

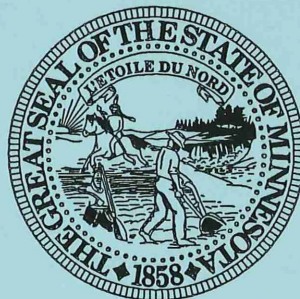
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TACIP BOARD

Telecommunications Access for Communication-Impaired Persons

State of Minnesota



Eighth Annual Report to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

January 31, 1995

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Pursuant to Minn. Stat. 237.55; Minn.
Stat. 237.50; 1987 Minn. Laws Chap.
308

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Minnesota Legislature and the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) had the foresight to address the telecommunication needs of communication-impaired persons long before most other states established similar programs and before telephone access was mandated by the federal government through Public Law 101-336, signed into law July 26, 1990.

Created by statute in 1987, the Telecommunications Access for Communication-Impaired Persons (TACIP) Board continues to fulfill its mission of making the telephone network in Minnesota fully accessible to communication-impaired persons. The Board accomplishes this goal through two programs, the Equipment Distribution Program and the Minnesota Relay Service. In brief, the distribution program provides specialized telecommunications equipment to eligible hearing, speech and mobility-impaired persons enabling them to access the telephone network. The relay service allows a person using a telecommunications device for the deaf (TTY/TDD) to communicate with any other telephone user. Since the inception of the two programs, over 17,200 telecommunication devices have been distributed without charge to more than 11,500 individuals and over 5,200,000 calls have been placed through the relay service to or from communication-impaired callers.

By statute, the TACIP Board has twelve members who are appointed by the Governor. The Board reports annually to the Commission; this is its eighth report. TACIP's programs are funded by a seventeen-cent monthly surcharge on each telephone customer access line in Minnesota.

In 1993, the Minnesota Legislature made the TACIP Board and its programs permanent, expanded the distribution program to include mobility-impaired persons, and provided additional funds to enable the relay service to meet federal standards and the increasing demand for service. In the same year, the Board received certification of the Minnesota Relay Service by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The FCC found that the Minnesota Relay Service "meets or exceeds all operational, technical and functional minimum standards (of the Commission)". This certification remains in effect for a five year period beginning July 26, 1993 and ending July 25, 1998.

This report presents information on the major activities of the TACIP Board and its committees in 1994 and details of the operations of the two programs. The report also provides financial and statistical data. The Appendices provide detail on the current organizational structure of TACIP and its service providers, board and program policies and procedures, consumer satisfaction surveys, and board and program reports.

1.000 INTRODUCTION

The mission of the TACIP Board is to provide access to the telecommunications network for people with hearing, speech or mobility impairments residing in Minnesota. The TACIP Board accomplishes this goal through the Equipment Distribution Program (EDP) and the Minnesota Relay Service (MRS). The EDP distributes a variety of specialized telecommunication devices to eligible communication-impaired persons throughout the state. The MRS provides a statewide telecommunications relay service that offers a means of communication between the users of TTY/TDDs and all other telephone users.

1.100 TACIP Board

The Board was created by statute in 1987 (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 237, Telephone and Telegraph Companies, Division 237.50-237.56). This statute can be found in Appendix A of this report.

The purpose of the TACIP Board is to make the telephone network in Minnesota accessible to persons with communication impairments. The two programs that were established to accomplish this purpose, the Equipment Distribution Program (EDP) and the Minnesota Relay Service (MRS), are funded by a seventeen-cent surcharge on each telephone customer access line in Minnesota. The Board is responsible for the setting of policy, development of services and the execution of contracts for the provision of services. The TACIP Organization Chart can be found in Appendix B of this report.

1.110 Board Membership

The TACIP Board has twelve members by statute:

- ☐ the Commissioner of the Department of Administration or the Commissioner's designee;
- ☐ seven communication-impaired persons appointed by the Governor, at least three of whom reside outside a metropolitan county at the time of appointment, at least four of whom are deaf, one of whom is speech-impaired, one of whom is mobility-impaired, and one of whom is hard-of-hearing;
- ☐ one person appointed by the Governor who is a professional in the area of communications disabilities;

- ☐ one person appointed by the Governor to represent the telephone company providing local exchange service to the largest number of persons;
- ☐ one member of the Minnesota Telephone Association appointed by the Governor to represent other affected telephone companies; and
- ☐ one person appointed by the Governor to represent companies providing inter-LATA interexchange telephone service.

As of December 31, 1994, TACIP Board membership consisted of:

James Beutelspacher,
representing the Department of Administration;

Daniel Chellin,
consumer residing outside a metropolitan county at the time of appointment;

Anyes deHorst Eames,
consumer residing in the Twin Cities area;

David Johnson,
professional in the field of communication impairment;

Sandra Morgan,
consumer residing in the Twin Cities area;

Douglas Morton,
representing the Minnesota Telephone Association;

Jeremy Nyquist,
consumer residing outside a metropolitan county;

Deborah Peterson,
a consumer residing in the Twin Cities area;

Linda Sadler,
representing the telephone company providing local exchange service to the largest number of people in the state;

Ruby Vine,
a consumer residing in the Twin Cities area;

Linda Wasilowski,
a consumer residing outside a metropolitan county; and

Randall Young,
representing the interLATA exchange companies.

1.200 Purpose of Report and Role of Public Utilities Commission

By statute, the TACIP Board must submit a report to the Commission by January 31 of each year. Each report must review the accessibility of the telephone system to persons with communication impairments, review the ability of persons without communication impairments to communicate with persons with communication impairments via the telephone system, describe services provided, account for money received and disbursed annually for each aspect of the program to date and include predicted future operations.

The Board must annually submit its budget for the following year to the Commission. The Commission reviews the Board's budget for reasonableness and may modify the budget to the extent it is unreasonable. The Commission annually determines the funding mechanism to be used within 60 days of receipt of the recommendation of the TACIP Board's Administrator. The Commission then orders the imposition of surcharges effective on the earliest practicable date.

During 1994, TACIP presented the following reports to the Commission:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| January 17 | Correction to the Report from the TACIP Board to the Commission, Docket No. P-3008/CI-92-1261. |
| January 27 | Supplement to the TACIP Board fourth quarter report providing the Commission with the information requested in its order of February 26, 1993, Docket No. P-3008/CI-92-1261. |
| February 24 | Modification of TACIP Tariff for Intrastate Long Distance Service, Docket No. P-3008/NA-89-140. |
| April 1 | First Quarter Report to the Commission, Docket No. P-3008/CI-92-1261 |
| July 1 | Second Quarter Report to the Commission, Docket No. P-3008/CI-1261 |
| July 22 | Commission Concerns Regarding the FY 1995 TACIP Board Budget, Docket No. P-3008/CI-94-403. |

August 1	Response to Commission Request for Information, Docket No. P-3008/CI-94-403
October 7	Third Quarter Report to the Commission, Docket No. P-3008/CI-94-403
January 9, 1995	Fourth Quarter Report to the Commission, Docket No. P-3008/CI-94-403

2.000 TACIP OPERATIONS

The full TACIP Board meets quarterly, or more often if necessary, to review program operations and respond to the need for executive oversight. The Board also develops program policies and administrative rules for the TACIP programs. During calendar year 1994, the Board met five times.

2.100 TACIP Board and Committees

The Board's officers consist of a Chair and a Vice Chair. During 1994, the TACIP Board Chair was James Beutelspacher and Sandra Morgan was the Vice Chair. Between Board meetings, TACIP committees meet to consider and recommend actions on various issues and to make reports to the Board for action. These committees met a total of 23 times during calendar year 1994.

2.110 Executive Committee

The Executive Committee provides oversight of the day-to-day operations for the TACIP Board. The Committee is composed of the TACIP Chair and Vice Chair and three other members elected by the Board. The Committee members at the end of 1994 were James Beutelspacher, Sandra Morgan, Douglas Morton, Linda Sadler and Linda Wasilowski.

2.120 Equipment Distribution Program Committee

The Equipment Distribution Program Committee studies specific issues related to the distribution program as administered by the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division of the Department of Human Services. This committee is chaired by Anyes deHorst Eames; other members are David Johnson, Sandra Morgan, Deborah Peterson and Linda Wasilowski. As EDP Coordinator, Lauren Hruska provides technical assistance and is a non-voting member of the committee.

2.130 Legislative Committee

The Legislative Committee developed recommendations to the Board for the new legislation to be presented to the Governor's Office prior to the 1995 legislative session. Current committee members are Jeremy Nyquist, Chair, James Beutelspacher, Sandra Morgan, Doug Morton, Deborah Peterson, Linda Sadler and Linda Wasilowski.

2.140 Minnesota Relay Service Committee

The Minnesota Relay Service Committee has eight voting members: James Beutelspacher, Anyes deHorst Eames, Sandra Morgan, Jeremy Nyquist, Linda Sadler, Ruby Vine, Linda Wasilowski, Chair, and Randall Young. Wendy Jacobson, MRS Manager, is also on the Committee as a non-voting member. The Committee spent much of its time in 1994 developing and recommending revised procedures for relay operations, analyzing the efficiency of the MRS operation and reviewing plans for implementation of a long distance billing system and Automatic Number Identification (ANI). The committee also spent considerable time reviewing various methods of making the MRS accessible to pay telephones and the potential impact this FCC mandate would have on the entire relay operation.

2.200 Major Activities of the TACIP Board in 1994

The year 1994 was very productive for the Board. The following is a listing of some of the major activities of the past 12 months.

