

Annual Report

INDIANA TELEPHONE RELAY
ACCESS CORPORATION FOR THE
HEARING AND SPEECH IMPAIRED

For the fiscal year ended September 30, 2023

InTRAC's 2023 Annual Report

The Indiana Telephone Relay Access Corporation for the Hearing and Speech Impaired (“InTRAC”) continued to provide quality and efficient service in its thirty-first (31) year of telephone relay services (“TRS”) for hearing and speech-impaired callers.

Description of Services. Beginning October 1, 1992, InTRAC began providing TRS to Indiana citizens through Sprint Communications, now T-Mobile, as its relay provider. TRS allows an individual who has a hearing or speech impairment to communicate over the telephone with a hearing individual who uses a standard telephone. T-Mobile provides this service through the operation of a Network Call Distribution system with six TRS centers nationwide. T-Mobile provides relay service to over 33 states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Individuals in Indiana with hearing or speech impairments can call these centers by using the three-digit number, 711. Persons with standard phones can also initiate calls to the centers. Additionally, since October 1, 2022, Hamilton Relay Service now provides Captioned Telephone Services (CTS) for Indiana citizens. Hamilton Relay provides TRS and CTS in 34 states and US Territories.

At the TRS call centers, specially trained relay operators receive the incoming calls from either a standard phone user or a deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired relay user. The operator then calls the desired number and connects the two telephone users. The operator reads aloud the text telephone message to the standard telephone caller and transmits that caller's oral responses back to the non-standard telephone user through the text telephone, computer, or video phone to view on their screen. The CTS centers provide advanced speech recognition software to generate captions of the call while a live Communication Assistant is available to ensure accuracy of the captions.

InTRAC offers a variety of relay services to meet the special needs in the deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired community. Those relay services include:

- **TTY** – If a person is deaf and does not voice, he or she may use a text telephone.
- **VCO** – If a person is hard of hearing but is able to voice, he or she may use Voice Carry Over service. Both standard callers and VCO users must take turns in speaking.
- **HCO** – If a person can hear, but is not able to voice, he or she may use Hearing Carry Over.
- **Speech to Speech** – If a person can hear but has difficulties with unclear speech, he or she may use this service.
- **Spanish to Spanish** – If a person is deaf and needs the conversation understood in Spanish, this option is available.
- **Voice User** – If a person uses a standard phone and wishes to speak with others who use special equipment to communicate, he or she can connect to Relay Indiana.
- **Captioned Telephone** – If a person is hard of hearing but is able to voice, he or she may use this Enhanced VCO. Users no longer take turns but speak in a more natural fashion. One side of the conversation appears on the phone's screen.

- **Relay Conference Captioning (RCC)** – If a person is deaf or hard of hearing, he or she may participate in conference calls and webinars using high-quality captioners that deliver real-time text streamed via a web browser on the computer.
- **Captioned Telephone on the internet (WebCapTel)** – If a person is hard of hearing and able to voice, he or she can use a standard telephone and a computer screen for Enhanced VCO on the internet. This is paid for at a federal level.
- **Video Relay Service (VRS)** – If a person is deaf and using American Sign Language, the interpreter/operator will appear on a screen of the computer, video phone, or smartphone and will place the call in the same way as a standard relay call. This is paid for at a federal level.
- **Internet Relay (IP)** – If a person is deaf or hard of hearing, he or she may use a computer or smartphone to see what is typed by the operator (while the standard phone user speaks) and can type so the relay operator can voice back to the standard phone user. This is paid for at a federal level.

Currently, **IP Relay, VRS, WebCapTel, and Captioned Calls** via non-analog lines are funded at the federal level. The FCC has stated numerous times that InTRAC will eventually pay for these internet minutes of use, but that has not yet happened. This continues to be discussed at the FCC.

The VRS provides the deaf community an opportunity to use their primary form of communication – sign language. VRS users must have high-speed internet connectivity and either a webcam or a videophone. VRS users go online to any of the five video relay providers and see a live interpreter at the relay center on their screen. VRS users then sign their conversations to the interpreter who voices the call for them. The standard phone users' responses are then signed back to the deaf user. This is real-time communication and a much more natural form of conversation. Access to VRS or Internet Relay may also be obtained via an App on any smartphone.

The WebCapTel service is popular with the hard of hearing. WebCapTel allows users to log onto an internet website and connect to an operator. The operator then calls the user on a standard telephone. Now the users can use their voice over the standard telephone but use their computer screen to view the text.

The operators who staff the TRS centers are well trained. To be employed, each must pass an examination that covers spelling, typing, dictation, TRS procedures, certain aspects of American Sign Language, deaf culture, ethics, etiquette, and a confidentiality statement.

