

Communication Access Services (CAS) – Program Report – 8/21/2024

Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Relay Nevada

Relay Nevada minutes of use have slightly decreased the past few months. Analog CapTel use through Relay Nevada's 711 service, provided under contract with Hamilton Telecommunications, has decreased to around 1,500-2,000 minutes a month, while TTY relay usage is around 4,500-5,000 minutes a month. This continued incremental decline in usage is expected, as more and more people obtain and move to broadband-based services such as video relay. Hamilton Telecommunications continues with its "Relay Friendly Business" sessions. Hamilton offers these sessions to businesses and government agencies in the state to teach them about the use of the relay and relay etiquette. Hamilton recently provided this training to the Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority (SNRHA). The SNRHA successfully completed the test calls and was certified as a Relay Friendly Business and its logo will appear on the Relay Nevada website, and SNRHA employees have been trained in the handling of relay calls from its deaf and hard of hearing clients in southern Nevada.

Communication Access Service Centers

Below is the report from the community partners for the fourth quarter (April 1 – June 30, 2024):

University of Nevada, Reno (UNR)'s Nevada Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program (NTEDP) provided outreach in the Las Vegas area to a series of apartments for people with disabilities called Accessible Space. Residents had the opportunity to hear about our program, explore telecommunication options, and in the end improve their communication and quality of life. In Northern Nevada, they continued to work with senior living facilities with outreach, information and assistance, and public awareness. These opportunities have allowed NTEDP to return to facilities that were visited in prior months and provide continued and more specific engagement of the residents. More people have been contacting NTEDP and many have arranged to visit the office to learn more about telecommunication equipment and other assistive technologies. In addition, in Northern Nevada, NTEDP hosted a community outreach and training event at the Redfield Campus at UNR. A Florida based assistive technology company provided information regarding their technology to 39 individuals. This type of opportunity allows the community to make informed decisions on what types of equipment and technology work the best for them. NTEDP provided services to a total of 104 clients in the 4th quarter and 31 of them received telecommunication equipment.

Communication Services for the Deaf (CSD) Learns provided ASL 1, 2, 3, & 4 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 March 2024 to June 2024. There were program-wide issues with registrants' attrition and those who signed up but never enrolled in the course. Multiple follow-up efforts were made through outreach and CSD remains dedicated to determining causes and developing solutions. For Session 4, 40 individuals enrolled in ASL 1, 3 individuals enrolled in ASL 2, and 1 person enrolled in ASL 3. For Session 5, 22 individuals enrolled in ASL 1, 2 people enrolled in ASL 2, and 2 people enrolled in ASL 4.

In anticipation of the next cycle of sessions for Fiscal Year 2025, CSD Learns has drafted a comprehensive social media plan, contracted with a graphic designer to ramp up our marketing materials, and are drafting a series of outreach emails. They are also looking into bringing the virtual town hall sessions back for Nevada residents to learn more about CSD Learns and possibly adding an additional mentor to be better available during Pacific Standard Time hours.

Nevada Hands and Voices (NVHV) has promoted outreach and education this quarter through 16 events and 2 outreach opportunities, including the beginning of monthly in-person support in Elko. These consisted of collaborations with Nevada Early Intervention Services (NEIS) to expand their Language Playgroup into the Rural area for children birth-3 years old, and the Elko “Mybrary” for ASL interpreted story time. Social media posts (Facebook and Instagram) had 12.9 thousand reaches this quarter.

NVHV had 321 direct services in the 4th quarter. They continued shadowing, onboarding and assigning families to new employees, had monthly staff meetings, and conducted a Regional Training in June with five other Hands & Voices chapters.

Nevada Care Connection (NVCC) had a total of 87 clients who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened, and Speech Impaired consumers from April 1, 2024, to June 30, 2024, and there were 707 units (1 unit of service equals 15 minutes). There were 23 consumers Medicaid eligible, 59 consumers income below 300% SSI, and 23 consumers from the underserved population. There were 69 consumers helped in the rural areas with 561 units provided and in the urban areas there were 18 consumers helped and 148 units of services provided. The top 3 topics were Options Counseling, providing resource and service navigation, followed by Life Skills, for individuals who want to learn particular skills to become independent, and Utility Assistance to help individuals who are unable to pay their utility bill with their application for the low-income assistance program.

