

NEVADA COMMISSION FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

(DRAFT) Position on Services Provided to People who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH)

Scope: The **Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NVCDHH)** is established to provide advocacy on behalf of individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH), including the development of the Nevada State Plan for the Deaf (D), Hard of Hearing (HH), Speech-Impaired (SI), DeafBlind (DB), and Deaf Plus (D+). The Commission, established in 2017, works to promote full inclusion, equal access, and self-sufficiency of D/HH/SI/DB/D+ in the State of Nevada. As an advisory and advocacy body to the state, local government, policymakers, and stakeholders, the NVCDHH makes recommendations to address systemic barriers and to advocate for policies that enhance communication access, education, healthcare, employment, and community engagement. Statutory Authority: [NRS 427A.70](#).

For the purposes of this position statement the term “Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH)” will be used throughout this document to include persons who are Deaf (D), DeafBlind (DB), Hard of Hearing (HH), Speech Impaired (SI), and Deaf or Hard of Hearing Plus (D/HH+).

Services Provided to People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (D/HH)

Services tailored to the needs of individuals who are Deaf **and** Hard of Hearing Plus (D/HH) are critical to ensuring equitable access, inclusion, and empowerment. These services must be delivered by qualified professionals with lived experience and expertise in addressing the unique challenges faced by D/HH individuals.

The Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NVCDHH) advocates for enhancing communication accessibility, ensuring the fair distribution of resources, and prioritizing culturally competent service delivery.

The Need for Qualified Professionals:

- Services for D/HH individuals should be provided by professionals who not only possess technical qualifications but also have lived experiences as D/HH individuals or in-depth knowledge of the D/HH community.
- Such professionals are uniquely positioned to understand the cultural, linguistic, and emotional nuances of being D/HH, allowing them to offer services that are empathetic, effective, and tailored to the needs of the community.

Enhancing Communication Accessibility and Services:

- Communication access is a cornerstone of providing equitable services to D/HH individuals. This includes the availability of American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters, captioning services, and assistive technologies.
- Services must extend to critical areas, including healthcare, education, employment, **government**, and community engagement, to ensure comprehensive accessibility.

- Statewide efforts should focus on reducing communication barriers by investing in innovative technologies and training programs for service providers.

Ensuring Fair Distribution of Resources:

- Resources must be distributed equitably to address the diverse needs of the D/HH population, including those in rural and underserved areas.
- Funding for programs and services should prioritize accessibility, quality, and inclusivity.
- Policies should ensure transparency and accountability in resource allocation, promoting trust and collaboration between service providers and the D/HH community.

Policy Recommendations:

1. Promote Culturally Competent Service Delivery

- Require service providers to have certifications or training in working with D/HH individuals, with a preference for professionals with lived experience.
- Develop mentorship programs to support emerging professionals from the D/HH community.

2. Expand Communication Accessibility

- Increase funding for ASL Interpreters, captioning services, and assistive technologies.
- Ensure that public services, including healthcare, education, and government programs, meet accessibility standards.

3. Equitable Resource Allocation

- Implement policies to distribute resources based on population needs, ensuring that rural and underserved areas receive adequate support.
- Regularly assess and address gaps in services to ensure comprehensive coverage.

4. Foster Public Awareness and Advocacy

- Launch awareness campaigns to educate the public and policymakers about the unique needs of D/HH individuals.
- Partner with community organizations to advocate for systemic changes that enhance accessibility and inclusion.

Proposed Next Steps (Call to Action): Meeting the needs of D/HH individuals requires a collaborative and proactive approach that prioritizes culturally competent services, communication accessibility, and equitable resource distribution. Policymakers, service providers, and community leaders must work together to create a Nevada where all individuals, regardless of hearing ability, can thrive.

Conclusion: By investing in qualified professionals, enhancing communication accessibility, and ensuring fair distribution of resources, Nevada can lead the way in providing exemplary services to its

D/HH population. These efforts will not only empower individuals but also strengthen the fabric of our communities through greater inclusivity and understanding.