Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services

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 publicly available online. Resources may change or no longer be available before the next annual publication. We are not responsible for the views and opinions expressed on the sites included in this resource.

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 is 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.

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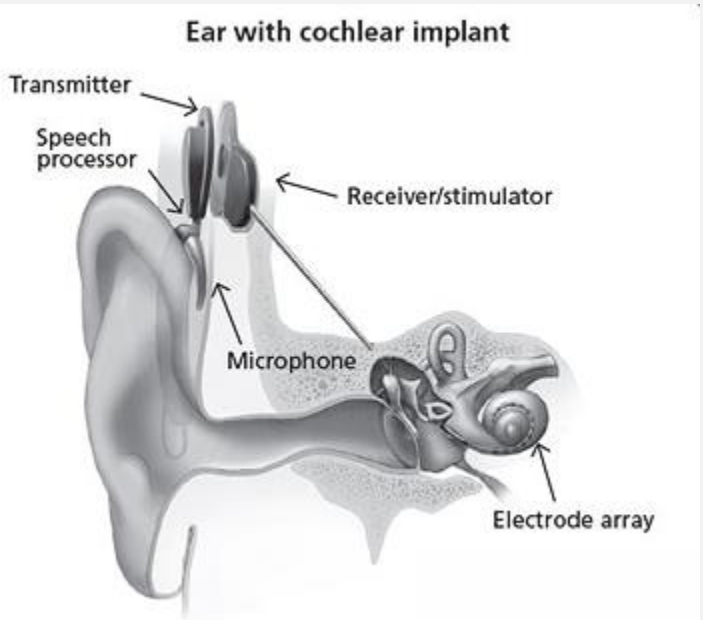
If you are aware of additional resources for future publications or come across a current resource that is no longer active or up to date, please contact us at **RA-ODPDeafServices@pa.gov**. Thank you!

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). ASL has complex visual-spatial linguistic structure which is distinct from English, which is 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.)*
Cochlear Implant	A cochlear implant is a small, complex electronic device that can help to provide a sense of sound to a person who has severe to profound hearing loss. The implant consists of an external portion that sits behind the ear and a second portion that is surgically placed under the skin. An implant does not restore normal hearing. Instead, it can give a deaf person a useful representation of sounds in the environment and help them to understand speech.  *(Hearing Loss Association of America)*
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 medical condition of not hearing. *(National Association of the Deaf)*

DeafBlind	A 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), the result is unique from either condition alone. *(National Center on Deaf-Blindness and Open Hands Open Access)* **Note:** You may see DeafBlind, Deafblind, deaf-blind, deafblind, Deaf-blind, etc. in various writings. Currently, the Helen Keller National Center encourages the use of DeafBlind.
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, difficulty with time sequencing, and/or difficulty answering wh- questions). 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)*
Frequency Modulation (FM) System	An FM system is like a tiny radio station with its own frequency. An FM system has two parts. One part is a microphone that the speaker wears. The microphone sends a signal to a receiver. The person listening wears the receiver on their ears (like headphones) or in their hearing aids. This lets the speaker's voice go directly to them, making it easier to hear. People can use an FM system almost anywhere, like in classrooms, restaurants, meetings, and nursing homes. *(American Speech-Language-Hearing Association)*
Hard of Hearing	A person with a mild-to-moderate hearing loss. *(National Association of the Deaf)*
Hearing Aids	A hearing aid is a small electronic device that is worn in or behind the ear. It makes some sounds louder so that a person with hearing loss can listen. A hearing aid has three basic parts: a microphone, amplifier, and speaker. The hearing aid receives sound through a microphone, which converts the sound waves to electrical signals and sends them to an amplifier. The amplifier increases the power of the signals and then sends them to the ear through a speaker. There are several different types of hearing aids.

	 (Hearing Loss Association of America)
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)*
Hearing Loop	Hearing Loops or induction loop systems work with hearing aids. The loop wire goes under the carpet or in the ceiling. The wire connects to a microphone. An electrical current moves through the wire when someone talks into the microphone. This creates an electromagnetic field in the room. The person wearing a hearing aid switches it to the "T" or telephone setting, picking up the signal so they can hear the speaker. Induction loop systems are good for large group areas. You can buy them for your own use at home. *(American Speech-Language-Hearing Association)*
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)*

Personal Sound Amplifier	Personal sound amplification products are not medical devices. They are consumer electronic wearable devices intended to make environmental sounds louder for people with normal hearing. These are bought over-the-counter and can vary widely from handheld devices to ones worn near or on the ears. *(FDA.gov)*
Remote Microphone System	A remote microphone is a small wireless microphone that is connected to hearing aid(s). Anything the microphone picks up is sent to the hearing aid(s). *(HearingTracker.com)*
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)	An 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)* *Note: Although the formal linguistic definition of "pidgin" languages has a different meaning, the commonly understood definition of PSE is as a "contact" language, as described here.*
ProTactile (PTASL)	The language named ProTactile was created by DeafBlind people to allow for direct communication between DeafBlind people. It prioritizes touch over visual and auditory senses. It is a tactile representation of visual information (heads nodding, yawning, laughing, agreeing, etc.). *(Western Oregon University)*
Tactile Sign Language	Tactile sign language is a form of communication that combines sign language with touch to allow access for people who cannot see. It's a hand-over-hand signing method that allows the DeafBlind person to place their hand on top of the signer's to feel the shape, location, and movement of the message being

