
NEVADA COMMISSION FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING – GENERAL MEETING

MEETING NOTICE

Date: February 11, 2026

Time: 9:00 AM

Pursuant to NRS 241.020(3)(a), as amended by Assembly Bill 253 of the 81st Legislative Session, this meeting will be held using remote technology only. The meeting can be listened to via telephone or viewed live over the internet.

Join Online:

Meeting Link: TEAMS Online

DRAFT MINUTES

Items may be taken out of order, combined for consideration, and/or removed from the agenda at the Chairperson's discretion.

1. Roll Call and Opening Statement:

Members: Angee Pompa; Eric Wilcox, Ph.D., Chair; Catherine Nielsen, Vice Chair; Carol Helou – Newly appointed 1/1/2026; David Kelsey, Ph.D. – Newly appointed 1/1/2026; Jaime Vitale; Kimberly Bauer-Schaub, Ph.D.; Lora Turner – Newly appointed 1/1/2026; and Paula Koerwitz – Newly appointed 1/1/2026.

Excused Abs: David Kelsey, Ph.D., Member; Eli Schwartz, Member; and Lee Bullock, Member.

Guests: Salvatore Fiorentino, Ruth Jensen, Jacqueline Shepard, Caroline Bass, Andrea Juillerat-Olvera, Andy Firth, Karina Acosta, Audrey Radef, Shauna Brennan, Daliah Jarrar-Jaha, Kim Nash, Kyla Christensen, Laura Fussell, Cathy Lutkin-Muehl, Beth Jones, Judy Yang, Molly Rose Lewis, Lorraine Belt-Dolan, Jaimarie Mangoba, Maureen Fraddianni, Mayumi Dimalanta, Sabrina Petrel, Samantha Orellana, Shelly Freed, Angee Pompa, David Stiles, Jasmine Crank, Cheyenne Pasquale, Paula Koerwitz, Ruth Jensen, Salvatore Fiorentino, Samantha Jayme, Jasmine Crank, Jennifer Montoya, Karina Acosta, Honey Houston, Kate Culhane, Dora, Darla Thompson, Betty Hammond, Beth Handler, Audrey Radef,

Interpreters: Jamie Jaramillo & Lisa Dopf

CART: Becky Van Auken

Staff: Lori Lutu, Regional Coordinator; Autumn Blattman, Regional Coordinator; Amanda Mata, AA III; Wendy Thornley, AA III; Hodan Edan, AA II

- 2. Public Comment:** Molly Rose Lewis – From Senator Jacky Rosen’s northern office for all things related to healthcare, the disability community and various other things, along with grant support for the whole state. Those having issues with social security, immigration, IRS and anything that’s a federal agency should contact her office at 775-560-1824 or mollyrose_lewis@rosen.senate.gov

Catherine Nielsen - Registration for the Silver State Self-Advocacy Conference in Las Vegas August 3rd and 4th is open and is accepting applicants for attendance and speakers. Travel funds are available for those that may need assistance. Attendance is free for individuals with disabilities and their family members. For those interested in speaking can register at the Silver State Self-Advocacy Conference website

<https://silverstateselfadvocacyconference2026.my.canva.site/>

- 3. For Possible Action:** Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Minutes of December 17, 2025, meeting.

Catherine Nielsen motioned to approve the draft minutes, Jaime Vitale seconded. Members voted and the motion carried.

- 4. For Information Only:** Review and discuss Office of Advocacy Rights Attorney (OARA), and NV AB461 – the implementation program to educate residents about long-term care planning. [AB461 Overview](#) by Shauna Brennan, ADSD Advocacy Rights Attorney

Please see meeting materials for highlights of the presentation.

- 5. For Information Only:** Report on activities of the ADSD Communication Access Services (CAS) Program by Jennifer Montoya, Social Services Program Specialist III

Please see meeting materials for highlights of the presentation.

- 6. For Possible Action:** Review of 2025 Engagement Conference Outcomes and Possible Vote to Approve proposed changes to 2026 Calendar for the Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing Engagement Conference. Obioma Officer, Executive Director

Feedback from the 2025 Engagement Conference was predominantly positive, with participants expressing appreciation for the information and resources provided. Some constructive feedback indicated a need for additional space for volunteers and smoother transitions between buildings. These concerns are understandable, and efforts will be made to improve accessibility and overall event logistics moving forward.

Angee Pompa - Was blown away by the community, the cooperation of everyone, the keynote speakers, the Deafblind, and the amazing work of Obioma and the commissioners for bringing it all together.

Paula Koerwitz - The interpreters were amazing; they were able to understand everything that was going on in the environment and context, It was the best she has ever seen.

Dr. David Kelsey - It was amazing to see the community, to learn and gather more information. His students attended and they learned an astronomical amount about the community and that was incredibly impressive. Dr. Kelsey stated that he wants to make sure we have more events like this so his students can keep attending.

