



State of Maine  
Maine Telecommunications Relay Service Council  
160 Capitol Street  
Suite 4  
Augusta ME 04330

Janet T. Mills  
Governor

John Post  
Council Chair

October 31, 2025

Joint Standing Committee on  
Energy, Utilities and Technology  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology,

My name is Benjamin Frech and I am the Executive Director for the Telecommunications Relay Service Council of Maine. Pursuant to the Government Evaluation Act, Title 3 of the Maine Revised Statutes, chapter 35, please find the attached report that I am submitting on behalf of the Telecommunications Relay Service Council of Maine.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at [Ben.Frech@maine.gov](mailto:Ben.Frech@maine.gov).

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

*Benjamin Frech*

Benjamin Frech

Cc: John Post (Council Chair), Peter Schleck (Director, Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability), Lindsay Laxon (Office of Policy and Legal Analysis)

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**STATE OF MAINE**  
**ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE**  
**COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY**

April 18, 2025

Benjamin Frech, Executive Director  
Telecommunications Relay Service Council of Maine  
P.O. Box 2229  
South Portland, ME 04116  
Via email: [Ben.Frech@maine.gov](mailto:Ben.Frech@maine.gov)

Dear Benjamin Frech:

We are writing to notify you that the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology has voted to review the Telecommunications Relay Service Council of Maine (TRSC) pursuant to the Government Evaluation Act, Title 3 of the Maine Revised Statutes, chapter 35.

Pursuant to the law, the Committee respectfully requests that the TRSC prepare a program evaluation report and submit this report no later than November 1, 2025. Title 3, section 956 provides a list of information to be included in the evaluation report (see attached). The Committee also asks that your report address how technological developments have affected the communication devices and services supported by the TRSC.

We will begin our review of the TRSC no later than February 1, 2026 as provided in law, and we anticipate submitting our findings no later than March 15, 2026. We look forward to working with you on this review process. Please feel free to contact us, or our committee analyst if you have questions about the process.

Sincerely,



Mark W. Lawrence  
Senate Chair



Melanie F. Sachs  
House Chair

cc: Danielle Fox, Office of Policy and Legal Analysis

## **§956. Program evaluation report**

**1. Report required.** Each agency and independent agency shall prepare and submit to the Legislature, through the committee of jurisdiction, a program evaluation report by a date specified by the committee.

**2. Program evaluation report; contents.** Each report must include the following information in a concise but complete manner:

- A. Enabling or authorizing law or other relevant mandate, including any federal mandates;
- B. A description of each program administered by the agency or independent agency, including the following for each program:
  - (1) Established priorities, including the goals and objectives in meeting each priority;
  - (2) Performance measures or other benchmarks used by the agency to measure its progress in achieving the goals and objectives; and
  - (3) An assessment by the agency indicating the extent to which it has met the goals and objectives, using the performance measures. When an agency has not met its goals and objectives, the agency shall identify the reasons for not meeting them and the corrective measures the agency has taken to meet the goals and objectives;
- C. Organizational structure, including a position count, a job classification and an organizational flow chart indicating lines of responsibility;
- D. [PL 2013, c. 307, §3 (RP).]
- E. Financial summary, including sources of funding by program and the amounts allocated or appropriated and expended over the past 10 years;
- F. [PL 2013, c. 307, §4 (RP).]
- G. Identification of those areas where an agency has coordinated its efforts with other state and federal agencies in achieving program objectives and other areas in which an agency could establish cooperative arrangements, including, but not limited to, cooperative arrangements to coordinate services and eliminate redundant requirements;
- H. Identification of the constituencies served by the agency or program, noting any changes or projected changes;
- I. A summary of efforts by an agency or program regarding the use of alternative delivery systems, including privatization, in meeting its goals and objectives;
- J. Identification of emerging issues for the agency or program in the coming years;
- K. Any other information specifically requested by the committee of jurisdiction;
- L. A comparison of any related federal laws and regulations to the state laws governing the agency or program and the rules implemented by the agency or program;
- M. Agency policies for collecting, managing and using personal information over the Internet and nonelectronically, information on the agency's implementation of information technologies and an evaluation of the agency's adherence to the fair information practice principles of notice, choice, access, integrity and enforcement;
- N. A list of reports, applications and other similar paperwork required to be filed with the agency by the public. The list must include:
  - (1) The statutory authority for each filing requirement;
  - (2) The date each filing requirement was adopted or last amended by the agency;
  - (3) The frequency that filing is required;

- (4) The number of filings received annually for the last 2 years and the number anticipated to be received annually for the next 2 years; and
- (5) A description of the actions taken or contemplated by the agency to reduce filing requirements and paperwork duplication;
- O. A list of reports required by the Legislature to be prepared or submitted by the agency or independent agency;
- P. A copy of the single-page list of organizational units and programs within each organizational unit required pursuant to section 955, subsection 1, placed at the front of the report; and
- Q. Identification of provisions contained in the agency's or independent agency's enabling or authorizing statutes that may require legislative review to determine the necessity of amendment to align the statutes with federal law, other state law or decisions of the United States Supreme Court or the Supreme Judicial Court.

