



California Public
Utilities Commission

ULTS Administrative Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes September 17, 2024

Please join the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for the Q3 2024 Universal LifeLine Telephone Service Administrative Committee Meeting

When: September 17, 2024 (9:00 a.m. – Noon)

Where: 505 Van Ness Ave., Hearing Room A, San Francisco, CA 94102

WebEx Meeting Link: <https://cpuc.webex.com/cpuc/j.php?MTID=m5e749e9bd3b4eae2f0a68753b7c65723>

Call-in Number: 1-855-282-6330 **Access Code:** 249 758 14005 **Meeting Password:** 2024

California LifeLine Program Meeting Agenda

Session 1: Welcome & Kick-Off

Session Outcome: Meeting Kick-Off

Session Topics: Welcome, Opening Remarks, Public Comments

9:00 a.m. – 9:05 a.m.	Introduction: David Avila, Chair
9:05 a.m. – 9:10 a.m.	Welcome:
9:10 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	Approval of Minutes: Committee reviews and approves the last meeting minutes prepared by the Communications Division (CD)
9:15 a.m. – 9:20 a.m.	Public Comments

Session 2: Program Alerts & New News

Session Outcome: Inform Critical Program Updates

Session Topics: New News, Alerts & Highlights

9:20 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.	CPUC Communications Division (CD) Updates: Robert Sansone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster Youth • No SSN Population Proposed Decision • Resolution T-17820 – Modifications to the ULTS Administrative Committee Charter positions -
-----------------------	---

Session 3: Program Performance & Metrics

Session Outcome: Understand "What's Working" vs. What's Not Working"
Session Topics: Internal & External Past Quarter Performance & Future Guidance

9:45 a.m. – 9:55 a.m. Fiscal Report: Lalaine Semana

9:55 a.m. – 10:05 a.m. Claims Status: Danyel Cordova

Session 4: Program Enrollment & Operations

Session Outcome: Understand Consumers Enrolling & Staying on the Program
Session Topics: Operational Topics & Updates

10:05 a.m. – 10:25 a.m. 3rd Party Administrator - Maximus Report: James Graettinger

- Completed Initiatives and Impact
- Upcoming Initiatives
- Program & Operation Reports

10:25 a.m. – 10:35 a.m. Foster Youth

10:35 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. BREAK

Session 5: Growth & Strategy

Session Outcome: Exploring How to Achieve Program Growth
Session Topics: Industry, Special Initiatives, External Collaborations

10:45 a.m. – 10:50 a.m. CAB Consumer Contact Statistics Report: Rosa Sauer

10:50 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. USAC Update: David Avila

Session 6: Committee Administration & Governance

Session Outcome: Lifeline Committee Management, Deliverables & Commitments
Session Topics: Committee Deliverables, Sub-Team Reports/Read-Outs, Calendars

11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. ULTS Administrative Committee Charter positions:
 10 Open Positions

- CLEC – 1 Alternate
- Consumer – 1 Alternate
- CBO – 2 Alternates
- Wireless – 1 Primary, 1 Alternate
- Sister Agency – 1 Primary, 1 Alternate
- Office of the Tribal Advisor – 1 Primary, 1 Alternate

11:15 a.m. – 11:25 a.m. Annual Report Vote – Marcie Evans

11:25 a.m. – 11:35 a.m. Future Q4 Meeting Date

11:35 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Meeting Adjourned

Member Roster

1	ILEC	Primary Alternate	Chris Burke	Frontier Communication Sierra Telephone
2	CLEC	Primary Alternate	Marcie Evans Vacant	Cox Communications
3	Wireless	Primary Alternate	David Avila Alex Gudkov	TracFone Wireless, Inc. TruConnect
4	Wireless	Primary Alternate		
5	Consumer	Primary Alternate	Vinhcent Le Vacant	Greenlining
6	CBO	Primary Alternate	Vacant	Southeast Community Development Corp.
7	CBO	Primary Alternate	Vacant	Faith Church, African American Empowerment, Nat'l Diversity Coalition, Answer City Outreach
8	CPUC's Public Advocates Office	Primary Alternate	Christopher Bartulo Sharmila Selvalakshmirajeswara	Public Advocates Office Public Advocates Office
9	Deaf/Hearing Impaired or Disabled Rep	Primary Alternate	Kate Woodford	Cntr for Accessible Technology CA Department of Rehabilitation
10	Sister Agency	Primary Alternate		
11	CA Office of the Tribal Advisor	Primary Alternate		

