



PUBLIC NOTICE

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DA 22-541

Released: May 17, 2022

COMMISSION ANNOUNCES ENTITIES CERTIFIED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NATIONAL DEAF-BLIND EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

CG Docket No. 10-210

By this Public Notice, the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB) of the Federal Communications Commission (Commission) certifies entities in 56 states and territories as administrators of the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP).¹ These certifications shall become effective July 1, 2022.

Background. Under the NDBEDP, also known as “iCanConnect,” the Commission may provide up to \$10 million annually from the Interstate Telecommunications Relay Services Fund (TRS Fund) to support local programs that distribute equipment to eligible low-income individuals who are deaf-blind, so that these individuals can access telecommunications service, Internet access service, and advanced communications services.² In accordance with the *NDBEDP Permanent Program Order*, CGB must certify one entity for each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, as the sole entity for that jurisdiction authorized to receive reimbursement for NDBEDP activities from the TRS Fund.³

On February 26, 2021, CGB announced that it would accept applications until June 30, 2021, from entities interested in receiving Commission certification to participate in the NDBEDP.⁴ In that Public Notice, CGB identified the eight qualifications for NDBEDP certification: expertise in the field of deaf-blindness, the ability to communicate effectively with people who are deaf-blind, sufficient staffing and facilities, experience with equipment distribution, experience training consumers on how to use the distributed equipment, familiarity with covered services, and administrative and financial management experience.⁵ The eighth qualification, which applies only to currently certified applicants seeking renewal of their certifications, requires demonstrated ability to provide equipment and related services in

¹ One of these entities, Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA), is granted certification pending its fulfillment of the NDBEDP’s audit requirement, as noted *infra*.

² Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (CVAA), Pub. L. No. 111-260, 124 Stat. 2751; Pub. L. 111-265, 124 Stat. 2795 (technical corrections to the CVAA). Section 105 of the CVAA adds section 719 to the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, and is codified at 47 U.S.C. § 620.

³ See *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, 9184, para. 9 (2016) (*NDBEDP Permanent Program Order*). See also 47 CFR § 64.6207. Collectively, the entities selected to participate in the NDBEDP are referred to herein as “certified programs” or “state programs.”

⁴ *FCC Announces Applications for National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program Certification Due June 30, 2021*, CG Docket No. 10-210, Public Notice, DA 21-241 (CGB Feb. 26, 2021).

⁵ 47 CFR § 64.6207(c)(1)-(7).

compliance with the Commission's rules.⁶ In addition, applicants for certification must disclose actual or potential conflicts of interest.⁷

CGB received a single application for 55 of the 56 jurisdictions that are the subject of this Public Notice, and these applicants, except for the District of Columbia, are currently certified to serve these jurisdictions. Following careful review of these applications, CGB is satisfied that each of these applicants meets the criteria to receive certification under the NDBEDP. As evidenced in their applications, these 55 entities have demonstrated extensive experience in providing accessible services in a manner that shows cultural awareness of the deaf-blind community and its communication needs; considerable expertise in the communications technology used by individuals who are deaf-blind; the administrative and financial management capability to manage state programs under the NDBEDP; sufficient staffing to manage these state programs; and, where applicable, a strong familiarity with the Commission's rules governing this program.⁸ Furthermore, as the NDBEDP-certified programs for these jurisdictions, these entities have committed to work in partnership with local agencies to meet the needs of the deaf-blind population throughout these jurisdictions. Thus, these 55 entities are certified to participate in the NDBEDP, effective July 1, 2022, for a period of five years, with one exception.⁹ The currently certified entity for Alaska (ATLA) has not satisfied the requirement to submit its requisite program audit reports to the NDBEDP Administrator, and thus is granted certification, conditioned on the prerequisite that the audit requirement is satisfied.¹⁰

For the state of Florida, CGB received two applications, one from Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults (HKNC) and the other from the Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST). CGB has selected HKNC as the certified entity to operate the NDBEDP in Florida for the next five years, effective July 1, 2022. Although CGB has determined that both applicants meet the Commission's qualifications for certification, HKNC's demonstrated expertise in the field of deaf-blindness, including cultural awareness and etiquette; its extensive history of distributing specialized equipment to individuals who are deaf-blind; its expertise in training deaf-blind consumers on the use of such equipment; and its provision of services targeted specifically to deaf-blind individuals for more than 50 years, make HKNC more qualified to provide NDBEDP services in the state of Florida.

