

# **CDBC.VRS-DWCC Comments to CAV's Answers to CRTC RFI Q32-Q35:**

## **Topic 7: Education, Outreach and Public Awareness**

This document from **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** focuses on Education, Outreach, and Public Awareness.

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## **CDBC.VRS-DWCC Comments to CAV's Answers to CRTC RFI Q32-Q35:**

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#### **Executive Summary**

**ES 1:** Education, Public Awareness, and Outreach are greatly valued by **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** is why many eight Committee Members (CM) signed up to respond to this category. Four groupings of perspectives are shared: Indigenous, Deaf-Blind, Senior citizen comments, and other general observations under different subleaders.

**ES 2:** Indigenous challenges remain because many of these Deaf people live in rural or remote communities but still have the right to communication accessibility to have independence and autonomy in their everyday lives. Yet, many are not aware of the VRS being available to them. CAV must make more of an effort to reach this population and add Indigenous members to the outreach team to focus on these remote customers.

**ES 3:** While there were initial efforts to reach out and educate Deaf-Blind after the launch of SRV Canada VRS, the Deaf-Blind essentially felt ignored by the CAV, who would often resort to saying: "well, the policy doesn't include or require to catering to Deaf-Blind consumers." With the comments from Deaf-Blind participants to their Response, CAV did not have a sincere effort for inclusivity of all Deaf community members. It appears they practiced vidism, oppression of those with visual challenges. CAV did not consider it their social responsibility to include all those with the dual disability of deafness and blindness. **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** reminds **CRTC** and the CAV that by adding Deaf-Blind to the VRS education plan, the number of VRS users will grow exponentially as accessibility is expanded.

**ES 4:** Another group, Senior Citizens, seems to be essentially not considered when considering public awareness and education. Senior citizens usually are the least technically familiar and need more guidance and technical assistance with setting up their accounts and familiarizing themselves with various devices' applications. They would benefit from one-on-one support and awareness. They would benefit from short educational public presentations and longer tech support one-on-one sessions.

**ES 5:** Other issues include the education of interpreters with Indigenous and Deaf-Blind about the customers they will encounter with incoming VRS calls. Also, with education and awareness to the greater hearing society, including businesses and government departments such as banks and the Canada Revenue Agency. CAV needs to add to its team a person that focuses on education and creating public awareness for the hearing callers of VRS.

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**Methodology**

1. A total of eight members of the DWCC participated in this topic of Education, Outreach, and Public Awareness, all bringing in their six years of experience with SRV Canada VRS since its launch. The members had an interest or perspective on the topic and wanted to respond to this category. The team leaders sent the questions and CAV's responses to each of the eight committee members to provide comments from their experiences and perspectives.
2. Each Committee Member (CM) has been assigned a number, and it is in the wording below that they contributed. The following Committee numbers participating in this Response are **CM#1, CM#3, CM#9, CM#11, CM#12, CM#13, CM#14, and CM#15.**
3. To create a flow between the questions, one Committee member consultant pulled all the answers together and tied up the response for each question, summarising the answers together for each question in the same numbered Response (R#).

**General comments**

4. Overall, the **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** provides perspectives from specific views of the Indigenous, Deaf-Blind, senior citizens, and general Deaf and Hard of hearing comments on the Education, Outreach, and Public Awareness by the CAV and their response to the CRTC's queries.
5. **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** has been aware of how important education and public education are to every fibre of our society, especially our Deaf communities across Canada, on video relay services.
6. **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** applauds the Canadian Administration of Video Relay Services for their best efforts to bring their education and public awareness campaign before the communities and the institutions for at least five years; however, there have been some shortcomings which will be addressed in few following paragraphs in this category.

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#### Senior Citizen Perspectives on 2016 CAV EDUCATION & PUBLIC AWARENESS PLAN

7. **CM#9:** "Even though the CAV's original Education and Awareness Plan for SRV Canada VRS, published in June 2016, was written for the telecommunication industry, and specifically for the CRTC, there are certain parts that strike me as needing to be made clearer so that the average Deaf, Deaf-Blind, or hard of hearing consumer can understand the material. This is important if they are part of the community reviewing a service for which they fought for many years to get established.
8. One example is the section on **Tactics** (page 4 of the above document), "*Reach audiences through "earned," rather than "paid" means, through in-person and virtual contact.*" What is the CAV trying to say? How is this to be evaluated? I consider myself very well-educated and am a retired educator of adults, but I find it ambiguous and not at all clear."
9. **CM#9:** As one who has participated in many projects and programs, I have seen various tools used for evaluating the planning and execution of such projects and programs. I would like to use the SMART Goal-setting method: Goals written to be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-Bound. I have not seen these SMART goals in the 2016 document to the extent that one can evaluate their progress over time."

