



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
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FCC INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR CERTIFICATION TO THE NATIONAL DEAF-BLIND EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM FOR THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

CG Docket No. 10-210

Applications Due Date: May 5, 2026

Under the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP), also called “iCanConnect,” the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) may provide up to \$10 million annually from the Interstate Telecommunications Relay Service Fund (TRS Fund) to support programs that distribute equipment to low-income individuals who are deafblind, so that these individuals can access telecommunications service, Internet access service, and advanced communications services.¹

On May 17, 2022, the FCC’s Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB or Bureau) certified the LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired (the LightHouse) to distribute equipment under the NDBEDP for California for a period of five years, from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2027.² On March 31, 2026, the LightHouse informed the Commission that it would not continue participating in the NDBEDP and that it would relinquish its certification effective June 30, 2026.³

The Commission thus invites entities interested in being certified to distribute equipment under the NDBEDP to eligible individuals in California, to apply for the certification period ending June 30, 2027, the remaining portion of the LightHouse’s unexpired 5-year certification term.⁴ The Commission will accept applications for this purpose until **May 5, 2026**.

This application opportunity is solely to fulfill the remaining portion of the LightHouse’s unexpired 5-year certification term, July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027. The Commission is also currently accepting applications to serve as a NDBEDP entity for a state or territory during the next 5-

¹ 47 U.S.C. § 620; *see also* 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*, CG Docket No. 10-210, Report and Order, 31 FCC Rcd 9178 (2016) (*NDBEDP Permanent Program Order*). In this *Notice*, we use the term “deafblind” unless the term “deaf-blind” appears in statutory or regulatory language or in quotations.

² *See Commission Announces Entities Certified to Participate in the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program*, CG Docket No. 10-210, Public Notice, 37 FCC Rcd 6212 (CGB 2022). Collectively, the entities selected to participate in the NDBEDP are referred to as “certified programs” or “state programs.”

³ Letter from Brandon Cox, Chief Executive Officer, LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired, to Jackie Ellington, NDBEDP Administrator, Disability Rights Office (DRO), CGB, FCC (filed Apr. 6, 2026) (on file in CG Docket No. 10-210).

⁴ 47 CFR §§ 64.6207(b)(3), 64.6207(e) (explaining 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).

year certification period, from July 1, 2027 to June 30, 2032.⁵ Any entity interested in serving as the NDBEDP entity for California for the next 5-year certification period will be required to separately apply by June 30, 2026, following the guidance included in the *Five-Year Certification Applications Public Notice*.⁶

This Notice summarizes the qualifications for NDBEDP certification. All certified programs must comply with the Commission's NDBEDP rules.⁷ We encourage applicants to become familiar with the requirements for program participation and the rules governing the NDBEDP before submitting an application.⁸

BACKGROUND: For California, the Commission will certify a single program as the sole entity authorized to receive reimbursement from the TRS Fund for NDBEDP activities within the state.⁹ The certified program will have full responsibility for distributing equipment and providing related services (e.g., outreach, assessments, installation, and training) in California, either directly or through collaboration, partnership, or contract with other individuals or entities in-state or out-of-state, including other NDBEDP certified programs.¹⁰ The entity selected for certification for California will be reimbursed for eligible NDBEDP-related costs that it incurs after its selection and for the duration of its certification.¹¹

WHO MAY APPLY? Any public or private entity may apply to the Commission for certification to participate in the NDBEDP and receive reimbursement for NDBEDP activities in California from the TRS Fund.¹² For example, equipment distribution programs, vocational rehabilitation programs, assistive technology programs, schools for the deaf, blind, or deafblind, organizational affiliates, independent living centers, or private educational facilities, may apply.¹³ Entities based within or outside a state may apply for certification to administer any NDBEDP state program.¹⁴

FILING AN APPLICATION: There is no application form, fee, or specified format that must be used to apply for NDBEDP certification. However, applications must contain sufficient detail to demonstrate the applicant's ability to meet all criteria required for certification and must reflect the

⁵ On March 31, 2026, the Commission announced the June 30, 2026 deadline for applications to serve as a NDBEDP entity for a state or territory during the next 5-year certification period, from July 1, 2027 to June 30, 2032. *Applications for National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program Certification Due June 30, 2026*, Public Notice, DA 26-317, CG Docket No. 10-210 (CGB Mar. 31, 2026) (*Five-Year Certification Applications Public Notice*), <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-26-317A1.pdf>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ 47 CFR §§ 64.6201-64.6219.

