

Commission for
Persons who are
Deaf and Hard of
Hearing

Access for All

STATE FISCAL YEAR 2023 ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Nevada Commission for Persons who are
Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Highlighted Background.....	3
Infrastructure Overview	3
State Plan 2021-2027 Overview	4
State Plan Recommendations	4
2023 Statewide Highlighted Prioritized Recommendation Outcomes	4
Recommendation #1: Inclusion of the Community.....	4
Deaf Day at the Legislature and Townhall in Carson City	4
Deaf Camp and Transition Day at UNLV.....	4
D/HH Commission Townhall Tour in Pahrump, Reno, and Las Vegas	5
D/HH Commission Engagement Conference in Las Vegas	5
Recommendation #3: Quality Interpreters	5
AB206	5
Recommendation #5: Healthcare Access	5
Mental Healthcare Needs	5
Healthcare Resource Development	5
Legislative Efforts Highlights	6
October 2023 Qualitative Data Analysis Highlights	6
Qualitative Data Themes.....	6
October 2023 Townhall Outcome Highlights by Region.....	6
Pahrump (P) Townhall Highlighted Outcomes.....	6
Reno (R) Townhall Highlighted Outcomes	6
Las Vegas (LV) Townhall Highlighted Outcomes	6
October 2023 Statewide Qualitative Data Analysis Highlights.....	7
2023 Statewide Highlighted Cumulative Findings.....	7
2023 Statewide Recommendations’ Deficit Chart.....	7
2023 Executive Director Statewide Recommendations	8
Highlighted Next Steps.....	8
Proposed 2024 Prioritized Recommendations.....	8
• Recommendation #1 Inclusion of the Community	8

- Recommendation #5 Healthcare Access 9
- Recommendation #6 Language Development 9

References..... 9

Introduction

The Commission, over the course of 2023, has diligently worked to become an immersive commission of action, advocates, and allies of the community. The Commission envisioned a stronger collaboration between the community and Commission by education and responding to the needs strongly shared in townhalls and listening sessions conducted in 2022. The Commission's Engagement Conference of 2023 is a testament to those objectives.

Below you will find the highlights found in the Commission's 2023 Annual Report. For further information and details, please visit our website for the full Annual Report and supporting documents.

Highlighted Background

The Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, was created through SB 481 in the 79th Legislative Session. As a result of the 80th Legislative Session, the Commission was granted a full-time paid Executive Director position to be paid from the Telecommunications Device Surcharge (TDD).

The Commission efforts in state fiscal year 2022/23 focused on active listening, particularly regarding deaf service provision needs, communication accessibility, and aligning legislative efforts through resourcing and providing knowledge on the state of Nevada's legislative structure.

Infrastructure Overview

Though the Commission now meets on a quarterly basis, the Commission has expanded their infrastructure through their subcommittee efforts, previously known as their workgroups. This expansion was agreed to in efforts to increase dialogue and align with the needs outlined in 2022's Qualitative Data Analysis of Townhall Outcomes and their current Stat Plan ([CDHH State Plan FY2022 to 2027 \(nv.gov\)](#)). The current subcommittees and organized efforts are as follows:

- Accessibility Subcommittee
- Education Subcommittee
- Employment Subcommittee
- Interpreter Subcommittee (NEW)
- Legislative Subcommittee

Each Subcommittee meets quarterly in efforts to continue the inclusion of the D/HH community and the ongoing dialogue around language access and communication needs throughout Nevada.

Further details on each subcommittee's activities can be found in the full Annual Report.

State Plan 2021-2027 Overview

The State Plan, as the results of a 2021 community survey conducted by the Commission, has become the driving force behind the Commission’s core initiatives/priorities of Access, Engagement, and Advocacy.

