

7 SERVICE CATEGORIES.

7.1 Introduction.

Each service specification is designed as mandatory, mandatory-optional, desirable, or exceptions. The bidder should comply with the following conditions when submitting its proposal. See Section 3.2.3 and 3.2.4 on pricing strategy and see Section 4.1 on the type of proposals to be submitted.

7.1.1 Mandatory.

These are service specifications that must be adhered to in providing the TRS, unless the bidder clearly explains any exceptions pursuant to paragraph 7.1.4 below. The price for all mandatory service specifications must be included in one postalized rate for a five-year term.

7.1.2 Mandatory-Optional.

These are service specifications that must be offered as part of the proposal, unless the bidder clearly explains any exceptions pursuant to the paragraph 7.1.4 below. The mandatory-optional service specifications must be separately priced in one of the two proposals. All-inclusive proposal will include mandatory-optional in its proposal and will not have separate pricing.

In either proposal, the prices shall be in one postalized rate for a five-year term.

In the proposal where there is a separate price for mandatory and mandatory-optional services, the pricing for mandatory-optional services may be included in the contract at the discretion of the Commission.

7.1.3 Desirable.

These are service specifications that may be offered as part of the proposal and must be separately priced in either of the two proposals. The prices shall be in one postalized rate for a five-year term.

These specifications may be included in the contract at the discretion of the Commission.

7.1.4 Exceptions.

If a contractor plans to deviate from the requirement of any service specifications or is unable to provide mandatory, mandatory-optional, or desirable service specifications, the deviation or inability should be clearly indicated in the proposal.

NOTE: If a mandatory-optional service is not included in the proposal, and

no explanation given, **this** may be ground to reject the proposal entirely.

8 SCOPE OF SERVICES.

8.1 One Telecommunications Carrier: Mandatory.

The TRS shall provide for the uniform and coordinated provision of the service on a statewide basis by one telecommunications carrier. The contractor will be permitted to reroute up to 20 percent of the total traffic to its other relay centers. The contractor will be permitted to reroute up to 100 percent of traffic to other relay centers in emergency situations if the circumstances warrant the need to do so. Special services such as Video Relay Interpreting, Speech-To-Speech, and Speech-To-Speech/Voice-Carryover can be provided out of Texas. Special service call volume traffic does not have to be part of the **20%** criteria. See Section 6.9.

8.2 Availability: Mandatory.

The TRS shall be available for all Texans at all times (24 hours a day, **365** days a year). Callers shall be able to place calls from their primary location, locations other than their primary location and from any locations reachable by wireless services (such as cell telephones) and shall be able to utilize alternative billing arrangements.

8.3 Accessibility: Mandatow.

Relay Texas shall be accessible from anywhere in the world where telecommunications systems exist. Bidders must show how this would be done. Texans must be able to place a relay call to any point in the world where telecommunications systems exist.

8.4 Compliance with Existing Regulations: Mandatow.

The TRS shall provide access to the telecommunications network equal to that provided to other hearing users in regular telephone network as required to be in compliance with this Request for Proposal. The TRS shall comply with requirements included in **PURA**, Subchapter D, Section 56.101, the Commission's Substantive Rule §26.414, and 47 C.F.R. Section 64.605 regarding intrastate telecommunications relay service. If there is a discrepancy between any of these requirements, the most stringent shall apply.

8.5 Complaint Resolution: Mandatory.

The contractor shall establish procedures regarding complaints, inquiries, and comments about the TRS and its personnel. The procedure shall be described in appropriate printed outreach material that is distributed to the general public.

The contractor shall ensure that relay callers who wish to register a complaint are able to reach a supervisor or administrator while on-line during a relay call. All complaints, along with their resolutions, shall be kept on file, **and** reponed **to the**

Relay Texas Administrator and the Relay Texas Advisory Committee (RTAC) at the RTAC's next meeting. Names and personal information about persons registering complaints will be kept confidential unless the affected person agrees otherwise or where more than one person is affected, all affected persons agree otherwise unless disclosure is required by the Texas Public Information Act. Exceptions are when the Relay Texas Administrator, auditor, or a PUCT staff needs to review the file to ensure compliance with contract terms. See FCC 47 U.S.C. §225, Section (g).

9 TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS.

9.1 Switching System: Mandatory.

The switching system shall ensure that no calls are dropped due to technical failure and must be capable of having preventive maintenance performed while the system is in operation.

9.2 Network Configuration: Mandatory.

The transmission circuits shall meet or exceed industry interexchange performance standards for circuit loss and noise.

The proposal will describe the facilities, telecommunications equipment, and software the contractor will use in providing the TRS. The proposal must include a network design diagram that describes the network configuration to be used in providing the TRS. The proposal should include the way callers will access the service, the way the Contractor will handle the calls, and the quantities and types of inbound and outbound circuits necessary to complete the local and toll calls.

9.3 Service Expansion: Mandatow.

The TRS must be capable of expanding in response to increasing demand. The expanded TRS shall maintain all standards in the Request for Proposal. Any expansion will incur no additional cost to the State.

9.4 Technology Innovation: Mandatow.

Considering the rapid growth of technology in the telecommunications industry, the contractor is strongly encouraged to take advantage of innovations to improve Relay Texas. Additionally, the contractor is encouraged to present new features or services that may enhance the quality of the service to the Relay Texas Administrator and the Relay Texas Advisory Committee.