⁸ *Id.*; see also *NDBEDP Permanent Program Order*, 31 FCC Rcd 9178.

⁹ 47 CFR § 64.6207.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ 47 CFR § 64.6213 (setting forth the reimbursement process and requirements). The certification period will end June 30, 2027, unless the certification is relinquished, suspended, revoked, or renewed. See 47 CFR § 64.6207(e), (g)-(h). See *supra* at note 6.

¹² 47 CFR § 64.6207(a).

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *NDBEDP Permanent Program Order*, 31 FCC Rcd at 9191, para. 25. For example, an out-of-state entity that works with in-state partners to provide services may function well in states that lack sufficient resources. When making its certification selections, CGB will consider the benefits that a local entity can bring to its state's residents, such as through established relationships with state networks and the ability to meet consumers' needs as they arise, especially when weighing the merits of equally qualified applicants. *Id.*, 31 FCC Rcd at 9191, para. 26.

applicant's commitment to comply with all Commission requirements governing the NDBEDP.¹⁵ The Commission will review applications and will determine whether to grant certification based on the ability of an entity to meet the following qualifications, either directly or in coordination with other programs or entities, as evidenced in the application and any supplemental materials:¹⁶

- Expertise in the field of deafblindness, including familiarity with the culture and etiquette of individuals who are deafblind.¹⁷
- The ability to communicate effectively with individuals who are deafblind (for training and other purposes), by, among other things, using sign language, providing materials in Braille, ensuring that information made available online is accessible, and using other assistive technologies and methods to achieve effective communication.
- Administrative and financial management experience needed to effectively operate a state's NDBEDP program.¹⁸
- Staffing and facilities sufficient to administer the program, including the ability to distribute equipment and provide related services to low-income individuals who are deafblind throughout the state, including those living in remote areas.
- Experience with the distribution of specialized customer premises equipment, especially to individuals who are deafblind.
- Experience in training consumers on how to use the equipment and how to set up the equipment for its effective use.
- Familiarity with telecommunications service, Internet access service, and advanced communications services.

In addition to the qualifications listed above, an applicant for certification must disclose in its application any relationship, arrangement, or agreement with a manufacturer or provider of equipment or related services that poses an actual or potential conflict of interest, as well as the steps the applicant will take to eliminate such actual or potential conflict or to minimize the associated risks.¹⁹ If an applicant for certification learns of a potential or actual conflict while its application is pending, it must immediately disclose such conflict to the Commission.²⁰

¹⁵ 47 CFR § 64.6207(c); *see also NDBEDP Permanent Program Order*, 31 FCC Rcd at 9187-91, paras. 17-27.

¹⁶ 47 CFR § 64.6207(c)(1)-(7). Applicants may also include letters of recommendation from members of the deafblind community in their state, experts, or others with direct knowledge of the applicants' capabilities and qualifications.

¹⁷ The Commission defines the phrase "expertise in the field of deaf-blindness, including familiarity with the culture and etiquette of people who are deaf-blind" to include expertise regarding the language and communication needs of individuals who are deafblind. *NDBEDP Permanent Program Order*, 31 FCC Rcd at 9187, n.53.

¹⁸ For example, applicants should have experience and expertise in managing programmatic funds, recordkeeping, and generally accepted accounting principles. *Id.*, 31 FCC Rcd at 9189, para. 22. Applicants should also have the financial resources and the administrative experience to support the equipment purchase, control, and inventory processes, the reimbursement process, and the annual audit. *See id.*, 31 FCC Rcd at 9189-90, n.73.

¹⁹ 47 CFR § 64.6207(d)(1); *see also NDBEDP Permanent Program Order*, 31 FCC Rcd at 9190, paras. 23-24. The Commission may reject an application for NDBEDP certification, or may require an applicant, as a condition of certification, to take additional steps to eliminate, or to minimize the risks associated with, an actual or potential conflict of interest, if relationships, arrangements, or agreements affecting the applicant are likely to impede its objectivity in the distribution of equipment or its ability to comply with NDBEDP requirements. 47 CFR § 64.6207(d)(1).

²⁰ 47 CFR § 64.6207(d)(1).

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications electronically to NDBEDP@fcc.gov. Applications may alternatively be mailed to the following address:

NDBEDP Administrator
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street, NE
Washington, DC 20554

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 NDBEDP Administrator Jackie Ellington, Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, at 202-418-1153 or NDBEDP@fcc.gov.

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