	conveyed. *(National Center on Deaf-Blindness)*
Telecoil or t-coil	A telecoil, also called a t-coil, is a wire that is installed inside many hearing aids and cochlear implants to act as a miniature wireless receiver. The telecoil works by receiving an electromagnetic signal from the hearing loop and then turning it back into sound within the hearing aid or cochlear implant. This process eliminates much of the distracting background noise and delivers sound customized for one's own need. For people who do not have a telecoil-equipped hearing aid or cochlear implant, loop receivers with headsets can provide similar benefits but without the customized feature that matches one's hearing loss pattern. *(Hearing Loss Association of America)*
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 impairment" is still accepted and appropriate.
Video Phone (VP)	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.

Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)

Speech Therapy is available through most insurances. In the ODP waivers, an 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**

To find a Speech-Language Pathologist, outside the waiver service, see **ASHA's website.**

Communication Specialist

In the ODP waivers, the Communication Specialist offers direct and indirect supports to individuals with nontraditional communication needs. Nontraditional communication may consist of sign language, lip reading, visual gestural communication, touch cues, objects of reference, braille, print and symbol systems, speech generating devices, etc. This Specialist offers:

- A comprehensive review of the communication needs and skills (both expressive and receptive)
- Development and implementation of a communication plan
- Establishing, modifying, and maintaining environments that best support communication

- Training, modeling, and coaching the team to carry out the communication plan

Note: There may be cases where a team includes a Speech and Language Pathologist, Behavioral Specialist, and a Communication Specialist. These 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**

Occupational Therapist

Hearing loss can cause sensory processing challenges. This can lead to challenges with balance and gravity in the person's body, attention control, and motor skills development. Working with an Occupational Therapist may be beneficial for identifying and addressing occupational performance issues.

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

Orientation, Mobility, and Vision Therapist

Orientation and mobility can help develop the individual's orientation in space and can teach them to travel safely, efficiently, and independently in their environment. Orientation is the process of mentally organizing the environment and determining one's location within that environment. Mobility is the act of moving through the environment in a safe manner and move and react to various stimuli. Severely affected orientation and mobility causes further limits. By walking independently, an individual with low vision will have more opportunities to achieve their social integration and become independent individuals.

For more information on the Therapy 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** and below under the Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Audiologist

Although this is not an ODP service, this is a professional that would be a good addition to an individual's multidisciplinary support team. It is important to fully understand each individual's level of hearing. An audiologist is a medical professional, outside of the waiver system, who can provide person-centered expertise on hearing differences and needs.

Ophthalmologist

Although this is not an ODP service, this is a professional that would be a good addition to an individual's multidisciplinary support team. It is important to fully understand each individual's level of vision. An ophthalmologist is a medical professional who can provide person-centered expertise on vision differences and needs.

Otolaryngologist

Although this is not an ODP service, this is a professional that would be a good addition to an individual's multidisciplinary support team. It is important to fully understand each individual's hearing needs. Medical complexities can play a role in how a person hears and how to accommodate their needs effectively. An otolaryngologist is a medical professional, outside of the waiver system, who can provide person-centered expertise on medical conditions of the ear, nose, and throat, as well as cochlear implantation.

Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI)

According to **the National Technical Institute for the Deaf**, the SLPI was adapted by Bill Newell and Frank Caccamise from the Language/Oral Proficiency Interview (L/OPI), an interview technique for assessing spoken language communication skills. Just as the L/OPI may be used to assess a variety of spoken languages the SLPI may be used to assess a variety of signed languages.

The SLPI involves a one-on-one conversation in sign language between an interviewer and candidate/interviewee. SLPI interviews are recorded and rated on the SLPI Rating Scale, a standard scale based on the sign language communication skills of highly skilled, knowledgeable native/native-like signers.

SLPI Rating Scale:

Superior Plus	Able to have a fully shared and natural conversation, with in-depth elaboration for both social and work topics. All aspects of signing are native-like.
Superior	Able to have a fully shared conversation, with in-depth elaboration for both social and work topics. Very broad sign language vocabulary, near native-like production and fluency, excellent use of sign language grammatical features, and excellent comprehension for normal signing rate.
Advanced Plus	Exhibits some superior level skills, but not all and not consistently.

