



California Public  
Utilities Commission

# ULTS Administrative Committee Meeting

## Meeting Minutes March 30, 2023

Please join the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for the Q1 2023 Universal LifeLine Telephone Service Administrative Committee Meeting

**When:** Thursday, March 30, 2023 (1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.)

**WebEx Meeting:**

[Join meeting](#)

<https://cpuc.webex.com/cpuc/j.php?MTID=ma417d91dbc648c64fcaae47dd04c68d0>

**Call-in Number:** 1-855-282-6330 **Access Code:** 2484 642 8779 **Meeting Password:** 2023!

## California LifeLine Program Meeting Agenda

### Session 1: Welcome & Kick-Off

*Session Outcome: Meeting Kick-Off*

*Session Topics: Welcome, Opening Remarks, Public Comments*

1:00 p.m. – 1:05 p.m.	Introduction: David Avila, Chair
1:05 p.m. – 1:10 p.m.	Welcome: Commissioner Genevieve Shiroma
1:10 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.	Approval of Minutes: Committee reviews and approves the last meeting minutes prepared by the Communications Division (CD)
1:15 p.m. – 1:20 p.m.	Public Comments
1:20 p.m. – 1:25 p.m.	Introduction of New Committee Members & Commission Staff Liaisons: David Avila

### Session 2: Program Alerts & New News

*Session Outcome: Inform Critical Program Updates*

*Session Topics: New News, Alerts & Highlights*

1:25 p.m. – 1:40 p.m.	CPUC Communications Division (CD) Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>LifeLine Pilots: iFoster &amp; ACP: Chari Worster</li><li>Universal Application System SB 1208 LIOB: Robert Sansome</li></ul>
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1:40 p.m. – 1:50 p.m.	CPUC Broadband & Tribal Community Report: Karen Eckersley
<b>Session 3: Program Performance &amp; Metrics</b> <i>Session Outcome: Understand “What’s Working” vs What’s Not Working”</i> <i>Session Topics: Internal &amp; External Past Quarter Performance &amp; Future Guidance</i>	
1:50 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Claims Status & TPA Update: Lisa Anthony
2:00 p.m. – 2:10 p.m.	Fiscal Report: Lalaine Semana
2:10 p.m. – 2:20 p.m.	CAB Report: Rosa Sauer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer Contact Statistics</li> </ul>
<b>Session 4: Program Enrollment &amp; Operations</b> <i>Session Outcome: Understand Consumers Enrolling &amp; Staying on the Program</i> <i>Session Topics: Operational Topics &amp; Updates</i>	
2:20 p.m. – 2:55 p.m.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Administrator - Maximus Report: James Graettinger <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewal Resumption Statistics</li> <li>• New Contract Requirement Deliverables</li> <li>• Completed and Upcoming Initiatives</li> <li>• Program &amp; Operation Reports</li> </ul>
<b>Session 5: Growth &amp; Strategy</b> <i>Session Outcome: Exploring How to Achieve Program Growth</i> <i>Session Topics: Industry, Special Initiatives, Etc</i>	
2:55 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.	USAC Update: David Avila
<b>Session 6: Committee Administration &amp; Governance</b> <i>Session Outcome: Lifeline Committee Management, Deliverables &amp; Commitments</i> <i>Session Topics: Committee Deliverables, Sub-Team Reports/Read-Outs, Calendars</i>	
3:10 p.m. – 3:40 p.m.	2023 Working Sub-Committees: David Avila <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee Membership</li> <li>• Ongoing Improvements to Renewal &amp; Recertification</li> <li>• Community Outreach &amp; Marketing</li> <li>• Fill Committee Vacancies</li> </ul>
3:40 p.m. – 3:55 p.m.	Review of Administrative Committee Vacancy Status: David Avila <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 open positions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Large ILEC – 1 Alternate</li> <li>○ CLEC – 1 Alternate</li> <li>○ Small ILEC – 1 Alternate</li> <li>○ Consumer –1 Primary, 2 Alternates</li> <li>○ CBO – 1 Primary, 3 Alternates</li> <li>○ Public Advocates Office – 1 Alternate</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>3:55 p.m.</b>	<b>Future Q2 Meeting Date</b>
<b>4:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Adjournment</b>

