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State of Florida



# Public Service Commission

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TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0850

**-M-E-M-O-R-A-N-D-U-M-**

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**DATE:** June 28, 2023

**TO:** Adam J. Teitzman, Commission Clerk, Office of Commission Clerk

**FROM:** Curtis J. Williams, Senior Analyst, Office of Industry Development and Market Analysis *CW*

**RE:** Docket No. 20230047-TP - Document Filing

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Please file the attached data request responses from Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc. in Docket No. 20230047-TP.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you

Attachment

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## Questions from PSC to FTRI Regarding its Proposed 2023-24 Budget

### FTRI Responses in Bold Blue

Please respond to the items below regarding FTRI's FY 2023-2024 proposed budget by **June 5, 2023**.

1. In FTRI's proposed budget, FTRI filed two relay surcharges. The primary recommendation for a 7-cent surcharge would result in a deficit of \$639 thousand, assuming no other changes to the budget. Please explain the justification for a 3-cent decline in the current surcharge.

**The FTRI Board of Directors voted for a 7-cent surcharge for SFY 2023-2024 since the board is believed that FTRI should start drawing some funds from its savings/reserve account to cover the deficit. The board also believed that we should no longer continue to build up FTRI savings/reserve account at the current surcharge of 10-cents.**

2. The second option for a 9-cent surcharge would result in a surplus of \$50 thousand. What factors were used in selecting this option? Did FTRI consider a 8-cent surcharge? If yes, why was the 9-cent surcharge option presented over a 8-cent option?

**While the FTRI Board of Directors voted to go with a 7-cent-cent surcharge, the board understood that PSC may not agree to this surcharge amount. Therefore, the board added an alternative budget based on a 9-cent surcharge which "balances" the budget and will not require FTRI to draw funds from the savings/reserve account. We have not explored the 8-cent surcharge option. The board also noticed that a 1-cent decline from the current 10-cent surcharge will "balance" the budget between income and expenditures so there is no need to draw funds from FTRI savings/reserve account.**

3. Regarding Budget Line Item 5, TTY/TDD equipment – iPad pilot program:
  - a. Section 427.703(14), Florida Statutes defines "Telecommunications device for the deaf" or "TDD" as a mechanism which is connected to a standard telephone line, operated by means of a keyboard, and used to transmit to receive signals through telephone lines." Please explain how the proposed devices would meet this definition.

**As for the Budget Line Item 5 (TTY/TDD Equipment), FTRI placed the cost of iPad Pilot Program in this line item temporarily since we do not know if PSC will approve this pilot project. FTRI also identified this line item (5) as an ideal temporary location to place iPad funding since iPad offers features that simulate TTY/TDD. Should PSC approve this iPad pilot program, FTRI will move the funds from this line item (5) and move to a new and separate line item for this iPad Pilot Project.**

- b. Section 427.703(11), Florida Statutes defines “specialized telecommunications devices” as “TDD, a volume control handset, a ring signaling device, or any other customer premises telecommunications equipment specifically designed or used to provide basic access to telecommunications service for a hearing impaired, speech impaired, or dual sensory impaired person.” Please explain how the proposed devices would meet this definition of specialized equipment given that such consumer devices can be used for a wide variety of functions.

**Per F.S 427.703 and F.S. 427.702, as referenced at the bottom of this section, iPad and Android Tablets offer Apps with mechanisms and keyboards that function like TTY/TDDs [e.g., TTY, Real-Time Text (RTT)] or VCP. These devices are the latest development of what we call “specialized telecommunications device.” They are also the products of latest state-of-the-art technology benefiting eligible individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, and Deafblind as well as those with speech impairments. The added benefit of iPad or Android Tablets at home (as connected to ethernet, the latest version of landline) is that it provides mobility to enhance daily functions. These tablets also provide emergency/safety that our regular FTRI telecommunications equipment lacks. The TTYs lack mobility within the home. While it is true that iPad and Android Tablets have other features, the key and main features that we are interested in and focusing on are telecommunications and communication Apps. Also, no manufacturer today would build a newer version of stand-alone TTY/TDD to replace our old, obsolete TTYs that are 40+ years old. Also, on a related note, there is a push nationally to replace TTY with Real-Time Text (RTT) which is now accessible via tablets or latest smartphones as an App.**