#### Number of VRS customers

10. According to the Mystery Shoppers Report<sup>1</sup> authored by the DWCC for TNC 2020-178, in Appendix D: 2021 Canadian Population: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Statistics (Statistics Canada), on page 130, according to 2021 population numbers by Statistics Canada<sup>2</sup>, the following deductions were made using a total population of 38.27 million, it means that:
  - a. based on .001% there are 38,270 Deaf ASL/LSQ users
  - b. based on .01% there are 382,700 Profoundly Deaf Canadians
  - c. based on .10 there are 3,827,000 Hard of Hearing Canadians<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Unlocking the Mystery Shopping Experiences of Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing Canadians*, Appendix D, p. 130-131 - <https://www.deafwireless.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/DWCC-et-al-MYSTERY-SHOPPERS-REPORT-TNC-2020-178-27-August-2021.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> CAV Annual Report 2017 - [link](#)

<sup>3</sup> DWCC Intervention for TNC 2022-65 - [link](#)

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11. **CM#3:** “The CAV have provided numerous outreach booths at various Deaf events plus webinars across Canada, however; there have been a bit more than 5,000 ASL and LSQ VRS customers only according to their statistics (**2017 Annual Report**<sup>4</sup>). The number of users has seemed very low to us despite the population of 38,000 Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind Canadians that use ASL and LSQ. There would be additional population numbers coming from the speech-impaired Canadians.
12. The CAVRS has provided visit statistics on their website, YouTube pages and broadcasts in their response to Question 34, item no. 5 and **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** observes that these figures are still very low. It is a fact that the majority of Deaf Canadians on the poverty lines or on social assistance do have limited or no Internet connections. **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** implores the CAVRS to use new approaches to adapt their marketing strategies to attract many more DDBHH Canadians to enter the world of the VRS.”
13. **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** questions: Where are the missing targets? Are their education and public awareness not proactive and reachable enough? What should be done to improve them?”

**QUESTION 32**

**Q32. Describe outreach that the CAV has undertaken to educate consumers who are Deaf or HoH or who have speech disabilities about VRS.**

**CDBC.VRS-DWCC Committee Member Responses to CAV's Answers to Q32:**

**Indigenous Perspectives**

14. **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** observes from CAV's response document that Video calling has been a critical service enabling remote work and learning from home.
15. **CM#1:** “For the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) community, it is also a lifeline - but it is our, Indigenous perspective, that not everyone is able to communicate using limited or no access to Wi-Fi to make calls using sign language, the primary language of the Deaf and Hard of hearing.

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<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada Population Stats - [link](#)

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16. **CM#1:** “The issue is that many Indigenous DHH are often unaware of the availability of VRS. Here is a list of solutions to address this issue:
- a. Create a web link version to access the VRS service and not be so dependent on apps, similar to *Convolink*<sup>5</sup>, in order that VRS can be accessed by logging in on a web browser to access VRS at public spaces, such as libraries, community centres, Health Centres, hospitals, community halls, band offices or tribal offices. More effort needs to be put into ensuring that there is a better quality of broadband to provide access to the VRS.
  - b. Educate the staff at these public spaces such as the band or tribal offices, introducing through perhaps more webinar awareness about how beneficial it is to include Indigenous DHH and non-Indigenous to interact with one another. There needs to be increased education and awareness for hearing people on the benefits of VRS accessibility to Indigenous Deaf persons.
  - c. **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** notes CAV discussed its information available on Facebook; in some cases, it might be beneficial to only those Indigenous DHH who are aware and on Facebook. However, CAV forgets that often these Indigenous DHH do not have the access to Wi-Fi and, in some cases, Indigenous DHH have low education in literacy, which means they may not be able to understand how to navigate or follow instructions on the webinar (such as Zoom, or other platforms) and to watch YouTubes may seem overwhelming for them).
  - d. Provide extra support to help new users for the service, assist the Indigenous Deaf and Hard of Hearing to get set up, and help make VRS an easy part of their lives on the reserves and off-reserve.
  - e. Create outreach teams for Indigenous DHH who live on the reserve, off-reserve, remote and rural regionals. CAV's Customer Service Team accompanies the Outreach Specialists. It offers attendees real-time, one-on-one technical support by downloading the apps, registering for the service, and making their first call.

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<sup>5</sup> Convolink - [ConvoLink - VRS on the Web - No Download Required](#)

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- f. **It would be best and highly recommended to have this in person for the first time and then remote support from the CSR using video conferencing.**
  - g. Hire Indigenous DHH for Customer Service teams or other Canada VRS job positions that would benefit all of us. That would help the VRS/VRI interpreters to understand better and interact more smoothly and with cultural sensitivity.”
17. **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** notes an annual “Open House” and its headquarters in Ottawa, honouring International Day of Sign Languages and International Deaf Awareness Week. Invite Indigenous DHH to the event, not just those from Ontario but different parts of Canada each year. This would ensure inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility. The annual open house event must include Indigenous community members from various parts of the country.

### **Deaf-Blind Perspectives**

18. **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** members note that the responses focus entirely on Deaf and Hard of hearing and nearly leave out the Canadian Deaf-Blind customers. This has left Deaf-Blind VRS customers feeling that they were the last priority of the CAV.
19. **CM#12** comments in the following three paragraphs, speaking generally and from the perspective of the Canadian National Society of the Deaf-Blind (**CNSDB**):
20. “Regarding outreach by CAV to “stakeholder organizations” and other DHH groups - I’m unaware of the CNSDB receiving any information from them. Our Deaf-Blind community members come from different areas of the country. Not all are aware of the *SRV Canada VRS* and know even less about the CAV, its mandate, governance, and technology infrastructure.
21. “The CNSDB is aware of Deaf-Blind individuals who live in small towns and rural areas and do not get access to CAV’s Outreach and Education opportunities. The Outreach Specialists (formerly Community Outreach workers) do not come to their towns and areas. Internet capabilities are less reliable, so virtual information sessions and webinars are not accessible.