Advanced	Able to have a generally shared conversation with good, spontaneous elaboration for both social and work topics. Broad sign language vocabulary knowledge and clear, accurate production of signs and fingerspelling at a normal/near-normal rate; occasional misproductions do not detract from conversational flow. Good use of many sign language grammatical features and comprehension good for normal signing rate.
Intermediate Plus	Exhibits some advanced level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Intermediate	Able to discuss with some confidence routine social and work topics within a conversational format with some elaboration; generally, 3-to-5 sentences. Good knowledge and control of everyday/basic sign language vocabulary with some sign vocabulary errors. Fairly clear signing at a moderate signing rate with some sign misproductions. Fair use of some sign language grammatical features and good comprehension for a moderate-to-normal signing rate; a few repetitions and rephrasing of questions may be needed.
Survival Plus	Exhibits some intermediate level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Survival	Able to discuss basic social and work topics with responses generally 1-to-3 sentences in length. Some knowledge of basic sign language vocabulary with many sign vocabulary and/or sign production errors. Slow-to-moderate signing rate. Basic use of a few sign language grammatical features. Fair comprehension for signing produced at a slow-to-moderate rate with some repetition and rephrasing.
Novice Plus	Exhibits some survival level skills, but not all and not consistently.
Novice	Able to provide single sign and some short phrase/sentence responses to basic questions signed at a slow-to-moderate rate with frequent repetition and rephrasing. Vocabulary primarily related to everyday work and/or social areas such as basic work-related signs, family members, basic objects, colors, numbers, names of weekdays, and time. Production and fluency characterized by many sign production errors and by a slow rate with frequent inappropriate pauses/hesitations.
No Functional Skills	(May be) Able to provide short single sign and 'primarily' finger-spelled responses to some basic questions signed at a slow rate with extensive repetition and rephrasing.

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.

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, Lifeprint	**http://www.lifeprint.com**	ASL - American Sign Language University Resource site for ASL students, teachers, interpreters, and parents of Deaf children.
Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP)	**https://dcmp.org/**	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.
Rainone Sisters	**https://www.rainonesisters.com/** YouTube	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.
Sign ASL	**https://www.signasl.org/**	Free ASL Dictionary
Signed with Heart	YouTube	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.

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 courses available
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.
Life Print.com: ASL University	**https://lifeprint.com/asl101/lessons/lessons.htm**	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.
Deaf Focus	**http://www.deaffocus.com/**	Offers sign language courses
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.

College Level ASL Courses

Below is a list of Pennsylvania colleges that offer American Sign Language courses to consider.

Allegheny College	**https://sites.allegheny.edu/modlang/asl/**	ASL 1 and 2
Bloomsburg University	**https://www.bloomu.edu/academics/programs/american-sign-language-and-english-interpreting-bs**	ASL 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, linguistics of ASL, Visual Gestural Communication, Deaf Culture
Community College of Philadelphia	**https://live-ccp-2024.pantheonsite.io/degree-programs/american-sign-languageenglish-interpreting**	Intermediate ASL 1 and 2, structure of ASL, advanced ASL 1 and 2, introduction to American Deaf community, ASL fingerspelling
Mount Aloysius	**https://www.mtaloy.edu/academics/majors-programs/american-sign-language-english-interpreting/**	ASL 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, Linguistics of ASL, Diversity in the Deaf Community, Deaf Culture
Penn State University	**https://hhd.psu.edu/csd/undergraduate/american-sign-language**	ASL1, 2, 3, and 4, Deaf Culture
Saint Joseph's University	**https://academiccatalog.sju.edu/courses/asl/**	ASL 1 and 2, Special Topics in ASL, Intermediate ASL 1 and 2,

Swarthmore College	**https://catalog.swarthmore.edu/preview_course_nopop.php?catoid=7&coid=8375**	American Sign Language 1 and 2, ASL Literature
Temple University	**https://www.temple.edu/academics/degree-programs/american-sign-language-certificate-undergraduate-hp-asl-cert**	American Sign Language 1, 2, 3, and 4, American Deaf Culture
University of Pennsylvania	**https://plc.sas.upenn.edu/languages/american-sign-language-asl**	Intro to ASL, intermediate ASL, Advanced ASL, Deaf Culture, ASL for medical professionals, academically based community service in ASL, and Deaf literature. They also hold a student-run group, Penn-In-Hand that hosts ASL activities.

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**	
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.
Lingvano	**https://www.lingvano.com/asl/**	Bite-sized, interactive lessons to help you develop the skills you need for real-life communication. The app offers interactive practice, an ASL dictionary, sign mirror, and vocabulary trainer.
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 are speaking. Within a second or two, the words appear live on a screen, effectively providing live captions of what's being said by all participants.
Sign Language Blitz	**https://sign-language-blitz.com**	Learn ASL by quizzing phrases and fingerspelling letters.
SignUp	**https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/signup-sign-language-for/gbllbjbhbafgdcolenjhdoabdjjbjoom**	The SignUp Google Chrome extension overlays American Sign Language (ASL) and British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation on live streaming platforms, Disney+ and Netflix, for more accessible captioning.
The ASL App	**https://theaslapp.com/**	Low monthly fee with a free buddy account. Free with in-app purchases. Learn conversational ASL on the go, with all phrases and signs organized to make it easy to learn.
Wavello	**https://sorenson.com/vrs/wavello/**	This app allows the users to have interpreted video chats where the hearing person, Deaf person, and interpreter can see each other on screen through the Video Phone system.