**427.703 (11)“Specialized telecommunications device” means a TDD, a volume control handset, a ring signaling device, or any other customer premises telecommunications equipment specifically designed or used to provide basic access to telecommunications services for a hearing impaired, speech impaired, or dual sensory impaired person.**

**427.702 (3)(g) That the telecommunications access system uses state-of-the-art technology for specialized telecommunications devices and the telecommunications relay service and encourages the incorporation of new developments in technology, to the extent that it has demonstrated benefits consistent with the intent of this act and is in the best interest of the citizens of this state.**

4. Regarding Budget Line Item 8, for VCP Speech Impaired equipment – iPad pilot program:

- a. Section 427.703(11), Florida Statutes defined “specialized telecommunications devices” as “TDD, a volume control handset, a ring signaling device, or any other customer premises telecommunications equipment specifically designed or used to provide basic access to telecommunications service for a hearing impaired, speech impaired, or dual sensory impaired person.” Please explain how the proposed devices would meet this definition of specialized equipment given that such consumer devices can be used for a wide variety of functions.

Per F.S 427.703 and F.S. 427.702, as referenced at the bottom of this section, iPad and Android Tablets offer Apps with mechanisms that function like VCP (e.g., amplified, captioned). These devices are the latest development of what we call “specialized telecommunications device.” They are also the products of the latest state-of-the-art technology benefiting eligible individuals with hearing loss who depend on speech for daily communication. For those who rely on speech, the iPads or Android Tablets offer reference-speech generating capabilities that are useful for phone calls. The added benefit of iPads at home (as connected to ethernet, the latest version of landline) is that it provides mobility to enhance daily functions. While it is true that iPad and Android Tablets have other features, the key and main features that we are interested in and focusing on are telecommunications and communication Apps.

427.703 (11)“Specialized telecommunications device” means a TDD, a volume control handset, a ring signaling device, or any other customer premises telecommunications equipment specifically designed or used to provide basic access to telecommunications services for a hearing impaired, speech impaired, or dual sensory impaired person.

427.702 (3)(g) That the telecommunications access system uses state-of-the-art technology for specialized telecommunications devices and the telecommunications relay service and encourages the incorporation of new developments in technology, to the extent that it has demonstrated benefits consistent with the intent of this act and is in the best interest of the citizens of this state.

- b. In FTRI’s supplemental material regarding the proposed pilot programs, FTRI notes that iPads for VCP Speech Impaired cost \$300 more because of added “Alternative Augmentative Communication apps.” Please explain how such apps meet the definition of Section 427.703(11), Florida Statutes.

Per F.S 427.703 and F.S. 427.702 as referenced bottom in this section, iPad and Android Tablets offer Apps that function like VCP benefiting eligible individuals who are speech impaired. As discussed in previous section (See #4 above), the Apps provide similar mechanisms to what our VCP (amplified, captioned) landline phones offer.

According to an email from Teltex dated Nov. 18, 2022, the higher cost (\$300) is due to the:

“Cost of the Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC) apps. For an iPad or a Tablet to benefit individuals with Speech Disabilities, an AAC app must be provided with the device – and the average cost of an AAC app is +/- \$300. This \$300 amount gives State TEDPs the flexibility to provide an AAC app, and if the consumer requests a different AAC app for greater accessibility, Teltex can pull the original app from the tablet and remotely send a new AAC app with no additional cost to the State TEDP (while the device is covered by Teltex Care). Please note, 99.9% of Speech Consumers request and receive an iPad as opposed to an Android Tablet, as AAC apps are developed in higher numbers for the iPad than the Android platform – though new apps are being developed and added to the Android App Store constantly.”

427.703 (11)“Specialized telecommunications device” means a TDD, a volume control handset, a ring signaling device, or any other customer premises telecommunications equipment specifically designed or used to provide basic access to telecommunications services for a hearing impaired, speech impaired, or dual sensory impaired person.

427.702 (3)(g) That the telecommunications access system uses state-of-the-art technology for specialized telecommunications devices and the telecommunications relay service and encourages the incorporation of new developments in technology, to the extent that it has demonstrated benefits consistent with the intent of this act and is in the best interest of the citizens of this state.

