Resource Guide for Supporting Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Individuals

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Published by the Office of Developmental Program's Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Advisory Committee

Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to offer resources in one central location for those who support or care for someone who is Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind and receives supports from the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP). Development of this guide included input from individuals within the Deaf, DeafBlind, hard of hearing, and hearing communities.

This guide provides some of the most frequently accessed resources to assist in addressing the unique needs of these populations.

This is not an endorsement of particular providers nor meant to be an exhaustive list; this information is available through online searching. Resources may change or no longer be available before the next annual publication.

The Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Advisory Committee

The Mission

The mission of the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Advisory Committee (the Committee) is to make recommendations to improve services and supports for Deaf, DeafBlind, and hard of hearing individuals with a developmental disability in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Everyday Lives

Everyday Lives will be a guide to the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) as it develops policy and designs programs. Providers of services will use the recommendations of Everyday Lives to support individuals and their families to achieve an everyday life. Everyday Lives will guide everyone toward the possibility of an everyday life.

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If you are aware of additional resources for future publications or come across a current resource that is no longer active or up to date, please contact us at **RA-ODPDeafServices@pa.gov**. Thank you!

Glossary of Terms

The following terms relate to Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing programs and topics. They are not all inclusive but may provide insight. If you need clarification on a term or know of another one that needs to be added, please email **RA-ODPDeafServices@pa.gov**.

American Sign Language (ASL)	ASL is the recognized sign language of the Deaf Community in the United States of America. As is the case with standardized spoken, written, and signed languages worldwide, ASL conforms to linguistic principles (e.g., semantics, syntax, morphology, phonology, and pragmatics). The complex visual-spatial linguistic structure of ASL is distinct from English, a linear, sequential language based on auditory processes. (National Association of the Deaf)
ASL Interpreter	A person trained in facilitating communication between a spoken language and American Sign Language (ASL). *(National Association of the Deaf)*
Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)	Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) refers to any type of communication that is not spoken language. These modes of communication are broken into two systems: unaided and aided. Unaided Communication refers to any type of communication that can be produced by an individual without the assistance of a tool. Aided Communication often overlaps with assistive technology because it refers to any communication that requires a tool to produce the communication. *(American Speech-Language-Hearing Association)*
Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI)	A Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) is a Deaf or Hard of Hearing person whose native language is Sign Language. CDIs have firsthand knowledge and experience with deafness, the Deaf Community, and Deaf culture. CDIs may use props, drama, and visual gestural communication. A CDI serves as an equal member of the interpreting team along with a certified hearing interpreter or a certified interpreter. The CDI interprets the message from the deaf consumer (without using English syntax) to the hearing interpreter and the hearing interpreter then relays the message to the hearing consumer by putting the content into English. This **infographic** explains it further! CDIs are particularly useful when the communication mode used by the deaf consumer is unique, when they have minimal or limited communication skills, or when they use signs that a hearing interpreter may not be familiar with such as non-standard signs, "home" signs, international sign language, visual gestural communication, regional signs, etc. Holders of this certification are deaf or hard of hearing and have demonstrated knowledge and understanding of interpreting, deafness, the Deaf community, and Deaf culture. Holders have specialized training and/or experience in the use of gesture, mime, props, drawings and other tools to enhance communication. Holders possess native or near-native fluency in American Sign Language and are recommended for a broad range of assignments where an interpreter who is deaf or hard-of-hearing would be beneficial. *(Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc.)*

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)	Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) offers immediate, verbatim, streaming of voice-to-text translation at events, conferences, classes, public hearings and other events. The text produced by the CART service can then be displayed on an individual's computer, projected, or appear as captions for a video presentation (example: meetings in Zoom). *(Hearing Loss Association of America)*
Deaf	Referring to a particular group of deaf people who share a language – American Sign Language (ASL) – and a culture. *(National Association of the Deaf)*
deaf	Referring to the audiological condition of not hearing. *(National Association of the Deaf)*
DeafBlind	A rare condition in which an individual has combined hearing and vision loss, thus limiting access to both auditory and visual information. Although it is a combination of two sensory losses (vision and hearing), it creates one different from either one alone. *(National Center on Deaf-Blindness and Open Hands Open Access)* **Note:** You may see Deaf-Blind, Deafblind, deaf-blind, deafblind, Deaf-blind, etc. in various writings.
Dysfluency	The state of not being fluent in one's own native, or best, language manifesting in abnormal language patterns (vocabulary deficits, absence of key grammar features, mixing of languages. and/or difficulty with time sequencing). It could refer to the expressive mechanics of producing the language or the receptive understanding of the language. *(Journal of the American Deafness and Rehabilitation Association)*
Hard of Hearing	A person with a mild-to-moderate hearing loss. *(National Association of the Deaf)*
Hearing Impaired	This term is no longer accepted by most in the Deaf community but was at one time preferred, largely because it was viewed as politically correct. To declare oneself or another person as deaf or blind, for example, was considered somewhat bold, rude, or impolite. At that time, it was thought better to use the word "impaired" along with "visually," "hearing," "mobility," and so on. "Hearing-impaired" was a well-meaning term that is not accepted or used by many deaf and hard of hearing people. For many people, the term "hearing-impaired" is viewed as negative. The term focuses on what people can't do. It establishes the standard as "hearing" and anything different as "impaired," or substandard, hindered, or damaged. It implies that something is not as it should be and ought to be fixed if possible. *(National Association of the Deaf)*