9.5 Uninterruptible Power System: Mandatow.

The relay center(s) must have a **back-up** system *sufficient to allow the center(s) to* operate for a minimum of 12 hours after a power failure. Re-routing to other centers in an emergency situation is acceptable and encouraged, but does not replace the

back-up system

9.6 Disaster Recovery Plan: Mandatory.

A complete plan to recover and restore relay service in the **event** of natural or man-made disasters is required. The Commission's Relay Texas Administrator must be notified of any disruption in service that lasts more than **30** minutes. Such notification shall take place within three hours of the time the disruption begins or by 8:30 a.m. on the next business day if the disruption otherwise occurs outside normal business hours. The report should explain how the problem will be corrected and give an approximate time and date when relay service will be in full operation. After the service is back in full operation, the TRS Provider will submit a written report on the problem to the Relay Texas Administrator.

10 STANDARD SERVICE SPECIFICATIONS.

10.1 Local and Intrastate Toll Calls: Mandatory.

The service shall be designed to provide local and intrastate toll calls by wire or radio.

10.2 interstate Toll Calls: Mandatory.

The Contractor will offer interstate TRS. Funding for interstate service will come from the interstate jurisdiction as mandated by the Federal Communications Commission.

10.3 Billing Requirements: Mandatory

The capacity to charge relay users for collect calls, person-to-person calls, and calls charged to a third party is required. The capacity to bill any Texas local exchange company calling card and any non-proprietary interexchange company calling card is required. For toll calls, the relay user shall be billed for conversation time (the time, in minutes and seconds, from the moment when the relay caller is connected with the called telephone number and conversation begins until the caller hangs up), not call set-up time, in between calls, and wrap-up time. The calls shall be billed from the city where caller is to the city where the called party is, not to the relay center.

This proposal must include a complete description of how relay users will be billed for all calls. This description will include the procedures for obtaining information from the local exchange companies, whether the billing will be performed in-house **or** contracted, a list of specific credit cards to which calls can be billed, and a sample bill format.

10.4 Call Billing Record: Mandatory

The billing system will be automated to the greatest extent technically possible.

Handwritten documents are not acceptable, except in emergency situations.

10.5 Automatic Branding: Mandatory.

When a relay user calls Relay Texas, automatic number identification (**ANI**) will automatically brand the telephone number to the caller's type of call for future use. The next time relay user uses the same telephone number; the ANI will automatically provide the requested type of call used. If the relay user uses different type of call (by relay user making the request), then automatic branding will brand the telephone number with new type of call for future use. See Section 10.6 for permanent branding.

10.6 User Database, Relay User Input: Mandatory

To assist in making relay calls more efficient, the TRS shall provide a database of users' call preferences such as type of call, billing information, speed dialing, **slow** typing, carrier of choice, etc. This information will appear on the agent screen when a user calls the relay center from the registered **ANI**. The relay user must be able to provide information on line via agents or customer service personnel. This process should be efficient and easy for relay user to be able to give data to the relay provider.

Note: If relay user states a preference to the type of call such as American Standard Code Information Interchange (ASCII), Voice Carryover (**VCO**) Speech-To-Speech (STS), etc. this will override the automatic branding. Though a different relay user may use the telephone number with permanent branding, he or she can ask for different type of call to be used; nonetheless, the permanent branding remains until relay user specifically requests that the agent change the **user's** database.

10.7 Usage: Mandatory.

No restrictions shall be placed on the length or number of calls placed by customers through the TRS, even during peak times.

10.8 Access to Automated System: Mandatory.

The TRS shall provide service by which a user (including but not limited to **TTY**, **VCO**, **ASCII**, **Hearing-Carryover (HCO)**, **STS**, and **VRI**) may call services in order to send messages. These services can include paging services, voice menus, answering machines, or any other automated system that either records or passes on a voice, text, or electronic messages to the other party.

10.9 Courtesy and Intercept Messages: Mandatory.

After five rings, a courtesy message will inform callers that they have reached Relay Texas. An example of a courtesy message would be "Welcome to Relay Texas. An agent will be with you shortly." Appropriate intercept messages shall also be provided if there is a system failure or if all relay stations continue to be busy. This

message will occur **30** seconds after the courtesy message has been invoked. The following message could be “Relay agents are still busy. Please wait for the next available relay agent.”

Note: **An** intercept message with a customer waiting on the line shall not constitute an answer. Accordingly, the time in queue shall not be billed to the TUSF. Intercepted calls will be documented with the monthly invoice. No busy signals are allowed, unless related to equipment failure of a third party.

10.10 Carrier of Choice (COC): Mandatory.

The TRS Provider will allow **the** relay user to choose **his** or her preferred interexchange carrier when placing toll calls through the TRS. The relay agent is not required to verbally offer the option, but must describe the option when asked by a relay user. **An** explanation of COC must be included in all appropriate relay publications. A list of participating long distance carriers at Relay Texas will be maintained and shared publicly. On an annual basis, TRS Provider is expected to mail to IXCs who are not listed with Relay Texas inviting them to be part of COC.⁵

10.11 Text, Voice, and Video Calls: Mandatory.

The TRS shall be capable of receiving and transmitting voice, text, and video calls that may involve electronic signals including but not limited to baudot code and American Standard Code for Information Interchange (**ASCII**), videoconference standards, ~~internet protocols~~, and wireless communications that TRS may use.

