

Workbook for Hiring Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Workbook Purpose – Provide an overview and strategies of the process in assisting persons who are deaf and hard of hearing to obtain and retain competitive employment.

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Overview of Job Development for Persons who are D/HH

- **Job Placement for Persons who are D/HH**

- Assisting people who are D/HH to find employment is in many ways not much different than working with any other customer. Like anyone else, people who are D/HH need to:
 - Have a clear idea of the type of job they wish to pursue
 - Consider what type of work environment would be the best fit for them
 - Use their personal and professional networks as a key component in job search
- The biggest difference for persons who are D/HH is that they may need support and assistance as they go through a job search, and that some of the steps are somewhat more planful, intensive and deliberate.
- Many of the techniques used to assist persons who are D/HH are related to communication. This would include the different levels of understanding English or ASL and could include Concept and Repetitive instruction to make sure items are well understood.

- **Job Development where to begin**

- In assisting a person who is D/HH to find employment, the Service Provider will begin working with the individual as they would with any other customer, selecting the most useful options from the full range of services and resources that exist:
 - Department of Rehabilitation RCD
 - Department of Rehabilitation Employment Coordinator
 - Employment Development Department
 - America's Job Center Disability Coordinator
 - Community Resource Provider
 - City Department of Disability
 - ASL Interpreting Agency
- ALMIS America's Labor Market Information System
 - California EDD Labor Market Information Division
 - www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov the official source of California Labor Market Information

- America's Job Bank www.ajb.org the world's largest pool of active job opportunities
- America's Learning Xchange www.alx.org provides information on career exploration, training, education, testing assessment and other career tools
- America's Career InfoNet www.acinet.org includes a wealth of information on job trends, wages and national and local labor markets
- O*NET Online <http://online.onetcenter.org> a database that describes a wide variety of occupations, their requisite skills and earnings potential
 - The assessment and career exploration tools of O*NET (Interest Profiler, Work Importance Locator, Ability Profiler) www.onetcenter.org/product/tools.html
 -
- Get beyond task skills
 - Job Development for persons who are D/HH may focus on skills, but experience shows that many people succeed or fail on a job based not on their skills, but how well they fit into the social environment of the workplace.
 - When developing successful employment opportunities consider:
 - What environments does the individual enjoy
 - In what environments have they succeeded
 - What social skills do they bring to the environment
 - In what environments would their personality and social skills be considered an asset
 - What types of environments should be avoided

Why Employers Hire Persons who are D/HH

When working with individuals where the employer will knowingly be hiring a person who is D/HH due to the disability being readily apparent, identifying employment opportunities requires that Service Providers determine what business needs can be met by hiring a person who is D/HH. The Institute for Community Inclusion and Boston College Center for Work and Family held a Focus Group and discussions with employers and identified three categories of benefits that employers receive when they knowingly hire persons who are D/HH

1. Benefits Directly Related to Business Objectives – hiring persons who are D/HH meets the organizations personnel needs by filling vacancies

2. Benefits Indirectly Related to Business Objectives – hiring persons who are D/HH benefits a company’s long-term viability and profitability by enhancing the corporate image and demonstrating a commitment to the community
3. Benefits Related to Organizational Values – hiring persons who are D/HH reflects the organizations commitment to corporate and social responsibility

In addition to the company’s values, the decision to hire a person who is D/HH is influenced by the relationship the Service Provider has with the Hiring Manager in the course of Job Development and the personal values the Hiring Manager has particularly if they have a family member, friend neighbor or acquaintance who is D/HH or if they have had experience in the past with American Sign Language in school or a social setting.

Through discussions with employers as well as observation, Service Providers and the job seeker should try to determine why the business is potentially interested in hiring a person who is D/HH.

