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*The Status of the
Telecommunications Access System Act of 1991*



December 2025

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I. Florida Relay Background and Executive Summary

Chapter 427, Florida Statutes (F.S.), established the Telecommunications Access System Act of 1991 (TASA). Section 427.702, F.S., requires the Florida telecommunications access system to be compliant with regulations adopted by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to implement Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA required the establishment of services to enable an individual with a hearing or speech disability to communicate by telephone or other device through the telecommunications system.

When enacted in 1991, TASA was intended to provide individuals, with a hearing or speech disability, with a means of accessing communications services using the predominant medium at the time, the landline network. Technological advances and customer choice have significantly changed the communications options available to individuals with a hearing or speech disability. In 2025, the Legislature amended TASA to reflect changes in technology and authorized the distribution of newly defined specialized communications technology.

Section 427.704, F.S., charges the Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC or Commission) with overseeing the administration of the statewide telecommunications access system. The Commission fulfills its duty by selecting a provider of telecommunications relay service (TRS or relay service) through a competitive bidding process. The current provider of relay service is T-Mobile USA, Inc. (T-Mobile). In its prior contract, T-Mobile provided both TRS and captioned telephone service (CTS); however, CTS is not part of the current contract because of declining minutes of use and the availability of alternatives. During this past year, the minutes of use for TRS and CTS declined 14 percent and 64 percent, respectively.

The Commission was also charged with designating an administrator of the relay system that is responsible for the distribution of specialized equipment and outreach. In May 1991, the FPSC directed the local exchange telecommunications companies to form a not-for-profit corporation, as required by TASA, to serve as administrator. Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc. (FTRI) was thus created to distribute specialized equipment in Florida.¹ From last year, the distribution of relay equipment declined by 22 percent.

On an annual basis, the Commission approves a budget for FTRI and sets the amount of the TASA surcharge, which is collected by landline telecommunications service providers and remitted to FTRI. This assessment base has declined by 23.1 percent from last year and 57.6 over the last five years.² This continued decline in landline providers is likely a result of consumers switching to service providers using other technologies, such as wireless and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). Neither wireless nor VoIP services are required to collect the TASA surcharge.

Section 427.704(8), F.S., requires the Commission to prepare an annual report on the operation of the telecommunications access system and make it available on the Commission's website. The report must, at a minimum, include: a brief outline of the status of developments in the telecommunications access system, the number of persons served, the call volume, revenues and

¹ FPSC Order No. 24462, Docket No. 19910496-TP, Telecommunications Access System Act of 1991, issued May 1, 1991, <http://www.floridapsc.com/library/filings/1991/04253-1991/04253-1991.pdf>, accessed on November 5, 2025.

² FPSC, Report on the Status of Competition in the Telecommunications Industry as of December 31, 2024, p. 11.

expenditures, the allocation of the revenues and expenditures between provision of specialized telecommunications devices to individuals and operation of statewide relay service, other major policy or operational issues, and proposals for improvements or changes to the telecommunications access system.

II. Equipment Distribution and Outreach

Under the FPSC's oversight, FTRI distributes specialized equipment required for telecommunications services to the deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or speech impaired. FTRI also performs outreach to increase consumer awareness of both FTRI's programs and the telecommunications access system. FTRI and its regional distribution centers (RDCs) conducted 343 outreach events during the last fiscal year. FTRI's operations are funded through the collection of the TASA surcharge.

A. FTRI

Table 1 shows FTRI's revenues and expenses for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. FTRI's largest expense component, which accounted for approximately 31 percent of all expenses, were payments made to T-Mobile as the relay services provider. These relay services are discussed further in Chapter III. Any funding deficits are paid through a reserve account with Commission oversight.³

Table 1
FTRI Financial Report

Account	Amount
Surcharge Revenue	2,157,538
Investment Income	749,089
Total Revenue	2,906,627
Relay Services Expense	1,013,354
Equipment and Repair Expense	530,925
Equipment Distribution and Training Expense	154,109
Outreach Expense	550,219
Administrative Expense	957,237
Total Expense	3,205,844
Revenue Less Expenses	(299,217)

Source: Florida Telecommunications Relay Inc.'s 2024-2025 Financial Statements.