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22. Elsewhere in this Comment document, there are additional words by Deaf-Blind team members who are more familiar with and may even use the *SRV Canada VRS* program and apps. They may have seen the CAV website and YouTube video channels. These team members have varying vision and communication needs and can convey what works for their vision and literacy levels and what does not.”
23. **CM#13:** “I felt that CAV was never willing to meet and listen to Deaf-Blind, continuing leaving them feeling left out, they never gave the window of opportunity to listen to Deaf-Blind sharing their views on what they need as customer service improvements for full accessibility of the Video Relay Services. They never asked our organization DBPC to work together to provide education and awareness to Deaf-Blind, providing specific Deaf-Blind information and learning how to work with features that match Deaf-Blind customers’ needs.
24. As a Deaf-Blind person, compared to having attended CAD-ASC events and having the attention and inclusion as a Deaf-Blind person, I feel that, in contrast, the CAV has largely ignored us since 2018-2019, even with the *Accessible Canada Act*. Since then, there hasn’t been special attention and assistance to Deaf-Blind who visit CAV’s booths.”
25. Additionally, **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** reminds us that by adding Deaf-Blind to the VRS education plan, the number of VRS users will grow exponentially as accessibility is expanded.
26. **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** says there are many examples in society of innovations initially intended for people with disabilities but that have provided access benefits to all people (curb cuts and automatic door openers are two of the most common). Accessible web applications are a similar innovation. If designed in a way accessible to Deaf-Blind, it benefits many Deaf users and often all users. [modified from DOIT]<sup>6</sup> If VRS is made more accessible for Deaf-Blind, this will help the Deaf and hard-of-hearing VRS users with more features, signals/alerts, and background colours.
27. **CM#13:** “I did not see anyone outreach to any provinces about Deaf-Blind to let the Deaf-Blind see what is happening with VRS and explain it further. Even to my knowledge, no Deaf-Blind were invited to go to the Open House or Outreach events. Deaf-Blind have not had an opportunity to talk to someone about how to

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<sup>6</sup> DO-IT: <https://www.washington.edu/doiit/how-does-accessible-web-design-benefit-all-web-users>

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Use VRS or learn more about VRS.”

28. **CM#15:** “VRS seems more focused on Deaf/Hard of Hearing, but not Deaf-Blind, so it is an issue. Not recognizing or having Deaf-Blind impacts both communities - Deaf and Deaf-Blind due to more access for the Deaf community than the Deaf-Blind community. If we investigate the Deaf-Blind community and design the key to fit Deaf-Blind, it might also benefit the greater Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.”
29. As a Deaf-Blind person, here are some suggestions:
- a. Improve CAV's *SRV Canada VRS* website where it is easier to find things and have more accessibility features such as changing the background colour, font colour, and size. For Deaf-Blind, the option to add is a black background with larger yellow or white text.
  - b. Be able to adapt fonts in dark mode and find the features to access such font colour and sizes.
  - c. Client services need to be improved and easier to reach.
  - d. Hours need to be expanded in the West for those still working in the afternoon.
  - e. Educate the interpreters continually to have dark backgrounds and to contrast dark clothing.
  - f. We must be mindful to keep Deaf-Blind VRS customers in with updates if there are any changes in the VRS app. More of an individualized outreach and development of relationships to Deaf-Blind VRS customers.
  - g. I also noticed that DBPC is the only one on the list with other Deaf organizations. What about other Deaf-Blind organizations such as the Canadian National Society of the Deaf-Blind (CNSDB)?”
30. This same Community member, **CM#15**, wrote comments about interpreter education and awareness as follows:

**Interpreters - Education and Awareness**

31. **CM#15:** “Educate the interpreters continually to have dark backgrounds and to contrast dark clothing, and that the lighting is not too bright and complex on the Deaf-Blind's eyes during the call.
32. Provide interpreter training in working with Deaf-Blind.

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33. Hire Deaf-Blind consultants to work for CAVRS; this will benefit the CAVRS to learn from Deaf-Blind to improve their app and devices that can help everyone.
34. Strongly suggests that the CAVRS explore other VRS companies in the USA to see what kind of access they provide for the Deaf-Blind community.”
35. Deaf-Blind committee members have provided their perspectives, and now we shift to the senior citizen perspectives on CAV's answers to the CRTC's RFI queries.

