

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

**Communications Division
Program Management & Implementation Branch**

**RESOLUTION T-17351
December 15, 2011**

R E S O L U T I O N

Resolution T-17351. To establish operational and program design parameters for the provision of wireless equipment (mobile devices)¹ to California Telephone Access Program (CTAP)-certified participants under the Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program (DDTP), and to delegate authority to the CPUC Executive Director to perform the required functions, including, but not limited to, entering into any necessary contracts, to execute and support the inclusion of wireless equipment as a permanent part of DDTP/CTAP.

Summary

This resolution approves operational and program design changes to the current Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program (DDTP)/California Telephone Access Program (CTAP) equipment program that are applicable to the provision of mobile devices to eligible DDTP/CTAP participants. This resolution provides additional guidance regarding our overarching goals for the provision of wireless equipment through the DDTP, and addresses key program implementation issues that relate to these goals. Finally, this resolution delegates to the Commission's Executive Director authority to perform the required functions, including, but not limited to, entering into any necessary contracts, to execute and support mobile devices' distribution through the DDTP/CTAP.

Background

In 1981, the Legislature enacted Public Utilities (P.U.) Code § 2881, which currently governs the DDTP program. The program is composed of two components: the California Telephone Access Program, which provides equipment to eligible customers; and the California Relay Service, which enables eligible customers to use relay service

¹ The terms "wireless equipment" and "mobile device" are used interchangeably in this resolution. They generally refer to regular cell phones and smart phones with adaptive features meeting accessibility and mobility needs of the deaf and disabled communities.

to access the telecommunications network. The current surcharge for the DDTP, effective December 20, 2007, until further revised by the Commission, is 0.02% as approved by Resolution T-17127. The Commission adopted a budget of \$69 million for the fiscal year 2009-10 in Resolution T-17156.

Resolution T-17089, dated May 3, 2007, approved the establishment of a pilot program for wireless equipment for CTAP-certified participants who are also low-income (i.e., California LifeLine-certified) using DDTP funds. Pilot participants were offered an equipment credit not to exceed \$300 or the cost of the device alone, whichever was less, whereby he/she would purchase a wireless communications device through a single provider's retail distribution channel.

Phase I of the Pilot provided a texting pager, called the Sidekick, to participants who were CTAP-certified as deaf, hard of hearing, or speech disabled and lived in or near the cities of Fresno, Sacramento, or Santa Ana. T-Mobile provided a data-only service plan. 159 users participated in Phase I of the Pilot.

Phase II of the Pilot provided an easy-to-use amplified cell phone, called the Jitterbug, to participants who were CTAP-certified as blind, low-vision, hard-of-hearing, mobility disabled or cognitively disabled, and who lived in or near the cities of Burbank, Fresno, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, or Santa Ana. Great Call, the creator of Jitterbug, provided the service plan. 390 users participated in Phase II of the Pilot.

On November 19, 2010, the Commission issued Decision (D.) 10-11-033, which adopted forward-looking modifications to the California LifeLine program in Rulemaking (R.) 06-05-028. In D.10-11-033, the Commission modified the wireless equipment program by eliminating the pilot status and made it a permanent part of the DDTP/CTAP. The Commission directed staff to take the necessary steps to comply with this directive, to conduct additional outreach to other wireless carriers and encourage them to participate in the program, and to apply the experience gleaned from the pilot program to establish parameters consistent with current DDTP/CTAP requirements for ongoing provision of wireless equipment through the program. The Commission further clarified that the dual eligibility requirement for purposes of the wireless equipment program was a requirement for the pilot only, and that going forward, customers receiving wireless equipment from the DDTP/CTAP who meet the eligibility requirements of the DDTP program need not also meet the eligibility requirements for the California LifeLine Program.² In addition, the Commission authorized carriers to apply the LifeLine discount to either landline or wireless text messaging services for those customers who meet the eligibility requirements for both DDTP and LifeLine programs.

² See D.10-11-033, Finding of Fact #43 and Ordering Paragraph #39.