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 1995, c. 488, §2 (NEW). PL 1999, c. 661, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 321, §§A1-3 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 495, §§1-3 (AMD). RR 2013, c. 1, §§3, 4 (COR). PL 2013, c. 110, §§2-4 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 307, §§2-7 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 588, Pt. A, §1 (AMD).

The Telecommunications Relay Service Council (the Council) is tasked with administering the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) program within the State. These services allow persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, or have speech disabilities to communicate by telephone in a manner that is functionally equivalent to telephone services used by persons without such disabilities.

In 2018, Public Law 2017, chapter 408, “An Act To Enhance the Operations of the Telecommunications Relay Services Advisory Council” was passed (link to statute below). This law created the Council as a standalone, quasi-government entity. The Council “...shall evaluate telecommunications relay services in this State and implement the Maine telecommunications relay services program as certified by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) pursuant to 47 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 64, Subpart F.”

The Council shall meet no less than four times every calendar year. The Council may meet more frequently if necessary to carry out the duties of the Council as set forth in statute. The Council’s meetings are public proceedings within the meaning of the Freedom of Access Act (see [1 MRS sec. 402\(2\)\(F\)](#)) and must comply with [1 MRS sec. 403](#) and [1 MRS sec. 406](#). It also must comply with [1MRS sec. 403-B](#), governing remote participation (more information is available in the [Council’s Remote Meeting Policy](#)).

Pursuant to the Government Evaluation Act, Title 3 of the Maine Revised Statutes, chapter 35, the Council respectfully submits the information below (list of information provided in Title 3, section 956):

**A. Enabling or authorizing law or other relevant mandate, including any federal mandates**

State:

- [35-A M.R.S.A. § 7104](#) (Statutory Authority & Funding for Council oversight of Relay Services, Attachment A)
- [35-A M.R.S.A. § 8701](#) (Council statute, Attachment B)
- [5 M.R.S.A. §12004-G, sub-§30-C](#) (Administrative Procedures)

Federal:

- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Title IV - Telegraphs, Telephones, and Radiotelegraphs <https://www.ada.gov/law-and-reg/ada/#title-47---telegraphs-telephones-and-radiotelegraphs-title-iv>
- Per the law, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has jurisdiction over relay services in the United States. The FCC issues rules and regulations about the relay service. The rules issued by the agency are published in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) here: **47 CFR 64** <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-47/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-64/subpart-F>

- Mandatory minimum standards for state relay services are outlined mostly in 64.604 and 64.606
- The CFR includes the following mandatory reports, to be filed by states:
  - Customer complaint logs: 47 CFR 64.604(c)(1) - [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-47/part-64/subpart-F#p-64.604\(c\)\(1\)\(i\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-47/part-64/subpart-F#p-64.604(c)(1)(i))
  - MARS Data collection and audits: 47 CFR 64.604(c)(5)(iii)(D) - [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-47/part-64/subpart-F#p-64.604\(c\)\(5\)\(iii\)\(D\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-47/part-64/subpart-F#p-64.604(c)(5)(iii)(D))
  - Certified state program: 47 CFR 64.606(a)(1) - [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-47/part-64/subpart-F#p-64.606\(a\)\(1\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-47/part-64/subpart-F#p-64.606(a)(1))

**B. A description of each program administered by the agency or independent agency, including the following for each program:**

*(1) Established priorities, including the goals and objectives in meeting each priority*

*(2) Performance measures or other benchmarks used by the agency to measure its progress in achieving the goals and objectives; and*

*(3) An assessment by the agency indicating the extent to which it has met the goals and objectives, using the performance measures. When an agency has not met its goals and objectives, the agency shall identify the reasons for not meeting them and the corrective measures the agency has taken to meet the goals and objectives*

One priority for the Council is to ensure that there is a high quality, reliable TRS program in the State that is compliant with federal standards and trends. Another priority is to ensure that people are aware of TRS and educated in how to use the system (outreach).

**Relay Services:**

Relay services allow hearing people and people who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or speech-impaired to communicate with each other via a statewide telecommunications system using telecommunications devices. The Telecommunications Relay Service Council is authorized to enter into contracts with providers for the purpose of providing these services. The Council recently completed a competitive bidding process to select a provider for Telecommunications Relay Services (not including Captioned Telephone Services). T Mobile was the successful bidder and was selected as the relay services provider. Captioned Telephone Services are provided by Hamilton, Inc. In recent years, the Council and Hamilton have renewed the service contract annually due to uncertainty surrounding the future of analog CTS and Hamilton is the only viable provider of CTS in the country. These services, and information about each service, can be found on the Council's website, as well as each vendor's website.

