

Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Director and Chair Report 2025

November 12, 2025

General Update(s)

Eric Wilcox, Chair

Budget

- Budget Update (FY26 Starting funds of \$34,282)
 - Total Spent/Obligated (through 10/3/2025): \$3,633.91
 - Balance (as of 10/3/2025): \$30,648.09

Membership Update(s)

Eric Wilcox, Chair
Catherine Nielsen, Vice Chair

Recently Filled Positions

- Updates or appointments to report:
 - (b) One member who is a member of the Nevada Association of the Deaf, or, if it ceases to exist, one member who represents an organization which has a membership of persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired
Lee Bullock – [ready for Governor's review in the upcoming weeks](#)
 - (g) One member who represents educators in this State and has knowledge concerning the provision of communication services to persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schools and the laws concerning the provision of those services
David Kelsey – [ready for Governor's review in the upcoming weeks](#)
 - (h) One member who represents an advocacy organization whose membership consists of persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired
Paula Koerwitz – [ready for Governor's review in the upcoming weeks](#)
 - (i) One member who is deaf or hard of hearing
Jaime Vitale – [waiting on DPS notes for waiver before appointment documents can continue being processed; seat has also been updated in our records, previously had Vitale on seat h](#)
 - (j) One member who specializes in issues relating to the employment of persons with disabilities
Lora Turner – [application submitted 11/3/2025](#)

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- (l) One member who: (1) Is registered with the Division pursuant to [NRS 656A.100](#) to engage in the practice of sign language interpreting; and (2) To the extent practicable, has experience with and knowledge of interpreting in a primary or secondary educational setting and a post-secondary educational setting and freelance interpreting
[No application or waiver on file.](#)
- If interested in Vacant Seats outlined below, please be sure to apply online https://hal.nv.gov/form/Governor/Boards_and_Commissions_Application.
 - For additional support in the process, please reach out to O. Officer, D/HH Commission Executive Director, to support your efforts and appointment initiative.
 - **Please Note: Decisions are made by the Governor, at their pleasure and discretion.** O. Officer is only available for further directional assistance in navigating the online submission process and can support if further clarification is needed in the waiting period. Boards should be contact directly for further assistance: Boards <boards@gov.nv.gov>.

Current Open Position(s) Report from Boards (Dated: 10/29/2024):

Our records show the following vacancies for the Commission for Persons who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired:

(b) One member who is a member of the Nevada Association of the Deaf, or, if it ceases to exist, one member who represents an organization which has a membership of persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired.

(d) One nonvoting member who is the Executive Director of the Nevada Telecommunications Association or, in the event of its dissolution, who represents the telecommunications industry.

– Inactive

(g) One member who represents educators in this State and has knowledge concerning the provision of communication services to persons *hearing or speech impaired* in elementary, secondary and postsecondary schools and the laws concerning the provision of those services.

(h) One member who represents an advocacy organization whose membership consists of persons who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired

(i) One member who is deaf or hard of hearing

(j) One member who specializes in issues relating to the employment of persons with disabilities

(l) One member who:

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(1) Is registered with the Division pursuant to NRS 656A.100 to engage in the practice of sign language interpreting: and

(2) To the extent practicable, has experience with and knowledge of interpreting in a primary or secondary educational setting and a post-secondary educational setting and freelance interpreting.

Outreach Efforts/Events/Announcements

Obioma Officer, ED

Eric Wilcox, Chair

Outreach Open for Discussion

- **Tour 2 OUTCOMES Oct. 2025 Statewide Townhall Tour – All Meetings held in person.**
 - **HIGHLIGHTED TOPIC(S):** Discuss lessons learned and how to prepare for the Legislative session in 2027, Explore how recent laws impact daily life, provide feedback on D/HH service provisions, contribute to the Commission’s annual report and December 2025 Engagement Conference, and help shape future initiatives that promote autonomy, equity, and access.
 - **Locations and Attendance:**
 - **Townhall (North) Outcomes – Friday, Oct.10, 2025 | 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**
University of Nevada, Reno
Davidson Math and Science Center – Room 105
1664 N. Virginia St., Reno, NV 89557
- **Attendance: RSVP - 23; Onsite Sign-In - 44; Head Count - 53**
 - **Townhall (Rural) Outcomes – Monday, Oct. 20, 2025 | 4:30 PM – 6:30 PM**
Laughlin Library
2840 South Needles Hwy., Laughlin, NV 89029
- **Attendance: RSVP - 7; Onsite Sign-In - 6; Head Count - 7**
 - **Collab (South): Hosted by Sammy’s DEN and Nevada Black Deaf Advocates (NVBDA) in Collaboration with Deaf Commission– Tuesday, October 21st | 5 PM – 9 PM**
Roundtable Pizza, 7460 W Lake Mead Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89128
- **Attendance: 55+ (including children)**
 - **Townhall (South) – Las Vegas, NV – Wednesday, Oct. 22, 2025 | 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM**