10.12 Type of Transmission: Mandatory

The TRS shall be able to process relay calls made by digital and analog transmissions, including enhanced speed as developed by TTY manufacturers. Enhanced speed codes to be used in Relay Texas need to be well established nationally before they can be used in TRS. Examples of ubiquitous enhanced speed would be “Turbo Code” from Ultratec, “Fast Type” from Krown, or “High Speed” by Ameriphone. Please indicate what type of enhanced speed will be used, if any, in your TRS platform.

10.13 Charges for Local Calls: Mandatory.

The calling and called parties shall bear no charges for calls originating and terminating within the same toll-free local calling scope.

In compliance with the Commission’s Substantive Rule §26.414 (b)(3)(A), local exchange carriers shall not impose access charges on calls made through the TRS which originate and terminate within *the* same toll-free **local** calling scope.

⁵ FCC Cite: 47 USC 225 and 47 CFR 64.604(b)(3)

10.14 Extended Area Service (EAS): Mandatory.

The system must ensure that relay users are not billed for toll usage when completing EAS calls, including calls made by or to subscribers of optional EAS.

The proposal shall describe the method that will be used to implement this requirement and indicate the frequency of update of the EAS database. The Relay Texas Administrator or PUCT staff involved in Relay Texas can, at his/her discretion, request the status of EAS and when it was last updated.

10.15 Charges for Intrastate Toll: Mandatory.

The TRS Provider shall provide to the Commission a copy of the intrastate toll rates that will be billed to relay users. The calling or called party shall bear one-half of the total charges.

If the copy of the intrastate toll rates is different from a contractor's current tariffed rates on file with the Commission, the TRS Provider must show in detail how the proposed rates vary from the tariffed rates.

10.16 Answering Machine and Voice Mail Procedure: Mandatory.

The following minimum procedures shall be used for processing relay calls that reach an answering machine or voice mail:

- i. The relay agent will inform the caller when an answering machine or voice mail has been reached.
- ii. When the relay caller is a text user, and if the answering machine is long, the agent will record the message, and convey it to the relay user in its entirety.
- iii. ~~The relay agent will ask the relay caller if he or she wishes to leave a message, typed in parenthesis.~~ The relay agent will relay the complete outgoing message verbatim including the option for the relay caller to leave a message if stated on the outgoing message.
- iv. The relay agent will leave the relay caller's message (voice or text).
- v. The relay agent will confirm to the caller that the message has been left.
- vi. The relay caller will be charged for only one call (the ~~last~~ first call) regardless of the number of calls that may be required to retrieve and convey the answering machine message and/or to leave a message.

10.16.2 Recording Answer Machine or Voice Mail: Mandatory.

If the caller reaches an answering machine or voice mail, if necessary the relay agent will record the voice announcement, and then relay the message back to the caller without having to call back each time to get the entire message. Once the relay call is completed, the recorded message must be deleted. This may not work with voice menus.

- 10.17 Voice Menus Procedure: Mandatow.
Relay agents shall, to **the** extent possible, convey the message to the text relay user as quickly as possible in order to process the relay call as quickly as possible. The relay caller will be charged for only one call (the first ~~last~~ call) regardless of the number of calls that may be required to retrieve and convey the voice menu message.
- 10.18 One-Line Answering Machine or Voice Mail Retrieval: Mandatory.
Relay users must be able to call Relay Texas *to* retrieve voice messages from answering machines or voice mail without connecting to **the** third party. The relay agent will record messages from answering machines or voice mail and then relay the message back to the caller. Once the relay call is completed, the recorded message must be deleted.
- 10.19 Number Verification and Identification of Calls: Mandatory.
When a text relay **user** calls Relay Texas **and** gives a telephone number to the agent, the system will automatically type back the number dialed, and identify the type (local, long distance, toll free) of call made. Examples are as follows:
- “Dialing Id xxx xxx xxxx ringing 1...2...”
“Dialing local xxx xxx xxxx ringing 1...“2...”
“Dialing toll free xxx xxx xxxx ringing 1...“2..”
- This will help users know if a number has been misdialled and be aware whether the call is local, long distance, or toll free.
- 10.20 Access to 9xx and 8xx Pav-Per-Call Services: Mandatow.
TRS must allow access to 9xx and 8xx number services that charge for usage. The TRS must allow for billing of the end user for such pay-per-calls. **Also**, the TRS must identify how it will determine if the end user’s phone number is blocked from making such calls. The 50% discount rates for intrastate relay calls do not apply to these calls.
- 10.21 Access to Restricted 8xx Numbers: Mandatory.
This service allows access to regionally restricted 8xx numbers by local relay users in cities or towns where relay centers are outside these regions.
- 10.22 Directory Assistance: Mandatory
Relay Texas users will be able to access local and long distance directory assistance through the TRS. Local directory assistance calls must **be** billed to end users at the same rates (or less) that are billed by the local company serving **the** end user. **Long** distance directory assistance calls must be billed at the TRS Provider’s tariffed rate or at the tariffed rate of the carrier used for the long distance directory. The TUSF **will** not be billed for directory assistance calls other than **for** associated agent work

time.

10.23 Emergency Calls: Mandatow.

The TRS proposal shall include appropriate procedures for handling emergency calls in the shortest possible time. Relay Texas currently processes approximately 20 emergency calls per month.