5. Note 3 on page 4 of FTRI’s 2023-2024 Florida FTRI/PSC – iPad/Tablet Pilot Project, states: “Should the demand by consumers for iPad/Samsung tablets exceed our budget, FTRI will request approval from PSC to draw additional funds from reserve/savings account to accommodate an increase in orders of iPads/Samsung tablets.” Does FTRI intend to file a supplemental budget request with the FPSC authorizing the purchase of additional tablets beyond the quantity requested in this proposed budget?

**Yes, it is the intent of FTRI to file a supplemental budget request to authorize additional tablets should “approved” funds for the iPad Project be depleted during the next fiscal year (2023-2024) due to increased number of eligible applicants who seek these tablets.**

6. Under the “Qualification Process” of FTRI’s 2023-2024 Florida FTRI/PSC – iPad/Tablet Pilot Project, FTRI proposes a qualification process that allows consumers to qualify based on either income or participation in other programs.
  - a. Please explain why your proposal would establish an income threshold for deaf customers at 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, while establishing a separate threshold of 400 percent of the federal poverty guidelines for the hard of hearing or speech impaired. The 2023 Federal Poverty Level for an individual is \$14,580. Thus, to qualify under this proposal, a customer who is deaf would have to have an income of less than \$29,160 to qualify, whereas a hard of hearing or speech impaired customer would have to have an income of less than \$58,320. Please explain this discrepancy.

**The proposed FTRI financial qualification process for those seeking iPads as described in the iPad Pilot Project Proposal was only preliminary. After our second review, we realized that the Federal Poverty Guidelines were misinterpreted.**

**FTRI appreciates this question which enabled us to make the discovery that we did not have a clear understanding of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. In hindsight, FTRI proposes to set a uniform financial eligibility at 200% of 2023 Federal Poverty Guidelines (income of less than \$29,160 for 1-person) for all those who seek iPad or Android Tablets, including Deaf, hard of hearing, and Deafblind as well as those with speech impairments. In Florida, those seeking an iPad or Android Tablet will need to meet either the 200% of 2022 Federal Poverty Guideline or Lifeline requirements if receiving government assistance.**



- b. Did FTRI compare its proposed income thresholds (i.e. 200/400 percent of the federal poverty guidelines) to other support programs (such as federal Lifeline program) to develop its recommendation? If yes, please identify those programs and criteria.

**In November 2022, a national survey was conducted by FTRI Executive Director with other states through TEDPA (Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Agencies) email network, on financial eligibility for iPad and Android tablets. Fourteen (14) states which offer iPad & Android Tablets responded to the survey as follows:**

- **Four (4) states (Colorado, Maryland, North Dakota, Wyoming\*) utilize 400% of the Federal Poverty Level. \*Wyoming, at the time of this survey, is changing from 200% to 400% level and utilizing a sliding scale above this level so everyone can be eligible.**
- **Two (2) states (Georgia, Pennsylvania) follow 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.**
- **One (1) state (Indiana) report a median income of \$74,000 or less to qualify**
- **One (1) state (Minnesota) shows a one-person income limit of \$61,145 and a 2-person household income limit of \$79,959.**
- **One (1) state (Missouri) sets an income limit for families of 1-2 at \$60,000, a family of three at \$65,000, a family of four at \$70,000, and add \$5,000 for each additional dependent.**
- **Four (4) states (Alaska, Kentucky, Nevada, South Carolina) offered no responses**
- **One (1) state (Oregon) replied to N/A.**

**While many other states use higher financial income eligibility, FTRI will start this project with financial income eligibility at 200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines (income of less than \$29,160 for 1-person – 2023 Guidelines) or Lifeline requirements for those receiving government assistance. In Florida, those seeking an iPad or Android Tablet will need to meet either the 200% of 2022 Federal Poverty Guideline or Lifeline if receiving certain government assistance. During the first year of this project, should FTRI be unable to secure a good number of qualifying applicants based on the 200% Federal Poverty Guideline or Lifeline requirements for those receiving government assistance, FTRI will seek guidance or other options from PSC.**

- c. FTRI proposes that “Those relying on SSI/SSDI, VA, Social Security, WC, Welfare, etc. will be exempted from this financial edibility requirement.” Please explain why each of these programs were selected and if participation is based on income. Would FTRI seek FPSC approval prior to expanding the list of eligibility programs?