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East Las Vegas Library

2851 East Bonanza Road, Las Vegas, NV 89101

- **Attendance: RSVP - 110; Onsite Sign-In - 112; Head Count - 124**

- **2026 Calendar: Proposed Adjustment**

- **Spring 2026 Townhall Tour**

- Townhall (Rural) – Elko, NV – Monday, February 23rd, 2026

- Location: TBA

- Townhall (North) – Reno, NV – Wednesday, February 25th, 2026

- Location: TBA

- Townhall (South) – Las Vegas, NV – March 12th, 2026

- Location: TBA

- **Reminder- D/HH Empowerment Weekend:**

- Friday, December 12th, 2025– Community Winter Gala; Hosted by: Sammy’s DEN – Highlighting D/HH Commission’s Community Gratitude Ceremony and Silent Auction (proceeds to benefit Nevada’s Deaf Day at the Legislator 2027).

- For further details on the above event, please see Sammy’s D.E.N. for Community Winter Gala.

- All Commissioners are welcome to attend in support of the Community and Gratitude Ceremony.

- Saturday, December 13th, 2025– Conference Day 1 & Community Event

- NVCDHH Engagement Conference 2025 Day 1, at 8am-5pm.

- All Commissioners to be present and registered. Travel assistance available.

- DeafBlind/Deaf/Hard of Hearing Night Out; Hosted by: Deaf Night Out (DNO) and Sammy’s D.E.N.; following Day 1 Engagement Conference.

- Saturday, December 14th, 2025, – Conference Day 2

- NVCDHH Engagement Conference 2025 Day 1, at 10am-6pm.

- All Commissioners to be present and registered. Travel assistance available.

- **FY 2026 Deaf and Hard of Hearing Conferences and/or Nevada Conferences with D/HH components:**

- **January 2026**

- **ACE-DHH Conference:** Potential dates January 28–31 in Denver, CO. Hosted by the Association of College Educators - Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

- **March 2026**

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- [EHDI Conference](#): March 15–17 in Jacksonville, FL. Focuses on Early Hearing Detection and Intervention programs.
- **April 2026**
 - [DHHBA Conference](#): April 22–23 in Washington, D.C. Focuses on DHH legal professionals.
 - [2axend Deaf In Healthcare Summit](#): April 17–19, virtual. For interpreters in healthcare.
 - [Language First Conference](#): April 14–15. Focuses on ASL-English bilingual education.
- **May 2026**
 - [ADARA Conference](#): May 26–30 in Salt Lake City, Utah. It covers vocational rehabilitation, behavioral health, education, and more.
- **June 2026**
 - [HLAA 2026 Convention](#): June 10–12 in Louisville, KY. A general hearing health and community convention.
 - [Moog Center Biennial Conference](#): June 12–13. A biennial conference for professionals who serve children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
 - [NAD - National Association of the Deaf](#): June 20–July 5 in San Francisco, CA. The 58th Biennial NAD Conference at the Hilton San Francisco Union Square for an unforgettable week of connection, learning, and celebration.
- **November 2026**
 - [Coalition for Global Hearing Health](#): November 20–22 in Chennai, India. Focuses on ear and hearing health in low-resource communities.

Event(s)

- CSD Presentation for LVDS and Community in Las Vegas, NV – August 14th, 2025
- ASL Accessible Therapist Network Meet and Greet in Las Vegas, NV – September 13th, 2025
- Sammy's D.E.N. Pasta Night in Las Vegas, NV – October 3rd, 2025
- Nevada Hands & Voices (NVHV) Trunk or Treat D/HH Resource Fair in Las Vegas, NV – October 11th, 2025
 - **Outcomes:** Commission had a Vendor Booth and handed out registration opportunities and flyers for 2025 Engagement Conference
- CAS Information & Q&A Session on NOFO Process in Las Vegas, NV – October 21st, 2025
 - **Next Session:**
 - **Date:** Tuesday, November 18th, 2025

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- **Time:** 3:00 PM to 4:30 PM
- **Location:** Aging & Disability Services Division (ADSD) office, 10375 Professional Circle, Reno, NV 89521

Announcement(s)

- **Holiday:** Thanksgiving Break – Thursday, November 27th
- **Holiday:** Holiday: Family Day – Friday, November 28th
- **NV D/DB/HH Empowerment Weekend:**
 - Friday, December 12th – Community Winter Gala; Host: Sammy's DEN – Highlighting D/HH Commission's Community Gratitude Ceremony
 - Saturday, December 13th to 14th – NVCDHH Engagement Conference 2025
- **Holiday:** Christmas – December 25th
- **Holiday:** New Year's Day – Thursday, January 1st
- **Holiday:** MLK Jr. Day – Monday, January 19th

Community Contact(s) – For Possible Action

Obioma Officer, ED
Eric Wilcox, Chair

This section is being added for the Director/Chairperson to report major issues/concerns reported by the community to the Commission.

