

INFORMAL TRANSCRIPT  
IP TRS National Outreach Project Stakeholders Meeting  
January 17, 2014

**Greg Hlibok:** Good afternoon. Can I get your eyes and ears? Hi, everybody. Can I have your eyes and ears? Thanks. Good afternoon to everyone here. This is a historical moment for this particular group of people to exchange thoughts, provide feedback for the VRS reform project and program. Even though this particular session was posted as being from 2:00 until 3:00, that was a mistake. It is an hour and a half long session. This meeting is for the Internet-based telecommunications relay service, national outreach program. That particular project is part of the implementation of VRS reform. I am Greg Hlibok, Chief of the Disability Rights Office. We are going to introduce the FCC folks quickly and then we will get the program started for the afternoon.

**Karen Peltz Strauss:** Hi, I'm Karen Peltz Strauss. Thanks for coming. It's nice to see all of you again. Greg will lead the meeting, but I want to welcome you all here. This is an issue that is important to all of us and is long overdue. For some time the FCC has contemplated having national outreach on relay services for the purposes not only of expanding -- making sure everyone who needs a service gets it - but making sure that the general public and businesses and government agencies understand what the service is. We are hoping that the outcome of these efforts achieve an understanding and appreciation of relay services that reduces the number of hang-ups and has the general public understanding how important these services are and how important it is to accept relay phone calls. I apologize in advance, I have to leave for part of the meeting and I'm hoping to be able to come back. We appreciate all of your attendance here and look forward to your input.

**David Schmidt:** I'm David Schmidt. I'm the TRS fund administrator. Along with my teammates, Diane Mason, we represent OMD's participation in this effort. Diane is particularly taking the lead for our team as we work together on this. We are glad to be here with you today. I will not be able to stay, but Diane will be here. Please don't take my absence as a lack of concern. We're working very hard to get this done as well as we can to continue to do everything that can be done to improve the service, and the results of the service, for everybody that needs it. We look forward to hearing what you have to say.

**Greg Hlibok:** Thanks, Karen and Dave. I want to explain a little bit about the scope and intent of this particular meeting. The main purpose, as you saw on the agenda, is to solicit feedback and promote public awareness of video relay service and IP Relay. This meeting is really part of the VRS reform order that came out last June. One of the key directives was the establishment of a nationwide iTRS outreach program. Outreach has been done from day one and relay service itself has seen quite a bit of success. We went from one form of relay to a long list of various forms of relay, whether it be speech to speech, video relay, IP Relay, captioned telephone service, IP captioned telephone service. Although the types of relay have increased, we are still seeing that the general public's awareness about the availability of relay is still lacking, whether that lack of knowledge has been shown to us in reports we receive from time to time or the

number of hang-ups we learn about. Various folks in the business community hang-up thinking it is a telemarketing call -- often the public mistakes a relay call for a telemarketing call and is resistant to handle the call at all or even answer it. Based on information we gleaned over quite a long time, we decided to establish ourselves a national outreach program and contract with an independent entity to conduct this outreach. We specifically want this outreach program to focus on VRS and IP Relay. That also goes with Congress's intent to make sure that relay is available to the extent possible and in the most efficient manner. In that Order, it instructed the Office of Managing Director working with Consumer and Governmental Affairs -- OMD is the Office of the Managing Director, CGB is the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau. It directs OMD in consultation with CGB to select one or more coordinators to direct nationwide outreach for two years with an option for a one-year extension. The funding for the program will come from the interstate TRS fund which has been in place for a while. The activities will be overseen by CGB. Oversight of the outreach programs will include input from consumer groups, providers and various stakeholders. The coordinator's role and responsibilities are first to not have any affiliation with an iTRS provider, we want a neutral body to be selected, to conduct non-branded outreach to consumers and the general public. We wanted non-branded outreach. The coordinator must have experience in conducting nationwide outreach, as well as working closely with the deaf, hard of hearing communities. This particular meeting is also being live webcast. I'm going to quickly turn it over to my colleague, Elaine Gardner, who coordinated this event. She is also in the Disability Rights Office. A quick explanation of how those watching via the webcast can submit their feedback. Elaine?

**Elaine Gardner:** Thanks. If anybody watching on the webcast today wants to submit a comment, feel free to e-mail me that comment before February 1 or you can send any comments or feedback you might have to us through the ECFS comment submission process. If you have any questions on how to do that, [elaine.gardner@fcc.gov](mailto:elaine.gardner@fcc.gov) is my e-mail. This webcast will be archived and will be available for you to view later on. It should come up on the FCC event page on Tuesday. A transcript of this will be available at the FCC disability rights office website, probably by Wednesday morning. If you have any questions about the location of any of these, the archived webcast or transcript, please call me or e-mail me at [elaine.gardner@fcc.gov](mailto:elaine.gardner@fcc.gov).

**Greg Hlibok:** Thank you. I also want to let you know that the document is an unofficial transcript. It will basically be the captions you are seeing today. We are trying to post this Wednesday for everyone to view and then feedback can be solicited after that. Unofficial transcript. It will be on the TRS page. The outreach program is really not a new or original idea. It is something that has been under consideration for quite a while. Consumer groups including TDI have emphasized the consumer's policy statement that was filed in April of 2011, stressing the need for outreach to the general population. The policy statement discussed identifying potential new users out there, new users of IP Relay and VRS. I want to start with some questions. Before I do so, let me know if you have any questions about logistics. The purpose of this meeting is to hear and collect your ideas and feedback which will be incorporated as part of the procurement

and contracting process and request for proposal. The FCC is here to listen to you. Before I go on, any questions about logistics? If something comes up, let me know. Dave?

**David Schmidt:** There may be questions you ask that we cannot or will not answer, specifically as it relates to procurement. We are here to receive. We will not be able to tell you what kind of procurement, timelines. It is not that we do not want to, it just creates problems. Please be understanding of that to the extent that you can be. If we are not able to answer something, we may take that question back and find a way so that everybody gets the same information at the same time.

From a technical aspect, I want everyone to understand that before we get started.