**(1)** The primary objectives for the Council are to ensure that these vendors;

- Provide reliable and quality services that must be available on a statewide basis to the extent that they are technologically feasible;
- Be available 24 hours a day for every calendar day of the year;
- Comply with State and Federal statutes, which include meeting the minimum service standards set forth by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC);
- Coordinate with the outreach provider to perform outreach services.

(2) Each vendor has provided a primary point of contact to assist the Council with administering these services. T-Mobile's Accessibility Relationship Manager and Hamilton's Relay Account Manager work closely with the Council's Chair and Executive Director to ensure reliable service is being provided in Maine. Both vendors are required to provide the Council with monthly reports tracking usage, with data about each service, which the Council reviews. Both vendors also attend and provide updates at the Council's quarterly meetings.

The FCC requires an annual report be filed that details the complaints filed by users with the providers. This information is provided to the Council and the Council files the report. Maine had zero complaints in the 2025 report. There is also an annual Federal data request Report, which is referenced in Section A.

Additionally, the FCC's state certification process (found [here](#)) is intended to ensure that TRS is provided in a uniform manner throughout the United States and its territories. Under the Commission's rules, all certified state TRS programs must provide traditional (TTY-based) TRS, Spanish language traditional TRS, and speech-to-speech relay (STS) service. States may also offer captioned telephone service (CTS). Each state seeking renewal of its certification must submit documentation to the Commission that describes its relay program and includes its procedures and remedies for enforcing any requirements that the program may impose. In addition, a state must establish that its program makes available to TRS users informational materials on state and Commission complaint procedures sufficient for users to know how to file complaints.

The TRS Council submitted a recertification application package to the FCC in December 2022. On July 25, 2023, the FCC granted certification to Maine to continue our state telecommunication relay service through July of 2028.

The Council also has a 'Contact Us' feature on the website for any members of the public having issues with service and/or equipment, or who would like more information about any Council-related activities and resources.

(3) The Council is meeting its goals and objectives. The FCC approved the recertification of our state relay program in July 2023 after a rigorous application process. The Council continues to ensure that high-quality TRS and CTS services are reliably provided according to established standards. *These services are essential to enable Deaf and Hard of Hearing people statewide to have access to telecommunications.* The Council has a great working relationship with both

vendors and communicates with each of them regularly. The Council received zero customer complaints over the past calendar year and monitored usage via monthly updates. The Council will continue to work with its vendors to ensure every Maine resident who needs relay services will have access to them.

### **Outreach Services:**

The Council is the contract administrator for outreach services intended to increase education, awareness, and usage of telecommunications relay services amongst deaf, hard-of-hearing, or speech impaired persons in the State who use telecommunications devices. Additionally, the Legislature permitted the Council to compensate "...for outreach services that encourage the use of telecommunications relay services" and to "...organize and fund projects designed to promote the use of telecommunications relay services, including but not limited to surveys, public forums and events." In early October, the Council's RFP Evaluation Team Subcommittee selected Disability Rights Maine (DRM) as the winning bidder to continue administering relay outreach services in the state.

(1) The Council's primary objectives for outreach services are to increase education, awareness, and usage of telecommunications relay services amongst deaf, hard-of-hearing, or speech impaired persons in the State who use telecommunications devices. The Outreach Services funded by the Council are the sole services available in the entire state to assist individuals, businesses, or organizations to learn about Relay services, or to provide training on using these services.

(2) DRM is expected to complete 20 outreach events per quarter, including a variety of outreach formats not limited to media, presentations, exhibits, meetings, one-on-one demonstrations, and technical assistance. DRM provides detailed monthly invoices and quarterly reports, which document each outreach event and the type of outreach. The Council reviews invoices and reports to ensure that benchmarks are being met.

(3) The Council and DRM believe the outreach program in Maine is robust and successful. In 2026 and going forward, the Council would like to increase support of DRM's efforts by sharing more information on the Council's website and assisting DRM in any other way that it is able.

### **C. Organizational structure, including a position count, a job classification and an organizational flow chart indicating lines of responsibility**

The Council was permitted to hire an Executive Director, who is classified as a non-voting member of the Council. The Council utilizes Atlantic Staffing, via the staffing agency's Master Service Agreements with the State, to compensate the Executive Director. The Council also has unpaid officer positions. The current Council Chair is John Post. The Chair oversees the Executive Director and approves payment of all invoices related to Council business.

### **D. N/A (Repealed) [PL 2013, c. 307, §3 (RP).]**

**E. Financial summary, including sources of funding by program and the amounts allocated or appropriated and expended over the past 10 years**

See attachment C, provided by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services.

