

Using MassRelay: Telephonic Assistive Technology

MassRelay is a telephonic interpreter service used to assist hearing people or people who do not use a text telephone (TTY) to communicate over regular telephone lines with people who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, late deafened, or speech disabled. MassRelay is available in English and Spanish, 24/7 at no charge. DTA staff often communicate with deaf, hard-of-hearing, late deafened, or speech disabled clients using this technology.

MassRelay uses a relay Operator to answer and complete your call. The Relay Operator remains on the line to relay messages electronically via a TTY device to the hearing-impaired person, or verbally to people who can hear. Relay operators provide exact transcriptions of what they hear and they speak what is typed to them, unless the caller directs them to do otherwise.

Using MassRelay:

Contacting a Client

- Dial 711 in Massachusetts or 1-800-720-3479 (voice). TTY users should dial 1-800-720-3480.
- A MassRelay operator will answer the call. He or she will serve as interpreter or “relay” between the person using a TTY device and the person using a standard phone so effective communication may take place.
- When the operator answers, state (or type) the number you want to call.
- The operator will dial the number, and the relay begins. The operator will explain how the service works, if an explanation is needed.
- The operator will type the case manager’s spoken words into a TTY so the TTY user can read them. The deaf or hard-of-hearing person reads the TTY and types his or her response. The operator will read aloud the TTY responses so the standard telephone user can hear them.

Client Contacting DTA

- Clients may use their TTY device to connect with MassRelay who will then contact the case manager with a standard phone. The process is otherwise the same.

For more information, contact MassRelay Customer Service at 1-800-720-3480 (TTY) or 1-800-720-3479 (Voice), or email to CustServ@MassRelay.org. Visit the MassRelay website at: www.mass.gov/massrelay.

Communication tips:

- Both the caller and the called parties should use "Go Ahead" when they are finished typing/talking to indicate that they are ready for the other person's response.
- Address the client directly, not the operator. For example, “Do you have your pay stubs?” not “Does she have her pay stub?” or “Ask her if she has her pay stubs.”
- Allow for additional pauses in conversation to allow the MassRelay operator to keep up with conversation.