



# PUBLIC NOTICE

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## 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.<sup>1</sup> In response to the Public Notice, CGB received one application from Perkins.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> *FCC Invites Applications for Certification to Participate in the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program for the State of Maine*, Public Notice, DA 22-835 (CGB August 9, 2022) (*Maine Application Public Notice*) (summarizing the qualifications for obtaining certification to participate in the NDBEDP), <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-22-835A1.docx>. On June 17, 2022, CGB certified Disability Rights Maine to distribute equipment under the NDBEDP for Maine for a period of five years, from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2027. See *Commission Announces Entities Certified to Participate in the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program*, Public Notice, DA 22-541 (CGB 2022) (including Maine), <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-22-541A1.docx>. Disability Rights Maine informed the Commission that it will be relinquishing its certification effective November 30, 2022. Letter from Kim Moody, Executive Director, Disability Rights Maine, to Jacqueline Ellington, NDBEDP Administrator, Disability Rights Office (DRO), CGB, FCC (July 14, 2022), <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/search/search-filings/filing/10714923425218>.

<sup>2</sup> Application of Perkins School for the Blind (August 29, 2022).

<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup> Perkins must comply with the Commission's NDBEDP rules pertaining to its participation in this program,<sup>7</sup> including transitional requirements to ensure the continuation of NDBEDP operations in Maine if its certification is relinquished, terminated, or not renewed.<sup>8</sup>

**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](mailto: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](mailto:Jackie.Ellington@fcc.gov); or Joshua Mendelsohn, Disability Rights Office, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, at 202-559-7304 or [Joshua.Mendelsohn@fcc.gov](mailto:Joshua.Mendelsohn@fcc.gov).

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<sup>4</sup> 47 CFR § 64.6207(c)(8). Please note that the terms "deafblind" and "deaf-blind" are used interchangeably.

<sup>5</sup> 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).

<sup>6</sup> See 47 CFR § 64.6207.

<sup>7</sup> 47 CFR §§ 64.6201-64.6219; *Implementation of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010, Section 105, Relay Services for Deaf-Blind Individuals*, Report and Order, 31 FCC Rcd 9178 (2016) (*NDBEDP Permanent Program Order*).

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