B. Regional Distribution Centers

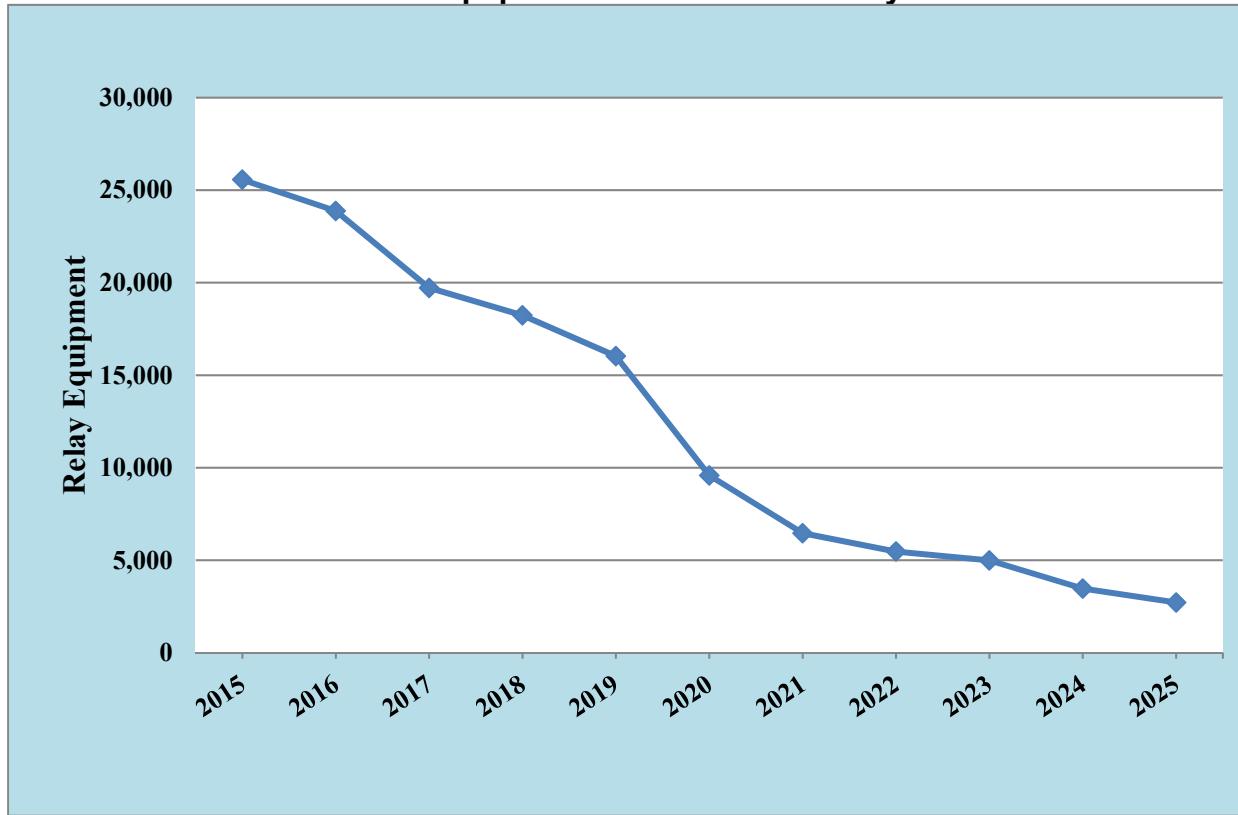
FTRI contracts with various non-profit agencies across Florida to assist in distributing equipment and provide training to their clients. RDCs are compensated by FTRI based on the amount of equipment they distribute. About 77 percent of FTRI's distribution and training expense was to compensate RDCs. There are 13 RDCs servicing Florida, as illustrated in Appendix A.

³ Conversely, any funding surpluses are deposited into the same reserve account.

C. Equipment Distribution

Section 427.704(6), F.S., requires the relay administrator to file quarterly financial statements for the distribution of specialized telecommunications devices and the telecommunications relay service. FTRI also files an annual report with the Commission, detailing equipment distribution, clients served, and outreach efforts. In its 2025 annual report, FTRI stated that it distributed approximately 2,717 pieces of relay equipment for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. Figure 1 shows the total units of relay equipment distributed from 2015 through 2025. As indicated in this Figure, there continues to be a steady decline in equipment distribution.

Figure 1
FTRI Equipment Distribution History



Source: Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc.'s 2015 Annual Report through 2025 Annual Report.