Intervener	An intervener provides consistent one-to-one support to a student who is DeafBlind and has training and specialized skills in DeafBlindness. An intervener provides a bridge to the world for the student who is DeafBlind. The intervener helps the person gather information, learn concepts and skills, develop communication and language, and establish relationships that lead to greater independence. *(Open Hands Open Access, a DeafBlind training)*
Signed Exact English	Signing Exact English (SEE) is a sign system modeled after the English language. SEE includes many signs that are taken from ASL (ASL is its own language); however, the sentence structure, the idioms, the verb endings, etc. are taken from English. In essence, SEE is a visual form of English. *(SignedExactEnglish.com)*
Support Service Provider (SSP)	A SSP is trained to support individuals who are DeafBlind in leading a more self- determined life. This is done by facilitating communication and acting as a human guide in such instances as running errands, accessing social events, etc. The support of an SSP empowers the person who is DeafBlind to make decisions for themselves based on the visual environment and social information provided by the SSP. An important aspect of SSPs that is different from interpreters is that the SSP role can be more fluid based on the established relationship between the two parties. *(Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing)*
Pidgin Signed English (PSE)	Pidgin Signed English (PSE) is a mode of communication arising from contact between American Sign Language (ASL) and spoken or signed English. With PSE, vocabulary is borrowed from ASL, while grammar typically follows English word order. *(Gallaudet University Press)*
ProTactile	ProTactile is a socio-cultural philosophy that reflects the DeafBlind world, which includes language (ProTactile American Sign Language), the DeafBlind culture, and our community. It is a tactile representation of visual information (heads nodding, yawning, laughing, agreeing, etc.). *(Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired)*
Tactile Interpretation	A method of interpreting used by individuals who are DeafBlind. In this mode, an interpreter creates signs in the person's hand, while using other tactile cues to describe affect and the environment. *(Connections for Independent Living)*
Visual Impairment	A decrease in the ability to see to a certain degree that causes problems not fixable by usual means, such as glasses. There are four terms used to describe different levels of vision impairment and blindness—partially sighted, low vision, legally blind and totally blind. *(Industries for the Blind and Visually Impaired)* **Note:** Although "hearing impaired" is no longer a term accepted by the Deaf community, using the term "visual impairments" is still accepted and appropriate.
Video Phone	A video phone is a video telecommunication device connected to the regular telephone system that allows Deaf and hard-of-hearing people to communicate in real-time using a visual language, like American Sign Language. A video phone can connect directly to another video phone, or it can connect to a typical telephone using an interpreter through the Video Relay System. *(Rochester Institute of Technology)*

Professionals to Consider Adding to Your Team

Every individual is unique and so is their communication! This section includes professionals that may be a good addition to the individual's multidisciplinary support team. To access a list of providers within ODP, follow the steps below.

hcsis.state.pa.us → Services & Supports Directory → Specialized Therapies → Select individual's county & "surrounding counties" → Scroll to the desired service (SLP, CS, BS, etc)

*There will often be several pages of results. To view all results on one page, change the dropdown on the right of the screen to "all" and clicked "go". This will list ALL the services on one screen.

Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP)

Speech Therapy is available through most insurances. In the ODP waivers, a SLP offers:

- Counseling regarding acceptance, adaptation, and decision making

- Assessing communication, speech, language and swallowing disorders

- Developing and implementing treatment to address the concerns of a communication or related functional issue. Treatment establishes a new skill or ability or remediates or restores an impaired skill or ability.

- Teaching American Sign Language or another form of communication to an adult waiver participant (a participant who is 21 years of age or older) who is deaf and has been assessed as benefitting from learning American Sign Language or another form of communication.

Note: Historically, when deafness is treated through a medical model, the focus becomes one of "fixing" what are seen as deficits or problems. This model was applied to the treatment of deafness and hearing loss for much of the twentieth century. Schools for the deaf focused on Oralism. This approach targeted residual hearing (remaining natural hearing, despite a hearing loss) and lip-reading skills. Sign language was banned from classrooms. This had the impact of denying children access to American Sign Language (ASL). Today, families with deaf children must make decisions, such as whether to teach their child ASL or pursue cochlear implantation. For families who are culturally Deaf, speech therapy may be perceived as biased in favor of oral speech; in essence, seeing deafness through the lens of the medical model.

The American Speech Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) has adopted guidelines that call for SLPs to honor the cultural and linguistic diversity of their client population. Linguistic diversity includes the use of manual languages, such as ASL. SLPs should respect the culture and communication modality of their Deaf clients and should use sign language interpreters as necessary. In essence, SLPs should see deafness through a social model of disability. The "problem" is not the hearing loss, but rather the barriers placed by society preventing equitable participation and access for the person with a disability. (ASHA, NCBI)

For more information on the Therapy service, see the waivers at **www.dhs.pa.gov**

Communication Specialist

In the ODP waivers, the Communication Specialist offers:

- A thorough review of the communication needs and skills (expressive and receptive)
- An action plan that includes barriers and measurable steps to eliminate barriers
- Assistance to establish an environment that emphasizes the use of visual cues
- Educating the team on communication access, legal responsibilities, and cultural and linguistic needs

Note: There may be cases where a team includes a Behavioral Specialist and a Communication Specialist. These two specialists should collaborate to ensure consistency.

For more information on the Communication Specialist service, see the waivers at **www.dhs.pa.gov**

Behavior Specialist (BS)

Behavior is communication. In the ODP waivers, the Behavior Specialist offers:

- A comprehensive assessment
- A behavior support plan and crisis intervention plan
- Implementation of strategies, which may include providing direct behavioral support, educating the participant and supporters regarding the underlying causes/functions of behavior and modeling and/or coaching of supporters to carry out interventions;

Note: There may be cases where a team includes a Behavioral Specialist and a Communication Specialist. These two specialists should collaborate to ensure consistency.

For more information on the Behavioral Support service, see the waivers at **www.dhs.pa.gov**

Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Support Service Provider (SSP)

Although this is not an ODP offered waiver service, this is a professional that may be a good addition to a DeafBlind individual's multidisciplinary support team.