**Greg Hlibok:** Thanks for the clarification, Dave. If you could tell us who you are and who you represent the first time you offer your comments for purposes of the transcript, and make sure the camera has time to get on you if you are signing before you continue with your remarks. Okay. Seeing no questions, I will ask you guys some general questions first, specifically about what population would be best served by outreach efforts. And out of the general public, are there certain populations that should be targeted? If so, whom? Is it geographically diverse? Or is there a particular profession? We're specifically talking about VRS and IP Relay.

**Claude Stout:** This is Claude. Should I stand up? Wait. OK. My name is Claude Stout. I'm with Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. In terms of different populations for outreach efforts, we think the FCC is on the right track in terms of targeting different groups, serving deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired, and those with serious disabilities who may already know about TRS and VRS services, but we're thinking more about the populations that don't know and spreading the word to those people. There are providers who have specific expertise, and that is fine. We need more focus on hearing people, the hearing population. Deaf and hard of hearing people have hearing family members and coworkers. They work with hearing people every day and those people may not be aware or may not feel comfortable engaging in calls, receiving calls through relay or making calls to a deaf person using relay, whether it be because they have a misunderstanding of it or they are simply ignorant of the service and what it actually does. The outreach program will help get that word out there and get those hearing people to have some more understanding and awareness of the service and hopefully more comfort. As Greg mentioned about the resistance to businesses receiving relay calls, misunderstanding them to be telemarketing, ensuring they feel comfortable receiving those relay calls from us, and if businesses should feel comfortable making calls to us and engaging with us through relay in that way. We are all human beings, we are all first-class citizens. We stand ready to purchase their products and services. We are ready to apply for jobs and to accept jobs. If we cannot get in touch with people, then we don't have access to the opportunities. I appreciate your open-mindedness in preparing and looking at who needs to be reached out to. Thank you, Greg, for that.

**Greg Hlibok:** Sharon?

**Sharon Hayes:** I am Sharon Hayes. Who am I looking at? I am with Video Relay Services Consumer Association, also known as VRSCA. This is a huge task, and I

applaud the commission for taking the initiative to do this. It is a huge need. There is a huge need out there to educate and recruit individuals to use relay. In whatever form of relay they choose to use. One thing I would recommend just because the U.S. is a large country and I'm already getting a sense there are some folks out there who think that really is not important and is something that does not apply to them -- social media is a good way to get out even to those types of people. Social media is a great way to do outreach. Attending various expos and types of events that apply directly to the groups of individuals who use relay is helpful. Those who use speech to speech relay, that's a whole different crowd of people than folks who are deaf or hard of hearing, for example, and they're totally different than any other group of individuals. It's important also that the outreach includes individuals to conduct their outreach who do use relay, who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability, use deaf people to communicate with deaf people or use deaf people to talk to the hearing audiences if you need to use an interpreter. You want someone who is familiar and understands VRS or IP Relay and owns it to get the information out there. More folks will listen to that type of information and it also provides a more fluid flow of communication. I meet folks across the country all the time, folks who are deaf or hard of hearing from varying levels of the socioeconomic spectrum. Often, I have had a difficult experience communicating fluidly with these individuals because I'm not able to match up with whatever socioeconomic scale they are on. I'm suggesting you have someone who really understands a particular group of people to do the outreach.

**Greg Hlibok:** This is Greg's speaking. You pointed out the U.S. is geographically large. It is certainly a tall order and a huge task for us to reach out to what we refer broadly to as a public. Is there a certain target audience we should be looking towards for our outreach efforts? Let's go to Mark, I believe.

Can we get the camera on Mark, please? Mark Hill? Next to Sharon? Thank you.

**Mark Hill:** Good afternoon. My name is Mark Hill and I'm the president of the Cerebral Palsy and Deaf Association. I appreciate everything that Sharon and Claude have said. It's important for more hearing individuals to understand relay and be able to talk to as many people as possible using relay. I feel that as Sharon was saying, the socioeconomic level issue is an important one. You need individuals who represent every level to speak to individuals on their same level. And I also want to make sure that hearing people have through VRS and relay services the ability to understand what we as deaf people can do.

**Mike Maddix:** I am Mike Maddix. Greg, to answer your question about targeted outreach, there should be targeted outreach. There are certain groups and classifications of businesses and entities that regularly refuse relay calls, and that's who needs the outreach. The typical person who has an acquaintance who is deaf and receives a relay call, they figure it out as soon as they introduce himself during the call. That isn't a problem. The problem is financial institutions. The National Association of the Deaf did a great service by getting the Department of Justice to go after a large banking institution which affected a lot of policies for larger banks. A lot of smaller banks and credit unions and loan officers and collection agencies regularly refuse relay calls. The consumers do not have anywhere to go with this. It is pretty difficult to get

the Department of Justice going on one of these complaints. N.A.D. was pretty successful in the past. That is one group that definitely needs attention. A second group that routinely refuses relay calls is health care. There have been public notices put out that helps clarify that situation and resolve it later, but the outreach needs to be done in advance. They need to understand that the relay entity or communications assistant or video interpreter is not a party to the call and it is not a violation of HIPAA, and it is a violation of the civil rights of the deaf person to refuse the call. The third entity has to do with government agencies. They routinely tell deaf consumers that they need to call directly to the TTY line, and that is antiquated and not functionally equivalent. It is forcing the deaf individual to communicate in a second language and it is archaic. Somebody needs to take the bull by the horns and solve that problem. The third group has to do with a lot of other entities that somehow realize that maybe they should be receiving a relay call but then they contact the providers, companies such as Hamilton, and they will ask the providers to enter into some confidentiality agreement with their company before they will receive relay calls. They need to understand that is not the role of our company. The most important thing that can be done with this outreach, to solve the real problems of businesses refusing calls, is to set up a hotline number that a consumer can call, that they can tell the name of the company that refused their relay call, the circumstance. Then the outreach needs to be done to that specific company and the company needs to be forced to call the consumer back to apologize for breaking their civil rights and say, "How can I help you?" That will give you the most bang for your buck.