## Member Roster

1	<b>Large ILEC</b>	Primary Alternate	Chris Burke Vacant	Frontier Communications
2	<b>Small ILEC</b>	Primary Alternate	Linda Lassen Vacant	Sierra Tel
3	<b>CLEC</b>	Primary Alternate	Marcie Evans Vacant	Cox Communications
4	<b>Wireless</b>	Primary Alternate	David Avila Alex Gudkov	TracFone Wireless, Inc. TruConnect
5	<b>Deaf / Hearing Impaired or Disabled Rep</b>	Primary Alternate	Kate Woodford Brian Winic	Center for Accessible Technology CA Department of Rehabilitation
6	<b>Consumer</b>	Primary Alternate	Vacant Vacant	
7	<b>Consumer</b>	Primary Alternate	Vinhcent Le Vacant	Greenlining
8	<b>CBO</b>	Primary Alternate	Cesar Motts Vacant	Southeast Community Development Corp.
9	<b>CBO</b>	Primary Alternate	Andre Chapple Vacant	Faith Church, African American Empowerment, National Diversity Coalition, Answer City Outreach
10	<b>CBO</b>	Primary Alternate	Vacant Vacant	
11	<b>CPUC's Public Advocates Office</b>	Primary Alternate	Christopher Bartulo Vacant	Public Advocates Office Public Advocates Office

## Meeting Minutes – ULTS-AC Meeting, March 30, 2023, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

**Attendees:** 6 primary members and 1 alternate present

**Primary members:** Chris Burke, Linda Lassen, Marcie Evans, David Avila, Kate Woodford, Christopher Bartulo,

**Alternates:** Alex Gudkov

**Other Attendees:** Lisa Anthony, Joe Haga, Robert Stanford, Francisco Hernandez, Commissioner Genevieve Shiroma, Jim Graettinger, Lalaine Semana, Lisa Bass, Robert Sansone, Chari Worster, Rosa Sauer, Sindy Yun, Alex Rasor, Angela Gilliam, Anthony Traini, Choua Her, Danyel Cordoba, Dan Morrison, Danielle Perry, Hans Eysenbach, Holly Smith, Indy Nelson, Jakraus, Kellie Jones, Judy Holliday, Julie, Rex Knowles, Krissy Murphy, Larry P, Marc G, Melanie Granados, Morgan, Lisa Paulo, Joanna Perez-Green, Rick DiLollo, Rommel, Sharmila Selvalaksh, Sue Myers, Susan Berlin, Tommy Johnson, Vanessa Garcia, Cheryl Wynn

**Introduction:** David Avila – Opening remarks

**Welcome:** Commissioner Genevieve Shiroma – Opening remarks

- Staff updates:
  - Welcome to Lisa Palo, New Energy & Communications Advisor.
  - Thank you to the previous Advisor, Joanna Perez-Green, who is now back in CD.
  - Welcome to Lisa Bass, as new LifeLine Liaison.

### Approval of Minutes:

- Marcie Evans – Motion to approve
- Christopher Bartulo - Second
- Motion approved by the members

### Public Comments:

- No Comments

### Introduction of New Committee Members & Commission Staff Liaison: David Lee

- Lisa Bass as Communication Division Staff Liaison
- Andre Chapel became a new member as of the last meeting
- No current reporting of anyone looking to resign

### CPUC Communications Division (CD) Updates

- **LifeLine Pilots – iFoster & ACP: Chari Worster**
  - iFoster Updates
    - There are no new updates, but as a status update, still working on reviewing the proposed budget and will be approving that soon.
  - ACP Updates
    - Commission issued a ruling seeking comments on the proposed ACP pilot to leverage ACP funds. Still reviewing comments & a proposed decision will be issued in the near future.

- **Universal Application System SB 1208 LIOB: Robert Sansone**
  - The commission is currently working with the Low-Income Oversight Board (LIOB) to create a draft report for the legislature regarding the use of the LifeLine Third Party Administrator (TPA) to work on a Universal Service Application for consumers and all of the CPUC consumer programs.
  - Staff has been working with the LIOB on this project to advise them on both the LifeLine program and referring them to the California Department of Technology (CDT) regarding the state contracting process.
  - CPUC has connected David Avila with the LIOB to utilize his knowledge and experience with the LifeLine program for their assistance, and we will continue to work on this initiative until that report is published.

