

PENNSYLVANIA TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICE/TRS ADVISORY BOARD

Commonwealth Keystone Building

400 North Street

Harrisburg, PA 17120

September 11, 2024, Third Quarter Meeting Minutes

Virtual Platform Teleconference Using MS Teams

ATTENDEES & AFFILIATIONS

Board Members

Amy Goldman, Chair

Past President, US Society for Augmentative & Alternative Communication (USSAAC), member, Board of Directors, National Council of State Boards of Examiners in Speech and Language Pathology and Audiology (NCSB). Public Member

Kay Tyberg, Secretary

HLAA National member; HLAA-Blair County PA Chapter President; National Association of the Deaf (NAD) member; Pennsylvania Society for the Advancement of Deaf (PSAD) Lifetime member; National Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA) member; Say What Club member. Former president of TRS/PUC and a Public Member

Sandi McNally

Assistant Director, TechOwl, Institute on Disabilities Temple University

Melissa Hawkins

Director, PA Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing within PA Labor and Industry

Allison LaBrie

Pennsylvania Account Manager, CapTel and TRS, Hamilton Relay

Steve Samara

Pennsylvania Telephone Association

Public Member Vacancy: 3

Board Members Absent:

TRS STAFF & GUESTS

Eric Jeschke

Public Utility Commission (PUC) (BTUS)

Melissa Derr

PUC (BTUS)

Matt Hrivnak

PUC Bureau of Consumer Services

Denise McCracken

PUC Office of Communications

Tom Giannantonio

PUC Bureau of Technical Utility Services

Christian McDewell

Vice Chairman's Office of PUC Commission

Aaron Margolis

PUC Office of Communications

John Paul Rogers

PUC Telephone Utility Services

Spencer Nahf

Bureau of Technical Utility Services

Aaron Margolis

PUC Office of Communications

David Screven

Law Bureau of the PUC

Joel Cheskis

PUC Chairman Legal Assistant to Commissioner

Lillian Harris

PUC Commissioner Legal Assistant

Kayla Rost

PUC Commissioner Legal Assistant

Laura Grassia

TDDP Program Manager, Institute on Disabilities, Temple University

Jenny Pearson

Outreach Coordinator, Hamilton CapTel

Thaddeus Graham

Outreach Coordinator, Hamilton Relay

Legal Advisor to the Board:

Tiffany Tran
Law Bureau of the PUC
David Screven
Law Bureau of the PUC

Guest Speakers:

Nicholas Smyth
Pennsylvania Assistant Chief Deputy Attorney
General
Ginger Etter
Pennsylvania Attorney General Office Bureau of
Consumer Protection

Sign Language Interpreters:

Jessica Bentley-Sassaman
Kathy Zimmerman

CART/Real Time

Archive Reporting and Captioning

Call to Order

Chair Amy Goldman called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, September 11, 2024. She welcomed board, PUC staff, and guests to the Third Quarter TRS/PUC Advisory Board meeting.

Virtual Platform Etiquette Protocols

While conducting Virtual Platform meetings the board established appropriate protocols to adequately accommodate the needs of those with hearing loss, deaf-blindness, and speech disabilities. We ask for everyone's cooperation:

- a) Before addressing the board, please unmute your audio and state your first name before speaking,**
- b) articulate clearly when speaking,**
- c) one person speaks at a time when called upon by the chair,**
- d) face and look into the camera when speaking to allow those who rely on lipreading to see you clearly,**
- e) avoid backlighting in the background,**
- f) allow time for the sign language interpreter to translate to the person with hearing loss and for that person to communicate their message or vote,**
- g) to assure accuracy raise your hand and say "yah" or "nay" during the voting process,**
- h) while in a meeting on a virtual platform avoid wearing clothing with abstract or loud patterns due to those who experience vertigo.**

OLD BUSINESS

Welcome/Introduction

Chair Goldman administered the roll call, requesting first board members, and then PUC staff, Commissioner's staff, interpreters, CART reporter, and other guest(s) present to introduce themselves and how they wished to be recognized.

Chairperson’s Report

Chair Goldman requested a moment of silence for the lives lost on September 11, 2001, at the World Trade Towers in New York City, the Pentagon in Virginia, and the Shanksville, Pennsylvania site. She thanked Steve Samara for sending the board the FCC notice that a vote will take place on September 26, 2024, on improving access to videoconferencing.

