



Arizona Commission
for the deaf and the hard of hearing

2020 FISCAL YEAR ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2019 - JUNE 30, 2020



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LETTER TO THE GOVERNOR

The Honorable Douglas Ducey Governor, State of Arizona
1700 W. Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Governor Ducey:

In accordance with A.R.S. §36-1944, I am pleased to submit the 2020 annual report on behalf of the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (ACDHH).

The ACDHH has been in existence for 43 years. Executive Director, Sherri Collins has led the agency in providing excellent service for the past 22 years. The overall goal of improving the quality of life for Arizona's Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind and persons with speech and communication difficulties is being accomplished on a daily basis. Numerous accomplishments are highlighted in this report.

I applaud the Executive Director and staff for the continued delivery of excellent services from the initial impact to date, of the COVID-19 pandemic. The immediate engagement of the community was evident in the hosting of virtual community forums to ensure communication access to all forms of public information. Most mediums of communication were inaccessible to our communities. Because of the Commission's actions, community members received critical information to assist them in making proper plans for protecting themselves and their families.

On behalf of Arizona's 1.1 million Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind and persons with speech and communication difficulties, I thank you for your support of the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing.

Respectfully,

Pv Jantz
ACDHH Chairperson

ABOUT ACDHH

The Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) was established in 1977 to improve the quality of life for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind/combined vision and hearing loss (CVHL) and persons who have speech and communication difficulties. ACDHH serves as a statewide bureau of information center, oversees the Arizona Relay Service, the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program and licenses American Sign Language Interpreters.

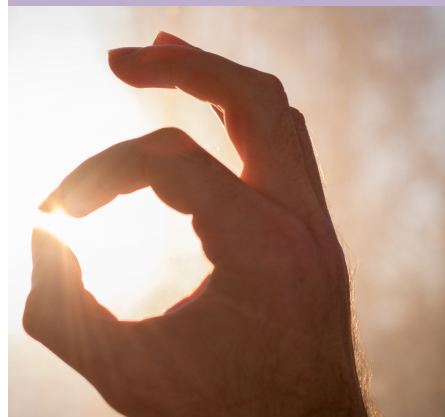
ACDHH is a national leader in communication access, support services and community empowerment throughout the state. ACDHH staff members serve as the statewide resource on issues concerning the deaf, deafblind, combined vision and hearing loss, persons who have speech and communication difficulties, and the hard of hearing communities by:

- Providing information and referral
- Conducting training and outreach events
- Distributing Telecommunications Equipment
- Overseeing Arizona Telecommunications Relay Service
- Staying abreast of local, state and national trends
- Licensing American Sign Language Interpreters

Keeping the deaf and hard of hearing community and the general public informed and connected are key services at ACDHH. It is for this reason a weekly email newsletter, a comprehensive resource library, proactive media relations efforts and agency social media outlets are provided. These resources keep the public well informed on issues of importance.

Mission

The purpose of the ACDHH is to ensure, in partnership with the public and private sectors, accessibility for the deaf and hard of hearing and to improve their quality of life.



Vision

The energetic and innovative ACDHH team is a national leader in the provision of communication access, support services and community empowerment throughout the Grand Canyon State.

STATUTE AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

The ACDHH Statute

To remain at the forefront of service delivery for deaf and hard of hearing Arizonans, ACDHH continues to work towards its specific regulatory obligations:

The commission shall act as a bureau of information to the deaf and the hard of hearing, state agencies and institutions providing services to the deaf and the hard of hearing, local agencies of government and other public or private community agencies and programs. In this capacity, the commission shall:

- Inform the deaf and hard of hearing of the programs and activities of the Commission and other services available to them at all levels of government.
- Develop and foster a framework for consultation and cooperation with the rehabilitation services bureau of the Department of Economic Security and with all institutions represented on the Commission.
- Study issues relating to the deaf and the hard of hearing, review the administration and operation of various programs and make recommendations concerning these issues to the programs and to the agencies represented on the Commission.
- Submit an annual report to the Governor and the legislature concerning its findings and recommendations.
- Review the problems of the deaf and the hard of hearing as they relate to the need for effective and appropriate auxiliary aids in public places.
- Maintain contractual compliance for Arizona Relay Service and enhance public awareness of relay service.
- Review and compile information on the development of acoustical technology for the hard of hearing and advocate the use of this technology if it deems appropriate.
- Make recommendations to state agencies, political subdivisions and institutions on how to meet the needs of the deaf and the hard of hearing.
- License American Sign Language Interpreters and certify teachers of American Sign Language.
- Make recommendations to the legislature regarding statutory changes needed to implement a statewide newborn child hearing loss screening program.
- Establish and administer a statewide program to purchase, repair and distribute telecommunication devices to residents of this state who are deaf, severely hearing or speech impaired.