**Upon reviewing the free phone programs available via Google, one phone carrier that offers affordability connectivity program (ACP) mentions those collecting government assistance including Medicaid or Lifeline can see a reduced monthly charge for a mobile phone (up to \$30). Another phone carrier mentions the same but adds that the applicant must meet the 200% of the federal poverty guidelines. One state, Missouri, mentions use of set income amount based on TAP for its phone, internet, and wireless for their iPad program.**

**In Florida, those seeking iPad or Android Tablet will need to meet either the 200% of 2023 Federal Poverty Guideline or Lifeline if receiving certain government assistance.**

7. How frequently does FTRI expect that a tablet will need to be replaced due to obsolescence or failure of the device to work?

**According to an email from Teltex (May 26, 2023):**

**“It is Teltex’s recommendation that most of our programs replace equipment for consumers every 3 years, as that is the average lifecycle of newer technology. However, since FTRI is a loaner program it is recommended that if the piece of equipment is working for the consumer, that equipment can stay out in the field indefinitely. Then, when the consumer has an issue with the device it gets returned and another loaner unit is sent out to the consumer. Teltex recommends that FTRI create a floating inventory that is prepped and ready to go so that the turnaround time of a client applying for equipment is less than a week versus ordering as needed, which increases the timeframe to up to 3 weeks.”**

8. Will the tables provide communication functionality without Wi-Fi connectivity?

**No. At home, Wi-Fi connectivity can be obtained through ethernet.**

9. Provide additional justification for the \$27,656 increase from FY 2022-2023 estimated expense for RDCs on line Item 16.
  - a. Explain why FTRI believes providing internet hotspot connectivity and laptops for access to FTRI’s client database is needed by the RDCs to fulfill the agreement to provide client enrollment and training services to FTRI.

**FTRI Staff and RDC representatives rely on functioning hotspot connectivity, laptops, and printers for Outreach events and to process applications either onsite or at RDC. Also, for RDC to check applicant or client information in FTRI AIMS. This equipment is essential for faster application processing, proper documentation, and recordkeeping.**

- b. Please provide a breakdown of the number and type of devices and any related services for this category of expense.

**FTRI currently has nine (9) iPads, ten (10) Hotspots, and nine (9) Mobile Printers. Also, the Executive Director has one (1) demo/loaner iPad, courtesy of Teltex. In addition, we have one (1) laptop in the shipping/distribution room that has not been updated and is old. We have no spare iPad laptops to give to a RDC should one be broken. In addition, we have eight (8) old laptops that are in the process of being destroyed.**

- c. How frequently does FTRI replace such support equipment for RDCs?

**Replacements of support equipment for RDCs depend on the age and functionality of both Hotspots and Laptops. FTRI will eventually need to purchase a new iPad or two as spares to replace any broken iPads from RDC in the future. We also have eight (8) old laptops that are in the process of being destroyed.**

10. What additional IT Security has or will FTRI implement to address expanding RDC access to FTRI's computer network?

**Our computer network and current RDC connections via iPads are secured via our IT Security through our main servers operating AIMS. In addition, there are no plans to expand RDC access to FTRI computer network.**

11. Provide additional justification for the \$24,532 increase from FY 2022-2023 estimated expense for training on Line Item 17.

- a. Explain why FTRI believes it is necessary to host RDC training sessions in Tallahassee and reimburse some RDC travel expenditures.

**FTRI recognizes the importance of face-to-face interaction, which is better in person than via Zoom for staff training, especially with new RDC staff. FTRI has not had face-to-face training for years, long before COVID-19. Nevertheless, FTRI has seen a high turnover of RDC staff over the years resulting in knowledge and quality issues in the delivery of services to our customers. We understand that most RDCs are short on staff so there are generally only one or two staff working at each RDC sharing different responsibilities. On-site training at FTRI allows for not only face-to-face training but also makes it possible for different RDC representatives to meet with each FTRI staff member in-person including those responsible for RDC communications as well as distributions of telecommunications equipment. Also, RDC representatives appearing in-person makes it possible for better interaction and team focus, as well as exchange of information on essential services (e.g., customer service, device training, hands-on education). It is important to note that Zoom meetings can be difficult to host and coordinate multiple accommodations online such as live sign-language interpreters and live CART (Captioned Real-Time) on-screen transcripts which can add cost to this training done via Zoom.**

- b. What RDC expenses will be reimbursed?

**RDC expenses include mileage (if personal car), rental car, hotel, and meals.**

- c. Will FTRI set parameters for incurred expenses? Please provide details.

