

**SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY
AND AUDIOLOGY AND HEARING
AID DISPENSERS BOARD**

Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensers Board

2025-2028 Strategic Plan

Adopted: September 5, 2024

Prepared by:

SOLID Planning Solutions

Department of Consumer Affairs

Table of Contents

Board Members..... 3

About the Board 4

Message from the Chair..... 6

Board Mission, Vision, and Values 7

Goal 1: Licensing..... 8

Goal 2: Enforcement 9

Goal 3: Outreach and Communications 10

Goal 4: Laws and Regulations 11

Goal 5: Board Administration..... 12

Strategic Planning Process..... 13

Board Members

Gilda Dominguez, M.S., CCC-SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist, Chair

Dr. Amy E. White, Au.D., Audiologist, Vice Chair

Tod Borges, Hearing Aid Dispenser

Dr. Tamara Chambers, MD, FACS, Otolaryngologist, Public Member

Karen Chang, Public Member

John Dandurand, BC-HIS, Hearing Aid Dispenser

Dr. Charles Sanders, Au.D., Audiologist

VACANT, Public Member

VACANT, Speech-Language Pathologist

Gavin Newsom, Governor

Tomiquia Moss, Secretary, Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency

Kimberly Kirchmeyer, Director, Department of Consumer Affairs

Paul Sanchez, Executive Officer, Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensers Board

About the Board

The Board serves to protect the public by licensing and regulating Speech-Language Pathologists, Audiologists, and Hearing Aid Dispensers; three separate and distinct professions with their own scopes of practice and professional settings. The Board sets entry-level licensing standards, which includes examination requirements that measure the candidate's professional knowledge and clinical abilities that are consistent with the demands of the current delivery systems.

Speech-Language Pathologists provide services in the areas of speech, language, voice, cognition, fluency, and swallowing disorders to individuals across their lifespan. They see individuals who may have language difficulties with verbal expression, auditory comprehension, reading comprehension, and/or written expression. These difficulties could be the result of a stroke, brain injury, or other neurogenic causes. Speech-Language Pathologists perform instrumental procedures within their scope of practice (e.g., Motion fluoroscopic evaluation of swallowing by cine or video recording, Flexible Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing by cine or videorecording, laryngoscopy with stroboscopy). Speech-Language Pathologists coordinate care with otolaryngologists and physicians for such procedures. Speech-Language Pathologists also provide aural rehabilitation for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and provide therapy in the augmentative and alternative communication domain for individuals with diagnoses such as autism spectrum disorder and progressive neurological disorders. Speech-Language Pathologists work independently and collaboratively on interdisciplinary teams with other school or health care professionals in a range of settings including schools, medical, community-based facilities, and in private practice.

Audiologists provide services for individuals with hearing loss and balance (vestibular) disorders across their lifespan. Audiologists work in a number of professional settings, including hospitals that provide newborn hearing screenings, pediatric clinics, university and hospital audiology clinics, private practice, military facilities, academic institutions, and industrial, research, and forensic settings. More recently, there are an increasing number of Audiologists who participate in intraoperative neuromonitoring in the state's leading hospitals. Dispensing Audiologists are licensed to fit hearing aids for populations that range from infants to the elderly.

Hearing Aid Dispensers provide services to individuals with hearing loss, including fitting, selection, and adaptation of hearing aids and hearing tests for the purposes of fitting and selling hearing aids. Hearing Aid Dispensers generally work with individuals over the age of 16 but can work with younger individuals under specified circumstances.

To ensure ongoing consumer protection, the Board enforces standards of professional conduct by investigating applicant backgrounds, investigating complaints against licensed and unlicensed practitioners, and taking disciplinary action whenever appropriate.

Message from the Chair

On behalf of the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensers Board, I am pleased to present our 2025-2028 Strategic Plan.

The Board carries out its Mission of consumer protection by promoting standards and enforcing the laws and regulations that address the qualifications and competence of providers of speech-language pathology, audiology and hearing aid dispensing services. The Board carries out its Vision ensuring that every person in the State of California has access to diagnosis, treatment of communication disorders, and related services of the highest quality. The Values of Consumer Protection, Integrity, Efficiency, Accountability, Transparency, and Inclusion are sustained through the work of its Executive Director, Office Staff, Board Members, and its Standing and Ad Hoc Committees.

