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For Immediate Release

**FCC EXTENDS TEMPORARY WAIVERS FOR RELAY SERVICES
RULES DURING PANDEMIC**

*Action Necessary to Ensure Providers Are Able to Meet the Needs
of Americans with Disabilities*

WASHINGTON, May 14, 2020—The FCC’s Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau today extended temporary waivers through June 30, 2020 for Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) providers to ensure relay services remain available during the COVID-19 pandemic for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, or have a speech disability.

These waivers extend actions previously taken to grant TRS providers flexibility to deal with reduced staffing and increased call volumes, to enable more of their employees to provide services from their homes, and to expand the pool of contractors qualified to provide American Sign Language interpretation services for Video Relay Service.

The Bureau today also temporarily waived two additional TRS rules to enable Internet Protocol Relay Service communications assistants to provide service from home workstations and to allow registered VRS users to make calls to the U.S. from abroad during the national emergency.

“As the national emergency continues, with uncertainty about how long stay-at-home and social distancing restrictions will remain in effect in many jurisdictions, we feel it is vitally important that we take action to ensure robust, reliable TRS is available for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, or have speech disabilities,” said Patrick Webre, Chief of the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau. “The waivers have been essential to ensuring uninterrupted service for hundreds of thousands of Americans during the current COVID-19 crisis.”

Telecommunications relay services are supported through the FCC-administered Interstate TRS Fund. Today’s action to ensure accessible communications remain available is yet another step forward in the FCC’s [Keep Americans Connected](#) initiative.

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