

Disability Advisory Committee (DAC)

Meeting Minutes

January 30, 2024

Certified by DAC Co-Chair Kyle Dixon — February 15, 2024

On January 30, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. EDT, the third meeting of the fifth term of the DAC was called to order by DAC Co-Chairs Kim Charlson of the Perkins School for the Blind and Kyle Dixon of NCTA – the Internet & Television Association.

Chairwoman Rosenworcel welcomed the DAC members. She shared highlights of the Commission's work since the previous DAC meeting in September, 2024, including expanding the availability of audio description, seeking 100% hearing aid compatibility for wireless headset models, ensuring safe connections for domestic violence survivors, and the use of artificial intelligence to prevent unwanted robocalls and texts. She also spoke about the potential wind-down of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Commissioner Nathan Simington spoke about the use of Direct Video Calling as a method for deaf and hard of hearing callers who use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate using video directly with consumer service representatives who also use ASL.

Alejandro Roark, Chief of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau (CGB), reiterated the potential wind-down of the ACP and outlined the agenda for this meeting. Diane Burstein, CGB Deputy Bureau Chief, expressed her gratitude to staff and accommodation providers who helped make the DAC meeting possible.

Joshua Mendelsohn, DAC Designated Federal Officer (DFO), summarized communications protocols and housekeeping rules for the DAC members. DAC Co-Chair Kyle Dixon then led a roll call of members present.

Suzy Rosen Singleton, Disability Rights Office (DRO) Chief, and Michael Scott, DRO Deputy Chief, shared briefings from DRO, including matters concerning audio description of video programming, telecommunications relay services, emergency communications, hearing aid compatibility with wireless handset models, and several recently-adopted items.

Thomas Wlodkowski, Vice President, Accessibility and Multicultural Technology and Product, Comcast, and Chair of the Audio Description working group, then introduced the working group's report and recommendation. The recommendation was voted upon and adopted without opposition.

Commissioner Geoffrey Starks spoke about the Video Relay Service (VRS), hearing aid compatibility wireless emergency alerts, and emergency alert systems.

After a brief break, Bill Wallace, Attorney-Advisor in CGB/DRO, and Rachel Wehr, Attorney-Advisor in the Policy and Licensing Division of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, led a dialogue on accessible emergency communications.

Commissioner Anna Gomez discussed her areas of focus as the newest Commissioner, including ensuring that people with disabilities are not left behind.

Annie Urasky, secretary of the National Association of State Agencies Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NASADHH), Director of the Division on Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing, Michigan Department of Civil Rights, and Chair of the Best Practices for Quality

Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) for Individuals with Multiple Disabilities working group, gave an update on the working group’s charge and progress. Shadi Abou-Zahra, Principal Accessibility Standards and Policy Manager, Amazon, Inc., and Chair of the Best Practices on the Use of Artificial Intelligence to Caption Video Programming working group, then provided an update on the working group's progress.

The meeting opened for public participation. FCC staff and DAC members responded to five questions and comments about emergency communications, the lack of accessibility information in IT educational curriculums, the composition of the TRS Best Practices working group, and the volume of the livestream of the DAC meeting. Closing remarks were made by DAC Co-Chairs Kim Charlson and Kyle Dixon, and the next DAC meeting date – May 16, 2024 – was announced.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

January 30, 2024 Attendees:

Organization	Representative
Amazon.com, Inc.	Shadi Abou-Zahra
American Association of the DeafBlind (AADB)	René Pellerin
American Council of the Blind (ACB)	Tabitha Kenlon
American Foundation for the Blind (AFB)	Sarah Malaier
Apple, Inc.	Megan Stull
The Arc	Katy Schmid
AT&T Corporation	Linda Vandeloop
Cerebral Palsy and Deaf Organization (CPADO)	Mark Hill
ClearCaptions, LLC	Michael Strecker
Comcast NBCUniversal	Thomas Wlodkowski
Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD)	Karen Peltz Strauss
Consumer Technology Association (CTA)	Rachel Sanford Nemeth
Convo Communications, LLC	Amanda Montgomery
CTIA - the Wireless Association	Sarah Leggin
Dicapta	Maria Victoria Diaz
Hamilton Relay, Inc.	Beth Slough
Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA)	Lise Hamlin
InnoCaption	Cristina Duarte
National Association of Broadcasters (NAB)	Joshua N. Pila
National Association of State Agencies Serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NASADHH)	Annie Urasky
National Captioning Institute (NCI)	Darlene Parker
NCTA – The Internet & Television Association	Kyle Dixon
Perkins School for the Blind	Kim Charlson
Sorenson Communications, LLC	Michael Maddix
T-Mobile USA, Inc.	Shellie Blakeney

University of Pittsburgh Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Wireless Technologies for People with Disabilities	Lindsey Morris
Verizon Communications, Inc	Zachary Bastian
VITAC	Jennifer Campedel
U.S. Department of Education	Brianne Burger
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	Lisa Bothwell
U.S. Department of Transportation	Katherine Elkin