

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of	§	
	§	
Structure and	§	CG Docket No.10-51
Practices of the Video Relay	§	
Service Program	§	
Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals	§	
With Hearing and Speech Disabilities	§	

**ANNUAL REPORT OF HANCOCK, JAHN, LEE AND PUCKETT, LLC
d/b/a COMMUNICATION AXESS ABILITY GROUP**

I. Introduction and Background

Pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 64.606 (g)(2) , Hancock, Jahn, Lee and Puckett, LLC d/b/a “Communication Axess Ability Group” (“CAAG”) hereby submits its Annual Report as a provider of video relay services (“VRS”). On November 15, 2011, the Commission conditionally granted CAAG’s Application to be certified as a VRS provider eligible for compensation from the Interstate TRS Fund (the “Application”).¹ CAAG’s Application included a commitment, certified by a CAAG senior executive officer, that CAAG would submit an annual report including updated documentation and a summary of updates, or certifying that there are no changes to the information and documentation submitted with CAAG’s Application. This Annual Report is provided to fulfill that commitment.²

CAAG incorporates herein its Application, dated September 21, 2011. All information included in the Application remains true and accurate except as noted in this Annual Report.

CAAG is a privately held, small business. Since 2001, CAAG has provided primarily on-site, community-based interpreting services that have included high-quality, in-person sign

¹ Notice of Conditional Grant of Application of Hancock, Jahn, Lee & Puckett, LLC d/b/a/ Communication Axess Ability Group for Certification as a Provider of Video Relay Service Eligible for Compensation from the Interstate Telecommunications Relay Service Fund, CG Docket No. 10-51 (Nov. 15, 2011).

² Attached as **Exhibit A** is the Verification of Everett Puckett attesting to the truth and accuracy of the statements contained in the Annual Report.

language interpretation, video remote interpreting (“VRI”), interpreter training and management services, CART, advocacy and support services for the deaf and hard of hearing, and coordination of conference and event access services. CAAG is actively involved in, and encourages its Communications Assistants (“CAs”) to participate in, ongoing professional development and mentoring programs that are open to all interpreters. CAAG offers workshops and training for employees and internship programs for students soon to graduate from interpreter training programs. We believe CAAG is one of the few interpreter agencies that offers both full and part-time employment, health, vision and dental plans, paid time off, retirement plans, and a FSA, HSA, Life, and Short Term Disability/Long Term Disability Insurance.

CAAG uses a unique dual or bifurcated interpreting model that provides pre-scheduled and emergency in-person/on-site community interpreter services at local sites, as well as video interpreter services like VRI and VRS. Under its dual services model, CAAG is able to place highly skilled, certified interpreters in the community as well as in its video call centers. CAAG’s dual service is particularly beneficial because it (1) addresses the concern frequently expressed by the deaf community that there is a shortage of qualified interpreters, while simultaneously (2) promoting the health and sustainability of interpreters working and continuing to work in VRS.

CAAG’s dual interpretive services system counters the increased risk of fatigue and physical injury that recent research and studies have linked to continuous video interpreting. Both VRS call volumes and on-site community needs fluctuate. As a result, CAAG is able to schedule interpreters to serve either at the call centers or in person in the community, depending on the need. CAAG alternates an interpreter’s work schedule between VRI, VRS and on-site community-based interpreting. This work schedule model provides interpreters with greater flexibility, while providing the physical breaks necessary to avoid the strain or injury that repetitive video interpreting can cause. Importantly, serving in person within the local community is an essential component of interpreter development. This service fosters the

development of relationships with those living in the local area and encourages a cultural sensitivity and appreciation for the experiences of the local deaf community.

CAAG continues to (1) meet all non-waived operational, technical, and functional mandatory minimum standards contained at 47 C.F.R. §64.604 *et. seq.* of the Commission's rules and (2) make available adequate procedures and remedies for ensuring ongoing compliance with the Commission's rules, providing informational materials to VRS users on complaint procedures, and (3) making available Whistleblower procedures for all CAAG staff involved in the VRS segment of its operations. All of CAAG's VRS practices, policies and procedures follow the guidelines of the mandatory minimum standards.

