

Communication Tips

- Get the person's attention. For a d/Deaf or late deafened person, a wave from a distance or a gentle tap on the shoulder is usually sufficient. A hard of hearing person may also benefit from this procedure, but calling the person's name may help.
- Ask for the best way to communicate with the person.
- Face the person when speaking – not to the Interpreter, the CART provider, or the person's companion. Only one person should speak at a time.
- Speak clearly and at a natural pace. Write down information or key words if it appears the person does not understand you.
- Give the person a cue when changing subjects - give key words for the new topic.
- During the conversation, use facial expression and gestures when appropriate. These "clues" can fill in missing gaps or help with the "tone" of your message.
- Maintain eye contact. Eye contact facilitates direct communication. When working with Deaf community members, especially the elderly or children, be sure they can see you clearly, and if they wear glasses for daily activity make sure they have them on.
- Be aware of light sources. Windows or other bright light sources can create shadows on your face. This can make watching sign and facial expressions more difficult.
- Complex communication requires the use of a licensed ASL Interpreter.

Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (ACDHH)

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ACDHH was established in 1977 to improve the quality of life for Deaf and Hard of Hearing residents. ACDHH serves as a statewide information and referral center for issues related to people with hearing loss.

ACDHH is a national leader in communication access, support services and community empowerment throughout the state. Our mission is to ensure, in partnership with the public and private sectors, accessibility for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, and their families to improve their quality of life.



Deaf Services & Communication



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Culture & Community:

When people share a similar set of values, norms, history and tradition, coupled with American Sign Language (ASL), those people constitute a culture. Deaf people have their own shared heritage, history and folklore. There is a deaf community and culture in Arizona associated with famous Deaf individuals. The “d” in Deaf usually is capitalized when referring to members of the Deaf community.

ASL Unites the Deaf Community:

The use of the cultural label of being Deaf can be a declaration of personal identity rather than an indicator of hearing ability. Deaf community members utilize ASL as their primary/preferred mode of communication. The U.S. Census lists ASL as one of the fastest growing languages. ASL is not universal, but is used in United States and Canada. ASL interpreters are utilized by many Deaf citizens.

Deaf communities have their own educational institutions, social clubs and athletic organizations. A variety of events, conferences and conventions take place on a regular basis, providing individuals who are Deaf with a wide variety of options in which to interact with others. In addition, the Deaf community engages in social and political activities exclusive to the Deaf community.

The Deaf community provides a sense of belonging for Deaf people who might otherwise feel excluded from the hearing culture. A belief commonly shared by Deaf people is that being Deaf should not be regarded as an impairment or a disability.

How many people in Arizona are Deaf?

Over 1.1 million Arizonans have hearing loss. Over one-third of Arizona seniors have hearing loss. Approximately 25,000 citizens are culturally Deaf. Culturally Deaf citizens identify themselves as members of a cultural and linguistic group.

What Can ACDHH Deaf Specialists Provide For You?

Information and referral, empowerment, community development, outreach, and education are some of the many services ACDHH Deaf Specialists provide. In partnership with the public and private sector, ACDHH Deaf Specialists strive to provide advocacy for Deaf citizens, ensuring communication accessibility. We also work with other agencies and organizations to expand opportunities by improving the quality of life for citizens who are Deaf or DeafBlind.

ACDHH offers free in-service training for Service Providers, Agencies, and Organizations. Training topics include:

- The unique culture and needs of people with a range of hearing levels.
- Applicability of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to the facility.
- American Sign Language Interpreter licensure laws.
- Auxiliary aids, cultural factors, communication techniques, assistive devices, equal access and effective communication, and available resources.
- Healthcare Curriculum for medical professionals and a Public Safety Curriculum for first responders.

Services provided by ACDHH Deaf Specialists for Deaf Citizens:

Advocacy

Inform citizens about rights, laws, and programs available to support to become self-advocates. Specialists are available to act as advocates on behalf of citizens as needed.

Resources

ACDHH maintains an extensive on-line directory of resources and services. Specialists use the directory to make referrals to assist citizens in need of information.

Consultation

Specialists work closely with community leaders to determine gaps in those that need to be expanded or created to better serve Deaf citizens throughout the state.

Consumer education

Specialists provide valuable outreach and educational opportunities throughout the state. Workshops and information sessions include, but are not limited to, Deaf culture, the ADA, civil rights, legal & employment issues, other concerns, topics, and issues.

- 20,000-30,000 people in Arizona are culturally Deaf
- Nearly 2 out of 1,000 babies in Arizona are born with hearing loss
- 20% of teenagers have at least a mild hearing loss