

Office of State Budget and Management
Establish New, Receipt-Supported Positions
(G.S. 143-34.1)

Agency: DHHS

Division: Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Budget Code: 67425

Center Title: Telecommunications Relay Service – Wireless

Center Number: 6726

***** Position Information *****

Proposed Classification: Community Services Consultant **Proposed Salary Grade:** 66

Salary Range: \$36,751 **Proposed Effective Date:** 03 / 01 / 04

Number of Positions: 5

	<u>Authorized Budget</u>	<u>Current Request</u>
Total Budget	\$ 4,676,765	\$ 332,910*
Receipts	<u>4,676,765</u>	<u>\$ 332,910</u>
Appropriation	\$ 0	\$ 332,910

*annualized amount

Funding Source(s): Wireless Telecommunications Relay Service Funds

Justification for Position (including description of duties and responsibilities):

The Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing is under legislative mandate to provide Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Services throughout the state of North Carolina. More specifically, the Telecommunications Relay Service statute states:

The [Public Utilities] Commission may allow the Department of Health and Human Services to use up to four cents (4¢) per access line per month of the surcharge for the purpose of providing telecommunications devices for hearing impaired or speech impaired persons, including those who also have vision impairment, through a distribution program (G.S. 62-157).

Senate Bill 939, passed in 2003, authorized the Wireless 911 Board to institute the same TRS (Telecommunications Relay Service) surcharge on wireless “lines” that has been imposed on land lines since 1989. One of the goals of this program is to provide

more eligible people with the equipment that they need to be able to access telecommunications. In order for us to effectively provide equipment distribution services, we must have staff available, throughout the state, to provide equipment assessment, training, outreach and distribution. During the first two years of operation with no support staff Telecommunications Access of North Carolina (TANC) was able to distribute equipment to 1,500 people in North Carolina. Statistical analysis shows us that there are potentially 235,000 people in the state who are eligible for this program. The development of these additional positions, which will be located within existing DSDHH Regional Resource Centers, will allow us to provide access to greater numbers of people to telecommunications. Without these positions, we will not be able to reach those North Carolina residents who are most in need of this service.

Statutory Reference for Request: GS 62-157 as amended by SB 939 (2003 Session).

Allyn Guffey

Presentation to be made by

Director, Budget and Analysis

Title

Linda Harrington

Agency Head Signature

State Budget Officer Signature