

# Video Relay Service and Video Remote Interpreting

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Video Interpreting is a recent addition to sign language interpreting through innovative technology using video conference equipment and broadband Internet access. The following information describes two services that are now available through local and national vendors.

**Video Relay Service (VRS)** A form of telecommunication relay service that involves a TV with a videophone, a mobile wireless device/computer with a web camera, and high speed Internet. An individual who is deaf or hard of hearing and uses sign language to communicate can use this technology to call a hearing party who uses a standard phone. The caller signs to the interpreter on the screen who in turns voices to the hearing party. The interpreter signs back to the caller what the hearing person says. Communication between the two parties is almost simultaneous and this “visual” form of communication is valued by many people who rely on sign language to communicate. A voice telephone user can also initiate a VRS call by calling a toll-free or direct number of the person being called.

## Features of VRS:

- Used for communication between a signing and non-signing party via the telephone
- Service provided for two parties in separate locations
- Is a subsidized program funded by the FCC; free for all callers
- Only the signing party is visible to the VRS interpreter
- All three parties are in separate locations

## **Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)**

Video conferencing equipment or a television with a video phone is used to allow people who are deaf or hard of hearing to communicate with people who are hearing at the same location through an interpreter. The interpreter is not physically present, but is available via the video equipment. There is a fee for this service. VRI is a convenient resource for parties in need of interpreter services when or where an interpreter is not available to be present on site.

## Features of VRI

- Used for communication between a signing and non-signing party in a face to face meeting
- Service provided for two or more parties in the same location
- Charges a fee for service, much like a freelance interpreter
- Interpreter is in a separate location than the other parties
- Both parties are typically visible to the VRS interpreter, and vice versa

Vendors for VRS provide free video phones to qualified persons and vendors for VRI provide video equipment for rent or purchase. For further information, suggested Internet search engine key words include: Video Relay Service, Interpreting Online, Video Remote Interpreting, and/or Video Interpreting.



*This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by calling voice, TTY; for speech-to-speech telephone re-voice services, call 1-877-627-3848.*

**Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division**



Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

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