- If an employer is strictly category 1. – Service Provider and the job seeker will have to demonstrate that hiring the individual will bring economic benefit. This may be a time to offer information on the WOTC Work Opportunity Tax Credit and other learned Return on Investment ROI items such as the supports that are in place to assist the person who is D/HH be successful on the job:
 - Job Coaching
 - Interpreting Services
 - Workshops
 - Advocacy
- On the other hand, if the employer is motivated by categories 2 and 3 – the company will likely be more committed to making it work. This presents the opportunity for greater flexibility and more creative solutions. However, these categories are not viewed as hiring as an act of charity – it is simply that the decision to hire is based on criteria other than straight forward economic return. It is still paramount – for the long term success of the individual who is D/HH – that the job be performed competently in a socially inclusive work environment.

What has been interesting in the experience of those who have spent significant time assisting persons who are D/HH to find employment, is the number of employers who initially hire a person who is D/HH for reasons 2 & 3 were pleasantly surprised that the person turned out to

be exactly what they needed and was performing above expectations. These experiences show that much work needs to be done to change the mis-perception that persons who are D/HH cannot be fully productive participants in the labor force.

Employment Issues for Persons who are D/HH

One of the most interesting and complex disabilities is in persons who are D/HH. Major levels of differences exist and persons who are hearing do not have a grasp on this disability although advances have been and are continuing to be made. Understanding the difference between the big “D” deaf and the little “d” deaf is an on-going conversation and a life-long learning process. Through a combination of resources, support meetings, interaction and communication – Service Providers can meet the many levels of communication and support needs of persons who are D/HH. Providing service to a person who is D/HH is provided by simply practicing good customer service, combined with respect, understanding, and following some simple guidelines as outlined in this workbook.

People who are D/HH include doctors, lawyers, software engineers, university professors with Ph.D.'s., architects, teachers, associate teachers, counselors, pastors, information technology experts, stock associates, custodians, food industry experts - people from virtually every profession and background. Although a person who is D/HH may have communication needs, this does not preclude his/her ability to contribute through working.

One of the most significant barriers to employment for persons who are D/HH are attitudes: their own, those of family members and helping professionals, and employers.

Poor work history or poor social behavior can also be barriers.

How to Help

The following principles have been shown to be effective in helping persons who are D/HH to get employed.

Service Providers need to:

- believe that the goal of employment is both valuable and possible
- be able to instill hope, support, and enthusiasm for the goal of work
- be aware that using a variety of strategies is most likely to lead to success
- understand that employment advocacy is crucial.

An essential element for success is to have the job seeker direct the job search and be involved in all aspects of the process. As with any job seeker, it is essential to do everything possible to ensure a good match between the individual and the work environment.

Placement Planning

Anyone conducting a job search should do some type of planning to ensure that the objectives and goals for the job search are clear, that the steps in the process have the best outcome of success and to avoid wasting time. Job seekers who are D/HH vary significantly in the amount of planning that needs to be done before taking an active job search. Some have a fairly clear idea of what type of job they are looking for, based on their meetings with respective counselors, past experience, education, skills and personal preferences. Others need to spend substantial time doing some up front planning or may need more Employment Preparation services including PVSA Personal Vocational Social Adjustment, SA Situational Assessment or WA Work Adjustment opportunities.

Persons who are D/HH need to undertake a substantial and deliberate planning and job search process. The reality for most is that they have had limited work and life experience on which to base their job search decisions, and also have limited expectations for themselves. Some persons who are D/HH have also had limited experience in making decisions for themselves or have a misperception of the world around them and are used to deferring to others.

A good planning and expectation process for persons who are D/HH must be empowering to the individual and promote self-reflection, personal insight, creativity and a wide range of possibilities.

