

Video Relay Service (VRS) and Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) for the Deaf

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Equal & Effective Communication For All



What is VRS and VRI and how does it work?

Video relay service (VRS), is a video telecommunication service that allows deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals to communicate over video telephones with hearing people in real-time, via an interpreter. This call involves a deaf person using a video phone connected to an interpreter who dials out PSTN to the hearing person. Deaf person, Interpreter, and hearing caller are all in different locations.

Video remote interpreting (VRI) is a video telecommunication service that uses devices such as web cameras or videophones to provide sign language or spoken language interpreting services. This is done through a remote or offsite interpreter, in order to communicate with persons with whom there is a communication barrier. Deaf person and hearing person are in the same location but the interpreter is remote or all parties remote but connecting via web and not telephone.

Why is it important to the Deaf Community?

Without any communication assistance, the problems and issues among the Deaf Community faces are enormous. VRS and VRI allow the deaf to communicate with the world around them by using their natural language, sign language.

Advancements in technology over the last 25 years has made communication between the deaf and hearing easily available. The deaf community relies on technology capabilities to facilitate their communications needs to function with their everyday tasks ranging from education, medical to career. Without VRS/VRI, the ineffective solution is pen/paper, or finding someone to make a call for you. That creates dependency among the Deaf and HOH people. The issues have gotten more intensified where the coronavirus and needing to practice a safe distance are forcing people to stay home. It creates isolation among the deaf community. VRS/VRI helps to counter the issues by providing communication access for the deaf community to reach out to businesses and/or family and friends.



VRS Call Example

1 Deaf User Signs to Interpreter

2 Interpreter Speaks to Hearing User



3 Hearing User Speaks to Interpreter

4 Interpreter Signs to Deaf User

How VRS/VRI improves the lives of deaf individuals.

Most deaf people use sign language to communicate. The language itself is very uniquely structured and not often expressed well in the text version such as written or online chat. Here are a few of the many benefits of having VRS/VRI:

- For sign language users, VRS/VRI conversations flow so much more smoothly, naturally, and faster than communicating by typing.
- Because consumers using VRS communicate in sign language, they are able to more fully express themselves through facial expressions and body language, which cannot be expressed in the text.
- Because the conversation flows more naturally back and forth between the parties, the conversation can take place much more quickly. As a result, the same conversation is much shorter through VRS than it would be through a call using a TTY.
- Creates job opportunities for Deaf/HOH community as well as the hearing community (interpreters)
- It leads the Deaf/HOH customer to be more self reliance to make calls without putting any reliance to find a hearing person to interpret or needing to stop by at the site physically.

How does it benefit those who are not deaf to have access to VRS/VRI to communicate?

- Better, Faster, and more accurate communication between the Deaf/HOH and hearing person
- Encourage the inclusion of Deaf/HOH in local communities as well as state/federal
- Build a more diverse customer base for your business
- Using Video interpreters can be used more efficiently since can be available anywhere without travel

Current countries using some form of VRS/VRI (not complete list)

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| • US | • Germany | • Sweden | • Italy |
| • Canada | • Ireland | • UK | • Australia |
| • Denmark | • Japan | • Columbia | • Caribbean Countries |
| • France | • Norway | • New Zealand | |