10.24 Blockage Rate: Mandatow.

No busy signals are allowed, and a queue service should be utilized when a busy signal is detected at TRS network, ~~unless related to equipment failure of a third party.~~

10.25 Average Answer Time: Mandatow.

After reaching the TRS, the average answer time shall not exceed **3.3** seconds in a single 24-hour period. This includes special services such as STS, *STSNCO*, VRI, etc. Contractor shall measure by sampling the **ASA** a minimum of once every 30 minutes for each 24-hour period. **ASA** shall be measured from the time the call hits the first measurable switch point to the point at which a relay agent is dedicated to the call. An answer shall mean that the relay agent is ready to render assistance and/or ready to accept information necessary to process the call. See Section **3.4** for penalty clause.

10.26 Relay Texas Identification on Caller ID: Mandatow.

The TRS Provider shall assure that its Relay Texas 800 trunks/phone lines are registered with the local phone company as "Relay Texas" in order for Caller ID subscribers to view this label on their Caller ID boxes. The company's corporate name must not appear on Caller ID boxes when a subscriber receives a Relay Texas call.

10.27 Caller-ID: Mandatow-Optional.

A relay caller's telephone number should appear on Caller ID box through the TRS system to the called party. Bidders shall describe how they will provide this feature.

10.28 ASCII Split Screen: Mandatory-Optional.

TRS Provider should be able to provide a "split-screen" for relay ~~callers who use ASCII with a computer.~~ agents handling **ASCII** calls if the caller requests it.

11 SERVICE SPECIFICATIONS.

11.1 Voice Carryover (VCO): Mandatow.

Voice carryover allows a person who has hearing loss to speak directly to the other party (hearing, TTY, HCO, STS, ASCII, and other VCO users) rather than typing on the TTY. If the other party is a hearing person, the relay agent will type to the VCO user the message of the hearing person. If the other party is a **TTY** user, he or she

can type directly to the VCO user

11.1.1 Two-Line VCO (2LVCO): Mandatory.

ZLVCO enables a VCO user to speak directly to the voice user on one line while the other line is used to receive the relay agent's typed responses from the voice user. This allows two-way, uninterrupted conversation.

Note: This requires the caller to have two telephone lines; one line must have conference calling or three-way calling capacities.

11.2 Hearing Carryover (HCO): Mandatory.

Hearing carryover allows a person who is speech-disabled to make telephone calls to hearing party, other HCO, VCO, STS, ASCII, and TTY users. If the called party uses text communications, the agent will voice this to the HCO user. The HCO user sends communications via a TTY or other automated equipment through a relay agent who will voice the message to the hearing person or allow TTY tones to pass through to the deaf person.

11.2.1 Modes for VCO and HCO: Mandatory.

The TRS shall enable VCO and HCO users to utilize both TTY modes: acoustic mode and direct connect mode. The TRS also must allow VCO relay users to set up the call using voice communication without the TTY transmission that is normally required to set up the relay call.

11.2.2 Flexibility of Utilizing VCO and HCO: Mandatory.

The TRS shall provide VCO and HCO upon request of the relay user if either VCO or HCO 800 numbers are not used.

11.3 Video Relay Interpreting Service: Mandatory Ooptional.⁶

This is an interactive video conference service that utilizes a sign language interpreter at the relay center(s) to provide interpreting services to locations equipped with video conference equipment and to individuals using their own video conference equipment. This service allows translation from sign language to voice, rather than from text to voice. A relay caller uses video equipment to place a call to the TRS. The interpreter at the relay center translates the caller's sign language to voice to complete a call to a hearing person. See Attachment F.

11.3.1 Criteria for Video Interpreters.

TRS shall employ qualified interpreters who are proficient in reading American Sign Language (ASL). The video interpreters shall be state or nationally

⁶ This is considered a special service and can be provided from relay centers not in Texas, if appropriate

certified.

11.3.2 Bandwidth for VRI.

The video quality must be of sufficient clarity to make the signing understandable, and the bandwidth utilized by video equipment, to the extent possible, should be uniform throughout Texas.

11.4 Speech-To-Speech Relay Service for Speech Disabled (STS): Mandatory.⁷

This is a form of TRS that enables an individual with a speech disability to use his own voice or a speech synthesizer in order to engage in a relay call in functionally equivalent communication by wire or radio. This service utilizes a relay agent with specialized training and ability in recognizing and relaying the speech of persons with speech disabilities to voice for the caller. The speech-disabled person will be able to hear the hearing person's voice. All three parties will hear the conversation.

11.5 Speech-to-Speech Relay Service for Persons with Hearing Loss with Speech Understandable by Trained Relay Agents (STS/VCO): Mandatory.⁸

This is a form of TRS that enables individuals with hearing loss and speech that may not be understood by hearing persons to speak for themselves during a relay call. Relay agents with specialized training and ability in recognizing and relaying the speech of persons with hearing loss are ready to voice for the user with hearing loss if the hearing person does not understand the user's speech. The agent types back to the person with hearing loss the text of the hearing person's communication.

11.6 Slow Typing for Deaf-Blind and Visually Impaired Users: Mandatory.

Agents shall type at a slower speed for Deaf-Blind and Visually Impaired users than other types of relay calls. The agent must maintain the typing speed throughout the call, in order to maintain efficiency.

11.7 Default for Deaf-Blind 800 number: Mandatory.

When an 800 number for deaf-blind callers is used, there must be default of a buffer with slow typing speed. Please state words per min for the default.