**Greg Hlibok:** Andrew? If we can get the camera on Andrew that would be great.

**Andrew Phillips:** Good afternoon. I'm Andrew Phillips with the National Association of the Deaf. One suggestion I would like to make for the outreach program in terms of specific populations is to make sure that the outreach is done strategically, rather than creating a single type of advertisement that is supposed to canvas the entire population. I think Mike gave a great example of how we need to target businesses and locations that may have a history of declining relay calls. For example, financial institutions and government agencies that frequently ask consumers to call the TTY line.

There are some populations who may have less awareness of VRS. They live in areas where the information is not as prevalent. You also should be thinking about how deaf and hard of hearing people get information. The under 18 generation and their family and friends, how do we get them informed too? People who are losing their hearing later in life, you might want to get to them through their children and their children can suggest, why don't you use relay? Outreach for relay is not one-size-fits-all.

**Greg Hlibok:** This is Greg again. We have one more feedback. If we can get the camera on Christian, that would be great.

**Christian Vogler:** Good afternoon. My name is Christian Vogler, and I am with Gallaudet University's Technology Access Program. Along those same lines, which were a very important point for Andrew Phillips to make, there are some deaf and hard of hearing people who are not fully aware the services are available. I have done research and surveys looking at deaf and hard of hearing populations who use telephone services and those who use a variety of voice communication services, and

we have recognized that most people are getting their information from other customers who are deaf and hearing. Consumers are telling other consumers. Friends are spreading the word to those who are not fully aware that the services are available. I have done some research and surveys looking at deaf and hard of hearing populations who use telephone services and those who use a variety of voice communication services and we have recognized that most people are getting their information from other customers who are deaf and hard of hearing. Consumers are telling other consumers. Advocacy organizations, friends are spreading the word. They very seldom get information directly through government programs or through audiologists, or any of these other professional venues. So the concern that that raises, as people grow up hearing and as they age and lose their hearing, those people do not have access to those networks of people who can make that service known to them. As they age, they are not in the targeted group that we are trying to reach, so they are being excluded. We need to strategically target those groups of people as well. I am not sure how to encompass that, definitely a challenge, but health care providers will be important for that specific population as well.

**Greg Hlibok:** This is Greg again. Christian, you made the point of those who grow up, losing their hearing later in life, might be most vulnerable, if you will, to not having information about relay. Would you say that is also true for non-English speaking populations, for example, those who speak Spanish?

**Christian Vogler:** I think that it would apply regardless of what primary language someone uses, whether English, Spanish, or another.

**Greg Hlibok:** I'm sorry. Please, I overlooked your hand.

**Aaron Guiterman:** Recognizing the geographic scope of the United States and the scale at which a communications program will need to connect with audiences of interest, particularly valuable target audiences, audience segmentation will be critical because of the fragmentation, not only of the media marketplace. As you know, with the advent of the Internet and social media, audiences are spread a mile wide and an inch deep across various channels and across the communications landscape. It would be important in the process to match and watch demographics and behaviors and values and messaging to those specific media outlets that resonate with very narrow bands of target audiences. That way, you ensure that your messaging is connecting the right message with the right audience at the right time. More importantly, that messaging is segmented to ensure that you are creating a groundswell of public support from the communities, connecting with influencers, whether it is positions, family members, businesses come up for rapid adoption and penetration of that in the marketplace. This message will not mean the same thing to every distinct target audience. OK, thank you.

**Greg Hlibok:** This is Greg again. The question I next have may be obvious, but I will ask it anyway. Is there a particular geographic area of the country that should receive more focus, in terms of outreach? Sharon? Could we get the camera on Sharon? Thank you.

**Sharon Hayes:** This is Sharon Hayes with VRSCA. I think it is very easy to say large urban areas, cities are easier to target, to reach a large group of people, but I think the

outreach organization needs to be mindful of people who are living out in more rural areas. I live in North Carolina. I know that there are 70% of deaf people in North Carolina who live in rural areas and it is sometimes hard to reach those people. There has to be some concentrated effort made to go out into different areas or reach up to organizations that serve deaf and hard of hearing people, or others with disabilities, in those areas as well. As I said, it is not an easy task. We typically canvass those larger cities and we have our expos and events there where we meet with a large number of people, but we are still missing members of the public in the community who live further out and who may not have access to the Internet and different methods of getting information about these types of services. The same thing will likely apply to small towns. As we were talking about, small-town banks, medical offices, and other providers that would probably not be reachable in that same way. I would encourage you not to forget people in those areas. Thank you.

**Greg Hlibok:** Once the outreach coordinator is selected, my question is, should they partner with other entities to disseminate the information, and if so, if they should partner with other entities, with whom should they partner, what types of entities should they partner with? Jane. Wait until we get the camera on Jane.

**Jane Jonas:** Hi, Jane Jonas from [deafnation.com](http://deafnation.com). I notice many people living in poverty and are deaf are not aware of relay services and do not have access, so it is important to focus on the population. Focusing on them, through their regional organizations, would be critical. Their advocacy organizations, deaf people who work in group homes, and other treatment situations that can be reached and distributing materials to those people who can then pass along to those that they think it is critical.

**Greg Hlibok:** So you are suggesting working with local organizations?

**Jane Jonas:** Specifically local and regional, yes.

**Greg Hlibok:** Sharon again.

**Sharon Hayes:** Thanks. This is a great idea to plug into an partner with local deaf organizations in different states. I know again in North Carolina, because I live in North Carolina, that would be a wonderful way to plug into those communities and work with them. Not only to work with the deaf community and hard of hearing community, but also with the hearing community in that area as well.

**Greg Hlibok:** Mark? Next to Sharon. Over here, thanks.

**Mark Hill:** Again, I agree with what everyone -- has said, but there is someone else who might need to be involved. The group I'm thinking of are those with limited communication skills. Again, that is a group of individuals that could be -- [interpreters are asking for clarification, one second]. Those with limited communication skills are aware of certain programs and potentially working with those programs to get to that population would be helpful. The group I'm thinking of are those with limited communication skills.

**Greg Hlibok:** This is Greg. Mike, did you have something? If someone could raise their hand -- Mike, you had your hand up.