Secretary’s Report/Approval of the Minutes

The advisory board’s meeting minutes from March 2024 were reviewed for comments/corrections: no changes or corrections. Chair Goldman moved and Steve Samara seconded the motion to accept the meeting minutes. The board members voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

Chair Goldman suggested to the Secretary for future reports to summarize the key or high points in the minutes and attach the PPTs and other documents reviewed in the meeting.

Telecommunication Device Distribution Program (TDDP) including Wireless (WEI) Report by Laura Grassia

The Telecommunication Device Distribution Program (TDDP) includes Wireless equipment distribution and support services whereas Laura Grassia reported the TDDP Report focuses on outreach projects.

The summary covers July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024. Key highlights below:

	Specifics	Nos.	Comment
2023 vs 2024	Applications ↑↑ 13		
	Philadelphia	61	Healthy competition between regional centers.
	Allegheny County	50	
	Age		
	100 and up applied	4	Accepted
	65-99 applied	57%	
	Eligible applicants	338	9 acquired landline & wireless
	Hearing assistive devices	312	Unduplicated consumers In 55 out of 67 counties
Outreach	Statewide events	8	3rd Quarter Veterans, PUC communities
	4 out of 8 events were for Underserved populations		
	Outreach – people	11,335	
	Press Release		

Device Distribution	Vision Disabilities	75%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Blind shell device ➤ Laura PPT explanation of the blind shell
	Hearing Disabilities	17%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Captioned Telephones ➤ Cell phones
	Other-Received cell phone and landline phone	9	<p>Recipients in 2024 got both</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Landline Lifeline Program ➤ Safelink Program
Customer Satisfaction	Survey Satisfaction	93%	95% rated highly satisfied with the program out of 93% responses.

*[Attachment 1](#) – TDDP Report

Hamilton CTRS Report by Thad Graham

Hamilton Telephone Company d/b/a Hamilton Telecommunications is the contracted Captioned Telephone Relay Services (CTRS) provider throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. CTRS is like its counterpart’s traditional relay service with an added feature that allows consumers to receive captions on their telephone with the ability to hear what the caller is saying.

Thad presented at multiple senior living facilities in and around Bloomsburg. He attended the senior expos sponsored by State Representatives in Somerset, Mars, and Mount Poconos areas. Hamilton Relay’s Second Annual PA Relay Night was attended by about 3,000 people. Hamilton Relay has scheduled a webinar in the Philadelphia area in October. The Hamilton Relay Community Leadership Award is being presented in Hollidaysburg, PA. Kay Tyberg will be invited to attend the ceremony.

*[Attachment 2](#) –CTRS Report

Hamilton CapTel Outreach Report by Jenny Pearson

Jenny Pearson provided the Hamilton Relay’s CapTel Outreach Report for May, June, and July. Jenny continues to expand her contacts in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania such as workforce development and businesses.

Hamilton CapTel's highlights for the quarter were a) the Montgomery County Senior Games Event, b) the event held with HLAA South Central Support Group at a retirement community and Hamilton Relay presentation, and c) the exhibit of Pennsylvania School for the Deaf Alumni Association's 200th anniversary.

PA TRS Quarterly Update Report by Melissa McMahan

Melissa McMahan provided the Pennsylvania TRS services Report. Pennsylvania caption telephone relay services and traditional relay services and traditional relay services telephones are doing well.

Members viewed the virtual introduction from Melissa McMahan, Hamilton Relay State Programs Manager. Melissa is the interim contact until the new account manager is on board. Melissa oversees Hamilton Relay's account management team for several states. An announcement will be forthcoming of Christa Cervante's replacement.

Broadband and Telecommunications by Joel Cheskis

Joel Cheskis is the Legal Assistant to PUC Commissioner Chairman, Steve DeFrank and is a statutory member of the Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority related to telecommunication and broadband concerns throughout the Commonwealth. Mr. Cheskis provided an update on what's happening in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority has 11 voting members including the PUC. The federal funds come from infrastructure and investment. **\$42 billion** was distributed nationally, and Pennsylvania received **\$1 billion** to help provide Internet service to unserved and underserved areas of Pennsylvania. The funding is dispersed to various agencies. The goal is to have systems in place by 2026. Further information is in the attachment.