### **Senior Citizen Perspectives**

36. **CM#9:** “The description of activities in the CAV's response looks like it has had a wide outreach to community agencies, events, groups, and organizations. But some of those listed may have been one-time only or for a limited purpose. Some key stakeholders have not had regular contact or updates from the CAV, especially during the past two years since the Covid 19 pandemic began.”
37. “In BC, a few times, mostly in the early years before and after the launch of SRV Canada VRS, there were special educational assemblies “sponsored” by community groups or agencies, and one such was held in the HHC social hall when the ‘new’ CAV Executive Director came to introduce the new service to the community. At this event, the community groups were responsible for covering interpreting costs, refreshments, and arranging the technology for the presentation.”
38. **CM#9:** The Happy Hands Club for Deaf Seniors in the BC Lower Mainland had a few VRS-related sessions where the local CAV Outreach Specialist would come to the church hall on a particular day when more members would be attending. However, some HHC members wanted to have a CAV technician come to their homes to check their connection issues and show them how to resolve their problems but were told this wasn't allowed. Over time, the community has gotten more support from each other than from dedicated CAV Outreach personnel.”
39. When the pandemic raged through the BC province, HHC suspended all in-person activities from September 2020 until June 2022. They shifted to weekly online game-playing and socializing through Zoom videoconferencing provided by two agencies serving the DDBHH communities in BC. We saw numerous frustrations shared by HHC members about problems with VRS, and being unable to get live, in-person assistance was a common thread. None of the group

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members knew about the online *CAV Connect* resources, and for some of these people, it would have made no difference, as they needed a person who could explain to them how it best suited their communication needs.”

40. **CM#9:** “When the community members were able to get out of their ‘stay-at-home’ isolation, slowly contacting a few friends in safer environments, the seniors were able to get their more ‘tech-savvy’ friends and family to help with their VRS issues. There are MANY Deaf who do not participate in social media out of choice and preference, or because they do not have the funds to pay for internet and wireless services.”
41. Today, BC is without a dedicated CAV Outreach Specialist – the closest CAV Outreach staff person is located in Alberta, even though there are more British Columbians who are Deaf, DB, and hard of hearing. It is not widely known if there IS such a CAV person in BC.”
42. **CM#9:** On June 4, 2022, when the Vancouver Community College ASL & Deaf Studies Department hosted the first Deaf, Deaf World (DDW) event since 2019, where over 250 people attended throughout the day, there was no visible CAV Outreach display among the many information booths at the event.
43. However, two sheets of paper were spotted on the stage behind some display tables of a local Deaf-Blind club... one sheet with ‘CAV’ and an email address printed on it, and the other paper was a sign-up sheet for people’s names and email addresses if they wanted information about SRV Canada VRS. The DDW volunteers didn’t know who had left the papers.”
44. **CM#9:** “I would like to see a **return to recruiting Community Outreach specialists** to provide the Deaf-Ecosystem with trained persons able to help their community members – who will know how to match their communication styles to those with whom they live and work.”
45. **CM#11:** “Comment about paragraph 33: Non-profits have minimal budgets and can hardly afford these expenses for the special events. With CAV having a million-dollar budget, the administrative body should be covering major costs such as room booking or rental fees, and interpreting costs, for Deaf interpreters that would be considered accessible for the Deaf-Blind. Deaf Interpreters are good for standing with the presenters to “mirror” audience questions and provide the presenter with less to have to “handle” while doing presentations. CAV should not have taken advantage of all these non-profit organizations with limited budgets with all of their public events in various locations across the country.

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46. The tech support people need to be made available in each Province or Territory to provide one-to-one technical support, even if it is to assist in orienting with how to set up or login using VRS on their devices; this is needed for senior citizens as well as the Deaf-Blind and those who are less technical savvy.”

**Corporations**

47. **CM#3:** “The Canadian Administration of Video Relay Services have stated in their answer to question no. 32 that they have done their education and public awareness to the financial and telecommunication institutions about the video relay services. Yet we have received numerous complaints from the DDBHH Canadians about the customer services that the corporations provide to assist them. A few of the most common complaints are:
- a. Their customer services still insisted that the DDBHH customers use text relay services. However, the video relay services prove better and more beneficial to the DDBHH customers and the **hearing customer services representatives**.
  - b. Most of their average waiting times are 20-30 minutes long. In some cases, the DDBHH customers lose connection with the customer service representatives when the video relay services interpreter switches to another interpreter.
  - c. Some DDBHH customers had asked the CAV Community Manager about educating the corporate customer services, and the manager seemed to fall on deaf ears.
  - d. Most corporations use their foreign customer service representatives to deal with the customers. The DDBHH customers have expressed their frustrations with these representatives for their lack of understanding and sensitivity to Deaf culture.
48. The issues above must be addressed and resolved in the best interests of DDBHH customers and even the hearing customer representatives. It is a win-win solution for everybody involved!

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**Technical difficulties**

49. **CM#3:** “Since the launch of video relay services, the Canadian Administration of Video Relay Services consistently has failed to make the DDBHH customers publicly aware of various technical difficulties, and a few actual incidents have happened below:
- a. Whenever the servers are down due to lost or broken connections, the CAV rarely publicly notify their customers of the incident. Often, they leave them confused and bewildered, and in most cases, the customers have had to go to the independent *SRV Canada VRS* group to seek assistance from the members on Facebook.
  - b. The CAV has rarely been making the customers aware of changes in their app which may lead to unexpected issues.
50. The CAV must keep the customers' public aware of the technical difficulties and their plan and time of length to resolve them **every time and all the time.**”

**VRS 911**

51. **CM#3:** “The **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** noticed that there had been insufficient education and public awareness of **VRS 911** that the CAV has provided since 2016 to the DDBHH customers and the public. The VRS 911 has been extremely important to the DDBHH customers and their families because it deals with the death or alive matters for all and each of us. Some customers have attended the webinars, and the meetings about the VRS, and they have reported to us that the VRS 911 subject has not been brought before them.
52. In short, the CAV must address their deficiencies all as stated above in their education and public awareness of VRS and double their efforts to widen their target at the public such as televisions where millions of Canadians are using.”

