

CALIFORNIA

California Department of Technology

California Privacy Protection Agency / CalPrivacy

Category: State CIO Special Recognition Category

Project: DROP: Delete Request and Opt-Out Platform

Project Dates: 1/1/2025 – 12/31/2025

Contact: Monica Hernandez, Deputy Director Communications & Stakeholder
Relations, monica.hernandez@state.ca.gov

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

California created the Delete Request and Opt-Out Platform (DROP) to make consumer privacy rights easier to exercise at statewide scale. Before DROP, Californians who wanted data brokers to delete or stop selling their personal information had to identify individual brokers, navigate separate request processes, repeat verification steps, and track responses individually. DROP replaces that fragmented process with one centralized service.

DROP was developed through a partnership between the California Privacy Protection Agency (CalPrivacy) and the California Department of Technology (CDT). CalPrivacy provided policy direction and regulatory oversight under the Delete Act. CDT designed and delivered the technology infrastructure required to operate the service, including digital identity verification through the California Identity Gateway and secure transmission of requests to registered data brokers.

The platform allows a California resident to verify eligibility, create a profile, and submit a single request that can reach more than 500 registered data brokers. Public reporting shows that to date more than 290,000 deletion requests have been submitted through DROP. Beginning August 1, 2026, data brokers are required to process deletion requests through the platform and continue deleting data on a recurring 45-day cycle.

DROP creates value by reducing resident burden, improving consistency, and giving the state an operational mechanism to implement a complex privacy requirement. The project also extends California's enterprise digital service capabilities by applying shared identity infrastructure, privacy-focused design, and coordinated platform operations to a high-demand public service.

Key Measures for CDT Validation

Measure	Current Draft Value	Needed for Final
Deletion requests submitted	290,000+ publicly reported	Updated request count and date
Registered data brokers reachable	500+	Current count and onboarding status
Resident funnel – Californian residency verified	459,000+	

IDEA

What problem or opportunity does the project address?

California residents have strong privacy rights, but exercising those rights against data brokers has been difficult in practice. A resident seeking broad deletion of personal information previously needed to determine which brokers may hold their data, visit separate websites or forms, provide information repeatedly, and track each request. That approach placed the work on the resident and limited practical access to the right.

DROP addresses this gap by creating a single state-operated process for deletion and opt-out requests. The platform allows residents to verify eligibility once and submit one request to registered data brokers through a secure digital service.

Why does it matter?

Data brokers collect, analyze, trade, and sell detailed personal information, often without a direct relationship with the consumer. The data may include information that can increase exposure to spam, scams, fraud, identity theft, impersonation, and unwanted profiling. The business rationale for DROP was straightforward: A legal right is only meaningful if residents can use it without excessive burden.

DROP turns a complex statutory process into an accessible service and creates a consistent operational channel for data brokers, CalPrivacy, and residents.

What makes it different?

DROP is distinct because it combines a consumer privacy service with enterprise identity infrastructure. The California Identity Gateway is CDT's statewide identity verification platform that helps digital government programs confirm a user is who they say they are before providing access to sensitive services. For DROP, this matters because deletion requests must be easy for residents to submit, but trusted enough for data brokers to process. By integrating the California Identity Gateway, CDT allowed residents to verify residency based eligibility through a secure, familiar process before submitting a request through DROP.

This approach separates DROP from a standard online form or information portal. The platform does not simply collect resident requests, it uses identity verification, secure request handling, and centralized distribution to create a trusted transaction between Californians and registered data brokers. That trust is essential because the system handles sensitive personal information and supports legally significant deletion requests. The Identity Gateway gives DROP a stronger foundation for fraud prevention, resident confidence, and broker acceptance while reducing the need for residents to verify themselves repeatedly across hundreds of separate broker websites.

What makes it universal?

Other states face similar challenges as privacy laws, digital identity needs, and consumer data risks continue to expand. DROP provides a practical model for converting a complex legal requirement into an accessible digital service. The approach is broadly applicable to states working on digital government, identity and access management, data protection, accessibility, and resident-centered service delivery.

