



Relay Service in Japan

JCA-AHF webinar WSIS2022

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Yasunobu Ishii

Executive Director

The Nippon Foundation Telecommunication Relay Service

Who we are

- The Nippon Foundation Telecommunications Relay Service (NFTRS).
- Designated as the sole service provider of Relay Service in Japan by the Minister of Internal Affairs and Communication (MIC).

Our Services

- Official service started from July 1, 2021
- Video Relay Service and Text Relay Service
- 24hours 7days a week
- Maximum 10 VRS booths, 12 TRS booths,
2 Emergency Call booths
- Deaf and H of H users should pay telephone bill equivalent to the amount Hearing people pay, except for the emergency call.

Scale of our service

- Registered Users: 9,192 people (End of March 2022)
- Population of Deaf and H of H People: about 360,000
- Service provided 210,068 (July 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022)
 - Video Relay Service 96,573
 - (Outgoing call 90,601)
 - (Incoming call 5,972)
 - Text Relay Service 113,183
 - (Outgoing call 108,556)
 - (Incoming call 4,627)
 - Emergency Call 312

Model Project

- In 2013, started as a model project aiming at establishing sustainable relay service system as a public infrastructure
- Video Relay Service and Text Relay Service
- Free of charge and all costs are fully funded by The Nippon Foundation
- Only 8am – 9pm
- Not responded to emergency call
- 13000 Deaf/H of H people registered at the end

Steps for Legislation

- Since the beginning of the model project, approached Government Officials, Political Leaders including Ministers of MIC and MHLW, Executive Officers of Telephone Companies, Media and etc.
- We work closely with Japanese Federation of the Deaf and other organization of persons with disabilities.

*MIC: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication

MHLW: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

Typical cases of misunderstandings

“Budget is limited and cannot make an exception in the Deaf and H of H People. Every person with disability should be treated equally.”

“It is not the times of telephone anymore. E-mails and Chat suffice the needs.”

“It is not the times of human support anymore. AI solves the matter.”

“We were sent around one office to another. Social welfare or telecommunication?”

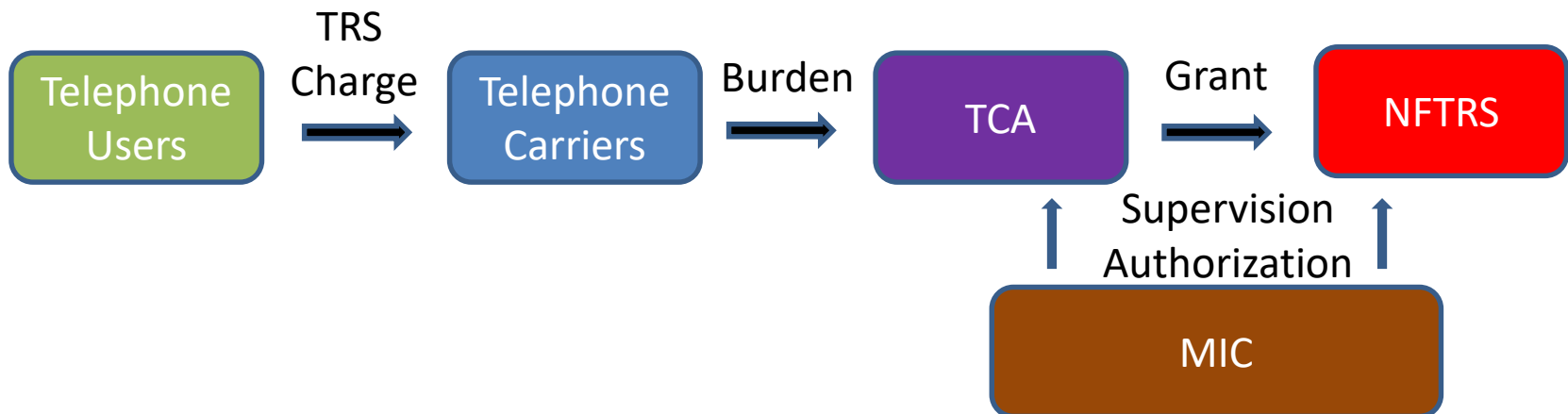
“Is there economic benefit of establishing RS?”

Relay Service for Ocean and Mountain Rescue

- In 2017 and 2018, Ocean and Mountain accidents of Deaf people happened continuously
- Unavailability of official and public Relay Service was questioned in House of Councilors several times
- In November 2018, PM Mr. Shinzo Abe said that TRS should be a public infrastructure and ordered MIC to take charge legislation and implementation.

Funding Mechanism

- In 2020, The Law of TRS enacted
- In 2021, NFTRS designated as a sole official TRS provider in Japan by the Minister of MIC.



NFTRS: Nippon Foundation Telecommunications Relay Service

TCA: Telecommunications Carriers Association

Challenges

- Captioned telephone service is highly desired by H of H people and elderly people.
- Lack of skilled sign language interpreters who can work overnight.

Thank you very much!

ありがとう！