Discussion

Following issuance of D.10-11-033, the Communications Division (CD) staff³ worked with staff of our DDTP Administrative Contractor to scope out the parameters of the wireless program and to develop an operational framework for the provisioning of the wireless equipment. Staff held several internal meetings during the first half of 2011 and identified a set of goals for the wireless program, as well as for specific program design including eligibility requirements for mobile devices; ownership of the mobile devices; application, certification, and approval process; distribution and warehousing of the devices; returns, refurbishments, and exchanges; and customer education, training and support. Staff met with several wireless carriers to identify mobile devices they offer that are best suited for people with disabilities, and to discuss their service plans, requirements for initiating service, customer support system, and potential distribution approaches if they participate in the DDTP/CTAP program. Staff presented a scoping of the key program design issues and options to the Telecommunications Access for the Deaf and Disabled Administrative Committee (TADDAC) and the Equipment Program Advisory Committee (EPAC) at their joint meeting on May 16, 2011, and held a follow-up meeting on May 25, 2011, with a subgroup of committee members to further discuss and get their input.

The program design issues addressed here arose from Staff's efforts during the past several months and Staff's recommendations on those issues, informed by feedback obtained from the TADDAC/EPAC members, and Staff's experience with the wireless pilot program.

Goals for Wireless Program

In Resolution T-17089, the Commission laid out specific goals for implementing the wireless equipment pilot program it authorized. Those goals and others discussed below provide the framework for the program design changes and implementation processes we adopt in this resolution to make wireless equipment a permanent feature within DDTP/CTAP.

As stated in Resolution T-17089, we continue to support expanding the offerings of the DDTP program to best meet the needs of the disability communities, but we also are mindful of our fiscal responsibilities. Accordingly, we choose to proceed incrementally in expanding the scope of the program so that we may evaluate program costs and benefits as we move forward with the implementation process.⁴ We will continue to apply this principle in rolling out the distribution of wireless devices within DDTP/CTAP. We find it reasonable for Staff to undertake a phased approach in

³ Unless otherwise noted, hereinafter, "Staff" as used in this resolution refers to staff of the Communications Division.

⁴ Resolution T-17809, p. 4.

implementing the program, starting with at least two types of mobile devices in limited quantities to be made available to eligible CTAP-participants according to a set priority. We expect the range of wireless equipment to expand as we gain more information on the demand for these devices by the DDTP constituents, as additional wireless devices with accessibility features become available in the market, and as more wireless carriers participate in the program. We delegate to CD staff the responsibility to determine which specific wireless equipment and their respective quantities to initially distribute within the program, and to expand the program in this regard as the need arises going forward. For example, CD staff may consider imposing caps on the number of mobile devices distributed per month, per type of devices, or some combinations thereof, in rolling out the wireless program.

We also expect that the administrative process we implement for user participation in the DDTP/CTAP wireless equipment program should be as simple as possible while still adhering to necessary and reasonable controls to ensure there is no waste, fraud, or abuse in the program.⁵ Unlike the landline equipment currently distributed within DDTP/CTAP, mobile devices may be transferred to another person (e.g., a family member) far more easily, and we do not want to learn that any device, by virtue of being portable, is being used by someone other than the initial DDTP/CTAP-eligible recipient. Relative to landline equipment that stays within the confines of a participant's residence or work place, these mobile devices may also be more prone to being lost, stolen, misplaced, and/or damaged. Furthermore, given the recurring monthly service charges associated with mobile devices, we envision a greater likelihood that recipients may discontinue their use because they can no longer maintain their wireless service plans.

In light of these concerns, we must adopt program design guidelines that will ensure that the mobile devices will actually be used by DDTP/CTAP participants, and will enable the tracking of the devices that have been distributed. To this end, we will require recipients of mobile devices to communicate with the DDTP/CTAP when they terminate their wireless service and to return the device back to the program. We shall also require wireless carriers participating in the program to provide the necessary customer information to DDTP/CTAP staff to enable the program to track these devices.