**Jeff Rosen:** The camera is on me. I will go first anyway.

**Greg Hlibok:** Hold on. Jeff has his hand raised. Thank you.

**Jeff Rosen:** Sorry, I was trying to defer to Mike. This is Jeff Rosen. I want to say that I appreciate you hosting this meeting, I know it is a very short meeting. I've got to say that is not great. I think we can certainly continue this conversation. I want to underscore that. This is an important issue. I know the budget for this is actually miniscule. I do not think that will be achieving what we want it to achieve, especially compared to the historic effort that has been made. I understand the FCC is proceeding with this. In terms of priorities, populations, there are a lot of deaf and hard of hearing people who are already aware of services, but will often not have access because of broadband. They do not have access because they are deaf-blind, do not have access to specific technologies, or they have multiple disabilities in addition to being hard of hearing that prevents access. Specifically for deaf-blind people, it is a large issue. Looking at such a tiny budget here, I am on the same page as Mike. Most of the issues we have are hang-ups by financial institutions and banks, businesses and so forth. I know I personally and many of us have had daily negative experiences with those institutions. With such a small budget, maybe it is our priority to stop hangups, to stop asking interpreters what their ID number is. Also, trying to get confidentiality agreements, as Mike said earlier, from VRS providers. I am not sure what is technologically possible. Certainly, it is not possible, but considering the size of the budget, it may end up being testing different banks and institutions to see if they are hanging up, and then, pending those results, refer them to the Department of Justice. I think an MOU with the DOJ would be beneficial. They have some great people over there, including Eve Hill, who could follow up on those complaints and take corrective action, and put some teeth behind it. The FCC cannot enforce anything in terms of these hang-ups. Providing technical assistance will only go so far. Making that tie into enforcement is critical. That is really the crux of my comment.

**Greg Hlibok:** Thank you, Jeff. Mike, your turn.

**Mike Maddix:** A couple of comments on the idea of using consumer organizations to distribute outreach material. That is a great idea, one that the central organization would develop collateral that could be shared by the likes of NAD, TDI, etc., organizations around the table, and follow them. When the FCC created some ASL videos in the past, they were successful in helping that information get out. One caution. I do not think the organizations should receive compensation for their involvement in that process. The reason why is they are largely consumer advocates organizations, and it might create somewhat of a dilemma for them if they are in the habit of receiving payment for services rendered to the Commission, distributing information, versus having to act as the watchdog should the Commission start to go down a path that is in conflict with consumer civil rights. I think that is something that needs to be watched carefully. The other thing we need to realize is, using other organizations such as Christian Vogler's idea, using audiologists. We need to realize that they work. If it works, more consumers will start to use relay services, which will cost more. It seems like the Commission, in another area than we are talking about today, did not like it when more consumers started to use the service. I think there is a wrestling match that needs to be addressed. This outreach might actually work and it will cost more if that happens.

**Greg Hlibok:** Claude.



**Claude Stout:** I want to respond specifically to your question, which was about the outreach coordinators and who they should coordinate with to conduct research or do outreach efforts. I do think it is important that the outreach coordinator should talk with all of the leaders of the national consumer organizations. We try to know and understand our members' needs, as well as the general public's needs, for the VRS and IP Relay services, but our consumer organizations should not be the only ones. Contacting parental organizations, the American Association of Deaf Children, and the FCC should encourage them to get in touch with CAID, administrators and instructors for the deaf, National Association of Special Education Directors, as well as others, who can identify where deaf and hard of hearing children are in mainstream programs. Your outreach contractor has a huge task. I do think you need to decide first, if we have adequate evidence for the outreach program, that we could actually achieve our goals. Considering the amount of money we have here. If you determine \$2 million a year -- I believe that is very small particularly for the type of outreach we are expecting the FCC to do. So first, what would an effective outreach program look like, and then how much money would that take? If, at this current moment, it is not possible, considering the amount of money available, but understanding what an average program should look like, you want to make sure you have a goal in mind so that you can achieve it, rather than setting the budget and then seeing what is achievable. You want to think about the market dollars and what they are providing for outreach. VRS providers' outreach marketing dollars are also important to consider here. We cannot forget that they will continue their work as well. If you start taking it over, we have to be mindful that providers may reduce or stop their efforts.

**Kelby Brick:** I am Kelby Brick from Brick Advantage. The FCC has taken away the money from providers for outreach. It is no longer part of the reimbursement, so that is a loss. So you are losing some outreach. They have been giving information out to the community - that is now lost. They have been the ones with the feet on the ground to the deaf community and to the community at large. With those cuts to VRS providers, you are taking it on as the Commission. I have personally already seen impacts from this. Loss of brand awareness has happened, and I think that is important because consumers need to know what new developments providers have come up with. That has been lost. \$2 million is a tiny bit of money and there is absolutely no way to replace the outreach that has been done. I do not know if you are trying to come up with a quick fix or one-size-fits-all type of situation, so maybe a Super Bowl ad, as an example, 30 seconds. If you feel that will solve all of your outreach problems, that might be a consideration, though it will get a lot of eyeballs even as opposed to the slow feet on the ground approach, if you will, which will have less eyeballs on it, if you will. Yet, more potential growth. So the FCC has to decide what it wants to do. A one-shot deal or a slow rolling out program. Something else the FCC needs to look at is keeping in mind the success of providers in reaching out through, for example, human resources people at various corporations. They have been taught how to receive a relay call, how to make a relay call. Perhaps the FCC can work with these types of corporations themselves, go back to those HR people that have had the experience, let them get it

through their Corporation network and let them use their Corporation's resource to partner with them. That is something the Commission and we can look to.

**Greg Hlibok:** Back to Jeff.

**Jeff Rosen:** Thank you. I briefly wanted to say that I do strongly support, and I think there is widespread support, for money going to a deaf organization. Deaf people know how to do this outreach. I think if the FCC has to provide instruction to an organization -- thinking about organizations like NAD -- I do not think that is their business. They know how to run the outreach efforts. I am not certain it makes sense to provide that specific guidance. I know that in the FCC proposal, with the neutral platform proposal, as we talked about, DeafNation is new but has a large grassroots population. We really need to look at a council, not an advisory committee. Just as was done with the national deaf-blind program -- there is a great model there disturbing funds to organizations. I would like to see that support from the deaf community and Convo really advocates from the deaf consumer point of view, and we believe that deaf consumers should be included here as an essential part, rather than as an afterthought.