State Plan Recommendations

The Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing monitor the following recommendations to ensure inclusive, effective services and supports are available to Nevadans within the target population (pg. 5-6, [CDHH State Plan FY2022 to 2027 \(nv.gov\)](#)):

1. Inclusion of the Community
2. Government Accessibility
3. Quality Interpreters
4. Emergency Response and Management
5. Healthcare Access
6. Language Development
7. Post-Secondary Education Transition
8. WIOA Partnerships

2023 Statewide Highlighted Prioritized Recommendation Outcomes

Below are the highlighted outcomes and efforts of the Commission and Executive Director in fulfillment of the 2023 Prioritized Recommendations:

- Recommendation #1 Inclusion of the Community
- Recommendation #3 Quality Interpreters
- Recommendation #5 Healthcare Access

Recommendation #1: Inclusion of the Community

Highlighted Efforts:

April 10th, 2023 – Deaf Day at the Legislature and Townhall in Carson City

This event was held in Carson City at the Legislature. 76 Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) constituents, Parents of D/HH students, students, and allies were bused to Carson City from Las Vegas to join additional Northern community members for this event. The total attendees were believed to have been roughly 100 guests.

June 26th-30th, 2023 – Deaf Camp and Transition Day at UNLV

This collaboration included Camp CRAVE and Camp SignShine Historians (i.e. Las Vegas Deaf Seniors, Nevada Association of the Deaf, previous Camp Counselors, etc.) in hosting Nevada’s all Deaf and Hard of Hearing Camp and D/HH Transition Day. There was a total of 18 students that identified as Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals with various modes of communication. The accommodations team included 2 Certified Deaf Interpreters, 6 Certified Hearing Interpreters and CART services. The students also had a

team of 10 camp counselors to support and mentor the students of whom also identify as Deaf, Hard of Hearing and/or fluent in ASL.

October 10th, 13th, and 24th, 2023 – D/HH Commission Townhall Tour in Pahrump, Reno, and Las Vegas

Three townhalls were held statewide to take note of the current needs and state plan conflicts/challenges experienced by our state’s Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. See sections: “October 2023 Qualitative Data Analysis Overview” and “2024 Executive Director Recommendations” for further information.

December 17th, 2023 – D/HH Commission Engagement Conference in Las Vegas

The Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing hosted their first ever Engagement Conference 202, “Empowering Advocacy in Policy Making and Legislative Change.” The Engagement Conference sustained an attendance of 113 attendees, 20 vendor booths, 8 presenters, 2 panel presentations from our D/HH community partner leaders and youth, over 20 volunteers, and catered breakfast, lunch, and sponsored snacks.

Recommendation #3: Quality Interpreters

Highlighted Effort(s):

AB206

Assembly Bill 206 was sponsored by Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May during the 82nd Legislative Session and was Approved by the Governor on May 25, 2023. NRS 427A.750 is amended to read 12 members with the addition of (l) One member who: (1) Is registered with the Division pursuant to NRS 656A.100 to engage in the practice of sign language interpreting; and (2) To the extent practicable, has experience with and knowledge of interpreting in a primary or secondary educational setting and a post-secondary educational setting and freelance interpreting. The bill became effective on July 1, 2023.

Recommendation #5: Healthcare Access

Highlighted Effort(s):

Mental Healthcare Needs

Early 2023, Executive Director Obioma Officer, began meeting with local Mental Healthcare providers that sign to address the ongoing needs and vision for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing access needs to Mental Healthcare.

Healthcare Resource Development

In additional efforts toward resourcing the state of Nevada and the Commission better with healthcare access, O. Officer attended the virtual summit: 2023 Deaf and Hard of hearing Experiences in Healthcare Summit – Driving Equitable and Accessible Patient Experiences on October 20th, 2023. Along with networking directly with experts like CEO of 2axend, Corey

Axelrod, O. Officer has made it an ongoing effort to network statewide to bring awareness of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) leadership nationwide.

Legislative Efforts Highlights

In addition to prioritized recommendation of 2023, the Commission considered, monitored, followed, resourced legislative bills with knowledge, feedback, letters of support, community engagement, and/or endorsement (see full Annual Report for details).

October 2023 Qualitative Data Analysis Highlights

Qualitative Data Themes

The October 2023 Townhall Qualitative Data analyzed revealed 5 themes consistently shared statewide: Theme 1. Interpreter Access, Theme 2. ADA Compliance, Theme 3. D/HH Education, Services, & Advocacy, Theme 4. D/HH Equipment & VRI Reliability, and Theme 5. D/HH Cultural Competency & Sensitivity Training.