FTRI, along with its RDCs, provides equipment to qualified deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or speech impaired individuals at no charge for as long as the equipment is needed. To receive equipment, individuals must complete an FTRI application, have it signed by an approved certifier, and either mail it to FTRI or visit a regional distribution center in their area. As part of the application process, consumers are informed of their responsibility to return equipment when it is no longer being used. The equipment predominantly distributed by FTRI is the volume control telephone for the hard of hearing. Table 2 compares types of equipment distributed by FTRI for the last two fiscal years. Overall, the total number of units distributed by FTRI declined by 22 percent during the last fiscal year.

Table 2
Equipment Distributed by FTRI

Equipment Type	Units 7/1/23 – 6/30/24	Units 7/1/24 – 6/30/25	Percentage Change
Volume Control Telephone (VCP)	2,410	1,774	-26%
Audible Ring Signaler (ARS) and Visual Ring Signaler (VRS)	357	317	-11%
Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)	7	2	-71%
Captioned Telephone	72	179	149%
In-Line Amplifier	581	426	-27%
Other*	42	19	-55%
Total	3,469	2,717	-22%

* Other includes hearing carry-over, voice-carry-over, and TeliTalk telephones.

Source: Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc.'s 2024 and 2025 Data Request Response.

Approximately 86 percent of new recipients of equipment from FTRI are hard of hearing. Table 3 identifies how many new clients received equipment and training by eligibility for the reporting period. The number of new recipients is lower than the distributed equipment referenced in Table 2 because a significant number of recipients received more than one piece of equipment.

Table 3
New Recipients of Equipment and Training
(For Fiscal Year 2024-2025)

Eligibility	New Clients
Deaf	161
Hard of Hearing	1,122
Speech Challenged	14
Total	1,297

Source: Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc.'s 2024-2025 Annual Report and 2025 Data Request Response.

Most applications received by FTRI were approved at Deaf Service Centers. Table 4 provides a listing of professionals involved with the certification of client applications for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

Table 4
Applications Approved by Certifier Type
(For Fiscal Year 2024-2025)

Category of Certifier	Approved Applications
Deaf Service Center Director	999
Hearing Aid Specialist	205
Audiologist	63
Physician	21
Speech Pathologist	8
State Certified Teacher in Hearing Impaired	1
Total	1,297

Source: Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc.'s. 2025 Data Request Response.

Table 5 reflects the number of persons served by FTRI over the last ten fiscal years. New clients served and customer calls are two of the key categories monitored to evaluate participation in the relay program. As presented, there has been a 90 percent decline in new clients served and a 66 percent decline in customer calls over the past ten years.

Table 5
FTRI Clients Served

Fiscal Year	New Clients	Equipment Changed	Equipment Exchange	Equipment Returned	Follow-Up Assistance	Calls and Application
2015-2016	12,620	231	10,700	4,685	665	27,751
2016-2017	11,024	192	8,110	3,911	768	24,933
2017-2018	10,378	442	6,765	3,670	862	29,224
2018-2019	9,874	139	5,798	3,245	732	18,452
2019-2020	5,658	94	3,694	1,986	380	3,634
2020-2021	2,432	667	2,663	1,424	226	3,634
2021-2022	2,290	349	2,075	1,254	150	11,892
2022-2023	2,584	260	1,669	1,111	166	6,910
2023-2024	1,717	201	1,291	737	116	6,515
2024-2025	1,297	247	921	581	77	9,437

Source: Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc.'s 2015-2016- Annual Report through 2024-2025 Annual Report.

D. Outreach

FTRI uses a mix of print and digital marketing to inform Floridians about relay service and equipment. FTRI also coordinates with the RDCs to conduct outreach. Based on coordinated efforts with the RDCs, FTRI conducted 343 outreach events and FTRI estimates that its outreach efforts delivered over 20 million general and targeted advertising contacts per month.

III. Relay Services and Minutes of Use

Relay service provides deaf or hard of hearing persons access to basic telecommunications services by using a specialized Communications Assistant (CA) who relays information between the deaf or hard of hearing person and the other party to the call. The deaf or hard of hearing person uses a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) to communicate with the CA. The person using the TDD types a message to the CA who in turn voices the message to the other party.

Captioned telephone service (CTS) allows users to dial the number they wish to call and be connected automatically to a captioned telephone relay operator at the CTS service facility. Specialized captioned telephone equipment, in turn, automatically connects the user's line to a second outgoing line from the CTS facility to the called party. The relay operator repeats what the called party says into a computer and voice recognition technology automatically transcribes it into text, which is then transmitted directly to the user.