11.8 Spanish Translation: Mandatory.

The TRS shall provide Spanish translation: Spanish to Spanish, Spanish to English, or English to Spanish.

11.9 Unique 8xx and 9xx Telephone Numbers for Services: Mandatow.

The TRS shall have a separate 800 for each of these services: TTY, ASCII, VCO, STS, STS/VCO, VRI, Spanish, Deaf-Blind, and 8xx/9xx Pay-Per-Call.

⁷ This is considered a special service and can be provided from relay centers not in Texas, if appropriate.

⁸ This is considered a special service and can be provided from relay centers not in Texas, if appropriate.

- 11.10 Existing 8xx Telephone Numbers: Mandatory.
The contractor will use existing Relay Texas 8xx numbers for VCO, ASCII, 8xx/9xx Pay-Per-Call, Voice, and TTY. The new contract will add 8xx numbers for STS, STSNCO, VRI, Spanish, and Deaf-Blind. These 800 numbers belong to Relay Texas, and not to the contractor.
- 11.11 Unique Greeting For Each 800: Mandatory.
The TRS shall submit greetings for each 800 number for the Relay Texas Administrator and RTAC to approve. The greetings will be on the Relay Texas website and used in outreach projects and materials,
- 11.12 7-1-1 Service: Desirable.
In the event that 7-1-1 service is implemented in Texas, the TRS shall receive 7-1-1 calls from Local Exchange Carriers. The default sequence for the TRS Provider to process 7-1-1 calls will be negotiated. The TRS Provider will use ANI to brand the calls based on the device used for future relay calls from the same ANI. The User Database configured by relay user (including hearing persons) will override ANI branding. The TRS Provider shall then reroute 7-1-1 calls to the relay user's preferred 8xx number (such as VCO, TTY, STS, etc). The rerouting process shall come from the TRS, not from Local Exchange Carriers. The bidder shall explain in detail its procedures for handling 7-1-1 calls.

The 8XX relay numbers will continue to be provided. The contractor will provide a monthly report showing how many relay calls are initiated by 7-1-1 and 8XX.

12 RELAY AGENT SPECIFICATIONS.

- 12.1 Identification of Relay Agent – Gender and Number: Mandatory.
Each relay agent in relay center[s] that process Relay Texas calls will be assigned an identification number. When answering a relay call, the relay agent will answer with his or her number and gender identification such as: "RTX 105M". The relay caller has the option to request a different gender.
- 12.2 Confidentiality: Mandatory.
TRS shall be provided in a manner that ensures confidentiality regarding existence and content of conversation as required by applicable laws. The TRS Provider shall outline disciplinary and/or termination procedures in writing if relay agents violate confidentiality laws. This information will be published in the Relay Texas newsletter and on the PUCT WEB site.

Attachment G is a copy of a Chapter 82, Texas Human Resources Chapter 82 (as amended) Legislature, which contains certain confidentiality requirements for relay

agents and interpreters

12.3 Relay Agent Training: Mandatory.

Relay agent training shall include instruction on proper translation/interpretation of typed ASL (ASL gloss and ASL grammar), information about deaf culture, and information about the needs of hard-of-hearing, speech-disabled, and deaf-blind users. Training will involve simulated call handling. Appropriate parts of agent training shall be provided by persons from the deaf, hard-of-hearing, speech-disabled, and deaf-blind communities with expertise in the field of language interpreting, ASL, and cultures.

A monthly summarization of the training will be provided to the Relay Texas Advisory Committee and Relay Texas Administrator.

12.4 Relay Agent Counseling: Mandatow.

The proposal shall outline a counseling and support program that will help relay agents deal with the emotional aspects of relaying calls. The counseling support system must follow the confidentiality procedures required pursuant to Section 12.2.

12.5 Procedures for Relaying Communication: Mandatow.

Relay agents must convey the full content, context, and intent of the relay communication they translate. It is extremely important that relay agents convey intent to the extent possible. Relay agents must strive to maintain functional equivalence for both parties during a relay call. **All secondary** activities that would normally be known to a hearing person engaged in a telephone conversation must be relayed whenever possible. Unless requested otherwise by a relay user, the agent shall relay all calls according to the following procedures:

12.5.1 Full Control of the Relay Call Remain with the Originating Relay User.

Generally, the caller shall have the option of telling the relay agent what aspects of the call she or he will handle. For example, a text relay caller may request that he or she introduce relay services to the called party, rather letting the relay agent do the introduction.

12.5.2 Neutral Position.

Relay agents shall not counsel, advise, or interject personal opinions or additional information during a relay call, even if the relay communication breaks down. An exception to this occurs when either the relay caller or called party requests assistance from a relay agent or during an emergency call. Even then, a neutral position must be maintained to the extent possible. Relay agents shall not offer any advice based on personal judgements regarding the content of any relay communication (i.e., "Don't do what he is asking you to do" or "he's trying to rip you off"). Relay agents shall not have a personal

conversation with anyone who calls the TRS at any time, except to extend a polite and concise response when prompted, such as “thank you” if a relay **user** comments on a job well done.

12.5.3 Information on Status of Relay Call.

Relay agents shall keep the relay caller informed regarding the status of a call, including but not limited to an indication of such signals as dialing, ringing, busy, disconnected, recording, a fax sound, or hold.