October 2023 Townhall Outcome Highlights by Region

The Commissioner's gathered information at each Townhall, revealing the following needs and recommendations by region:

Pahrump (P) Townhall Highlighted Outcomes

Findings:

1. ADA Compliance (Theme 2) needs in the Southern Rural region – Pahrump with a 28% reported impression and potential impact with an emphasis on Language Development at 25% focus on student's needs.
2. D/HH Education, Services, and Advocacy (Theme 3) with a 25% reported overall impression and potential impact on D/HH Inclusion in the Community, Healthcare Access, and Language Development.

Reno (R) Townhall Highlighted Outcomes

Findings:

1. D/HH Education, Services, and Advocacy (Theme 3) needs in the Northern region – Reno with a 56% reported impression and potential impact with an emphasis on Inclusion of the Community at 45% focus on needs for a Deaf language development model with experts found in Deaf Schools, direct D/HH services, D/HH resources, and D/HH advocacy provided through a Deaf Center model with full communication access (D/HH staff and/or ASL user friendly environment).
2. D/HH Cultural Competency and Sensitivity Training (Theme 5) with a 20% reported overall impression and potential impact.

Las Vegas (LV) Townhall Highlighted Outcomes

Findings:

1. D/HH Education, Services, and Advocacy (Theme 3) needs in the Southern region – Las Vegas with a 36% reported impression and potential impact on all D/HH

Commission Recommendations aside from Government Accessibility, with an emphasis on Healthcare Access at 29% impact or focus across all themes.

2. Interpreter Access (Theme 1) needs with 20% reported overall impression and potential impact on Quality of Interpreters, Emergency Response and Management, and Healthcare Access.

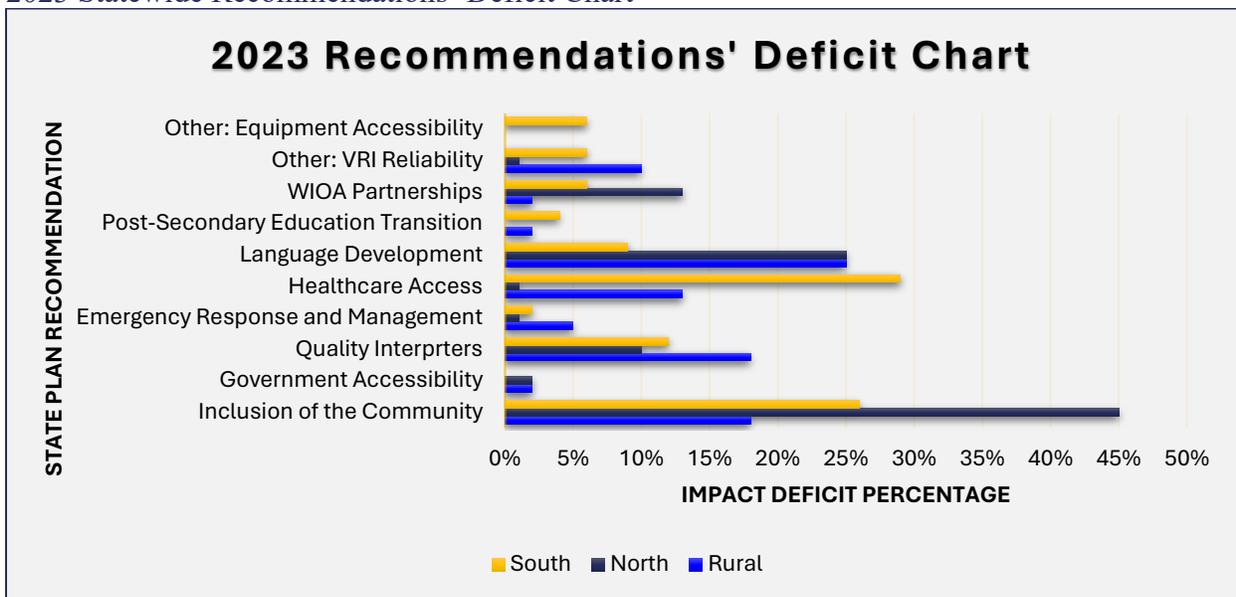
October 2023 Statewide Qualitative Data Analysis Highlights

The following is a highlighted summary of the overall accumulative findings of the North, South, and Rural regions.