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**QUESTION 33**

**Q33. Describe how the CAV has used ASL and LSQ videos to promote VRS and provide a list of those materials.**

**Committee Member Responses R#33:**

**Indigenous Perspectives**

53. **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** notes that CAV focuses on videos produced and placed on its YouTube Channel.
54. **CM#1:** "From an Indigenous perspective, YouTube channels may be excellent for the general Deaf community. However, the layout and setup will affect Indigenous DHH in ways that they would have difficulty navigating the YouTube video page or video playlists for the materials. From my point of view, this felt overwhelming when I opened the ASL videos to promote VRS to follow the materials.
55. Captioning seemed unavailable. Not all videos were captioned; I only found a few captions in ASL videos. What I found was that the videos did not reveal captioning available when some of us prefer to have both ASL and captioning on all videos. And, of course, the equivalent for the LSQ videos."
56. **CM#1:** "To be honest, with the level of sign usage or terminology, these materials would require more Indigenous Deaf Interpreters or Deaf Interpreters (DI) to be included in videos to reach the Indigenous Deaf populations.
57. These videos with the DIs could be supplied in another category for resource availability rather than having no DI available. This is because in some cases, Indigenous DDBHH does not use full ASL or would comprehend by using a mix of ASL and may use home signs."

**Deaf-Blind Perspectives**

58. **CM#13:** "The YouTube videos and links were not Deaf-Blind friendly; it didn't offer choices of close captions, different sizes, and colours of fonts. There was no option to customize according to my needs as a Deaf-Blind person.

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59. To be honest, it was a tiny font of closed captions to read, and when I tried to enlarge them, it somehow stopped working. The settings were all wrong. CAV needs to do a better job of ensuring that the options are made available for Deaf-Blind viewers to set their preferences and have these preferred settings working, i.e., large text font size of captions when they view the videos.
60. Deaf-Blinds need the ability to have the choice to adjust the size of the video to what they are comfortable viewing all the videos.
61. Even more so, for those who are fully blind, there were no accompanying or attached transcripts in the video descriptions. Furthermore, no transcripts were made available outside of YouTube, for example, in Google documents. Therefore, the information was made even more inaccessible for Deaf-Blind Canadians.
62. Additionally, the colour of the background and the clothes of the ASL or LSQ signers do not match the Deaf-Blind preferences and accessibility. It is not Deaf-Blind friendly. Deaf-Blind prefer contrasting colours with background and clothing, for example, black or dark navy-blue background with appropriate lighting because otherwise, the Deaf-Blind people's eyes will tire out.
63. As a Deaf-Blind person, the links to videos were confusing, as there were too many links or the links led to playlists, and that was disorienting as a Deaf-Blind person trying to find the specific video I needed. There needs to be some sort of webpage with just a list of links and the subject."
64. **CM#15:** "The videos are not accessible for the Deaf-Blind because I do not see any transcripts for any of CAV's videos. I suggest providing transcripts and image descriptions on every video and image to make it accessible for Deaf-Blind who cannot see the video (and pictures).
65. The videos should be made with a black or dark blue background. The person(s) in the video should wear a black or dark coloured top (no lace or open neckline if a woman). If the person has dark skin, they should not wear WHITE. A beige or light-coloured top or shirt is better. But not too light - no pinks or yellows."



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#### **Senior Citizen Perspectives**

66. **CM#9:** “CAV has described extensively what they have done in terms of putting ASL & LSQ videos on their website, in email bulletins to stakeholders, and producing videos for PSA (Public Service Announcements (PSAs). Let’s look at the website first, as well as the connections to the YouTube video channel as follows:
67. The CAV website, like many telecommunication websites, the CAV website seems to be designed to be written at higher level literacy levels than being geared to the average DDBHH person. For example, the introduction page describing CEO/Executive Director Sue Decker is written at a Grade 13.2 Grade Level (Flesch-Kincaid) and a reading ease score of 41 – which is low.”
68. **CM#9:** “The website is also not very accessibility friendly. The “A-A” or Accessibility Adjustments feature button is on the extreme lower left position on the screen – easily overlooked. The AA pop-up has TOO many options and features so that it would be intimidating for Deaf Seniors, Deaf-Blind, and those with visual processing disorders.
69. Almost all the videos are available on the YouTube platform and, in theory, could be available to consumers, but not everyone has or wants a YouTube account.”
70. **CM#9:** “I would like to see the individual list of videos and past webinars on the website for viewing or in a document that can be downloaded and saved for reference. Create sub-channels in the CAV YouTube account so people can select which one appeals to them. (e.g., those interested in the CRTC VRS Review Proceedings can choose to go there or to other topics.
71. On the Customer Stories Page, why couldn’t CAV choose “less famous” Deaf people who could describe how SRV Canada VRS made a real difference for them? Ordinary Deaf persons.
72. Also, it would be helpful to put in people of diversity – IBPOC Deaf, their hearing co-workers and family, and so forth. Maybe a rotating video story centre.
73. One very positive move CAV has made is to hire a Deaf videographer and further support the Deaf Ecosystem.”