**FTRI estimates an average reimbursement of \$1,000 for each of up to 25 RDC representatives to come to Tallahassee for extensive training during SFY 2023-2024. Any reimbursement amounts exceeding \$1,000 will require justification and approval from the FTRI Executive Director.**



- d. Explain why in-person training will be more cost-effective than Webinar, Zoom, or Go-To-Meeting sessions.

**As explained in earlier section (#11), in-person training allows for close face-to-face discussion, dedicated focus, and exchange of information on the spot. The in-person training eliminates dealing with in-office distractions where RDCs work from, and such does happen during Zoom meetings. In addition, potential internet connectivity glitches relating to internet access are avoided. In-person training is a good investment in the long run.**

12. Line Item 21 shows a \$9,035 increase in Legal Expense from the FY 2022-2023 estimate. FTRI explains that the increase is due to the potential hiring of two new employees and legal advice relating to RDCs and vendors. Please provide additional detail on legal services to be provided related to RDC and vendors.

**The increase in Legal Expense relates to receiving legal assistance with review of both RDC and vendor agreements as well as amendments that we expect to renew in 2024. Legal consultations include discussions and advice on potential RDC issues, including liability, equipment return, and challenges relating to their discontinuance as an RDC.**

13. Line Item 39 presents a \$8,697 increase in Travel & Business Expense. FTRI explains that the travel expense includes five trips for staff to meet with RDCs and/or vendors. As presented earlier, Line Item 17 reflects a significant increase in travel related expense to reimburse RDCs for travel to Tallahassee. Please provide additional justification for increased travel expense for FTRI and RDCs. If the Commission were to deny increased travel training expense for RDCs, provide an estimate for FTRI travel expense to train and meet with RDCs.

**This line item (#39) focuses on a need for FTRI staff (particularly, Distribution Program Coordinators (DPC) to travel more to not only visit but also to audit RDCs. The increased travel and business expense funding also makes it possible for the Executive Director to attend telecommunications conferences and in-state community events to not only promote FTRI but answer any questions the public and local clients may have toward our program.**

**If PSC decides to reject Line Item 17 that deals with increased travel training expense for RDC representatives to come to Tallahassee, the cost for FTRI staff to travel to RDCs for the same purpose may be somewhat lower. To approximate costs, we need to consider FTRI staff travelling to each or several nearby RDCs to not only meet and do audits but to also provide RDC staff training during the same week. The projected total cost would be \$15,000 (\$3,000 x 5 trips), depending on where and how long the staff needs to stay and train, and travel between several RDCs.**

**However, it is helpful to recognize that on-site and one-on-one training with local RDC staff does not provide the same energy and opportunity to share best practices as done with several RDC representatives meeting together at the same location (i.e., FTRI). At FTRI, there is better engagement throughout the training process in which RDC representatives develop effective working relationships with one other. Developing better working relationships between RDCs will benefit FTRI in the future as several representatives from nearby RDCs may be asked to team together at an exhibit in a local Outreach event.**

14. Did FTRI execute a 10 percent category-to-category fund transfer during FY 2022-2023?  
If so, identify Line Items involved.

**No.**

**Answers compiled by FTRI  
June 2, 2023**

## Second Set of Questions from PSC to FTRI Regarding Its Proposed 2023-24 Budget

### FTRI Responses in Bold Blue

Please respond to the items below regarding FTRI's FY 2023-2024 proposed budget by **June 20, 2023**.

1. For FTRI's estimated operating revenue surcharges for the 2023/2024 budget, FTRI has presented two estimates with the 9 cent surcharge, \$3,102,995 on line one of the "Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget @ 9 cents surcharge" table, and \$3,102,955 on the Access Line History Analysis table. Please confirm that \$3,102,955 is the correct value for the estimated operating revenue surcharges for the 2023/2024 budget with the 9 cent surcharge.

**Yes, the correct value is \$3,102,955. The "access line history" table is our supporting document to show how we determined and calculated the estimated surcharge receivables for the TASA surcharge revenues. The trend suggests that there is an average decrease of 8.70% of overall access lines. FTRI used a conservative 8% decrease in access lines for the budget year (FY23-24). To answer the question: \$3,102,955 from "access line history" was the calculated amount then that same dollar amount was input it into our estimated operating surcharge revenue line item.**

2. Staff calculated DPR expense of \$1,299,227 for FY 2023/2024 using T-Mobile's estimated TRS and CapTel minutes of use multiplied by the current contract service rates of \$1.60 for TRS and \$1.69 for CapTel. It appears that FTRI's proposed DPR expense (\$1,139,303) is based on applying the previous contract rates of \$1.35 for TRS and \$1.69 for CapTel. Please confirm that the FY 2023/2024 DPR expense should be \$1,299,277.

