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For Immediate Release

**FCC REVITALIZES CRITICAL DISABILITY RIGHTS INITIATIVE
SUPPORTING AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE USERS**

***Agency Increases Telecommunications Relay Services Fund’s Support
for Video Relay Service, Makes Changes to Compensation Plan***

WASHINGTON, September 28, 2023—The Federal Communications Commission on September 22 adopted a Report and Order that approves revised Telecommunications Relay Services Fund (TRS Fund) compensation formulas for Video Relay Service (VRS) which enables persons with hearing and speech disabilities who use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate with voice telephone users through video equipment, rather than through typed text. The Commission approved the revised formula for a five-year period through June 30, 2028 to ensure that VRS users can access highly qualified ASL interpreters and benefit from improved communications technology. With several key changes in the VRS compensation plan, VRS providers will have the resources to strengthen VRS interpreting and find functionally equivalent solutions for video conferencing, emergency calling, and other technologically challenging uses of VRS.

“Video relay service is a vital communications tool that we must support with top-quality interpreting and technology,” **said Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel**. “Updating the VRS compensation framework will improve the quality and effectiveness of these services.”

The new compensation plan will increase the TRS Fund support for this service for the 2023-24 Fund Year. Under a modified, two-tier rate structure, large VRS providers will be paid \$6.27 per minute for the first 1 million minutes handled each month, and \$3.92 per minute for additional monthly minutes. The modified structure addresses changes in the relative efficiency of providers, allocates TRS Fund support more equitably, and prevents waste. For smaller VRS providers with up to 1 million monthly minutes, the FCC will retain a separate compensation formula (\$7.77 per minute) so that new entrants and small providers have an opportunity to innovate in the provision of VRS. To address variable costs of a specialized service for users who are deafblind, additional compensation of \$0.19 per minute will be paid to the provider when that service is used. In addition, so that future cost increases do not jeopardize consumers’ access to service improvements, the compensation formulas will be automatically adjusted each year based on a Department of Labor cost index.

The FCC also adopted a Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that seeks further comment on providing additional compensation in special situations, such as when a Certified Deaf Interpreter is needed for a VRS call, and rule changes to facilitate the provision of services to deafblind users.

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).