**F. N/A (Repealed)[PL 2013, c. 307, §4 (RP).]**

**G. Identification of those areas where an agency has coordinated its efforts with other state and federal agencies in achieving program objectives and other areas in which an agency could establish cooperative arrangements, including, but not limited to, cooperative arrangements to coordinate services and eliminate redundant requirements**

Several state agencies are represented with seats on the Council and each agency's experience and input is considered during Council discussions. The Council coordinates with the Maine Connectivity Authority in their shared goal of ensuring broadband infrastructure expansion benefits deaf and hard-of-hearing relay customers.

**H. Identification of the constituencies served by the agency or program, noting any changes or projected changes**

The Council serves deaf, late-deafened, hard of hearing, and speech-disabled consumers of relay services.

**I. A summary of efforts by an agency or program regarding the use of alternative delivery systems, including privatization, in meeting its goals and objectives**

As stated above, the Council contracts with multiple vendors to provide relay services that accomplish the Council's goals and objectives.

**J. Identification of emerging issues for the agency or program in the coming years**

- **Analog to Digital transition** – the change to digital telephone service from analog (copper wire) service is already well underway. This will mean that traditional analog TTY users and analog CTS users will need to eventually shift to digital-based TRS services. Analog-based services will ultimately be phased out, although there is no timeline for this at present. This past spring, the Council designated a subcommittee to study the transition for CTS customers and to provide the Council with a recommendation regarding the future of these services. There are several considerations that must be made and the Council will remain in close contact with each vendor as it plans for the future.
- **Membership on the Council** – there are currently three vacant seats on the Council.
- **Future of Executive Director position** – the Council may have interest in pursuing a permanent structure for compensating the Executive Director position. As stated above, the Council currently utilizes Atlantic Staffing, but that may only be a temporary solution. The Council is expressly mandated in statute to hire an Executive Director.

**K. Any other information specifically requested by the committee of jurisdiction**

*Committee requested that report address how technological developments have affected the communication devices and services supported by the Council.*

It is important to emphasize that the relay services supported by the Council continue to be necessary and fill an important need for Mainers, even as technological developments change the *types* of devices/services used. Relay services will continue to play a vital role in the years ahead in enabling Mainers who are deaf, hard of hearing or who have speech disabilities to have access to the telephone system.

As stated in section J above, technological developments will have an effect on the services offered to the community in the coming years, especially analog-based relay services. Relay services currently include a mix of analog-based and internet-based services. As the analog-to-digital transition accelerates, analog-based relay services and devices will likely be phased out entirely. There is no set timeline for this phase out at this time. Regardless, the Council is working closely with DRM, the outreach services provider, on efforts to reach these users and to work to shift them to digital-based relay services.

Two types of services were decommissioned in the past 12-24 months: ASCII and Video Speech-to-speech. The Council was informed throughout the process of T-Mobile's decision to not offer those services any longer. The two services were no longer required by the FCC and the state had zero users of either service at the time of decommissioning. Many users of other Relay services remain.

In regards to devices, the Council does not oversee this service. The Council ensures the provision of Relay Services themselves, but is not charged with providing telecommunications devices. The Equipment Distribution Program, while also funded by the Maine Universal Service Fund, is separate from the Council within the Department of Labor and is put out to bid. The Council works closely with the administrator of that program (Disability Rights Maine) and will continue to do so.

**L. A comparison of any related federal laws and regulations to the state laws governing the agency or program and the rules implemented by the agency or program**

N/A

**M. Agency policies for collecting, managing and using personal information over the Internet and nonelectronically, information on the agency's implementation of information technologies and an evaluation of the agency's adherence to the fair information practice principles of notice, choice, access, integrity and enforcement**

It is very rare for the Council to need any personal information. The one time that this did occur, the Council worked closely with the vendor and the vendor provided the information to the Council electronically via a protected file.

The Council's only IT equipment is leased from the State and the Council adheres to the State's IT and equipment policies.

The Council posts all meeting agendas to the website in advance of each quarterly meeting, which is open to the public. The Council updated its remote meeting policy in 2025 and has been holding its meetings at the Governor Baxter School.

The Council recently updated its website and one of the Council's goals in 2026 is to upload past reports, as well as any other important information related to the Council's activity, to the new website and to ensure the format meets accessibility requirements.

**N. A list of reports, applications and other similar paperwork required to be filed with the agency by the public. The list must include:**

- (1) The statutory authority for each filing requirement;*
- (2) The date each filing requirement was adopted or last amended by the agency;*
- (3) The frequency that filing is required;*
- (4) The number of filings received annually for the last 2 years and the number anticipated to be received annually for the next 2 years; and*
- (5) A description of the actions taken or contemplated by the agency to reduce filing requirements and paperwork duplication.*

N/A. The public is not required to file any documentation with the Council.