**FTRI followed T-Mobile projections as provided by its staff on January 24, 2023. Upon receiving this projection chart, FTRI accepted and followed these figures from T-Mobile. As PSC asked FTRI to confirm \$1,299,227 for FY23-24, FTRI took another look at the formulas in this spreadsheet. FTRI discovered that despite what was listed per minute on this chart, T-Mobile used incorrect formulas (\$1.35 for TRS Minutes and \$1.69 for CapTel Minutes). So, FTRI recalculated by using correct minute formulas based on \$1.60 for TRS and \$1.67 for CapTel as referenced on the projection chart by T-Mobile. Please note that FTRI used \$1.67 to calculate each CapTel Minute, not \$1.69 as PSC mentioned. As a result, our analysis supports PSC's calculations toward the correct expense amount for DPR: \$1,299,227.**

3. In Line Item 2 – Interest Income, what are the dollar amounts invested in the Investment Trust Money Market account and purchased 3-month T-bills?

**FTRI transferred \$14,700,000 from FTRI regular Savings/Reserve account to Regions Bank Investment Trust. On March 6, 2023, \$14,696,042.39 was invested in a 3-Month T-Bill with \$9,173.99 (Fidelity Treasury/Cash Equivalents: \$3,957.61 and Interest earned on April 3, 2023: \$5,216.38). Any funds not in T-Bills are invested in Money Market (MM) to cover monthly service fees which are set at 0.2%.**

In our second investment period starting on June 7, 2023, the 3-Month T-Bill rate is 5.25%. The face value of our 3-Month T-Bills is \$15,062,100 (on the date of maturity) with a cash portion of \$7,298 (to cover monthly fees). For this 3-Month T-Bill investment, the maturity date will be September 7, 2023.

4. FTRI states that “FTRI purchased 3-month T-bills that will earn interest at maturity at expected rate of 4.84%.” Please explain what “expected” means. What is FTRI’s projected return for the remainder of FY 2023/2024?

The 3-Month T-Bill rate fluctuates every month. When Regions Bank approached FTRI on 3-Month T-Bills, the rate was projected to be 4.84%. At the time when initial investment was made by FTRI on March 6, 2023, the 3-Month T-Bill rate was 4.82%. For the FTRI’s second investment period starting on June 7, 2023, the 3-Month T-Bill rate was set at 5.25%. \$14,870,246.50 was deposited into a new 3-Month T-Bill. The face value of our 3-Month T-Bill on September 7, 2023 (the date of maturity) is \$15,062,100 with a cash portion of \$7,298 (to be placed in Investment Money Market earnings to cover monthly fees set at 0.2%).

Below are excerpts of first three end-month reports received from Regions Bank, showing the balances of the initial 3-Month T-Bill investment (started on March 6, 2023) and monthly fees. Also, a separate (last) column showing its market value on June 15, 2023, because of our re-investment on June 7, 2023:

	First T-Bill			Second T-Bill
	<u>March 31, 2023</u>	<u>April 30, 2023</u>	<u>May 31, 2023</u>	<u>June 15, 2023</u>
Market Value:	\$14,763,537.38	\$14,810,204.57	\$14,866,686.66	\$14,895,548.75
Accrued Income:	\$63,537.38	\$107,579.99	\$166,919.00	\$195,548.75
Cash Equivalents:	\$3,957.38	\$6,582.19	\$3,725.26	\$4,403.58
Monthly Service Fee Pd*:	\$2,876.39	\$2,885.03	\$2,894.44	(TBD/In July)

\*The monthly service fee for the current month is deducted in the middle of next month.

The cash equivalents are placed in Investment Trust Money Market to cover monthly service fees.

Coming up with a projected return for the remainder of FY 2023/24 is difficult at best. Our best guess is based on using the figures from our initial investment of 4.82% in our 3-Month T-Bill. On June 6, 2023, the maturity date, the Bank reported that FTRI gained an accrual income of \$177,757.61. Using this amount to extrapolate an estimated one-year projected return (\$177,757.61 x 4), the result would be at least \$700,000. Again, the projected return for one year is subject to a fluctuating T-Bill rate every three months.