A SSP is trained to support individuals who are DeafBlind in leading a more self- determined life. This is done by facilitating communication and acting as a human guide in such instances as running errands, accessing social events, etc. The support of an SSP empowers the person who is DeafBlind to make decisions for themselves based on the visual environment and social information provided by the SSP. An important aspect of SSPs that is different from interpreters is that the SSP role can be more fluid based on the established relationship between the two parties. A comprehensive publication about SSPs can be found **here**.

Sign Language Dictionaries

These resources are helpful to look up vocabulary but do not capture grammar and should not be used solely to learn American Sign Language (ASL).These resources are helpful to look up vocabularly but do not capture grammar and should not be used solely to learn ASL.

ASL Pro.com	**http://www.aslpro.cc**	Free website. Scroll to the bottom of the main page and click on "ASL for Babies Dictionary" or "Conversation Dictionary" or "Main Dictionary"
ASLCORE	**https://aslcore.org**	An ASL website with signs for advanced, disciplined related terminology for various content areas (architecture, art, biology, engineering, literature, etc).
Bill Vicars	**https://www.youtube.com/user/ billvicars**	ASL - American Sign Language University (**http://lifeprint.com**) Resource site for ASL students, teachers, interpreters, and parents of Deaf children.
Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP)	**https://www.youtube.com/user/ dcmpnad**	A resource to improve the receptive (understanding of) and expressive skills in sign language, to learn more about Deaf culture, and about people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Also provides a limited number of educational videos, general interest topics, classic movies, videos in sign language and captioned.
Hand Speak	**https://www.handspeak.com/**	ASL tutorials, Deaf culture, dictionary, fingerspelling, and resources.
Michigan State University	**http://aslbrowser.commtechlab. msu.edu/browser.htm**	Easy to use free dictionary
Rainone Sisters	**https://www.youtube. com/channel/ UC91hZQaqLMlfVfs0QLenJzA**	Deaf Sisters on a mission to make the world Deaf aware & accessible for all. They specialize in everything American Sign Language.
Rochester Institute of Technology, National Technical Institute for the Deaf	**www.ntid.rit.edu/dictionary**	Online video dictionary from NTID, which consists of vocabulary organized by category, used in sentences, and shown at slow or normal speeds.
Signed with Heart	**https://www.youtube.com/user/ ashleyclarkfry**	Signed With Heart, an endeavor to teach American Sign Language through social media.

Signing Savvy	**https://www.signingsavvy.com/**	A sign language dictionary that contains videos of ASL signs, fingerspelled words, and other common signs used within the United States and Canada. It also includes resources and tools to use while learning, such as the ability to build custom wordlists and share them with others, create virtual flash cards and quizzes, print signs, build sign phrases, and much more. Additional information is included with each sign videos to help provide a better understanding of what the sign is, when to use it, and how to remember it.
The National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID)	**http://www.ntid.rit.edu/ dictionary**	ASL Video Dictionary and inflection guide (online, iPhone app or CD-ROM) It requires no installation. It will run on either PC or MAC computers that have 64+ MB RAM and are capable of playing MPEG-1 files. $49.95, Rochester Institute of Technology Book Store.

Virtual ASL Courses

These courses provide vocabulary, grammar, and culture to support the acquisition of ASL.

American Society for Deaf Children	https://deafchildren.org/knowledge-center/asl-resources/online-asl-classes/	Beginner, intermediate, and advanced ASL 4-week courses available for $100/each.
ASL Deafined	https://www.asldeafined.com/?da=asldefined.com	A subscription-based website for ASL video lessons. The content is for anyone who wishes to learn ASL. It has been designed to instruct Deaf students, parents, and the community-at-large. All lessons are taught by Deaf experts of ASL.
Deaf-Hearing Communication Centre	https://dhcc.org/resources/asl-classes/	Community-level, non-credit beginner ASL instruction. Teachers are native ASL users, they promote a relaxed learning environment with both structured and spontaneous dialogue. Give students the opportunity to develop appropriate conversational strategies that are unique to Deaf culture. Class size is limited and enrollment is on a first come, first serve basis. DHCC requires a minimum of 8 students per class. Locations include Swarthmore, Philadelphia, Montgomeryville, King of Prussia, Center City Philadelphia, and Media, PA
Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB) Outreach ASL Interactive Online Classes	https://www.fsdbk12.org/outreach	Eight-week ASL interactive online class. This is offered several times throughout the school year at no cost. Limited space. First come first serve. Participants must have high-speed internet access.
Gallaudet University	https://www.gallaudet.edu/asl-connect/asl-for-free	Free online ASL lessons, basic ASL vocabulary, and information on an ASL summer residency program.
Hearing and Deaf Services	https://www.hdscenter.org/asl-classes/	Sign Language classes
Life Print.com: ASL University	www.lifeprint.com	ASLU is an online ASL curriculum resource center. ASLU provides many free self-study materials, lessons, and information, as well as fee-based instructor-guided courses.
Lighthouse Louisiana	https://www.lighthouselouisiana.org/	Offers free virtual sign language courses every Monday from 6:45-8pm on Zoom. For more information email: nolasignlanguageservices@gmail.com
Oklahoma School for the Deaf	https://www.osd.k12.ok.us/index.php?pageID=483600_3	Free, 8-week pre-recorded ASL1 and ASL2 classes

Sign It! ASL Made Easy	**https://signitasl.com/**	An online, self-paced ASL course. The complete curriculum will have a total of 10 units (50 lessons) that teach conversational ASL (vocabulary, sentences, grammar, and syntax) and Deaf culture.
Sign Language 101	**https://www.SignLanguage101.com/**	Learn ASL with a guided course and free videos.
Signing Online ASL Instruction	**https://signingonline.com/**	Offers web-based courses, designed with nationally and internationally recognized curriculum developed by Dr. David Stewart. These online ASL courses focus on conversational ASL and use videos to demonstrate the visual nature of signing designed to help you learn sign language. For anyone wanting to learn ASL online, whether just starting out or at a more advanced level.
Start ASL	**https://www.startasl.com/learn-sign-language-asl_html**	A complete 3-Level ASL course curriculum
Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf	**http://www.wpsd.org/asl-classes/**	ASL classes and promotion of an understanding of Deaf culture. New sessions begin in the fall, winter, and spring. Each session is 8 weeks long and cost $75. Allegheny County.