We envision the wireless program to focus on the unserved and underserved communities as a matter of priority. As of June 2010, there were almost half a million participants to the DDTP/CTAP program out of the estimated five million Californians with hearing, vision, mobility and cognitive disabilities. There are disproportionately larger populations of Native Americans, African Americans, and Latinos with disabilities in California relative to the number of DDTP/CTAP participants from these

⁵ Resolution T-17809, p. 5.

ethnic groups.⁶ Thus, a substantial number of people with disabilities, particularly among ethnic communities, have not yet applied to participate in the program. These “unserved” populations currently do not have any DDTP/CTAP-provided equipment and could be given priority for the wireless program, especially in those instances where they reside in areas that currently have no landline telephone service. Some people with disabilities may already have landline equipment, whether provided by the DDTP/CTAP program or not, but their equipment may not meet all their accessibility needs, making them therefore “underserved.”

As stated earlier, we are cognizant of our fiscal responsibilities and recognize that the DDTP program does not have sufficient funds at this time to provide wireless devices to all participants who may want them. We will therefore target the wireless program to those who need mobile devices the most and provide an order of priority in distributing mobile devices to these communities. We understand that the TADDAC/EPAC members had similar recommendations, which they discussed with Staff.⁷ They agree that mobile devices should be distributed at a slow measured pace to ensure that operational changes effectively meet the needs of their constituents. They provided several suggestions for prioritizing the distribution of the mobile devices over a four to five year period with priority given to those customers new to the program who have no landline service in their area, but can receive a wireless signal, and therefore whose only option would be to have a wireless device. The next priority could be those customers who are new to the program or who may have already been certified as eligible, but have not received any equipment from the program. The third priority could be those who currently have DDTP/CTAP landline equipment but now wish to opt for just one device, and who would give up their landline equipment for a wireless device. In short, the idea is to stagger the distribution of the mobile devices over a period of time in order to contain costs for the program. We concur with these ideas and authorize Staff to implement the wireless program in a phased approach in expanding the program as we have also discussed above.

We will continue our general policy for the DDTP/CTAP of allowing only one device (either landline or wireless) per eligible customer.⁸ Since wireless devices can generally be more expensive than landline equipment, we will focus our initial distribution on those devices that provide value-added service to those customers most likely to benefit. A limited number of devices in the market have adaptive features for people with disabilities. The program will identify those mobile devices with adaptive features appropriate to various disability groups, and provide equipment that best suits the

⁶ OneWorld Communications, Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program Quarterly Report, April-June 2010, submitted August 2010. The report refers to the US Census American Community Survey as the source of data on Californians of various disabilities, ethnicities, and ages who are deaf or disabled as of 2008.

⁷ Based on captioning notes from the May 16, 2011, TADDAC/EPAC Joint Meeting, and notes from the May 25, 2011, follow-up meeting among Staff and a subgroup of members from both committees.

⁸ P.U. Code § 2881(a).

needs of the customer during the needs assessment process. Mobile devices will not be offered to customers that are better served by landline equipment.

We expect the DDTP/CTAP program to consider the needs of the DDTP/CTAP constituents and to find best distribution channels that appropriately balance the cost of the devices that the program funds with the services offered by the wireless carriers to the participants. We will seek wireless vendors that provide dedicated, specialized customer support consistent with best practices tailored to the needs of the deaf and disabled communities. We expect Staff to identify wireless devices with accessibility features that are not readily available in the market and ensure that the business model of the wireless vendors is a good match with a distribution model and customer support system that caters to DDTP/CTAP participants.

The provision of adequate customer education and service support is another goal that must be met as we include mobile devices into the DDTP/CTAP program. In this regard, we expect Staff to review the customer support services that participating carriers offer and identify those which are tailored to the deaf and disabled communities. Further, those customer support services should be designed for an effective working relationship with the various constituencies the DDTP/CTAP serve to ensure that eligible participants get necessary information. When eligible participants sign up for service, carriers should provide the users information about the mobile devices that includes, but is not limited to, the following: the features of the various devices offered; the types and costs of available service plans; and other terms and conditions of their wireless service.