With a focus on a Person Centered Planning, below are a few tools used by a local Community Resource Provider:

We have had proven success in taking these steps toward job development and placement for participants into competitive employment:

1. Have four staff with expertise in the following areas –
 - a. Sales Person – with experience to work with Employers and Partners on behalf of the participants
 - b. Communicator – one able to communicate at various levels of ASL and Technology with both the participant and Referring Counselor
 - c. Manager of all levels of process for acquiring the Interpreting, scheduling and coordination of Interview, Hiring and On-boarding process which may include Job Coaching coordination
 - d. File Manager for documentation of all activities and keeping the files in compliance

Once Intake is complete and Employment Preparation begins, we put the **Office Number for Employers** on the Participants Resume so that the Employer will call the office and a hearing person who is strong in sales will answer the phone. This is a sample of the conversation:

- a. "Hello" (Sales person does not answer with the company name)
- b. Employer – "Yes, may I speak with John?"
- c. Sales person – "He is not here right now, but I can take a message for him"
 - a. Sales Person then pulls up the excel sheet with information and notes on each participant so they are ready to "sell" the participant to the Employer.
- d. Employer – "Sure can you have him call Target in Pasadena as he applied for a Stocker position and we would like to speak with him and set up an interview"
- e. Sales person – "Great! John just happens to be a young man who is deaf and that is why I am answering the phone on his behalf and can assist in setting up that interview. We support him in whatever he needs including interpreting services for the interview and can schedule that time right now if you'd like"
- f. Employer – "Well ok, let me see"
- g. Sales person – "John is a great candidate and has worked as a Stocker for Big Lots and Wal-Mart (known from the excel sheet) and has just moved to the San Gabriel Valley. He lives near this Target, is very experienced, flexible and a team player. He is such a great guy. Target has hired many of our participants already and he would make a wonderful addition."
- h. Employer – "Ok, sure, well can he come tomorrow at 2:30?"
- i. Sales person – "Yes, that's perfect. It gives me time to get the interpreter too. Please let me know the information so I may make sure the interpreter has what they need to support John."
 - a. Address
 - b. Contact person name – phone
 - c. Position applied
 - d. Shift
 - e. Notes on steps of do they come in the front door and ask or back of the store or?
 - f. Do they need to bring anything specific?

Once the information is gathered, the Sales Person writes all in an email to the Communicator and Manager of Process to start the process of communication to all players – Participant, DOR and Interpreting Agency. Participant is contacted by the Communicator to make sure they understand where they are to go, at what time, what to bring and if they need another mock interview – will practice with them by video phone. The Manager of Process connects with

DOR to inform them of the interview and receive interpreting authorization. The Manager of Process also connects with the Interpreting Agency to schedule the interpreting services. All confirmations are sent to the team so everyone stays informed. Once the interview is complete, feedback is given to the Manager of Process which is then disseminated to the team.

Each week the Team discusses each participant at Roundtable session and feedback is given on what worked, what needs improvement, status of participant and specific summaries and case notes are written.

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Job Ready Checklist :

Deaf Ability Resource
Job Readiness Checklist

Participant Name: _____

Date: _____

Referring Counselor: _____

DAR Staff: _____

Level I Criteria – All must be met before commencing job search.

1. Vocational Goal(s) : (1) _____ (2) _____

Has appropriate experience, skills, education and/or training for this type of work. Describe (degree, certificate, 5 years experience, literacy/communication skills):

Training is in plan or in progress. Completion date: _____

Has all required professional documentation needed to obtain employment in desired position (guard card, license, etc): Y N

2. Able to participate in full-time job search activities

3. Transportation needs met:

Adequate, reliable transportation (not family or friends)

Travel trained to utilize public transportation independently

Knows how to obtain tokens or bus passes

Knows how to get information or schedule transportation or has appropriate, ongoing supports (as needed).

4. Basic needs met: Stable housing, shelter, meals, etc.

5. Childcare (in place or in plan)
6. Meets current I-9 requirements (SS Card, ID or DL, etc.)
7. Free from drug and alcohol abuse
8. Absence of an acute medical problem, or an acute medical disturbance
9. Ability to provide self-care, mobility, self-discipline or toileting needs.
10. Assurance that any treatment prescribed, or in process, is maintained.
11. Has interview clothing or can obtain authorization from DOR Counselor or other source to purchase
12. Agrees to communicate progress to staff and referring counselor including changes in personal information, change in works status, job leads, etc.
13. Expressed motivation to obtain employment
(Note: If Participant's apparent lack of motivation is due to fears about going to work or other emotional barriers.)
14. Has needed Job Search documents to apply for employment:

