

## Communication Access Services (CAS) – Program Report – 11/8/2023

Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

### Relay Nevada

Hamilton Telecommunications continues to provide analog (711) relay and traditional captioned telephone (CapTel) services for the State of Nevada as of July 1. Hamilton is providing all the analog relay services offered by Relay Nevada, including TTY relay and analog Captioned Telephone Service (CapTel). The same phone numbers are being used to access Relay Nevada. Usage of traditional landline relay in Nevada now is roughly 5-6,000 minutes per month for each primary service (TTY and CapTel).

The CAS program continues to encourage relay users to obtain internet-based equipment and services from the vendor of their choice (video relay service or internet captioned telephone service), considering the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) intent to sunset landline relay requirements for common carriers within the next three years. Our relay administrator recently sent out postcards to large senior residential facilities and home-based care companies regarding the eventual end of landline CapTel and the need for CapTel users to transition to IP-CTS (internet protocol captioned telephone service). Our relay administrator and a community partner, the Nevada Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (NTEDP), which serve the same user base, have met to begin coordinating outreach activities for 2024, to most effectively target this user base and avoid duplication of outreach efforts.

### Communication Access Service Centers

Below is the report from the community partners for the first quarter (July 1, 2023 – September 30, 2023):

**University of Nevada, Reno (UNR)** for Telecommunication Equipment Distribution have engaged in outreach and made presentations at several area events primarily in Las Vegas, such as Camp CRAVE for transition age young adults who are deaf and/or hard of hearing. The kids enjoyed hearing from other people with disabilities about assistive technology and how that is essential in going to work or living in the community. They also attended several other outreach events including the Disability Awareness Day hosted by the Southern Nevada Center for Independent Living. The program donated a raffle item of a Galaxy Tablet. It was much appreciated by the lucky winner.

They are continuing to do outreach to make sure people around the State have access to telecommunication equipment and other resources. They are working with Senior Centers, Senior Apartments and Assisted Living Facilities to do presentations to their members and residents.

NTEDP is currently updating some of their equipment to provide internet-based equipment, instead of the older analog devices. The program is collaborating with the Nevada Relay Administrator to get the word out to prepare people when the FCC moves away from the old system to the new internet-based system. Activities are being planned over the next several months around the State.

**Communication Services for the Deaf (CSD) Learns** had a positive first quarter providing ASL 1 and 2 courses to Nevada residents who live or work with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. They reached out to 69 Nevada-based organizations to promote their five eight-week sessions, running from September 2023 to June 2024. Their first session was a success, with 29 enrolled for the ASL 1 course. They are also receiving many registrations for future ASL 1 and 2 courses which are filling up close to their maximum capacity which is 40 seats. They are in their current second session for ASL 1 and 2, which started on October 30 and will run through December 22. Their next session for ASL 1 and 2 is scheduled for January 16 – March 8, 2024.

They hosted an informative town hall for the first session. During the town hall, they provided insights about their program overview, the registration procedure, who to contact, and the features they offer in their ASL courses.

CSD Learns will be expanding their ASL course offerings and will be introducing ASL 3 and 4 courses in 2024, allowing Nevadans to continue their sequential ASL learning journey.

**Nevada Hands and Voices (NVHV)** continues to provide support in multiple ways to families on their journey, including one-on-one support, participation in group settings and providing resources. They are currently hiring to fill multiple open positions for *Guide by Your Side* Parent Guides and Deaf/Hard of Hearing Guides as well as ASTra Educational Advocates with the goal to have all staff hired and trained in the second quarter as well as increasing representation and support to families.

They provided 199 one-on-one services between three Parent Guides and 11 one-on-one services between three Deaf/Hard of Hearing Guides. They held their summer “Popsicles in the Park” event in Las Vegas and in Reno. As school started, they resumed their monthly Parent Only Coffee Chats, “Growing Book By Book” literacy events, monthly ASL interpreted storytimes in collaboration with Las Vegas Clark County Library District and monthly Language Playgroups for children from birth to 3 years old in collaboration with Nevada Early Intervention Services in Reno. Their Leadership team also attended the annual Hands and Voices Leadership Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan from October 1 – 3 to continue their growth in serving underpopulated communities in Nevada.

**Nevada Care Connection (NVCC)** had a total of 104 Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers in the first quarter with some ongoing consumers monthly and a total of 68 hours of services provided. There were 54 consumers that were assisted in the rural areas and 28 hours of services provided. In the urban areas, there were 50 consumers that were assisted and 40 hours of services provided. The top three topics were Homemaker Services which assists individuals with their household tasks, Options Counseling which is resource and service navigation, and Utility Assistance to help individuals who are unable to pay their utility bill with their application for the low income assistance program.

The data report for CASC is currently under development to reflect the services more accurately.

## State Interpreters and Mentoring

The CAS interpreter mentors are charged with improving the quality of ASL-English interpreters in Nevada to meet the State Plan - Recommendation #3: Quality Interpreters. The CAS mentorship program includes one-on-one mentoring, certification study groups, school district professional development, and workshops.

## One-on-one Mentoring

Current total mentees: 14

## Certification Study Groups

CAS mentors are currently facilitating two study groups:

The CASLI Generalist Performance Exam (CGPE) study group began in October 2023 and will end in April 2024. 9 individuals are participating. This study group will be meeting bi-weekly to prepare interpreters to pass the CGPE for the purposes of registering with the State Interpreter Registry as community interpreters. The CGPE is the performance exam community interpreters must pass in order to achieve National Interpreter Certification (NIC).

CAS mentors are also facilitating an Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) performance exam study group. 10 individuals are participating. The group began in November 2023 and will end in April 2024. The EIPA performance exam is designed specifically to assess interpreters who are working in the K-12 education system. The EIPA performance exam is scored on a scale of 0.0-5.0. To qualify for the State Interpreter Registry in the educational provisional category, interpreters must achieve a score of 3.5-3.9. To qualify for the State Interpreter Registry as an educational interpreter, interpreters must achieve a score of 4.0-5.0.

Plans are also underway for more study groups throughout 2024, including a study group focused on ethics.

## School District Professional Development Days

The CAS mentors facilitated one professional development day workshop for interpreters in a local school district. Several more workshops are in process for 2024.

## Registry

Below is the data report for registry as of November:

Registration type	In State	Out of State	Totals
Community	49	276	325
Provisional Community	8	5	13
Educational	4	12	16
Provisional Educational	24	4	28
Community & Educational	69	27	96
Provisional Community & Educational	15	6	21
Totals	169	330	499

## **Additional Information**

The CAS team had the opportunity to attend two national conferences in the past month. The National Association of the Deaf (NAD) Leadership Training Conference took place in Albuquerque, New Mexico from September 21 – 23. Their workshops focused on promoting improved leadership skills in the deaf and hard of hearing community. The Southeastern Regional Institute on Deafness (SERID) Conference took place in Charlotte, North Carolina from October 26 – 29. This conference attracted deaf and hard of hearing services providers where their training focused on rehabilitation, education, mental health, interpreting and many more. One of the CAS team members had the honor to present the closing keynote at this conference.

The CAS webpage is up to date with current information about the program and services with their contacts. The link to CAS webpage can be found at [CAS \(nv.gov\)](https://cas.nv.gov). If anyone wants to be added to CAS mailing list for latest information and updates, please see link to sign up: [Communication Access Services Program Mailing List](#)