**Greg Hlibok:** Andrew. Waiting for the camera. Thanks.

**Andrew Phillips:** Thank you very much. Andrew Phillips with the National Association of the Deaf. I also think it is important that outreach is done by people on the front line. People who already have established relationships in the community. People that the community, wherever they are, are familiar with and there is a level of trust developed. Whether it is deaf or hard of hearing people themselves. It is very impactful to have a hard of hearing person go to the bank and tell them how to make a relay call. They are learning not only how to accept a relay call, but that deaf people have been empowered to do that outreach. As opposed to someone who is not deaf or hard of hearing going into that bank and they may show a level of sympathy that we are not looking for. I honestly think many national organizations or local organizations are in the best place to provide outreach to the communities they serve, and whether it is financial institutions or banks or so forth in their localities.

**Greg Hlibok:** Sharon.

**Sharon Hayes:** This is Sharon Hayes with VRSCA. I just wanted to throw in my two cents as well along the lines of Andrew and Jeff's comments. Of course, I agree. I just wanted to say, on behalf of the consumers who use VRS, we need to own this. We really need to own this this time. That is what I want to say.

**Greg Hlibok:** This is Greg. OK, thank you. I want to clarify one quick point on the funding aspect. We have been paying providers all along via the permanent reimbursement scheme for outreach. The FCC has, written in the record, indicated there are still a large number of hang-ups and entities not understanding what it is or how to handle a relay call. We have not seen any improvement in this area from the day one. I am sure NAD can attest to that experience as well. Again, the FCC is making an effort to see what we can do to finally make things work this time and we are shifting the obligation to this independent organization to inform folks about relay. Mike, I see your hand. Let me clarify one more point. Ironically, there is a question that you already answered, a question I was going to throw out, which was, what particular quality or criteria should the Commission be looking for in an outreach coordinator?

Some of you have touched on that particular question. For example, an entity that has a prominent role in the deaf community, maybe being a deaf or hard of hearing run organization. Sharon mentioned folks need to take ownership of the issue. Are there any other particular qualities that this entity should have? Mike.

**Mike Maddix:** My comment has more to do with your earlier comment and has to do with the targeted outreach. I want to give an example, where in the early days, before 911 was mandated, Sorenson started processing calls before they were required. In the early days, we had hang-ups from PSAPs who did not know what they were getting, they were confused. Sorenson, -- personally, I have been to every conference they have had, national conference over the last several years. We talked to the PSAPs, we speak with NENA, we send it to places all over the country. There are no more problems because of the targeted outreach we did. Every week, Sorenson processes several hundred 911 VRS calls every week. There are not any more problems with it. It worked because of targeted outreach in areas where there was a problem.

**Greg Hlibok:** To the question that I raised about certain qualities or characteristics, Claude, did you want to address that?

**Claude Stout:** This is Claude with TDI. You raise a good question about the qualifications and quality to look for in terms of the outreach coordinator. A hard question, because we put a lot of emphasis on outreach for deaf and hard of hearing populations who are going to benefit from the service, but we also must be mindful that relay service is not only for deaf and hard of hearing people. Relay service is for both parties on a call, hearing and deaf or hard of hearing, or people with speech impediments, or people with mobility disabilities. Half of that relay call is the hearing person. So selecting an outreach coordinator is a difficult proposition - you want to make sure that we select someone that has -- even if they do not have the specific understanding and skill in the community that they know who to go to. The coordinator is going to want to recruit a diverse staff to outreach with these different populations, people who are good at reaching out to deaf and hard of your populations, those who are going to be more skilled at doing the mass media with television or radio, to figure out what makes hearing people tick. How do we reach those hearing people? We do not want to reach the hearing people who already know and are sensitive to deaf people. They are not the target population we are trying to reach. We have to get into the brain of the hearing consumer. Whoever you pick has to have some expertise not only in dealing with deaf and other populations, but also dealing with the business community, service providers, hospitals, doctors, social workers, mental health services, among others. But relay is a general community issue. Certainly, most of the benefit goes to the people who are deaf and hard of hearing or with speech disabilities, mobility disability, people who are blind, but if we make that population much more aware, the population at large, that is where we will see the improvement in overall use of the service.

**Greg Hlibok:** Thanks. Anyone else on that particular -- Andrew and then Kelby.

**Andrew Phillips:** This is Andrew. Hi, I just want to add a brief comment on a hang-up issue and how it is continuing to perpetuate, although there have been organizations such as NAD and TDI trying to educate the general population. Providers have been

working hard to conduct such education. I guess my point in saying all of this is you want the outreach to be somewhat ongoing because the person who works at this financial institution that learned how to accept a relay call will not work there for 10 years. They will be replaced by someone who may hang up on the next call. You want to have an ongoing type of situation, just like in our lawsuit situations. Sometimes we see the effects last only for a certain amount of time, because the education that may have been required as a result of the lawsuit was short-lived. My point is that it needs to be an ongoing situation.

**Greg Hlibok:** Kelby.

**Kelby Brick:** This is Kelby. You ask about the criteria that your coordinator should have, certainly a number of things that we could say, but I want to emphasize two things in particular. The first, that this coordinator should already have experience in outreach on these very specific issues. For example, some have mentioned it, reaching out to PSAPs, companies and corporations that should have expertise in those areas. Otherwise, the FCC will be wasting money on the ramp-up for this coordinator, their learning curve to get up to speed. You want someone who will already be skilled at marketing the relay service to those particular people and educating those populations, how to use relay and so forth. What has worked and what does not work, so they do not have to go through that again. My second point - a lot of people are skeptical of what the FCC is doing here. People feel this is an effort to take money away from the civil rights program. Maybe not a civil rights program, service. If the FCC contracts with a coordinator who has no understanding of the issues, no working on these issues, and no background in relay service, no background with these communities, this will be looked at as carpetbagging. Trying to exploit this civil rights program for monetary gain of another entity. We want to prevent that perception. FCC needs to hire a contractor who already has experience on these issues in this community.

