

From: [Lorraine Belt](#)
To: [Lorraine Belt](#)
Subject: Feedback related to access to adult services and a deaf center
Date: Tuesday, May 7, 2024 2:58:34 PM

Please see below the email exchange I had with Jeff Duncan and ADSD leadership regarding the CAS program.

Thanks!

Eric

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jeffrey S. Duncan <jsduncan@adsd.nv.gov>
Date: Tue, Apr 23, 2024 at 9:09 AM
Subject: RE: Feedback related to access to adult services and a deaf center
To: Eric Wilcox
Cc: Adrienne Navarro <AMNNavarro@adsd.nv.gov>, Cheyenne Pasquale <cpasquale@adsd.nv.gov>, Susan J. Beckett, LaDonne Knighten <LKnighten@adsd.nv.gov>, Obioma Officer <Obioma@adsd.nv.gov>

Eric, please our responses below along with the 2 attached documents. Let us know when you would like to discuss further.

1) 1. Without a deaf center, and only poorly delivered services by NV Care Connection, the community is naturally questioning how the CAS program funds that used to support the Deaf Centers of Nevada are now being spent. I have received two separate inquiries from disparate corners of the community asking for an accounting. We would like to request that we be provided with an accounting of the expenditures of the telecommunication surcharge funds for the fiscal years since July 1 2021 following the closing of the Deaf Centers of Nevada.

ADSD Response: See attached for expenditures. The total budget for direct services (inclusive of language acquisition, telecommunications equipment, and access to services) is \$1,709,470. The resource centers receive \$350,000 of that to serve individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired. This allocation has remained the same since SFY2022. This amount was determined based on the analysis of the DCN budget and the amount they previously allocated for access to services.

2) 2. One of the major challenges faced by the Deaf Centers of Nevada was meeting the matching funds obligation that was placed on them. Given that this obligation began at \$0 in the early years of DCN and grew to be an insurmountable challenge at the end, a question has been raised about exactly what rules are being applied to dictate the matching fund requirement and where those regulations reside? Should a similar rule apply to a future grantee, it is reasonable to fear that the same vulnerability will arise again. Can you clarify for us which rules dictate the matching fund requirement? And where in the code or statute these rules reside?

ADSD Response: The Deaf Centers of Nevada never had a match requirement placed on them. In State Fiscal Year 2021 ADSD began implementing a 15% match requirement across service programs. However, the match requirement for services under the Communication

Access Services program did not go into effect until State Fiscal Year 2022, by which time Deaf Centers of Nevada had already closed their doors. The [ADSD Requirements and Procedures for Grant Programs \(RPGP\)](#) states “All funded grantees may be required to provide matching funds. Any exceptions must be requested in writing and approved by the ADSD’s program manager.” (page 16)

3) 3. In light of the lack of success of NV Care Connection, and the many complaints we have heard about lack of responsiveness and a lack of ability to communicate with the community by NV Care Connection, we hope that there is a plan to solicit for new proposers to establish deaf centers and provide the access to services support to the adult community that has been lacking. Should a new NOFO be released I think it is essential that proposers be obligated to demonstrate their competence and understanding of Deaf culture and modes of communication with the target population. The deaf commission has tried consistently to communicate to both ADSD and NV Care Connection how critical it is that the agency providing these services have these competencies. Nevertheless, this hasn't been addressed. This should be a critical element of the proposal review process before awarding CAS program funding.

ADSD Response: ADSD continues to provide training and support to the NV Care Connection resource centers to increase deaf awareness. To enhance the ability to communicate with the deaf and hard of hearing community, the resource centers continue to try to recruit individuals that have experience working with deaf individuals and/or who know American Sign Language, as positions become vacant. ADSD continues to address any complaints related to responsiveness as this information is provided to us. Upon the next competitive NOFO release for Access to Services, ADSD certainly encourages any and all entities to apply.

4) 4. To put it bluntly, there is a perception in the community that ADSD has sought to siphon off the telecommunication surcharge funding to prop up the finances of organizations that were not previously serving the deaf community and are not now doing so adequately. The fact that a deaf-led proposer to the NOFO a couple of years ago (albeit one from out-of-state) was apparently deemed unqualified, has helped perpetuate this perception. The review process of the proposals to provide the services under the telecommunication surcharge-funded CAS program must exhibit transparency and community buy-in, or it runs the risk of being perceived as a rigged process. I strongly urge you to include representation from the community in the proposal review process to avoid this risk.