5. Is the 3.948% return for the Investment Trust Money Market account guaranteed? What is FTRI's projected return for the Investment Trust Money Market account for the remainder of FY 2023/2024?

**The return of 3.948% in Investment Trust Money Market is not a guaranteed rate but a reflection of initial returns for funds placed in Investment Money Market for the purpose of covering monthly service fees (0.2%). On May 30, 2023 investment statement, the estimated annual rate is listed at 4.49%. Again, this rate is not fixed. At every maturity and re-investment of a FTRI 3-Month T-Bill, a portion (up to \$10,000) is taken from the T-Bill income to cover future monthly service fees (0.2%) in the next three months.**

6. If FTRI does not receive the expected returns during FY 2023/2024, what action will FTRI take to address any adverse revenue shortfall?

**Should FTRI not receive expected returns during FY 2023/24, FTRI will request permission from PSC to withdraw some funds from our regular bank savings/money market account (money market) which is now in the balance of \$500,000. Since our expenditure budget is in good shape with current bank checking and money market (savings/reserve) accounts as well as revenues (collected monthly surcharges despite an ongoing declines), we do not anticipate withdrawing any funds from the investment account (3-Month T-Bills) in the coming year to cover any revenue shortfall. However, in the future years, we may request approval from PSC to transfer some accrued income from the investment account during maturity to our regular bank money market account (savings/reserve) should this become necessary.**

7. FTRI states that “Unlike Florida, other states offer their consumers with hearing loss a wide choice of telecommunications equipment, including broadband (i.e., iPad, Android).” Please respond to the following:
  - a. List of state equipment distribution programs referenced above by FTRI that distribute iPads and Android devices.

**According to a FTRI survey conducted via TEDPA members in November 2022, fourteen (14) states responded as having state distribution programs providing various types of iPad and/or Android devices include Alaska, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Wyoming. One other known state that did not respond but provides such devices is New Mexico.**

**In email from Teltex dated June 19, 2023: as of June 1st, 2023, Teltex has now deployed over 20,000 Apple & Android devices to the following 25 states (with State Distribution Programs): Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, South Dakota, Texas, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, South Carolina, and Georgia .**



- b. If known, list states that provide funding for the distribution of iPads and Android devices through its state relay surcharge.

According to a FTRI survey with TEDPA members in June 2023, two states responded by saying that they use state relay surcharge (I assume you meant landline) to cover the cost of iPad and Android devices: Georgia and Missouri.

In addition, fourteen (14) out of 21 states that responded to FTRI Survey to TEDPA members in June 2023 indicated that they have both landline and wireless surcharges, and they are: Alaska, California, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, Utah, Virginia, and Wyoming.

- c. If known, list states that provide funding for the distribution of iPads and Android devices through private grants, private donations, and public funding?

According to the same FTRI survey with TEDPA members in June 2023, three states responded by saying that they rely on public funding. They are Pennsylvania (state funding; no surcharge), Virginia (special funds from Communications Tax), and Washington State (funds provided through the Governor's Office).

8. Has FTRI explored external funding sources to fund the proposed iPad Pilot Program (i.e. private grants, private donations, and public funding)?

Yes, FTRI has had several engaging communications with Sean J. Lewis, Director of Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) since September 2022. FTRI discussed ideas with Mr. Sean. FTRI also shared an early draft proposal with Mr. Sean for his review and thoughts on the possibility of FTRI applying for a Florida Digital Equity Project grant to purchase iPads/Android Tablets to improve broadband access among those with hearing loss and speech disabilities statewide. This project funding is made possible through the Digital Equity Act, a part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), with the State of Florida heading the statewide broadband through DEO. While Mr. Lewis was receptive to this idea, it was evident that there was no opportunity for FTRI to apply for and seek a grant through DEO this year.

The State Broadband Office is now busy focusing on improving broadband infrastructure in local areas statewide. DEO has not responded to my last email of May 23, 2023. FTRI Board President has advised Executive Director to sign up for email announcements from DEO for possible grants in 2024 so he did sign up. FTRI will watch out for future announcements from DEO in 2024. As soon as DEO grants are available, FTRI will apply for one.