12.5.4 Identification of Gender of Non-Typing Relay User.

To the extent possible, the relay agent shall identify to the text relay user whether the hearing or voice user is female or male by using parentheses at the beginning of a call as follows: “(M)” or “(F)”.

12.5.5 Relay Agent Comments.

All comments directed to either party by the relay agent shall be relayed. For example, if the relay agent asks a hearing party, “Will you accept a collect call?” these words will be relayed *to* the text relay user in parentheses. Likewise, all comments directed to the relay agent by either party shall be relayed. For example, if a text relay user types, “**Yes**, I will accept the charges” these words will be relayed to the other relay party as (The party says, ‘Yes, I will accept the charges.’)

12.6 Describing of Voice Tone to the Relay User: Mandatow.

Relay agents shall, to the best of their abilities, convey **to** the text relay **user** the voice relay user’s tone of voice. Whenever possible, characterizing of tone voice will first be conveyed with descriptive words such as “yelling,” “crying,” “loud,” “quiet,” or “foreign accent.” These words shall be in parenthesis.

If it is clear to the relay agent that the tone of voice is more emotional than the descriptive sound words can provide, then relay agent can type something such as “(sounds angry)” in addition to the descriptive sound words if it makes conversation clearer. Such descriptions and other similar utterances shall be in parenthesis, preceded by the word “sounds”. The TRS shall provide a comprehensive list of possible descriptive sound words as well as possible list **of** emotional terms that will be used for “(sounds *adjective*)” for the Relay Texas administrator and Relay Texas Advisory Committee to review. The list will **be** published on the Relay Texas WEB site and in the Relay Texas newsletters.

Relay agents may also be creative in the ways that they may convey the **hearing** person’s vocalizations to the text user. If the voice Relay User “groans” or “hums” these could be relayed as “ooohh” or “hmmmm”. An excited “yes” may be relayed as “yesss!!!”. The TRS Provider should provide training in voice tone conveyances as

pan of the overall agent training.

12.7 Conveyance of Relay User's Typed Text: Mandatory.

When the relay agent verbalizes for the text relay user, the agent shall adopt a conversational tone of voice approximate to the type of call being made. If a text user types "ooohhhh" or similar typed expression, the relay agent shall verbalize accordingly.

12.8 Background Noise Identified: Mandatory.

The relay agent will identify background noise (e.g. a baby crying, music, flipping pages) to text relay user whenever possible.

12.9 Censorship: Mandatory.

There shall be no censorship or omission by relay agents in any situation. Relay agents must convey everything, including profanity, to the other party.

12.10 Proficiency: Mandatory.

The contractor shall ensure that any relay agent who does not have the skills listed in the following subsections within a three-month period shall not be used as a relay agent.

12.10.1 Spelling Skills.

Relay agents must possess 12th grade level spelling skills

12.10.2 Typing Speed of 45 wpm.

Relay agents must be able to type at a speed of 45 wpm for five minutes. The relay agent's typing speed may initially be tested using standard typing tests. Relay agents must be tested every six months to ensure that the 45-wpm for five minutes standard (voice to text) is maintained. These periodic tests shall simulate actual working conditions and not be standard typing tests. Tests should be sufficiently modified with sufficient frequency to ensure that relay agents cannot "learn" the test.

12.10.3 Speech Quality: Mandatory.

The relay agent's speech must be clear and easily understood.

12.10.4 Ability to Translate for Relay Users with Minimal English Language Skills: Mandatory.

Relay agents must translate the typed languages of relay users whose primary language may be ASL or whose written English language skills are limited to conversational grammatically correct English. This is to assist in clearer understanding between the two parties. If text users instruct the relay agent to

type verbatim, agents will follow such instructions.

- 12.11 Ability to Translate for Spanish-Speaking Relay Users: Mandatory.
During all shifts, relay agents fluent in Spanish must be available to provide translation when one or both relay users communicate in Spanish. See Section 11.8.
- 12.12 Explanation of TRS: Mandatory.
When a non-text user *receives* a relay call, the relay agent will ask whether he or she has previously used TRS. If such user has used TRS before, the call will be processed without further delay. If not, the relay agent will explain how the service operates and will notify the text relay user, using parentheses, that TRS is being explained.

The TRS explanation will be brief and concise. A suggested format is:

‘The person who is calling **you** is either deaf or speech-disabled. The caller is typing their conversation, which will be read to you. When you hear the words “Go Ahead,” it will be your turn to speak. Please speak directly to the caller. Everything that is heard will be typed to them. One moment for your call to begin.’

When a non-text relay user *initiates* a call to Relay Texas, the relay agent will NOT ask whether he or she has previously used TRS unless it is obvious to the relay agent that the relay user does not know how to use TRS.

13 OUTREACH PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS.

- 13.1 Outreach Projects: Mandatow.
The Contractor shall coordinate/provide annual outreach projects including but not limited to:
- 13.1.1 Quarterly Relay Texas Newsletter.
The contractor will work closely with the Relay Texas Administrator to prepare the Relay Texas newsletter. The newsletter will provide information about Relay Texas and related activities, and will be distributed to anyone who requests it. The newsletter will contain between 4 to 6 pages and the page format will be the standard 8 ½” by 11”.
- 13.1.2 Promotional Items.
The contractor will work closely with the Relay Texas Administrator and the members of Relay Texas Advisory Committee in designing, developing, and approving promotional items. These items may include but are not limited to brochures, magnets, koozies, pens, and videotapes (information or training).