Executive Director:

Obioma U. Officer, ED

- **For Discussion and Possible Action:** Discussion and Vote to approve becoming a partner in the efforts of The Carter Center. Efforts are sought to join the development of a Non-Partisan Election Observation and ADA Advancement effort in the State of Nevada with Deaf and Hard of Hearing constituents in mind and at the table of discussion.
 - Program development and collaboration is current under the consultation and guidance of Stacey Shinn, our ongoing ally in Legislative and Voters participation in Policy development.
 - No fees for partnering with these efforts but does have potential revenue opportunities for those we guide to training as D/HH Observers at polling sites.
 - Attachments/materials will be included in the two documents found in materials for this meeting.
- **For Discussion and Possible Action:** Discussion and Vote to approve membership in the National Council on Independent Living – ADSD received a formal letter addressed to

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Obioma Officer, ED of the Deaf Commission to Join NCIL. Please see the following links for Membership and the Benefits of this allyship:

- **Webpage** (<https://ncil.org/>)
- **Join NCIL** (<https://ncil.org/member-center/>)
- **View NCIL Member Benefits** (<https://ncil.org/member-center/member-benefits/>)
- **Membership Fees** (<https://ncil.org/member-center/dues/>)
 - **Organizational Dues Chart**
NCIL Organizational Dues Chart: For Centers for Independent Living, Statewide Independent Living Councils, and other organizations
Operating Budget (minus pass-through funds) = Dues Less than \$100,000
= \$150 – **NV Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing Level**

Chair and/or Vice Chair:

Eric Wilcox, Chair

Catherine Nielsen, Vice Chair

- All concerns addressed in agenda.

Networking Efforts: Resources/Collaborations/Potential Partner/Partners

Obioma Officer, ED

Network System

- If you are interested in one of our networking options, please email us at NVDeafCommission@adsd.nv.gov and we will get you started TODAY!
- For more information and to learn more about the Commission's ongoing vision, please check us out at [Nevada Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf Hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired \(nv.gov\)](https://www.nv.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing).

Recent Resources/Collaborative relationships/efforts

All efforts current 2025 efforts.

- **ADSD- Adult Protective Services (APS) – CJ Johnson**
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - To collaborate strategies, opportunities, and next steps for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) outreach efforts going forward, including the 2025

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- Engagement Conference scheduled for December 13th and 14th focusing on building sustainable partnerships and community engagement.
 - Presenter for breakout session at the 2025 Engagement conference and joined the Planning Team
 - **Last Meeting:** September 10th 2025
- ASD- Office of Consumer Health Assistance (OCHA): Ombudsman Program – Fabiola Chavez-Jimenez, Ombudsman
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - NV Deaf Commission Engagement Conference Presenter Request – Information/Discussion
 - **Last Meeting:** September 19th, 2025
- All Voting is Local – Chanel Cassanello and Kerry Durmick
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - 2025 Engagement Conference Kenote Speakers and Breakout Session Speakers
 - Sponsorship for Accommodations for 2025 Engagement Conference Accommodation needs and general Conference needs
 - Ongoing Voting Accessibility and D/HH Feedback on New Bill education on resources available
 - **Last Meeting:** May 5, 2024
- American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Nevada – Kaylah Maese, ACLU Nevada Policy Manager
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - Host breakout session for 2025 Engagement Conference
 - **Last Meeting:** September 10th, 2025
- College of Southern Nevada (CSN) – West Charleston Campus
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - Venue for 2025 Engagement Conference
 - **Last meeting:** September 25th, 2025
- Communication Services for the Deaf, Inc. – Christina Hopewell-Albert and Team
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - Clarification of Community efforts and collaborative opportunities
 - 2025 Engagement Conference Presenters and Sponsorship
 - Reconnecting with Cam and Ryan on additional projects and opportunities to connect with Nevadans.
 - **Last Meeting:** August 28th, 2025
- Communication Services for the Deaf, Inc. – Cameron Papazis and Ryan