State Interpreters and Mentoring

The CAS interpreter/mentors continue to work on improving the quality of ASL-English interpreters in Nevada to meet the Commission’s State Plan - Recommendation #3: Quality Interpreters. The CAS mentorship program includes one-on-one mentoring, certification study groups, school district professional development, and workshops. The CAS interpreters also provide interpreting services for State public events when able.

One-on-one Mentoring

Current total mentees: 15 mentees among three CAS mentors

Certification Study Groups

The study groups for the National Interpreter Certification (NIC) performance exam and the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) performance exam concluded in April 2024. Evaluations from participants in both groups were quite positive. One participant in the EIPA group reflected this by saying, “...the study group is an incredible source of information and your opportunity to learn from some of the best mentors/professionals in the state!” A common theme in the evaluation feedback was an appreciation for the sense of community and support that this group fosters. A participant in the NIC

group reported, “It was such an awesome experience. Was a lot of work but a major benefit,” while another participant shared that, “I have told people that this is a great learning environment and is an opportunity provided by the State!”

The CAS mentors began two new study groups, one focused on the National Interpreter Certification (NIC) knowledge exam and the other focused on the EIPA performance exam. The NIC study group started in June 2024 and will end in October 2024. It consists of fourteen participants. The EIPA study group also started in June 2024 and will conclude in November 2024. This study group includes ten participants.

School District Professional Development Days

The Clark County School District has invited the CAS mentor team to present on effective mentorship practices at their September Professional Development Day.

Nevada Interpreter/CART Registry

Below is the data report for registry as of July 19, 2024:

Registration type	In State	Out of State	Totals
Community	55	361	416
Provisional Community	18	8	26
Educational	4	14	18
Provisional Educational	23	5	28
Community & Educational	68	35	103
Provisional Community & Educational	17	7	24
Totals	185	430	615

The Registry is nearing the end of the renewal period. Interpreters must renew by August 1 to maintain their registration. Renewal applications are accepted beginning in May until August 1 every year, with a 30-day grace period.

Additional Information

The newest member of the CAS interpreter/mentor team, Michelle Montelongo, was invited by Jesus Remigio, current RID VP and incoming President, to co-present at the Deaf in Healthcare Summit on May 5, 2024. This was a national virtual conference hosted by Corey Axelrod of 2axend. The title of the presentation was, *Experiencing Mental Health Through the Lens of Case Scenarios*. The seminar focused on 1.) recognizing mental health themes in everyday settings, 2.) providing a safe venue for interpreters to explore ethical decision-making approaches and 3.) identifying stakeholders within mental health settings. The seminar garnered over 300 attendees. Most of the attendees were interpreter educators, health care professionals, students of interpreting preparation programs, and interpreters.

The American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association (ADARA) held their 2024 conference at the end of May. The CAS interpreter/mentors were honored to have their presentation, regarding the state of Nevada's mentoring program, selected. The presentation is titled, *Teaching to Fish: A Holistic Approach to Mentoring Interpreters*. Additionally, this offered a prime opportunity for the CAS interpreter/mentors to network with national leaders in the field of dDeaf/hard of hearing services and promote the open CAS Sign Language Interpreter/Mentor position.

The CAS team attended the annual Meet and Greet event hosted by the College of Southern Nevada on May 8, 2024. This event is provided by the college for recent graduates of the interpreter preparation program to network with potential employers, referral agencies, State entities, and non-profit organizations. They provided information about the CAS Mentorship Program and study groups, and the Registry and registration requirements.

The CAS Program Manager was invited to attend the Beyond the Deaf Home Camp in Las Vegas on June 14th to interact with the deaf and hard of hearing campers and to provide outreach at their Transition Day on the 15th.

The Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD) office in Reno has moved to a new location. The new address is 10375 Professional Circle, Reno, NV 89521.

For more information about the CAS program and services, please see the link to CAS webpage at [CAS \(nv.gov\)](https://cas.nv.gov).