InTRAC's TRS centers process several types of calls including: local calls, intrastate long distance calls, interstate long distance, and international calls that originate in Indiana. Callers to the centers can choose the carrier they wish to process their long-distance calls to the same extent standard phone users may choose their long distance carriers.

No special charge is imposed on those who use the TRS centers. Neither the party originating nor the party receiving a call processed by the centers pay a surcharge for calls originating and terminating within the same toll-free, local calling area – even though the call must pass through the TRS centers located throughout the country. Similarly, those who use the

centers to make long distance calls are charged rates no greater than the rates paid for functionally equivalent voice communication services.

Because InTRAC’s relay services are processed through a Network Call Distribution system, and have the ability to automatically process calls through several TRS centers, it is unlikely that service will ever be disrupted by a cable cut, adverse weather or other event. Each center provides TRS to Indiana callers seven days a week, 52 weeks a year, and each is equipped with state-of-the-art telecommunications equipment and software. Each center can receive messages from text telephones that use Baudot and ASCII codes and can automatically identify the types of incoming signals.

Developments During the Year. During InTRAC’s 2023 fiscal year, the following activities occurred:

Equipment Loaner Program. InTRAC initiated an equipment loaner program in 1997 for hearing and speech impaired persons unable to afford a TTY. Since that time, we have lent more than 11,105 pieces of equipment. InTRAC repairs and replaces the units as necessary. As technology improves, InTRAC is committed to providing the most updated equipment to individuals who have a financial need in order that they too are able to utilize the relay service.

Currently, InTRAC lends a Superprint 4425 TTY; a multipurpose Uniphone 1140 for VCO/HCO/TTY users; CapTel units for Enhanced VCO captioning relay calls; and iPads or Android Tablets for consumers to communicate using their specific relay applications. Citizens of Indiana earning below the median income can apply to receive equipment on loan from InTRAC.

Service Volume. In the twelve months ending September 30, 2023, InTRAC/Relay Indiana has processed 24,634 conversation minutes of TRS calls and 175,863 session minutes of CapTel calls. These minutes do not include relay calls for General Assistance. The number of minutes for TRS and CapTel calls have decreased over recent years. Traditional TRS minutes of use continue to decline as callers have migrated to VRS calls. And, CapTel minutes have declined as analog lines have changed to digital and those minutes are funded by the FCC. Also, InTRAC/Relay Indiana has processed 6,255 minutes of Relay Conference Captioning (RCC) during its first year.

The chart below shows the number of minutes of use by InTRAC’s TRS and CapTel centers and the comparison over the last three years. * New provider for CapTel service does not provide Data & Voice Calls, so inbound and outbound calls will replace those.

TRS Year of Operation	Inbound Calls	Outbound Calls	Minutes of Use
2021	12,703	12,678	46,085
2022	9,187	6,907	33,848
2023	5,905	4,292	24,634

CapTel Year Of Operation	Data Calls*	Voice Calls*	Minutes of Use
2021	98,721	27,209	395,316
2022	68,724	16,554	292,461
2023	66,454*	74,776*	175,863

Complaint Filing. On June 29, 2023, InTRAC filed its Annual Report of Complaints with the FCC. Users of InTRAC’s relay centers have been extremely pleased with the overall quality of the service. The 159,547 calls processed, including general assistance, during June 2022– May 2023 resulted in eight complaints from relay callers, all due to telephone service changes from analog to digital, without customers knowing it.

Service levels. The FCC has established quite stringent operational, technical and functional standards for telecommunications relay services. For example, 85% of the calls received in the relay center must be answered in ten seconds or less daily, identified as 85/10 daily. InTRAC’s numbers exceeded the FCC performance standard of 85/10 with 97% for TRS calls and the average answer time was 1.9 seconds for TRS calls. For Captioned calls (CTS), the service level was 99.9% and average answer time was .5 seconds. A second important FCC requirement for relay service providers is that the grade of service must be a minimum of PO1. This means that if one hundred people simultaneously call the relay center during the busiest period of the day, only one call would be blocked due to the lack of available telephone equipment. InTRAC’s results have continuously exceeded this requirement.

Promotional Activities. An important part of InTRAC’s mission is to ensure that Indiana citizens are aware of the relay services that InTRAC provides. Toward that end, InTRAC, engaged in numerous promotional activities. After the pandemic, large events quickly picked up to levels of previous years.

In the 2022 - 2023 fiscal year, InTRAC held over 82 events. InTRAC contacted over 25,000 people at these events throughout the state at conferences, trade shows, Expos, town hall meetings, and other informational meetings in 28 cities. Additionally, Indiana residents were informed about Relay Indiana services by radio, television, internet, and print advertisements.

- **Outreach Personnel** – InTRAC employs a member of the Deaf community to travel throughout the state to communicate the role of InTRAC, the telecommunications providers, Federal Communications Commission rules and orders, and the relay service as well as support the expanding office operations. He then provides feedback to InTRAC about concerns of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community regarding Relay Indiana and the Equipment Distribution Program to assist connection with relay services..