II. Update: Call Centers

CAAG launched its VRS on January 16, 2011, with call centers in Houston and Beaumont, Texas. By its Notice of Change in Video Relay Service, dated December 2, 2011, CAAG notified the Commission of its execution of a new lease for the Houston call center space and provided a copy of the lease. Pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 64.606 (c) (5)(iii)(N)(2)(iii), on September 17, 2012, CAAG provided advance notification of its intent to operate a new call center located in Austin, Texas.³ CAAG expects to begin commercial operations at the Austin call center before the end of 2012.

III. Update: Products and Services

CAAG's VRS can be accessed using CAAG4you Soft Phone for PCs, dialing 855-877-2224 (inbound video and audio), dialing caagvrs.com, and using most other existing provider equipment. CAAG continues to make improvements and adjustments to ensure that other provider equipment and updates continue to operate in coordination with CAAG's VRS platform. CAAG also continues to provide improved VRS features through enhancements to its platform. CAAG has been hard at work developing its VRS Mobile Application. The VRS Mobile

³ A true and correct copy of the Austin lease is attached as confidential **Exhibit B**.

Application, which is expected to be released in the coming weeks, has been tested and demonstrated with deaf users, resulting in modifications based on valuable feedback received.

IV. Continued Qualifications for Certification

Video Interpreters⁴

CAAG continues to provide what it considers to be the best interpreting services available. By only employing highly qualified CAs, CAAG provides its customers with a sense of confidence in the quality of its service and CAAG's ability to meet a variety of call scenario needs. CAAG continues to hire only state or nationally certified interpreters. Additionally, applicants are required to pass an expressive and receptive skills assessment prior to employment to validate they are able to interpret calls effectively and accurately.

All CAs continue to meet the same service level standards, receive the same training, and enjoy the same high quality working conditions and employment practices described in CAAG's Application. CAAG is committed to the professional development of its CAs. CAAG demonstrates this commitment by providing on-going training, offering the opportunity to attend in-house programs and continuing education, as well as supporting attendance at outside conferences and workshops offered by higher education institutes and other community organizations.

24-Hour Operation and Redundancy

CAAG's VRS operates twenty-four hours per day, seven days a week.⁵ CAAG's CAs are prohibited from relaying calls from their home.⁶ CAAG provides VRS only through established commercial offices and on specific computers and equipment, which are not available to CAs at home or in any environment other than an approved CAAG call centers. CAAG checks

⁴ 47 C.F.R. § 64.604(a)(1).

⁵ 47 C.F.R. § 64.604(b) (4) (i).

⁶ 47 C.F.R. § 64.604(b) (4) (iii).

on a daily basis to ensure that the most recent log-in IP address for all CAs is the IP address of the CAAG call centers.

CAAG's VRS has redundancy features that are functionally equivalent to the equipment in normal central offices, including uninterruptible power in case of emergency.⁷ CAAG has secured servers and support with SureWest, a co-location vendor. Servers in the co-location have dual power supply for redundancy. The co-location has A/B/C power supply, delivering double supply with an additional power generator (diesel) on stand-by. CAAG has battery back-up on computers, routers and firewalls located within each call center facility and recently upgraded the battery back-ups to include even longer stand-by power. The Beaumont call center has a back-up generator for building suites, while the Houston building has back-up for emergency functions. Failover resides at the platform level. The addition of the Austin call center will enhance redundancy at the access level, providing a location that is less likely to experience severe weather, such as hurricanes. In the event of an emergency preventing operation at one call center location, calls are automatically distributed to another call center.

Call Transfers

In accordance with Commission rules⁸ and CAAG policy, interpreters answering and placing VRS calls stay with a call for a minimum of ten minutes unless the CA finds that he or she is not communicating effectively given the nature of the call.⁹ CAAG CAs also use their best efforts to accommodate a user's requested CA gender.¹⁰ If a call is transferred from one interpreter to another interpreter before 10 minutes, the CA is required to document the call information in the CAAG database for follow up with a manager.

⁷ 47 C.F.R. § 64.604(b) (4) (ii).

⁸ 47 C.F.R. § 64.604 (a)(1)(v).

