bills from the previous year that did not pass.

Key legislative priorities discussed included insurance coverage for hearing aids and proposed revisions to state statutes to remove the term "impairment" and replace it with person-centered language such as "deaf" and "hard of hearing." The Deaf-Blind Task Force also outlined additional bills they plan to introduce, which DCAB will continue to monitor throughout the legislative session.

Staff will track legislative hearings and testimony opportunities and provide updates via the DCAB email distribution list. Staff noted that cochlear implants are already covered by insurance, while hearing aids are not fully covered. Staff will monitor legislation beginning with the legislative session

opening on January 21 and will keep the Committee members informed of relevant developments.

D. Report on the Hawai'i Quality Assurance System (HQAS) Test held on January 7, 2026.

DCAB staff reported that the HQAS test was administered on January 7, 2026. One participant completed the test, and staff is currently in the processing and editing phase. The materials will be submitted to evaluators, with results typically returned within approximately three (3) months.

E. Discussion on the Continuing Education Unit (CEU) Workshop Funding Application Form and next steps for a recent sponsor request.

Staff reported ongoing discussions regarding how DCAB may sponsor or partner on CEU workshops to support interpreters. A recent request was received from Hawai'i Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (HRID) seeking DCAB support for a CEU workshop, including potential funding for speaker-related costs. Staff noted the need to consult with the Committee prior to responding to sponsorship requests.

Staff reviewed the existing CEU Workshop Funding Application Form, which was developed prior to the COVID pandemic. The form requires updates to reflect current timelines and practices. Key elements of the form include funding limits (not to exceed \$2,400 total), eligibility requirements, Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) conditions, workshop accessibility requirements, and administrative responsibilities of sponsoring entities.

The Committee discussed DCAB's historical role in supporting CEU workshops, including past partnerships and co-sponsorships with HRID, which were paused during the COVID pandemic and have resumed in recent years. The Committee expressed general support for partnering and sponsoring CEU workshops, pending review of completed applications.

Staff will update the application form submission date and share the revised form with the Committee. Future CEU sponsorship requests will be brought to the Committee for review and discussion at a scheduled meeting, or a special meeting if necessary.

F. Initial discussion and planning for the 2026 Communication Access Conference.

DCAB staff initiated planning for the 2026 Communication Access Conference, with a tentative target of September to align with Deaf Awareness Month. The Committee previously agreed to combine Communication Access and Deaf Awareness Month into a single conference.

Initial discussion focused on potential venues, including the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i (JCCH), Neal Blaisdell Center, and other large venues. JCCH was favorably noted due to ease of coordination, bundled services (space, food, parking), and cost considerations. Attendance was

tentatively discussed at approximately 150–200 participants, subject to budget approval, with a statewide audience anticipated.

The Committee discussed holding the conference on a Saturday to increase attendance and explored the option of incorporating a Deaf history museum-style exhibit rather than exhibitor tables, similar to last year's Deaf Awareness Month event. Materials from organizations could be included in participant packets instead of hosting exhibitor booths.

Staff will contact JCCH and other potential venues to obtain pricing and availability and will prepare a preliminary cost estimate for review at the next meeting. Future discussions will address conference theme, activities, target audience, and logistics.

G. Review and Establish a Disability and Communication Access Board Guiding Principles on Communication Access – Draft.

DCAB staff introduced the need to develop DCAB Guiding Principles on Communication Access to provide consistent guidance for policies, procedures, testimony, and public comments related to communication access for people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind, and individuals with other communication access disabilities. It was clarified that DCAB does not currently have formal guiding principles specific to communication access, and that these would be newly created (distinct from existing fact sheets).

Staff shared examples of existing DCAB guiding principles developed for other issue areas, explaining that such documents function as “guardrails” to allow staff to respond efficiently to proposals, counterproposals, and emerging issues without requiring immediate board or committee action. These guiding principles help ensure consistency when engaging with federal, state, and county agencies.

The Committee discussed the scope of potential guiding principles, including accommodations, interpreter access, effective communication, emerging technologies (e.g., Video Remote Interpreting (VRI), Artificial Intelligence (AI) interpreting), relay services (Teletypewriter (TTY), Video Relay Service (VRS)), identification concerns, and future communication access issues. Members were encouraged to think broadly about principles that reflect DCAB's values and positions.

Staff will prepare an initial draft of the Communication Access Guiding Principles. Committee members may submit individual input directly to staff for inclusion. The draft will be presented at a future Committee meeting for review, discussion, and edits. Once finalized by the Committee, the guiding principles will be brought forward for a vote and then submitted to the full Board for consideration and approval.

VII. Open Forum

No topics were submitted for discussion.

VIII. Announcement of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 9, 2026, at 11:00 a.m.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:21 p.m.

NOTE: All votes were unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Respectfully submitted,

JUSTIN TOKIOKA