

**Contributed article for
newsletters and staff training**



[INSERT COMPANY NAME HERE] Joins Growing List of Virginia Relay Partners

Have you ever wondered how Virginians who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech disabled call a friend, family member or local business? Years ago, the answer was that they didn't. All that has changed, however, thanks to the creation of a public service called Virginia Relay, which allows people who have hearing and/or speech loss to communicate with anyone who uses a telephone.

Here's how the service works: After dialing the number for Virginia Relay, the person initiating the call gives the Virginia Relay Communications Assistant (CA) the phone number of the person or business being called. As the call progresses, the CA voices the words of the text user (people who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech disabled commonly use a TTY, or text telephone, to make calls through Virginia Relay) and types the words of the standard phone user back to the text user, relaying the conversation back and forth.

Although Virginia Relay was implemented nearly 15 years ago, Relay users still experience difficulties when calling local businesses, often because the person answering the phone is not familiar with the ease of a Relay call. That's why **[INSERT COMPANY NAME HERE]** is participating in RELAY PARTNER. The first program of its kind in the nation, RELAY PARTNER is designed to educate businesses and their employees about how to use Virginia Relay to communicate with customers who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech disabled. As a RELAY PARTNER, **[INSERT NAME OF COMPANY HERE]** will be instituting a company wide, mandatory Virginia Relay training program. Once employees have experienced the steps for a Relay call as part of the training, they will feel confident about conducting business through Virginia Relay.

We also will be using a special Relay Partner logo that will be incorporated into our marketing and advertising materials. This will let Relay users know that our employees have received adequate education and training about making and receiving Virginia Relay calls, and that we welcome them as customers.

For more information about our participation in Virginia Relay Partner, contact **[INSERT CONTACT PERSON'S NAME HERE]** at **[INSERT E-MAIL/PHONE NUMBER HERE]**. To learn more about Virginia Relay and view a current list of Virginia Relay Partners, visit www.varelay.org.