### **CPUC Broadband & Tribal Community Report: Karen Eckersley**

See presentation #1 Broadband Tribal Update

- Has been working with tribal nations in Northern California on communications resiliency & helping them obtain the right resources for informed decision-making about communication services on tribal lands.
- California has 109 federally recognized tribes who have federal reservation land, and about 50 state-recognized tribes who do not have federal trust lands.
- For communication services most of these tribal nations do not have a tribal entity, which provides communication services to residents, and because most of these lands are remote, they frequently have poor service from existing providers.
- CPUC has a fund which provides a grant for tribal nation to have the capacity to understand their situation regarding communication services, and to plot a path forward in the way that they want to proceed.
- The CPUC recognizes tribal sovereignty, and so does not dictate what that path or program might be. The tribal technical assistance fund provides resources to help determine that path & provide that information.

Key programs in SB 156 are:

- Technical Assistance Fund (\$50million) – Assists local governments & tribes to prepare for broadband infrastructure investments.
- Loan Loss Reserve Fund (\$750million) – Enables local governments & nonprofits to secure financing for broadband infrastructure.
- Federal Funding Account (\$ 2 billion) – Fund Last Mile Broadband infrastructure projects in every county.

### **Claims Status & TPA Update: Lisa Anthony**

See presentation #2 Claim Status TPA Timeline

- Claims Processing – The electronic claims & application portal (eCAP) went live on January 30<sup>th</sup>. As of January claims, all claims are now being processed electronically. Currently processing February claims & getting ready for the intake of March claims. We are now working on enhancements to make the process even better, but we are already seeing the positive impact & going forward claims will be easier to submit,

track, review and resolve. Service providers can send any questions or feedback to [lifelineclaim@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:lifelineclaim@cpuc.ca.gov).

- TPA Transition –We are in the final stages of the transition period to new Maximus contract; officially going live with the new contract this weekend, April 1<sup>st</sup>. All work being done under the existing contract will be completed by tomorrow.
  - Will be in our system stabilization phase throughout April and May to ensure everything is running smoothly. We will resume system enhancements on June 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Questions/Comments:
  - David: Anything you are noticing after the eCAP launch that may be helpful for those listening or anything that would help the launch go smoother?
    - Lisa Anthony: Service Provider feedback has been extremely helpful. An example is a Service Provider told us, “it would be nice if we could sort by status”. We took a look and realized you could sort in a myriad of ways, but not by status, so that is something we will be implementing on an upcoming patch release. So, this is really helpful and we encourage everyone to continue to send that feedback.

### Fiscal Report: Lalaine Semana

See attachment #3 Fiscal Report

- Total Revenue: \$145,582,795
- Total Appropriation: \$530,488,330
- Remaining/Available Appropriation: \$429,450,249
- Total Available Cash as of February 28, 2023: \$420,402,901
- Questions/Comments:
  - Linda from Sierra: Question regarding surcharges. With the new flat rate of the PPP, how is that divided into the ULTS program?
    - Lalaine: There is a certain percentage that ULTS gets for the user fee and surcharges. <circulated document to all participants with more detailed information>.

### Cab Report: Rosa Sauer

See presentation #4 CAB Quarterly LifeLine Report

- CAB has dedicated specialists to assist consumers with LifeLine-related issues:
  - Appealing LifeLine denials
  - Disputing various issues with LifeLine Service Provider
  - Requesting information on LifeLine application processes
  - Resolving consumer questions or complaints with LifeLine application process regarding Rules/General Order
  - Resolving issues with wireless devices
- LifeLine Contacts Received by CAB

**LifeLine Contacts Received by Source**

Source	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
PHONE <sup>1</sup>	73	77	69	220
WRITTEN	275	335	208	818
<b>Total Received</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>1,037</b>