**O. A list of reports required by the Legislature to be prepared or submitted by the agency or independent agency:**

- Annual budget request to the Maine Public Utilities Commission (6/30)
- Annual report to the Maine Public Utilities Commission (12/1)
- Annual report to the Maine Secretary of State (12/31)
- Report to the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA), (every seventh year, or whenever designated by the Maine Legislature).

**Other Reports:**

- Annual complaint log report to the Federal Communications Commission (July)
- Responses to the FCC's federal TRS data request (MARS, late January/early February)
- FCC re-certification (every five years)

**P. A copy of the single-page list of organizational units and programs within each organizational unit required pursuant to section 955, subsection 1, placed at the front of the report.**

N/A

**Q. Identification of provisions contained in the agency's or independent agency's enabling or authorizing statutes that may require legislative review to determine the necessity of amendment to align the statutes with federal law, other state law or decisions of the United States Supreme Court or the Supreme Judicial Court.**

None.

**§7104. Affordable telephone service**

**1. Low-income support.** The commission shall require telephone utilities to participate in statewide outreach programs designed to increase the number of low-income telephone customers on the network through increased participation in any universal service program approved by the commission.

[PL 1997, c. 692, §1 (NEW).]

**1-A. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "North American Numbering Plan Administrator" means a North American organization responsible for neutrally administering numbering resources in a Maine numbering plan area. [PL 2023, c. 144, §1 (NEW).]

B. "Number placed in service" means an active 10-digit telephone number that is:

- (1) Compliant with the guidelines established by the North American Numbering Plan Administrator for use by a voice network service provider;
- (2) Has been assigned to an end user customer of the voice network service provider; and
- (3) Is capable of receiving voice traffic from, or originating voice traffic to, the public switched telephone network. [PL 2023, c. 144, §1 (NEW).]

C. "Numbering plan area" has the same meaning as in 47 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 52.7(a) in effect on December 16, 2022. [PL 2023, c. 144, §1 (NEW).]

D. "Numbering resources" means blocks of telephone numbers provided to authorized voice network service providers in a numbering plan area by the North American Numbering Plan Administrator. [PL 2023, c. 144, §1 (NEW).]

E. "Voice network service provider" means a voice service provider that offers its subscribers the means to initiate or receive voice communications using the public switched telephone network and includes a provider of interconnected voice over Internet protocol service required to register with the commission pursuant to section 7110, subsection 2. [PL 2023, c. 144, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2023, c. 144, §1 (NEW).]

**2. General availability.** The commission shall seek to ensure that provider of last resort service is available at reasonably comparable rates to consumers throughout all areas of the State in which the service is available pursuant to section 7221.

[PL 2015, c. 462, §2 (AMD).]

**3. Authority.** The commission shall adopt rules to implement this section and may require voice network service providers using numbers placed in service for the State's numbering plan area from the North American Numbering Plan Administrator or its successor to contribute to a state universal service fund to support programs consistent with the goals of applicable provisions of this Title and the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, Public Law 104-104, 110 Stat. 56. A voice network service provider is not required to contribute to the state universal service fund for telephone numbers that are acquired by the provider but are not placed in service. Prior to requiring that voice network service providers contribute to a state universal service fund, the commission shall assess the telecommunications needs of the State's consumers and establish the level of support required to meet those needs. If the commission establishes a state universal service fund pursuant to this section, the commission shall contract with an appropriate independent fiscal agent that is not a state entity to serve as administrator of the state universal service fund. Funds contributed to a state universal service fund are not state funds. Rules and any state universal service fund requirements established by the commission pursuant to this section must:

- A. Be reasonably designed to maximize federal assistance available to the State for universal service purposes; [PL 1997, c. 692, §1 (NEW).]
- B. Meet the State's obligations under the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, Public Law 104-104, 110 Stat. 56; [PL 2011, c. 623, Pt. B, §14 (AMD).]
- C. Be consistent with the goals of the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, Public Law 104-104, 110 Stat. 56; [PL 2011, c. 623, Pt. B, §14 (AMD).]
- D. Ensure that any requirements regarding contributions to a state universal service fund be nondiscriminatory and competitively neutral; [PL 2017, c. 422, §2 (AMD); PL 2017, c. 422, §12 (AFF).]
- E. [PL 2011, c. 623, Pt. B, §14 (RP).]
- F. [PL 2011, c. 623, Pt. B, §14 (RP).]
- G. Require, if a voice network service provider recovers its contributions under this section by means of a charge placed on a bill issued to a customer, explicit identification on that bill of any charge imposed under this section; and [PL 2017, c. 422, §3 (AMD); PL 2017, c. 422, §12 (AFF).]
- H. Ensure that any fees or surcharges established by or pursuant to this section are not imposed on revenues received from or on prepaid wireless telecommunications service transactions supported by federal universal service support funds pursuant to 47 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 54. This paragraph does not prohibit the imposition of fees or surcharges with respect to revenues received from consumers for optional services that are not supported by federal universal service support funds. [PL 2017, c. 422, §4 (NEW); PL 2017, c. 422, §12 (AFF).]

