

# TRS Advisory Council FCC UPDATE

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# Roadmap for Today's Presentation

- Video relay service (VRS)
- Internet Protocol Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS)
- TRS at Correctional Facilities
- Hearing Aid Compatibility
- Advanced Communications Systems
- CVAA Biennial Report
- Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
- Broadband Labels
- Disability Advisory Committee (DAC)
- Video Programming
- Emergency communications
- Other related actions
- Contact information



# VRS Improvements Report and Order

- On December 20, 2023, the FCC released a Report and Order:
  - Increasing the portion of a VRS provider's monthly minutes handled by CAs working at home
  - Modifying the amount of prior interpreting experience required of VRS CAs who work at home
  - Allowing VRS providers to contract for interpretation services for up to 30% of their monthly minutes
  - Permitting compensation for calls placed by registered VRS users to the USA from outside the country, as long as users notify their provider of such travel at any time prior to the first such call
  - Clarifying the annual inflation adjustment for IP Relay compensation
  - Extending current waivers of CAs at-home interpreting experience; the prohibition on use of contract CAs; and the waiver of the 50% cap on minutes handled by CAs working at home until the effective dates of these provisions



# More VRS Updates

- On March 20, 2024, Sorenson conditional certification was extended to Dec. 31, 2024.
- On March 14, 2024, comment due dates were established for the VRS Compensation FNPRM
  - Comments were due April 15, 2024
  - Reply Comments are due April 29, 2024
- On Jan. 18, 2024, FCC announced the effective date of the two-week grace period for VRS user registration verification
- On October 27, 2023, FCC granted conditional certification to Tive, LLC to provide VRS



# IP CTS Updates

- FCC granted conditional IP CTS certification for:
  - NexTalk, Inc. (until Jan. 2026)
  - RogerVoice (until Jan. 2026)
  - GlobalCaption, Inc. (until Jan. 2026)
  - Nagish, Inc. (until Jan. 2026)
  - ClearCaptions (until Mar. 2026)
- CaptionCall and Hamilton's conditional certifications were extended to Dec. 31, 2024



# TRS at Correctional Facilities

- On March 19, 2024, FCC announced effective date for several FCC rules requiring TRS access in carceral facilities:
  - Allowing VRS and IP CTS providers to register incarcerated people for VRS and IP CTS
  - Requiring providers of incarcerated people's communications services to provide access to TRS and point-to-point video service
- FCC posted a consumer guide and ASL video to answer frequently asked questions about TRS access in carceral facilities, found on [www.fcc.gov/accessibility](https://www.fcc.gov/accessibility)



# Hearing Aid Compatibility (HAC)

- On Dec. 13, 2023, the FCC adopted an NPRM that:
  - Tentatively concludes that 100% HAC requirement for wireless is “achievable” and explores ways to reach the 100% compatibility benchmark
  - Proposes to require a certain percentage of handset models meet a Bluetooth requirement
  - Seeks comment on:
    - a definition of HAC that would include the use of Bluetooth connectivity technology between handset models and hearing aids
      - the HAC Task Force’s suggestion to require all handset models to have at least two forms of coupling
      - incorporating a specific non-proprietary Bluetooth standard into the HAC rules or to allow market conditions to decide
      - continuing to allow previously certified handset models to be grandfathered
      - implementation issues related to the 100% HAC proposal and updates to the HAC rules
  - Comments were due Feb. 26, 2024, and replies were due Mar. 11, 2024



# Advanced Communication Services (ACS)

- On Feb. 26, 2024, FCC released its annual public notice reminding service providers and equipment manufacturers to maintain records of their efforts to make their telecommunications services and equipment, advanced communication services and equipment, and Internet browsers built into mobile phones accessible to people with disabilities





# CVAA Biennial Report to Congress

- In preparation of its CVAA Biennial Report to Congress, FCC is seeking comment by May 6, 2024, on:
  - Compliance with the accessibility requirements for telecommunications and advanced communications services and equipment, and Internet browsers built into mobile phones;
  - Whether accessibility barriers exist with respect to new communications technologies; and
  - The effect of the CVAA's accessibility recordkeeping and enforcement requirements on the development and deployment of new communications technologies
- The CVAA Biennial Report to Congress is due by October 8, 2024



# Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Wind-Down

- April 2024 will be the last fully funded month of the ACP
- Partial reimbursements will be issued for the May 2024 service month
- More information (including ASL video) is available at [www.fcc.gov/acp](https://www.fcc.gov/acp)



# Broadband Labels

- On April 10, 2024, the FCC announced the availability of broadband nutrition labels for consistent, transparent, and accessible point-of-sale information about broadband prices and services
  - Providers with more than 100,000 subscribers must provide labels, subscribers with fewer than 100,000 subscribers must comply by October 10, 2024.
- Labels are required for all standalone home or fixed internet service or mobile broadband plans and include: prices, speeds, fees, data allowances, and other critical information
- By October 10, 2024, providers will be required to make the labels accessible to people with disabilities and machine readable



# Disability Advisory Committee (DAC)

- At the January 30, 2024, meeting, the DAC adopted a recommendation on Audio Description File Transmittal for Internet Protocol Delivered Video Programming
- Next meeting: May 16, 2024 (virtual)
- More information: [www.fcc.gov/dac](http://www.fcc.gov/dac)



# Joint Closed Captioning Display Settings Proposal

- On Mar. 19, 2024, FCC released a Public Notice seeking comment on:
  - A Joint Proposal filed by NCTA and several disability advocacy groups for how digital apparatus manufacturers and multichannel video programming distributors can make captioning display settings readily accessible for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing
  - Whether the requirements in the Joint Proposal should apply broadly to the devices covered in section 303(u) of the Communications Act, and to both digital apparatus manufacturers and multichannel video programming distributors
- Comments were due Apr. 15, 2024, and replies are due Apr. 25, 2024



# Audio Description

- On Feb. 28, 2024, FCC announced the top five national nonbroadcast networks subject to the audio description requirements: HGTV, Hallmark, TLC, TNT, TBS
- On Nov. 30, 2023, FCC reminded broadcast television stations about their audio description requirements, including the phase-in of an additional 10 designated market areas (DMAs) each year until all DMAs are included



# Emergency Communications (1)

- ASL and Multilingual Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) Templates:
  - In Oct. 2023, the FCC adopted rules to require participating wireless providers to make available certain WEAs in the thirteen most commonly spoken languages in the United States and in ASL in addition to English, and to allow consumers to opt-in to receive ASL WEA alerts
  - On Feb. 15, 2024, the FCC released a Public Notice seeking comment on 18 different emergency message templates in 13 languages and ASL
  - FCC seeks comment on the effectiveness of ASL videos as well as the format and production of the ASL videos
  - Comment and reply deadlines will be announced soon



# Emergency Communications (2)

- EAS Multilingual Accessibility NPRM
  - On Feb. 15, 2024, FCC issued an NPRM intended to simplify the process for alert originators to send multilingual emergency alerts over television and radio using the Emergency Alert System (EAS)
  - The NPRM proposes to create template alert scripts that would be pre-translated into the 13 most commonly spoken non-English languages in the United States, and seeks comment on the feasibility of developing and implementing ASL video alerts
  - Comments were due Apr. 8, 2024, and replies are due May 6, 2024
- On Jan. 25, 2024, FCC adopted a Report and Order requiring all wireless carriers to implement location-based routing nationwide for wireless calls and real-time text (RTT) communications to 911 call centers





# Other Items of Interest

- On Nov. 15, 2024:
  - FCC adopted rules and sought comments to prevent and eliminate digital discrimination based on income level, race, ethnicity, color, religion, or national origin
  - FCC adopted rules implementing the Safe Connections Act for Survivors of Domestic Abuse
  - FCC issued a Notice of Inquiry into AI's impact on robocalls and robotexts (including its use with TRS)
  - FCC adopted rules to protect consumers' cellphone accounts from SIM swap and port-out fraud
- On Feb. 2, 2024, FCC issued a Declaratory Ruling confirming that restrictions on the use of “artificial or prerecorded voice” encompass current AI technologies that generate human voices



# Contact Information

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