Before DROP	After DROP
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- Residents identified brokers individually - Separate request processes - Repeated identity steps - Manual tracking - Inconsistent user experience - Costs to residents	- One verified statewide request - Secure California Identity Gateway verification Single profile and request flow - Centralized platform - Clearer path for broker processing - Free to all Californians
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IMPLEMENTATION

What was the roadmap?

The roadmap was driven by the Delete Act (SB 362, 2023) and the need to operationalize a new statewide deletion mechanism. CDT and CalPrivacy moved from statutory requirements to service design, technical development, launch readiness, public communications, and broker onboarding. The project fits an enterprise view because it used shared state capabilities, especially the California Identity Gateway, rather than treating identity verification as a one-off requirement.

Milestone	Draft Description	CDT/CPPA Validation Needed
2023	Delete Act signed into law	Confirm statutory framing
2024 to 2025	Requirements, design, build, testing, security review, and broker readiness	Confirm dates and major phases
January 1, 2026	DROP available to all Californians	
Spring 2026	Broker API integration and onboarding activities	Confirm timing and scope
August 2026	Broker processing begins	Confirm operational status and metrics

Who was involved?

The project required policy, technology, legal, security, privacy, communications, and operational coordination. CalPrivacy led policy direction, regulatory oversight, data broker requirements, and public education. CDT led platform delivery, identity integration, secure digital infrastructure, and service operations, and provided product management, software engineering and technology infrastructure expertise, web consulting provided user experience design expertise, and the underlying identity verification services and infrastructure.

Buy-in and adoption were supported through public-facing guidance, a DROP toolkit, plain-language resident materials, data broker communications, and ongoing coordination between program and technology teams.

How did you do it?

CDT implemented DROP as an enterprise digital service, with the California Identity Gateway serving as a core component of the resident experience. The Identity Gateway provides a reusable verification layer for state services by connecting users to trusted identity proofing and authentication capabilities. For DROP, CDT integrated this capability so residents could verify their identity and California residency-based eligibility before submitting a deletion request. This helped create a consistent, secure entry point into the platform and reduced the risk of fraudulent or incomplete requests.

Once a resident is verified, DROP allows the resident to create a profile, choose the information to include, and submit a request to registered data brokers through a centralized process. Behind the scenes, CDT designed the platform to support secure transmission, privacy-protective data handling, broker access, and future API-based processing. This architecture matters because it allows California to operate DROP at statewide scale while limiting unnecessary exposure of personal information. It also demonstrates the value of reusing enterprise technology assets rather than building identity verification separately for each new public-facing service.

IMPACT

What did the project make better?

DROP improved access to privacy protections by reducing the number of steps required for residents to act. The prior environment required residents to pursue individual broker requests, often across many separate processes. The new environment gives residents a centralized, secure channel for submitting a verified request to hundreds of registered brokers.

The project also improved the state's ability to administer the Delete Act. Instead of relying on a fragmented consumer-to-business process, California now has a structured platform that supports request submission, broker processing, public education, and regulatory oversight. This makes the policy more operational and easier to evaluate over time.

How do you know?

Early adoption demonstrates public demand for a simpler privacy tool. Public reporting shows more than 290,000 deletion requests submitted through DROP, with one request

Impact Area	Draft Evidence	Needed for Final
Resident burden	One request replaces broker-by-broker submissions	Time savings calculation
Scale	500+ registered data brokers reachable	Current broker count and onboarding status
Adoption	290,000+ publicly reported requests	Updated requests and unique users

What now?

CDT and CalPrivacy continue to maintain and improve DROP as data brokers begin processing requests and the platform moves into steady-state operations. Ongoing priorities include broker onboarding, API integration, resident support, platform monitoring, accessibility, security, and performance improvement

The longer-term value of is its combination of public access and enterprise capability. The project established a secure process for consumer deletion requests while demonstrating how shared identity infrastructure and coordinated digital service delivery can support statewide privacy requirements. The same operating lessons can inform future digital services that require trust, verification, data protection, and broad public adoption.