

Resources For the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind



This document is designed to provide a list of resources and technology available in Nebraska to enhance communication and relationships with Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals.

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Purpose

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) will develop a repository of resources and technology that providers can utilize to communicate with individuals who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing/and Deaf-Blind pursuant to the Olmstead Plan.


Assistive Technology

Assistive technology is an adaptive and rehabilitative device for people with disabilities or the elderly population that includes a broad range of hardware and software tools to transmit information to the individual in the manner most accessible to them. Those can include personal amplification devices, devices with signaling light receivers, vibrating receivers, and visual aids.

Nebraska Specialized Telecommunications Equipment Program

The State of Nebraska is proud to offer the Nebraska Specialized Telecommunications Equipment Program (NSTEP) which is a program that provides free equipment for Nebraska residents with qualifying disabilities that interfere with their use of the telephone. Nebraska residents who have phone service in their home and a certified disability that causes difficulty using a standard telephone may qualify for assistance in the purchasing of specialized telephone equipment such as amplified telephones, wireless cell phones, captioned telephones, signaling devices and TTYs.

The Nebraska State Legislature established the Nebraska Equipment Distribution Program during the 1995 legislative session. The Public Service Commission (PSC) was mandated to develop specific procedures necessary for implementation of the program and is responsible for the management of the program.



In 1999, the legislature passed a bill that removed the income guideline requirement. The equipment distribution program may issue a voucher of up to \$1,000 to deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and speech disabled persons who qualify.

Vouchers can only be used to purchase specialized telecommunication equipment.

A voucher will be issued to approved applicants for the purchase of telecommunication equipment. The equipment can be purchased from any merchant selling the specialized devices. Coordinators for NEDP can provide a list of vendors who distribute specialized telecommunication equipment. Some vendors may provide installation and training on the use of the equipment. Additional training and assistance is available through the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Applications are currently limited to one individual per household once every five years.

Examples of Types of Equipment Offered



CapTel - Captioned Telephone

- CapTel 840 - for people who have a standard analog phone line
- CapTel 2400i - for people who have a telephone service and high-speed internet access
- CaptionCall - High speed internet access required

Cell Phones

- A cell phone (sometimes called a mobile phone) is an electronic device used for mobile telecommunications over a cellular network. Cell phones offer a wide range of features: simple voice function, text messaging, email, internet options and more.
- A hard of hearing consumer may want an amplified cell phone with speaker phone options or text options. Hearing aid or cochlear implant users may experience some interference when using a cell phone. The FCC has mandated that cell phone companies provide models that are hearing aid compatible.
- A deaf consumer may want a cell phone with text messaging, email options or TTY mode options.
- When selecting a cell phone, be sure to test it at the cell phone store to make sure it has the options you need, that it is loud enough, or is compatible with your hearing aids.
- You are responsible for paying for the monthly cellular service with the options you select.


Computer Conversion Package

- This package consists of a modem and software that you install in your computer. After connecting a phone line to the modem and installing the required software on your computer you will be able to use your computer as a TTY.

Large Visual Displays

- This is a large bright display with red characters. This has adjustable brightness, display speed and direction options.

Pagers

- A pager is a simple telecommunications device for short messages. A one-way numeric pager can only receive a short numeric message (usually a telephone number). A two-way pager has the ability to send and receive email, numeric pages and short messages. Unlike cell phones, pager messages are short and quick.
 - Paging is a subscription service offered in a variety of plans depending on the communication needs of the consumer.
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Phones with Amplification built in (*Corded, Cordless, Phone Amplifier*)

- Amplified Telephones are devices used by people who are hard of hearing who have some residual hearing and use their voice. The amplifier makes sounds louder and clearer. There are several different ways a telephone can be amplified; a volume control in the handset, an in-line amplifier that is attached to the telephone, and a phone that has built-in amplification. Public pay phones have a button to press or a sign explaining how to increase the volume.
- Phones manufactured after Jan. 1, 1989, must be hearing aid compatible. If a person's hearing aid has a T-coil switch, the conversation can be amplified without having to use an amplifying device with the phone. The Hearing Aid Compatibility Act of 1988 required that telephones located in workplace common areas and credit card operated telephones be compatible with hearing aids.

