

Sprint Selected as State's Telecommunication Relay Service Provider

SALT LAKE CITY—Aug. 3, 2015—Utah welcomes Sprint as the new Telecommunication Relay Service (TRS) provider starting August 1, 2015. Sprint was selected by the Utah Public Service Commission to provide TRS for its Relay Utah program for deaf, hard of hearing and individuals with speech difficulties. Sprint has a 25-year history in the Relay industry as the nation's largest TRS provider.

TRS is free and is accessed by dialing 7-1-1. It is a "relay" or "translation" service that enables those who are deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing, and speech disabled to communicate with traditional telephone users through a specialized text telephone and third party operator called a communications assistant. TRS is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and all calls are completely confidential. Currently nearly 10,000 TRS calls are placed each month in Utah.

"TRS helps improve the quality of life for Utah's deaf, hard of hearing and individuals with speech difficulties by making communication and connection easy and seamless," said Gary Widerburg, commission secretary. "Sprint has an extensive and proven history of providing TRS and we're confident it will provide excellent and dependable service."

In addition to providing relay services, Sprint will actively engage in outreach and education throughout Utah with the goal of increasing awareness for the 7-1-1 Relay service as well as the equipment distribution program.

Relay Utah's equipment distribution program loans equipment at no cost to Utah residents that qualify who currently participate in the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, Medicaid and other Department of Human Service or Public Assistance Programs. A complete list can be found at <http://www.relayutah.gov/qualify.html>. TRS and the Relay Utah equipment program is subsidized through a \$.02 telephone line surcharge.

"Sprint looks forward to working with Utah consumers and welcomes questions from all communities and individuals who wish to learn more about the Utah Relay Service," said Mike Ellis, director at Sprint Relay.

Relay Utah has been operational since 1987 and was one of the first hearing assistive equipment distribution programs to be established in the United States.

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