

The Utah Public Service Commission Awarded FCC Grant for Deaf-Blind Accessible Equipment

SALT LAKE CITY – March 5, 2013 – The Utah Public Service Commission was awarded a grant from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to provide eligible Utahns with Braille devices, mobile devices, computers, phones, signalers and other communication equipment. The grant is part of the FCC's National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution program (NDBEDP) established in 2012.

The FCC established the NDBEDP in response to the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) directing the Commission to establish a program using funding of up to \$10 million annually from the Interstate Telecommunications Relay Service Fund (TRS Fund) for the nationwide distribution of communications equipment to low-income individuals who are deaf-blind. The grant was provided to all states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The deaf-blind [equipment application](#) is available on the Relay Utah [site](#). Information about what hearing and vision-accessible equipment is found on the NDBEDP [iCanConnect](#) site. Relay Utah is the hearing assistive distribution program housed under the Utah Public Service Commission.

The purpose of the grant is to ensure that eligible Utahns who have combined hearing and vision loss have access to telephone, advanced communications and information services. Eligibility requirements include meeting both federal poverty guidelines and disability criteria as defined in the Helen Keller National Center Act. Specific eligibility information is included on the application.

Relay Utah has been operational since 1998 and was one of the first hearing assistive equipment distribution programs to be established in the United States. In addition to equipment distribution Relay Utah provides the 7-1-1 "relay" translation service that facilitates calls between deaf, hard of hearing and hearing individuals. This free service is available by dialing 7-1-1. A Relay Communications Assistant (CA) will "relay" communication between an individual using a hearing-assistive phone and a standard phone. Relay Utah is also offered in Spanish by calling 888-346-3162.

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