Public Members Recruitment by Denise McCracken

Denise McCracken reported the PUC has not received any new applicants for public members. A productive discussion and brainstorming followed with several potential ways to promote widespread recruitment. The board is requesting a speaker who has done recruiting with success.

Deaf/deaf/hard-of-hearing Statistical Data by Kay Tyberg

PUC/TRS needs statistical data of the hearing loss community throughout Pennsylvania State to balance and contemplate Deaf/deaf/hard-of-hearing services across the Commonwealth. FCC regulations and rulings affect TRS/PUC in the telecommunications environment. The FCC's work is complex and time-consuming considering the "small" percentage of the Deaf/deaf/hard-of-hearing population. However, the FCC does not feel the need to spend time to account for accurate Deaf/deaf/hard-of-hearing data whereby other agencies can acquire such requests without violating confidentiality or privacy. The hearing loss community believes it will be helpful to have the PUC Commissioners' support to encourage the FCC to share demographics reliably with the

Deaf/deaf/hard-of-hearing community. Joel Cheskis, Kay Tyberg, and Neil McDermott will schedule a meeting to discuss the next steps. (Please refer to Kay's report from March 2024).

NEW BUSINESS

"Scams and Frauds Presentation by Assistant Deputy Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection by Nicholas Smyth and Ginger Etter

Mr. Smyth, Assistant Chief Deputy Attorney General from the Pennsylvania State Attorney's Office in Pittsburgh, presented an overview of the widespread scams and frauds in the United States, specifically Pennsylvania. Mr. Smyth helps lead the Bureau of Consumer Protection in handling consumer complaints. Their office reviews and mediates cases for approximately 30,000 complaints annually. There is a Scams and Fraud Team which Nick's associate Ginger Etter explained in their presentation. The bureau investigates and brings legal action against companies or individuals engaging in unfair practices against Pennsylvanians. There are 75 staff members handling complaints. Mr. Smyth and Ms. Etter shared in-depth statistics on bank wire fraud and telephone scams. The Federal Trade Commission reported between \$20 million and \$137 billion in 2022. Within those amounts about \$6 billion to \$48 billion adults over 60 were the target of scams and frauds. This does not include unreported scams and frauds by criminals. The economic impact on Pennsylvanians is between \$800 million and \$5 billion. In 2024, HB 2624 would propose a mechanism in place for reporting suspicious transactions in real time. Individuals are encouraged to report these instances to the Attorney General's office and should not be embarrassed or afraid to come forward to report the crime. The banking industry has formulated new fraud prevention measures and other innovative measures. Consumer education is a continuing process. The advisory board became aware of how many uniformed Pennsylvanians with hearing loss, speech disorders, as well as other disabilities have become prime targets for scams and frauds. The advisory board thanked Steve Samara for arranging for Mr. Smyth and Ms. Etter to speak.

2025 Meeting Dates

Chair Goldman presented the 2025 meeting dates for approval:

March 5, 2025

June 4, 2025

September 3, 2025

December 3, 2025

The next TRS/PUC Advisory Board-MS Teams Virtual meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 4, 2024.

Virtual meetings will begin promptly at 9:30 a.m. We encourage everyone to log in 10-15 minutes earlier to ensure the connection is in order.

Public Comment

No comment was presented.

Meeting Adjourned

Kay Tyberg, secretary asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. There was a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 a.m. The board unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Annita Kay Tyberg

Annita Kay Tyberg, Secretary

Attachments

Rev. 11/20/24, 12/01/24, 12/02/24, 01/09/2025

***Attachment 1 – TDDP Report**

TDDP Update for TRS Advisory Board Meeting- September 11, 2024

April 1, 2024 to June 30, 2024

***Effective July 1, 2022, the Wireless Expansion Initiative is combined with Wireline TDDP and will be inclusively labeled as TDDP.**

Applications received by county: 112 (41 counties)

Adams	1
Allegheny	13
Armstrong	0
Beaver	2
Bedford	1
Berks	4
Blair	2
Bradford	0
Bucks	0
Butler	1
Cambria	0
Cameron	0
Carbon	1
Centre	0
Chester	2
Clarion	1
Clearfield	2
Clinton	0
Columbia	0
Crawford	1
Cumberland	2
Dauphin	2
Delaware	6
Elk	0
Erie	6
Fayette	1
Forest	0
Franklin	2
Fulton	0
Greene	0
Huntingdon	1
Indiana	0
Jefferson	0

