



MEETING MINUTES

Name of Organization: Nevada Commission for Persons Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing:

Date and Time of Meeting: Tuesday November 10, 2020 | 9:00 am

Place of Meeting: ZOOM

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Pursuant to Governor Steve Sisolak's [Emergency Directive 006](#), there will be no physical location for this meeting.

The meeting can be listened to or viewed via ZOOM.

Note: Minutes of this meeting will be produced in summary format. Please provide the secretary with electronic or written copies of testimony and visual presentations if you wish to have complete versions included as exhibits with the minutes.

Note: Items on this agenda may be taken in a different order than listed. Two or more agenda items may be combined for consideration. An item may be removed from this agenda or discussion relating to an item on this agenda may be delayed at any time.

Roll Call:

Eric Wilcox, Vice Chair

Commission Members: Laura Fink, Jeff Beardsley, Maureen Fradianni, Susan Beckett, Daina Loeffler, Summer Wright

Guest: Christopher Robison, Laura Thompson, Obioma Officer, Antoinette Lewis, Caroline Bass, Dawn Lyons, Ken Arcia, Lora Lee Turner, Shawna Goldhammer, Jenn Montoya, Sal Fiorentino, Jeff Jaech, Jay Cafferata, Jack, A Connell, Jeff Duncan

Interpreters/CART: Dawn Duran, Stephanie Webb, Becky Van Auken

Staff: Khianti Thomas, Cheyenne Pasquale, Carole Hanley,

Excused: Eli Schwartz

Absent: Mike Eifert

1. **Public Comment:**

(No action may be taken upon a matter raised under public comment period unless the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an action item. Comments will be limited to five minutes per person. Persons making comment will be asked to begin by stating their name for the record and to spell their last name and provide the secretary with written comments.)

Eric Wilcox, Vice Chair

Maureen attended Deaf Centers of Nevada (DCN) and Nevada Hands and Voices (NVHA) virtual legislative workshop and shared her experience. She mentioned that the workshops were very educational and benefitted the entire community

2. **Approval of the September 9, 2020 Meeting Minutes: (For Possible Action)**

Eric Wilcox, Vice Chair

- Laura Fink moved to approve the minutes; Susan seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

3. **Discussion and Approval of Recommendations from the Director and Chair reports: (For Possible Action)**

Khianti Thomas, Executive Director

- Strategic plan update: Strategic plan expires June 2021 we need to consider new community/advocacy needs. Members have been asked to review the current strategic plan and provide feedback via email by Dec 1st.
- Hearing Loop: Letter was sent to all commission managers and chairs their responses can be found in the Directors report.
- State Seal: Finally got approval to use the state seal, Khianti is working to make final arrangements to have the cards distributed.
- SB203 Update: Recently had a meeting with the Legislative Council Bureau (LCB). Overall, the meeting went great and we were advised to look at the actual language. Eli and Khianti will be working together to draft new language.
- Voting Video: As of Nov 3rd there has been 300+ views and the video was shared by Assemblywoman Cohen. Khianti will partner with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and the Nevada Governors Developmental Disability Council (DD Council) on a new video focusing on accessibility.
- Eric suggested that the commission members reach out to people within their community to get their input on priorities that should be outlined in the strategic plan.

4. **Membership Updates**

Eric Wilcox, Vice Chair

- Summer Wright was introduced to the Commission as one of the new members.

5. **Update and Presentation- Relay Nevada**

Ken Arcia, Sprint Accessibility Customer Relation Mgr.