Apps

A variety of apps related to ASL and captioning.

Ava: Live Captions for all Conversations	**https://apps.apple.com/us/app/ava-best-live-transcription/id1030067058**	Ava is an app designed to empower people who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing by allowing to follow conversations in real time. The app provides 24/7 real-time captioning (with up to 95% accuracy, based on artificial intelligence), on your smartphone. Free for <5 hours a month.
CaptionMate	**https://www.captionmate.com**	CaptionMate is a free service for individuals with hearing loss. It allows you to read both sides of the phone conversation instantaneously. CaptionMate works on smartphones, tablets and all other phones, even your landline.
DPAN.TV, the sign language channel	**https://dpan.tv/pages/apps**	Latest news, entertainment, interviews, documentaries, and more. $1.99 a month subscription
Innocaption	**https://innocaption.com**	InnoCaption is free and available for both iPhone and androids. It offers real-time captioning of phone calls through live stenographers and automated speech recognition software.
Marlee Signs	**https://apps.apple.com/us/app/marlee-signs/id566054855**	Free with in-app purchases
Otter.ai	**https://otter.ai**	Transcribes what people are saying in meetings as they're speaking. Within a second or two, the words someone has spoken appear on screen, effectively providing live subtitles of what's being said by all participants. Free for 600 minutes (max 40 mins/recording)
The ASL App	**https://theaslapp.com/**	Free with in-app purchases. Learn conversational ASL on the go, with all phrases and signs organized to make it easy to learn.

Books

ASL is a visual, moving language, therefore 2D images found in books may be insufficient and would be best paired with video to support the learning of ASL.

Learn American Sign Language	**https://smile.amazon.com/Learn-American-Language-James-Guido/dp/1577151070/ref=smi_www_rco2_go_smi_4368549507?_encoding=UTF8&dchild=1&ie=UTF8&keywords=learn%20american%20sign%20language&qid=1615564569&s=books&sr=1-1**	Learn more than 800 signs, including signs for school, the workplace, around the house, out and about, food and drink, nature, emotions, small talk, and more. Unlock the storytelling possibilities of ASL with classifiers and find out how to make sentences with signs, use the proper facial expressions with your signs, and other vital tips.
Signs For Me: Basic Sign Vocabulary for Children	**https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/943258.Signs_for_Me**	Behan, Ben, & Dannis, Joe (1990). 111 pages, excellent book to learn sign language and written English. Book organized into categories. Includes pictures of a child expressing the sign, of the concept, and word in English. Includes translations in 8 other languages. $12.95
Signing Naturally	**https://www.dawnsign.com/series/details/signing-naturally**	ASL curriculum

Accessibility

Below is a list of accessibility adaptations to consider.

Fire Alarm, Smoke Detector, Carbon Monoxide Detector	These devices come in two formats: hard-wired, meaning that a professional electrician needs to install it, or ready to be plugged in. The alarms either flash bright strobe lights or emit an extremely loud sound. A single transmitter can be connected to multiple receivers to provide alerting throughout a home or building. Vibration systems are also available.
Doorbell Flashers, Alerting Door Device	Door signalers let Deaf individuals or individuals who are hard of hearing know when someone is at the door, usually by flashing a light. Some hang on the back of a door and sense vibrations, others connect to regular lamps, and some work by remote signaling, picking up a signal from a push-button on the door. There are also wireless pagers that can pick up transmissions from pressed door transmitters.
	You can modify the bedroom and bathroom lights so there is a switch outside the room as well as in the room that can be switched on and off to alert the Deaf individual someone is at the door (or needs to use the restroom).
Adapted Alarm Clock/Bed Shaker	Wake-up alarms either vibrate or flash a light and can attach to an existing clock or be part of a clock. They can go under a pillow or mattress or be set up near the bed. For hard of hearing people, the alarms are very loud. There are also clocks with braille features that can be used by DeafBlind people.
Mirrors	Mirrors can be placed in strategic locations to extend visual fields, such as seeing someone coming around a corner.
Three-Way Light Switches	Allow a single light to be controlled by more than one switch. Example: one switch in the bedroom and one switch in the hall outside the bedroom.
Television Related Equipment	This may include activating the Closed Captioning features or using amplification devices. A FM signal or loop can also be used to send the television sound directly to the individual's hearing aids.

Telephone Related Equipment | **There are many options:**

- Amplified telephones

- A T-Coil, this will allow individuals to hear directly over the phone or via a loop or FM through their hearing aid

- Phone signalers. These work by flashing a light or making a very loud sound. They work by being plugged directly into the telephone line and having a lamp connected to the signaler. They can be put on a desktop next to a telephone or mounted on a wall. Remote receivers can transmit a phone signal to other rooms, and there are also standalone models. For those who have video phones, video phone signalers are also available.

- Captioned Call telephones (CapTel) allow you to speak into the telephone, hear what the other caller is saying, and read the other person's response via captioned relay service

- Video Phones or WebCam based phones See Accessible Phones below.

- WebCam based phones, such as Skype, Zoom, Facetime. Please note that some popular web-based communication systems such as Skype, ooVoo, Facetime do not provide a direct contact to 9-1-1 systems.

Note: Some form of text-based telephonic equipment should be available for those with some text literacy for times when videophones and internet are out (such as power outages or network outages.)

These adaptations can typically be found in the following locations:

- Fire departments
- Local civic organizations (Lion's Club, Rotary, Knights)
- Businesses that offer home modification services
- County/city housing office
- Local Area Agency on Aging
- Assistive Technology Resource Centers (listed below)
- Vendors of Deaf and hard of hearing products

Assistive Technology Resource Centers

https://techowlpa.org/atrc/
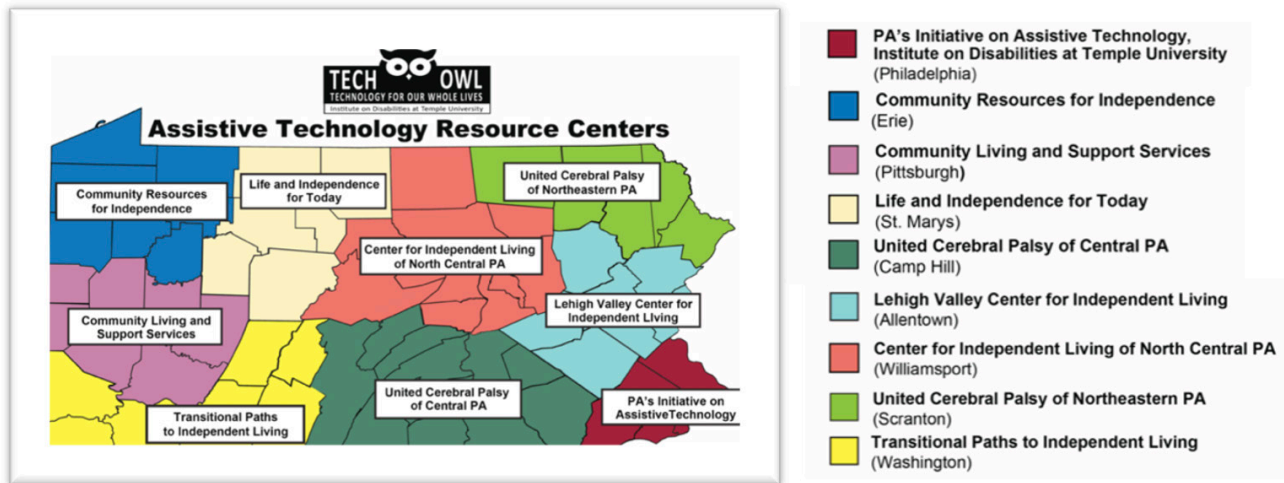
Telecommunication Device Distribution Program (PA TDDP)

http://disabilities.temple.edu/programs/assistive/tddp/

The program has free equipment to help people with disabilities make phone calls. People with disabilities includes people who are deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired, blind or have visual problems, have physical disabilities or intellectual disabilities. If you don't have a TTY, or other equipment you need for the phone or if your equipment is broken, contact us and apply. You must meet five qualifications. You must be six or older, live in Pennsylvania, have low income, have a phone line in your home, and not able to use a regular phone.

TechOWL Lending Library

https://techowlpa.org/news/our-lending-library-today/

The AT Library is a statewide library for Pennsylvanians with disabilities. People can borrow tools and technology in order to find solutions that work for them. Someone picks the items they want to borrow from our catalog. We ship the items directly to the person. Then we pick the items up at the end of the loan period. If necessary, we support the person during the time of the loan.

Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF)

http://www.patf.us/

Provides financing opportunities to people with disabilities and older Pennsylvanians helping them to acquire the assistive technology devices and services that improve the quality of their lives.

iCanConnect

https://techowlpa.org/form/icanconnect/

iCanConnect is a special free program to help people who have combined hearing and vision loss to access telephone, advanced communications and information services. There are income requirements for this program. iCanConnect gets people equipment to help them make a phone call, send an email, access the internet, or use other communications tools to talk with family, friends and other people. To be eligible for iCanConnect, you must have both significant vision and hearing loss, and meet the program's income guidelines.

Accessible Phones

Video phones allow the user to communicate with ASL. Captioned telephones allow you to speak into the telephone, hear what the other caller is saying, and read the other person's response via captioned relay service. Video phones and amplified and captioned telephones are available to any individual who is Deaf or hard of hearing frequently at no charge to the individual. The individual has to provide documentation to confirm his/her hearing loss, have a location that provides electricity, and internet access. The captioned telephone also requires that the location have a standard telephone line. The individual is responsible for the cost of electricity, telephone and internet service. The video phone and captioned telephone providers will typically provide free installation, training, onsite and remote technical support. Use of the video relay telephone and captioned telephone relay services are free to both callers on a conversation. The Federal Communication Commission oversees the use of these devices. For more information, click **here**.

CapTel Captioned Telephone Services	http://www.captel.com/
CaptionCall Telephone Services	https://www.captioncall.com/captioncall
Convo Video Relay Services	https://www.convorelay.com/company.html
Purple Video Relay Services	www.purple.us
Sorenson Video Relay Services	www.sorensonvrs.com
Z Video Relay Services	https://www.zvrs.com/services/services/vrs

Video Conferencing Platform Features Matrix

This **Matrix** developed by the Hearing Loss Association of America with a consensus by Deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind consumer advocacy organizations and subject matter experts looks at different applications and their different features and approaches to accessibility.

Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind Friendly Organizations/ Activities

Art-Reach

https://www.art-reach.org

Art-Reach is an art service organization, based in Philadelphia, PA that creates, advocates for and expands accessible opportunities in arts and culture so the full spectrum of society is served. Art-Reach removes the financial barrier to arts engagement for the disability community and people with low-income through the **ACCESS Philly**, **STAMP**, and **Membership** program. Art-Reach partners with museums, theatres, gardens, historic homes, and other performing arts organizations to build audiences, enhance accessible services, and design inclusively. Art-Reach also provides training, resources and professional development opportunities to empower the arts and cultural sector and increase cultural accessibility throughout the United States.

