



## Idaho Public Utilities Commission

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Edward Lodge, Commissioner

Case No. GNR-T-23-03

Order No. 35764

Case No. GNR-T-23-02

Order No. 35763

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**NEWS RELEASE:** Commission accepts annual reports, budgets for telecommunications programs that assist Idaho residents

**BOISE (May 3, 2023)** – The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has accepted the 2022 annual reports and this year’s budgets for the state’s Telecommunications Relay Service and the Idaho Telecommunications Service Assistance Program.

The relay service, established by the Idaho Legislature in 1992, allows hearing- or speech-impaired residents to use phone communications “in a manner that is functionally equivalent to individuals without hearing or speech impairments.” A relay center is used, which converts or relays verbal conversations to text-type and vice versa. The relay center also provides speech-to-speech, Spanish-to-Spanish, video, and Internet relay services.

It is managed by Hamilton Telecommunications, and is funded by assessments on local telephone service (residential and business) access lines and on billed intrastate long-distance minutes.

The relay center handled 1,102 calls in calendar year 2022, a 41 percent decrease from calendar year 2021.

The annual operating budget for 2023 is \$141,350. It includes administrative fees and expenses, travel and conference costs, payments to Hamilton and annual membership dues.

The commission also approved the annual report for 2022 and this year’s budget for the Idaho Telecommunications Service Assistance Program. The program helps decrease the cost of basic local phone service for eligible Idaho residents, and is funded through a uniform, commission-ordered surcharge on all end-user business, residential, and wireless access service lines. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare manages the program, along with federal programs to grant limited federal contributions to low-income customers.

Idaho telephone companies provide a monthly \$2.50 discount to eligible applications. If the commission designated a company as an eligible telecommunications carrier, the company may be reimbursed from the program's fund for assistance provided.

The program's annual report offers information on the number of customers participating, how much telecommunications companies received in reimbursements and the number of wireless access lines, among other information.

Additional information on the annual reports and budgets can be found at:  
<https://puc.idaho.gov/Fileroom/PublicFiles/telecom/35764.pdf> and  
<https://puc.idaho.gov/Fileroom/PublicFiles/telecom/35763.pdf>.