Appendix B provides insight into TRS user call patterns. As presented, incoming calls outnumbered outgoing calls, and month-to-month call levels were stable. Also, call durations of 0-5 minutes for outgoing calls far exceeded call durations greater than 5 minutes.

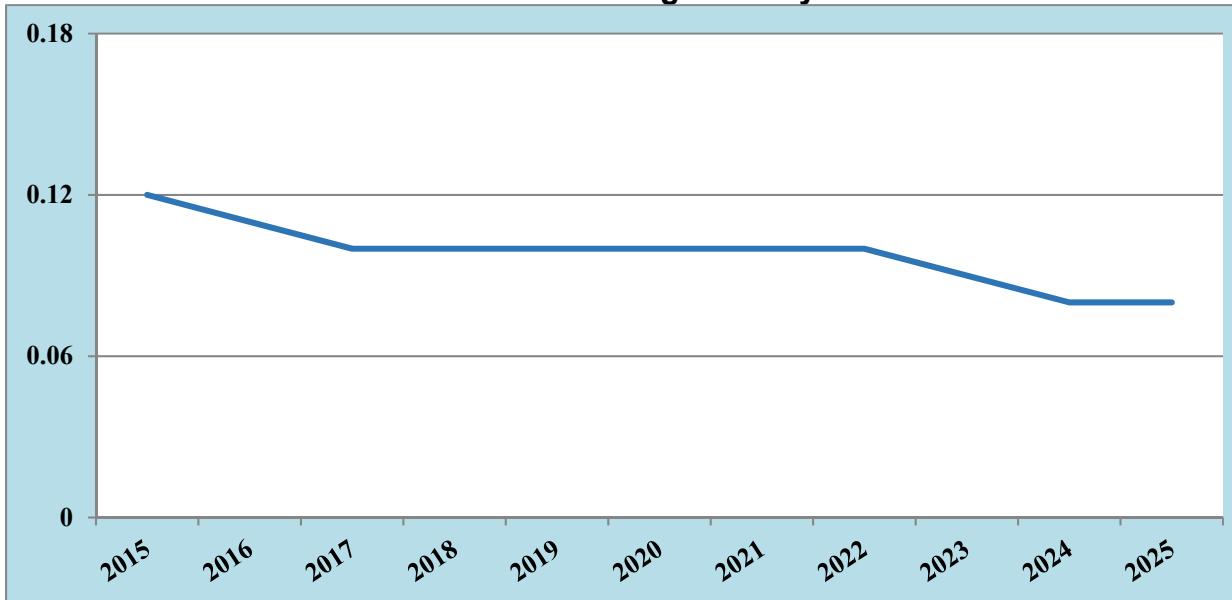
Appendix C reflects the minutes of use for TRS and CTS from July 2024 to June 2025. During this period, the total number of billable minutes of use for TRS calls was 510,081, which is a decrease of 14 percent from the previous year. The total number of CTS minutes of use was 42,415, which represents a 64 percent decrease from the prior year.

In response to the significant declines in CTS call volume and minutes of use, T-Mobile made the decision to discontinue offering the service. As will be discussed further in Chapter V, on November 5, 2024, the Commission awarded a new three year contract for TRS to T-Mobile beginning March 1, 2025, which did not include CTS service. As a result, in addition to presenting declining CTS minutes of use from July 1, 2024 to February 28, 2025, Appendix C reflects zero CTS minutes from March 1, 2025 to June 30, 2025.

IV. Funding

The Florida telecommunications access system is funded through a monthly surcharge on basic telecommunications access lines (landlines), up to 25 lines per customer. FTRI's revenues continue to decline due to the steady fall in the number of landlines. The number of landlines declined by 23.1 percent from 2023 to 2024, as consumers continued to switch to other technologies such as wireless and VoIP,⁴ which are not required by TASA to contribute to the Florida telecommunications access system. The TASA surcharge for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 is \$0.08 per access line each month. Figure 2 provides a historical view of the monthly TASA surcharge since 2015.

Figure 2
TASA Surcharge History



Source: FPSC Orders establishing budget and setting monthly surcharge, 2015 through 2025.