2.210 Summary of Board Activities

The following is a brief description of the major activities of the TACIP Board during 1994.

- ☐ Completed administrative rule process to incorporate changes in EDP eligibility criteria resulting from 1993 legislative changes.
- ☐ Conducted consumer satisfaction survey for the EDP program.
- ☐ Drafted an RFP for a backup relay service and sent it to TRS providers for comment.
- ☐ Negotiated contracts for the operation of the Minnesota Relay Service and the Equipment Distribution Program for FY 1994.

- ☐ Issued RFP for billing services. Implemented long distance billing and collection system for the MRS.
- ☐ Established new rates for both interstate and intrastate long distance service which were accepted by the FCC and the Commission.
- ☐ Filed quarterly reports with the Public Utilities Commission on implementation of a billing and collection system for intrastate and incoming interstate toll calls involving the MRS and the efficiency of the relay operation.
- ☐ Notified more than 4,000 MRS customers of the implementation of the long distance billing system.
- ☐ Expanded the MRS facility to meet growing space demands and upgraded the system technology to meet FCC standards for Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) and improve the efficiency of processing relay calls. Upgraded the workstations for blind Communications Assistants (CAs) to fully comply with FCC standards.
- ☐ Actively involved with the Bellcore Industry Forum in developing industry response to FCC mandate for coin-sent-paid access to TRS.

More detailed information on the implementation of the MRS long distance billing system and the efficiency of the MRS operation is contained in the quarterly reports submitted to the Commission during 1994.

2.220 TACIP Legislative Initiatives

During 1994, the TACIP Legislative Committee recommended and the Board accepted legislative initiatives to revise the TACIP statute. These initiatives have been forwarded to the Governor's office for approval.

- ☐ **Elimination of Age Requirement for EDP Eligibility** - The current statute requires that a person must be at least 5 years of age to be eligible to obtain a telecommunication device. This requirement overlooks the needs of hard-of-hearing children who could benefit from an amplified phone and ringer, children with mobility impairments who could benefit from other adaptive devices for the phone, and deaf children who may not be able to use a TTY at a young age but could still benefit from a ring signaling device which would let them know when the telephone is ringing. The cost impact of this initiative would be negligible at approximately \$5,000 per year.

- ☐ **EDP Applicant Must be Able to Benefit from and Eventually Utilize Equipment** - This language would insure that equipment is not distributed to anyone who is not able to benefit from and eventually utilize it. In the past, applications have been received for individuals who could not use any of the equipment distributed by EDP. In some cases, family members or residential facilities were applying on behalf of a severely disabled person to obtain equipment for their own use or the use of the facility. Since many group homes and nursing homes are required by federal law to have TTYs if they serve persons with communication impairments, some have tried to obtain a free device from EDP even though their residents are so severely disabled they cannot use the equipment. This change would have no impact on cost.
- ☐ **Clarify Language Regarding Residents of Nursing Homes and Group Homes** - As mentioned above, many nursing and group homes that serve persons with communication impairments are required under federal law to have special adaptive equipment for the telephone. Currently, the administrative rules which EDP operates under specify that if a group or nursing home provides phone service to its residents as part of the overall service, EDP will deny the residents of that facility service because it is the responsibility of the organization operating the home to provide the equipment. However, if telephone service is not provided as part of the overall service and the resident has a private line to his/her room, they can qualify for EDP equipment. The proposed change would strengthen the position of TACIP and the Department of Human Services, the provider of the service, when this kind of situation arises. This change would have no impact on program costs.
- ☐ **Expand Surcharge to Include Cellular Phone Subscribers** - By requiring cellular subscribers to pay the TACIP surcharge, the base of telephone customers paying into the TACIP fund would increase by about 200,000. Approximately \$408,000 of additional revenue would be generated each year and act to offset the need for future increases in the TACIP surcharge. Relay calls can be placed from and to cellular phones. The 9-1-1 statute was amended in the 1994 legislative session to include cellular users and met with little opposition from cellular users or providers.
- ☐ **Elimination of Language Requiring TACIP to Contract with a Consumer Organization for Operation of the MRS** - This change in the TACIP statute would give the Board the flexibility it needs to ensure that the relay users and other telephone subscribers of Minnesota are being provided a high quality, cost effective service. Currently, the TACIP statute requires the TACIP Board to contract with a "local consumer organization" for the operation of the Minnesota Relay

Service. This effectively limits the Board to only one provider, D.E.A.F. Inc. TACIP is the only state in the nation with this restrictive language.

A formal request for the Commission's support has been forwarded to the Executive Secretary. The Board has also requested the support of the Commissioner of the Department of Public Service and various other organizations.

2.300 Minnesota Relay Service

The Minnesota Relay Service (MRS) allows a person using a telecommunications device for the deaf (TTY/TDD) to communicate with any other telephone user. The service also works in reverse, allowing a person without a TTY/TDD to call a TTY/TDD user. Specially trained communication assistants (CAs) are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to relay calls. There is no extra charge to the user of the relay service.

The TACIP-enabling legislation requires that the Board contract with a local consumer organization that serves communication-impaired persons for operation of the telecommunication relay system. Legislation passed during the 1993 session stated that the Board may contract with other than a local consumer organization if the Board finds, by at least a two-thirds majority vote, that no local consumer organization is available to enter into or perform a reasonable contract to operate a telecommunications relay system.

Since its inception, the MRS has been operated under contract with the Deafness Education and Advocacy Foundation Inc. (D.E.A.F.). The MRS is a PBX telephone system that distributes calls to operators who manage incoming and outgoing calls through the service center. Installation of the appropriate telephone system, telephone lines, modems and computers was completed on February 15, 1989. Full service commenced March 1 of that year. The relay system continues to be modified as needed. TACIP owns and maintains the relay equipment and updates it as necessary.

The organization chart for the Minnesota Relay Service is included in this report as Appendix C.

2.310 MRS Contract

As mentioned above, D.E.A.F. has served as the MRS contractor since winning the first bidding process in 1988. The contract with D.E.A.F. was renewed after a Request For Proposal (RFP) was issued in July 1993. D.E.A.F. was the only organization to respond to the RFP. The current contract

continues through June 30, 1996 and can be extended up to a maximum of five years.

The contractor's main responsibility is to operate the State's MRS facility on a 24 hour a day, seven days a week basis. The contractor provides staff, an office location, local telephone lines, customer relations, and other duties it deems necessary in order to carry out the contract within budgetary constraints.

2.320 Statistical Information

The contractor provides statistical information to the Board on a monthly basis. The report gives data on the number of calls received in the reporting period and the efficiency of the relay in processing those calls. Daily call statistics (including the number of calls in, answered, outgoing and abandoned), the percentage of calls answered in under ten and under thirty seconds, the average time per call, the percentage of calls from the Metro and the Greater Minnesota areas, the average call statistics per operator per hour, public relations activities, human resource activities, and consumer comments are reported.

There was a monthly average of 95,346 *outgoing* calls placed through the MRS during 1993. For 1994, the average monthly outgoing call volume was 81,831 calls. This is a 14.2% decrease over calendar year 1993. The reason for the decrease in outgoing calls during 1994 appears to be the implementation early in the year of a system for billing for intrastate long distance calls.

By comparison, the 1994 monthly average of 69,408 *incoming* calls, showed an increase of 1.8% over 1993.

The FCC has established as a minimum standard that 85% of all *incoming* calls to the relay center must be answered within 10 seconds. During 1994, the MRS yearly average of all calls answered within that 10 second period was 90.62%.

2.321 Program Promotion

During 1994, the Minnesota Relay Service carried out extensive public relations activities in the community. Highlights of the accomplishments of the Customer Relations Specialists include:

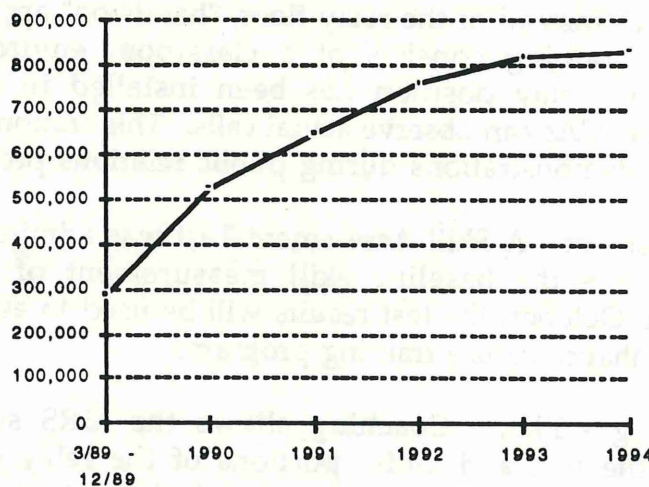
- ☐ Presentations given to 31 different groups involving approximately 780 participants.

- ☐ Fifty tours of the relay service conducted involving approximately 300 persons.
- ☐ Sixteen exhibits were held and materials were made available to approximately 19,000 individuals.
- ☐ Information packets were sent out to approximately 230 persons.
- ☐ Approximately 5000 letters, brochures, etc. were sent to Minnesota state agencies, legislators, summer camps, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding care homes and supervised living facilities.

2.322 Evolution of Service

The number of communication assistants (CAs) has grown from ninety-one full time equivalent employees (FTEs) in 1993 to ninety-nine in 1994. As seen in Figure 1, demand for relay service in Minnesota has leveled off from dramatic increases during the early years of the service. From 1993 to 1994, the demand for service increased 1.8%.