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74. There may be respectful disagreements with the CAV's response to Question 33, allowing **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** to respond with their perspectives with details as follows below.

#### **YouTube and Facebook**

75. **CM#3:** “The **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** has recognized and applauded the CAVRS for using their YouTube and Facebook pages to educate the DHHDDDB customers about their services and products; however, there is a massive problem with their chosen social media platforms.
76. The CAV has intentionally adjusted their social media settings and turned off their comments, preventing the customers from asking questions and raising concerns. By blocking the customers from making the comments, how can they learn without receiving answers that may help satisfy or resolve the customer's needs? Additionally, CAV is missing out from customers applauding them for the new announcements about services.”
77. **CM#3:** “In addition, the **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** have recognized that the CAVRS have not yet added Twitter to their social media platform. Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are among the most popular social media platforms.
78. The **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** believe that once CAVRS adds Twitter to their list of social media platforms, they can use that platform and Facebook to announce the technical difficulties with server down and length of downtime to notify their customers.”
79. **CM#2:** “Another perspective and rationale to add Twitter are to increase engagement and awareness among hearing service users and the telecommunication service providers. Companies such as Bell, TELUS, and Rogers are on Twitter and can easily promote VRS to create a more extensive public awareness, engagement, and networking reach for the CAV.
80. The CAV must remember that these platforms are not only for their Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of hearing customers but also for the hearing people on the other end of the calls, and they now need public awareness to avoid hang-ups and misunderstandings about third-party issues, especially banks and government

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level services and offices.”

81. **CM#11:** “Furthermore, another consideration is LinkedIn as a professional networking platform, and it is a good way to reach government and businesses such as banks and allow for former Board members and staff to link to the CAV as their former associate to help build their resumes and working backgrounds for employment. It is a great benefit for professionals.”

### **Website**

82. **CM#3:** To improve accessibility for Deaf-Blind customers, we highly recommend that the CAVRS website be adapted with a black background with a yellow font option; therefore, they should offer the customers to toggle on/off the option on either left or right top corner at the main page.”

### **QUESTION 34**

**Q34. Describe any efforts the CAV has made to increase awareness and acceptance of VRS calls among the general public and businesses, including banks, credit card companies, and other institutions.**

### **Committee Member Responses R#34:**

#### **Indigenous Perspectives**

83. CAV mentions that they offer these businesses and organizations an easy-to-install App SRV Canada VRS to promote Canada VRS and provide the information.
84. **CM#1:** Observed the website; there is no friendly video with ASL and DI interpreter or translator to show what VRS is all about. How to use VRS and how to promote the businesses and organizations to insert on their websites to raise awareness, especially the band offices, the health centre on the reserve, community hall (such as feasts, gatherings, band councillor meetings, AGM, etc.) and schools on the reserves too.
85. Hearing people, such as those who work at a band office, community hall, or health care service on the reserve, need to be educated and trained about VRS so they know what to do when they receive and accept a VRS call. They need to understand the VI being a “third party” on the separate call-in outlets for video

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and audio for Indigenous Deaf and Hard of hearing on one end of the call and Indigenous hearing peers on the other.

86. There needs to be education for all Indigenous Peoples to raise awareness about how to contact for Emergency preparedness and about the technologies, including VRS and Video Remote Interpreting (VRI). This is to ensure that Indigenous DHH has more support and access to the Indigenous DHH for disasters and must be prepared for the mass evaluation.

### **Deaf-Blind Perspectives**

87. **CM#15:** "Over time, from my experience, as a Deaf-Blind VRS user, it sometimes seems that while I use VRS to connect with banks or governments, they appear unaware of VRS. This awareness may have slowly improved since COVID, so I am unsure how they have education in the public or government sectors."
88. **CM#13:** "For Deaf-Blind people, it is not very friendly to use VRS with banks, government, credit card or even the doctor's office as they are part of the general hearing public without awareness and knowledge about intervenors and Deaf or hearing interpreters. It is overwhelming and hard to understand how it works and the concept of third-party while using VRS."
89. Deaf-Blind Canadians have a right to be independent with the ability to choose if they prefer to ask for someone to help and assist them with the VRS calls.
90. This means that there needs to be more education and awareness raised by the CAV about Deaf-Blind accessibility needs to the general public, the banks, government offices, and so forth."

### **Senior Citizen Perspectives**

91. **CM#9:** "The video PSA that the CAV created, "**Don't hang up,**" could be used more often, and CAV could create others that show everyday Deaf people using VRS. Target the PSA videos to specific areas and populations. Get them on television!"
92. Share that video with community groups – cultural centres, faith groups, institutions, and municipal governing bodies. Create posters for transit hubs, bus shelters, and transit vehicles."