<input type="checkbox"/> Updated Resume	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Resume
<input type="checkbox"/> Cover Letter	<input type="checkbox"/> LinkedIn
<input type="checkbox"/> Thank You Letter	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Email
<input type="checkbox"/> Master Application	<input type="checkbox"/> Registered with CalJobs
<input type="checkbox"/> References (both professional and personal)	
- Subjective (Participant report): _____
- Objective (DAR Staff observations): _____

Level II Criteria – If unmet, must be addressed in individualized placement plan. Unmet Criteria must be met no later than 3 months after assessment.

1. Demonstrates positive attitude: cooperative, appropriate work-related behaviors
2. Proper grooming and hygiene for the workplace

- 3. Exhibits ability to understand, follow and respect Deaf Ability Resource program policies and procedures
- 4. Realistic expectation (goals congruent with skills; occupational goal reflects current labor market trends, reasonable time frame for goal attainment)
- 5. Reasonable Accommodation needs understood or in process (with DOR for example)
- 6. Demonstrates understanding of implications of returning to work regarding public benefits (such as SSI/SSDI), if applicable.
 - Would like Work Incentive Counseling

Completed by: _____

Date: _____

Participant Acknowledgement: _____

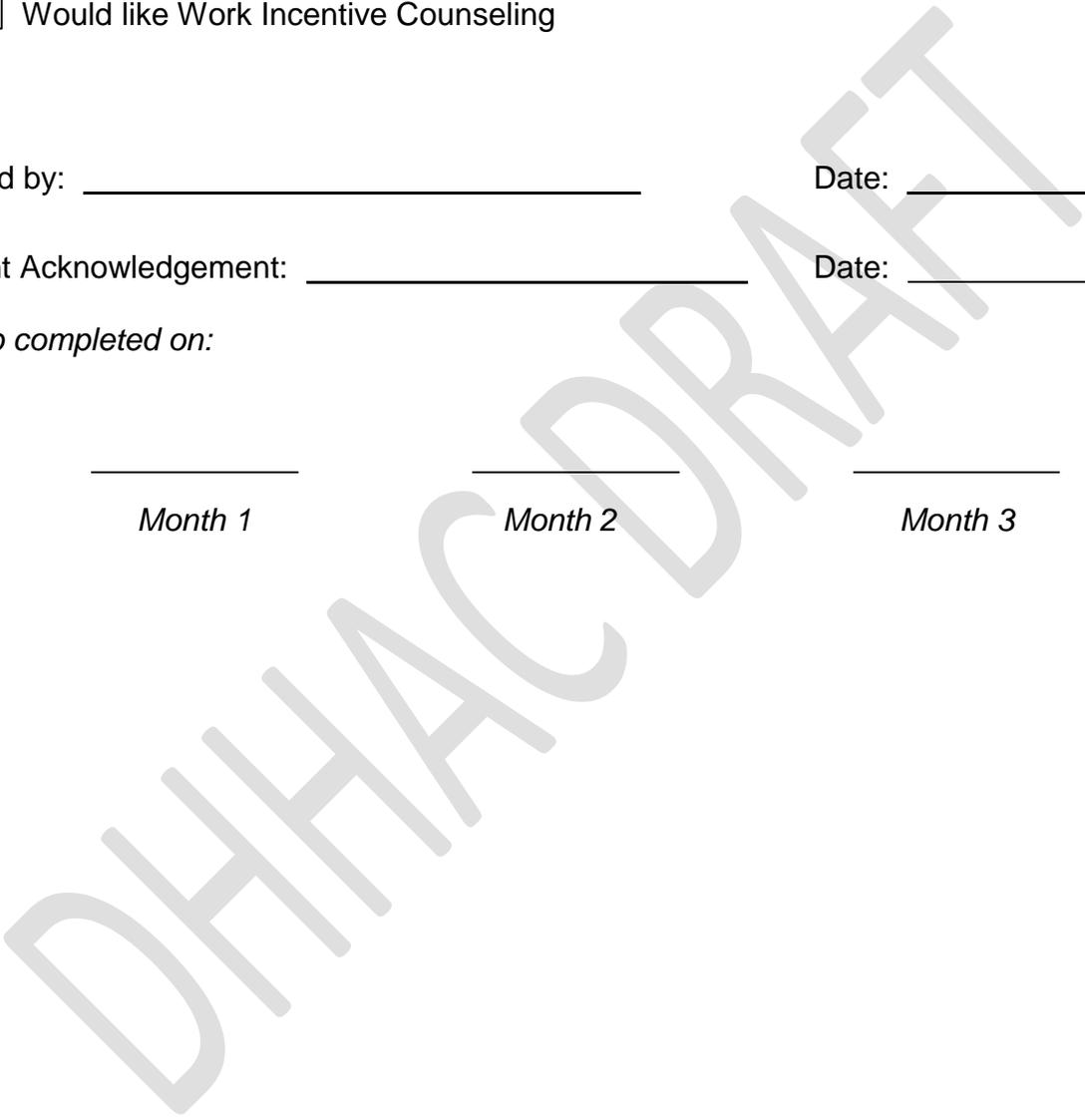
Date: _____

Follow-Up completed on:

Month 1

Month 2

Month 3



Job Search Expectation Agreement:

TO: PARTICIPANT

_____ will begin this contract on this date _____ to help in assuring his/her success in obtaining competitive employment. This contract will be used to assist in adjusting the services to meet employment needs and in communication with the respective DOR Counselor. This contract is in effect for 90 days beginning the date of signature.

EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTICIPANT:

1. Meet with DAR staff at identified Career Center/One-Stop on scheduled appointment days.
2. Come to each appointment on time or as early as 15min beforehand.
3. Come to each appointment prepared to fill out 10 applications online at potential companies.
4. Document each application on a job log provided by DAR with complete information filled out.
5. Come to each appointment with user names, passwords and information on various applications, Cal Jobs and sites where there were registering requirements. (small notebook recommended)
