

# Minnesota Relay

Telecommunications services and equipment that provide independence for Minnesotans who have difficulty using the telephone due to a hearing loss, speech disability, or physical disability



Stay Connected! There are many free services that make it possible for people who are hard of hearing, deaf, deafblind, speech disabled, or physically disabled to conduct business, contact emergency services, and stay connected to family and friends.

These services provide assistance with making a phone call, provide free specialized telecommunications equipment, and provide financial assistance for the cost of telephone or internet services for eligible Minnesotans.

# Minnesota Relay

Minnesota Relay is a free service providing telephone accessibility to people who are hard of hearing, deaf, deafblind, or speech disabled.

## Dial 711 to Make a Relay Call

711 is a toll-free, nationwide relay access number. You may dial 711 from anywhere in the country and be connected to the relay service in the state you are calling from. Once connected to the relay service, inform the communications assistant of the type of relay call you wish to make (i.e. HCO, VCO, STS, Spanish, etc.).

NOTE: The 711 access number is easy to remember, particularly for less experienced relay users. However, dialing the toll-free number specific for the type of relay call you wish to make may result in faster call set-up, as your call will not need to be transferred.

The 711 dialing access does not work for Video Relay Service (VRS), Internet Protocol (IP) Relay, or IP Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS) calls. To initiate a call to a VRS, IP Relay, or IP CTS user just dial the party's 10-digit telephone number directly.



You can use Minnesota Relay to call family, friends, businesses, and vital services. Calls can be made to anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with no restrictions on the number, length, or type of calls.

A specially trained communications assistant (CA) facilitates the telephone conversation between the person who has a hearing loss or speech disability and the other person on the call.



All calls are completely confidential and no records of any conversations are maintained.



# Types of Relay Services

There are a number of different types of relay services available to meet specific telecommunications needs.



## Hearing User: 1-800-627-3529

A hearing person may use a standard telephone (wired or wireless) to place a relay call and speak with a person who is deaf, hard of hearing, or speech disabled.



## CapTel™ Captioned Telephone

CapTel is for individuals who can speak and have some residual hearing, but their hearing loss is significant enough that they can't use a standard telephone or specialized equipment, such as an amplified telephone or hearing-aid compatible phone.

CapTel uses a special telephone with a text display screen so that a person who is hard of hearing can listen to and read captions of everything the other person on the call says. You speak directly to the other person on the call, and a relay communications assistant transcribes everything the other person says into written text, which appears on the display screen of your CapTel phone.

## Voice Carry Over (VCO): 1-877-627-3024

VCO is an option for a person who can speak clearly, but has hearing loss significant enough to prevent them from hearing and understanding conversations over the telephone.

Using VCO relay and a specially designed telephone with a text display, you can speak directly to the other person on the call. The relay communications assistant types what is spoken by the other person for you to read.

## Text Telephone (TTY): 1-800-627-3529

This service allows a person who is deaf, deafblind, or speech disabled to use a TTY to communicate with the other person on the call. The relay communications assistant reads your typed words to the other person, and types the other person's words for you to read.

Individuals who are deafblind can use a TTY equipped with a braille display or a large visual display.



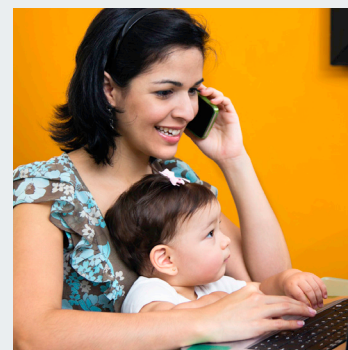
## Speech-to-Speech (STS): 1-877-627-3848

STS allows a person who has difficulty speaking or being understood on the telephone to communicate using his or her own voice or voice synthesizer. The relay communications assistant revoices your words so that the other person on the call can understand them, and the other person speaks directly to you.

No special telephone equipment is needed to use STS, though some people may find beneficial to use a speakerphone or hands-free telephone equipment.

## Hearing Carry Over (HCO): 1-800-627-3529

HCO allows a person who can hear clearly but who has very limited or no speech capability to make and receive phone calls. Using a special text telephone, you type your conversation for the relay communications assistant to read to the other person, and listen directly to the other person's response.



## Spanish Relay: 1-877-627-5448

Relay services are also available to Spanish speaking individuals with a hearing or speech disability. This is not a translation service. A communications assistant relays the call between a Spanish speaking person with a hearing or speech disability and a Spanish speaking hearing person. Dial the Spanish Relay toll-free number and tell the CA the type of relay call you wish to make.

Para Relay en español, llama 1-877-627-5448. No es un servicio traducción.

# Internet-Based Relay Services

Internet-based Relay services are currently under the jurisdiction of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and are available nationwide. These services are paid for through a fund administered by the FCC, and are not a part of Minnesota Relay.

## Internet Protocol (IP) Relay

IP Relay is a text-based form of relay service that uses the internet, rather than a traditional telephone line and TTY, for the leg of the call between the person with a hearing or speech disability and the relay communications assistant. You are able to make your relay call using a computer, laptop, tablet, or select smartphones.

IP Relay is offered by Sprint Relay. For more information go to [www.sprintrelay.com/services/sprint-ip-relay](http://www.sprintrelay.com/services/sprint-ip-relay).

## Video Relay Service (VRS)

VRS allows a person who uses American Sign Language to place phone calls by signing instead of typing.

You contact a VRS provider using a high-speed internet connection and a videophone, computer, tablet, or mobile device. The VRS communications assistant, who is a qualified sign language interpreter, then places the telephone call to the party with whom you wish to speak. The communications assistant relays the conversation back and forth between the parties – in sign language with the VRS user and by voice with the called party.

Numerous providers offer VRS. For more information regarding VRS go to [www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/video-relay-services](http://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/video-relay-services).