2020 FISCAL YEAR GENERAL HIGHLIGHTS

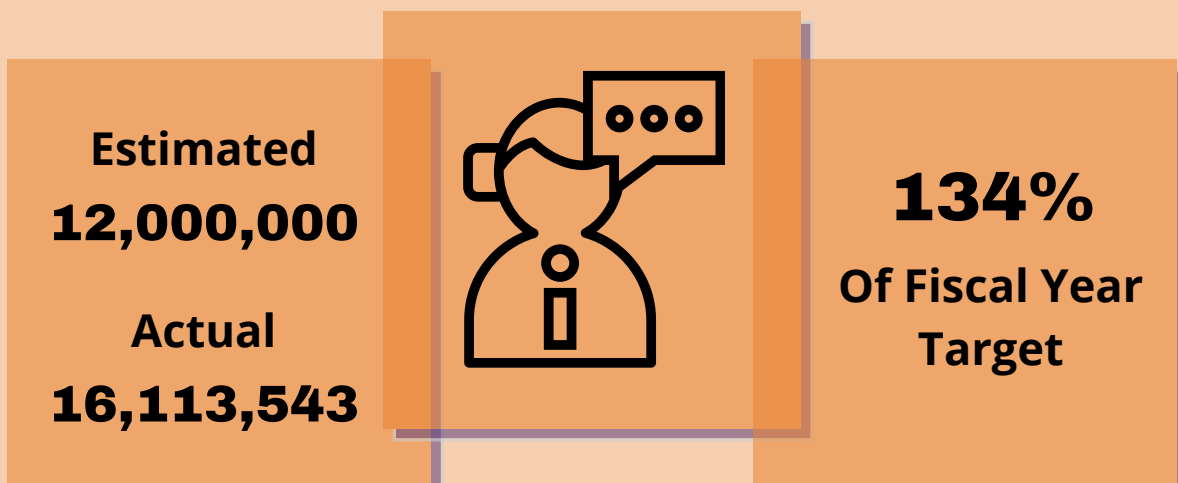
Public Policy and Legislative Efforts

In FY2020, ACDHH went through its Sunset and Sunrise legislative process. In its Sunset review, ACDHH received a unanimous vote from the Senate Health Committee to continue its statutory services for another eight years. Right before the legislature Sine Die due to COVID-19, SB 1055 passed out of both chambers and was signed by Governor Ducey. In addition to our legislative achievement with our Sunrise, ACDHH monitored and tracked several legislative bills that would impact the lives of the deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind community. Two major policy impacts: telehealth and sexual abuse prevention. Telemedicine/telehealth and quality of access due to lack of infrastructure to equitable telehealth services. Sexual abuse policies drafted as a result of the work of the Governor’s Task Force and the House of Representative’s Ad Hoc Committee of the same topic. ACDHH continues to participate in workgroup committees in the state that works to reduce incidents of sexual abuse and prevention in vulnerable communities.

Information and Referral

The Commission reached more than 16 million individuals through telephone contacts, email correspondence, Facebook, Twitter, E-news, Legislative Update Alerts, and E-COVID Bulletin distribution, Community View video news, print media and TV interviews. Millions were reached as a result of strategic planning and public and private sector partnering. Arizonans and the entities serving them were informed of the services of the ACDHH, including training curriculums for public safety providers and healthcare professionals.

I&R Contacts



Hearing Healthcare Program

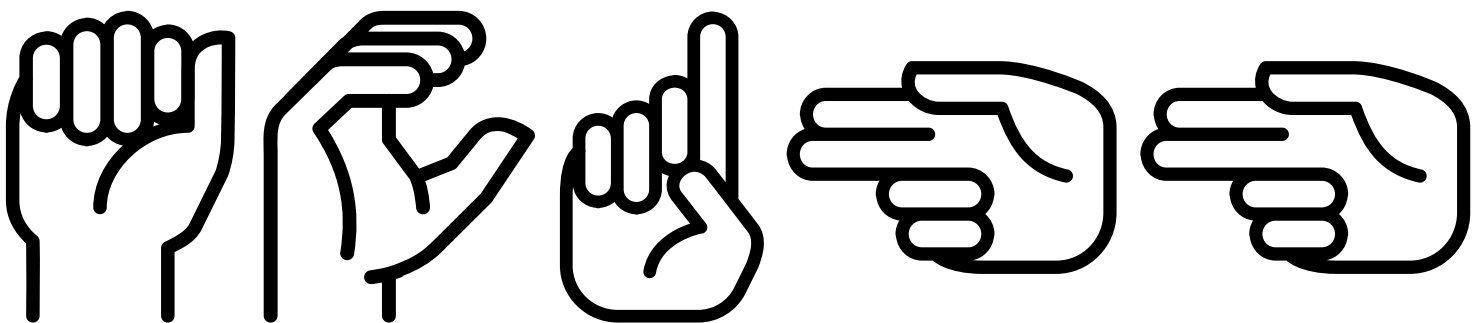
In the second year of expansion of the Hearing Healthcare Program, citizens have been screened for receiving affordable hearing aids. Consumers continue to receive consultation, coping strategies, and hearing healthcare services along with options for effective communication through technology in a one-stop approach. Services also include assistance navigating the complexities of the insurance industry and Arizona Healthcare Cost Containment Services for hearing aid coverage. The staff continues to collect data on uninsured and underinsured citizens in need of support in purchasing hearing aids.