Meeting Minutes – ULTS-AC Meeting, September 17, 2024, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Attendees: 6 primary members and 2 alternate present

Primary members: Chris Burke, Marcie Evans, David Avila, Vinhcent Le, Christopher Bartulo, Kate Woodford,

Alternates: Alex Gudkov, Sharmila Selvalakshmirajeswara

Other Attendees: Robert Sansone, Rosa Sauer, Lalaine L. Semana, Sindy J. Yun, Jim Graettinger, Rick DiLollo, Kellie M. Jones, Michael Mullaney, Nicholas Clark, Danyel Cordoba, Sandy Lion, Jenny Pokempner, Ann Quirk, Gelareh Safavi, Sarah Torres

Introduction: David Avila – Opening remarks

Approval of Minutes:

- Marcie Evans – Motion to approve
- Vinhcent Le - Second

- Motion approved by the committee members

Public Comments:

- No Comments

CPUC Communications Division (CD) Updates: Robert Sansone

- LifeLine Foster Youth:
 - Staff has been working with all counties and stakeholders for considering outreach, and building relationships with all counties associated with providing foster youth services in the state of California. Maximus has been doing a great job taking leadership on that and establishing outreach.
 - We have officially onboarded all counties with foster youth, now it is just a matter of working with them to establish policies and processes to transition the foster youth that are currently on T-Mobile to a Verizon network, and for foster youth that are trying to join the program, be able to join the program.
 - As of right now, we have a little over 1K foster youth that have transitioned.
- No SSN Population Proposed Decision:
 - The proposed decision was held for a voting meeting and pending therefore cannot provide more updates right now, due to it being in a pending state.
- Resolution T-17820 – Modifications to the ULTS Administrative Committee Charter positions: It modifies the number of board positions in the charter, so there are now four positions to serve LifeLine. <https://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M539/K202/539202750.docx>
- Questions/Comments:
 - Kellie Jones: This modification to the board position is to try to target parts of the communities that have not been necessarily reached in the past. They are underserved or unserved communities like our tribal and agricultural workers. We added a sister agency to the board and included the Office of Tribal Advisor. This is an area where we have had difficulty reaching, so we are hoping to get help from the Office of Tribal Affairs. We also added another wireless position for the service providers. We had three CBOs and removed one. The board number remains the same at 11 positions with both primary alternates. There are still two CBO positions that both have a primary and alternate seat.
 - David: Kellie, did you send out the guidance and forms people need to follow if they are interested in applying for these committees?
 - Kellie: No, nothing official has gone out but if there is interest, they are more than welcome to reach out to you, or I, and we can walk them through.
 - David: Our purpose is to really grow the program. The segments we are bringing on board are really going to help us better reach those segments. We are trying to understand what is working and what is not.

Fiscal Report: Lalaine Semana

See presentation #1: ULTS (Fund 0471) Committee Meeting Report

- For period ending July 30, 2024 (First month of new fiscal)
 - Total Revenue: \$24,550,509
 - Total Appropriation: \$631,931,960
 - Total Expenditures: (\$52,250,031)

- Remaining/Available Appropriation: \$678,398,606
- Total Available Cash as of July 31, 2024: \$591,132,135
- Total Available Cash as of September 13, 2024: \$606,434,005
- Total Available Cash as of September 17, 2024: \$606,500,000

Questions/Comments: N/A

Claims Status: Danyel Cordoba

See attachment #2 Fiscal Report

- June 2024 – 87% of all claims approved for the month of June:
 - Wireline: 88% of Claims Received and Approved by CPUC
 - Wireless: 85% of Claims Received and Approved by CPUC
- July 2024 – Service Providers have until September 30th to submit July claims. CPUC staff has received and approved 50% of all claims.
 - Wireline: 40% of Claims Received and Approved by CPUC
 - Wireless: 70% of Claims Received and Approved by CPUC
- August 2024 – WAR and Connections Report was uploaded to eCAP on Tuesday, September 10th.