Rules adopted under this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. The commission may investigate a voice network service provider to ensure compliance with this section.

[PL 2023, c. 144, §2 (AMD).]

**3-A. Determination of amount of prepaid wireless telecommunications service fee.** The commission shall determine by rule the amount of the fee on prepaid wireless telecommunications service that is required to be contributed to a state universal service fund established under subsection 3. The fee is a fixed amount per retail transaction established by multiplying \$25 by a percentage that is determined by the commission for purposes of calculating contributions to the state universal service fund by providers of intrastate telecommunications services. The fee must be rounded to the nearest penny. The fee may not be adjusted by the commission more frequently than once every 24 months. The collection of the fee is governed by section 7104-C. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2011, c. 600, §5 (NEW); PL 2011, c. 600, §10 (AFF).]

**4. Standards and reporting.**

[PL 2011, c. 623, Pt. B, §15 (RP).]

**5. Funds for Communications Equipment Fund.** The commission shall annually transfer \$85,000 from a state universal service fund established pursuant to this section to the Communications Equipment Fund established under Title 26, section 1419-A.

If the Department of Labor, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services does not receive from federal or other sources funds in addition to the \$85,000 sufficient to carry out the purposes of Title 26, section 1419-A, the commission, at the request of the Department of Labor, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, may transfer from the state universal service fund to the Communications Equipment Fund an additional \$100,000.

- A. [PL 2005, c. 305, §1 (RP); PL 2005, c. 336, §3 (RP).]

B. [PL 2005, c. 305, §1 (RP); PL 2005, c. 336, §3 (RP).]

The commission may require contributions to the state universal service fund in an amount necessary to collect amounts transferred pursuant to this subsection.

[PL 2019, c. 343, Pt. UUU, §4 (AMD).]

**6. Public-interest pay phone support.** The commission may require contributions to a state universal service fund established pursuant to this section in an amount sufficient to collect up to \$50,000 each year to fund public-interest pay phones pursuant to section 7508. The commission shall maintain an accounting of all funds contributed to the state universal service fund pursuant to this subsection and all funds expended pursuant to section 7508. Funds contributed to the state universal service fund pursuant to this subsection may be expended only for the purposes of section 7508.

[PL 2005, c. 131, §1 (NEW).]

**7. Telecommunications relay services support.** In order to ensure the affordability of telecommunications relay services throughout the State, the commission shall establish funding support for telecommunications relay services, including related outreach programs, within the state universal service fund established pursuant to subsection 3.

A. In establishing the total level of support for the state universal service fund, the commission shall include funding levels for telecommunications relay services as requested by the Telecommunications Relay Services Council, as established in section 8704, pursuant to the submission of an annual budget in accordance with section 8704, subsection 6. The commission shall transfer funds requested by the council, up to a maximum of \$600,000 annually, in quarterly installments to the Telecommunications Relay Services Council Fund established in section 8704, subsection 2-A. The commission shall require contributions to the state universal service fund on a quarterly basis to meet the established funding support levels. [PL 2017, c. 408, §3 (AMD).]

B. [PL 2017, c. 408, §3 (RP).]

[PL 2017, c. 408, §3 (AMD).]

**8. Maximization of support.** The commission shall pursue all activities necessary to maximize the amount of federal support received by voice service providers offering voice and broadband service in the State.

[PL 2011, c. 623, Pt. B, §17 (NEW).]

**9. Blind and Visually Impaired News Access Fund.** The commission shall annually transfer \$40,000 from a state universal service fund established pursuant to this section to the Blind and Visually Impaired News Access Fund established under Title 27, section 9.

[PL 2019, c. 15, §2 (NEW).]

**10. Designation of eligible service providers.** The commission may designate any provider or reseller of commercial mobile radio service, as defined in 47 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 20.3, as an eligible telecommunications carrier for purposes of receiving federal universal service support and offering services supported by federal universal service support mechanisms pursuant to 47 United States Code, Sections 214(e)(1) and 214(e)(2) and 47 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 54.201. The commission may adopt rules necessary to implement this subsection. Rules adopted under this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2023, c. 568, §1 (NEW).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 1991, c. 654, §4 (NEW). PL 1991, c. 654, §5 (AFF). PL 1997, c. 692, §1 (RPR). PL 1999, c. 60, §1 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 553, §A4 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 131, §1 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 305, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 336, §3 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 683, §A59 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 224, §3 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 600, §5 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 600, §10 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 623, Pt. B, §§13-17 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 600, §2 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 462, §2 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 408, §3 (AMD).