Arizona Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program

Two hundred and eighty six (286) devices were distributed to citizens from the AZ Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program in need of telecommunications access. Ninety-five demonstrations were conducted. The agency collaborated with the AZ State Procurement Office to utilize statewide contract allowing a wider array of telecommunications. This agreement increases consumer choice for functionally equivalent telecommunications devices to improve the quality of their lives.

Interpreter Licensure

The agency implemented online application and payment portals for interpreter licensing. Six hundred and seventy six (676) interpreters were licensed during the fiscal year. A total of two (2) complaints were filed. The Commission partnered with the University of Arizona's National Center for Interpretation to conduct two surveys to assess the consumer and professional interpreter's perspectives on licensure. The surveys were available online and in person. The in-person events took place in conjunction with the three town hall meetings. Results are currently being assessed.



Interpreter Professional Development

Workshop Hours from ACDHH Sponsorship for Continuing Education Units This Period



Deaf Services

Consultation and advocacy services were provided for consumers accessing legal, medical and other public services during the fiscal year. Requests for the healthcare curriculum is on the rise as service providers seek to improve services.

DeafBlind Services

Support Service Provider (SSP) services are available for persons who are deafblind or experience combined vision and hearing loss. SSPs provide environmental information in the following settings, such as medical, legal, recreational, and social environments. The program was piloted in FY19. In its first year has served 35 persons, with eight SSPs providing 288 hours of SSP services.

