

NEVADA COMMISSION FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

Position on Deaf Resources Centers for People who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH)

Scope: The **Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NVCDHH)** is established to provide advocacy on behalf of individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH), including the development of the Nevada State Plan for the Deaf (D), Hard of Hearing (HH), Speech-Impaired (SI), DeafBlind (DB), and Deaf Plus (D+). The Commission, established in 2017, works to promote full inclusion, equal access, and self-sufficiency of D/HH/SI/DB/D+ in the State of Nevada. As an advisory and advocacy body to the state, local government, policymakers, and stakeholders, the NVCDHH makes recommendations to address systemic barriers and to advocate for policies that enhance communication access, education, healthcare, employment, and community engagement. Statutory Authority: [NRS 427A.70](#).

For the purposes of this position statement the term “Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH)” will be used throughout this document to include persons who are Deaf (D), DeafBlind (DB), Hard of Hearing (HH), Speech Impaired (SI), and Deaf or Hard of Hearing Plus (D/HH+).

Deaf Resources Centers for People who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH)

Deaf Resources Centers, also known as Deaf Centers, have long played a critical role in providing essential resources, services, and advocacy for individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH). Historically, access to communication, education, and employment support was limited for the D/HH community, leading to the establishment of dedicated centers to bridge these gaps. Deaf centers serve as community hubs, offering job training, social opportunities, community resources, direct advocacy, social services, and educational programs tailored to the unique needs of the D/HH population.

Over the years Nevada has strived to advance in policy, technology, and public awareness to improve accessibility. However, many D/HH individuals still face barriers in accessing equitable services and support. Deaf Centers remain vital in ensuring community engagement, cultural preservation, and the empowerment of individuals who are D/HH.

The Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NVCDHH) firmly believes that every individual, regardless of their hearing ability, has the right to full participation in society. We advocate for equal access to communication, education, employment, and community resources. Deaf Centers play a vital role in ensuring that people who are D/HH have the support and services they need to lead independent and fulfilling lives. The Commission is dedicated to fostering an inclusive and accessible Nevada where all individuals can thrive.

History of Deaf Centers:

Deaf Centers have long played a critical role in providing essential resources, services, and advocacy for individuals who are D/HH. Historically, access to communication, education, and employment support has been limited for the D/HH community, leading to the establishment of

dedicated centers to bridge these gaps. Deaf Centers serve as community hubs, offering job training, social opportunities, community resources, direct advocacy, social services, and educational programs tailored to the unique needs of the D/HH population.

Over the years, advancements in policy, technology, and public awareness have improved accessibility. However, many D/HH individuals still face barriers in accessing equitable services and support. Deaf Centers as a vital component to D/HH individuals' autonomy ensures community engagement, cultural preservation, and self-empowerment.

The Need for Deaf Centers in Nevada:

Nevada currently lacks adequate infrastructure and resources to fully support the D/HH community. The Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NVCDHH) recognizes the necessity of establishing and expanding Deaf Centers across the state to:

- Provide tailored direct services, including community resources, advocacy, social services, and educational programs/workshops.
- Offer job training, career development, and employment placement programs.
- Facilitate social and mental health services specifically tailored to individuals who are D/HH.
- Serve as a centralized hub for information on legal rights, education, and accessibility advocacy through direct communication, American Sign Language (ASL) and/or English, by Experiential Experts and D/HH professionals.
- Promote D/deaf Culture and foster a sense of community among individuals who are D/HH.
- Provide early intervention support services including Deaf Mentors for ages 0-5.

Policy Recommendations:

To establish and sustain effective Deaf Centers in Nevada, the Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission (NVCDHH) recommends:

1. **State Funding Allocation:** Secure state funding to establish and maintain Deaf Centers across Nevada, ensuring they provide comprehensive services.
2. **Legislative Support:** Advocate for policies that recognize Deaf Centers as essential community resources and integrate them into state-funded programs.
3. **Partnerships with Local Agencies:** Collaborate with healthcare providers, educational institutions, and employers to expand services offered through Deaf Centers.
4. **Workforce Development Programs:** Provide training and employment opportunities within Deaf Centers for individuals who are D/HH.
5. **Technology and Accessibility Enhancements:** Invest in modern technology to improve service delivery, including Video Relay Services (VRS), Video Remote Interpreting (VRI), Assistive Technology (AT), and assistive listening devices.
6. **Public Awareness and Outreach:** Educate the broader community on the importance of Deaf Centers and their role in fostering accessibility and inclusion.

Proposed Next Steps (Call to Action): To advance the establishment and expansion of Deaf Centers in Nevada, the Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission (NVCDHH) urges the following actions:

- **Legislative Action:** Work with policymakers to secure funding and maintain legal recognition for Deaf Centers.
- **Community Engagement:** Conduct needs assessments and gather input from the D/HH community to inform providers of service priorities.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborate with public and private entities to enhance services offered and accessibility needs.
- **Funding Advocacy:** Advocate for federal, state, and local funding to support the development and sustainability of Deaf Centers.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement tracking mechanisms to assess the impact of Deaf Centers and address service gaps effectively.

Conclusion: Deaf Centers are essential to ensuring that people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (D/HH) have access to the resources, services, and support they need to thrive. The Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NVCDHH) is committed to advocating for the establishment and expansion of Deaf Centers statewide. Policymakers, community leaders, and stakeholders must take action to create inclusive spaces that empower and uplift the D/HH community in Nevada.