## **CDBC.VRS-DWCC Comments to CAV's Answers to CRTC RFI Q32-Q35:**

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93. **CM#9:** "CAV partner organization Convo Canada should be allowed – **no, to be encouraged**, to produce videos highlighting members of Canada's Deaf community, with the Convo Canada logo and the CAV's *SRV Canada VRS* logo – this will serve to educate the hearing community about the diversity of the DDBHH community, their achievements, and to highlight the businesses involved in making SRV Canada VRS the service that **provides communication equity**."
94. Create information packages for various community agencies, colleges, and agencies, including videos. Reach out to Senior organizations for both Hearing and DDBHH."
95. **CM#9: Use all available connections to share information – but do not limit it to digital presence only.**

### **Other Considerations and Concerns**

96. **CM#3:** "The **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** wishes to express our heartfelt appreciation to the CAVRS for their efforts to spread public awareness about the VRS, which we recognize as their essential and hard work; however, we would like to address a few issues on their general understanding as follows:
97. Despite the CAV's efforts to spread public awareness about the VRS to different industry sectors, which are mentioned in CAV's itemized response no. 6 response, the customer services representatives for the brand corporation (major corporations, banks, or government department offices) still insist the DDBHH customers use the outdated and ineffective text relay services. However, the VRS has provided more significant benefits and effectiveness to the DDBHH customers than the text relay services.
98. Our consumer group strongly encourages the CAVRS to adapt their approaches and their market strategies to maximize their efforts to these corporations to accept the VRS instead of the text relay services."
99. **CM#11:** "In response to **CM#3's** comment, it would be greatly beneficial that the CAV create an additional specialized education specialist to focus their work on education and creating awareness for business and government about VRS and how it works and explaining the benefits of VRS far outweigh the text relay services."

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**QUESTION 35**

**Q35 Provide a copy of the CAV's current public awareness and outreach plan in English and French.**

**Committee Member Responses R#35:**

**Indigenous Perspectives**

100. **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** noticed in CAV's documents that the Indigenous educational sessions were more likely to be in urban areas and that those in remote or rural regions,
101. **CM #1:** "CAV needs to be cognizant that Indigenous have been largely victims of language deprivation, and they need to consider simplifying their materials to accommodate and provide accessibility for such intersectionality as ADHD, ADD, FAS profile, etc. There should be accessible options for those with communication disabilities."

**Deaf-Blind Perspectives**

102. **CM#15:** Where the CAV responded to say, "The websites also feature a WCAG 2.1 AA level certified Accessibility Tool prominently displayed on every page. The tool is used to vary the colour schemes, contrast, fonts, and other accessibility options to accommodate a variety of needs such as low vision and screen reader options, a seizure-safe view, and cognitive or ADHD profiles. Both websites are monitored and updated regularly to ensure accuracy and relevance. Features include:" my view is that no matter if it is "WCAG 2.1 AA level certified" it is still yet to be accessible for the Canadian Deaf-Blind.
103. On the website, the Accessibility Adjustment button [AA] is placed in the far bottom left corner, making it easy to overlook for Deaf-Blind. The adjustment choices are confusing... all set in English (or FR), and would the average person understand what they mean? There are currently too many choices, yet the most obvious Deaf-Blind friendly choices and options of black background and yellow text (or white) are unavailable.
104. In response to the comment where CAV stated: "We also produce information in infographics, motion graphics, and ASL and LSQ videos to supplement the

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Written text. Great care is taken to ensure the accessibility of visual materials for all readers, including low-vision readers. This care is uniformly applied to all CAV awareness and educational materials.”

105. **CM#15:** As a Deaf-Blind, I do not see these on the CAV website; where is this feature (motion graphics or infographics) information on the website? Where is this information coming from? The information is not accessible in the colours of choice for us Canadian Deaf-Blind with a black background and yellow font contrast colours. Until that is made possible, it is not fully accessible, including the app itself.”
106. **CM#13:** “When the initial outreach spread out to each and any of the provinces in Canada, they collected information from us, the Deaf-Blind, about what they thought, felt, their perspectives, their feedback, but when they came out in late 2018 to 2019, we noticed the outreach did not ask any Deaf-Blind to come to them about VRS Services. CAV has no knowledge or understanding of Deaf-Blind culture and does not invite Deaf-Blind to express their feelings and perspectives about what is working or not with VRS and value the accessibility for the Deaf-Blind VRS users.
107. The Deaf-Blind, myself, and my friends locally were not receiving anything like a newsletter or direct information because CAV has pretty much ignored us. All the materials they produce are always in PDF format and, therefore, not accessible for Deaf-Blind to get equitable information. Documents must be provided in MS Word because then it works to convert document text to Braille. These documents often must come without pictures and be text-only for readability on screen readers and Braille; therefore, image-free copies must be made available as an option for those Deaf-Blind.

#### **Senior Citizen Perspectives**

108. **CM#9:** “This public awareness and outreach plan should follow the previously mentioned SMART Goal plan framework so that goals would be **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Publish this plan and send copies to all stakeholders.**

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109. Share the timeline for achieving the goals – consult with the community frequently and expand the Stakeholder list to include a greater diversity of groups and individuals to do Outreach and Training. I recommend including DDBHH Seniors in Outreach work and planning, maybe even a “Deaf Senior VRS-Geek Squad!”
110. **CM#9:** Consult with international providers of VRS and pick up new techniques and technology from these providers and their telecommunications contacts.”