- **Contracted Outreach.** – InTRAC continues to contract with a Hard of Hearing individual to provide community outreach for the CapTel units and the captioning service through relay. As the outreach has increased, so has the distribution of CapTel units. He also informs the community who are speech impaired on how to use an iPad and the relay services. This person is providing presentations to a variety of clubs, churches, nursing homes, disability/ability expos, and hospitals to reach these communities. As more organizations learn about our CapTel/iPad presentations, we are being contacted and invited to attend many more events.
- **TRS & CapTel Outreach** – Events were held in the following Indiana communities in 2022-20223: Anderson, Avon, Bloomington, Bluffton, Brookston, Carmel, Chesterton, Columbia City, Evansville, Fishers, Fort Wayne, Greenfield, Greenwood, Huntington, Indianapolis, Jasonville, Jasper, Lafayette, Marion, Martinsville, New Albany, Noblesville, Pendleton, Seymour, South Bend, Terre Haute, Waveland and Westfield.
- **Major Promotional TRS Events** – Some of the larger events were the RCC Open House Tour; Suds in the City fundraising event-Fort Wayne; DeafBlind Workshop; Deaf Seniors of America National Conference; Ability Awareness Day - Indiana State Fair; Fishers Safety Day; Annual PTCO Day Festival; Annual Fort Wayne Deaf Festival; Deaf Awareness Day – Conner Prairie; and Mental Health Conference.
- **Major Promotional CapTel Events** – Some of the larger events were Wells County Health Fair; Hearing Loss Assoc of America; Patin Tec Expo; Wells County Senior Expo; South Bend Disability Resource Fair; Huntington Senior Expo; Indiana State Fair; and the Fort Wayne Senior Fair.
- **Television Advertisements.** InTRAC continued to advertise with WISH-TV on PetPalsTV and GreatDayTV shows airing each weekend. These shows star and are produced by, a local celebrity who is a former Indianapolis TV Anchor - Patty Spitzer, who is a user of the CapTel phone and promotes the phone wherever she appears, as well as in InTRAC ads on WISH-TV.
- **Print Advertisements.** InTRAC is currently advertising in the *SeniorLife* newspaper which reaches more than 130,000 readers monthly within central and northern Indiana. Also we reach central Indiana with ads in the *Indy Bi-Weekly Post*, and the Bluffton area with ads in the *News-Banner/Echo Ossian Journal/Sunriser News*.
- **Radio Advertisements.** InTRAC continued to advertise on Network Indiana/WIBC which covers 65 radio stations, reaching all 92 counties within Indiana. The ads explain how the captioned telephone can help users increase their self-esteem and regain their independence. The ads vary from actual interviews with CapTel users and a promotion by a local celebrity about using the phone in the business world.
- **Internet Advertisements.** InTRAC places promotional ads when a person searches for key words such as “deaf telephones” “hard of hearing telephones” “phone amplifiers” etc. These searches will link to InTRAC’s website and can view a video for captioned telephones.

Annual Meeting. On December 28, 2023, InTRAC held its annual meeting. To maintain continuity in its leadership, InTRAC's directors are elected to staggered three-year terms. Ben Schlichter, Frontier Communication was elected to serve on the InTRAC's Board of Directors.

Board of Directors. Members of the Board as of fiscal year end September 2023 are as follows: Pepper Mulherin, AT&T, Board President; Alan Terrell, Rochester Telephone, Board Secretary; Sharon McKay, NITCO, Board Treasurer; Ted Hankins, Century Link; and Rhonda Marcum, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, State of Indiana.

Test of Surcharge Collected and Remitted by Members. InTRAC engaged its accounting firm, Kehlenbrink, Lawrence & Pauckner, to perform tests of the books and records of local exchange carriers and cellular providers that are members of InTRAC to determine whether the members are properly collecting and remitting the surcharge that funds InTRAC's operations. Our accountants confirmed that all surcharges were properly collected and remitted.

Audit of Relay Service Billings. InTRAC provides TRS under a contract with T-Mobile Services; and provides CTS under contract with Hamilton Relay Services; InTRAC pays both companies based upon the number of minutes of relay service provided. Under the contracts, InTRAC has the right to audit and test both T-Mobile's and Hamilton Relay's books and records to ensure that InTRAC is billed properly. InTRAC's accounting firm of Kehlenbrink, Lawrence & Pauckner confirmed that InTRAC payments were correct as billed by both.

Financial Statements. Audited Financial Statements prepared by accounting firm Dean Dorton Allen Ford, PLCC meeting the requirements of Ind. Code § 8-1-2.8-21(6)(D) are attached. Also, financial projections for 2024, 2025, and 2026 prepared by CPA Kelhenbrink Lawrence & Pauckner are attached.