- Outreach is currently on hold due to COVID, however webinars are taking place weekly about Relay Nevada and posted online. Currently 80 outreach presentations are required for the year.
- There has been an increase in traffic for Relay Nevada due to the increase in COVID cases
- Second contractor has not been hired for Southern Nevada

6. **Report and Discussion from Deaf Centers of Nevada**

Obioma Officer, Executive Director

- There has been an increase in engagements with the community and exchanging equipment. DCN is currently focused on outreach efforts

- A new website has been developed and they are planning to sell t-shirts to solidify branding.
- Currently have 59 collaborative allies, 62 partners and 28 potential partners
- No updates to services outside of grantor, DCN has experienced a lot of hurdles due to COVID. Having clients fill out extensive documentation or intake forms have not been as fruitful as they would like.
- Community challenges: the community has shared they have had difficulty finding audiologist that are affordable without insurance. Other areas include lack of Deaf and Hard of Hearing support with virtual learning, obtaining interpreters at the DMV, and virtual fatigue. Advocates are working to rectify the challenges at the DMV.
- It is expected this month and next month for there to be a decline in engagements because of community and staff fatigue
- Rural areas are still a big challenge. People needing employment and influx of need for technology, DCN currently has a plan of action in place to assist with this issue. Homeless clients are on the rise due to layoffs and unable to sustain shelter. DCN is looking to prioritize efforts to help ensure basic needs are met.
- DCN is experiencing a hiring freeze and finding it challenging to diversify funds they are seeking recommendations from the commission on ways they can possibly diversify their funding.

7. **Update from Nevada Hands & Voice**

Eric Wilcox, Co-Chair

- There has been quite a bit of evidence of zoom fatigue among families NVHA interacts with, attendance has declined.
- The legislative workshops that were done in partnership with DCN were a success.
- Two scholarships were awarded to two Deaf and Hard of Hearing high school students that will be attending higher education in the fall.
- NVHA recently rolled out their new ASTRA educational advocacy program- currently have six educational advocates from across the state ready to provide educational advocacy to families. NVHA is looking to organize virtual events to get the word out about the new program
- Recently partnered with Collaboration center on a program called SIB shop which is a community group that provides programs for siblings of differently abled kids. This new partnership was established to increase interaction of siblings of Deaf and Hard of Hearing kids.

8. **Presentation and Discussion Regarding the Communication Access Services Program**

Jenn Montoya and Jeff Jaech, CAS Program Manager

- Provided different examples of places CAS interpreters are not able to interpret including medical appointments, job interviews, IEP meetings etc.
- CAS has two different types of interpreter registrations (Community and Educational) The total numbers of interpreters registered in the state are 167, 63% of that number are educational interpreters. School districts are currently the highest employer of interpreters at the moment.
- CAS program shared an in-depth presentation about the mentorship program including the different classifications, the format and effectiveness of the program and the goal of the program. They also provided clarification regarding concerns related to the NIC exam and the EIPA.
- Maureen raised a comment that she would like to see an expansion to the program that provides training for Deaf interpreters.
- Laura questioned how does one graduate from the program. Jeff mentioned that the program is capped at 2 years. However, graduation is based off of "self-determination"

- Obioma asked if there can be a future collaboration with DCN and the CAS program to have this information presented again to the community.

9. **Presentation, Discussion and Approval of Recommendations Regarding the Competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity for Communication Access Service Centers (For Possible Action)**

Jeff Duncan and Salvatore Fiorentino, ADSD Chief and CAS Program Manager

- Explanation of what the Notice of Funding Opportunity is (NOFO) including but not limited to the application, background, expectations and how funds are collected.
- Provided a timeline of events that will take place including workshops open to the public to learn more about the NOFO and get the communities' input.
- Communication access centers are required to provide 4 basic services as outlined in NRS 427A.797 (telecommunications, assistive technology, access to services, language acquisition as well as the hearing aid program).
- Looking to spread services statewide throughout the Northern, Southern and Rural regions
- Interested in receiving feedback from the community regarding the division of funded categories and priorities. Members of the community will be able to provide feedback from Nov 30- Dec 11th.
- Eric raised a question seeking clarification regarding language acquisition and what does that look like.
- Laura raised a question regarding how the current breakdown of funding for each service category compares to other states. Jeff Duncan stated there has not been any comparisons to other states as Nevada is unique.
- Approximately 33% of the total funds go to access services, 29% to technology, 34% to language acquisition, and 4% to hearing aids. ADSD currently proposed the allocation of funds formula as 35%, 35%, 30%
- Service centers funds are funded through the PUC/TDD surcharge, therefore the funds will not be impacted due to the 12% budget cut