Kimberly Bauer-Schaub - Wanted to give her input from two perspectives. First as a commissioner. Going to this conference blew her mind with expanding such a different perspective as a hearing individual and opened her eyes to so many different experiences that she was not aware of. Truly engaging with the community, meeting people, and hearing their stories and being open and vulnerable to talk. In addition, her daughter also attended and was able to talk and share, thanks to Nevada Hands and Voices. She is growing up as the next generation of advocates and learning to be a self-advocate. Her daughter is learning her identity, and the community was invested and showing her what it means to be an advocate and what it means to be who she is. As a mom she is grateful to everyone that has put this together and to give her daughter a wonderful opportunity and a safe space.

Lora Turner - Shouted out the volunteers, the ITP students really worked hard and where verry helpful. They were asking questions and getting involved. She looks forward to those students, improving their skills and the impact they will have on the community as they go into the workforce.

Vote to move the 2026 Nevada Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing Engagement Conference from December to November 13th – 15th 2026. Paula Koerwitz motioned to approve, Angee Pompa seconded. Members voted and the motion carried.

Partners for the community events will be LVDS and Deaf Seniors will conduct the award ceremony that will recognize members of the community and give out awards. The Deaf Night Out will be hosted by community partners as well. Sponsorship is still needed. Approximately \$77,000 was allocated for the 2025 conference. We anticipate requesting a similar amount, if not a modest increase, to support continued growth and expansion of the event.

- 7. For Possible Action:** Discuss accepted Presentation Request to the Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults with Special Needs on Monday, February 23, 2026. Possible Vote to Approve topics for the NV Commission for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing to present in accordance with Legislative Needs of the Commission and all barriers to access for the Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, and Speech Impaired community. Presentation and collaboration with the Las Vegas Deaf Seniors (LVDS). Obioma Officer, Executive Director and Eric Wilcox, Chair

Presentation of the following topics will be brought to the Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults with Special Needs on Monday, February 23, 2026.

- Closed captioning in public spaces
- ASL classified as a foreign language credit
- NV School for the Deaf
- Deaf and hard of hearing community living
- Deafblind support services included Support Service Provider (SSP) and Co Navigator (CN)
- Revisions to NRS 6565A and the NAC for interpreter registry

8. For Possible Action: Review, Discuss and Possible Vote to Approve Director & Chair Report Recommendations: Budget updates, seat details, community requests, partner engagements and upcoming outreach. Eric Wilcox, Chair; Catherine Nielsen, Vice-chair; Obioma Officer, Executive Director

- At the start of the fiscal year on July 1, 2025, the legislature allocated a budget of \$34,282. As of January 16, total expenditures amounted to \$17,213, leaving a remaining balance of \$17,068.98.
- All vacant seats have been filled except for a non-voting seat which is reserved for the Executive Director of Nevada Telecommunications association.
- Members are needed for all subcommittee's; anyone interested should contact the Nevada commission at ADSD.NV.gov.
- Executive Director will be out March 30th to June 18th. Eric Wilcox and Cathrine Nielson will help in supporting ADSD as needed.
- In accordance with the bylaws, elections of Chair and Vice Chair must be conducted annually by July 1. Although the election is typically held during the May meeting, Executive Director is scheduled to be on maternity leave at that time and is requesting that the election process be postponed until August.
 - Eric Wilcox motioned to approve postponing the election process from May to August, Jamie Vitale seconded. Members voted and the motion carried.
- April townhall tours in April will need to be canceled due to Obioma Officer out on Maternity leave. October's townhall tours are still scheduled.
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing community conferences being held nationwide
- The committee has been invited to the EHDI Conference in Florida
- NAD conference will be held June 20th – July 5th in California
- The Coalition of Global Hearing and Health is in November
- Deaf Awareness Day is in April
- CSD events – Nevada's Hands and voices, Sammy's Den, CSD and Nevada Black Deaf Advocates are partnering with the Springs preserve.
- NCIL has requested for the commission to join the national level within their origination. Membership fee is \$150 and more details are listed in the Director & Chair Report.

- Jamie Vitale motioned to accept that the committee become members for NCIL, Carol Helou seconded. Members voted and the motion carried.
- Reminder regarding meeting policy: A quorum requires the presence of 51% of members. If a member is unable to attend, it is essential that they communicate this in advance. Failure to do so may result in the meeting being canceled; however, previously arranged accessibility accommodations may still incur costs, which could otherwise be allocated to other needs.

For more details on agenda item 8, please see the Director & Chair Report in the meeting materials.

