

Meeting information

Title	Consumer Consultation Panel (CCP) for Canadian Administrator of VRS (CAV)
Date	November 19, 2025, from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm Eastern Time
Type	Consultative meeting
Location	Zoom
Subject	Improving VRS Notifications for Outages and Service Upgrades and Enhancing Accessibility
Present	<p>Chris Kenopic, Facilitator</p> <p>CAV Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suzanne Laforest, CEO and Executive Director • Paula Bath, Director of Regulatory Compliance and Strategy • Chad Taylor, Chief Digital Officer • Patrick Lazure, Outreach and Events Specialist (LSQ) (Zoom Moderator) <p>CCP Members or Representatives (Present)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connie Russell, (Silent Voice Canada Inc.) • Richard Belzile (Canadian Association of the Deaf) • Anthony Cashin, (Canada Deaf Grassroots Movement) • Pengchao Shao, (Greater Vancouver Association of the Deaf) • Jeffrey Beatty, (Deaf Wireless Canada Consultative Committee) • Leah Riddell, (Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf) <p>Absent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natasha ‘Courage’ Bacchus, (Ontario Deaf Sports Association) • Terri Nolt (Deaf-Blind Planning Committee)
Interpreters	English-ASL, ASL-LSQ
Additional notes	Meeting Languages: ASL, LSQ, English

DISCLAIMER:

This document is provided for informational purposes only. It does not necessarily represent the viewpoints of CAV. It is intended to provide a clear and accurate high-level summary of the topics discussed and removes identifying detail of participants. It is not a verbatim transcript or intended to provide quotes of participant comments. In the event of translation errors or any concerns with accuracy, please signal your concerns to: publications@cav-accs.ca.

Introduction

The Consumer Consultation Panel (CCP) meeting was held with nominated members of CAV-registered stakeholder groups from the Deaf community to discuss Canada VRS. A nonpartisan facilitator, Chris Kenopic, was invited to facilitate the meeting. The facilitator started introductions and explained the meeting agenda and process. A summary of the meeting will be publicly shared with names removed. The CCP will be a two-year term and meet twice per year.

Theme: Improving VRS Notifications for Outages and Service Upgrades and Enhancing Accessibility

Introducing CAV Team

The CAV team and CCP members were given the floor to provide a brief introduction.

CAV Quality Service Update

Suzanne Laforest provided a brief overview of CAV's recent activities. She described CAV's first strategic plan project and confirmed that a new administrative coordinator had been onboarded. She highlighted the ninth CAV anniversary event held in Montreal in September 2025, which drew approximately 200 people. She confirmed that CAV filed its 2026 budget, necessary bylaw changes along with CAV's 2024 annual report.

Discussion – Notifying Users of Service Upgrades and New Features

CAV is looking to develop a more robust notification system for customers. These questions are to inform the design of that project.

Question 1 – How would you prefer to be notified of scheduled and unplanned outages?

Members suggested that CAV implement a redundancy or backup platform until an outage issue is resolved. Members overall preferred to be notified via the VRS app or text message, and that any link notifications should have ASL or LSQ support.

The consensus was to provide one planned outage reminder on social media and another via text the day before the outage.

Question 2 – How would you prefer to contact Customer Service for help?

Members suggested a built-in, readily available reporting system within the app, rather than going through a chat. A separate reporting method for concerns specific to interpreters was suggested, with bugs sent to the technical team and interpreter concerns sent to HR to ensure confidentiality.

A member commented that the Deaf community should be aware of how feedback is being reported, where complaints go, and that they shouldn't have to worry about constantly following up. Another member suggested adding a tracking system for interpreters who receive frequent complaints from callers.

Question 3 – How would you like for new features on the app to be shared?

It was suggested to include a suggestion feature in the app, along with the ability to share feedback via sign language in a video, rather than filling out a form. A member also suggested advertising the 9050 customer service number to ensure the information is more widely available.