We also expect the wireless carriers to provide ongoing customer support services in conjunction with the DDTP/CTAP staff to address service issues for participating customers. We encourage Staff to explore alternative means of educating the various DDTP constituent communities regarding the availability of mobile devices under the program and to provide other information that would enable the customers to make informed decisions when selecting a device and/or a service plan. These can include partnering with Consumer Based Organizations (CBOs) to better educate potential participants; ensuring that manuals for mobile devices offered in the program are provided in alternative formats and languages; and exploring the use of CDs, DVD, and American Sign Language (ASL) via Google Service as means to educate program participants.

Program Design Changes

Certain program design changes must be made to accommodate the permanent inclusion of mobile devices in the DDTP/CTAP. We discuss the key operational parameters below to serve as further guidance to Staff as they proceed to implement the wireless program.

a. Eligibility Requirements

In Resolution T-17089, the Commission imposed a dual eligibility requirement for participants in the wireless equipment pilot program – i.e., for a DDTP constituent to qualify for the pilot, the individual had to be certified both to receive a CTAP equipment and to participate in the California Universal LifeLine Telephone Service (ULTS or California LifeLine). The Commission removed this dual eligibility requirement when, in D.10-11-033, it authorized the inclusion of wireless equipment as a permanent part of DDTP/CTAP, and directed that customers need not also be California LifeLine eligible in order to receive mobile devices from DDTP/CTAP. We reiterate that directive in this resolution. We will not limit the availability of mobile devices to only those CTAP-eligible customers that also meet the low-income requirements of ULTS. Rather, we will make these mobile devices available to CTAP-certified customers in general, but will prioritize distribution to those customers whose disability and accessibility needs are best met by these devices as discussed above.

We believe that the program should provide the same level of benefits as all other DDTP/CTAP –eligible participants receive. The program currently pays the full cost for the landline equipment being distributed under the program. Similarly, the program should also pay for the full cost of the mobile devices that are distributed regardless of income levels of the recipients. It is customary for wireless carriers to provide discounted prices for mobile devices if customers sign a service agreement/contract (typically two years). We do not authorize carriers to require users obtaining wireless devices under this program to sign a contract in order to get a discounted price for a mobile device. Instead, Staff should explore contracting options and negotiate the best prices for these devices with wireless carriers. The devices, in turn, will be provided to eligible participants in the program through the CTAP.

The phased implementation of the wireless equipment program we authorize in this resolution means that a limited number of devices could be offered in the program initially. Hence, only certain disability groups might be served and be eligible to receive these devices initially, given the devices' features and compatibility with the participants' disability and accessibility needs.⁹ We expect EPAC and our Administrative Contractor to continue testing mobile devices as they become available in the market and make recommendations to Communications Division as to their potential inclusion into the program.

b. Number of Equipment per Customer

As discussed earlier, eligible DDTP/CTAP customers will be entitled to receive one free device (either landline or wireless equipment) from the program at any given time. Customers who are new to the program will go through the program application and

⁹ Staff recommends initially offering the Blackberry Curve and the Jitterbug. Blackberry is best suited for deaf, severely hard-of-hearing, and speech disabled customers, while the Jitterbug is for blind, low-vision, hard-of-hearing, mobility and cognitively disabled customers.

certification process as currently in place. However, the customer assessment process should now take into account the mobile devices offered in the program, the availability of landline and wireless service in the customer's area, as well as the customer's needs for mobile versus landline equipment. DDTP/CTAP staff will work with the customer during the assessment process to determine which type of equipment is best suited to the customer, and alert the customer about the sign-up and/or monthly costs he/she will have to pay for if he/she opt for a mobile device.

At a future point in time, existing DDTP/CTAP customers who currently have landline equipment from the program may request to exchange their landline equipment for a mobile device, provided that the user can show the need for such change. The DDTP/CTAP staff will assess the customers' needs for the mobile device and make the appropriate determinations. Exemptions may also be made in limited cases for those customers who may have a legitimate need for both landline and mobile devices.