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
Deaf Culture: Exploring Deaf Communities in the United States	**https://www.amazon.com/Deaf-Culture-Exploring-Communities-United/dp/1635501733**	Written by Deaf and hearing authors with extensive teaching experience and immersion in Deaf Cultures and signed languages, Deaf Culture fills a niche as an introductory textbook that is more inclusive, accessible, and straightforward for those beginning their studies of the Deaf-World.

Accessible Spaces

Below is a list of accessibility adaptations to consider.

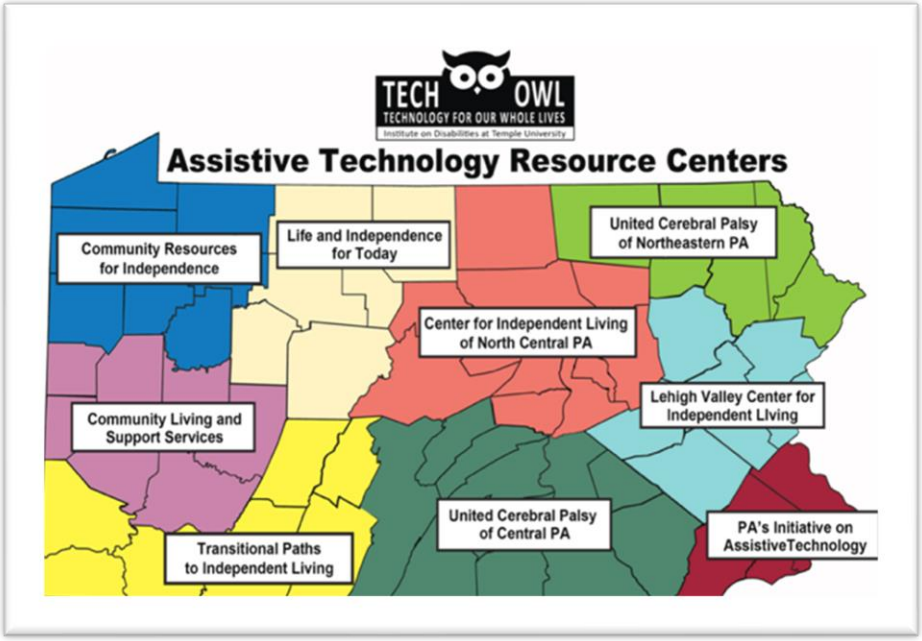
Fire Alarm, Smoke Detector, Carbon Monoxide Detector	These devices come in two formats: hard-wired, meaning that a professional electrician needs to install it, or ready to be plugged in. The alarms either flash bright strobe lights or emit an extremely loud sound. A single transmitter can be connected 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



Website	**https://techowlpa.org/atrc/**

Telecommunication Device Distribution Program (PA TDDP)

The program has free equipment to help people with disabilities make phone calls. To qualify for the program, a person must be a Pennsylvania resident, have a disability, be six years of age or older, have access to telephone service and have an individual gross income of 200% of Federal Poverty level or less.

Website	**http://www.trcil.org/TDDP.htm**

TechOWL Lending Library

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.

Website	**https://myatprogram.org/home/42**

Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF)

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.

Website	**http://www.patf.us/**
Social Media	

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.

Website	**https://techowlpa.org/deafblind-services/**

Accessible Phones

Video phones allow the user to communicate using 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 their hearing loss, and 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, and telephone and internet service. The video phone and captioned telephone providers will typically provide free installation, training, and 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://sorenson.com/captioned-calls/captioning/**
Convo Video Relay Services	**https://convorelay.com/**
Purple Video Relay Services	**www.purple.us**
Sorenson Video Relay Services • Sorenson for Zoom app – you can download it from the Zoom Marketplace, if you have a Sorenson account and a paid	**www.sorensonvrs.com**

Zoom account. Then the meeting host can invite an interpreter to join the meeting directly from the Zoom window: **Link for more information** • Wavello app (see apps section above)	
Z Video Relay Services	**https://www.zvrs.com/services/**

Hearing Assistive Technology

Hearing technology can include hearing aids, over-the-counter hearing aids, cochlear implants & other implantable devices, hearing loop technology, etc.

Simulations:

- What it sounds like to listen to speech through a hearing aid and frequency-modulated (FM) system, close up and far away, and in quiet and in noise. **Video link**.
- What it's like to hear through a cochlear implant. **Link**.

An important video resource - "Myth: I should only wear my hearing aides when I need them" **Video link**.

Below is a list of resources related to hearing technology.

Hearing Aid Know

The mission is to offer clear, honest & easy to understand advice on buying hearing aids and accessing quality hearing care. This website offers information on hearing aids, hearing loss, hearing health, and a free Audiogram Creator to plot hearing test results.

Website	**https://www.hearingaidknow.com/**
Social Media	

Help America Hear

This program provides new high-quality hearing aids nationwide to men, women, and children with limited financial resources (should be used as a last resort).