⁹ *Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities*, CG Docket No. 03-123, FCC 06-81, Order ¶¶ 1 & 9 (June 16, 2006).

¹⁰ 47 C.F.R. § 64.604 (a)(1)(vi).

Confidentiality and Conversation Content¹¹

All of CAAG's CAs are bound by a strict code of professional conduct which mandates maintaining the utmost confidentiality with regard to every call. These requirements include faithfully rendering the content and spirit of the message communicated using language most readily understood by consumers and correcting errors discreetly and expeditiously.

CAAG CAs also must adhere to CAAG's confidentiality policy which states that all call content shall remain strictly confidential and which warns that policy violations may be reported to the appropriate certifying agency and may result in the revocation of the CA's certification. Any customer information that CAAG acquires is used only for the purpose of connecting VRS users with called parties, and is not sold, distributed, shared or revealed in any other way. Further, CAAG requires that each CA sign a confidentiality acknowledgment before the CA is permitted to begin employment in a CAAG call center.

CAAG also continues to maintain strict confidentiality of all VRS calls by limiting access to its call centers.

Types of Calls

CAAG handles all non-waived call types.¹² CAAG CAs do not refuse any single or sequential calls or attempt to limit the length of calls utilizing relay services.¹³ CAAG does not charge the user for any calls, including long distance calls, and, therefore, does not conduct credit checks or authorizations.¹⁴

CAAG CAs continue to provide answering machine and voice mail retrieval services to callers. Additionally, audio callers may leave an interpreted video mail for registered users when the call is unanswered.

¹¹ 47 C.F.R. § 64.604(a)(2).

¹² 47 C.F.R. § 64.604(a)(3).

¹³ 47 C.F.R. § 64.604 (a)(3)(i).

¹⁴ 47 C.F.R. § 64.604 (a)(3)(iii)

Speed of Answer¹⁵

The staffing of CAAG's call centers has provided callers with efficient access based upon projected calling volumes to reduce the probability of a busy response. CAAG ensures that 80 percent of all calls are answered within 120 seconds.¹⁶ In fact, out of the approximately 300 days that CAAG has been operational, fewer than 20 days fell below the 100 percent, and on none of those days were less than 95 percent of calls answered within 120 seconds. Call volume and speed of answer are monitored daily by the management team to determine the need for increased staffing. Those statistics also are captured in a report generated on a monthly basis.

Public Access to Information¹⁷

CAAG has engaged in activities designed to advise potential users of the availability of CAAG's VRS through deaf conferences and events on a national and local level, partnering with affiliate state associations to educate local communities, and informing individuals through our company website. CAAG also distributes material at these events with information regarding 911 calls and the importance of having a preferred provider.

End-User Information

Any customer information that CAAG acquires is used solely for the purpose of connecting TRS users with called parties, and is not sold, distributed, shared or revealed for any other purpose or in any other way.¹⁸

Emergency Calling/911 Standards

The CAAG Platform supports all requirements for Internet-based TRS registration¹⁹ and automatic 911 call handling requirements using 10-digit numbering.²⁰ CAAG's Platform is able

¹⁵ 47 C.F.R. § 64.604(b)(2).

¹⁶ 47 C.F.R. § 64.604(b)(2)(iii).

¹⁷ 47 C.F.R. § 64.604(c)(3).

¹⁸ 47 C.F.R. § 64.604(c)(7).

¹⁹ 47 C.F.R. §§ 64.605 and 64.611.

²⁰ *Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities*, Report and Order and Order on Reconsideration, CG Dkt. No. 03-123, WC Dkt. No.

to accept and handle emergency calls (as a default provider) from registered users through the CAAG4you end user software application. CAAG utilizes the Emergency Endpoints Database provided through Dash Carrier Services, a division of Bandwidth, Inc. Upon registration, the consumer must supply CAAG with their physical location. Once entered in the Dash system, the PSAP telephone number and location are determined and associated to the consumer.