PL 2017, c. 422, §§2-4 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 422, §12 (AFF). PL 2019, c. 15, §2 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 343, Pt. UUU, §4 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 144, §§1, 2 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 568, §1 (AMD).

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**§8704. Council**

The Telecommunications Relay Services Council, as established by Title 5, section 12004-G, subsection 30-C, shall evaluate telecommunications relay services in this State and implement the Maine telecommunications relay services program as certified by the Federal Communications Commission pursuant to 47 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 64, Subpart F. [PL 2017, c. 408, §6 (AMD).]

**1. Membership.** The council consists of 11 voting members as follows:

A. The Director of the Division for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, Department of Labor, or a designee; [PL 2009, c. 174, §26 (AMD).]

B. The chair of the Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Late Deafened established by Title 5, section 12004-J, subsection 17, or a designee; [PL 2009, c. 652, Pt. A, §48 (AMD).]

C. One member from the Public Utilities Commission, appointed by the commissioners; [PL 1989, c. 851, §7 (NEW).]

C-1. One member from the Maine Connectivity Authority, as established in Title 5, section 12004-G, subsection 33-H, appointed by the president of the authority; [PL 2023, c. 182, §1 (NEW).]

D. One member from the office of the Public Advocate, appointed by the Public Advocate; and [PL 1989, c. 851, §7 (NEW).]

E. Six members appointed by the Governor as follows:

(1) One member from the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf;

(2) One member from a statewide association for the deaf;

(3) One member from a disability rights organization in this State;

(4) One member from the largest incumbent local exchange carrier providing telecommunications relay service in this State; and

(6) Two members from the general public who use telecommunications devices for the deaf that operate in connection with telecommunications relay services as their primary means of telecommunications. [PL 2023, c. 182, §1 (AMD).]

The executive director shall serve as a nonvoting member of the council in accordance with subsection 3-A, paragraph E.

[PL 2023, c. 182, §1 (AMD).]

**2. Compensation.** Members of the council are not authorized to receive payment or reimbursement for attendance or participation in regular meetings of the council, including but not limited to per diem compensation and mileage costs. The council is authorized to reimburse members and individuals designated by the council for costs associated with participation in conferences regarding telecommunications relay services and telecommunications devices for the deaf or technologies for the deaf and hard of hearing.

[PL 2017, c. 408, §6 (AMD).]

**2-A. Telecommunications Relay Services Council Fund.** The Telecommunications Relay Services Council Fund, referred to in this section as "the fund," is established as a nonlapsing fund to fund the activities of the council in accordance with this section. The fund receives funds transferred by the commission in accordance with section 7104, subsection 7. No more than \$600,000 may be transferred into the fund annually.

[PL 2017, c. 408, §6 (NEW).]

**2-B. Meeting costs.** The council is authorized to pay for costs associated with scheduled meetings of the council or any meeting of a duly authorized subcommittee of the council, including costs associated with a venue, refreshments, interpreters for meeting attendees and transcription services. [PL 2017, c. 408, §6 (NEW).]

**3. Technical assistance.**  
[PL 2017, c. 408, §6 (RP).]

**3-A. Executive director.** The council shall, within its allowable annual budget established by subsection 6, hire a part-time executive director to assist in carrying out the powers and duties of the council. The executive director shall:

A. Assist in the preparation and submission of the budget of the council required pursuant to subsection 6; [PL 2023, c. 182, §2 (NEW).]

B. Prepare and submit the report required pursuant to subsection 8; [PL 2023, c. 182, §2 (NEW).]

C. Assist the council with contract negotiations; [PL 2023, c. 182, §2 (NEW).]

D. Assist the council with processing invoices; [PL 2023, c. 182, §2 (NEW).]

E. Serve as a nonvoting member of the council; and [PL 2023, c. 182, §2 (NEW).]

F. Perform all other duties necessary to assist the council in performing its powers and duties pursuant to subsection 5. [PL 2023, c. 182, §2 (NEW).]

[PL 2023, c. 182, §2 (NEW).]

**4. Election of chair and vice-chair.** Every 2 years, the members shall elect a chair and a vice-chair from among the membership. The vice-chair shall serve as acting chair in the absence of the chair. The council shall meet at the call of the chair but no fewer than 4 times during the calendar year. The chair may delegate, as necessary, duties to members of the council, either individually or through the formation of subcommittees, to carry out the functions of the council.

[PL 2023, c. 182, §3 (AMD).]

**5. Powers and duties.** The council shall evaluate telecommunications relay services in this State and shall implement the Maine telecommunications relay services program as certified by the Federal Communications Commission pursuant to 47 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 64, Subpart F. In implementing the state program, the council shall develop and execute programs and policies as necessary, including, but not limited to, the development of training standards and an evaluation of the services being provided, including the quality and availability of those services.

A. The council may enter into one or more contracts with telecommunications relay services providers for the purpose of providing intrastate telecommunications relay services. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the council shall choose one or more telecommunications relay services providers to provide intrastate telecommunications relay services through a bidding process developed in consultation with the division of purchases within the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of General Services to be held no less than once every 5 years. The bidding process must ensure a process that recognizes the unique nature and limited number of telecommunications relay services providers. [PL 2017, c. 408, §6 (NEW).]

B. The council may enter into agreements with one or more entities to work with the telecommunications relay services providers to encourage use of telecommunications relay services. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the council, in consultation with the division of purchases within the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Bureau of General Services shall develop a process for entering into such agreements that recognizes the limited number of entities providing the services sought by the council. Any agreement established under this paragraph may include compensation for outreach services that encourage the use of telecommunications relay services. [PL 2017, c. 408, §6 (NEW).]

C. The council may organize and fund projects designed to promote the use of telecommunications relay services, including but not limited to surveys, public forums and events. [PL 2017, c. 408, §6 (NEW).]

D. The council may develop, administer and fund pilot projects to provide access to telecommunications relay services. [PL 2017, c. 408, §6 (NEW).]  
[PL 2017, c. 408, §6 (AMD).]

**6. Council budget.** The council shall prepare and submit to the commission an annual budget of the projected costs of the council under this section for the coming fiscal year. The annual budget may not exceed \$600,000. The annual budget must be submitted to the commission and the commission shall transfer funds quarterly to meet the council's budgeted costs to the fund established in subsection 2-A and pursuant to section 7104, subsection 7.  
[PL 2017, c. 408, §6 (NEW).]

**7. Conflicts.** A member of the council may not participate in any decision on any contract entered into by the council under this section if that member has any interest, direct or indirect, in any firm, partnership, corporation or association that is party to the contract. The interest must be disclosed to the council in writing and must be set forth in the minutes of the council.  
[PL 2017, c. 408, §6 (NEW).]

**8. Report.** Beginning December 1, 2019 and annually thereafter, the council shall submit a report to the Public Utilities Commission that details the activities of the council, including all the expenditures the council has made from the fund and how all vendors that the council contracts with for services were selected.  
[PL 2017, c. 408, §6 (NEW).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 1989, c. 851, §7 (NEW). PL 1993, c. 708, §J12 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 377, §3 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 279, §17 (AMD). PL 2005, c. 605, §§5,6 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 68, §13 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 174, §§26, 27 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 652, Pt. A, §48 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 40, §1 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 398, §1 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 408, §6 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 182, §§1-3 (AMD).

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Department: 95T  
 Appropriation: Z26601  
 Fund: 014

**Maine Telecommunications Relay Services  
 2018 through 2025**

		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	
<b>Revenue:</b>		<b>120,000.00</b>	<b>647,548.89</b>	<b>175,000.00</b>	<b>376,096.00</b>	<b>371,696.00</b>	<b>110,096.00</b>	<b>435,096.00</b>	<b>432,552.00</b>	
Obj Group	<b>Expenses:</b>									<b>YTD Expenses</b>
40	Prof. Services, Not By State		\$ 460,293	\$ 280,281	\$ 235,094	\$ 271,447	\$ 246,244	\$ 221,703	\$ 353,076	\$ 2,068,137
41	Prof. Services, By State		10,296	10,296	10,296	7,722	12,870	2,892	4,898	\$ 59,270
43	Travel Expenses, Out of State			3,058			5,102			\$ 8,160
46	Rents								237	\$ 237
49	General Operations		561	2,064	80	562	1,976	990	300	\$ 6,532
53	Technology		6,271	275	475	634	223	118	2,848	\$ 10,843
85	Stacap		11,554	8,702	7,870	9,420	2,925	3,203	4,206	\$ 47,880
	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 488,974</b>	<b>\$ 304,675</b>	<b>\$ 253,815</b>	<b>\$ 289,785</b>	<b>\$ 269,340</b>	<b>\$ 228,906</b>	<b>\$ 365,564</b>	<b>\$ 2,201,059</b>
<b>Remaining Budget</b>		<b>\$ 120,000</b>	<b>\$ 158,575</b>	<b>\$ (129,675)</b>	<b>\$ 122,281</b>	<b>\$ 81,911</b>	<b>\$ (159,244)</b>	<b>\$ 206,190</b>	<b>\$ 66,988</b>	<b>\$ 467,026</b>
Funding Source- Solix										
Encumbrances FY26										(157,882.72)
Revenues FY26										90,000.00
Expenses FY26										(55,296.04)
<b>Allotment as of 9/23/2025</b>										<b>\$ 343,847</b>
<b>Cash Balance as of 9/23/2025</b>										<b>\$ 501,729.46</b>