Signalers (*Light Signaler, Phone Ringer, Personal Signaler, Tactile Ring Signaler*)

- Signalers are devices to alert people to audible warnings. These devices alert people who are deaf or hard of hearing to a telephone ring, a doorbell, a baby crying, fire/smoke alarms, timers, alarm clocks, pagers, and so forth. Signalers are used in the home and on the job.
- A light signaler can be a single lamp hooked to a receiver and placed strategically around the house. Some light signalers are hard wired to the source of the sound. These lights flash in response to sounds and alert the person to the auditory source, such as a doorbell or ringing phone. A phone ringer is attached to your telephone and amplifies the volume of the ringer. This alerts the hard of hearing person when the phone is ringing. A personal signaler is often used for pagers and alarm clocks. A tactile/vibrating signaler is a lightweight signaler that uses vibrating motions to notify you of an audible signal. Some signalers can be worn on your belt and operate up to 80 feet away. Others are placed on a bed box spring so you will be awakened while sleeping. These devices alert the user to the pager or alarm clock.

Speech Enhanced Telephones

- This phone allows a speech-impaired person with a soft/low voice to use the phone.
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Telebrailers

- This piece of equipment enables deaf/blind individuals to communicate on the phone, face to face, or by computer. It is designed to meet the needs of people comfortable with using a standard TTY over a phone system but can also be switched to activate the home keys and spacebar as a Braille keyboard.

Applications for the NSTEP program can be found at:

<https://ncdhh.nebraska.gov/sites/ncdhh.nebraska.gov/files/doc/app.pdf>

Interpreting Services

When a deaf individual who uses sign language communicates with an individual who does not know sign language, a sign language interpreter may be warranted to assist with effective communication. Sign language interpreters in Nebraska must be licensed and are professionals who facilitate communication between people who are deaf and people who do not know sign language in a wide variety of settings including, but not limited to, education, medical, legal, employment, and more.

Effective January 1, 2016, N.R.S. §20-156.01 mandates that sign language interpreters who receive compensation for their services and Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) Service Providers who provide services in Nebraska to hold licensure in the State of Nebraska. Interpreters that are exempt from this law are: interpreters working in the K-12 educational setting, volunteers, emergency situations (interpreters working in an emergency situation is only permitted until a licensed interpreter arrives), interpreting students (must be under the supervision of a licensed interpreter), interpreters working in the religious setting, and interpreters working under a VRI business license (working for a VRI provider, who is licensed).

You can find a list of Nebraska licensed sign language interpreters at:

<https://ncdhh.nebraska.gov/licensing>;

You may also utilize an Interpreting Agency to locate a licensed interpreter for you. Below is a list of Interpreting Agencies you may contact to secure a licensed sign language interpreter. This list can also be found at <https://ncdhh.nebraska.gov/licensing>.

Deaf Services Unlimited

6925 Hickman Road
Des Moines, IA 50322
(515) 243-4455
(800) 930-2580

www.deafservicesunlimited.com
coordinators@deafservicesunlimited.com

DSU gives your organization easy access to American Sign Language interpreting and captioning services. Simply request services by calling us or by visiting DeafServicesUnlimited.com/schedule. Regardless of your need, we have you covered.

Interpretek

P.O. Box 954
Lee's Summit, MO 64063
(816) 246-8770


kc.office@interpretek.com

Keystone Interpreting Solutions (KIS)

1799 Hillcrest Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55116
(651) 454-7275
(612) 470-5190 (VP)

info@kisasl.com
www.kisasl.com

KIS provides ASL and CDI Interpreting-On-site and VRI, ASL Translation, Video Production, Learning Zone-ASL class, Mentoring, ASL/Interpreting Skills training.



Linguabee

ASL Interpreting Agency - On-site / VRI

Justin Buckhold, "Bucky"

(855) 585-5859 Voice/Video/Text/Fax

support@linguabee.com

Access and book American Sign Language interpreting services 24 / 7 / 365 using our homegrown online booking platform with built-in features, and receive extraordinary live support from our Happy team, making your booking experience seamless and convenient.

