FCC CERTIFIES PERKINS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND TO ADMINISTER THE NATIONAL DEAF-BLIND EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM FOR MAINE

CG Docket No. 10-210

By this Public Notice, the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB) of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) announces the selection of Perkins School for the Blind (Perkins) for certification to administer the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP), also called “iCanConnect,” for the state of Maine.

On August 9, 2022, CGB released a Public Notice inviting applications from entities interested in being certified to distribute equipment under the NDBEDP to eligible individuals in the state of Maine. In response to the Public Notice, CGB received one application from Perkins.

Following its review of this application, CGB is satisfied that Perkins meets the criteria contained in the Commission’s rules to receive certification under the NDBEDP. As evidenced in its application, Perkins has demonstrated extensive experience in providing accessible services in a manner that shows cultural awareness of the deafblind community and communication needs of people who are deafblind; considerable expertise in the communications technology used by individuals who are deafblind; the administrative and financial management capability to manage state programs under the NDBEDP; sufficient staffing to manage the state program; and sufficient staffing to manage the state program.


3 The Commission’s rules specify the following certification criteria: (1) “[e]xpertise in the field of deaf-blindness, including familiarity with the culture and etiquette of individuals who are deaf-blind”; (2) “[t]he ability to communicate effectively with individuals who are deaf-blind,” including by using assistive technologies; (3) administrative and financial management experience; (4) staffing that is “sufficient to administer the program, including the ability to distribute equipment and provide related services to low-income individuals who are deaf-blind throughout the state”; (5) “[e]xperience with the distribution of specialized customer premises equipment, especially to individuals who are deaf-blind”; (6) experience in training consumers how to set up and use equipment to access covered services; (7) familiarity with covered services; and (8) if the applicant is seeking renewal of certification, ability to provide equipment and related services in compliance with Commission rules. 47 CFR § 64.6207(c)(1)-(8).
a strong familiarity with the Commission’s rules governing this program. Furthermore, as the NDBEDP-certified program for Maine, Perkins has committed to work in partnership with local agencies to meet the needs of the deafblind population throughout Maine.

Accordingly, CGB certifies Perkins to become the authorized entity under the NDBEDP in Maine, effective December 1, 2022, through June 30, 2027.

Perkins will have full responsibility for distributing equipment and providing related services in the state, including outreach, assessments, installation, and training, either directly or through collaboration, partnership, or contract with other individuals or entities in-state or out-of-state, including other NDBEDP certified programs. Perkins must comply with the Commission’s NDBEDP rules pertaining to its participation in this program, including transitional requirements to ensure the continuation of NDBEDP operations in Maine if its certification is relinquished, terminated, or not renewed.

ACCESSIBLE FORMATS: To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau at 202-418-0530 (voice).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Contact Jackie Ellington, Disability Rights Office, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, at 202-418-1153 or Jackie.Ellington@fcc.gov; or Joshua Mendelsohn, Disability Rights Office, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, at 202-559-7304 or Joshua.Mendelsohn@fcc.gov.

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4 47 CFR § 64.6207(c)(8). Please note that the terms “deafblind” and “deaf-blind” are used interchangeably.

5 See 47 CFR § 64.6207(e) (providing that, when a certified program is replaced prior to the expiration of its certification period, the successor entity's certification will expire on the date that the replaced entity's certification would have expired).

6 See 47 CFR § 64.6207.


8 NDBEDP Permanent Program Order, 31 FCC Rcd at 9197, paras. 44-45; see also 47 CFR § 64.6207(j)(1)-(3).