**Greg Hlibok:** This is Greg. Jane.

**Jane Jonas:** Hi, this is Jane. I agree with everything my colleagues have said. I want to add that this entity needs to be savvy with mass media and social media and be very technologically savvy and have information that can keep pace with the deaf community. If you have an entity that is unfamiliar with this and does not have appropriate web and technical skills on how to reach the deaf community, it will not work. That is my key point to make.

**Greg Hlibok:** Thank you. I will recognize Aaron.

**Aaron Guiterman:** I am hearing a consistent theme, there is a multitude of audiences that we need to reach, mobilize, educate, in relation to the issues. More importantly, what the underscoring theme that I am hearing is, there is a requirement and should be a requirement of the coordinator to have extensive research capabilities. Not only in demographic and behavioral and clustering audience populations, but also how that then interacts with media consumption. What is going to happen is, in planning a campaign based on research, once you understand the demographics and values related to each audience you need to communicate with, you can then pinpoint how each one of those audiences intersects with media. Whether it be earned, paid, online, or in the

digital space. I think research will play a significant role in driving efficiency and efficacy of the campaign.

**Greg Hlibok:** OK, thanks. Back to Jane's point and emphasizing the need of using -- being savvy with social media. Can you give me an example of a particular method that you would suggest being used, since there are so many possibilities? For example, TV ads, the 30 seconds Super Bowl ad, as an example, webpage, social media, radio, other media outlets, town hall meetings, presentations, booths at Expos or so forth. Are there videos? Holding aside the funding aspect for a second, out of what I listed or anything I did not list, are there any particular methods that are more effective in reaching out to the hearing population? Sharon.

**Sharon Hayes:** This is Sharon again. From my experience, we have set up booths at various Expos and meetings, attended various events, and gone to gatherings for deaf people frequently. That is really the way to attract -- back to Greg for one second.

**Greg Hlibok:** I am sorry to do that. Just to clarify my question. You said booths and conferences and so forth. Could you specify what types of conferences? Any particular population that you have in mind? Back to Sharon.

**Sharon Hayes:** Sure, states host various events through the year. The DeafNation Expo is one great venue we have been attending. Not everyone goes to the DeafNation Expo. There is one coming up called Winterfest. Each state tends to host their own individual Expo. What is hosted in Missouri might be different from Kansas, etc. It is state-dependent, and is different times in the year. For the person that does this outreach would need to be in the know about how to find those resources and identify those events. Often, those events will have attendance of over 1000 people, sometimes even in the 4000 numbers, but we do not want to limit ourselves to those types of events. Not everyone we are trying to reach attends them. I think that is one fantastic way to get the word out, but not the only way, to disseminate that information. In terms of reaching a larger hearing audience, you would have to identify target groups and attend events where those people gather such as health fairs, expos, clubs, etc. We would have to be savvy in researching where and what types of events are happening, this would apply to both hearing and deaf audiences; so we could make sure we get the word out.

**Greg Hlibok:** Thanks. Mark.

**Mark Hill:** This is Mark Hill again from Cerebral Palsy and the Deaf organization. I support what Sharon just said. About going to, for example DeafNation. However, there are a lot of diverse services and populations out there. One thing does not fit all. For example, you have folks that use wheelchairs, those that are deaf-blind, others with various mobility disabilities, you name it. And whoever it is has got to understand all those populations in finding one organization familiar with all of those is difficult.

**Greg Hlibok:** Angie at the end. Angie Officer.

**Angie Officer:** Thank you, Greg. My name is Angie Officer. I am with Sprint Relay. Greg asked a very pointed question. As we are targeting hearing audiences, what is the most effective tool in Sprint Relay's experience, over the past several years, the most effective way to reach hearing people is absolutely by radio. It is amazing how much hearing people enjoy listening to the news while they are commuting, in their cars,

and we get tons of questions from hearing people solicited through radio outreach. Through public service announcements as well. Those have been tremendously effective. We just recently entered into a partnership with United Cerebral Palsy -- UCP -- and they have done quite a bit of marketing with us and people with speech disabilities, and their families as well. It is important when we are trying to reach hearing audiences, to partner with national level organizations, with their headquarters. They will help us to disseminate that information and they will do it in a way that is sensitive to the communities we are trying to reach. Those are the three areas I would recommend focusing on to hearing people so they are aware: radio, public service announcements, and reaching out through existing national organizations. Back to Greg.

**Greg Hlibok:** Thank you. Anyone else? Claude.

**Claude Stout:** Just a couple of ideas for you. Keep in mind, there are children's programs. Whether it is through various cartoons, as an example, that get kids' attention. You could have a character there using a video phone or using a captioned telephone. Hearing children love watching those types of programs and they may have a hard of hearing or deaf friend, or parent. If they can -- once they learn about relay, they can teach their parent as well. What a boon that would be if the FCC could partner with Hollywood or the TV industry in coming up with that type of concept, to introduce all the good that relay service can provide to a younger generation. I honestly do not think it would cost that much money. You have the right connections. You might be able to help this organization and possibly use your network. I do not think it is necessarily the best approach. I think it is a solution that you can keep in mind. I can say in the past, every time we see something on television -- for example, some new piece of equipment like a telephone that a hard of hearing or deaf person can use, we are thrilled when the general population also saw that ad. TV is an effective medium, but don't forget what others have said about social media. YouTube is not a bad idea, too. Videos get lots of hits on YouTube. Radio can sometimes be a one-shot deal or a few times a year deal, so you want to find something that folks will hear or pay attention to on a daily basis.