Purple

VRI/CART/On-Site

interpreting@purple.us

(866) 669-7707, Ext.9

Sorenson Community Interpreting Services (SCIS)

Brad Holt, Director of National Accounts Sorenson Communications

(800) 659-4783

(844) 720-1891 (videophone)

Communityinterpreting@sorenson.com

Telecommunications: VRS, VRI, and TRS

Overview

With technology seemingly always one step ahead of us, it's easy to confuse the various telecommunication services used to visually connect individuals wishing to communicate with each other. There are three primary telecommunication services in use today: (a) video relay service (VRS), (b) telecommunications relay service (TRS), and (c) video remote interpreting (VRI). VRS and TRS are free programs regulated by the FCC and VRI is a fee-based service that satisfies the communication-related mandates of the ADA. VRS and VRI, as their names suggest, are video-based services; TRS is text-driven.

How do the various telecommunication services differ?

Video Relay Service (VRS): VRS is a free subscriber-based service. Available 24 hours a day, it is described by the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) as a service that enables deaf individuals “to make and receive telephone calls through a communications assistant (CA) who is a qualified American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter.” Using videophones, smart phones, or computers with video communication capabilities, the subscriber (deaf individual) calls the VRS provider who, through an interpreter, calls the person who can hear on a standard phone and then relays the conversation between the two parties. Conversely, a person who can hear wishing to call a subscriber (deaf individual) simply dials the subscriber’s phone number, which is automatically routed to the VRS provider.

Video Remote Interpreting (VRI): VRI is a fee-based service. Unlike VRS, VRI is not a telephone service but rather a means for two or more individuals in the same room to access an interpreter remotely. A VRS provider, by FCC regulation, cannot provide free interpreting services when all parties wishing to communicate are in the same room. The deaf user signs to the interpreter who speaks simultaneously to the people who can hear. They speak to the interpreter who signs the message simultaneously to the deaf user. VRI is an alternative to on-site interpreting (whereby the interpreter is physically in the room). It is not effective in all circumstances and in some cases it can be counterproductive. The Department of Justice notes that VRI “...will not be effective if the person who is deaf or hard of hearing has difficulty seeing the screen (either because of vision loss or because he or she cannot be properly positioned to see the screen, because of an injury or other condition). In these circumstances, an on-site interpreter may be required.

Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) Service Providers who provide services in Nebraska must be licensed in the State of Nebraska. Please refer to <https://ncdnh.nebraska.gov/licensing> for a list of currently licensed VRI providers.

Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS): TRS is a free, text-based service. It is accessed by dialing 7-1-1. Relay operators (communication assistants) serve as intermediaries between people who rely on a text telephone (TTY) or text messaging and people who use standard voice telephones. Relay operators convey to the telephone user what the other party is typing and then type to the TTY user what the telephone user is saying.

Telecommunication Services at a Glance

VRS: Interpreter, deaf person, and hearing person are all in different locations. The hearing person uses a standard telephone while the deaf individual uses a visual screen. Cost of the service: free.

VRI: Deaf and hearing person are in the same location while the interpreter is in another location. The interpreter is accessed via a visual screen. Cost of Service: fee-based.

TRS: Deaf person, hearing person, and relay operator are all in different locations. Primary equipment is text-based. Cost of the service: free.

Additional Resources on this subject may be found at:

<http://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/resources>

Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP)

“The Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP), through collaboration, provides all Nebraskans access and opportunities to better live, learn, and work.”

Since 1989, the Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) has assisted Nebraskans with disabilities, their families, educators, service coordinators, employers and a host of agencies to learn about and use assistive technology. ATP is a state agency under the Department of Education.

Creating a partnership with agencies resulted in a unique collaboration. The seamless service across program lines resulted in less duplication and made it possible for individuals of all ages and disabilities to access success through a single point of entry. ATP provides services to explore potential funding sources, try equipment before buying, and have an assessment/consultation done by a qualified technology specialist at home, school, and work.