Figure 1: Incoming Calls to the MRS, 3/89 - 12/94



The grand total of *incoming* calls since inception of MRS service in March of 1989 is 3,839,177. The grand total of *outgoing* calls is 5,200,631.

The Minnesota Relay Service continues to evolve as new technologies become available. Several significant changes in operations were made in 1994.

- ☐ New Position Established - The position of MRS Technical Manager was established by TACIP to manage the MRS facility for the State. John Davoux was hired to fill this position in April of 1994.
- ☐ Changes in MRS Management - In June, Wendy Jacobson joined the MRS as Relay Manager, coming from Northwest Airlines where she worked as an Assistant Manager at the WorldPerks Service Center. In August, Judith Morgan became the Human Resource Manager for D.E.A.F. and spends part of her time involved with MRS.
- ☐ MRS Expansion - As the MRS phone volume increased, it became apparent that the space housing D.E.A.F. was not adequate. To allow for MRS expansion, D.E.A.F. administrative offices and its other programs were relocated to a separate building in June. Once the move was completed, construction began at the MRS site and eleven new cubes were installed.
- ☐ Revision of CA Training Process - In an attempt to obtain a more comprehensive initial training program for CAs, reduce follow-up training hours, and increase customer service, D.E.A.F. extended the "new hire" training program to thirty-two hours in beginning September. With the additional hours, the style of training was changed as well. Instead of the relay floor, "hands-on" approach of the past, the new training consists of a classroom environment. A permanent "live" relay position has been installed in the training room so that new CAs can observe actual calls. This station is also used for "mock call" demonstrations during public relations presentations.
- ☐ CA Skill Assessment - A Skill Assessment Test was administered to all CAs to determine the baseline skill measurement of CAs. First administered in October, the test results will be used to assess training needs and to enhance future training programs.
- ☐ Phone Coaching - Phone Coaching allows the MRS supervisor to monitor both the text and audio portions of the relay conversation while it is taking place. This is an extremely important management tool since the text of relay conversations cannot be retained after the relay call has been terminated per FCC regulations. Plans for the implementation of Phone Coaching were developed during 1994. This project will allow CAs to receive immediate feedback on how a call was handled. Materials have been developed and training of supervisors is underway.
- ☐ Scheduling Software - MRS administrative staff have been working to improve the scheduling of CAs to meet predictable phone patterns at the relay. A cost effective system that will meet the needs of the MRS

has been identified and the purchase and implementation of this system will take place during February and March of 1995.

- ❑ Long Distance Billing System Implemented - In March, the MRS long distance billing system was activated. Prior to the implementation of the MRS long distance service, consumers made long distance calls via third party billing, credit card or collect using the carrier of their choice. Detailed quarterly reports on the MRS long distance billing service have been submitted to the Commission during 1994.
- ❑ Local Area Network Installed - TACIP installed a Local Area Network (LAN) at the MRS. TACIP staff worked with D.E.A.F. personnel to ensure a smooth and effective implementation of the LAN in May 1994. With the addition of a LAN, software upgrades can be performed on one system instead of each individual workstation causing less interruption on the relay floor. The LAN will also perform many functions now being done by the telephone switch thereby allowing the system to be more efficient and reducing the number of lines needed at each workstation. The reduction of telephone lines at each workstation will reduce the cost of the maintenance agreement with the equipment vendor (cost is based on the number of active ports in the switch) and enable TACIP to reduce the number of steps and the time involved in setting up a relay call, making the process more efficient. It is also possible to obtain additional reporting information, not generated by the Isoetec Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) system, through the LAN. The LAN also enhances communication among staff as authorized administrative personnel are able to transmit to the CAs information which can be reviewed before a shift begins. With the addition of the administrative E-Mail system, members of the staff receive vital information in a timely manner with the reduction of printing expenses.
- ❑ Call Transfer Capability Developed - This feature allows a consumer to be transferred from a CA to a supervisor or to the Customer Relations Department to process a compliment, complaint, or to ask questions. This new feature allows the CA to pass on customers who do not want to place relay calls to the more appropriate staff person thus freeing up the CA workstation to accept more calls.
- ❑ Blind Workstations Upgraded - The workstations for CAs with severe visual impairments were upgraded at the MRS during 1994. While the MRS made its first successful Voice Carry Over (VCO) call on July 28, 1993, the workstations used by the blind employees have only recently had this capability. Over a year of development involving staff from TACIP, D.E.A.F., Shared Resources Management (SRM) and State Services for the Blind went into this project and the new Braille

workstation upgrade was completed at the end of December. This system, unique to the TRS industry, allows the workstations for the blind CAs to generate a computer voice for the menus and other instructions that appear on the screen while the actual typed relay conversations appear on a Braille keyboard device. The MRS is the only Relay Service in the U.S. that has been able to successfully implement this type of technology.

2.330 Authority to Resell Long Distance Service

The MRS serves all of Minnesota through its St. Paul office. People seeking relay service may call in from anywhere within the state and place a call to any telephone user. Non-relay users would normally incur long distance charges for equivalent intrastate calls. Because the MRS is not a telephone company serving a specific location, it has limited ability to determine appropriate long distance charges for MRS users. In order to cover the TACIP Board's costs for long distance from an interexchange carrier, the only viable option was for the TACIP Board to charge the user for the long distance call placed through the MRS based on usage rather than distance.

On March 8, 1989, TACIP filed a request with the Commission for a certificate of authority to resell long distance service within the state of Minnesota. The Commission approved the request. In 1994, this request was amended to reflect revised rates.

2.340 Long Distance Billing and Collection System

TACIP has made many attempts to establish a billing system since it began providing TRS in Minnesota in March 1989. It was always the Board's intention to ensure that the users of the MRS are provided a relay service that is functionally equivalent to the service received by persons who do not need the relay service to communicate over the telephone. The Board includes in its definition of functional equivalency not only as speedy and transparent service as possible, but also paying for long distance service when there would have normally been a charge if the call had been placed direct dial.

Unfortunately, the Board met with many technical and financial obstacles that delayed the implementation of a billing system. The Board investigated the use of a service bureau, a Local Exchange Carrier (LEC), an Interexchange Carrier (IXC), the State's North Star Network, and the Board's own resources by purchasing technology to do the billing itself. All of these options proved to be cost prohibitive. The Commission agreed with the Board's conclusion and agreed to the delay of the implementation of a billing system until the costs to the Board of absorbing the long distance charges reached \$5,000 a

month. This was the amount the Board had estimated in its December 31, 1991 report to the Commission that would have to be collected to "break even". On August 14, 1992, the Board informed the Commission that the costs of absorbing intrastate long distance charges had exceeded \$5,000 and even though the current cost projections for the billing system exceeded that amount, the Board would proceed with the implementation. The Commission's response to this report was to issue an order the Board to implement a billing system by January 31, 1994. The TACIP Board signed a contract with the Minnesota Equal Access Network (MEANS) for the provision of billing services.

The implementation of a long distance billing system has proved to be a difficult challenge for other state relay services as well. In states where relay service has been or is currently being provided by anyone other than an IXC or LEC, no billing has been done for intrastate long distance calls placed through their relay. All current and previous independent relays (relay not provided by an IXC or LEC) in Arizona, Connecticut, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, and the State of Washington have explored billing and determined it would be cost prohibitive. This fact demonstrates that billing for intrastate long distance relay calls is a very difficult undertaking unless the TRS provider is already setup to do so, such as a telephone company. With the implementation of long distance billing for the MRS in March of 1994, Minnesota became the only independent relay service to ever bill for intrastate long distance calls. (Utah and Minnesota are now the only remaining independent relays in the nation).

Detailed updates on MRS long distance billing have been submitted to the Commission in regular quarterly reports during 1994.

2.350 Automatic Number Identification (ANI)

The TACIP Board formally approved the acquisition of ANI for the MRS at its October 24 meeting. Implementation of ANI is now proceeding.

There are two primary reasons why the MRS requires Automatic Number Identification (ANI) or a near identical facsimile of that service. The first is the billing requirement. Today, the MRS is operating on the honor system for its billing. The customer is required to provide the number he/she is calling from and then MRS bills the call to that number. However, there is a significant number of these numbers that end up as toll fraud or dialing error by the customer or CA. If TACIP continues with unsubstantiated toll billing, it is likely there will be trouble billing this toll through the local LECs. The second requirement for ANI is the FCC mandate that relay services provide coin-sent-paid billing to all pay phones by July 26, 1995. For TACIP to provide

that service, it is mandatory that we be able to identify when the consumer is using a pay phone. This would normally be implemented by using ANI with the addition of ANI II which provides two screening digits that identify the type of origin line. Conceivably, the screening digits could be replaced if an accurate up-to-date database with all coin phones identified can be obtained.

TACIP has looked at four potential ways to implement ANI or equivalent service:

The first option is to bring all calls into the relay via 800 service. From an equipment termination perspective this is the easiest to accomplish and could be implemented quickly. However, nearly 80% of MRS calls come to the relay toll free from the Twin Cities metro local calling area. The TACIP Board would have to pay 13 cents per minute to receive calls from the metro free calling area plus one-half cent per message for the ANI information. It is estimated this alternative would cost \$634,000 per year in additional incoming WATS charges.