**Greg Hlibok:** Thanks. Kelby.

**Kelby Brick:** I believe the Commission needs to decide up front who the target audience is. That has got to be the first, identify the audience. We talk about how limited the budget is, we mention a variety of groups, but we do not have the funds to thoroughly educate all of them. To be successful, we have to target a particular group and put our efforts and resources into that group. Whether it is PSAPs, corporations, whether it is parents, we have got to name our target audience. If we try to focus and spread ourselves too thin, we will be ineffective. We cannot be all things to all people. Again, with the idea of getting a Super Bowl ad, we could reach the largest number of people in a short window of time, but that is short-lived.

**Greg Hlibok:** Time is running out. You can compete with each other - who wants to go first?

**Aaron Guiterman:** The interesting thing the Commission needs to consider is the barrier for entry into social media is quite low. From a communications standpoint, the value of social media right now across multiple channels, primarily Facebook and

Twitter, but there are others, is that the amount of data available for research and planning, to connect with communities online who are already talking about these issues is critical. It is the low hanging fruit of communities who are already engaged, who already have strong followings, talking to one another about these issues, that allows you to enter and test your messaging and optimize your messaging in a short period of time. And it is also measurable. Everything you can do in the additional space has metrics behind it. Cost efficient -- there are available communities already available online. Your measure of success can be measured relatively quickly.

**Greg Hlibok:** Jeff.

**Jeff Rosen:** This is Jeff with Convo. I want to applaud the FCC for recognizing the need for this kind of service. But on the flip side, I'm not sure that the approach is commendable. This is sort of an experiment. We are not sure how it will work. FCC is going to allocate funds to an independent organization with no idea what the result will be, and I think we have already seen harm to the deaf community by taking that function away from VRS providers. What the long-term result will be, remains to be seen. I do think the FCC has demonstrated that we have got to put in place some metrics to determine whether the program is successful or not. If we see that we have not made an impact, I would plead that you re-examine the approach and reallocate funds, because we cannot afford an experiment that hurts the civil rights of deaf individuals.

**Greg Hlibok:** Thanks, Jeff. This is Greg speaking. There are many avenues, issues that were dealt with via the rulemaking procedures. Remember there was an opportunity to file comments and proposals were submitted. Those things can still be done. We are trying to bring everyone back to the scope and purpose of this meeting, to solicit ideas for an effective outreach. I appreciate everyone staying within the scope of the meeting. Sharon.

**Sharon Hayes:** This is Sharon Hayes. In regards to social media, it is definitely a great way to reach people, but you will not reach everyone through that avenue. It is impossible to reach everyone, regardless of what you do, but there are still many people in the world who do not use social media. Folks my age, my husband, my mother. Those folks definitely do not use social media regardless of the fact that they are deaf and it may be beneficial to them. There are populations within the deaf and hard of hearing community that just do not use social media. That may not be the most effective way to reach out to certain populations. And I know that you know that as well. Without really working together with schools, with deaf clubs, organizations that serve hard of hearing populations and others with disabilities, you have just got to be creative in finding and identifying other groups who are typically harder to reach, and who will be the most in need, because they are the hardest to reach.

**Greg Hlibok:** This is Greg. Just to give you a quick warning, we have less than 15 minutes left. I know you have more comments. I have two specific questions I want to try to get out, and then I am happy to open the floor so that you can throw ideas off the top of your head. I will go to Billy real quick.

**Billy Kendrick:** Hello, Billy Kendrick, Communication Services for the Deaf. We just completed a multiyear grant, BTOP grant. At the beginning of the grant, the goal was to improve broadband access for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. During the time

of the grant, we realized the scope was way too broad. The individuals who wrote the grant program, left it way too broad and open in our opinion. So we chose to narrow the scope to specific metrics, and we found that really was more effective in capturing the purpose of the program. I am suggesting the FCC use same approach. We have heard some great suggestions from various stakeholders, and they have mentioned specific populations that should be reached out to, whether mental health institutions, financial institutions, large corporations, schools for the deaf, welfare agencies, Medicare companies, pharmacies, etc. Things like that. Again, however, the target here is not educating the deaf community. They already know about relay, generally speaking. For this particular project, you have to get to the folks who do not know about relay because they receive a relay call, they hear it is from a man's name but they hear a female voice. They want to hang up. I think this -- you should narrow the scope of what you are talking about in order to have an effective program. If you do so, you have a better chance of having an effective program. And then target your response. Speaking from what CSD has experienced, gleaned.

**Greg Hlibok:** This is Greg. Honestly, I could not have said it better.

This is truly the purpose of today's meeting, getting some meaningful feedback for this particular procurement process for when we let the contract to someone. Dave has left. I did want to speak for him, but we do not know what this will look like. We have collected your feedback and I appreciate what you said, Billy. It will be part of what we consider. Kelby.

**Kelby Brick:** This is Kelby here. The federal government has just adopted the new section 503 requirement for federal contractors to hire people with disabilities. It would be good for FCC to build on that initiative. It would require an individual not only to have experience and background with a relay service, but that provider or the coordinator to have staff who uses the relay service on a regular basis. If they do not use the service regularly on their own, they really have very limited understanding of relay services itself and in turn, how to market that. A requirement could be that the coordinator have people on staff who use relay on a regular basis as well as that background knowledge and experience and that the staff include a significant number of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

**Greg Hlibok:** Thanks. This is Greg. Any more comments on that particular issue? OK, with about 10 minutes left, I will tell you, what I am hearing so far is a strong emphasis on targeting particular audiences. For example, financial institutions, health care institutions, and government agencies. And that the funding amount seems insufficient, in general, to support this program if the program has too broad of a target and too broad of a scope. And, that there is no one -size-fits-all approach to this. That various approaches will need to be taken as it depends on a target audience. I do have two quick questions for you. As Mike had pointed out, there could be the possibility of establishing a hotline for someone with experience, frustration using relay, whether someone refused to answer their call, that there could be a hotline where that person could report the problem, and then potentially someone be available to the public to show how prevalent that problem is, which might be a way to measure the success of this program. Do you feel that would be important, that is my first question? My second



question is, do you feel how the communication assistant, CA, announces relay, might be a cause of the persistent hang-up problem, meaning, should there be an announcement, should there not be an announcement, would one or the other increase or reduce the understanding of the person on the other side of the call that which is essentially resulting in a lot of the hang-ups? We are trying to figure out different ways to track the progress of this particular program. One might be able to track to see if the hang-up situation improves. Andrew for a second.