ADSD Response: The proposal received under the previously released NOFO was denied because it did not meet the service requirements of the NOFO. ADSD is planning to release a competitive NOFO for access to services at the beginning of 2025 for services to begin in state fiscal year 2026. When developing our notice of funding opportunity, we utilize community feedback, as well as that of the Commission, to inform the content. We also have a mechanism in place to solicit external reviewers for the competitive NOFO process, and we will ensure that the Commission is aware of this opportunity.

Thank you.

Jeff

Jeff Duncan (he/him/his)
Agency Manager

Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
Aging and Disability Services Division
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From: Eric Wilcox

Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2024 8:45

AM

To: Jeffrey S. Duncan <jsduncan@adsd.nv.gov>

Cc: Adrienne Navarro <AMNavarro@adsd.nv.gov>; Cheyenne Pasquale <cpasquale@adsd.nv.gov>; Susan J. Beckett; LaDonne Knighten <LKnighten@adsd.nv.gov>

Subject: Re: Feedback related to access to adult services and a deaf center

Hi Jeff and team:

Just wanted to bring this item back to the top of the in-box, as I don't think we ever followed up on this. We continue to get inquiries from the community about accounting for how exactly the surcharge funds are getting used, and a general perception that these funds are not being used as effectively as they could, particularly for the adult access to services. The LV Deaf Seniors have specifically asked me if we could see accounting for the past few years.

Thanks!

Eric

Eric Wilcox

Chair, NV Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

On Tue, Nov 7, 2023 at 10:36 AM Jeffrey S. Duncan <jsduncan@adsd.nv.gov> wrote:

Hello Eric. This is confirmation that I have received your email, and I will follow up. FYI, it will be at the end of this month, if not early December.

Thank you.

Jeff Duncan (he/him/his)

Agency Manager

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From: Eric Wilcox

Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 11:03 AM

To: Jeffrey S. Duncan <jsduncan@adsd.nv.gov>

Cc: Adrienne Navarro <AMNavarro@adsd.nv.gov>; Cheyenne Pasquale <cpasquale@adsd.nv.gov>; Susan J. Beckett

Subject: Feedback related to access to adult services and a deaf center
Dear Jeff,

In the wake of the recent round of town hall sessions held by the Deaf Commission it is clear that the state is still struggling to fulfil its obligation to provide services to the deaf community, particularly the adult population. The ongoing lack of a center for the deaf is a complaint we heard from many attendees in both the north and the south and demands our attention. Given that, what follows here is a request for some information and some recommendations I would like to make to help ensure that we make some overdue forward progress.

1) Without a deaf center, and only poorly delivered services by NV Care Connection, the community is naturally questioning how the CAS program funds that used to support the Deaf Centers of Nevada are now being spent. I have received two separate inquiries from disparate corners of the community asking for an accounting. We would like to request that we be provided with an accounting of the expenditures of the telecommunication surcharge funds for the fiscal years since July 1 2021 following the closing of the Deaf Centers of Nevada.

2) One of the major challenges faced by the Deaf Centers of Nevada was meeting the matching funds obligation that was placed on them. Given that this obligation began at \$0 in the early years of DCN and grew to be an insurmountable challenge at the end, a question has been raised about exactly what rules are being applied to dictate the matching fund requirement and where those regulations reside? Should a similar rule apply to a future grantee, it is reasonable to fear that the same vulnerability will arise again. Can you clarify for us which rules dictate the matching fund requirement? And where in the code or statute these rules reside?

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4) To put it bluntly, there is a perception in the community that ADSD has sought to siphon off the telecommunication surcharge funding to prop up the finances of organizations that were not previously serving the deaf community and are not now doing so adequately. The fact that a deaf-led proposer to the NOFO a couple of years ago (albeit one from out-of-state) was apparently deemed unqualified, has helped perpetuate this perception. The review process of the proposals to provide the services under the telecommunication surcharge-funded CAS program must exhibit transparency and community buy-in, or it runs the risk of being perceived as a rigged process. I strongly urge you to include representation from the community

in the proposal review process to avoid this risk.

Thanks so much for considering these requests and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,
Eric