On April 10, 2025, FTRI filed its proposed Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget for FPSC consideration. At the July 1, 2025 Agenda Conference, the Commission approved a total FTRI budget expense of \$3,666,733 and maintained the monthly TASA surcharge at \$0.08 per month.⁵ Appendix D provides FTRI's approved budget and actual expenses for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, and the approved budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

⁴ FPSC, Report on the Status of Competition in the Telecommunications Industry as of December 31, 2024, p. 11.

⁵ FPSC PAA Order PSC-2025-0279-PAA-TP, Docket No. 20250062-TP, Notice of Proposed Agency Action Order Approving Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc.'s Budget, issued July 18, 2025, <https://www.floridapsc.com/pscfiles/library/filings/2025/06589-2025/06589-2025.pdf>, accessed on November 5, 2025.

V. State and Federal Activity

A. Statutory Changes

In 2025, the Legislature amended Sections 427.702 through 427.706, F.S. relating to TASA.⁶ Among other things, these statutory changes grant FTRI authority to distribute newly defined specialized communications technology and required the Commission to set eligibility requirements for its distribution. Section 427.704(e), F.S. mandates that the eligibility requirements be based on income qualifications of no less than double, but no more than triple, the federal poverty level, or participation in other state or federal programs based on income. On October 13, 2025, the Commission issued its order providing notice of the proposed rules.⁷ The eligibility requirements in the proposed rule include: income of less than 250 percent of the federal poverty level, or participation in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, or Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program, or who receive either a Veterans Pension or Survivors Pension from the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Commission filed the rules for adoption with the Florida Department of State on November 12, 2025 and anticipate the rule amendment will become effective on December 2, 2025.

B. Request for Proposals

On March 5, 2024, FPSC staff opened a docket to initiate a Request for Proposals (RFP) to provide relay service in Florida after the conclusion of the contract scheduled to expire in early 2025.⁸ At the July 9, 2024 Agenda Conference, the Commission issued the RFP for a new contract beginning March 1, 2025. In response, Hamilton Relay and T-Mobile filed proposals. On November 5, 2024, the Commission approved staff's recommendation to select T-Mobile's proposal, based on staff's evaluation of technical, financial, and price elements. The new contract began on March 1, 2025, for a period of three years, with options to extend for four additional one-year periods.

C. TASA Advisory Committee

Pursuant to Section 427.706, F.S., the FPSC established a committee in 1991 to provide advice regarding the operation of TRS in Florida. The advisory committee provides the expertise, experience, and perspective of people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or speech impaired. The committee advises on any matter relating to the quality and cost-effectiveness of TRS and the specialized telecommunications device distribution system. Members of the committee are not compensated for their service, but are entitled to per diem and travel expenses for committee meetings.

⁶ See 2025-148, Laws of Florida.

⁷ FPSC Order No. PSC-2025-0374-NOR-TP, Docket No. 20250097-TP, Proposed amendment of Rule 25-4. 150, F.A.C., The Administrator; and Rule 25-4.160, F.A.C., Operation of Telecommunications Relay Service, issued October 13, 2025, <https://www.floridapsc.com/pscfiles/library/filings/2025/14495-2025/14495-2025.pdf>, accessed on November 5, 2025.

⁸ FPSC Document No. 01047-2024, Docket No. 20240043-TP, Request for submission of proposals for relay service for the deaf, hard of hearing, deaf/blind, or speech impaired, and other implementation matters in compliance with the Florida Telecommunications Access System Act of 1991, filed March 5, 2024, <https://www.floridapsc.com/pscfiles/library/filings/2024/01047-2024/01047-2024.pdf>, accessed on November 5, 2025.

The 2025 amendments to TASA discussed above also revised the composition of the advisory committee, while leaving the size of the committee at no more than 10 persons. Specifically, Section 427.706, F.S., was amended to remove specific organizations that must be represented, some of which no longer exist, and instead required that the committee include persons recommended by organizations representing the following groups:

- The deaf
- Persons with hearing loss
- The deaf/blind
- Persons with speech impairment
- The elderly
- Telecommunication relay service distribution centers
- Communications Service Providers

Table 6 identifies current TASA Advisory Committee members, the group they are representing, and related organizations.