**Andrew Phillips:** Hello? Thank you. This is Andrew Phillips with the National Association of the Deaf. I definitely think that we should keep track of the number of hang-ups. Sharing that information will help the community understand the extent of the problem we are facing. Of course, as Jeff Rosen stated, any reports of hang-ups should also be tied to enforcement actions because if there is no enforcement, people may not be motivated to change their responses to accept those calls, or even to report hang-ups. It may be a way to judge the effectiveness of the program, but with only \$2 million a year, we may not, in fact, be able to change the situation across the country in such a short window of time and with such a tight budget. I think we have to make sure that we have a number of strategies.

**Greg Hlibok:** Thanks. Sharon, and then Aaron.

**Sharon Hayes:** This is Sharon again. I think that is a great idea to establish the idea of a hotline. However, we also have to consider how we are going to disseminate the information to deaf and hard of hearing people. How will they know that there is a place for them to even go to report they have experienced frustration or hang-ups? I imagine at least half the consumers out there or even more would either not know about the hotline or would not take the time to make the report. So I think we need to come up with a most effective way of implementing that kind of suggestion as well.

**Greg Hlibok:** Aaron quick. Mike, sorry. Aaron first, Jeff, then Mike.

**Aaron Guiterman:** There are various research methodologies that you can employ to test the receptivity of a campaign throughout its duration. Going back to the requirements of the contractor, research from a pre-campaign to get an understanding and benchmarking of attitude, usage, understanding of the issues, with the general public and with the audience we are targeting. Halfway through the campaign, at set time periods, we can do the same quantitative survey, as well as qualitative overlays with those audiences, and see how those quantitative measures, attitudes, uses, perceptions, change to the course of the campaign. As you get to the end of the first year, you can conduct the same survey again, apples to apples, from before the campaign launch, throughout the duration of the campaign, to measure those key performance indicators that are crucial to go back and say, the campaign is effective in these areas with these audiences, or not. Then that will help to answer why. So you can be fine tuning the initiatives, tactics, audience segmentation, throughout the campaign execution, but you are serving the same base of individuals throughout. That will give you a good measure of success as the campaign involves -- evolves.

**Greg Hlibok:** Jeff and then back to Mike.

**Jeff Rosen:** Actually, the camera is on Jeff, so I will take it. Sorry, Mike.

This is Jeff with Convo. I want to mention we should look at what has worked and what has not in other areas. For example, the Department of Transportation and the airline industry, they have a hotline. I have met with them over the last 10 years and they have admitted that the hotline was a good concept but no one ever called it. In that light, Sharon might be right. Second, what has worked, I would say, in other agencies, with Housing and Urban Development, I had talked earlier in my comments about testers. They have folks who make test calls, if you will, to see if their rules and regulations are being followed. I would suggest the same thing might happen with this. It has worked successfully in the areas of housing. Sorry to do that to you, Mike.

**Mike Maddix:** Greg, here is how you make the hotline work. Every time a business refuses a relay call, have the interpreter who attempted to relay the call make the consumer aware of the hotline in case they want to report it. It will work. It will work. The other thing to be aware of is the idea of announcing the VRS call, not announcing. The consumers control the call. It is a double-edged sword. Without the education that it is a relay call, you can tell there is something different about the call, which puts people on guard. So therefore announcing helps in some situations. In other situations, like with some of the major banks, if it is not announced, because the consumers learn they are more successful if it is not announced, they will not process the call because they do not know what CA is on the call, it is not announced what their company name is, CA number, and they will not process the call for that reason. So it goes back to the outreach and the requirement that the businesses have to receive the call, and the enforcement angle. There needs to be a penalty if businesses refuse to process the calls. If they are educated about the responsibility, it will not matter if the call is announced or not. They will process the call because they are fearful of the penalty. Like the do-not-call list. If the consumer is made aware of it every time they have a business hanging up, and you can report it, they will.

**Greg Hlibok:** I am looking at the clock and we do have to stop. I truly apologize, again, I truly apologize. Obviously, we wish we could continue, but we have to stop. We appreciate your input. It has been extremely helpful and substantive. You have explained very clearly all of your ideas. I do want to emphasize one particular thing. Today is not the end. Even the moment a vendor is chosen, that also does not mean the effort ends. It is all of our responsibility and ongoing effort, if you will, to look at this program and modify it as necessary. It is a brand-new concept for us. Again, I thank you. You still have the opportunity to provide feedback on this particular issue, as I said, until February 1st. You can send in ideas, suggestions, e-mail them to Elaine Gardner. The webcast of this as well as an unofficial transcript of this will be -- the transcript will be on the TRS page. The broadcast will not, but the transcript will be. You can also see the archived webcast of this on the FCC page. We appreciate you coming, and giving us your valuable feedback. Thank you.

Participants at Meeting:

Kelby Brick, Brick Advantage

Mark Hill, Cerebral Palsy and Deaf Organization  
Everett Puckett, Communication Access Ability Group  
Billy Kendrick, Communication Service for the Deaf, Inc. (CSD)  
Debbie Goldman, Communications Workers of America  
Jeff Rosen, Convo Relay  
David Bowles, Creative Marketing Resources, Inc.  
Aaron Guiterman, DDC Advocacy  
Jane Jonas, [DeafNation.com](http://DeafNation.com)  
Glenn Hughes, Evolution Impressions, Inc.  
Christian Vogler, Gallaudet University Technology Access Program  
David A. O'Connor, Hamilton Relay  
Andrew Phillips, National Association of the Deaf  
Ryan Karnas, Neustar, Inc.  
Monica Desai, Purple Communications  
Michael Maddix, Sorenson Communications  
Angie Officer, Sprint  
Alan Stiffler  
Claude Stout, Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI)  
Sharon Hayes, Video Relay Services Consumer Association (VRSCA )  
Kerry Humphrey, Weber Shandwick

For the Commission:  
Karen Peltz Strauss  
David Schmidt  
Greg Hlibok  
Elaine Gardner