Lackawanna	3
Lancaster	3
Lawrence	2
Lebanon	0
Lehigh	1
Luzerne	9
Lycoming	4
McKean	1
Mercer	2
Mifflin	1
Monroe	1
Montgomery	3
Montour	0
Northampton	0
Northumberland	1
Perry	0
Philadelphia	12
Pike	0
Potter	0
Schuylkill	5
Snyder	1
Somerset	0
Sullivan	0
Susquehanna	1
Tioga	0
Union	1
Venango	0
Warren	1
Washington	0
Wayne	1
Westmoreland	3
Wyoming	1
York	4

Juniata	0
---------	---

Eligible applicants: 86 (includes applicants whose applications were still in process prior to March 31, 2024)

Ineligible applicants: 3

-overincome 2

-has equipment 1

Incomplete applications: 12

Inactive: 1

Withdrawn applications: 7 (death-1, didn't need equipment-3, used another program-3)

Device Recipients by county: 83 unduplicated recipients (38 counties)

Adams	0
Allegheny	11
Armstrong	1
Beaver	1
Bedford	1
Berks	4
Blair	1
Bradford	0
Bucks	0
Butler	2
Cambria	0
Cameron	0
Carbon	1
Centre	1
Chester	1
Clarion	1
Clearfield	1
Clinton	0
Columbia	0
Crawford	1
Cumberland	0
Dauphin	1
Delaware	3
Elk	0
Erie	8
Fayette	2
Forest	0
Franklin	1
Fulton	0
Greene	0
Huntingdon	2
Indiana	0
Jefferson	0
Juniata	1

Lackawanna	0
Lancaster	3
Lawrence	2
Lebanon	0
Lehigh	1
Luzerne	5
Lycoming	1
McKean	0
Mercer	1
Mifflin	0
Monroe	0
Montgomery	1
Montour	0
Northampton	2
Northumberland	2
Perry	0
Philadelphia	9
Pike	0
Potter	0
Schuylkill	3
Snyder	1
Somerset	0
Sullivan	0
Susquehanna	0
Tioga	0
Union	1
Venango	0
Warren	1
Washington	0
Wayne	1
Westmoreland	2
Wyoming	1
York	1

Two (2) consumer received both a landline and wireless device.

Devices Distributed from April 1, 2024 to June 30, 2024:

89 pieces for 83 unduplicated consumers

Device Name	Quantity Ordered
Clarity Alto, Amplified Telephone	0
Clarity Alto Plus, Amplified Telephone	2
Clarity HA-40, In-Line Handset Amplifier	0
Clarity JV35, Talking Amplified Telephone	0
Clarity JV35W, Talking Amplified Telephone	0
Serene Innovations HD-40P, Amplified Photo Telephone	1
Clarity XLC2+, Amplified Cordless Telephone	3
Clarity XLC8, Amplified/Cordless/Bluetooth/Answering Machine	0
*Panasonic KX-TGM430B, Amplified/Cordless/Bluetooth/Answering Machine	0
*Panasonic KX-TGM 450S, Amplified/Cordless/Answering Machine	4
CapTel 2400i, (Touch Screen) Captioned Telephone	0
CapTel 840 Plus, Captioned Telephone	0
CapTel 840i, Captioned Telephone	0
CapTel 880i, Captioned Telephone	0
Ultratec Superprint 4425A with ASCII, TTY	0
Clarity XLC8-GLT (VCO)	0
Reizen, Big Button Speakerphone	0
Clearsounds CR2000, Loud Ring Signaler	0
*Sonic Alert TR75VR, Flashing Light Signaler	0
Apple iPhone SE (128GB)	7
Apple iPhone 12 (Discontinued Summer 2023)	0
Apple iPhone 13 (128GB)	40
Samsung Galaxy S21FE 5G Smart Phone	9
Google Pixel 7	4
MiniVision2+ 4G Mobile Phone	4

SmartVision3-Omni Package	1
Apple iPad 4G	9
Samsung Galaxy S7 FE Tablet	1
Serene Innovations SA-40 HearAll Cellphone Amplifier	0
Smart Signaler: Serene Innovations RF200 Alerting Device	2
Smart Signaler: Bellman & Symfon Vibio Bed Shaker	1