Table 6
TASA Advisory Committee

Name	Representing	Organizations
Jane E. Johnson	Relay Distribution Center	Florida Association of Centers for Independent Living
Tom D'Angelo	Hard of Hearing	Florida Association of the Deaf, Inc.
Margaret Lynn Duggar	Elderly	Florida Council on Aging

Source: [TASA ADVISORY COMMITTEE - Florida Public Service Commission \(floridapsc.com\)](https://floridapsc.com)

At the committee's October 27, 2025 meeting, Commission staff presented the 2025 TASA amendments to the committee and other meeting participants. FTRI presented an update on equipment distribution and its plans on distribution of advanced communications technology beginning in 2026 as authorized by the new statute. T-Mobile updated the committee on its services offered, including minutes of use data.

D. FCC Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

At the November 2025 Open Meeting, the FCC released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on efforts to update relay services.⁹ The FCC currently recognizes six TRS types—three analog (TTY Relay, Speech-to-Speech Relay, and Captioned Telephone Service) and three Internet-based. The FCC has observed that the analog services for which state commissions have oversight have declined in use, whereas Internet-based TRS has expanded. The FCC has stated that its goal in modernizing TRS is to help keep these services effective, accessible, and sustainable for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or have speech

⁹ Federal Communications Commission, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 25-79, CG Docket Nos. 08-15 and 03-123, released November 20, 2025, <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-25-79A1.pdf>, accessed on November 25, 2025.

disabilities. In this Notice, the FCC seeks comment on various aspects of the relay services, including:

- Terminating the mandatory status of TTY Relay for state-based TRS programs to afford states the flexibility to adapt their programs to local needs and technological realities.¹⁰
- Recognizing Internet Protocol (IP) Speech-to-Speech as a form of TRS that would include video-assisted Speech-to-Speech as an integrated or add-on component.¹¹
- Helping TRS users requiring additional training to transition to IP-based alternatives.¹²
- Understanding how state programs may change as analog TRS services transition to IP-based services.¹³
- Applying user eligibility, registration, verification, and call detail records requirements to all forms of TRS.¹⁴

¹⁰ Ibid, ¶¶ 21-24.

¹¹ Ibid, ¶¶ 51-53.

¹² Ibid, ¶¶ 65-69.

¹³ Ibid, ¶¶ 21, 29, 54, 70-69.

¹⁴ Ibid, ¶¶ 39-40.

VI. Recommendations and Conclusion

Section 427.704(9), F.S., requires the Commission to include proposals for improvements or changes to the telecommunications access system as part of the Commission's annual Relay Report. As noted in previous chapters, the relay program is facing a number of challenges in terms of technological changes that affects both the demand for equipment and the viability of the program's long-term funding. The statutory changes made in 2025 to modernize TASAs are a major step to meet the evolving needs and preferences of consumers served by the program.

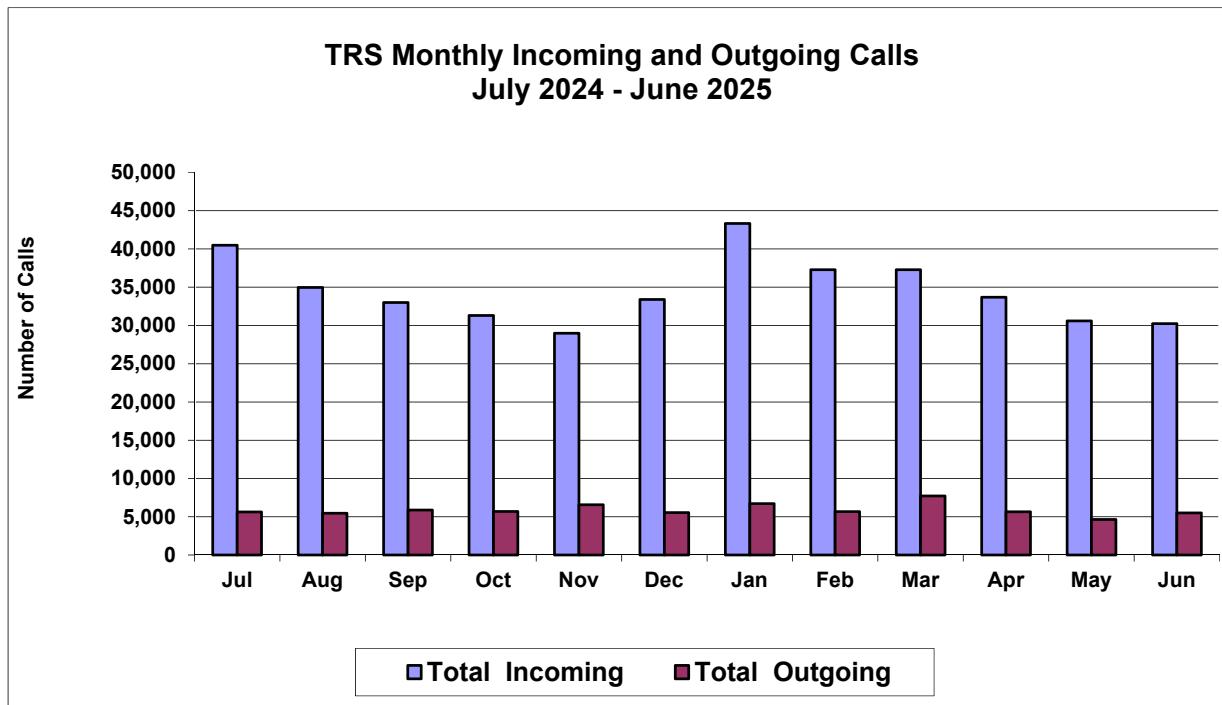
The FPSC will continue to be responsive to the needs of the deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and speech-impaired community in Florida. In addition, FTRI continues to distribute equipment and perform outreach activities that increase consumer awareness of both FTRI programs and the telecommunications access system.