The second option is to provide ANI from the LEC directly. The initial alternative was to provide feature group D trunking from each Central Office in the metro area. The estimated cost for this option is over \$100,000 monthly with over a \$400,000 initial installation charge. From a technical viewpoint, this would be a difficult service to install at the relay. It would require over 200 trunks to terminate in the MRS system. This method of obtaining ANI would probably make our current ACD switch obsolete. The cost of replacing the current switch with one able to handle the additional trunks would be approximately \$250,000 plus design and implementation costs.

The third option TACIP has explored is Caller ID. Two potential ways of providing this service have been identified by US West. The first is the standard Caller ID applied to each inward trunk. The problems with this service is that it can be blocked so the callers telephone number for billing is not provided. In addition, pay phones are identified as an "out-of band" call. Thus this service does not begin to meet the needs of the MRS. The second type of Caller ID proposed by US West is provided over ISDN on a Primary Rate Interface (PRI). They are currently investigating if this service could be provided without blocking. If US West is unable to identify pay phones with a unique message, they would need to provide TACIP with up-to-date databases containing all pay phone numbers. While this is a far less than ideal service, it has the advantage of cost (estimated to be less than \$10,000 per month - though official rates have not been quoted).

The fourth option and the one chosen by TACIP is to use a "950" number to access the MRS for calls originating in the St. Paul/Minneapolis metro area while continuing to use the existing 800 number for calls originating in Greater Minnesota.

The 950 numbers were initially established to allow equal access to interexchange companies immediately after divestiture. These numbers are now being used for a variety of purposes by companies whose primary business is not long distance service or even telecommunications, i.e. Pizza Hut and JC Penny. However, no TRS provider has ever used a 950 number for access, even though it is significantly less expensive than WATS service. TACIP requested the assistance of the Department of Public Service (DPS) to verify that no telecommunication rules or regulations would be violated by the use of a 950 number for MRS access. The DPS responded that there appear to be no problems with the MRS using "950" number for access but recommended that MRS customers be instructed to only use the 950 number only when making a long distance call so TACIP can avoid the charges that will be levied on 950 usage by metro area LECs. Unfortunately, this approach would not comply with the "functionally equivalent service" requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which prohibits the imposition of unnecessary steps or procedures on relay users to place calls through the relay service, i.e. persons with normal hearing and speech do not have to call a special number each time they wish to make a long distance call from their home.

The Board is currently awaiting the assignment of the 950 number from Bellcore. After the number has been received, the hardware installed and the system thoroughly tested, MRS customers will be notified of the new number for the metro area.

2.400 Equipment Distribution Program

The Equipment Distribution Program is responsible for distributing telecommunication devices to eligible Minnesota citizens, informing communication-impaired persons of services available through the program, providing training in the use of the telecommunications devices and maintaining the devices. The statute defines "communication-impaired" to mean certified as deaf, severely hearing-impaired, hard-of-hearing, speech-impaired, deaf and blind, or mobility-impaired if the mobility impairment significantly impedes the ability to use standard customer premises equipment.

The TACIP distribution program is administered through an interagency agreement by the Department of Human Services, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division (DHHSD). Services are provided through six of DHHSD's regional offices located around the state. The map in Appendix D shows the makeup of the regions and the number of households served to date by EDP. The organizational chart for EDP is included in this report as Appendix E.

2.410 Authority to Provide Equipment

Subdivision 5 (3) of Statute 237.51 provides the Board with the authority to establish specifications for special communication devices to be purchased under Section 237.53, subdivision 3. This authorizes the Board to evaluate and purchase communication devices that may be beneficial to eligible persons under its distribution program.

2.420 Policy and Adoption of Administrative Rules

From the beginning of the TACIP programs, it was clear that there was a dramatic need to provide appropriate telephone access equipment to communication-impaired persons in Minnesota. The EDP Committee worked with a number of individuals and organizations to identify communication-impaired populations, the kind of telecommunications equipment needed, and the eligibility criteria for the program. Terms such as "severely hearing-impaired", "residency", and "appeal process" were defined and a priority system for distribution was established. An update to these rules was done in 1994 so that they would reflect the 1993 changes in the TACIP statute.

2.430 EDP Contract

By statute, the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) is required to administer the Equipment Distribution Program for the TACIP Board. The Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services Division (DHHSD) of the Department of Human Services provides TACIP with access to an established network of regional service centers around the state and professional staff experienced in working with communication-impaired persons. This approach has proven very effective.

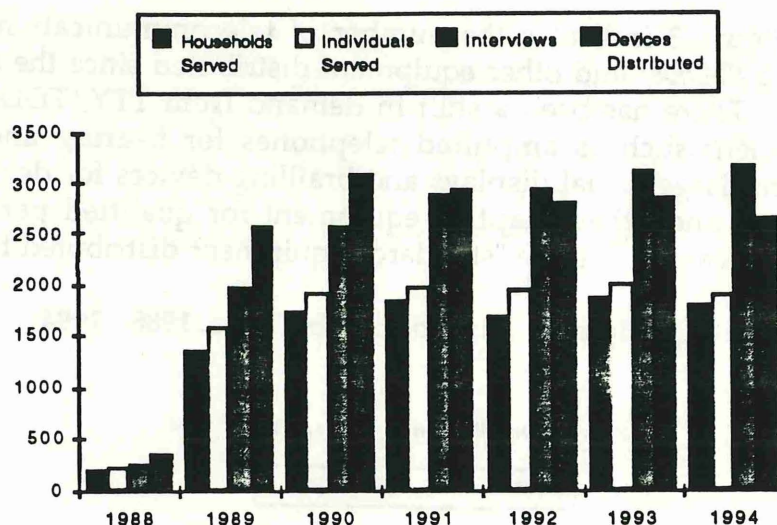
The TACIP Board, through its EDP Committee, developed equipment specifications and administrative rules in consultation with DHS and the State Attorney General's office. An interagency agreement was then established. It is renewed each fiscal year; the current contract runs through June 30, 1995. The result of this agreement continues to be the delivery of efficient and high quality TACIP services.

In 1994, the state contracts for TTY/TDDs and ring signalers needed to be re-negotiated. The EDP Committee met to determine what specifications would be used in the contract bids. The result of this re-negotiation was a lower contract price per unit for the TTY/TDDs.

2.440 Statistical Information

The TACIP Board receives a monthly report from DHHSD describing its EDP activities. The report fully documents outreach activity, the number of interviews conducted, the number of households receiving equipment, and kinds of equipment distributed. Distribution data from the beginning of the program in October 1988 through December 1994 is contained in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Equipment Distribution Program Activity, 1988 - 1994

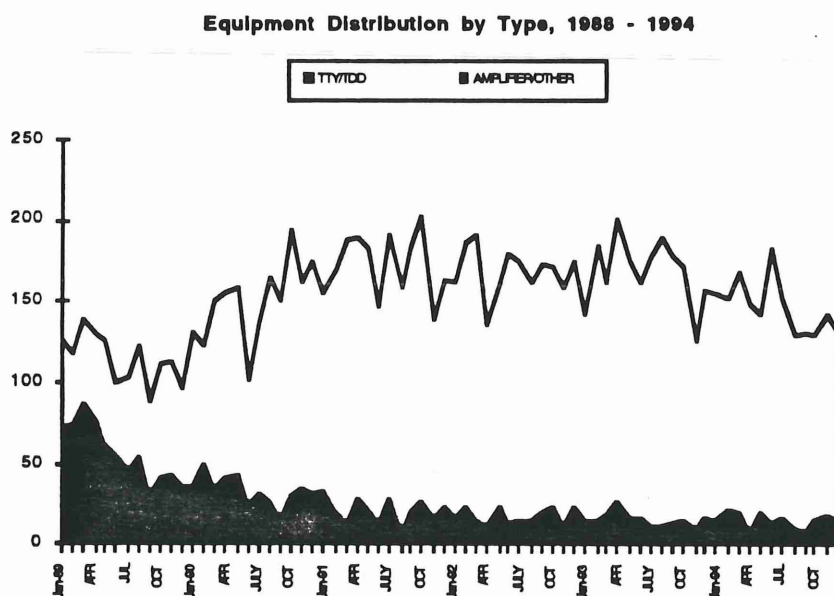


2.441 Program Promotion

The task of outreach and program promotion for EDP has been delegated to DHHSD through its contract with TACIP. Presentations by EDP staff explain the program, outline the eligibility requirements, demonstrate types of equipment currently available, explain the availability of the statewide telecommunications relay service, and provide other pertinent information. Since the program began in 1988, nearly 1,600 presentations have been given to over 37,000 participants across the state. During 1994, the EDP conducted its third Consumer Satisfaction Survey. The survey was sent to 220 randomly selected recipients of EDP services, thirty from each greater Minnesota office, sixty from the metropolitan area, and ten from the special needs caseload. The selected consumers received service between August 1993 and January 1994. The survey participants were able to respond without revealing their identity. Of the 176 surveys returned, over 95% were favorable. Of these participants, 99% indicated that they were generally happy with the service they received from EDP. The findings were consistent with surveys done in 1991, 1992 and 1993. The survey results appear as Appendix F.

The graph in Figure 3 indicates the number of telecommunications devices for the deaf (TTY/TDDs) and other equipment distributed since the beginning of the program. There has been a shift in demand from TTY/TDDs to other types of equipment such as amplified telephones for hearing and speech-impaired persons, large visual displays and braille devices for deaf/visually impaired persons, and other adaptive equipment for qualified persons with special needs who cannot use the "standard" equipment distributed by EDP.