The Board's strategic planning process and goals are guided by our Mission, Vision, and Values. Input for the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan was obtained from stakeholders, as consideration for the future direction and focus of the Board. Stakeholders included our California consumers, licensees, Board members, and office staff. Stakeholders were asked to provide feedback, via a survey about the Board, pertaining to each of its focus areas. This feedback provided insight as to how the Board is doing by identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in five (5) focus areas: Licensing, Enforcement, Outreach and Communications, Laws and Regulations, and Program Administration. In addition, a public planning session with the Board was facilitated by the Department of Consumer Affairs Office of Strategic Organization, Leadership, and Individual Development (SOLID) to establish key goals and activities that were to be included in the revised Strategic Plan.

Goals have been established in each of the five (5) aforementioned focus areas to ensure effective board operations aligned with our Mission, Vision, and Values. In the Strategic Plan document, specific activities are outlined that are considered to be vital to the fulfillment of the Board's function. Our 2025-2028 Strategic Plan expands upon previous goals achieved and continues to support our Mission of consumer protection.

We invite all stakeholders to review this strategic plan and support its goals, activities, and progress by participating in Board meetings, rulemakings, and other activities presented. We also encourage stakeholders to remain abreast of regulations and information available for the respective disciplines of practice. Information can be found on the Board's website at: <https://www.speechandhearing.ca.gov/>.

Board Mission, Vision, and Values

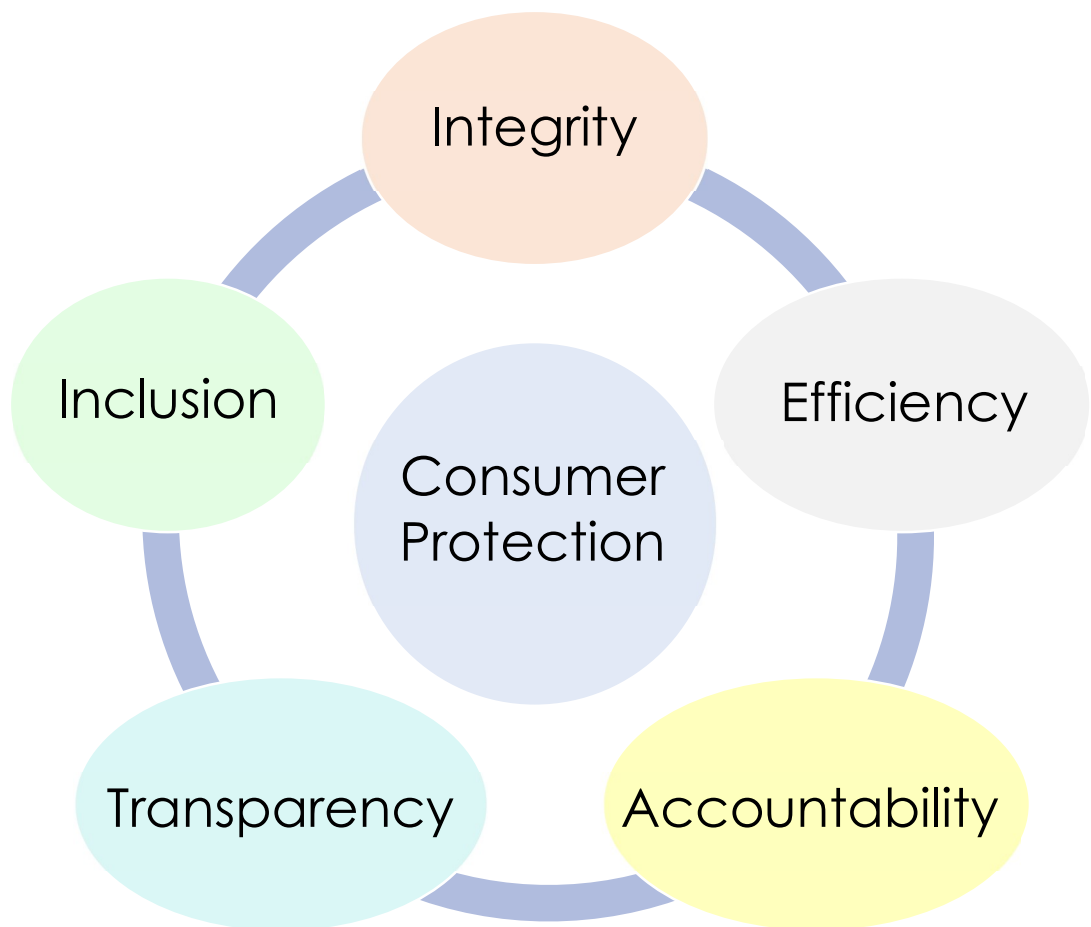
Mission

We protect the people of California by promoting standards and enforcing the laws and regulations that ensure the qualifications and competence of providers of speech-language pathology, audiology, and hearing aid dispensing services.