TRS users are transitioning to IP Relay, VRS, IP CTS, and Wireless Service. In Fiscal Year 2024-2025, TRS minutes of use continued to decrease from the prior fiscal year. Based on continued advancements in technology, along with the expansion of consumer choice, it appears that minutes of use for these services will continue to decline. Authority for FTRI to acquire equipment that uses other technologies (i.e. wireless and VoIP) beyond that used to provide basic telecommunications services should have a positive impact.

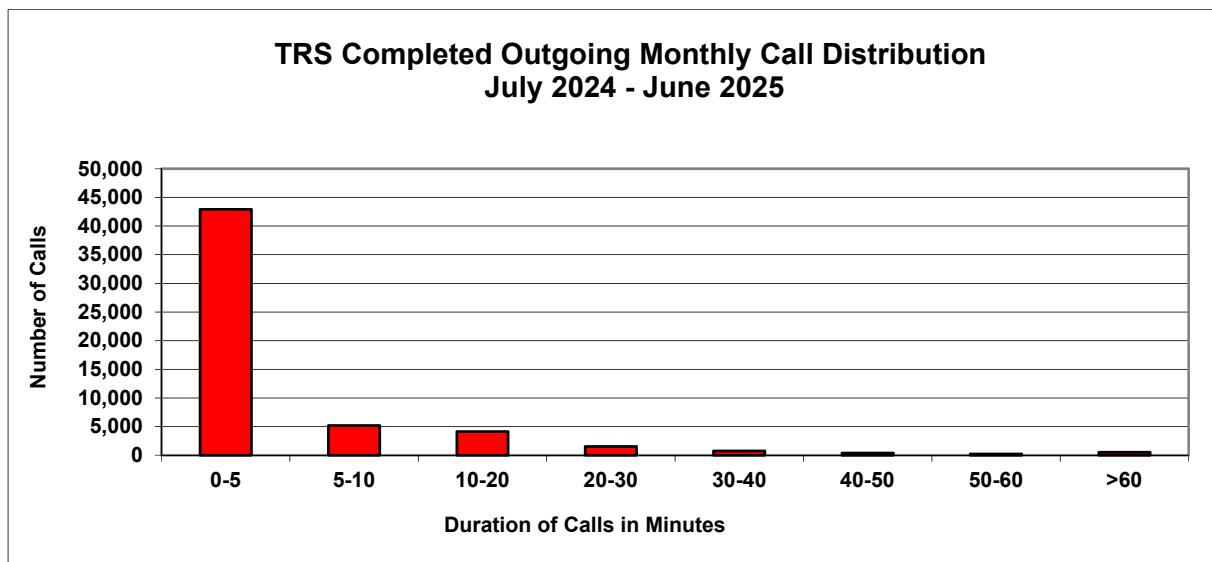
Florida Regional Distribution Center Map



Source: FTRI Website



Source: T-Mobile Relay Services Report – Florida Traffic Pattern Statistics – July 2024-June 2025.



Source: T-Mobile Relay Services Report – Intrastate/Interstate for FL - July 2024-June 2025.