The Pittsburgh Deaf Connection

https://www.facebook.com/groups/391326597594037/

For the signing community (Deaf and hearing) to post and share information, discussions, socials, events, ASL, businesses, etc.

Hands UP Productions

https://www.handsupproductions.com/calendar

Hands UP Productions is committed to providing customer focused, high quality sign language interpreting services for theatrical events. A list of events they will be interpreting can be found at the link above.

People's Light

https://www.peopleslight.org/visit/accessibility/

People's Light aims to make its campus and programming accessible and enjoyable to everyone through a range of accommodations and resources. Every venue and facility at People's Light is wheelchair-accessible. The theatre has a range of devices and support freely available to patrons, including Audio Devices & T-Coil Loops, Fidgets & noise-canceling headphones, ASL interpreters, and Open Captions at some performances, and Audio Descriptions. People's Light is currently the only theatre in the US to offer Smart Caption Glasses for people who are Deaf or experience hearing loss. Developed by the National Theatre of Great Britain, Smart Caption Glasses integrate Augmented Reality technology with a new voice-following algorithm that provides real-time captioning for performances.

People's Light also offers relaxed performances which invite and encourage individuals with autism, ADD, ADHD, dementia, and sensory sensitivities to enjoy the performance in their "shush-free" zone.

Other Places to Look for Deaf Events

- Interpreting agencies
- Deaf organizations (example: PSAD)
- Deaf clubs
- Churches
- Deaf Schools
- Colleges with interpreting programs (example: Bloomsburg University)

Foundational Organizations Directory

These agencies, state offices, and organizations are great starting points when looking for resources to support Deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind individuals. They are full of information, infographics, trainings, and contacts to reach out to where there is a wealth of knowledge for these populations.

For more information on each organization, click their name below.

American Society for Deaf Children

Department of Human Services, Office of Developmental Programs, Special Populations Unit

Department of Labor and Industry, Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS)

Department of Labor and Industry, Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH)

Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

Gallaudet University

HealthBridges

Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA)

Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults

National Association of the Deaf (NAD)

National Family Association for Deaf-Blind and Hearing Loss Association of America

PA Society for the Advancement of the Deaf (PSAD)

Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN)

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc (RID)

State DeafBlind Projects

TechOWL- Technology for Our Whole Lives

Apple's iOS 14 and Accessibility for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Appendix

American Society for Deaf Children

https://deafchildren.org

The American Society for Deaf Children (ASDC) is committed to empowering diverse families with deaf* children and youth by embracing full access to language-rich environments through mentoring, advocacy, resources, and collaborative networks.

*ASDC uses the term "deaf" to be inclusive of various hearing levels, including those who are seen as, or identify as Deaf, deaf, or hard of hearing.

Some of their resources include free ASL posters, deaf mentors, ASL classes and webinars, ASL story time, deaf peers, and ASL stories dictionary.

Contact Information:

Address: PO Box 23, Woodbine, MD 21797
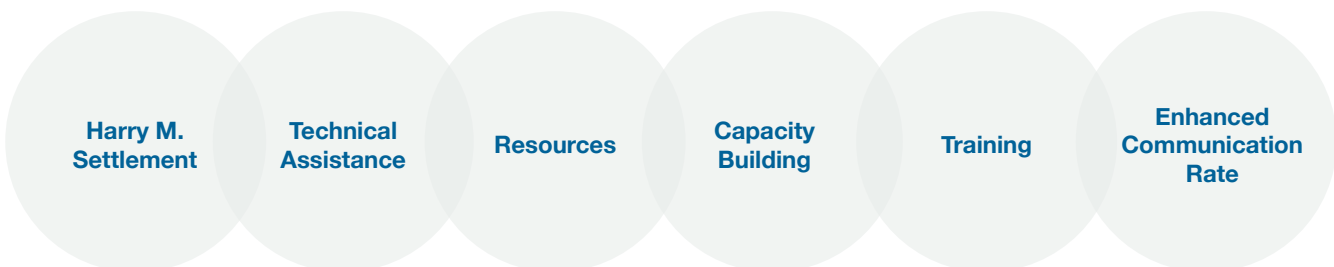
Phone: 1-800-942-2732 (ASDC)

Email: info@deafchildren.org

Department of Human Services, Office of Developmental Programs, Special Populations Unit

www.myodp.org

The goal of the Special Populations Unit is to assure that every person has an effective way to communicate in order to express choice and ensure his or her health and safety. All forms of communication should consider and include the individual's language preferences, both expressive and receptive, and use of current technology.

The Unit is responsible for:

Harry M. Settlement • Technical Assistance • Resources • Capacity Building • Training • Enhanced Communication Rate

Resources and trainings created or shared by the Special Populations Unit can be found on MyODP.org under Trainings > Special Populations.

To receive emails on pertinent information, resources, Virtual Targeted Trainings (VTT), and Virtual Office Hours (VOH) specific to Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind populations, click the following link to sign up for the listserv: **http://listserv.dpw.state.pa.us/Scripts/wa.exe?SUBED1=odp-deaf-hard-of-hearing-db&A=1**

Contact Information:

Email: **RA-ODPDeafServices@pa.gov** or **RA-PWSpecialPopUnit@pa.gov**

Department of Labor and Industry, Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS)

https://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Disability-Services/bbvs/Pages/default.aspx

The mission of the Bureau is to assist Pennsylvanians who are blind or visually impaired gain the skills necessary to live and work independently in their communities.