*Discontinued Equipment

TDDP Recipients by Age Demographics: 60% are ages 65+

Age Range	Count
6-10	0
11-16	1
17-21	4
22-55	14
56-60	7
61-64	7
65+	50

TDDP Consumer Education Outreach Events Summary: April 1, 2024 to June 30, 2024:

Total Attendance (estimated)	3,622
Number of Events	21
Events reaching underserved populations	1
Counties Reached	10
Statewide Events	3

Other Highlights:

- 80% of devices distributed were for vision disabilities. 12% of devices distributed were for hearing disabilities. 8% of devices distributed were for other disabilities.
- Targeting mailings reached 1,406 people
- 7 recipients requested support with their TDDP devices totaling 7 hours of set up, training and or troubleshooting. 100% survey response. 71% highly satisfied with service.

- 135% response rate on satisfaction surveys. This includes surveys initiated from last quarter and received this quarter. 96% highly satisfied with the program.

*Attachment 2 – CTRS Quarterly Report



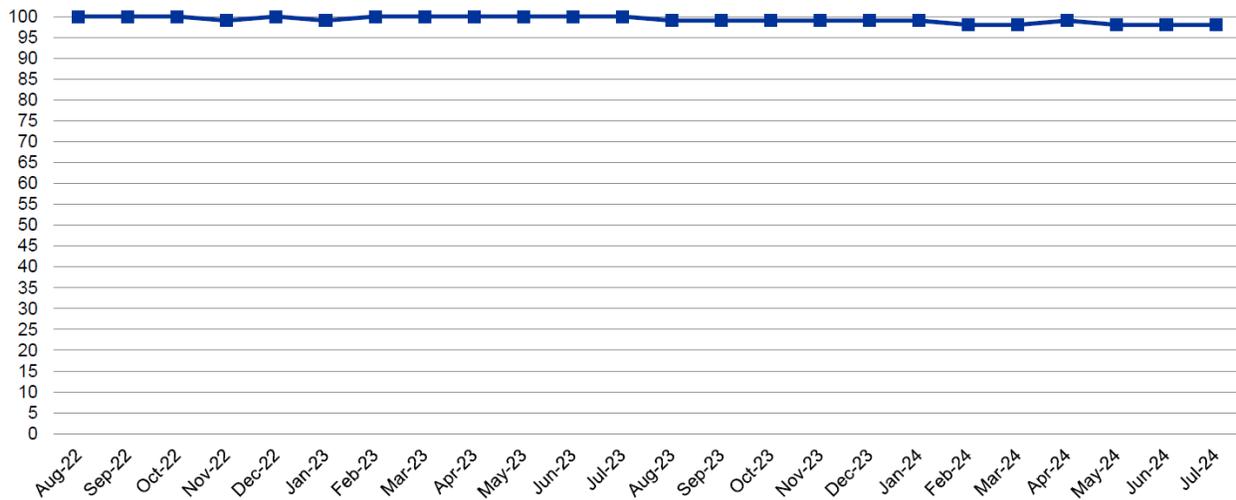
HamiltonRelay.com

Pennsylvania TRS Advisory Board Quarterly Update

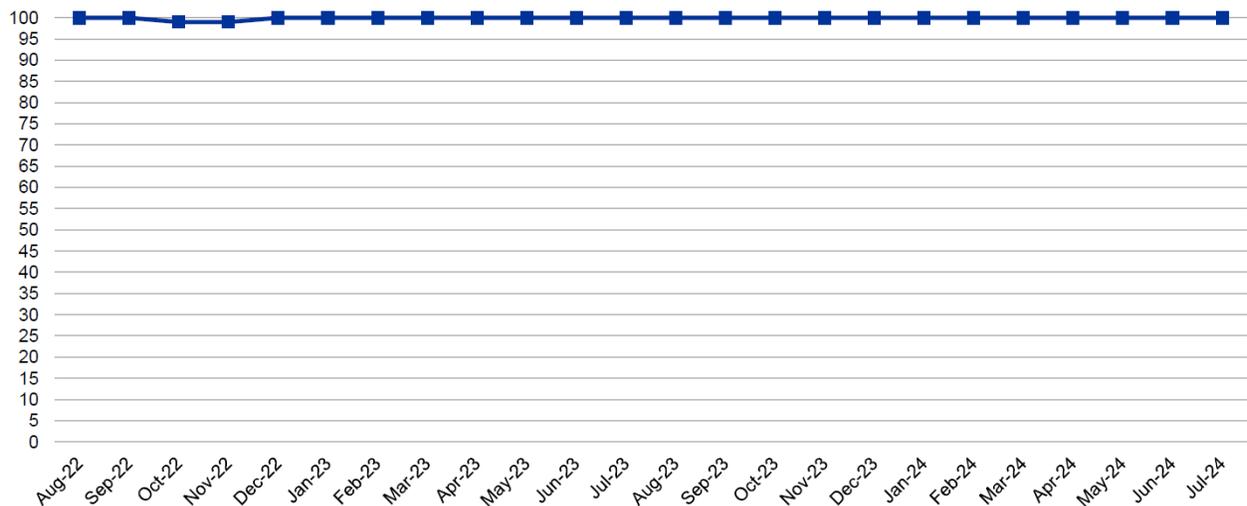
Melissa McMahan, State Programs Manager
Thad Graham, TRS Outreach Coordinator
Jenny Pearson, Regional Outreach Coordinator