Arizona Relay Service

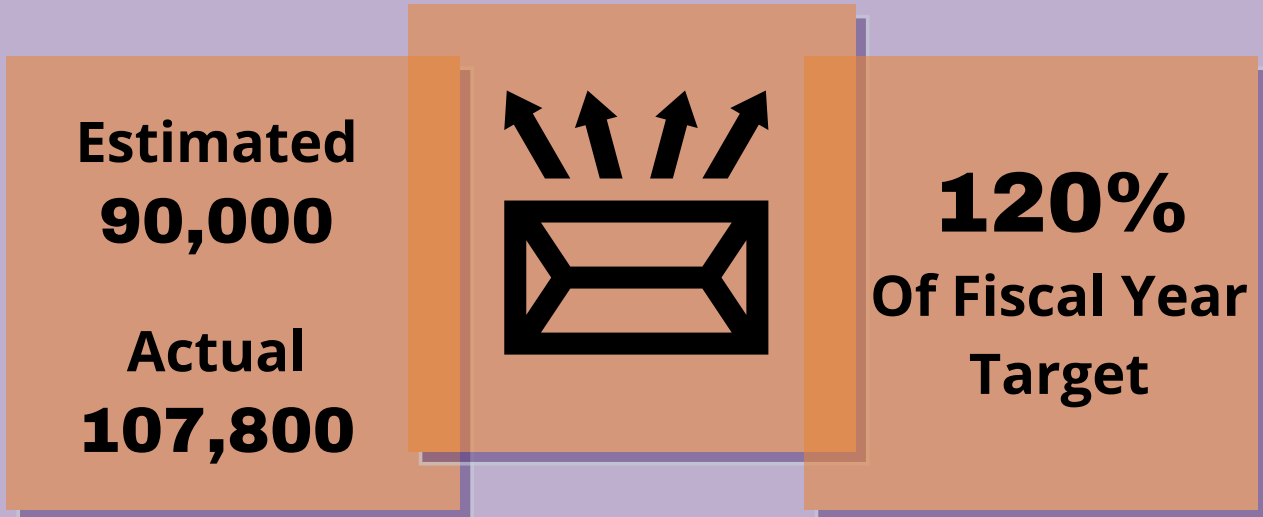


Community Engagement

Prior to the pandemic, ACDHH was working in partnership with the state's non-profit, Arizona Association of the Deaf and state agencies such as AzDHS and ADE related to the importance of Language Acquisition for newborns and children with varying hearing levels. ACDHH was working on Census 2020 outreach to ensure every household in AZ was counted. ACDHH partnered with the Citizens Clean Elections Commission to create inclusive accessible videos on the importance of voting and the President Primary Election in March. Due to COVID-19 impacting the state midway through the fiscal year, ACDHH was forced to shift our engagement strategies. As part of this shift, ACDHH was in a position to lead the virtual environment in meeting communication access and accessibility. ACDHH quickly adapted to online platforms, such as Zoom in an effort to not lose our connection to the communities we serve and represent. Early on in the COVID pandemic, ACDHH released a publication on Zoom accessibility for the user and provided technical assistance to agencies and organizations on how they can be accessible in an online platform. AZ DEMA relied on ACDHH to produce an inclusive accessible video of the Governor's Stay at Home Executive Order. ACDHH held a Status of the State call with community leaders, members, organizations and state agencies on the impact of COVID-19 was having on the D/HH/DB communities. The Status of the State reinforced the issues ACDHH discusses on a daily basis as it relates to accessibility and communication, but the pandemic increased these issues ten-fold. As a result ACDHH swiftly moved to create solutions within our control. We partnered with the AZ Broadcast Association to ensure Picture-in-Picture on Governor press conferences were large enough for users to see the interpreters.

We held FB Live events and created an accessible COVID-19 website, where information was provided in American Sign Language (ASL), simple graphics, and had an accompanying plain text transcript. In addition, we created a weekly COVID Bulletin to our listserv to bring important information related to the pandemic.

Newsletters Distributed




We continue to evolve and adapt to the new world we are living in, and are resolved to continue to engage in partnerships and relationships that address and allow for D/HH/DB communities to have equal and equitable access in the state of Arizona. The Commission entered into an agreement with the AZ Peace Officers Standard Training (AZPOST) leadership to develop online training modules to be available to the 160 law enforcement agencies. These modules provide recommended best practices for officers when working with the deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, persons with speech difficulties and those who experience combined vision and hearing loss.

Partnerships Created



BUDGET

ACDHH BUDGET: FISCAL YEAR 2020



| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Revenue | \$5,663,800 |
| Appropriation | \$4,622,800 |
| Expenditures | |
| Personal Services/ Employee Related Expenses | \$1,381,400 |
| AZRS (Relay) Contract | \$395,648 |
| AzTEDP (Equipment Distribution Program) | \$85,963 |
| Professional and Outside Services | \$593,465 |
| Other Operating Expenses | \$639,832 |
| Total | \$3,096,308 |

*** Rounded to nearest whole number**

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The Board oversees the policymaking, budget planning and strategic planning of ACDHH, in addition to evaluating the ongoing performance of the executive director. Each board member also acts as an advocate for ACDHH and the particular group they represent.

The ACDHH Board consists of 14 members appointed by the Governor to three-year terms. Of the representatives, four are deaf; four are hard of hearing; one is a parent of a deaf or hard of hearing child; one Arizona licensed American Sign Language interpreter; one licensed hearing aid dispenser; one clinical audiologist; one representative from Department of Economic Security; one representative from the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind in Tucson or the Phoenix Day School of the Deaf.

The Board meets four times a year, one of which serves as their retreat.

Current Board Member/Terms:

- Judy Huch, Clinical Audiologist (Exp 8/26/2021)
- Susan Webster, Hard of Hearing Representative (Exp 8/26/2021)
- Tamara Collinsworth, Hard of Hearing Representative (Exp 8/26/2021)

Current Board Vacancies

- 2 Hard of Hearing Representative
- 1 DES Representative
- 1 Parent Representative
- 1 Interpreter Representative
- 4 Deaf Representative
- 1 ASDB Representative
- 1 Licensed Hearing Aid Dispenser

COMMISSION STAFF

| Name | Position |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sherri L. Collins | Executive Director |
| Carmen Green | Deputy Director |
| Curtis Humphries | Business Manager |
| Betty McEntire | Director of Public Policy and Community Relations |
| Sherita Teachey | Information and Referral Coordinator |
| Kimberly Minard | Deaf Specialist |
| Victoria Vaughn | Interpreter Assessment Coordinator |
| Shari Burda | Business Operations Coordinator |
| Laricsa Herrera | Business Operations Assistant |
| Emmett Hassen | Licensing Certification Coordinator |
| Beca Bailey | Community Engagement Liaison |
| Julie Stylinski | DeafBlind Specialist |
| Katie Lopez | Assistant to the Executive Director |
| Vicki Thompson | Program Planner - AzTEDP |
| Michele Michaels | Hearing Healthcare Program Manager |
| Christy Abrams | Hard of Hearing Specialist |
| Jeremy McCown | Technical Operations Specialist |
| Sonia Samaniego | Family Engagement Coordinator |