Phone: 402-471-0734

Toll Free: 877-713-4002 (In-state only)

Website: <https://atp.nebraska.gov/>



Community Organizations

Omaha Association for the Deaf (OAD)

- Omaha Association of the Deaf is a non-profit organization promoting the general welfare of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Communities. The OAD hall is a place where people socialize. Anyone, including hearing people, families with deaf members, children of deaf adults (CODA), and interpreters are welcome!
- OAD Hall is located at 4050 Hillside Ave, Omaha, Nebraska.
- Phone: (402) 206-2401
- Candice Arteaga - President of OAD

Lincoln Association for the Deaf Club (LAD)

Nebraska Association for the Deaf (NeAD)

- Established in 1902 serving all Deaf and Hard of hearing people in Nebraska, their families, advocates, and public service providers.
- Mark Anderson - President of NeAD
- <http://www.nead1902.com/default.html>

Hands and Voices

- Parent-driven, non-profit organization dedicated to supporting families that have children who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing without a bias towards communication modes or methodologies. Hands and Voices provides Nebraska families with the necessary resources, networking, and information in order to improve communication access and educational outcomes for their children. Members are families with children who have all types of hearing loss.
- Shelli Janning - Program Coordinator - Guide by your Side (GBYS)
- <http://www.handsandvoicesne.org/>

Hearing Loss Association of America - Omaha Area Chapter (HLAA)

The Hearing Loss Association of America is the nation's foremost membership and advocacy organization for people with hearing loss. Hearing Loss Association of America opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss through information, education, support and advocacy.

<http://www.hlaaomaha.org/>

Nebraska Regional Programs for Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Nebraska's Regional Program's mission is to provide support for the unique educational, socio-emotional, cultural, and transition needs of children who have a hearing loss ages birth through graduation from highschool and their families, through cooperative regional planning of interactive activities, organizations, and career explorations that meet or exceed the Nebraska Department of Education standards.

<http://nrpdhh.site.esu9.org/>



Learning Sign Language Resources

Gallaudet University (ASL Connect) - <https://www.gallaudet.edu/asl-connect>

Sign School - <https://www.signschool.com/>

Sign Language 101 - <http://www.signlanguage101.com/>

American Sign Language University (ASLU) - <http://www.lifeprint.com/>

Also, check your local community colleges and universities to see if they offer courses in American Sign Language.



Additional Resources

National Deaf Center

The National Deaf Center's mission is to close the substantial gaps in education and employment that exist for deaf people in the United States and its territories. We are a technical assistance and dissemination center federally funded by the Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to provide evidence-based strategies at the local, state, and national levels. The National Deaf Center is located at the University of Texas at Austin, based in the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk at the College of Education. Stephanie Cawthon, PhD, directs the National Deaf Center.

National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes

The University of Texas at Austin

College of Education SZB 228

1912 Speedway D4900

Austin TX 78712-1284

Phone (512) 471-8283

VP (512) 256-6344

<https://www.nationaldeafcenter.org/>

National Association for the Deaf (NAD)



The National Association of the Deaf (NAD) is the nation's premier civil rights organization of, by and for deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the United States of America. 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. The NAD also carries out its federal advocacy work through coalition efforts with specialized national deaf and hard of hearing organizations, as well as coalitions representing national cross-disability organizations.

On the international front, the NAD represents the United States of America to the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), an international human rights organization. Individual and organizational membership makes it possible for the NAD to ensure that the collective interests of the American deaf and hard of hearing community are seen and represented among our nation's policy makers and opinion leaders at the federal level.

The NAD is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization supported by the generosity of individual and organizational donors, including corporations and foundations.

National Association of the Deaf

8630 Fenton Street, Suite 820

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Videophone:

- 301-587-1788 (ZVRS)
- 301-328-1443 (Sorenson)
- 301-338-6380 (Convo)
- 301-453-2390 (Purple)
- TTY: 301-587-1789
- Fax: 301-587-1791

<https://www.nad.org>



Contact

Omaha Office

1313 Farnam Street, Suite 304

Omaha, NE 68102-1836

(800) 545-6244

Lincoln Office

4600 Valley Road Suite 420

Lincoln, NE 68510-4844

(402) 471-3593

Kearney Office

(308) 865-5447

North Platte Office

200 South Silber Room 35

North Platte, NE 69101-4298

(308) 535-6600



Scottsbluff Office

505A Broadway, Suite 700

Scottsbluff, NE 69361- 3515

(308) 633-3751

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