3rd Party Administrator – Maximus Report: James Graettinger

See presentation #3 Maximus CA LifeLine – TPA Presentation

- Completed Initiatives and Impact
 - We made a change to enhance the program by making a change to our service provider intake API, to provide functionality to the service providers that use SPIA to submit medical client index numbers.
 - The enhancement is a way to objectively validate eligibility based on Medi-Cal participation.
 - The CPUC staff got us access to AEVS, which is Automated Eligibility Verification System provided by the Department of Health Care Services. The AEVS system is driven by individual's client index numbers which is part of their BIC number or Benefit Identification Card number.
 - A Medi-Cal Subscriber ID was added to SPIA Submit Application and Submit Renewal methods.
 - Soft launch Date was Thursday, June 20th
 - Hard launch was Thursday, August 15th
- Questions/Comments:
 - David: A point of clarification, with this change, does that mean that now we are checking the Medi-Cal database to see if we have a participant? What does this change represent?
 - Jim: You are absolutely right. It is a fully manual system, a one-by-one check of the Medi-Cal database. AEVS tells the reviewer that the individual is receiving Medi-Cal, Medi-Caid or Medi-Care. Medi-Cal and Medi-Caid do qualify an individual, but Medi-Care does not. This is the first step, therefore being used for the enrolment process but not for the renewal process.
 - The last change we made was on all TPA intake systems, they were updated to return a 40159 error if a Service Provider attempts to initiate an inter-carrier benefit transfer request within the initial 24 hours after the current service term for the subscriber is activated.
 - As of the end of August, we have 115,419 registered portal users.
- Upcoming Initiatives

- Creating a LifeLine enrollment pathway for California residents who cannot provide valid SSN4s
 - We envision this being implemented in a phased approach. Once the Commission decision is approved, we envision this being implemented within three months.
- Collecting and managing demographic data for Benefit Qualifying Persons (BQP)
 - An individual can qualify for the program based on their own eligibility or the eligibility of another individual in their economic household. For example, a household will have the applicant parent who is not on a qualifying program, but possibly they have a child in their household who receives SSI benefits, so that would be an example where the individual would seek to qualify based on that qualifying person. The Program has always approved those scenarios but do not track the demographic data of those benefit qualifying persons, therefore we need to collect that to tighten up waste, fraud and abuse (WFA) for the Program.
- Establishing an API connection with Medi-Cal Eligibility Data System (MEDS) for confirming eligibility.
 - MEDS is another database that keeps track of Medi-Cal participation.
 - Integrating MEDS will be a giant leap forward because when we integrate with MEDS, we will be doing an API check, and that will be a fully automated check.
 - That will be a fully automated check that we will be able to complete for both enrollments and renewals.
 - Once we get the client index number (CID), that is a unique number assigned to an individual that stays with that individual permanently, so going forward, the program will always have that number to check eligibility.
- Introducing an eligibility re-verification process during the annual renewal for subscribers whose continuing eligibility is not determined by matching with external databases.
 - From a WFA standpoint, we are now verifying that participants are eligible for the LifeLine program. Of the 95.3%, 98% of those qualify based on CalFresh or Medi-Cal.
 - Individuals qualify for the program 95.3% through enrollment eligibility methods; only 4.7% qualify based on income.
- Questions/Comments:
 - David: Do we have an estimated timeline; how soon do you think we will get to that end state?
 - Jim: The dependency is with MEDS, they are in the process of getting a cost estimate of this integration to get approval. Once that step has passed, and the MEDS team has built their API, things are going to happen really fast. The TPA's technical team planned for this, so my hope is for the first quarter of 2025.
 - David: This is a big win for our program because it is a major step in reducing waste, fraud and abuse (WFA) from the California LifeLine program.
 - Medi-Cal Identification Cards
 - There are two types of Medi-Cal identification cards. The Client Index Number (CIN) we use is the first part of the ED number on the cards preceding the letter. The legitimate numbers always begin with a 9, so we learned that anything that begins with another number is a fraud. As of August 15th, we are only accepting images of these two Medi-Cal cards as proof for eligibility.
 - SPIA change transaction authentication
 - We changed how the Service Provider authenticates with us. Prior to August 15th, Service Providers sent their usernames and passwords whenever they sent a transaction through SPIA. The change consists of users submitting their username and password to a Microsoft authentication service, that service provides them with a token, and once they have that token, they use the token instead of their username and password with their SPIA transaction.
 - Soft Launch: Friday, July 19th
 - Hard Launch: Thursday, August 15th