DDTP/CTAP customers who receive mobile devices will be eligible to apply for a new mobile device once every three years from the time they obtain the initial equipment. This allows the customers to take advantage of updated and/or improved features that manufacturers typically incorporate in newer models of devices that the program might be offering in the future, while also being mindful of program costs.

However, such replacements should be made in conjunction with a reassessment of the customers' accessibility and mobility needs vis-à-vis the features of the newer devices that are available. The goal is to provide customers with equipment that is best suited to their needs; hence, replacement of an otherwise functional mobile device will not be done unless justified by a change in certification (i.e., a change in the customer's disability status) or a change in the customer's mobility needs.

However, in order to keep program costs down while ensuring customers' access to the telecommunications network, customers whose program-provided mobile devices are somehow lost, stolen, and/or damaged during this three-year period, will be offered the option of getting landline equipment in exchange for the mobile device. The program did not replace broken, stolen, or damaged equipment during the Phase I and Phase II of the wireless pilot. Customers were asked to purchase insurance for the device from the wireless carriers at an average cost of \$4 per month. We will leave it up to the customer's discretion whether or not to purchase insurance from the wireless carriers to give them some coverage during the three-year period that they would be ineligible to obtain a replacement wireless device from DDTP/CTAP.

c. State Ownership of the Devices

As with landline equipment, the mobile devices to be distributed under the DDTP/CTAP to eligible participants are considered property of the State since program funds will be used to pay for the equipment. As such, the program must be able to track the devices that have been distributed and recover those devices that are no longer

in use. Devices that are salvageable can be refurbished and reissued; those that are not can be collected for disposition to a State approved e-waste recycler. As noted earlier, recipients of these mobile devices will be required to provide certain information to the program when they sign up for mobile service and to inform the program when they discontinue service from the wireless provider. Similarly, the wireless carriers participating in the program are required to provide DDTP/CTAP staff with customer information necessary to track these devices.

d. Customer Outreach, Education, and On-going Support

The DDTP/CTAP staff currently provides all customer outreach, education, and on-going support services associated with the distribution of landline equipment under CTAP. The California Communications Access Foundation (CCAF) staff provides the primary program and contract administration services for the DDTP as a whole, and manages the operation of seven Service Centers throughout the state. The Commission has contracted with the Communications Services for the Deaf (CSD) to provide equipment processing services which include the operation of the DDTP Contact Center in Stockton, California; the equipment warehouse distribution and processing center in San Jose, California; and CTAP's electronic tracking system and database. A cadre of outreach specialists, customer advisors, field advisors, and itinerant field operations support staff are located at the various Service Centers, while customer service representatives are housed at the Stockton Contact Center. This staff generally disseminates information about DDTP; assists customers through the application process; assesses customer needs and abilities, and matches them with the landline equipment provided by the program; trains customers on the use of the equipment; and troubleshoots equipment with customers as needed.

By including mobile devices under the DDTP/CTAP, we envision that the DDTP/CTAP staff will be involved primarily in the initial customer application and certification process, as well as in the assessment of customers' needs and eligibility for various types of program equipment. We anticipate also that DDTP/CTAP staff will continue to provide outreach and customer education to inform constituents about the CTAP program in general. The DDTP/CTAP staff, however, will now also need to provide potential users with some basic information about the mobile devices offered in the program to inform customer's choice of equipment, and to explain the program rules/processes specifically applicable to mobile devices. The DDTP/CTAP staff can inform customers about the price ranges for the service plans of the wireless carriers, but should not be determining which service plans a customer should purchase as doing so would be beyond the scope of the program. Once the DDTP/CTAP staff has undertaken the assessment process with a customer and approved the customer to receive a mobile device, staff will direct the customer to contact the wireless carrier to order the device and activate service.

The DDTP/CTAP staff will inform the wireless carriers of the customers that have been approved to receive mobile devices and referred to the carriers for further processing.