2023 Statewide Highlighted Cumulative Findings

1. Inclusion of the Community (Recommendation #1) needs – 41% relevance statewide in ADA Compliance (Theme 2), D/HH Education, Services, and Advocacy (Theme 3), D/HH Equipment and VRI Reliability (Theme 4), and D/HH Cultural Competency and Sensitivity Training (Theme 5).
2. Language Development (Recommendation #6) needs – 18% relevance statewide in the areas of ASL Access (Theme 1), ADA Compliance (Theme 2), D/HH Education, Services, and Advocacy (Theme 3), D/HH Equipment and VRI Reliability (Theme 4), and D/HH Cultural Competency and Sensitivity Training (Them 5).
3. Healthcare Access (Recommendation #5) needs – 17% relevance statewide in the areas of ASL Access (Theme 1), ADA Compliance (Theme 2), D/HH Education, Services, and Advocacy (Theme 3), D/HH Equipment and VRI Reliability (Theme 4), and D/HH Cultural Competency and Sensitivity Training (Theme 5).

2023 Statewide Recommendations' Deficit Chart



2023 Executive Director Statewide Recommendations

1. Current Recommendation is to start with the above top 3 needs being supported by our Commission: Recommendation 1, 5, and 6. As for the regional needs, allow our subcommittees to begin advocating for changes as outlined in each region per ED Recommendations (see full Annual Report for details).
2. Additional recommendations, collaborations, and networking are necessary for the success or change for our D/HH community. Commission is encouraged to seek additional resources and advise from the [Nevada Equal Rights Commission \(nv.gov\)](https://nv.gov).
3. The community has spoken, it's time to act, advocate, and show we are listening by maintaining our alliances with the community through transparency, education, and empowerment.
4. The Engagement Conference for 2024 should include priorities presented by the community, along with community partner initiatives for legislative change. Efforts made with intentionality, optimism, and tenacity for statewide change will be evident through new D/HH Legislation outcomes in 2025.

D/HH Equipment Accessibility revealed 4% impactful concerns due to conflicts found in inadequate equipment for communication access (i.e. VRI equipment), VRI equipment not being ready and/or maintenance, and staff lacking knowledge to operate said equipment. This includes an emphasized concern with D/HH alerting systems no longer being distributed, and consumer equipment now considered to be outdated or obsolete.

Current advice is to monitor all D/HH Equipment and VRI Reliance practices and consider including these conflicts as an addendum to the D/HH Commission's State Plan priorities for communication access moving forward.

Highlighted Next Steps

Going into the year 2024, the Commission is focused on substantial legislative impact in the 83rd Legislative Session in 2025. The Commission is finding its voice and footing and intends to remain studious in their efforts of advocacy with the greater community at the helm.

Proposed 2024 Prioritized Recommendations

The proposed data driven 2024 Recommendation Prioritizes are as follows:

- Recommendation #1 Inclusion of the Community
Continue community engagement through town halls, roundtable discussions, and statewide Deaf Awareness events. Increase focus on the Legislative Advocacy needs to readdress D/HH Services with a direct service model that includes cultural competencies found in Deaf Schools and Deaf centered facilities/centers nationwide.

- Recommendation #5 Healthcare Access
Increase ADA compliance mandates and accountability statewide to ensure an increase in healthcare hospitality services of communication access, D/HH mental health services, and healthcare network expansions.
- Recommendation #6 Language Development
Immediate intervention in D/HH Education, Post-Secondary Student Services, and Early Intervention Advocacy in Language Development in all school districts. Seek more robust Language Access Plan (LAP) enforcement and qualified audits/check-ins for resource supported programs, I.E.P. compliance, and education needs of instructors and staff.

References

August 2022 Townhall Qualitative Data Analysis_Reporter O.Officer
Available on the [Nevada Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf Hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired \(nv.gov\)](#) website.

October 2023 Townhall Qualitative Data Analysis_Reporter O.Officer
Available on the [Nevada Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf Hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired \(nv.gov\)](#) website.

CDHH State Plan 2021-2027 [CDHH State Plan FY2022 to 2027 \(nv.gov\)](#)
Available on the [Nevada Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf Hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired \(nv.gov\)](#) website.