Website	**https://helpamericahear.org/**
Social Media	

Over-the-Counter (OTC) Hearing Aids

The Food and Drug Adminiatration (FDA) created a category of over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids. OTC hearing aids may be a less expensive and easier to access choice than prescription devices for some people. Find out who they are for and how to identify them in this **short video**. These aids are:

- Available without a prescription
- Designed for adults (age 18 or over) with mild to moderate hearing loss only

- Not for people who have trouble hearing conversations in quiet environments or have trouble hearing loud sounds like power tools, or motor vehicles
- Must adhere to Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standards
- May be purchased in-person, by mail, or online without the involvement of a licensed hearing healthcare professional
- To check the FDA database of listed devices and registered companies, click **here**.
- For more information from the FDA on OTC hearing aids, click **here**.

To show the differences between OTC hearing aides, prescription hearing aids, and personal amplification products, see below.

	Over-the-Counter (OTC) Hearing Aids	**Prescription Hearing Aids** (Any hearing aids that do not meet OTC requirements)	**Personal Sound Amplification Products**
Type of Product	Medical device Electronic product	Medical device Electronic product	Electronic product
Intended Users	• People 18 years and older • For those with perceived mild to moderate hearing loss	• People of any age, including those younger than 18 years • For people with any degree of hearing loss, including severe	• People of any age with normal hearing to amplify sounds in certain environments
Conditions for Sale	• Purchaser must be 18 years or older • No medical exam • No prescription • No fitting by audiologist • No need for licensed seller	• Prescription needed • Must purchase from licensed seller in some states	• No applicable FDA requirements regarding conditions for sale

Source: US. Food & Drug Administration, 2023, Hearing Aids and Personal Sound Amplification Products: What to Know, **https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/hearing-aids-and-personal-sound-amplification-products-what-know**

Vision Resources

Below is a list of resources related to vision.

American Council for the Blind (ACB)

The ACB's mission is to increase the independence, security, equality of opportunity, and quality of life for all blind and visually impaired people. ACB offers a wide variety of programs, services, and resources to help people who are blind or visually impaired and those who support them.

Website	**https://www.acb.org/**
Social Media	

Be My Eyes

Be My Eyes connects blind and low-vision users who want sighted assistance with volunteers and companies anywhere in the world, through live video and artificial intelligence.

Website	**https://www.bemyeyes.com/**
Social Media	

Eye2Eye Peer Support Program

Eye2Eye is a free, phone-based, peer support program, designed to help adults from across the country who are blind or visually impaired and their families adjust to the challenges of vision loss. Callers to the program are paired with trained peer support specialists who are also living their lives with low or no vision. These peer support specialists connect with clients on a regular basis to provide social and emotional support, practical information, mentorship, and community resources. At Eye2Eye, callers are given close, personalized attention tailored to their needs. Through our peer support services, we help build resilience, navigate the challenges of vision loss, and celebrate victories one step at a time.

Website	**https://shp.rutgers.edu/psychiatric-rehabilitation/eye2eye/**
Social Media	

Library of Accessible Media for Pennsylvanians (LAMP)

LAMP is a program funded through the Pennsylvania Office of Commonwealth Libraries. They are Network Libraries of the Library of Congress' National Libraries Service, Library for the Blind and Print Disabled at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and Free Library of Philadelphia. They circulate over 1.5 million titles in accessible formats like digital, digital download, Braille, print/Braille, large-print, and Audio described DVDs to Pennsylvanians registered for our services who can't access the printed page. LAMP also provides readers advisory and outreach to residents statewide and a variety of programming at our locations in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

Website	**https://mylamp.org/**
Social Media	
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh	4724 Baum Blvd Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Free Library of Philadelphia	1500 Spring Garden St, Suite 230 Philadelphia, PA 19130

National Federation of the Blind

The Federation coordinates many programs, services, and resources to defend the rights of blind Americans, provide information and support to blind children and adults, and build a community that creates a future full of opportunities.

The Federation offers the free white cane program, an independence market, braille certification courses,

career mentoring, blind parent mentoring, and free slate and stylus program.

National Website	**https://nfb.org/**
Social Media	
PA Website	**https://nfbp.org/**
Social Media	

PA Association for the Blind (PAB)

PAB brings innovative programs and resources to local communities across Pennsylvania. Their services are designed to meet the individual needs of Pennsylvanians with vision impairment, including braille embossing.

Website	**https://www.pablind.org/**
Social Media	

Children

This section has specific resources geared towards children however, some material may be a resource to anyone.

American Society for Deaf Children

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

> *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.

Website	**https://deafchildren.org**
Social Media	

Decision Guide to Communication Choices pamphlet

This **pamphlet** from the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Division of Human Development and Disability will help guide the user through the steps in deciding about communication. Deciding which communication method(s) will be best for each child can be stressful. The right choices are up to each family. Discovering what works for the child is truly a work in progress. The child’s needs, and those of the family, along with long-term goals for the child, may change with time and families will want to review choices regularly. The communication method chosen at first may not be the last or only choice. The pamphlet will help find the starting point in the decision making process, identify

and explore needs, and plan next steps.

Further free materials about hearing loss in children can be found **here**.

Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA) Portal

The EITA, Hearing-Deafness section was designed to support families and professionals to increase their knowledge and understanding about hearing, hearing loss, and supports that are available in Pennsylvania. Explore the various resources within this interaction to learn more.

