



MEDIA RELEASE
IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Bridges Oregon, Inc.
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Executive Director

BRIDGES OREGON TO OFFER NEW PROGRAM FOR DEAFBLIND OREGONIANS

Salem, Oregon – Starting January 2, 2023, Bridges Oregon will manage Oregon’s Communication Facilitator services, a new program that provides DeafBlind Oregonians, who communicate using American Sign Language through tactile or close vision methods, with access to make and receive video to video and Video Relay Service calls.

Communication Facilitator services, a program of the Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC), also supports Oregonians who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing with a mobility disability in their arms or hands that affects their expressive communication. When a person on the video screen is unable to understand as a result, the Communication Facilitator uses their receptive skills to relay or convey the Deaf or Hard of Hearing person’s message.

“Communication is a basic human need. Access to communication using video platforms is essential for staying connected with others and for participation in society, government, education, and healthcare. Communication Facilitator services will address this lack of access that many in the community experience,” said Jon Cray, a program manager at the PUC, and Chad Ludwig, Executive Director of Bridges Oregon.

Oregon is the first state to pass a bill, House Bill 3205 during the 2019 Legislative Session, to expand the Telecommunications Devices Access Program to offer Communication Facilitator services to Oregonians who are DeafBlind or are Deaf or Hard of Hearing with an upper mobility disability.

Every Conversation Matters! Visit <https://bridgesoregon.org/cf/> or contact Bridges Oregon with questions about Communication Facilitator services at request@bridgesoregon.org or (971) 800-6258.

View an American Sign Language translated video of this information at <https://youtu.be/9WXoeAon5Xc>.

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About Bridges Oregon: Bridges Oregon is a nonprofit organization for Oregonians who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing or face other communication barriers. Our mission is to facilitate equity, inclusiveness, and to provide a bridge to opportunities through advocacy, education, and communication.

About the Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC): *The PUC regulates customer rates and services of the state’s investor-owned electric and natural gas utilities, including Portland General Electric, Idaho Power, Pacific Power, Avista, Cascade Natural, and NW Natural. The PUC also regulates landline telephone providers and select water companies. The PUC’s mission is to ensure Oregonians have access to safe, reliable, and fairly priced utility services that advance state policy and promote the public interest. We use an inclusive process to evaluate differing viewpoints and visions of the public interest and arrive at balanced, well-reasoned, independent decisions supported by fact and law. For more information about the PUC, visit oregon.gov/puc.*

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