BBVS can assist people with visual impairments in several different ways:

- Finding employment
- Setting up a business
- Independent living skills
- Specialized children services
- Resources

Contact Information:

ALTOONA	
Address:	1130 12th Ave. Suite 300 Altoona, PA 16601
Phone:	(814) 946-7330
TTY:	(814) 949-7956
Toll Free Phone:	(866) 695-7673
Toll Free TTY	(866) 320-7956

ERIE	
Address:	4200 Lovell Place Erie, PA 16503
Phone:	(814) 871-4401
TTY:	(814) 871-4599
Toll Free Phone:	(866) 521-5073
Toll Free TTY	(888) 884-5513

HARRISBURG	
Address:	4200 Lovell Place Erie, PA 16503
Phone:	(717) 787-7500
TTY:	(717) 787-1733
Toll Free Phone:	(866) 375-8264
Toll Free TTY	(888) 575-9420

PHILADELPHIA	
Address:	444 N. 3rd Street, 5th Floor Philadelphia, PA 19123
Phone:	(215) 560-5700
TTY:	(215) 560-5725
Toll Free Phone:	(866) 631-3892
Toll Free TTY	(888) 870-4473

PITTSBURGH	
Address:	531 Penn Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Phone:	(412) 565-5240
TTY:	(412) 565-3678
Toll Free Phone:	(866) 412-4072
Toll Free TTY	(877) 255-5082

WILKES-BARRE	
Address:	300 G Laird Street Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702
Phone:	(570) 826-2361
TTY:	(570) 826-2023
Toll Free Phone:	(866) 277-4163
Toll Free TTY	(888) 651-6117

Department of Labor and Industry, Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH)

https://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Disability-Services/odhh/Pages/default.aspx

The Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (ODHH) serves all 67 counties in Pennsylvania. ODHH provides three primary services, represented by the acronym AIR.

- We ADVOCATE for people with hearing loss who are not receiving proper services from government or private agencies.
- We distribute INFORMATION and answer questions on issues relevant to people with hearing loss.
- We REFER people to appropriate organizations. ODHH is ready to serve as liaison, open doors, explain procedures and make referrals. No request is too small.

ODHH provides administrative support to the Advisory Council for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing established by Act 1997-37. ODHH also provides resources and manages the statewide database for sign language interpreters who meet the Pennsylvania registration requirements defined in Act 57. The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf can be found here. Additionally, ODHH oversees the state-funded Support Service Provider (SSP) for DeafBlind.

ALLENTOWN	
Address:	45 North Fourth Street Allentown, PA 18102
Phone:	(484) 866-9929
TTY:	(610) 821-6111
Toll Free:	(800) 233-3008
Video Phone:	(484) 866-9929

HARRISBURG	
Address:	1521 North 6th Street Harrisburg, PA 17112
Phone:	(717) 783-4912
TTY:	(717) 783-4912
Toll Free:	(800) 233-3008
Video Phone:	(717) 831-1928

JOHNSTOWN	
Address:	727 Goucher Street Johnstown, PA 15905
Phone:	(814) 792-2381
TTY:	(717) 783-4912
Toll Free:	(800) 233-3008
Video Phone:	(814) 792-2381

Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

https://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Disability-Services/ovr/Pages/default.aspx

The Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) provides vocational rehabilitation services to help persons with disabilities prepare for, obtain, or maintain employment. Statewide there are 21 District Offices staffed with trained, professional Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors which serve Pennsylvania in all 67 counties. OVR serves individuals with any disability or disabilities, including specialized services for the blind and visually impaired through OVR's Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS) and specialized services for the deaf and hard of hearing through OVR's Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (BVRS). OVR's office directy can be found here.

Gallaudet University

https://www.gallaudet.edu/asl-connect/asl-for-free/

Gallaudet University is a federally chartered private university for the education of the deaf and hard of hearing located in Washington, D.C. Through Gallaudet University, Deaf ASL-fluent scholars have created ASL Connect and all its content, a central resource for learning ASL and about Deaf Studies online. They offer ways to learn some basic ASL online to get you started, and then offer highly engaging and interactive ASL and Deaf Studies courses online.

HealthBridges

www.healthbridges.info

HealthBridges is a website for information about mental health, behavioral health, and social services supports for people who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing, and for providers who serve them. Based out of Pittsburgh, PA, HealthBridges is managed by a coalition of people who are Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, and hearing. A team of volunteer consultants, including providers, consumers, advocates and payors, write and organize material for the website. Information on the website is made available in American Sign Language, oral English and English.

Mental Health and Behavioral Health Services Resource Directory available.

Email: Complete contact form at: **http://healthbridges.info/?page_id=137**

Resource Directory: http://healthbridges.info/directory

Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA)

https://www.hearingloss.org

Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) advocates for equal access for all Americans with hearing loss in areas such as telecommunications, employment, health care, education and community life. The programs and services offered are designed to focus on the person with hearing loss.

HLAA Chapters are a place where individuals with hearing loss will meet others going through the same thing—right in their own community. In these chapters, people share stories, hear guest speakers, get information on technology, and develop lifelong friendships. For more information or to meet others with hearing loss, please reach out to a local chapter. To see if there is an HLAA Chapter, State Organization, State Chapter Coordinator, or Support Group in your area, check out the **map locations**.

Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults

https://www.helenkeller.org/hknc

HKNC's leadership team is committed to fostering self-advocacy and community development, giving people who are deaf-blind the tools to be change agents for themselves and others.

- Peer collaborative virtual learning opportunities
- Deaf-Blind immersion experience
- Online training modules

- Equipment distribution program
- On-site assessment, consultation, and training
- Peer learning groups (PLG) are offered through ZOOM video conferencing
- Information, support, and advocacy

Contact Information: Region 3: East CentralDE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV

Address:	14440 Cherry Lane Court, Suite 214 Laurel, MD 20707
Phone:	(240) 786-6534
TTY:	(240) 786-6847
Video Phone:	(240) 667-7295
Email:	**Cynthia.ingraham@hknc.org** or **Carrie.benson@hknc.org**

National Association of the Deaf (NAD)

https://www.nad.org/

NAD is a civil rights organization by and for deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the USA. Established in 1880, the NAD was shaped by deaf leaders who believed in the right of the American deaf community to use sign language, to congregate on issues important to them, and to have its interests represented at the national level. These beliefs remain true to this day, with American Sign Language as a core value. The advocacy scope of the NAD is broad, covering a lifetime and impacting future generations in the areas of early intervention, education, employment, health care, technology, telecommunications, youth leadership, and more – improving the lives of millions of deaf and hard of hearing Americans.

