

Dear Ms. Korbolic,

May 14, 2020

As you start your new position as Director of the Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR), we would like to bring to your attention disability access concerns:

No ADA Assistance Link on the DETR webpages. Unlike other State of Nevada webpages including the State's main webpage, DETR does not have an "ADA Assistance" link where individuals who have disability access issues can readily contact a state agency to have access concerns addressed. The "ADA Assistance" link on other State of Nevada webpages came about as a result non-compliance with the federal regulation 35 CFR 35.107. This federal regulation requires the state to designate at least one responsible employee to coordinate Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, including investigation of any complaint communicated to it alleging its noncompliance or alleging any actions that would be prohibited under the ADA. The "ADA Assistance" link was a way for individuals to easily contact the State of Nevada with disability access issues to be addressed in an efficient and timely manner.

Communication Access Issues Related to Contacting DETR in the Unemployment Insurance Process. While we understand there are large call volumes during the pandemic, there are communication access which need to be addressed to ensure Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act compliance.

First, the unemployment office (UI) has a published phone line for those who use TTY (teletypewriter). Due to the COVID-19 situation, there are now multiple barriers with this line. First, due to the increased call volume related to COVID19 at DETR, these dedicated lines are not being regularly monitored. In addition, the UI staff assigned the TTY duties are not provided specialized training or resources related to this mode of communication. Finally, TTY users in the community have received error messages indicating the TTY lines are nonfunctional at this time.

Second, individuals who are deaf that communicate using American Sign Language (ASL) must use the general phone queue with the assistance of an FCC-funded relay interpreter. Because of in the phone queue wait times, the interpreter must spend considerable time on the phone with the deaf individual thereby impacting the ability to serve other individuals who are deaf. In addition, the interpreter does not have a background/expertise or expertise in unemployment which has resulted in incorrectly completed weekly reporting and further time required to contact the unemployment office to correct inaccurate reporting.

I would appreciate if you could respond what has been done to ensure ADA compliances and equitable treatments for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community regarding UI issues. I can be reached by NVdeafcommission@gmail.com.

Thank you

Eli Schwartz

Nevada Commission for the Person who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

CC:

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