Website	**https://www.eita-pa.org/low-incidence/hearing-deafness/**

Family Connections for Language and Learning (FCLL)

The Family Connections for Language and Learning Program serves families of children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing. The program is made up of a team of experienced parents of children who are deaf or Hard of Hearing and deaf/Hard of Hearing adults. The program mentors:

- Connect with families by text, email, phone, virtual meetings or the family home/ community
- Help families understand hearing loss and the unique needs of children who are deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Discuss the many language and communication opportunities available
- Provide unbiased information to help families make informed decisions for the child
- Connect to resources, including Early Intervention
- Help parents become an advocate for the child's needs
- Share strategies for collaboration with the professionals who serve the child, including a Care Coordination Plan

Website	**https://www.parenttoparent.org/family-connections-for-language-and-learning/**
Name	Anne Gaspich, Director/Parent Mentor
Voice/Text	(717) 580-0839
Email	**FamilyConnections@tiu11.org**

Family Resource Group

PaTTAN Family Resource Group sends out resources, event information, and contacts that can benefit children and families. It's an easy way to get updates and take advantage of any available opportunities.

Website	**https://www.pattan.net/Disabilities/Deaf-and-Hard of Hearing/Families**
Name	Erin Campion
Email	**ecampion@pattan.net**

LEAD-K

LEAD-K aims to end language deprivation through information to families about language milestones, assessments that measure language milestone achievements, and data collection that holds our current education system accountable. LEAD-K provides information about learning American Sign Language (ASL) and how having ASL as a foundation leads to acquiring our national language, English.

Website	**lead-k.org**

Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN)

Students who are deaf or Hard of Hearing have unique linguistic, environmental, and cultural needs. Each student with a hearing loss is an individual with different strengths, talents and communication preferences that must be considered when designing educational programs to facilitate growth and to prepare the student for adult life.

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. Some of the resources on the website are:

- Communication considerations for children who are deaf, Hard of Hearing, or deafblind
- Educational resources for children with hearing loss
- Students who are deaf, Hard of Hearing, or deafblind: Safety checklist for Individual Education Program (IEP) teams
- Hearing accessibility: Event planning checklist
- Considerations for students who are deaf, Hard of Hearing, or deafblind: Questions to discuss with your school team
- Technology resources for students who are deaf, Hard of Hearing, or deafblind

PaTTAN also has consultants available to assist. 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, in order to improve student achievement. Each regional office serves specific intermediate units.

Website	**https://www.pattan.net/Disabilities/Deaf-and-Hard of Hearing**

	West	**Central**	**East**
Intermediate Units Served	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 27, and 28	8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 29	18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26
Phone	(412) 826-2336	(717) 541-4960	(610) 265-7321
Video Phone	Not available	(717) 255-0869	(610) 572-3430

Emergency Resources

Crisis Text Line

Crisis Text Line is available for any crisis (any painful emotion that you may be experiencing and need support to handle). A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds, all from a secure online platform. The volunteer Crisis Counselor will help you move from a hot moment to a cool moment.

Website	**https://www.crisistextline.org/**
Text	741741

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

The Lifeline provides 24/7 free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States.

Website	**https://988lifeline.org/help-yourself/for-deaf-Hard of Hearing/** to use online chat with a counselor, available 24/7.
Voice/Text	TTY users can use a preferred relay service or dial 711 then 988 Or Text 988 to chat with a counselor

National Deaf Domestic Violence Hotline

The National Deaf Domestic Violence Hotline (NDDVH) is available to Deaf callers anywhere in the United States. Deaf NDDVH provides Deaf emergency therapy and counseling services. In partnership with the Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services (ADWAS), advocates answer videophone calls and emails 24/7. Talk with a Deaf advocate for mental health information and referrals, or Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault education. Advocates can also assist Deaf callers in identifying different ways to stay safe and develop a formal safety plan.

Website	**https://www.thehotline.org/get-help/domestic-violence-deaf-services/**
Videophone	1-855-812-1001
Email	**Nationaldeafhotline@adwas.org**

Disaster Distress Helpline

The national Disaster Distress Helpline's videophone service for ASL users can help those feeling anxious, alone, or overwhelmed after a disaster.

Website	**https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline**
Videophone	1-800-985-5990

Web Connect	**Disasterdistress.samhsa.gov** and click 'ASL NOW'

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.

- Art-Reachcv
- Deaf Professional Arts Network
- Deaf Queer
- DeafStone
- 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
- Hands UP Productions
- HealthBridges
- Hearing Loss Association of American (HLAA)
- Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults
- My Deaf Therapy
- National Association of the Deaf (NAD)

National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA)
National Center on DeafBlindness (NCDB)
National Deaf Center
National Deaf Therapy
National Family Association for DeafBlind and Hearing Loss Association of America
National Hispanic Latino Association of the Deaf
Pennsylvania Partnership for the DeafBlind
Pennsylvania School for the Deaf
PA Society for the Advancement of the Deaf (PSAD)
People's Light
Pittsburgh Deaf Connection
Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc (RID)
Rochester School for the Deaf
Scranton School for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
State DeafBlind Projects
TechOWL- Technology for Our Whole Lives
Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf

Art-Reach

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 , , and 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.