Figure 3: Equipment Distribution by Type, 1988 - 1994



The largest EDP consumer group continues to be senior citizens (over the age of 65). This population experiences an extremely high incidence of hearing loss and is most in need of telephone service to access health, safety and social services to maintain self-support and self-sufficiency. Speech-impaired people comprise another group which continues to receive an increasing amount of service from EDP.

2.451 Services for Special Needs Recipients

The Equipment Distribution Program continues to serve people with multiple disabilities. In accordance with the TACIP statute passed during the spring session of the 1993 Legislature, EDP began serving people with mobility impairments on July 1, 1993. A mobility-impaired person is eligible for EDP services if his/her mobility impairment significantly impedes ability to access standard customer premise equipment. Devices distributed to this population include speaker phones that allow for "hands free" operation and special switches that can be attached to activate the phone if necessary. In 1994, there were 132 "hands-free" speaker phones distributed to individuals with mobility impairments. This demand closely matches the demand anticipated by TACIP. EDP is continuing outreach efforts that target the mobility impaired population. EDP also serves persons who, in addition to having a communication-impairment, also have other disabilities such as blindness and/or physical limitations. Serving these consumers is time intensive and sometimes requires that an evaluation be done by a rehabilitation engineer or a speech and language pathologist. EDP works closely with other state and private agencies to ensure that there is no duplication of service and to provide for efficient use of TACIP resources.

3.000 FUNDING MECHANISM

Funding for the TACIP programs comes from a seventeen-cent surcharge on all telephone access lines in Minnesota.

3.100 Revenues

Minnesota statute 237.52, subdivision 2 as amended in 1993 requires that the TACIP Board annually recommend to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) an "adequate and appropriate mechanism" to fund the program. The PUC reviews the Board's budget for reasonableness and may modify the budget to the extent it is unreasonable. The PUC then determines the funding mechanism to be used within 60 days of receipt of the recommendation of the TACIP Administrator and orders the imposition of surcharges effective on the earliest practicable date. A maximum monthly surcharge of 20 cents was established by the Legislature.

3.110 Reimbursement for Interstate TRS

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) directed the FCC to establish requirements, guidelines, procedures, and minimum standards for Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). The FCC conducted a proceeding (CC Docket 90-571) to examine and resolve a variety of TRS issues, one of which was the recovery of the costs of providing interstate TRS by service

providers. The FCC Order released on July 20, 1993 established rules requiring a nationwide fund to recover the costs of providing interstate TRS, and named the National Exchange Carrier Association (NECA) as the Fund's first administrator. The Fund became operational effective July 26, 1993. The TACIP Board is one of thirteen TRS providers that now receives reimbursement from the TRS Fund.

3.200 Fiscal Year 1994 Actual and Fiscal Year 1995 Estimated Revenues and Expenditures

FY 1994 (July 1, 1993 - June 30, 1994)

Revenues:

Income from Surcharge =	\$ 4,637,288
Income from NECA =	134,088
Income from Long Distance Billing =	0
Balance Forward =	560,384
Income from Investments =	16,624
 Total Revenues	 \$ 5,348,384

Expenses:

TACIP Administration	\$ 220,332
Equipment Distribution Program	933,547
Minnesota Relay Service	3,555,871
 Total Expenses	 \$ 4,709,750
 Balance Forward	 \$ 638,634

FY 1995 (July 1, 1994 - June 30, 1995)

Revenues (Projected):

Income from Surcharge =	\$ 4,745,840
Income from NECA =	255,031
Income from Long Distance Billing =	76,045
Balance Forward =	638,634
Income from Investments =	18,000
 Total Revenues	 \$ 5,733,550

Expenses (Projected):

TACIP Administration	\$ 261,025
Equipment Distribution Program	934,618
Minnesota Relay Service	4,426,898
Total Expenses	\$ 5,622,541
Balance Forward	\$ 111,009

4.000 ACCOMMODATIONS AVAILABLE FOR TACIP MEETINGS

The TACIP Board provides a variety of services to ensure the complete accessibility of its Board and Committee meetings.

4.100 Sign Language Interpreters

Certified sign language interpreters are provided at all TACIP meetings. Tactile interpreters for persons with deaf/blindness are also available upon request.

4.200 Live Captioning

A court reporter with custom designed equipment is provided at most meetings and upon request for people with a hearing impairment who do not use sign language interpreters. The court reporter and the equipment enable the meeting discussion to be transcribed immediately and projected on a screen or monitor to be read by everyone in the room.

4.300 Assistive Listening Devices

Specialized amplification devices such as FM, Infrared and Loop systems are available upon request for persons who are hard of hearing and require additional amplification to hear the proceedings.

4.400 Wheelchair Accessibility

All TACIP Board and Committee meetings are held in locations where the building and the parking lot are fully wheelchair accessible.

5.000 CONCLUSION

TACIP's programs, the Equipment Distribution Program and the Minnesota Relay Service, have been successful by any measure. Thousands of persons have been helped to live better, easier, more complete lives by enhancing their ability to communicate over the telephone. Minnesotans with hearing, speech and mobility impairments have been able to lead more independent lives and maintain contact with friends, family, health care and emergency services. Communication-impaired people, who have historically been discriminated against in employment, are now able to compete on a more equal footing for jobs. The services provided by TACIP have enabled persons with communication impairments to become part of the societal network created by the telephone.

However, TACIP is not content to rest on past accomplishments and is constantly exploring ways to improve its services while keeping expenditures under control. This effort is clearly demonstrated by the projects completed over the last 12 months and by the legislative initiatives the Board has proposed. TACIP is looking forward to another successful year in 1995.

Appendix A

TACIP Statute: Minnesota Statute 237.50 - 237.56 (1993)

CHAPTER: 237
TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANIES; TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIERS
COMMUNICATION-IMPAIRED PERSONS

237.50 DEFINITIONS.

Subdivision 1. Scope. The terms used in sections 237.50 to 237.56 have the meanings given them in this section.

237.50 DEFINITIONS.

Subd. 2. Board. "Board" means the telecommunication access for communication-impaired persons board established in section 237.51.

237.50 DEFINITIONS.

Subd. 3. Communication impaired. "Communication impaired" means certified as deaf, severely hearing impaired, hard-of-hearing, speech impaired, deaf and blind, or mobility impaired if the mobility impairment significantly impedes the ability to use standard customer premises equipment.

237.50 DEFINITIONS.

Subd. 4. Communication device. "Communication device" means a device that when connected to a telephone enables a communication-impaired person to communicate with another person utilizing the telephone system. A "communication device" includes a ring signaler, an amplification device, a telephone device for the deaf, a braille device for use with a telephone, and any other device the board deems necessary.

237.50 DEFINITIONS.

Subd. 4a. Deaf. "Deaf" means a hearing impairment of such severity that the individual must depend primarily upon visual communication such as writing, lip reading, manual communication, and gestures.

237.50 DEFINITIONS.

Subd. 5. Exchange. "Exchange" means a unit area established and described by the tariff of a telephone company for the administration of telephone service in a specified geographical area, usually embracing a city, town, or village and its environs, and served by one or more central offices, together with associated facilities used in providing service within that area.

237.50 DEFINITIONS.

Subd. 6. Fund. "Fund" means the telecommunication access for communication-impaired persons fund established in section 237.52.

237.50 DEFINITIONS.

Subd. 6a. Hard-of-hearing. "Hard-of-hearing" means a hearing impairment resulting in a functional loss, but not to the extent that the individual must depend primarily upon visual communication.

237.50 DEFINITIONS.

Subd. 7. Interexchange service. "Interexchange service" means telephone service between points in two or more exchanges.

237.50 DEFINITIONS.

Subd. 8. Inter-LATA interexchange service. "Inter-LATA interexchange service" means interexchange service originating and terminating in different LATAs.

237.50 DEFINITIONS.

Subd. 9. Local access and transport area. "Local access and transport area (LATA)" means a geographical area designated by the Modification of Final Judgment in U.S. v. Western Electric Co., Inc., 552 F. Supp. 131 (D.D.C. 1982), including modifications in effect on the effective date of sections 237.51 to 237.54.

237.50 DEFINITIONS.

Subd. 10. Local exchange service. "Local exchange service" means telephone service between points within an exchange.

237.50 DEFINITIONS.

Subd. 11. Telecommunication relay service. "Telecommunication relay service" means a central statewide service through which a communication-impaired person, using a communication device, may send and receive messages to and from a non-communication-impaired person whose telephone is not equipped with a communication device and through which a non-communication-impaired person may, by using voice communication, send and receive messages to and from a communication-impaired person.

237.50 DEFINITIONS.

NOTE: This section, as added by Laws 1987, chapter 308, section 1, is repealed June 30, 1993. See Laws 1987, chapter 308, section 8.

237.50 DEFINITIONS.

History: 1987 c 308 s 1; 1988 c 621 s 2; 1993 c 272 s 2-6

CHAPTER: 237

TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANIES; TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIERS

COMMUNICATION-IMPAIRED PERSONS

237.51 BOARD.

Subdivision 1. Creation. The telecommunication access for communication-impaired persons board is established to establish and administer a program to distribute communication devices to eligible communication-impaired persons and to create and maintain a telecommunication relay service.