Question 4 – How would you like CAV to inform you of new features or updates on the VRS app?

A member suggested holding a town hall to educate DeafBlind individuals about new features, which could be described in ASL or LSQ to users.

Question 5 – How would you like to be notified of bug fixes or technical improvements on the VRS app?

Members requested an in-app notification for bug fixes and notifications when a serious bug has been resolved. It was also suggested that an alert be added via the VRS app.

Discussion – Setting Priorities for Accessibility and Canada VRS

CAV is looking to submit its first Accessibility Plan in line with the Accessible Canada Act Regulations. These questions are intended to support the preparation and assist in the development of this document.

Question 1: Do you experience accessibility barriers with VRS?

A member suggested improving connectivity issues with the mobile app, noting that the desktop version rarely disconnects.

Another member noted concerns that users may not know how interpreters are conveying their signing and suggested that captions be presented on screen. Another technical concern regarding missed call notifications was noted.

Question 2: Do you experience accessibility barriers with the Canada website?

No concerns were noted regarding website accessibility.

Question 3: Do you experience accessibility barriers accessing CAV's office or events?

No concerns were noted regarding accessibility of CAV's office or events.

Question 4: What is the best way for specific accessibility needs to be shared?

A member noted that the user agreement is not very accessible due to its technical and legal language. CAV shared that the agreement has since been translated into ASL and LSQ, but that some customers may not have seen it, so it was suggested that the sign language versions of the agreement be redistributed.

A member shared that due to a lack of awareness they often they need to explain "what is VRS". The member suggested that an FAQ be developed in EN and FR that can be easily copied and pasted and used by VRS customers to share what VRS is and how it works more easily.

A member suggested methods to educate others on how to handle calls received from the VRS app, and for CAV to develop tips to raise awareness more quickly. It was also suggested that three-way video communication be implemented. CAV replied that it is aware that video calling is becoming more popular and mainstream. There is no commitments, at this time, to offer this feature as it is working on platform stability and resiliency at the moment.

Another member requested the ability to know who the interpreter is before the caller has to show their face, in case of a conflict of interest. It was also suggested to ensure that an interpreter is qualified to handle the call if the subject involves legal or healthcare matters.

Another member requested the ability to switch the display from vertical to horizontal.

Open Discussion

A member inquired why Canada VRS requires that when calling on someone's behalf the interpreter must first see that person before proceeding with the call, to which CAV confirmed that it is to prevent callers misrepresentation and fraudulent practices and to foster trust in VRS, in particular in industries with high level of privacy and security.

Members expressed how remote video interpreting would be beneficial, and while outside of Canada VRS's mandate, further advocacy could be done by Deaf advocacy groups to potentially motivate the CRTC to amend its policies to be more flexible.

A member suggested adding services of a Deaf Interpreters to VRS. CAV emphasized that it understands the value of Deaf Interpreters, but that it is not a service priority at this time due to competing needs under its new mandate.

A member suggested that CAV conduct a feasibility study to examine situations for DeafBlind individuals in other communities with different needs to improve access levels. CAV explained that a DeafBlind feasibility study was conducted in 2024 and is posted on its website.

A member requested improvements in receiving flashing light notification when a user receives a call, noting that the current one does not work effectively. CAV responded that in its efforts to looking to the VRS platform market, one element is to better understand what compatible flashing light notification products exist. Once complete, CAV does plan to make a compatible product available to customers. More information will be shared when ready.

Closing

CAV thanked all panel members for their feedback, and all comments would be taken into consideration. A summary of the meeting will be circulated (without names) to ensure comments were captured accurately. This summary will then be posted on CAV's website. CAV provided an overview of how to access the CAV summary and terms of reference on the CAV website in English and French.

CAV stated that a meeting participation survey will be sent to meeting attendees to gather feedback and made adjustments.

CAV closed the meeting by requesting that all members, who attended, send their invoices to the Administrative Assistant.