Website	**https://www.art-reach.org**
Social Media	

Deaf Professional Arts Network (DPAN.TV)

The Deaf Professional Arts Network (D-PAN) a nonprofit 501 (c) 3 organization was originally founded to make music and music culture – the predominant shared language and experience of people worldwide – universally accessible by extending its reach to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Since 2006, D-PAN has pioneered the art form of creating high quality American Sign Language (ASL) music videos, translating the lyrics of popular songs through ASL.

D-PAN.tv (**The Sign Language Channel**) was formed for a singular, essential purpose: To make quality news and information accessible to both the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community and it's supporters.

Website	**https://d-pan.org/**

Deaf Queer

The Deaf Queer Resource Center (DQRC) is a national nonprofit organization for, by and about the Deaf Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer communities. DQRC provides information and resources, collects and preserves Deaf LGBTQ history, advocates for communication access, and works to support, empower, and bring more visibility to and awareness about marginalized Deaf LGBTQ communities.

Website	**www.deafqueer.org**
Social Media	

DeafStone

DeafStone is a nonprofit organization within the Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, and Hearing communities. DeafStone provides supports and services for those whose primary language is sign-language.

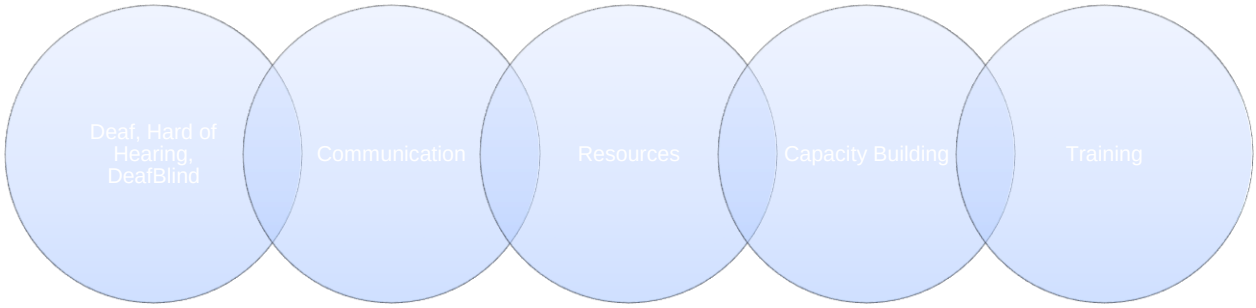
Website	**https://deafstone.org/**
Social Media	
Email	**info@DeafStone.org**

Voice, Text, FaceTime	412-616-1400
Video Phone	412-314-4365

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

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:



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

To receive emails on pertinent information and resources specific to Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind populations, email the RA account listed below to sign up for the listserv.

Website	**www.myodp.org**
Email	**RA-ODPDeafServices@pa.gov** or **RA-PWSpecialPopUnit@pa.gov**

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

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

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

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

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.

Website	**https://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Disability-Services/odhh/Pages/default.aspx**
Social Media	
V/TTY	(717) 783-4912
Video Phone	(717) 831-1928
Email	**odhh@pa.gov**

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

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**.

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

Gallaudet University

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.

Website	**https://www.gallaudet.edu/asl-connect/asl-for-free/**
Social Media	

Hands UP Productions

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.

Website	**https://www.handsupproductions.com/calendar**

HealthBridges

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.

Website	**www.healthbridges.info**
Social Media	
Resource Directory	**http://healthbridges.info/directory**

Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA)

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**.

Website	**https://www.hearingloss.org**

Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults

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 Central DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV

Website	**https://www.helenkeller.org/hknc**
Social Media	
TTY	(240) 786-6847
Video Phone	(240) 667-7295
Email	**Cynthia.ingraham@hknc.org** or **Carrie.benson@hknc.org**

Institute for Disabilities Research and Training, Inc.

Institute for Disabilities Research and Training (IDRT) is dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities, their families, and service providers through research and development, training, technical assistance, and advocacy. They specialize in research and development efforts on behalf of children and adults who are deaf and Hard of Hearing. IDRT has particular expertise in American Sign Language (ASL) software and services, and gesture recognition technology.

- MyASLTech is an on-line portal that hosts IDRT's comprehensive suite of ASL tools, the mySign Generator, myASL Publisher, and myASL Quizmaker.
- MyASLServices provides translation services. They offer English-to-ASL translation of hardcopy documents, softcopy documents, transcriptions, games, websites, software, and oral transcripts.
- MyASLStore offers memberships, instructional tools and training, ASL games, 911 products, ASL Stories, other languages and cultures, and products on vision.

Website	**https://www.idrt.com/**

My Deaf Therapy

My Deaf Therapy are experienced clinicians who are ASL fluent, linguistically accessible, and culturally affirmative. They emphasize the importance of inclusivity and embrace diversity and fluidity of various identities on a number of spectrums (e.g., hearing, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, neurodiverse). My Deaf Therapy welcomes D/deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, late-deafened, and Hard of Hearing individuals and their families. They also serve hearing clients who know sign language such as KODA/CODAs and interpreters.