Vision

Every person in the State of California has access to the highest quality diagnosis and treatment of communication and hearing disorders, and related services.

Values



Goal 1: Licensing

The Board's licensing standards protect consumers while permitting reasonable access into the professions.

- 1.1 Improve responsiveness and communication to applicants and licensees.
- 1.2 Increase accessibility to the hearing aid dispensing practical exam.
- 1.3 Expand online licensing services to improve efficiency.
- 1.4 Create educational materials to clearly explain the application and licensing processes.
- 1.5 Research the impact of joining the interstate compact.
- 1.6 Research and evaluate creating a mid-level license type for entry into the profession of audiology to promote workforce development.

Goal 2: Enforcement

The Board protects consumers through the active enforcement of the laws and regulations governing the practices of speech-language pathology, audiology, and hearing aid dispensing.

- 2.1 Review and update the Board's disciplinary guidelines to ensure more consistent disciplinary actions for similar violations.
- 2.2 Improve communication with complainants and respondents to clarify the enforcement process and promote consumer satisfaction.
- 2.3 Collaborate with DCA's Office of Information Services (OIS) to research the feasibility of creating a Board specific online complaint system that provides status updates to complainants and respondents.

Goal 3: Outreach and Communications

The Board educates and informs consumers and other stakeholders about the practices and laws and regulations governing the professions of speech-language pathology, audiology, and hearing aid dispensing.

- 3.1 Improve outreach and communication about the Board's purpose and role to promote stakeholder understanding.
- 3.2 Improve all communications to ensure transparency, and enhance clarity and understanding by consumers.
- 3.3 Increase visibility and awareness of Board activities to promote stakeholder engagement and awareness.
- 3.4 Continue to develop informational materials about the regulatory process and the importance of public comment to increase timely and meaningful engagement.
- 3.5 Improve the Board's website to increase accessibility and user friendliness.
- 3.6 Clarify and educate stakeholders on the Board's jurisdiction to address school speech therapist caseload and other concerns.
- 3.7 Communicate the risks and limitations of over-the-counter hearing aids to increase consumer awareness.

Goal 4: Laws and Regulations

The Board protects California consumers by the laws and regulations governing the speech-language pathology, audiology, and hearing aid dispensing professions.

- 4.1 Communicate and educate licensees about the recently changed continuing education regulations to keep licensees informed.
- 4.2 Continue periodic reviews of Board regulations, and update, if necessary, to ensure clarity and understanding, and to reflect current professional practices and their use of technologies.
- 4.3 Update regulations about supervision to increase clarity and address ethical issues.
- 4.4 Prioritize regulatory packages to improve the Board's responsiveness to high priority issues.
- 4.5 Advocate for a balance of specialty areas during the appointment process for members of the Board to achieve more balanced input into Board decisions and their impacts on different work settings.

Goal 5: Board Administration

The Board is committed to efficiently and effectively utilizing resources and personnel to meet its goals and objectives.

- 5.1 Define necessary staffing levels and, if needed, obtain additional staffing through the budget process to achieve the Board's goals and mission.
- 5.2 Review the organizational structure to ensure appropriate oversight of Board's operations and supervision of staff.

Strategic Planning Process

To understand the environment in which the Board operates as well as identify factors that could impact the Board's success in carrying out its regulatory duties, the Department of Consumer Affairs' SOLID Planning Solutions Unit (SOLID) conducted an environmental scan of the Board's internal and external environments by collecting information through the following methods:

- Phone/online interviews with board members and executive leadership during March and April of 2024.
- Online surveys distributed to board staff, as well as external stakeholders, during the month of April of 2024.

The most significant themes and trends identified from the environmental scan were discussed by board members, board leadership and staff, and members of the public during a strategic planning session facilitated by SOLID on June 12, 2024. This information guided the Board in the development of its strategic objectives outlined in this 2025-2028 strategic plan.

Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensers Board

1601 Response Road, Suite 260

Sacramento, CA 95815

Phone: (916) 287-7915

<https://www.speechandhearing.ca.gov/>

Strategic plan adopted on September 5, 2024

This strategic plan is based on stakeholder information and discussions facilitated by SOLID for the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and Hearing Aid Dispensers Board on June 12, 2024. Subsequent amendments may have been made after the adoption of this plan.



Prepared by:

SOLID Planning Solutions

1747 N. Market Blvd., Ste. 270

Sacramento, CA 95834