- A customer portal flyer was sent out promoting the California LifeLine Portal on July 24th by the CPUC
- We identified almost 44K wireless and wireline subscribers who since October of 2023, had used the mail to submit a form to the TPA and had not yet registered. We provided them with a QR code so they could get them to the portal and register.
- Questions/Comments:
 - David Avila: How do consumers become aware of this portal? How do we promote the portal?
 - Jim: The portal is mentioned in all of the forms, so that is part of it. The Program is using a significant amount of text messaging and pre-recorded outbound calls to applicants and subscribers and directs them to use the portal, and service providers are also encouraging them to use it.
 - 24 Hour Transfer Freeze
 - On September 13th, all TPA intake systems (SPIA, file and web) were updated to return a 40159 error if a Service Provider attempts to initiate an inter-carrier benefit transfer request within the initial twenty-four (24) hours after the current service term for the subscriber is activated.
 - Introducing an eligibility reverification process during the annual renewal for subscribers whose continuing eligibility is not determined by matching with external databases
- Program & Operation Reports
 - Program Participation – Active LifeLine Subscribers: 14.58% increase of total subscribers
 - There has been a 14.58% increase in total subscribers of the LifeLine Program since June 1, 2024. We believe that with the ACP Program ending, the Service Providers have been very active in getting those individuals that weren't already on the LifeLine program registered.
- Foster Youth
 - We went live with the Foster Youth program on July 31, 2024.
 - Some high points: Our Service Provider for the Foster Youth program is Simple Mobile, it is on the Verizon network, it is part of the TracPhone/Verizon brand, no contract service. We are very happy to have the Verizon TracPhone partnering with us, we are meeting with each other regularly.
 - They are providing free smartphones, chargers and free cases to all participants, they receive unlimited talk and text up to 25 GB of mobile data and 10 GB of hotspot data, all at no cost.
 - The goal is to provide this foster youth the resources they need to stay connected and contribute to their safety net.
 - We have 1,059 phones that have been shipped, most individuals that have been shipped phones are in LA county. Over a hundred of those phones have active usage already.
 - One of the biggest hurdles we are encountering is we need valid shipping addresses for these youth, to ship the phones. The Service Provider has a phone shipped to the youth within two business days.
 - Getting the counties engaged has been huge.
- Questions/Comments:
 - David: Thank you and congratulations on the launch of this program, I know this was a continuation of the earlier pilot, but it was kind of rebuilding it from the ground up and starting at square one. And congratulations to Simple Mobile and Verizon for collaborating and working together to serve this segment. This shows how California goes above and beyond to serve the low-income segment, and this was a very challenging segment.
 - David: We will give you an outline of what key aspects to read out in future sessions, on how the program is doing from the growth perspective and some of the challenges and improvements, or

anything that may be important. How many foster youth do we have in California, that you anticipate taking advantage of this program?

- Robert: Our initial estimate for the pilot program was about 33K. I think if we hit half of that might be realistic, and maybe even less than that because that included a population we are not serving, which is 18 to 26 year olds, so if we hit the 12K we will be doing pretty good.
- David: Robert, the measurement of success, will it be when we hit that number or how do we know if it is successful?
- Robert: To see how much stress and pressure the counties are under, I think a good measuring stick is seeing a smile on their face that they are happy we are partnering with.
- Jenny Pokempner with Youth Law Center: I have been working with Robert and Jim and the team and as advocates we appreciate all the collaboration, and are really committed to working and continuing working with the whole team as the program continues to be implemented. We are happy to participate in these meetings and anything else you invite us to. We do think that the stronger the youth program is, the lessons we learn there will only strengthen the general LifeLine program. I think the other measure of success that we were thinking of is as these young people move from the foster program to the mainstream program, success would be a smooth transition there as well. This is an excellent resource and young adults can hugely benefit from it, especially young people leaving foster care. We appreciate that CPUC is really prioritizing or putting focus on this group.
- Ann Quirk with Children's Law Center: We are the attorneys for youth in foster care in Los Angeles, Placer and Sacramento counties, so we represent over half the youth in foster care in California, and we have been working with Maximus and the CPUC on this transition and both have been wonderful and appreciate how much you are willing to listen and are so committed to making sure this program is successful. The majority of youth who qualify for this program who are currently in foster care, in addition to having social workers and probation officers, they also have attorneys. I am definitely getting flooded with questions and concerns about the whole transition.