- LifeLine Contacts Received by Utility Type:
  - 722 regarding LifeLine Administrator
  - 189 Wireline
  - 120 Wireless
  - 4 Unknown
  - 2 Non-Jurisdictional
- Question/Comments:
  - David: When I look at LifeLine Appeals Subcategories, ‘Consumer Did Not Return Form’ is the largest subcategory. Am I interpreting it correctly that these clients appealed that they want to open the case?
    - Rosa: Yes, the consumer is appealing their denial.
  - Marcie: Does the “Federal Program/Equipment” subcategory only include the Federal LifeLine program and not the ACP discount?
    - Rosa: Correct. ACP is non-jurisdictional for us because it is mandated by the FCC, not the CPUC.
  - David: Are all the phone calls closed in the first call?
    - Rosa: Yes, we close all the phone calls immediately. We treat all phone calls as inquiries, and we do one of two things: 1) we direct them to their service providers to handle their complaints, or 2) we answer their concerns or questions in that same call.
  - David: Are written complaints closed within 45 days?
    - Rosa: We try to close informal written complaints within 30 to 45 days. A lot of the written complaints are closed within 30 days, but we have complex complaints that may pass the 30 to the 45-day mark.
  - Marcie: I agree that the spike in LifeLine Contacts Received in Dec-22 and Jan-22 has to do with the renewals.
  - David: Do you think that we have seen the worst, and we will be trending back down to our normal numbers.
    - Rosa: Yes, I do believe the numbers will decline.
  - David: Do you believe we have lost these customers, or will they reapply.
    - Rosa: Maximus (TPA) will be able to give better numbers to see who have reapplied and been approved for the program.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Administrator – Maximus Report: Jim Graettinger

See presentation #5 Maximus CA LifeLine

- Renewal Resumption Statistics
- New Contract Requirement Deliverables
- Completed and Upcoming Initiatives
- Program & Operation Reports
- Questions/Comments:
  - David: Is there any suggestion from a service provider-based leader perspective that we can start working on it? Are you seeing things that we could start working on?
    - Jim: Text messaging is really important. A pre-recorded outbound call is better than a robo call. Connecting directly to a CSR is a good idea as well.
  - Linda: From December 2022 through March 2023, the reduction in subscriber numbers is huge. Are these renewals or what exactly is the loss coming from? Do you know?
    - Jim: They failed in the renewal process, and we need to look at those specific subscribers.

## USAC Update: David Avila

See presentation #6 USAC Update

- Questions/Comments:
  - Danielle Perry: If a consumer tries to qualify for ACP using the national verifier it's very challenging in California because there is no database connectivity to any state funded organization. It takes a week to get processed. She expressed interested in what kind of conversations the CPC has had with USAC.
  - David Avila: Thanked Danielle and asked if anybody from the Communication Division could address if there's any steps taking place for Medi-Cal connections in California.
    - Lisa Bass: CMS who USAC uses for their Medicaid/Medi-Cal & SNAP/CalFresh database connectivity told CPUC they do not have legal authority to grant us access to their federal system. We are working on partnering with the Statewide Verification Hub, which would be the State's system for eligibility matching Medi-Cal and CalFresh. It is not set to launch until 2024.

## 2023 Working Sub-Committees: David Avila

- Committee Membership
- Ongoing Improvements to Renewal & Recertification
- Community Outreach & Marketing
- Fill Committee Vacancies

Linda Lassen volunteered to lead Informal Ongoing Improvements to Renewal & Recertification Sub-Committee.

David Avila encouraged other Committee Members to consider volunteering to lead and form other Informal Sub-Committees. While a Chair cannot form or lead an Informal Sub-Committee, he said he would volunteer to help serve on them.

Members will collaborate post meeting.

## Review of Administrative Committee Vacancy Status: David Avila

- **11 open positions**
  - Large ILEC – 1 Alternate
  - CLEC – 1 Alternate
  - Small ILEC – 1 Alternate
  - Consumer –1 Primary, 2 Alternates
  - CBO – 1 Primary, 3 Alternates
  - Public Advocates Office – 1 Alternate

Resignations since last Quarterly Meeting include Ken McEldowney who retired from Consumer Action and Benny Corona who left Public Advocates Office for a new assignment in another CPUC Division.

## Future Meeting Date –TBA

Meeting adjourned: 3:52 pm.