**Other Comments**

111. **CM#3:** “**CDBC.VRS** wishes to express our deep gratitude to the CAVRS for listing their clear, detailed timelines since the VRS was introduced to Canada in 2015. **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** has reviewed the CAVRS’s responses to Question no. 35, and the responses are detailed in a few categories: Surveys, Websites, Embrava Blynlight, and Annual Open House paragraphs below:

**Surveys**

112. **CM#3:** “According to the CAVRS’s response, the CAV had conducted four surveys with the VRS users, and despite the number of the surveys, they had never released or shared the outcome of the surveys to the public.
113. Should the CAV release the outcomes, it will be an excellent benefit for the parties in this proceeding to provide their comments, feedback, and ideas as part of the education to make their services improve in many ways in the best interests of the CAVRS and their clients.”
114. **CM#11:** “When conducting CAV’s surveys, **CDBC-VRS-DWCC** noticed that CAV always used a hearing interpreter translating the surveys. Our group questions why resources from the Deaf Ecosystem were not used. Deaf interpreters or translators should be doing the survey questions as the CAD-ASC, DWCC, and CNSDB have done with their telecommunications accessibility surveys since 2015.”
115. **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** recommends that CAV ensure that Deaf translators and interpreters are used for the ASL and LSQ versions of the survey questions.



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116. Additionally, **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** is suspect with too high of a positive outcome rate with the questions' responses and the way the questions are worded. With this, **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** notes that the survey questions are skewed only to show CAV in a positive light and not neutralized enough to warrant transparency in consumers' experiences and perspectives with Canada's VRS, instead of covering up the real issues that are happening with the VRS services and usage."

**Websites**

117. **CM#3:** "The **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** acknowledges that the CAVRS have made some improvements on their websites over the last years; as a result, their efforts have been much appreciated. We would like to see the CAVRS continue improving the websites as long as they welcome our suggestions below:

- a. Dark Mode is an extension that helps you quickly turn the screen (browser) to dark at night. The toolbar button is an ON|OFF switch, enabling you to turn the extension easily and quickly ON or OFF.
- b. Add ASL/LSQ videos on the remaining pages, such as About Us, and Get App. The ASL or LSQ languages are the DHHDB people's first language.
- c. Add Toggle ON/OFF on the left or right top corner to be accessible for the Deaf-Blind customers because the white background on all the pages is not friendly and vague to them. The black experience with yellow fonts with highlights is highly recommended."

**Embrava Blynclight**

118. **CM#3:** "**CDBC.VRS-DWCC** would like to suggest the CAVRS stop promoting the product for the VRS clients to buy for a few reasons below:

- it is expensive (\$87 plus taxes = \$110). It is inconvenient for the VRS clients on social assistance or low income to spend the money supposed to be for their food.
- To redesign or upgrade the app by adding the resizable flash with a choice of colour that the users may choose. In addition, it can be

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accessible to the Bluetooth capability on smartphones, tablets, TVs, laptops, and computers.

119. Otherwise, the CAVRS should be required to make a considerable investment and a bulk purchase to make the Embrava Blynclight accessible for the DHHDB clients, which is a massive plus for the organization.”
120. **CM#11:** “To reiterate paragraph 91, referencing DWCC’s Intervention, paragraph #151, whereas “people had to pay for the flasher, which was a grave decision. Why do these customers have to pay for something connected to a free federal communications accessibility service? Instead, one flasher should have been provided to every customer free of charge...”<sup>7</sup>

### **Annual Open House**

121. **CM#3:** The **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** firmly believes that it is essential for the CAVRS to hold an open house to elevate the community awareness about the VRS and the organization itself to the clients, government officials and the public interest in Ottawa. We highly recommend that the CAV add or take turns on locations of their annual open houses in the major cities such as Toronto, Vancouver, or Halifax; therefore, they can widen and pull in their attraction from the local Deaf community and the city officials and the provincial government officials there.”

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<sup>7</sup> DWCC Intervention for TNC 2021-102 - [link](#)

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**Conclusion**

122. The **CDBC.VRS-DWCC** has explored themes from Indigenous, Deaf-Blind, and senior citizens' perspectives to the CAV's responses to CRTC's RFI questions for this proceeding.
123. The CAV has overlooked three categories of consumers in its public education and awareness efforts: Indigenous in remote communities, Deaf-Blind with a range of vision and hearing disabilities, and senior citizens who are still learning to catch up with new technologies. The community education team needs to be expanded, and people added to the team that cater to these specific populations within the Deaf community, including VRS users.
124. Deaf-Blind and senior citizens need in-person one-to-one workers to support technical, step-by-step use of the VRS app and services, including installation on various devices.
125. The other bracket of people that require education and information through public awareness are the businesses and government departments such as the Canada Revenue Agency and banks. There needs to be a more significant effort to educate these more prominent hearing entities for the more substantial benefit of the VRS caller ecosystem. CAV staff must add personnel to have their work completely geared toward these entities.

**\*\*\* END DOCUMENT\*\*\***