237.51 BOARD.

Subd. 2. Members. The board consists of 12 persons to include:

(1) the commissioner of the department of administration or the commissioner's designee;

(2) seven communication-impaired persons appointed by the governor at least three of whom reside outside a metropolitan county, as defined in section 473.121, subdivision 4, at the time of appointment, at least four of whom are deaf, one of whom is speech impaired, one of whom is mobility impaired, and one of whom is hard-of-hearing;

(3) one person appointed by the governor who is a professional in the area of communications disabilities;

(4) one person appointed by the governor to represent the telephone company providing local exchange service to the largest number of persons;

(5) one member of the Minnesota Telephone Association appointed by the governor to represent other affected telephone companies; and

(6) one person appointed by the governor to represent companies providing inter-LATA interexchange telephone service if the company with whom the person is employed does not have a contract to operate a telecommunication relay service under section 237.54 and agrees not to enter such a contract for at least one year after the person leaves the board.

237.51 BOARD.

Subd. 3. Terms; compensation; removal; vacancy. The membership terms, compensation, and removal of members and the filling of membership vacancies are governed by section 15.0575.

237.51 BOARD.

Subd. 4. Meetings. The board shall meet at least annually.

237.51 BOARD.

Subd. 5. Duties. In addition to any duties specified elsewhere in sections 237.51 to 237.56, the board shall:

(1) define economic hardship, special needs, and household criteria so as to determine the priority of eligible applicants for initial distribution of devices and to determine circumstances necessitating provision of more than one communication device per household;

(2) establish a method to verify eligibility requirements;

- (3) establish specifications for communication devices to be purchased under section 237.53, subdivision 3;
- (4) enter contracts for the establishment and operation of the telecommunication relay service pursuant to section 237.54;
- (5) inform the public and specifically the community of communication-impaired persons of the program;
- (6) prepare the reports required by section 237.55;
- (7) administer the fund created in section 237.52;
- (8) reestablish and fill the position of program administrator whose position is in the unclassified service and establish and fill other positions in the classified service required to conduct the business of the board;
- (9) adopt rules, including emergency rules, under chapter 14 to implement the provisions of sections 237.50 to 237.56; and
- (10) notwithstanding any provision of chapter 16B, develop guidelines for the purchase of some communication devices from local retailers and dispensers if the board determines that otherwise they will be economically harmed by implementation of sections 237.50 to 237.56.

237.51 BOARD.

Subd. 6. Administrative support. The commissioner of the department of administration shall provide staff assistance not including the program administrator and other board staff who are to be chosen by the board, administrative services, and office space under a contract with the board. The board shall reimburse the commissioner for services, staff, and space provided. The board may request necessary information from the supervising officer of any state agency.

237.51 BOARD.

NOTE: This section, as added by Laws 1987, chapter 308, section 2, is repealed June 30, 1993. See Laws 1987, chapter 308, section 8.

237.51 BOARD.

History: 1987 c 186 s 15; 1987 c 308 s 2; 1988 c 621 s 3; 1990 c 571 s 41; 1990 c 598 s 3; 1992 c 430 s 1,2; 1992 c 518 s 1; 1993 c 272 s 7-11

CHAPTER: 237

TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANIES; TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIERS
COMMUNICATION-IMPAIRED PERSONS

237.52 FUND; ASSESSMENT.

Subdivision 1. Fund. A telecommunication access for communication-impaired persons fund is established as an account in the state treasury. Earnings, such as interest, dividends, and any other earnings arising from fund assets, must be credited to the fund.

237.52 FUND; ASSESSMENT.

Subd. 2. Assessment. The board shall annually

recommend to the commission an adequate and appropriate mechanism to implement sections 237.50 to 237.56. The public utilities commission shall review the board's budget for reasonableness and may modify the budget to the extent it is unreasonable. The commission shall annually determine the funding mechanism to be used within 60 days of receipt of the recommendation of the program administrator and shall order the imposition of surcharges effective on the earliest practicable date. The commission shall establish a monthly charge no greater than 20 cents for each customer access line, including trunk equivalents as designated by the commission pursuant to section 403.11, subdivision 1.

237.52 FUND; ASSESSMENT.

Subd. 3. Collection. Every telephone company providing local service in this state shall collect the charges established by the commission under subdivision 2 and transfer amounts collected to the commissioner of administration in the same manner as provided in section 403.11, subdivision 1, paragraph (c). The commissioner of administration must deposit the receipts in the fund established in subdivision 1.

237.52 FUND; ASSESSMENT.

Subd. 4. Appropriation. Money in the fund is appropriated to the board to implement sections 237.51 to 237.56.

237.52 FUND; ASSESSMENT.

Subd. 5. Expenditures. Money in the fund may only be used for:

(1) expenses of the board, including personnel cost, public relations, board members' expenses, preparation of reports, and other reasonable expenses not to exceed 20 percent of total program expenditures;

(2) reimbursing the commissioner of human services for purchases made or services provided pursuant to section 237.53;

(3) reimbursing telephone companies for purchases made or services provided under section 237.53, subdivision 5; and

(4) contracting for establishment and operation of the telecommunication relay service required by section 237.54.

All costs directly associated with the establishment of the board and program, the purchase and distribution of communication devices, and the establishment and operation of the telecommunication relay service are either reimbursable or directly payable from the fund after authorization by the board. Notwithstanding section 16A.41, the board may advance money to the contractor of the telecommunication relay service if the contractor establishes to the board's satisfaction that the advance payment is necessary for the operation of the service. The advance payment may be used only for working capital reserve for the operation of the service. The advance payment must be offset or repaid by the end of the contract fiscal year together with interest accrued from the date of payment.

237.52 FUND; ASSESSMENT.

NOTE: This section, as added by Laws 1987, chapter 308, section 3, is repealed June 30, 1993. See Laws 1987, chapter 308, section 8.

237.52 FUND; ASSESSMENT.

History: 1987 c 308 s 3; 1988 c 621 s 4; 1992 c 518 s 2; 1993 c 272 s 12,13

CHAPTER: 237
TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANIES; TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIERS
COMMUNICATION-IMPAIRED PERSONS

237.53 COMMUNICATION DEVICES.

Subdivision 1. Application. A person applying for a communication device under this section must apply to the program administrator on a form prescribed by the board.

237.53 COMMUNICATION DEVICES.

Subd. 2. Eligibility. To be eligible to obtain a communication device under this section, a person must be:

- (1) at least five years of age;
- (2) communication impaired;
- (3) a resident of the state;
- (4) a resident in a household that has a median income at or below the applicable median household income in the state, except a deaf and blind person applying for a telebraille unit may reside in a household that has a median income no more than 150 percent of the applicable median household income in the state; and
- (5) a resident in a household that has telephone service or that has made application for service and has been assigned a telephone number.

237.53 COMMUNICATION DEVICES.

Subd. 3. Distribution. The commissioner of human services shall purchase and distribute a sufficient number of communication devices so that each eligible household receives an appropriate device. The commissioner of human services shall distribute the devices to eligible households in each service area free of charge as directed by the board under section 237.51, subdivision 5.

237.53 COMMUNICATION DEVICES.

Subd. 4. Training; maintenance. The commissioner of human services shall maintain the communication devices until the warranty period expires, and provide training, without charge, to first-time users of the devices.

237.53 COMMUNICATION DEVICES.

Subd. 5. Wiring installation. If a communication-impaired person is not served by telephone service

and is subject to economic hardship as determined by the board, the telephone company providing local service shall at the direction of the administrator of the program install necessary outside wiring without charge to the household.

237.53 COMMUNICATION DEVICES.

Subd. 6. Ownership. All communication devices purchased pursuant to subdivision 3 will become the property of the state of Minnesota.

237.53 COMMUNICATION DEVICES.

Subd. 7. Standards. The communication devices distributed under this section must comply with the electronic industries association standards and approved by the Federal Communications Commission. The commissioner of human services must provide each eligible person a choice of several models of devices, the retail value of which may not exceed \$600 for a communication device for the deaf, and a retail value of \$7,000 for a telebraille device, or an amount authorized by the board for a telephone device for the deaf with auxiliary equipment.

237.53 COMMUNICATION DEVICES.

Subd. 8. [Repealed, 1988 c 621 s 19]

237.53 COMMUNICATION DEVICES.

NOTE: This section, as added by Laws 1987, chapter 308, section 4, is repealed June 30, 1993. See Laws 1987, chapter 308, section 8.

237.53 COMMUNICATION DEVICES.

History: 1987 c 308 s 4; 1988 c 621 s 5-8

CHAPTER: 237

TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANIES; TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIERS COMMUNICATION-IMPAIRED PERSONS

237.54 TELECOMMUNICATION RELAY SERVICE.

Subdivision 1. Establishment. The board shall contract with an inter-LATA interexchange telephone service provider to establish a third-party telecommunication relay service with an "800" number to enable telecommunication between communication-impaired persons and non-communication-impaired persons.

237.54 TELECOMMUNICATION RELAY SERVICE.

Subd. 2. Operation. The board shall contract with a local consumer organization that serves communication-impaired persons for operation of the telecommunication relay system. The board may contract with other than a local consumer organization if the board finds by at least a two-thirds majority vote that no local consumer organization is available

to enter into or perform a reasonable contract to operate a telecommunications relay system. The operator of the system shall keep all messages confidential, shall train personnel in the unique needs of communication-impaired people, and shall inform communication-impaired persons and the public of the availability and use of the system. The operator shall not relay a message unless it originates or terminates through a communication device for the deaf or a braille device for use with a telephone.

237.54 TELECOMMUNICATION RELAY SERVICE.

NOTE: This section, as added by Laws 1987, chapter 308, section 5, is repealed June 30, 1993. See Laws 1987, chapter 308, section 8.