The wireless carriers will have the primary responsibility for educating these customers on the specific features and use of the devices, and for explaining to the customers their wireless service plans and corresponding rates, as well as their requirements for service activation (e.g., credit checks, activation fees, etc.). The wireless carriers will be responsible for setting up and maintaining the customers' service accounts, and for providing on-going customer service support to troubleshoot equipment problems, connection, and other service issues that may arise with those customers who have signed up for service. As a general practice, DDTP/CTAP staff at the Contact Centers and Service Centers will refer customers who contact them for these types of issues to their wireless carriers for servicing.

CD Staff should work with the wireless carriers to identify and resolve implementation details to better coordinate the DDTP/CTAP's and the carriers' customer education and support systems, to avoid duplication of efforts and customer confusion, and to provide timely customer service.

e. Equipment Distribution and Tracking

The DDTP/CTAP staff is currently responsible for warehousing, processing orders, and shipping to individual customers, landline equipment that are distributed under the program. An inventory of landline equipment is maintained in the San Jose warehouse under DDTP/CTAP staff's oversight. DDTP/CTAP staff also maintains the CTAP equipment tracking system and database, which contain detailed information on the particular types of equipment distributed to each customer in the program. DDTP/CTAP staff also handles equipment returns, exchanges, and refurbishing, at the San Jose warehouse.

A different equipment distribution system will be instituted for wireless devices offered in the program. It is more reasonable to tailor the distribution of these devices according to the typical business practice of wireless carriers, which is to "drop-ship" the devices to individual customers who have ordered the device and signed-up for service. The wireless carriers can deliver the devices directly to the customers' addresses by mail or customers may pick up the devices at the carrier's designated retail outlets, if available and whenever possible. Given this delivery model, there will be no need for the program to keep an inventory of the equipment at the warehouse, thereby saving the program some warehousing costs. The DDTP/CTAP staff will not be involved in the shipping of the devices to individual customers, but will need to set up a system with the wireless carriers to transfer information necessary to track the specific equipment issued to each customer who obtain a device and activate service. Nevertheless, CD Staff may modify this "drop-ship" distribution process as needed for specific mobile devices that might be added to the program for certain disability groups that may be best served by alternative distribution approaches, including the current process used for DDTP/CTAP landline equipment.

The current exchange policy may not be effective for wireless devices in conjunction with the distribution system that will be used for these devices. The wireless carriers should primarily handle exchanges and returns of working devices that have been paid for by the program, and to the extent possible, reissue these devices to other DDTP/CTAP customers. Returned devices that are defective and cannot be refurbished should be disposed of and recycled. The DDTP/CTAP staff should coordinate with the wireless carriers in developing a system for tracking devices that have been exchanged, returned, refurbished and reissued under the program.

Wireless carriers typically allow customers to return devices and cancel their service commitment within a certain number of days (e.g. 30 days) if the customers change their minds for whatever reason, and provide partial or full refund of particular upfront costs charged to the customers. We expect the wireless carriers participating in the program to extend similar offerings to DDTP/CTAP customers and to give the program a corresponding credit back for the cost of the devices returned within this trial period.

Contracting

With the additional guidance provided in this resolution, we delegate to the Commission's Executive Director the authority to enter into any necessary contracts, to execute and support the distribution of mobile devices as a permanent offering under DDTP/CTAP. The Executive Director, with assistance from CD Staff, should explore different contracting vehicles to obtain mobile devices that are deemed as most appropriate for the program from wireless carriers whose business model is a good match with the program's requirements. The wireless carriers' ability to provide adequate customer service/support to the DDTP/CTAP's constituents and to work with the program's processes, together with carrier's price for the devices, are key considerations when negotiating the contracts with these carriers.

Comments

Public Utilities Code Section 311(g)(1) provides that this resolution must be served on all parties and subject to at least 30 days public review and comment prior to a vote of the Commission. Accordingly, this draft resolution was mailed for comments at least 30 days prior to being considered by the Commission.

Findings and Conclusions

1. In 1981, the Legislature enacted Pub. Util. Code § 2881, which currently governs the Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program (DDTP). The DDTP is composed of the California Telephone Access Program (CTAP) and the California Relay Service (CRS).