13.1.3 Relay Ambassador Project (RAP).

On an annual basis, the contractor will prepare and release a request for proposals for outreach projects for the subsequent fiscal year (September to August). The targeted groups will be grassroots individuals, organizations, agencies, businesses, service providers, and any other interested groups in Texas. The purpose of the RAP is to educate, train, inform, and distribute outreach materials to the following groups: deaf, hard-of-hearing, elderly, speech-disabled, deaf-blind. hearing people, businesses, agencies, organizations, and any other groups that may benefit from learning about Relay Texas.

The request for proposals and the proposals from bidders will be reviewed and evaluated by the Relay Texas Administrator, PUCT agency staff, and sub-committee members of the RTAC. The Commission will approve final selection based upon the evaluation committee's recommendations.

13.1.4 Outreach Projects by TRS Provider.

The TRS Provider is expected to provide outreach to Texas cities utilizing a budget of up to \$10,000 a year. This will be reimbursed by the TUSF. These outreach expenses will be tallied on a monthly basis and will be reflected on page one of the invoice (see Exhibit A). A monthly report on outreach trips and the purpose of the trips will be included in the monthly report.

13.2 Approval of Outreach Projects.

On annual basis, the Contractor shall outline costs and activities for each outreach project and submit them to the RTAC and Relay Texas Administrator for review. The Relay Texas administrator will submit the recommendations to the PUCT for approval

13.3 Financial Terms for Outreach Projects.

Outreach project expenses shall be submitted with the monthly invoice

14 REPORTING SPECIFICATIONS.

14.1 Records Maintenance: Mandatory.

The contractor shall maintain its records of the TRS operations so as to permit review and determination of the TRS data. The contractor shall make such records available during normal business hours for inspection by the Commission and the RTAC.

14.2 Reports to Local Exchange Carriers: Mandatory.

The contractor shall provide to local exchange companies necessary information to enable those companies to meet the statutory requirements that access charges not be

charged on calls that originate and terminate within the same local calling area

14.3 Monthly Reports: Mandatory.

14.3.1 Invoice, Page One.

The first page will have the minimal necessary expense information that will ultimately be faxed to the TUSF. The first page of the invoice should have the following items (see Exhibit A):

- i. Total service compensation.
- ii. Publicity expense.
- iii. Amount due based on the postalized price per min or one-time or monthly charge for the mandatory-optional and/or desirable services.
- iv. Total amount due.
- v. Certification statement stating that the charges are accurate,
- vi. Necessary signature lines for the responsible parties from the contractor and the Commission.

14.3.2 Invoice, Page Two.

The second page of the invoice will give a *summary* of detail and statistics supporting the first page. The following items will be included (See Exhibit B):

- i. Total session minutes, including local, intrastate, interstate, international, and general assistance calls (including intrastate, interstate, and international directory assistance, toll-free calls⁹, and busy/ring/no answer calls).
- ii. Total session minutes of interstate and international calls including directory assistance, toll free calls, and busy/ring/no answer calls deducted from the total session minutes, which will be subtracted from the previous total, to produce total billable minutes.
- iii. Price per minute of service.
- iv. Subtotal service compensation.
- v. Total billable session minutes based on the postalized price per minute for mandatory-optional or desirable if not one-time or monthly charge.
- vi. Amount due based on the postalized price per minute or one-time or monthly charge for the mandatory-optional and/or desirable.
- vii. Total service compensation.
- viii. Number of billable calls from local, intrastate, toll-free calls, directory assistance calls, busy/ring/no answer calls, and general assistance calls.
- ix. Average length of billable outbound calls.
- x. Average length of non-billable outbound calls,

⁹ The Interstate TRS Fund currently funds 64% of 800 calls made through TRS. CC Docket 90-571 "In the Matter of Telecommunications Relay Services, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990".

14.4 Monthly Minutes of Service, Calls Handled, and Percentage Report.

The following three reports listed on one page provide supporting data which include a breakdown of total minutes of service, total calls handled, and percentage of calls handled to total calls handled. Three reports should be on one page. (See Exhibit C)

14.4.1 Monthly Summary Detail Record.

- i. Total minutes of service, total number of calls handled, and percent of calls handled to total calls handled.
- ii. Non-billable minutes of service, total number of calls handled, and percent of calls handled to total calls handled. This **will** be subtracted from the sub-total to create total billable data.
- iii. Total billable minutes of service, total number of calls handled, and percent of billable calls handled to total calls handled.

14.4.2 Monthly Detail of Billable Data.

Unless otherwise stated, the following items will be used in order: Total minutes of service, total number of calls handled, and percent of calls handled to total calls handled.

- i. Local
- ii. Intrastate
- iii. Intrastate toll-free
- iv. 8XX and 9XX pay-per-call ¹⁰
- v. Intrastate directory assistance
- vi. General assistance
- vii. Intrastate busy/ring/no answer
- viii. Emergency
- ix. Sub-totals of minutes of service, total call, and total percentage

14.4.3 Monthly Detail of Non-Billable Data.

Unless otherwise stated, the following items in order will be used: Total Minutes of Service, Total Number of Calls handled, and Percent of calls handled to Total Calls handled.