237.54 TELECOMMUNICATION RELAY SERVICE.

History: 1987 c 308 s 5; 1993 c 272 s 14

CHAPTER: 237

TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANIES; TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIERS COMMUNICATION-IMPAIRED PERSONS

237.55 REPORTS; PLANS.

The board must prepare a report for presentation to the commission by January 31 of each year. Each report must review the accessibility of the telephone system to communication-impaired persons, review the ability of non-communication-impaired persons to communicate with communication-impaired persons via the telephone system, describe services provided, account for money received and disbursed annually for each aspect of the program to date, and include predicted future operation.

237.55 REPORTS; PLANS.

NOTE: This section, as added by Laws 1987, chapter 308, section 6, is repealed June 30, 1993. See Laws 1987, chapter 308, section 8.

237.55 REPORTS; PLANS.

History: 1987 c 308 s 6; 1993 c 272 s 15

CHAPTER: 237

TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANIES; TELECOMMUNICATIONS CARRIERS COMMUNICATION-IMPAIRED PERSONS

237.56 ADEQUATE SERVICE.

The services required to be provided under sections 237.50 to 237.55 may be enforced under section 237.081 upon a complaint of at least two communication-impaired persons within the service area of any one telephone company, provided that if only one person within the service area of a company is receiving service under sections 237.50 to 237.55, the commission may

proceed upon a complaint from that person.

237.56 ADEQUATE SERVICE.

NOTE: This section, as added by Laws 1987, chapter 308, section 7, is repealed June 30, 1993. See Laws 1987, chapter 308, section 8.

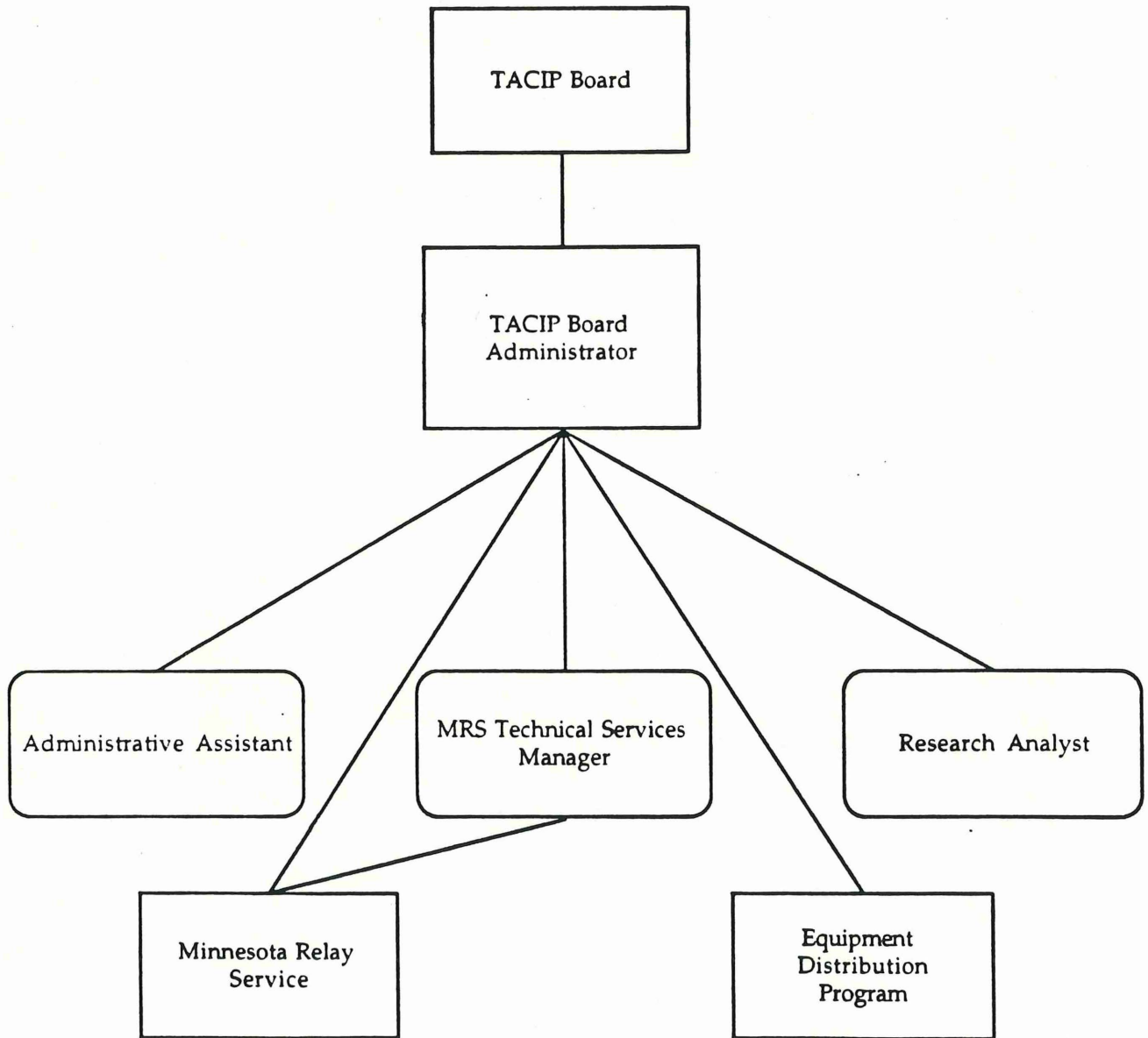
237.56 ADEQUATE SERVICE.