2. The equipment the DDTP/CTAP currently distributes is limited to communications devices compatible only with landline telephones.
3. In Resolution T-17089, dated May 3, 2007, the Commission authorized a pilot program using DDTP funds to distribute a limited number of wireless equipment to CTAP-certified participants who are also low-income certified (i.e., California LifeLine-certified).
4. Phase I of the pilot program provided a texting pager, called the Sidekick, to participants who were CTAP-certified as deaf, hard-of-hearing, or speech disabled and who lived in or near the cities of Fresno, Sacramento, or Santa Ana. T-Mobile provided a data-only service plan.
5. Phase II of the pilot program provided an easy-to-use amplified cell phone, called the Jitterbug, to participants who were CTAP-certified as blind, low-vision, hard-of-hearing, mobility disabled or cognitively disabled, and who lived in or near the cities of Burbank, Fresno, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, or Santa Ana. Great Call, the creator of Jitterbug, provided the service plan.
6. In D.10-11-033, the Commission modified the wireless equipment program by eliminating the pilot status and made it a permanent part of the DDTP/CTAP. The Commission further clarified that the dual eligibility requirement for purposes of the wireless equipment program was a requirement for the pilot only, and that going forward, customers receiving wireless equipment from the DDTP/CTAP who meet the eligibility requirements of the DDTP program need not also meet the eligibility requirements for the California LifeLine Program.
7. Also in D.10-11-033, the Commission set forth specific goals for implementing the wireless equipment pilot program it had authorized in Resolution T-17089.
8. Following issuance of D.10-11-033, the Communications Division (CD) staff together with staff of our DDTP Administrative Contractor, took the necessary steps to scope out the parameters of the wireless program and develop an operational framework that are subject for approval in this resolution. Staff met with various wireless carriers and obtained input from the Telecommunications Access for the Deaf and Disabled Administrative Committee (TADDAC) and the Equipment Program Advisory Committee (EPAC) members on key program design issues and options.
9. It is reasonable to undertake a phased approach in the distribution of wireless devices under DDTP/CTAP to address the needs of the program's constituents while being mindful of our fiscal responsibilities in managing the program's costs. We find it reasonable to begin distributing limited types and quantities of mobile devices to eligible CTAP-participants according to a set priority; and to expand the program as we gain more information on the demand for these devices by the DDTP constituents, as additional wireless devices with accessibility features become available in the market, and as more wireless carriers participate in the program.
10. Certain program design and operational changes must be made to accommodate the permanent inclusion of mobile devices in the DDTP/CTAP.

11. Modification to the “drop-ship” distribution process described in this resolution may be needed for certain devices that might be added to the program for disability groups that may be best served by alternative distribution approaches, including the current process used for DDTP/CTAP landline equipment.
12. As with landline equipment, the mobile devices to be distributed under the DDTP/CTAP to eligible participants are considered property of the State since program funds will be used to pay for the equipment. As such, these devices will need to be tracked and recovered when no longer in use or usable. Recipients of these mobile devices will have to provide certain information to the program when they sign up for mobile service and to inform the program when they discontinue service from the wireless provider. Similarly, the wireless carriers participating in the program are required to provide DDTP/CTAP staff with program customer information necessary to track these devices.
13. It is reasonable to delegate to the Commission’s Executive Director the authority to enter into any necessary contracts, to execute and support the distribution of mobile devices as a permanent offering under DDTP/CTAP, and with assistance from CD Staff, to explore different contracting vehicles to obtain mobile devices that are deemed as most appropriate for the program from wireless carriers whose business model is a good match with the program's requirements.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that:

1. To facilitate the distribution of mobile devices under the Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program (DDTP)-California Telephone Access Program (CTAP), the operational and program design changes to the DDTP/CTAP as set forth in Findings and Conclusions 9 through 12 above, are authorized.
2. The CPUC Executive Director is authorized to perform the tasks necessary to implement the DDTP/CTAP mobile device program, including, but not limited to, entering into any necessary contracts.

This Resolution is effective today.

I hereby certify that the Public Utilities Commission adopted this Resolution at its regular meeting on December 15, 2011. The following Commissioners approved it:

PAUL CLANON
Executive Director