Website	**https://www.mydeaftherapy.com**

National Association of the Deaf (NAD)

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.

Website	**https://www.nad.org/**
Social Media	
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 Black Deaf Advocates

National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA) is the official advocacy organization for thousands of Black Deaf and Hard of Hearing Americans. NBDA is a growing organization with more than 30 chapters across the country. The Mission of the National Black Deaf Advocates is to promote the leadership development, economic and educational opportunities, social equality, and to safeguard the general health and welfare of Black deaf and Hard of Hearing people.

Website	**https://www.nbda.org/** The Philadelphia Chapter: **https://www.nbda.org/local_chapters/philadelphia-chapter-of-black-deaf-advocates**
Social Media	

National Center on DeafBlindness (NCDB)

The National Center on DeafBlindness (NCDB) works with state deaf-blind projects and other partners to improve educational results and quality of life for children who are deaf-blind and their families. They provide lots of opportunities to learn about deafblindness and instructional practices —online courses, webinars, and self-study modules.

Website	**https://www.nationaldb.org/**

National Deaf Center

A technical assistance and dissemination center funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). They provide products and services that are deaf-centered, evidence-based, and developed in response to community needs. They offer online courses, online gaming tools for youth, data reports, research summaries, evidence-based resources, webinars, and more.

Website	**https://nationaldeafcenter.org/**
Social Media	

National Deaf Therapy

A Deaf, female owned company that offers video-based therapy and eTherapy options. There are therapy sessions designed for individuals, couples, families or groups, support circles, and workshops/training sessions for community members, wellness providers, organizations, mental health interpreters, and more. This company offers several Pennsylvania licensed clinicians.

Website	**https://www.nationaldeaftherapy.com**
Social Media	

National Family Association for Deaf-Blind (NFABD)

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**

Website	**https://www.nfadb.org**

National Hispanic Latino Association of the Deaf (NHLAD)

The mission for NHLAD is to build an alliance between Deaf Latino and the Hispanic community through the preservation of language, culture & customs.

Website	**http://www.nhlad.org**

PA Partnership for the DeafBlind

The mission of The Pennsylvania Partnership for the DeafBlind (PPDB) is to provide support for individuals who are DeafBlind through a family-driven network. PPDB connects families with similar needs throughout the lifespan and connects them with accurate and timely resources and organizations specific to their needs. PPDB collaborates with other organizations and groups to ensure that the needs and concerns of persons who are deafblind are addressed and assists families in attending advocacy events and supporting legislative efforts.

Website	**https://www.papdb.org/**
Social Media	
Email	**papartnershipdeafblind@gmail.com**

PA School for the Deaf

The Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (PSD) the third oldest school for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students in the United States. PSD strives to make the larger community around campus DEAF AWARE! The Community Outreach office does this daily by answering telephone, email, or letter requests for information about deafness, Deaf Culture, and sign language.

Website	**http://www.psd.org**

Social Media	
Email	**info@psd.org**

PA Society for the Advancement of the Deaf (PSAD)

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."

Contact Information:

Website	**http://www.psad.org**
Social Media	
Email	**President@psad.org**

People's Light

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.

Website	**https://www.peopleslight.org/visit/accessibility/**
Social Media	

Pittsburgh Deaf Connection

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

Social Media	

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc (RID)

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.

Website	**https://rid.org/**
Social Media	
Phone	(703) 838-0030
Video Phone	(571) 257-3957
Email	**RIDinfo@rid.org**

Rochester School for the Deaf

The Rochester School is one of eleven Section 4201 schools created by legislation to educate New York State's deaf, blind, and severely physically disabled students. They offer ASL classes for the community, and for businesses and organizations.

Website	**https://www.rsdeaf.org/**
Social Media	

The Scranton School for the Deaf

The Scranton School for the Deaf provides academic and extracurricular programs to deaf and Hard of Hearing children from birth through eigth grade. They offer ASL classes and other services to educate and serve as a resource for individuals with hearing loss.

Website	**https://thescrantonschool.org/**
Social Media	

State DeafBlind 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.

Website	**https://www.nationaldb.org/state-deaf-blind-projects/** Pennsylvania DeafBlind Project: **https://www.pattan.net/disabilities/deaf-blind**

Step Up Services

Step Up Services provides support services for DeafBlind individuals. They are trained Support Service Providers (SSP) who have a variety of experiences in the community with DeafBlind individuals. A Support Service Provider is a specially trained individual who provides access to the community for people who are deafblind. This allows the person who is deafblind to make decisions for themselves based on the visual, environmental and social information communicated by the SSP.

To learn more about SSP services go to **ODHH website**.

Website	**https://stepupservicesllc.com/**

TechOWL- Technology for Our Whole Lives

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.

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.

Website	**https://techowlpa.org/**
Social Media	
Email	**TechOWL@temple.edu**

The Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf

The Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (WPSD) provides academic and extracurricular programs to deaf and Hard of Hearing children from birth through twelfth grade. WPSD offers ASL classes that teach not only sign language skills but also promote an understanding of Deaf Culture.

Website	**https://www.wpsd.org/**
Social Media	