	State	NDBEDP Certified Programs
1.	Alabama	Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind
2.	Alaska	Assistive Technology of Alaska ¹¹
3.	Arizona	Perkins School for the Blind
4.	Arkansas	Perkins School for the Blind
5.	California	Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired

⁶ 47 CFR § 64.6207(c)(8).

⁷ 47 CFR § 64.6207(d)(1); *see also* NDBEDP Permanent Program Order, 31 FCC Rcd at 9190, paras. 23-24.

⁸ 47 CFR § 64.6207(c)(8).

⁹ 47 CFR § 64.6207(e).

¹⁰ ATLA's certification is granted subject to the condition that the audit reports required under section 64.6211(a)(7) of the rules are received by December 31, 2022 and subsequently approved by the NDBEDP Administrator. Upon satisfaction of this condition, ATLA's certification will be converted to a full five year certification, which will expire on June 30, 2027. Failure to submit the required audit reports by the due date may affect the qualification of ATLA to continue as the NDBEDP certified entity for Alaska pursuant to section 64.6207(c) of the rules, and may lead to suspension or revocation of certification under section 64.6207(h) of the rules.

¹¹ *Id.*

6.	Colorado	Colorado Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind
7.	Connecticut	Connecticut Tech Act Project
8.	Delaware	University of Delaware – Center for Disabilities Studies
9.	Florida	Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults
10.	Georgia	Georgia Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
11.	Hawaii	Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults
12.	Idaho	University of Idaho – Center on Disabilities and Human Development
13.	Illinois	Lester and Rosalie Anixter Center
14.	Indiana	Perkins School for the Blind
15.	Iowa	Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults
16.	Kansas	Assistive Technology for Kansans
17.	Kentucky	Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults
18.	Louisiana	Affiliated Blind of Louisiana Training Center
19.	Maine	Disability Rights Maine
20.	Maryland	Perkins School for the Blind
21.	Massachusetts	Perkins School for the Blind
22.	Michigan	Perkins School for the Blind
23.	Minnesota	Perkins School for the Blind
24.	Mississippi	Perkins School for the Blind
25.	Missouri	Missouri Assistive Technology
26.	Montana	Perkins School for the Blind
27.	Nebraska	Nebraska Assistive Technology Partnership
28.	Nevada	Perkins School for the Blind
29.	New Hampshire	Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Inc.
30.	New Jersey	New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
31.	New Mexico	Perkins School for the Blind
32.	New York	Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults
33.	North Carolina	North Carolina Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing
34.	North Dakota	North Dakota Assistive Technology
35.	Ohio	Perkins School for the Blind
36.	Oklahoma	Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services
37.	Oregon	Access Technologies, Inc.
38.	Pennsylvania	Institute on Disabilities – Temple University

39.	Rhode Island	Perkins School for the Blind
40.	South Carolina	Perkins School for the Blind
41.	South Dakota	South Dakota Department of Human Services
42.	Tennessee	Tennessee Public Utility Commission
43.	Texas	Perkins School for the Blind
44.	Utah	Perkins School for the Blind
45.	Vermont	Perkins School for the Blind
46.	Virginia	Perkins School for the Blind
47.	Washington	Perkins School for the Blind
48.	West Virginia	Perkins School for the Blind
49.	Wisconsin	Wisconsin Department of Health Services
50.	Wyoming	Wyoming Institute for Disabilities – University of Wyoming
	Other Jurisdictions	NDBEDP Certified Programs
51.	American Samoa	Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults
52.	District of Columbia	TCS Access
53.	Guam	Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults
54.	Northern Mariana Islands	Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults
55.	Puerto Rico	Perkins School for the Blind
56.	U.S. Virgin Islands	Perkins School for the Blind

Each entity selected will have full responsibility for distributing equipment and providing related services, including outreach, assessments, installation, and training, in their state(s), either directly or through collaboration, partnership, or contract with other individuals or entities in-state or out-of-state, including other NDBEDP certified programs.¹² All certified programs must further comply with all of the Commission's NDBEDP rules pertaining to their participation in this program, including requirements designed to ensure the continuation of NDBEDP operations in their jurisdictions if they relinquish or do not renew their certifications or otherwise exit the program.¹³

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, 202-418-1153, e-mail Jackie.Ellington@fcc.gov.

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¹² 47 CFR § 64.6207.

¹³ 47 CFR §§ 64.6201-64.6219; *see also NDBEDP Permanent Program Order*, 31 FCC Rcd at 9197, paras. 44-45, 9278-87, Appendix D (setting out the NDBEDP permanent program rules).