Break: 10:21 am – 10:31 am

CAB Consumer Contact Statistics Report: Rosa Sauer

See presentation #4 Quarterly LifeLine Report

- Consumer Affairs Branch LifeLine Overview
 - CAB has dedicated specialists and consumer affairs specialists to assist consumers with LifeLine-related issues:
 - Appealing LifeLine denials
 - Disputing various issues with LifeLine Service Provider
 - Requesting information on LifeLine application process
 - Resolving consumer questions or complaints with LifeLine application process regarding Rules/General Order 153; a lot of consumers have knowledge of the General Order

- Resolving issues with wireless devices
- LifeLine Contacts Received by CAB: May 2024 – July 2024
- Top LifeLine Contact Categories Received by CAB: May 2024 – July 2024
- LifeLine Contacts Closed by CAB: May 2024 – July 2024
- LifeLine Contacts Received and Closed by CAB: 15-Month Trend

USAC Update: David Avila

See presentation #7 Federal Lifeline and National Verifier Update

- Lifeline and ACP Participation
 - ACP remains inactive because congress has not allocated funds to extend the program.
 - In California, about 69% of eligible households participated in the ACP Program.
 - As Jim mentioned, the growth we are seeing in California for the LifeLine program could be from those who no longer have that ACP support. ACP provided consumers thirty dollars of monthly support off their communications or broadband services. In contrast, California LifeLine offers \$19 dollars of support and Federal Lifeline support is \$9.25, so it is giving consumers a real benefit off of their communications.
 - The Federal Lifeline program has a participation rate of 20% of approximately 38 million eligible households participating and may need reform to provide consumers more support.
 - FCC suspended the ACP as of June 1, 2024, and all enrollees remain enrolled until the FCC advises otherwise.
 - The National Lifeline Association has been very involved in trying to get legislation through and getting it to vote. It is very uncertain what will take place prior to elections. Consumer groups are strongly advocating for funding the ACP Program.
- Questions/Comments:
 - Robert Sansone: The Fifth Circuit ruling on USF taxes may potentially go to the Supreme Court. If it does go to the Supreme Court, is there any interest of the Board to have a unified opinion on that?
 - David: We need to assess it and take a look at that and bring a point of view for the next meeting.

ULTS Administrative Committee Charter Positions:

- **10 open positions**
 - CLEC – 1 Alternate
 - Consumer – 1 Alternate
 - CBO – 2 Alternates
 - Wireless – 1 Primary, 1 Alternate
 - Sister Agency – 1 Primary, 1 Alternate
 - Office of the Tribal Advisor – 1 Primary, 1 Alternate
- We added the Office of Tribal Advisor and our sister agency. We will see if we can bring candidates for a vote, for the next meeting.

Annual Report Review: Marcie Evans

See presentation #10 ULTSAC Annual Report

- The Committee took a five-minute break to review the final version of the annual report, which was made available to the committee prior to the meeting.

Motion to approve: Marcie Evans

Second motion to approve: Chris Burke

- Questions/Comments:
 - David: In the annual report are some good recommendations that this committee is making to the Commission on ways of improving the program. When we have these meetings, we should consider elevating some of these initiatives to create awareness.

Future Q4 Meeting Date: TBD

- Questions/Comments:
 - Kellie: I will reach out to members to select a date for the fourth quarter meeting.
 - David: During our last meeting, a couple of committee members were going to set up a sub committee to look at opportunities for the program. Is there something that we need to prepare for the next meeting?
 - Marcie: Vinhcent took the lead on it. The subgroup met with Maximus about what they are available to provide for geocoding or what is available to them, but there were no additional suggestions to Maximus as to what we are looking for or potentially could be looking at. There are no future meetings scheduled at this time.

Meeting adjourned: 11:18 a.m.