TRS Billable Minutes and Charges July 2024 – June 2025		
Month	TRS Minutes of Use	TRS Charges (\$)
Jul	45,181	\$72,290
Aug	45,236	\$72,378
Sept	45,849	\$73,358
Oct	39,577	\$63,323
Nov	39,585	\$63,336
Dec	39,241	\$62,786
Jan	49,287	\$78,859
Feb	44,417	\$71,067
Mar	52,482	\$135,404
Apr	42,300	\$109,133
May	33,795	\$87,190
Jun	33,131	\$85,478
Total	510,081	\$974,602

Source: T-Mobile Monthly Traffic Report

CTS Billable Minutes and Charges July 2024 – June 2025 ¹⁵		
Month	CTS Minutes of Use	CTS Charges (\$)
Jul	6,307	\$10,533
Aug	5,949	\$9,934
Sept	5,178	\$8,647
Oct	5,435	\$9,075
Nov	5,554	\$9,274
Dec	5,386	\$8,994
Jan	5,158	\$8,614
Feb	3,448	\$5,758
Mar	0	\$0
Apr	0	\$0
May	0	\$0
Jun	0	\$0
Total	42,415	\$70,829

Source: T-Mobile Monthly Traffic Report

¹⁵ CTS is no longer offered under the new T-Mobile contract beginning March 1, 2025.

FTRI Budget for 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 Fiscal Years

	Commission Approved Budget 2024-2025	Actual Revenue And Expenses 2024-2025	Commission Approved Budget 2025-2026
Operating Revenue			
Surcharges	2,349,642	2,157,538	1,938,584
Interest Income	1,099,754	749,089	831,138
Total Revenues	3,449,396	2,906,627	2,769,722
Surplus Account	23,625,205	19,976,638	20,222,848
CATEGORY I. Operating Expenses/ Relay Services			
T-Mobile	921,793	1,013,354	1,206,289
CATEGORY II. Equipment & Repair			
VCPh Cordless	0	272,173	
Caption Phone Equipment	28,250	104,665	113,000
VCP Hearing Impaired	284,697	36,723	226,803
VCP Speech Impaired	0	2,760	27,600
TeliTalk Speech Aid	14,925	22,100	22,100
In-Line Amplifier	89,123	36,265	23,157
ARS/VRS Signaling Equipment	10,411	31,538	34,293
Accessories & Supplies	7,500	0	10,500
Telecom Equipment Repair	30,248	24,701	19,856
TOTAL CATEGORY II	465,154	530,925	477,309
CATEGORY III. Equipment Distribution & Training			
Freight-Telecom Equipment	37,000	35,392	42,157
Regional Distribution Centers	200,000	118,249	145,940
Training Expense	25,000	468	468
TOTAL CATEGORY III	262,000	154,109	188,565

	Commission Approved Budget 2024-2025	Actual Revenue And Expenses 2024-2025	Commission Approved Budget 2025-2026
CATEGORY IV. Outreach			
Outreach Expense	579,306	550,219	634,281
TOTAL CATEGORY IV	579,306	550,219	634,281
CATEGORY V. General & Administrative			
Accounting/Auditing	26,833	28,861	29,950
Legal	20,000	59,786	33,991
Computer Consultation	6,403	6,363	27,899
Computer Software	0	3,885	0
Bank Charges	37,108	37,541	38,690
Dues & Subscriptions	2,500	4,438	5,866
Office Equipment Purchases	8,240	0	6,505
Depreciation	0	2,469	0
Office Equipment Lease	1,842	1,504	1,871
Insurance- Health/ Life/Disability/Other	163,149	115,091	164,246
Office Expense	13,820	13,189	14,902
Postage	2,060	2,662	3,200
Printing	750	2,032	1,000
Rent	94,842	94,613	95,133
Utilities	7,881	5,698	5,825
Retirement	88,469	77,710	104,312
Employee Compensation	513,176	430,536	552,193
Taxes-Payroll	39,258	32,241	39,350
Taxes-Unemployment Comp	63	0	70
Taxes-Licenses	61	0	61
Telephone	16,750	22,565	19,520
Travel & Business	8,000	7,998	8,500
Equipment Maintenance	1,250	1,202	1,205
Employee Training	500	0	0
Meeting & Interpreter	5,500	6,853	6,000
Miscellaneous	0	0	0
TOTAL CATEGORY V	1,058,455	957,237	1,160,289
GRAND TOTAL EXPENSES	3,286,708	3,205,844	3,666,733