## Internet Protocol Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS)

This service is for individuals who can speak and have some residual hearing, but their hearing loss is significant enough that they can't use a standard telephone or specialized equipment, such as an amplified telephone or hearing-aid compatible phone.

IP CTS uses a relay communications assistant to allow people who are hard of hearing to see captions of their telephone conversation on a display screen built into a specialized CTS phone, while also listening to what is being said using their residual hearing. You speak directly to the other person on the call, and the communications assistant transcribes everything the other person says into written text for you to read.



You must have standard analog or digital phone service and high-speed internet access to use this service. The voice/audio part of the call is delivered over the telephone line, while the captions are delivered via the internet connection.

Numerous providers offer IP CTS. For more information regarding IP CTS go to [www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/internet-protocol-ip-captioned-telephone-service](http://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/internet-protocol-ip-captioned-telephone-service).

## WebCapTel

WebCapTel is a web-based form of captioned telephone service that allows you to listen to the other party on the call using your phone (landline or wireless), while reading word-for-word captions on a computer or laptop (internet access required). For more information go to: [www.captel.com/webcaptel](http://www.captel.com/webcaptel).

## Mobile Captioned Telephone Service

Software apps make it easy to get captioned telephone service on select smartphones and tablets. The app delivers captions of everything your caller says, while you listen (with your residual hearing) and speak directly to your caller. For more information search “captioned telephone” in your device’s app store/marketplace.



# Relay Calling Features

## Compliments or Complaints

If you would like to file a complement or complaint regarding Minnesota Relay, please call 1-800-657-3775 (voice/TTY). You will need to provide the date and time of the relay call, the calling to and from telephone numbers, the CA's identification number, and the nature of your complement or complaint.

You may also file a relay complaint with the Federal Communications Commission:

Online: [www.fcc.gov/complaints](http://www.fcc.gov/complaints)

Voice: 1-888-225-5322

TTY: 1-888-835-5322

ASL via VP: 1-844-432-2275



## Customer Preferences

Relay users are able to customize their relay call by registering their call preferences such as frequently dialed numbers, the type of relay service you use, whether or not you want the communications assistant to explain relay to your caller, etc. By completing a Customer Preference/Profile, the relay is able to store your call preferences in their database. This will allow your relay calls to be set up quickly.

Ask your relay provider how you can set up a customer preference/profile.

## Deafblind Transmission Speed

Minnesota Relay users with low vision who use a TTY equipped with a Telebraille or large visual display typically prefer slower typing speeds. During this type of relay call, the communications assistant will type at a normal speed, but the text will come across at a rate of 15 words per minute, allowing for a more readable transmission speed. Users may request to increase or decrease the transmission speed in increments of 5 words per minute.

## Emergency Assistance

TTY callers should dial 911 or other existing emergency numbers directly in emergency situations. All 911 centers are equipped to handle TTY calls. Minnesota Relay can process emergency calls, but doing so may result in a delay in your call getting through.

## International Calls

Relay users are able to place and receive calls from anywhere in the world (using English or Spanish languages only).

- Callers within the US can dial 711.
- Callers outside the US can dial 1-605-224-1837.

Different requirements apply for international calling for internet-based relay calls. Ask your internet-based relay provider for their policy.

## Public Payphones

Minnesota Relay users can make relay calls from payphones free of charge. Just dial 7-1-1 on most payphones and give the relay communications assistant the phone number that you wish to call.

## Voice Mail/Answering Machine Retrieval

Allows relay users to retrieve voice messages on their answering machine or voice mail.



# Financial Assistance

## Specialized Telecommunications Equipment

### Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program

If you meet certain eligibility requirements, you may qualify to receive telecommunications equipment at no cost through Minnesota’s TED Program. The TED Program loans telecommunications equipment to people who are hard of hearing, deaf, deafblind, speech disabled, or physically disabled. If you do not qualify, TED Program staff can provide you with a directory of vendors where equipment can be purchased.

#### To learn more about the TED Program:

Website: [mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing](http://mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing) – search for “TED Program”

Voice: 1-800-657-3663

VP: 651-964-1514

### National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (iCanConnect)



If you have significant combined vision and hearing loss and meet federal income guidelines, iCanConnect can provide you with free communication equipment and software, as well as training in your home, allowing you to take full advantage of the powerful features and functionality that today’s communication technologies provide.

#### To learn more about iCanConnect:

Website: [www.icanconnect.org](http://www.icanconnect.org)

Voice: 612-990-3834

Fax: 866-844-4689



## Discounts for Telephone or Internet Service Costs

### Lifeline and Telephone Assistance Plan (TAP)

The federal Lifeline and state Telephone Assistance (TAP) programs provide monthly discounts on landline or wireless telephone service, or on internet (broadband) service, for eligible low-income customers.

Additional Lifeline discounts are available to low-income residents who live on Tribal lands. Only one Lifeline/TAP service discount is allowed per household.

#### To learn more:

Website: [mn.gov/puc](http://mn.gov/puc) - search for “telephone assistance”

Voice: 651-296-0406 or 1-800-657-3782

E-mail: [consumer.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:consumer.puc@state.mn.us)





**To learn more about Minnesota Relay Services or to  
schedule a free presentation:**

Website: [www.mnrelay.org](http://www.mnrelay.org)

1-800-657-3775

E-mail: [mn.relay@state.mn.us](mailto:mn.relay@state.mn.us)

The Telecommunications Access Minnesota (TAM) program within the Department of Commerce is the state administrative office responsible for ensuring equal access to the telecommunications network for Minnesotans who are hard of hearing, deaf, deafblind, speech disabled, or physically disabled.

Minnesota Relay and the TED Program are funded by a telephone surcharge.