- i. Interstate
- ii. Interstate toll-free
- iii. International
- iv. Interstate directory assistance
- v. Interstate busy/ring/no answer
- vi. Sub totals of minutes of service, total Call, and total percentage

¹⁰ The Interstate TRS Fund does not reimburse for 8XX and 9XX pay-per-calls so this will be fully subsidized by the TUSF

- vii. Grand totals of billable and non-billable minutes of service, total call, and total percentage

14.5 Monthly Device Report.

Total monthly calls handled, percent of total, minutes of service, average length of call and average speed of agent interaction categorized as (See Exhibit D):

- 1. TTY Baudot calls
- ii. Spanish-speaking TTY Baudot calls
- iii. Voice calls
- iv. Spanish-speaking voice calls
- v. Voice Carryover calls
- vi. Spanish-speaking voice carryover calls
- vii. **ASCII** calls
- viii. Spanish-speaking ASCII calls
- ix. Speech-To-Speech calls by Speech-Disabled
- x. Speech-To-Speech calls by Hearing Disabled
- xi. Hearing Carryover calls
- xii. Spanish-speaking hearing carryover calls
- xiii. Deaf-Blind calls
- xiv. Mandatory-optional or desirable calls

14.6 Monthly Delayed Call Profile.

The Delayed Call Profile provides data on the time a relay user waits before TRS responds and the number of abandoned calls. (See Exhibit E)

14.6.1 Monthly Inbound Call Profile.

- 1. Number of inbound calls (calls placed to the TRS center)
- ii. Number of inbound calls placed in queue
- iii. Number of inbound calls answered from queue
- iv. Total number of inbound calls abandoned from queue
- v. Percentage of abandoned calls to the total calls in queue

14.6.2 Delayed Call Profile.

Two reports with the same data: one will report section by section data and the other will report cumulative data. (See Exhibit E.)

The Delayed Call Profile shows how many callers stayed in queue, using the following time frames: less than 1 second, 1-5 seconds, 5.01-10 seconds, 10.01-15 seconds, 15.01-20 seconds, 20.01-25 seconds, 25.01-30 seconds, 30.01-40 seconds, 40.01-50 seconds, 50.01-60 seconds, 60.01-90 seconds, 90.01-120 seconds, 120.01-180 second, 180.01+ seconds. The delayed profile chart **will** show the following for each second group:

- i. Number of inbound calls offered
- ii. Number of inbound calls processed
- iii. Number of abandoned inbound calls
- iv. For the cumulative report, percentage of calls processed **to** the total of accumulating number of inbound calls processed

14.7 Daily Activity Report.

- i. Number of calls handled for each day of the month
- ii. Average number of weekday calls
- iii. Average number of weekend calls
- iv. Peak day and hours of operation

14.8 Average Speed of Answer.

- i. Contractor's call detail reports from the switch should be attached to the invoice to verify the information included in the invoice and to review average speed of answer (See Sections 3.4 and 10.25.)
- ii. The contractor shall work with Commission staff to develop an acceptable format for the invoice.

14.9 Traffic Reports: NPA/NXX.

Traffic reports will include a numbering plan area ¹¹ (NPA) traffic report and exchange traffic (NXX) report. These monthly reports will be called "Exchange Usage Statistics" and "NPA Usage Statistics" (See Exhibits F and G.) (See Attachment H, "Glossary of NPA/NXX Terms Used in PPA/NXX Reports" for further clarification.)

The example reports in Exhibits F and G were generated **using** all inbound calls to the TRS, including local, intrastate, interstate, international, general assistance, and busy/no answer calls.

14.9.1 NPA Usage Statistics Report.

- i. Identify NPA
- ii. Number of subscribers of each identified NPA
- iii. Percent of total Texas subscribers of each identified **NPA**
- iv. Number of completed calls for each identified **NPA**
- v. Completed rate of each identified NPA
- vi. Minutes of total use for each identified NPA
- vii. Percent of total Texas use for each identified **NPA**
- viii. Minutes of agent time for each identified **NPA**
- ix. Percent of non-conversation time for each identified **NPA**
- x. Number of inbound calls for each identified NPA

¹¹ There are sevenreen (17) NPAs in Texas as of the date of this Request for Proposal

- xi. Number of outbound calls for each identified NPA
- xii. Outbound to inbound ratio for each identified NPA

14.9.2 Exchange Usage Statistics Report.

The Exchange Usage Statistic report reports the top 10 exchanges of each NPA with the largest number of subscribers. The top 10 exchanges of each NPA shall not list exchanges in the same local calling area but the data will be included in the report. For example, “Austin LATA” includes data from Manchaca, Round Rock and Jollyville. If Austin is the largest exchange in NPA 512, the Manchaca, Round Rock or Jollyville exchanges will not be listed in the top 10 exchanges, as these are in the Austin LATA.

- i. Identified NPA
- ii. Name of exchange (city name) of the identified NPA
- iii. Total number of subscribers in each NPA/exchange
- iv. Percentage of Texas subscribers in each NPA/exchange compare to total Texas subscribers
- v. Number of completed outbound calls for each NPA/exchange
- vi. Completion rate for each NPA/exchange
- vii. Conversation time for each NPA/exchange
- viii. Minutes of agent time for each NPA/exchange
- ix. Agent time that is not conversation time for each NPA/exchange
- x. Number of outbound calls for each NPA/exchange
- xi. Total number of outbound calls handled from the identified NPA/exchange