When a 911 call is placed by a registered user, the call is immediately moved to the front of the queue and the first available CA will receive the call.²¹ The CA then verifies the 10-digit number and call originating location. Upon validation, the outgoing 911 call generates a system query to the Dash Emergency Endpoints Database to look up the PSAP telephone number and location assigned to the registered physical address. The outgoing 911 call is routed to that pre-determined PSAP contact for further handling. If the originating address is not the consumer's registered location, a secondary 911 call is initialized that routes directly to the Emergency Call center of Bandwidth, Inc. for further assistance in call routing. Incoming calls from non-registered users are handled in the same manner as a registered user calling from a location that is not the location assigned to the 10-digit number in Dash. In the event of disconnection of either party, the CA immediately reestablishes contact with that party to resume call handling.

In order to ensure that 911 callers have the ability to communicate with first responders when they arrive, CAAG CAs stay on the call to assist. Upon the arrival of first responders, CAAG terminates the connection to the PSAP, but remains with the caller, performing non-billable video interpreting for as long as necessary to ensure the caller's safety. This is done as a community service only. The associated interpreting time is not reflected in the compensable minutes reported by CAAG to the Fund Administrator.

05-196, FCC 08-151, 23 FCC Rcd 11591 (adopted June 11, 2008); *Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, CG Dkt. No. 03-123, WC Dkt No. 05-196, FCC 08-275 (December 19, 2008).

²¹ See *Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities*, Report and Order on Reconsideration, CG Dkt. No. 03-123, WC Dkt. No. 05-196, FCC 08-78 (adopted March 11, 2008).

CAAG informs subscribers of the process for placing emergency VRS 911 calls through promotional materials, CAAG's website <http://www.caag4.com>, and through information communicated in the registration process.

Data Collection and Reporting

CAAG is current on its submission to the fund administrator of all data necessary to determine TRS fund payments and to meet speed of answer compliance requirements. Processes have been implemented to ensure that the accuracy and completeness of all data submitted can be attested to based on the first-hand knowledge of a CAAG senior executive.

Notification of Substantive Changes

CAAG confirms its intent to notify the Commission of substantive changes in its VRS services, program or features within 60 days of when such changes occur.

Procedures for Ensuring Compliance

In order to ensure compliance with all of the FCC's rules governing VRS providers, CAAG continues to train all new employees regarding applicable standards and requirements, and when rule changes are adopted. CAAG monitors new Commission decisions, actions, policies and rule changes so that training of new and existing employees incorporates current standards and requirements.

Complaint Procedures

CAAG continues to be committed to providing the highest quality customer service for all its service offerings. CAAG VRS users can contact customer service by videophone at 855-807-2224, e-mail at vrscare@caag4.com, or a transfer from a CAAG call center to customer service. Voice callers can also reach customer service by dialing 832-413-4622. CAAG continues to track and document complaints in its database and commits to submit complaint summaries annually to the Commission as required.

Contact Persons

Kate Johnson, VRS Manager, is the designated contact person to provide consumer information and receive consumer complaints for CAAG VRS. Ms. Johnson may be contacted at 1445 N. Loop West, Suite 910, Houston, Texas 77008, 713.807.1176 (voice and TTY telephone number), 713.807.1238 (fax), kate.johnson@caag4.com (e-mail). Correspondence should be sent to the following physical address: 1445 N. Loop West, Suite 910 Houston, Texas 77008.

V. Conclusion

Having been committed to providing sign language interpreting services to the deaf and hard of hearing community for 11 years, CAAG is honored to be able to provide outstanding VRS services as well. CAAG will continue to comply with all TRS rules and will continue to provide its consumers with a quality VRS service.

Respectfully submitted,

JACKSON WALKER L.L.P.

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**ATTORNEYS FOR HANCOCK,
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d/b/a COMMUNICATION AXESS
ABILITY GROUP**

Date: November 14, 2012

Exhibit A

Verification of Everitt Puckett

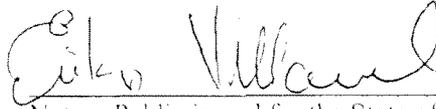
FURTHER AFFIANT SAYETH NOT.



Everett Puckett
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713-807-1176 (Phone)

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED before me on this 14th day of November, 2012.

My Commission Expires:



Notary Public in and for the State of Texas



Exhibit B

Austin Call Center Lease [CONFIDENTIAL]

REDACTED FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION