

Communication Access Services – Program Report – 09/16/2021

Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Language Acquisition and the CAS Program Role

What is the role of ADSD’s Communication Access Services (CAS) Program in Language Acquisition?

- NRS Chapter 427A – “Services to Aging Persons and Persons with Disabilities”
 - NRS 427A.797 - <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-427A.html#NRS427ASec797>
 - Instruction in Language Acquisition
 - Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD) Surcharge
- NRS Chapter 388 – “System of Public Instruction”
 - NRS 388.419 - <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-388.html#NRS388Sec419>
 - NRS 388.437 - <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/NRS/NRS-388.html#NRS388Sec437>
 - SB203 - 80th Legislative Session (2019) - <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/80th2019/Bill/6347/Overview>
 - Development of language
 - Advisory Committee on Language Development for Children Who Are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind or Visually Impaired
 - Department of Education and Nevada Early Intervention Services

Community Challenges

The NRS 427A describes services which are to be used under the “Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDD) surcharge. All services and supports for deaf, hard of hearing, and speech-impaired individuals keeps getting added to this funding source, limiting what ADSD can do to support access to the telecommunications systems.

Secondly, there is not a clear understanding across the community of whose role is what in language acquisition. We are continuing to explore how we can help facilitate stronger connections to ensure children and families are supported in language acquisition.

Relay Nevada

T-Mobile and ADSD has signed an 4th year extension in contract to ensure quality relay service continue to be provided in Nevada until June 30, 2023, which a Request for Proposal (RFP) will be released by summer of 2022 for competitive bid.

Community Challenges

During this fiscal year, due to pandemic and severe weather incidents, call centers had to close on 3 separate occasions for safety of their employees. However there have been no delays in calls as all traffic has been routed to other call centers and Work-From-Home Agents. Call centers usually re-open within several hours up to the next morning pending on the situation.

Communication Access Service Centers

ADSD CASC temporary staff will continue to provide services to the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Speech Impaired community until September 30, 2021. Currently we have 1 Youth Case Specialist, 1 Adult Case

Specialist, and 1 Assistive Technology specialist. ADSD CASC temporary staff have been keeping clients informed of the transition to new community partners to help avoid gaps in services.

Community partners are gearing up for services and training for the community partners has begun. It is expected that services will transition to the new community partners, beginning October 1, 2021, with exception of American Sign Language Instruction will be available by February 2022. Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD) that will provide American Sign Language Instruction is currently in production phase as they are developing a virtual Learning Management System (LMS) platform, which will enable clients to log on at any time to watch instructional videos with option to schedule a live meeting with ASL language mentor. We plan to continue to do community announcements to keep the community updated as the community partners are getting ready to launch by October 1, 2021.

- **University of Reno (UNR)**- Telecommunications Equipment and Assistive Technology Distribution
- **Nevada Hands & Voices (NVHV)**- - Access to Services for Youth (0-21)
- **Nevada Care Connection (NVCC)**- Access to Services for Adults (22+)
- **Nevada Hands & Voices (NVHV)**- a portion of Language Acquisition through Deaf Guide program
- **Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD)**- American Sign Language Instruction * Available to serve the community by February 2022

**Community partners listed above will be available to serve the community by October 1, 2021. Contact information for all above partners will be shared during next community announcement.*

Community Challenges

Since American Sign Language Instruction will not be available until February 2022, ADSD is evaluating what can be done to help fill the gap. We will keep the commission updated once we learn more.

Additional information

If you would like to subscribe to CAS mailing list for latest information and updates, please see link: <https://adsd.nv.gov/Programs/Physical/ComAccessSvc/CAS/> and scroll to the bottom of the webpage to complete the form.

State Interpreters and Mentoring

The CAS interpreters/mentors continue to provide interpreting services for press conferences by the Governor as well as mentoring services to 25 community and educational interpreters across the State. There are currently 5 applicants for the mentorship program on the waiting list.

The CAS interpreters/mentors hosted the third in a three-part series of workshops this month for interpreters working in any setting. This workshop is a continuation of the monthly Practical Interpreter Training Series (PITS) provided by the State, the intent of which is to provide content that can be applied to any interpreter's work the very next day. Due to high demand and limited capacity, the CAS team prioritized workshop registration to those who are Nevada residents over those who are out-of-state. The CAS interpreters/mentors are honored to have been asked to present one of our workshops for school districts in Idaho in October. This collaboration will add more recognition to the CAS program.

With the start of the school year, the CAS interpreters/mentors have resumed the partnership with Washoe County School District and Douglas County School District in joining the interpreters for their Professional Learning Community (PLC) time. Also, we have scheduled Professional Development (PD) days with Clark County School District and Washoe County School District. The CAS team is working on continuing or starting similar partnerships with other school districts for PLC and PD days. In addition, we have scheduled several presentations with interpreting programs at the College of Southern Nevada (CSN) and Nevada State College (NSC).

Additional Information

The CAS team is piloting a study group for the national interpreter certification knowledge exam for interpreters statewide. As the knowledge exam is the first step to achieving national certification, this is another opportunity to increase the quantity of certified interpreters as well as the quality of services. There are 7 participants in the study group, and they meet every two weeks until March. Discussions include topics from, *So You Want to be An Interpreter? An Introduction to Sign Language Interpreting* and other materials as well as understanding what to expect for the exam and how to mentally prepare when taking the exam.

The CAS team held a public workshop on July 29, 2021, to gather feedback from the community to update the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC). The presentation and minutes from the workshop are posted on Interpreter Registry website at:

https://adsd.nv.gov/Programs/Physical/ComAccessSvc/Interpreter_Registry/Interpreter_Registry/

We are still accepting feedback from anyone who missed the workshop which can be done by email at JMontoya@adsd.nv.gov or videophone at (775) 434-0237.