History: 1987 c 308 s 7

Appendix B

TACIP Organizational Chart

TACIP Board Administration
Organizational Chart

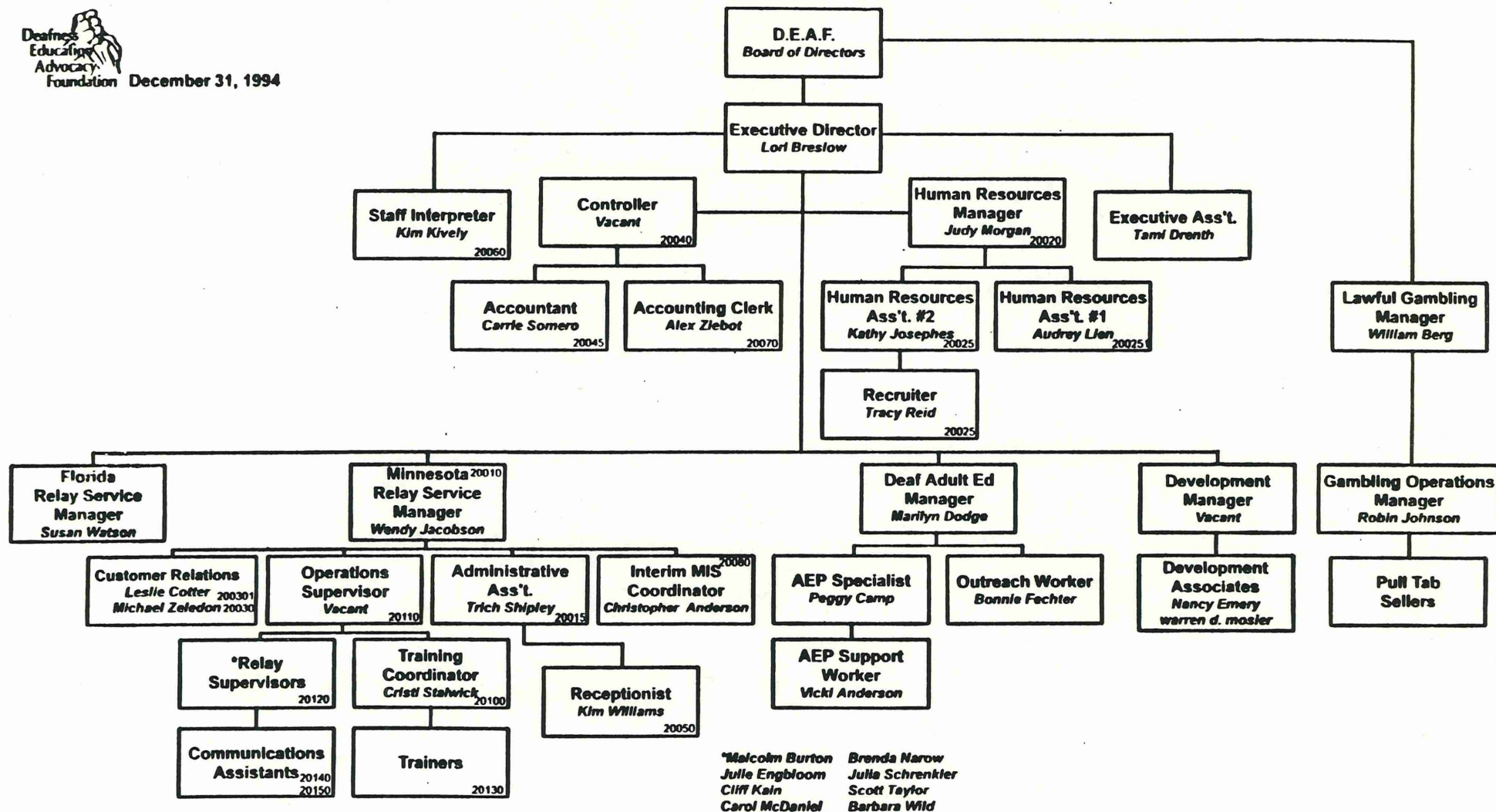


Appendix C

MRS Organizational Chart



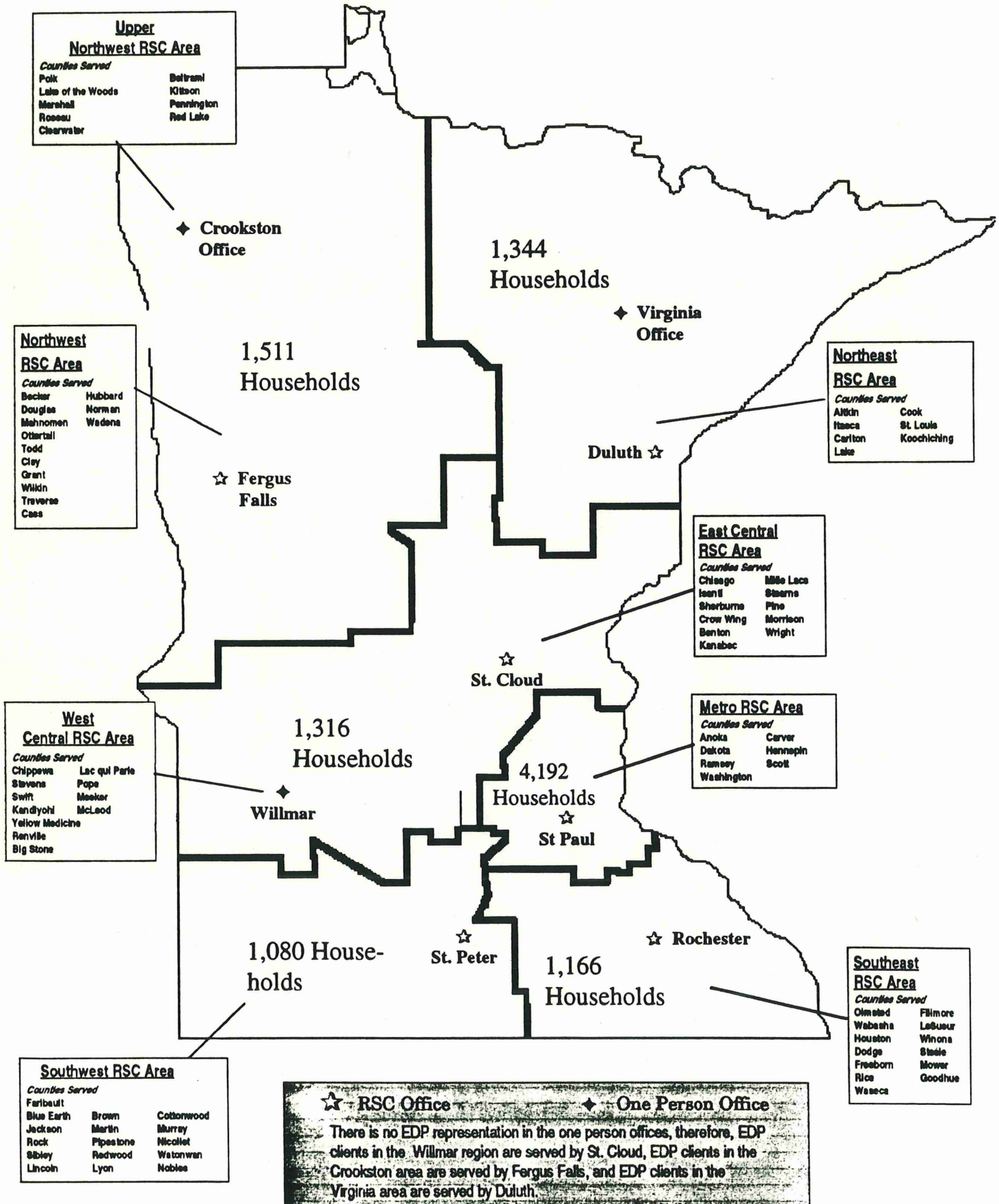
December 31, 1994



Appendix D

Households Served by EDP

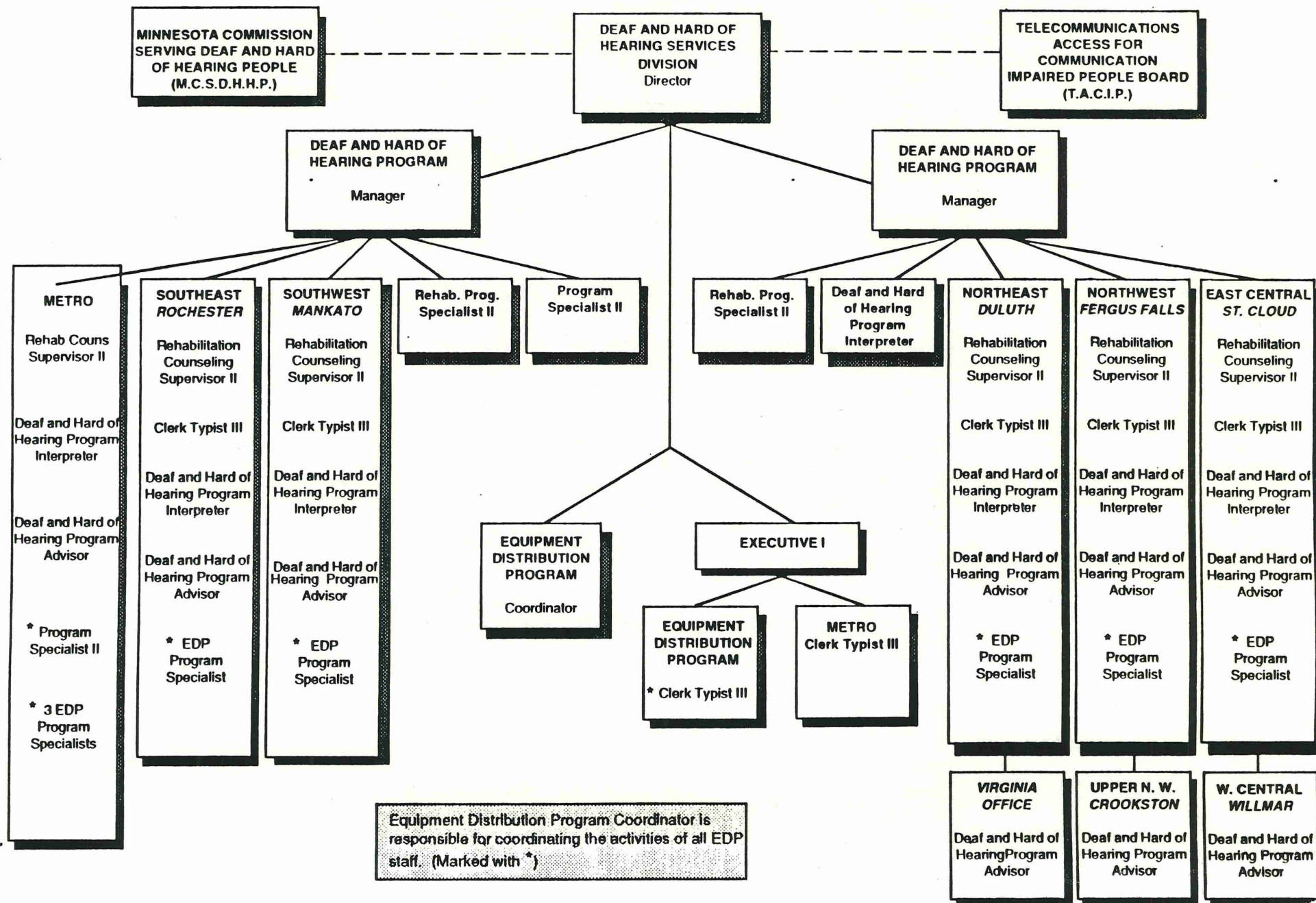
Number of Households Served by EDP October, 1988 thru December 1994



Appendix E

EDP Organizational Chart

**Minnesota Department of Human Services
Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division**



Appendix F

EDP Consumer Satisfaction Survey Summary

Equipment Distribution Program Consumer Satisfaction Survey

March, 1994

In an effort to continue monitoring the quality and effectiveness of the services provided by EDP, a consumer satisfaction survey was mailed to 220 recipients of EDP services. The survey attempted to measure the level of satisfaction of people who have received EDP services. To get the highest response rate possible, the survey was limited to seven yes or no questions. Included at the end of the survey was a comment section allowing responders to elaborate on their answers and/or give their name and address so EDP staff could follow up with additional information or services. Thirty consumers were selected from the case files of each program specialist for a total of 210. An additional ten were sent to those consumers served by the Special Needs case worker. The selected consumers received service between August 1, 1993 and January 31, 1994. To keep the survey as objective as possible, EDP staff were not told of the survey until after the questionnaires were mailed and the recipients were able to respond without revealing their identity.

STATEWIDE

(30 for each 7 program specialists and 10
for the consumers served by the special
needs coordinator)

Number of surveys mailed: 220

Number of surveys returned: 176

Question #1

Are you satisfied with the telephone equipment you received?

Yes 168 No 7

Question #2

Are you currently using the equipment you received?

Yes 172 No 3

Question #3

Do you feel you were served in a timely manner?

Yes 171 No 4

Question #4

Did you receive enough training on how to use and install the equipment?

Yes 167 No 8

Question #5

Were your questions answered clearly and completely?

Yes 172 No 3

Question #6

Generally speaking, are you happy with the service you received from the Equipment Distribution Program?

Yes 174 No 0

Question #7

Would you like us to contact you about the service and/or equipment you received?

Yes 32 No 141