Pennsylvania TRS Percent Answered in 10 Seconds

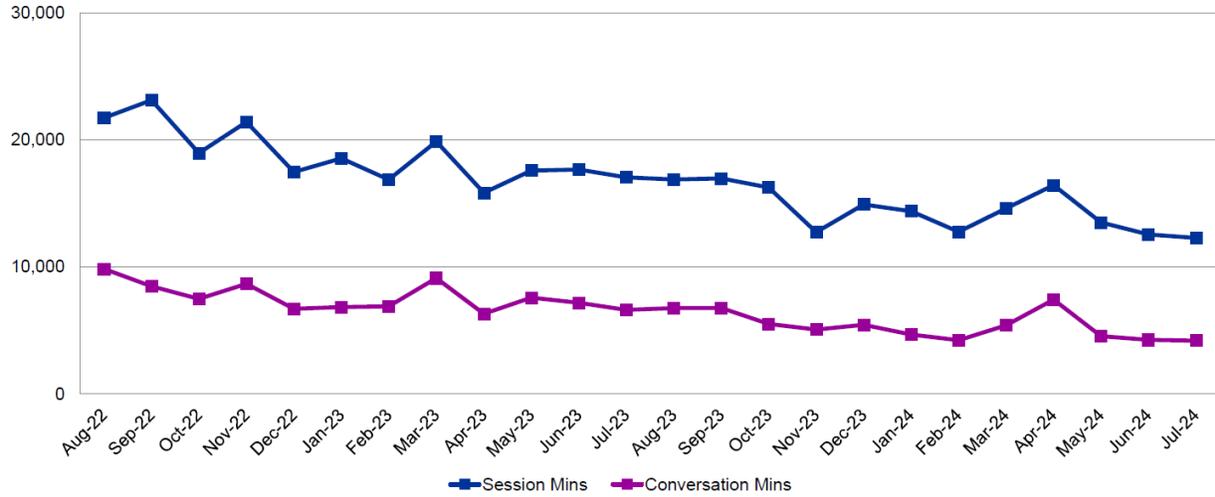


Pennsylvania CTRS Percent Answered in 10 Seconds

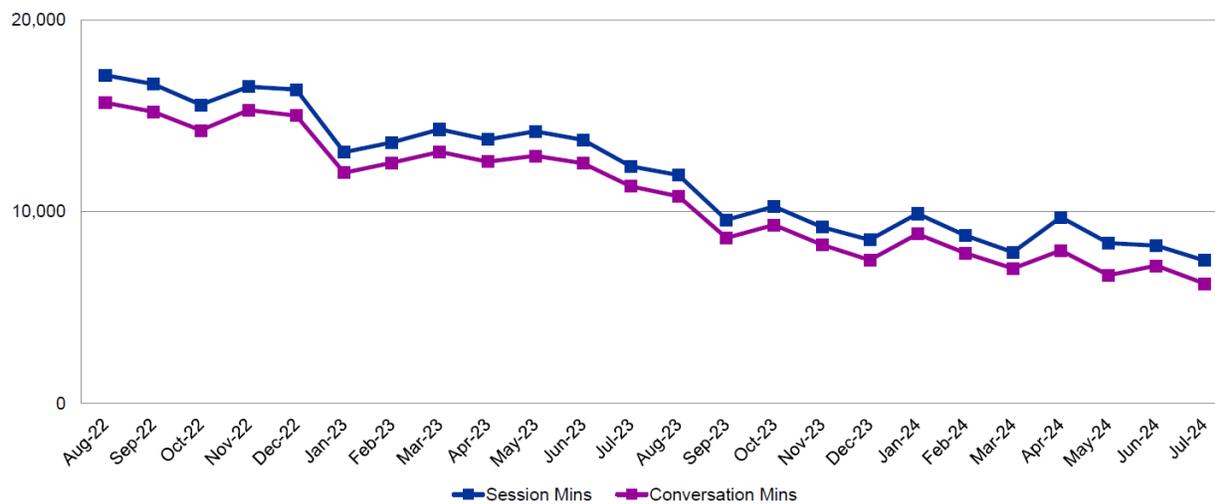




Pennsylvania TRS Session and Conversation Minutes

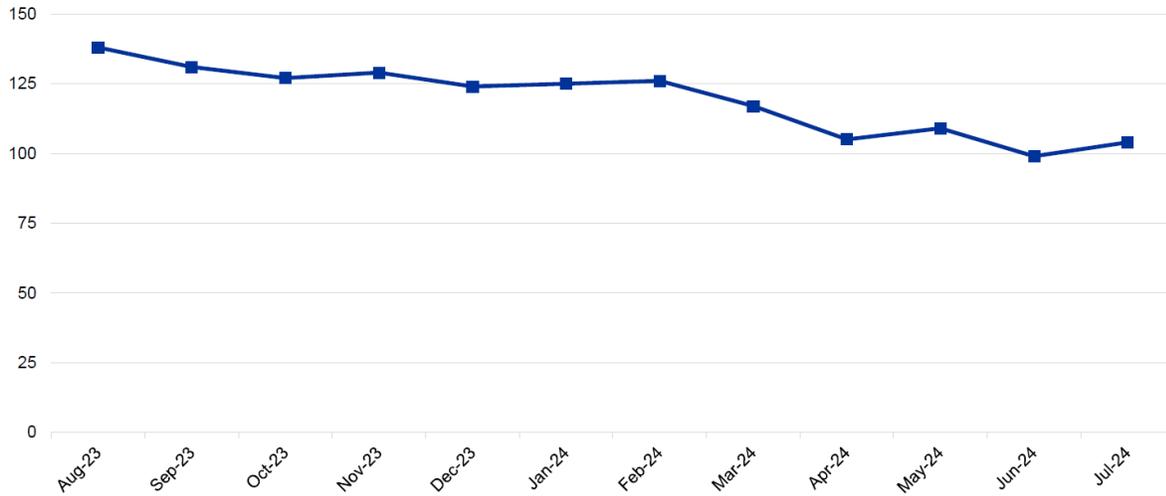


Pennsylvania CTRS Session and Conversation Minutes





CTRS Phones Used Last 12 Months



TRS Quality Scores Most Recent Month

	GA	LA	MD	NE	Company-wide
Current Month QA Average	99%	98%	99%	99%	99%
Previous Month QA Average	99%	98%	99%	99%	99%
Overall Increase/Decrease	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Typing Words Per Minute Average	N/A	64.0	65.0	N/A	64.5
Typing Accuracy Average	N/A	98%	99%	N/A	99%



CapTel Quality Scores Most Recent Month

Average Words Per Minute	176.92
Average Rate of Accuracy	99.65%
Average Rate of Error	0.35%



Pennsylvania TRS Customer Care Contact

	May	Jun	Jul
Technical	0	0	0
General Information	8	10	8
Equipment	2	2	4
Customer Profile	0	0	0
Outreach	1	0	0
Operations Complaints	1	0	0
External Complaints	15	10	14
Wrong Number/Hang Up	22	23	32
Compliments/Commendations	0	0	0
Misuse Caller	0	0	0



Pennsylvania CTRS Customer Care Contacts

	May	Jun	Jul
Service	0	0	0
Technical	0	0	0
Product	0	0	0
Billing	0	0	0
Set Up	1	0	3
Info/Referral/Ed	1	2	0
Other	0	1	0



Pennsylvania TRS Outreach Events

PA RELAY
DIAL 711





Pennsylvania CTRS Outreach Events



© 2024 Hamilton Relay. All rights reserved.



Questions?