Contact Information:

TTY:	(301) 587-1789
Video Phone:	(301) 587-1788 ZVRS
	(301) 328-1443 Sorenson
	(301) 338-6380 Convo
	(301) 453-2390 Purple
Email:	Complete contact form at: **https://www.nad.org/contact-nad/**

National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (NFABD)

https://www.nfadb.org

Originally started by and for families, NFADB has expanded to include any interested individuals, professionals, organizations, and agencies that wish to empower the voices of families with individuals who are deaf-blind. The term "deaf-blind" means any combination of hearing and vision loss, occurring at any age, for any number of reasons.

NFADB, in collaboration with the CHARGE Syndrome Foundation and Jennifer Arnott from the Perkins Research Library created deaf-blind resource guides. They are the result of ongoing conversations about the need for resources for adults with deaf-blindness and their families and include an overview of programs, services, and information about specific topics relevant to adults who are deaf-blind. The Overview Guide and Topics Guide can be viewed at the links below.

Overview guide: https://bit.ly/dbadults-overview Topics guide: https://bit.ly/dbadults-topics

PA Society for the Advancement of the Deaf (PSAD)

http://www.psad.org

PSAD is one of the oldest state associations for deaf people in the US. It was established in 1881 by Deaf Pennsylvanians. It is an advocacy organization of Deaf Pennsylvanians with a long proud history of advocating for effective access to education, community, work, and government. It also has a rich tradition for social gatherings of Deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind people and their families throughout the state of Pennsylvania and during their annual conferences.

 To receive email notices of social gatherings, workshops and changes in laws that affect deaf people – sign up for PSAD's E-Zine by scrolling to the bottom of the above webpage and enter your email address after "Sign up for our PSAD News E-Zine." Archived announcements can also be viewed from this website by clicking on "View our PSAD News E-Zine."

Email: President@psad.org

Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN)

https://www.pattan.net/

PaTTAN is a project of the Bureau of Special Education in Pennsylvania. PaTTAN provides a full array of professional development and technical assistance targeted to improving student results. This professional development and technical assistance takes many forms in order to meet the varied needs of PaTTAN's constituents.

PaTTAN has three regional offices. These offices develop training courses, offer technical assistance, and provide resources to build the skills of intermediate unit and school personnel to support student achievement.

MALVERN	
Address:	333 Technology Drive Malvern, PA 19355
Phone:	(610) 265-7321
Toll Free:	(800) 441-3215
Video Phone:	(484) 685-0063

HARRISBURG	
Address:	6340 Flank Drive Harrisburg, PA 17112
Phone:	(717) 541-4960
Toll Free:	(800) 360-7282
Video Phone:	(717) 255-0869

PITTSBURGH	
Address:	3190 William Pitt Way Pittsburgh, PA 15238
Phone:	(412) 826-2336
Toll Free:	(800) 446-5607
Video Phone:	(412) 265-1002

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc (RID)

https://rid.org/

A national membership organization, plays a leading role in advocating for excellence in the delivery of interpretation and transliteration services between people who use sign language and people who use spoken language. In collaboration with the Deaf community, RID supports our members and encourages the growth of the profession through the establishment of a national standard for qualified sign language interpreters and transliterators, ongoing professional development and adherence to a code of professional conduct.

Contact Information:

Phone:	(703) 838-0030
Video Phone:	(571) 257-3957
Email:	RIDinfo@rid.org

State DeafBlind Projects

https://www.nationaldb.org/state-deaf-blind-projects/

The National Center on Deaf-Blindness has organized each state's Deaf-Blindness program, which provide a wide range of services to improve results for individuals with deaf-blindness and their families. Each state offers trainings as well.

Contact Information:

MALVERN	
Address:	333 Technology Drive Malvern, PA 19355
Phone:	(610) 265-7321
TTY:	(484) 685-0063

TechOWL- Technology for Our Whole Lives

https://techowlpa.org/ https://AACCommunity.net

TechOWL serves people of all ages with any disability. We are Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology (AT) Act Program. TechOWL is part of the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University. TechOWL helps people: (1) discover and explore AT devices, gadgets, and tools - (2) consult with a local TechOWL specialist - (3) borrow devices from our lending library and (4) get AT that they need.

Contact Information:

Address:	1755 N 13th St, Room 411S Philadelphia, PA 19122
Phone:	(800) 204-7428
TTY:	(866) 268-0579
Email:	TechOWL@temple.edu

If an individual meets the requirements, TechOWL has a program where individuals may be able to get an iPhone (or other type of phone) as well.

Apple's iOS 14 and Accessibility for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Every year, Apple updates its accessibility features to better support people with disabilities. These features have included support for hearing devices. Phone calls (and other media) can be connected directly to a hearing aid. You can also turn on Noise Cancellation or Mono Audio (to direct left and right speakers to play the same content. There is also an LED Flash that can alert someone to a call or text coming in.

iOS 14 brings with it some new features to support the Deaf community. This iOS will support sound recognition under Accessibility Features. You can set your phone to listen for sounds, such as a baby crying or the smoke alarm. It will notify you when these sounds happen. While not for primary use in an emergency, this is sure to provide some great support for people with hearing loss.

Also, Facetime will now be able to tell when someone is using sign language and focus on them, so everyone can see their signs. As well, iPhones will have headphone accommodations, so that you can set certain headphones to match your pattern of hearing loss.