

## Communication Access Services (CAS) – Program Report – 2/14/2024

Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

### Relay Nevada

Hamilton Telecommunications continues to provide analog (landline) 711 relay services via *Relay Nevada*. Usage of 711 relay continues to slowly decline as users migrate to Internet and wireless-based services. TTY usage is now at approximately 4,000 minutes per month, and analog captioned telephone service (CapTel) usage is at about 2,000 minutes per month statewide. The migration of all users to the Internet and wireless services remains the focus of the relay program, given the declining usage of the services. When analog relay usage eventually ends, the focus of the state's telecommunications access efforts will be through expansion of the Nevada Telecommunications Equipment Program, which can educate, refer, and distribute IP-based equipment to relay users in Nevada. Accordingly, Jenn Montoya, CAS Program Manager and Andy Firth, Nevada Relay Administrator, have been networking with staff from equipment distribution programs in other states to learn about and explore ideas for purchase and distribution of IP-compatible equipment and services to Nevada residents who are deaf, hard of hearing and speech disabled, such as smartphones and tablets pre-loaded with relay applications. Finally, Hamilton has begun a "Relay Friendly Business" (RFB) initiative in Nevada. This program teaches businesses and organizations about best practices when accepting or placing calls with relay users. The first RFB training was successfully delivered to A Greater Hope, a non-profit organization in Henderson.

### Communication Access Service Centers

Below is the report from the community partners for the second quarter (October 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023):

**University of Nevada, Reno (UNR)'s Nevada Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program (NTEDP)** continues to provide telecommunication equipment across the State. Outreach also continues to take place around the State. The NTEDP team has attended events including the Deaf Engagement Conference in December and the Senior Resource Fair in Reno on January 23, 2024. The northern office has plans to provide outreach to two Assisted Living Facilities in the Reno area and a Resource Fair in Lyon County. Two of NTEDP staff attended the Assistive Technology Industry Association National Conference in Orlando, Florida and gathered information about current and new technology for people with disabilities. The NTEDP team is working on an upcoming presentation and in service training with the Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD) office in Las Vegas to assist with improving effective communication. Resources will be discussed such as handling drop in visits and using available tools and procedures to improve communication. NTEDP is in the final stages of hiring a Senior Project Coordinator for the Las Vegas Office. This position will provide additional personnel to handle the need in southern Nevada and assist the team with data collection and reporting for the program.

**Communication Services for the Deaf (CSD) Learns** had a positive second quarter, providing ASL 1 and 2 courses to Nevada residents who live or work with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. They contacted 65 Nevada-based organizations to promote their five eight-week sessions from September 2023 to June 2024. Their second session was a success, with 30 enrolled for the ASL 1 course and two enrolled for the

ASL 2 course. Future ASL 1 and 2 courses which are filling up close to their maximum capacity, which is 40 seats. They are in their current third session for ASL 1 and 2, which started on January 16th and will run through March 8th, 2024. CSD Learns will expand its ASL course offerings and introduce ASL 3 and 4 courses for in the Spring, allowing Nevadans to continue their sequential ASL learning journey. The dates for Spring sessions are March 11th – May 3rd and May 6th – June 28th.

**Nevada Hands and Voices (NVHV)** filled their open positions and began onboarding two new Guide by Your Side Parent Guides, four new Guide by Your Side Deaf/Hard of Hearing Guides, and four new ASTra Educational Advocates. They currently have a full team of 17 staff. The training and onboarding for new staff will be completed between January-March for them to be able to join the current staff to provide services to families across Nevada. NVHV provided 195 direct services between three Parent Guides, 23 direct services between two Deaf/Hard of Hearing Guides and 19 direct services between one ASTra Advocate. NVHV held their monthly ASL Interpreted Storytime in collaboration with Las Vegas Clark County Library District and Language Playgroups for children from birth to 3 years old in collaboration with Nevada Early Intervention Services in Reno. They also held their virtual Parent Only Coffee Chats and Growing Book by Book Literacy events. They hosted their Signing Santa event in collaboration with Washoe County School District and Northern Rural Family Summit in collaboration with Elko County School District and Nevada Early Intervention Services. NVHV participated in the Northern Nevada RAVE Family Foundation's Trunk or Treat and the Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing's Engagement Conference and Nevada Association for the Deaf Winter Gala in Las Vegas.

**Nevada Care Connection (NVCC)** had a total of 138 Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened, and Speech Impaired consumers and 208.5 hours of services provided. There were 51 consumers that were assisted in the rural areas and 120.5 hours of services provided. In the urban areas, there were 35 consumers that were assisted, and 92.25 hours of services provided. The top three topics were Homemaker Services which assists individuals with their household tasks, followed by 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.

## 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: 16 mentees between three CAS mentors

### Certification Study Groups

CAS mentors are currently facilitating two study groups to prepare interpreters for the National Interpreter Certification (NIC) performance exam and the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA), which are now at their midpoint. The NIC study group started on October 23, 2023,

and will end on April 8, 2024. The NIC study group consists of nine participants. The EIPA study group started on November 1, 2023, and will conclude on April 17, 2024, and includes ten participants.

The Center for the Assessment of Sign Language Interpreters (CASLI) has published the nationwide pass/fail rates for candidates who took the knowledge exam between July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022. These are the first pass/fail rates published since CASLI revamped the NIC. The knowledge exam consists of two portions, each scored separately: Fundamentals of Interpreting and Ethical Decision Making & Cultural Responsiveness. The national pass rate stands at 59% for the Fundamentals of Interpreting portion and 70% for the Ethical Decision Making & Cultural Responsiveness portion. *The current rates for participants in the CAS study groups for the NIC knowledge exam are in line with or above these national rates.* To date, 69% of CAS study group participants have passed the Fundamentals of Interpreting portion and 69% have passed the Ethical Decision Making & Cultural Responsiveness portion.

	<b>National pass/fail rate.</b> National Interpreter Certification Knowledge Exam (July 2021 – June 2022; latest data published by CASLI)	<b>CAS study group pass/fail rate.</b> National Interpreter Certification Knowledge Exam (August 2021 – November 2023)
Fundamentals of Interpreting	59%	69%
Ethical Decision Making & Cultural Responsiveness	70%	69%

CASLI has not yet published pass/fail rates for the NIC performance exam as this exam is still in the beta period of the test development process.

### School District Professional Development Days

CAS mentors provided professional development workshops for interpreters for the Washoe County School District and Elko County School District over the last three months.

Carson City School District has requested the CAS mentors to facilitate their monthly Professional Learning Community Days over the spring semester for their interpreters.

### Nevada Interpreter/CART Registry

Below is the data report for registry as of January 29, 2024:

Registration type	In State	Out of State	Totals
<b>Community</b>	52	302	354
<b>Provisional Community</b>	10	7	17
<b>Educational</b>	4	12	16
<b>Provisional Educational</b>	22	4	26

<b>Community &amp; Educational</b>	70	34	104
<b>Provisional Community &amp; Educational</b>	17	6	23
<b>Totals</b>	175	365	<b>540</b>

Kim Johnson, who manages the Registry, hosted a booth at the Engagement Conference on December 16, 2023, in Las Vegas. She was able to meet with interpreters, interpreting students, and community members to provide information about the Registry and registration requirements.

### **Additional Information**

The CAS interpreter team collaborated with the Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing by providing support leading up to the Engagement Conference on December 2023 in the form of consultation on and coordination of interpreting, as well as direct interpreting services during the conference.

For more information about the CAS program and services, please see the link to CAS webpage 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](#)