10. **Report, Discussion and Approval of Recommendations Regarding Unemployment Issues (For Possible Action)**

Laura Fink and Christopher Robison, Commission Member and DETR's Research

Analyst

- Currently in a policy driven recession due to the pandemic which has heavily impacted our economic climate, specifically dropping unemployment by 30% overnight. Once the regulations and restrictions are dialed back we should be able to recover pretty fast. However, due to the duration of shutdowns a portion of employment won't recover for a number of years.
- The effects of the recession are very different depending on where you live within the state. Las Vegas area has been significantly impacted more than any other place in the state
- Vegas recovered less than 50%, Reno recovered over 50% and Carson City almost has full recovered.
- During the first couple weeks of the shutdown there were 92,000 unemployment claims in a week. Currently there is roughly 9,000 a week
- Different types of disabilities make it easier or harder to engage in the workforce 57% of individuals that identify as having a hearing difficulty are currently employed.
- According to the American Community survey in 2019 71,000 people with disabilities were employed.

- Laura has personally assisted 35 claimants with unemployment issues, but in partnership with DCN they have helped collectively over 100 plus community members.
- There has been a major impact to VR services due to remote working and the offices being closed to the public. Additionally, because businesses have been shutting down or scaling back their services this has affected consumers maintaining their employment. As a result, consumers have to start the process over again.
- The Deaf and Hard of Hearing population is having difficulty using the technology. And those that are Hard of Hearing and do not sign have additional barriers along with the adverse effects of COVID resulting in limited accommodations.
- Clients have expressed concerns regarding confidentiality, they are not comfortable sharing information via email and prefer face to face communications
- Question raised regarding if there is a video or outreach training done to assist clients with completing the unemployment claim application? Laura mentioned that she partnered with Kate from DCN to host 3 live webinar trainings on how to complete the forms and provided information regarding the differences between unemployment insurance claims and pandemic unemployment assistance.
- Recommendation to consider a commission member or possibly the Executive Director to engage in a broader discussion about long-term plans for support for the Deaf and hard of hearing community. Providing support for them and unemployment claims.
- Motion made by Jeff Beardsley to have Khianti, Eli, and Eric draft a letter to DETR leadership specifically on ensuring that support is being provided to the Deaf and hard of hearing community for pandemic unemployment assistance. Laura second the motion. All approved.

11. **Update and Discussion Regarding Resource Website**

Cheyenne Pasquale and Khianti Thomas, ADSD Chief and Executive Director

- Update on the resource website, Cheyenne shared the new website is scheduled to launch in December. The goal with the December launch is for the Deaf resources website to have one or two pages ready for the commission's review and then in January
- Cheyenne mentioned: Khianti is revisiting what we approved back in March of 2019, so she may be reaching out to the commission members just to get clarification on some of those things that we were brainstormed previously.

12. **Report, Discussion and Approval of Recommendations Regarding Deaf Commission Logo (For Possible Action)**

Khianti Thomas, Executive Director

- Discussion regarding commission logo designs and possibly creating a contest for community members to submit logo ideas, in efforts to encourage community engagement. Khianti will follow up with the fiscal department to confirm if the commission can provide a monetary prize for the winner of the contest
- Potentially invite Clark County School District students and/or make it a statewide contest where any student in a Deaf or Hard of Hearing program can participate
- Discussion about being inclusive of both the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community recognizing that the commission represents both, therefore the logo should reflect both communities.

