

The Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing is deeply saddened to learn about the recent events regarding a Deaf community member and a N. Las Vegas Police Officer. As a governor appointed commission, and the leading advocacy body for the Nevada Deaf community. We are committed to ensuring that the Deaf citizens in this state are treated with dignity, equity, and respect. Moreover, the Deaf Commission is a proponent for timely access to information, effective communication, education, and services that promote choice and independence for all Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Speech impaired residents.

The Deaf Commission is thoroughly concerned about policies and procedures that do not foster an inclusive safe environment for individuals that rely on different methods of communication. The failure to provide individuals with accessible and effective communication is a direct violation of federal regulations and the American Disability Act. Additionally, we would like to remind the North Las Vegas Police Department of the following provisions of the settlement agreed to by the City of North Las Vegas with the U.S. Department of Justice in September 2005, requiring effective communication. In particular, the City of North Las Vegas Police Department agreed to adapt for its own use and implement the City of North Las Vegas' Police Department's Policy Statement on Effective Communication with People Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing the following provisions regarding on-call interpretative services:

- The Agency will maintain a list of sign language and oral interpreting services that are available (on-call 24 hours per day) and willing to provide qualified interpreters as needed. Each of these services will be chosen after having been screened for the quality and skill of its interpreters, its reliability, and other factors such as cost. The Agency will update this list annually.
- A qualified sign language or oral interpreter is one who is able to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary. Accordingly, an interpreter must be able to sign to the deaf individual (or interpret orally to the person who does not use sign language) what is being said by the hearing person and to voice to the hearing person what is being signed or said by the deaf individual. The interpreter must be able to interpret in the language the deaf person uses (e.g., American Sign Language or Signed English) and must be familiar with law enforcement terms and phrases. Because a qualified interpreter must be able to interpret impartially, a family member, child, or friend of the individual who is deaf may not be qualified to render the necessary interpretation because of factors such as professional, emotional, or personal involvement, or considerations of confidentiality. Additionally, although a "qualified" interpreter may be certified, a certified interpreter is not necessarily "qualified," if he or she is not a good communications match for the deaf person (e.g., where the deaf person uses Signed English and the interpreter uses American Sign Language) or the situation (e.g., where the interpreter is unfamiliar with law enforcement vocabulary). Certification is not required in order for an interpreter to be "qualified."

The North Las Vegas Police Department must immediately implement this provision in situations that demand an on-call interpreter such as the one that occurred on April 7, 2021. We welcome the opportunity for a dialog with leadership from the local police departments to ensure

that cultural sensitivity and accessibility is a priority, especially when working with marginalized communities. Please let us know in what ways we can work together to support our Deaf citizens in Nevada.

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