

Top Priorities in Vocational Rehabilitation Services for Deaf People

Successful employment and independent living outcomes for deaf* people require an intentional and tailored approach to vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. Agency leadership can help close the employment gap for deaf people with these proactive strategies.



Prioritize designated staff.

Deaf-specific VR knowledge is critical for effective service provision, especially the State and Regional Coordinators of the Deaf.



Increase eligibility of services.

Deaf applicants currently face longer waiting lists for services than their peers.



Recognize ableism.

Be a model of a positive workplace culture. Include deaf staff in all levels of leadership within your agency.



Invest in current technology.

Accommodations options are constantly evolving, allowing for greater accessibility for deaf clients and staff.



Prioritize direct communication.

Develop internal resources to support a range of communication modality preferences.



Strengthen business partnerships.

They are a lifeline for successful career pathways in competitive, integrated employment.



Expand professional development.

Interagency and cross-state networking activities are critical to mentorship and career-long success.



Value ongoing community engagement.

Keep open lines of communication with a broad range of stakeholders.



Embed Pre-ETS funding opportunities.

Seek collaborations with secondary programs to leverage flexibility across agency activities.



Leverage the new Model State Plan for agency improvement.

Use it as an opportunity to reflect on your local state context and as a tool for planning, training, and implementation.

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Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

These priorities are based on recommendations within the 2022 Model State Plan report developed in collaboration with the Deaf Professional Network at Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation and published at www.csavr.org.

* The umbrella term "deaf" is used to refer to deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened, deafdisabled, and deafblind.