9. For Possible Action: Review, discussion and possible vote to approve recommendations presented by each subcommittee as detailed in their respective reports, all reports are accessible in the meeting materials.
Obioma Officer, Executive Director

- Lorraine Belt-Dolan, Chair of Accessibility Subcommittee
 - **Recommendation/ Request:** To take recommendations from the 2025 Engagement Conference and Townhalls on accessibility issues especially strategies to support community providers for DeafBlind individuals and report back to the commission. Recommendation to pursue advocacy for DeafBlind Support Services (i.e., SSPs and/or CNs) per Community Feedback.
 - Paula Koerwitz motioned to approve the recommendations/request, Jaime Vitale seconded. Members voted and the motion carried.
- Jaime Vitale, Chair of Interpreter Subcommittee
 - **Recommendation/ Request:** Recommendations to further research of National standards and Nevada state law to find areas of alignment and make recommendations for changes to the NRS. Along with research of National Grievance process and make recommendations to bring Nevada's registry grievance process into closer alignment with National Practices. Requests are to add Revisions to the NRS 656A and NAC in the upcoming 2027 Legislative Session advocacy efforts in accordance with Community Feedback and/or Concerns while seeking community-initiated Sponsors for potential BDR. With emphasis on the Grievance process as outlined in the NAC 656A.
 - Angee Pompa motioned to approve the recommendations/request, Paula Koerwitz seconded. Members voted and the motion carried.
- Catherine Nielsen, Legislative Subcommittee Member
 - **Recommendation/Request:** To pursue and advocate for the following Legislative topics while seeking community-initiated Sponsors for potential BDRs:

- Closed Captions in Public Spaces
- ASL as a Foreign Language Credit
- Nevada School for the Deaf (NVSD) – an Inclusive/Bicultural Approach
- D/HH Community Living – in support of Las Vegas Deaf Seniors (LVDS) Efforts
- DeafBlind Support Services (i.e., SSPs and/or CNs) – in support of Community Feedback and/or Concerns from 2025 Engagement Conference outcomes and the D/HH Community Living Initiative.
 - Eric Wilcox motioned to approve the recommendations/request, Jaime Vitale seconded. Members voted and the motion carried
- Eric Wilcox, Chair of Education Subcommittee
 - **Recommendation/Request:** Request to agendize Nevada Deaf School (NVSD) as an Education Subcommittee workgroup in efforts to support Legislative Advocacy and further research.
 - Angee Pompa motioned to approve the recommendations/request, Jaime Vitale seconded. Members voted and the motion carried

10. For Possible Action: Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Tentative Agenda Items for the Next meeting, tentatively planned for May 13, 2026.

Eric Wilcox, Chair

No agenda items were added at this time.

11. Public Comment: Lora Turner – Informed that a save the date will be coming soon for Deaf Camp set up by UNLV for this summer. Students aged 16 to 22 are encouraged to register. Current date for this is June 8th – 13th and transportation services will be provided. Saturday will be opened to families and the public to come and support.

Jaime Vitale – Sammy's Den is planning a nationwide Panda Express fund raiser to be held on March 3rd.

Betty Hammond - Thank you for the work you are doing on these issues. I also want to acknowledge that I've expressed sadness, anger and frustration in the past. This is personal because these systems affect real people. After communicating directly with the department it as become clear that "access to services" and "advocacy" no longer mean what they once did. For example of a Deaf person receives a notice frothier landlord - possibly and eviction notice _ and they do not understand it they are now being told that this kind of support is no longer part of the program. This is a major shift Does the Deaf Community know this? DO legislators know this? Because when advocacy is removed and access is narrowly defined, people fall through the cracks. They are left to navigate the complex systems alone - and that is already happening. Because when advocacy is removed and access is narrowly

defined, people fall through the cracks. This is already happening. We need clear, public definitions of what "access" and "advocacy" means today.

12. Adjournment: 11:56 AM

PLEASE NOTE:

Supporting Materials: Supporting public materials for this meeting will be available during the meeting, and on the ADSD website:

[https://adsd.nv.gov/Boards/NCPWADHHSI/Nevada Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf Hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired/](https://adsd.nv.gov/Boards/NCPWADHHSI/Nevada_Commission_for_Persons_Who_Are_Deaf_Hard_of_Hearing_or_Speech_Impaired/) . Meeting materials can also be obtained via the Administrative Support Staff listed below.

Translation Requests: To request document translation or interpreter, please contact the Administrative Support Staff listed below. Si quiere este documento traducido, por favor escriba a wthornley@adsd.nv.gov

Accommodation Requests: ADSD program applicants, participants, and board/committee members who require an accommodation may make a request for an ADA accommodation to:

- ADSD Administrative Support in writing (listed below); or,
- Via the [ADSD ADA Inquiry Form](#) located on the ADSD webpage at [ADSD.nv.gov](https://adsd.nv.gov).

To acquire necessary aids or services, ADSD requires reasonable advance notice, based on the time needed to arrange the requested accommodation (e.g., scheduling interpreters).

Administrative Support Staff Contact:

Wendy Thornley
1550 East College Parkway
Carson City, NV 89706
wthornley@adsd.nv.gov

AGENDA POSTING LOCATIONS:

Notice of this meeting was posted at the following locations:

- 1550 E College Parkway, Carson City, NV 89706
- Aging and Disability Services Division webpage: [Nevada Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf Hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired](#)
- Nevada Public Notices webpage: <https://notice.nv.gov/>