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- **Current Efforts:**
 - Reconnecting on additional projects and opportunities to connect with Nevadans.
- **Last Meeting:** September 17th, 2025
- Deaf Seniors of America – Sheri Collins
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - SC present for this years 2025 Engagement Conference on the Senior Citizens Track and Keynote/MC Host for the Community Panel.
 - **Last Meeting:** August 25, 2025
- DETR Vocational Rehabilitation – Lora Turner
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - 2025 Engagement Conference Collaborative Efforts and Accommodations Support.
 - **Last Meeting:** November 3rd, 2025
- eConnection- AARP NV – Justin Chavez
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - Seeking presentation for 2025 Engagement Conference on local resources in Nevada.
 - Currently not well versed in the D/HH community and does not hold the staff capacity to pursue new initiatives.
 - **Last Meeting:** August 18, 2025
- F2F – Salvatore Fiorentino
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - Check in and clarification of collaborative efforts for D/HH in Nevada
 - **Last Meeting:** September 4th, 2025
- Hauck Consulting – Dolores Hauck
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - Check-in and continued efforts to expand D/HH Resource opportunities with mainstream Disability resources and collaborations.
 - **Last Meeting:** September 19th, 2025
- Helen Kelly National Center (HKNC) – Chad Metcalf
 - **Current Efforts/Request:**
 - Attend the 2025 Engagement Conference to provide presentation on NV DeafBlind Resources. – Unfortunately, per email dated August 25th, 2025 , will no longer be able to attend and referred me to Keith Clark of T-Mobile.
 - **Last Meeting:** August 13, 2025

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- Hunta Williams – DeafBlind C/DI and Specialist
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - Presenter/Keynote for 2025 Engagement Conference
 - **Last Meeting:** August 8th, 2025
- LVCVA – Jim Michael
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - Debrief from DeafNation World Expo and additional D/HH Outreach Events
 - Upcoming events and check-in for future efforts in 2027
 - **Last Meeting:** August 13, 2025
 - **Last Call:** November 3, 2025 – Setting up meeting for Week of Thanksgiving.
- Las Vegas Deaf Seniors (LVDS)
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - 2025 Engagement Conference 3rd Party funding support, Planning Team, and Presenters.
 - Transitioning the Community Gala to the new host – Sammy's DEN.
 - **Last Meeting:** August 28th, 2025
- Mark Apodaca – Deaf School of New Mexico
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - Presenter/Keynote for 2025 Engagement Conference
 - **Last Meeting:** August 28th, 2025
- National Association of Interpreters in Education (NAIE)
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - 2025 Engagement Conference Breakout Session presenters
 - O. Officer join their NAIE Conference/Summit in 2026 in Las Vegas, NV as a presenter and local support.
 - **Last Meeting:** September 17th, 2025
- Nevada ASL Accessible Therapist Network
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - Collaborate or develop a co-op network for ASL Accessible Therapist in the state of Nevada. Hopes are to include workshops, resourcing, presentation opportunities, and outreach.
 - 2025 Engagement Conference Safe Space and Networking with national resources through Malibu Barron.
 - **Last meeting:** September 29th, 2025
- Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities
 - **Current Efforts:**

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- Ongoing D/HH Support and Resources
- Connection with Community to better understand the resources and revenue through other Disability resources available to the D/HH Community.
- Silver State Advocacy Conference 2026 Efforts – O. Officer on Planning Team.
- **Last Meeting:** August 21st, 2025
- The Barron Keller Impact – Malibu Barron, Trainer/Consultant
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - Deaf Consultant for 2025 Engagement Conference and Mental Health Safe Space for Conference
 - **Last Meeting:** September 29th, 2025
- T-Mobile – Keith Clark
 - **Current Efforts:**
 - Presenter for breakout session during the 2025 Engagement Conference
 - **Last Meeting:** September 3rd, 2025

2025 Meeting Schedule Reminder

Obioma U. Officer, ED

- **Next General Commission Meeting, Wednesday, February 11th, 2026, 9:00am.**
- **Upcoming Subcommittee Meetings:**
 - Legislative Subcommittee: Wednesday, February 3rd, 2026, @2:30pm – 3:45pm
 - Education Subcommittee: Wednesday, February 3rd, 2026, @4:00pm – 5:15pm
 - Accessibility Subcommittee: Friday, March 14th, 2026, @2:30pm – 3:45pm
 - Interpreter Subcommittee: Friday, September 14th, 2026, @4pm – 5:15pm
 - Accessibility Subcommittee: Friday, November 7th, 2025, @2:30pm – 3:45pm
 - Interpreter Subcommittee: Friday, November 7th, 2025, @4pm – 5:15pm