13. **Report, Discussion and Approval of Recommendations from the Deaf Commission Outreach Subcommittee: (For Possible Action)**

Khianti Thomas, Executive Director

- The Outreach subcommittee met recently to discuss townhall workshop events and the healthcare brochure. The commission will look to compile a list of healthcare providers to distribute the brochure. Additionally, the brochure will be shared on social media. Laura mentioned perhaps we can also look to share the information on the new Deaf Commission website.
- There was a discussion to potentially investigate providing CEU's to different professional communities in efforts to persuade them to attend our workshops.
- The Commission will host their first workshop on the legislative process on Dec 9th. This workshop will be an extension of the webinars that were recently hosted by DCN.
- Khianti and Jeff Beardsley will be leading the first workshop on the legislative process.

14. **Review, Discuss and Approval Tentative Agenda Items for January 14th, 2020 meeting: (For Possible Action)**

Eric Wilcox, Vice Chair

- Legislative activities
- Other agenda items will be determined by executive team.

15. **Public Comment:** (No action may be taken upon a matter raised under public comment period unless the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an action item. Comments will be limited to five minutes per person. Persons making comment will be asked to begin by stating their name for the record and to spell their last name and provide the secretary with written comments.)

Eric Wilcox, Vice Chair

Anonymous community submitted a letter to the commission, the letter was read aloud by Khianti:

"As stakeholders in the changes to the NAC 656A, we would like to weigh-in via public comment. However, to do so and identify ourselves by name would come with reprisals. As professionals in the field, we recognize that our livelihood could be in jeopardy due to the consequences of one or more staff members overseeing the interpreting profession in Nevada. Therefore, we have written this letter anonymously in hopes that the Commission will accept this information as public comment during the next Commission meeting.

*The EIPA is an assessment of educational interpreting only. The components of testing are strictly limited to interpreting in a K-12 setting. Interpreters holding any EIPA score have only been assessed based on their skill level in those K-12 settings. However, under the current classifications they may, with a score of 4.0, interpret in community settings where they have **not** been assessed in terms of skill.*

RID recognized certifications including the CI/CT, NIC etc. include testing in a variety of common interpreting environments including education and other settings. This certification includes a knowledge exam and a performance exam. However, an interpreter holding this certification must also take the EIPA knowledge exam to interpret in K-12 settings. This redundancy is not necessary.

As written, someone assessed in K-12 only can go interpret in the community with no additional testing, but someone tested in multiple settings including education, cannot interpret for K-12 without additional EIPA testing. This is shortsighted, and an unnecessary burden that is preventing more skilled interpreters from providing services to K-12 students without bearing the cost of time and resources to test again.

Consider this, someone with a 3.5 EIPA score can interpret in K-12 where someone with NIC Master cannot.

It is our firmly held belief that many of the changes and classification are arbitrary and intended to specifically limit those who work heavily in a K-12 setting. We respectfully request that this issue be reconsidered. Specifically, the requirement that RID certified interpreters should not be tasked with the requirement to take an EIPA (assessment, not certification) knowledge test to interpret for K-12 students in need of more highly qualified interpreters."

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16. **Adjournment:**

Eric Wilcox, Vice Chair

- Meeting adjourned at 12:59 a.m.

Note: We are pleased to make reasonable accommodations for members of the public who are disabled and wish to attend the meeting. If special arrangements for the meeting are necessary, please notify the Khianti Thomas in writing at 3320 W. Sahara Ave, Suite 100 Las Vegas, Nevada 89102, email KThomas@adsd.nv.gov or call at (702) 486-3368 as soon as possible

Notice of this meeting was posted in the following N/A. Notice of this meeting was faxed, e-mailed, or hand delivered for posting to the following Carson City and Las Vegas, Nevada, locations N/A Notice of this meeting was posted on the Internet through the Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division website at adsd.nv.gov. and Nevada Public Notices website at www.notice.nv.gov. Supporting public material provided to Commission members for this meeting may be requested from Khianti Thomas, Director, ADSD at (702) 486-3368 and is/will be available at the meeting locations and ADSD website at adsd.nv.gov