6. If unable to make an appointment due to unforeseen circumstances, illness or emergency, contact DAR staff minimum 2 hours ahead of scheduled appointment at the contact information given to them on the DAR Participant Handbook.
7. Communicate via text, email, video phone or caption call phone on an on-going basis with DAR staff to inform of any change in status.
8. Once an interview is scheduled, work with DAR staff on location and assistance with information on transportation, parking, and contact with interpreter name.
9. Commit to participation in each interview scheduled. Sometimes the interview is at another location that the job itself. Do not assume a place is too far or that you will have a hard time getting to work. DAR staff will work with you in clarifying any information.
10. Arrive at interview appointment 20-30minutes early, prepared with resume, cover letter as appropriate and dressed professionally.

11. Do not leave interview appointment for any reason until contact is made. If it seems as though the interpreter or support staff have not arrived, do not leave. Be assured that DAR staff have coordinated all and support will be there on time if not early.

EXPECTATIONS FOR DAR STAFF:

1. Meet with participants at each Career Center/One-Stop on scheduled appointment days.
2. Arrive at scheduled appointments early and prepared to provide employment services.
3. Assist participant with online applications, assessments and job leads.
4. Provide participant with Job Logs and bring back the contact information to the weekly round-table discussion so that each application can have a follow up.
5. Work with the participant in gathering their user names, passwords and other vital information and how to keep them current and available.
6. Communicate with participants on scheduled days and any days that DAR may be closed due to holidays, school closures or inclement weather.
7. Keep record of contact information on all participants and give contact information to participants regarding DAR staff.
8. Once an interview is scheduled, work with participant on specific information as to time, place, parking, contact person and interpreting.
9. Remind the participant that sometimes interviews are scheduled at a location other than where the job itself will be and the importance of attending the interview as scheduled.
10. Remind participant on the importance of being prepared for interview with resume, cover letter and professional dress.
11. Remind the participant to stay at the scheduled interview until contact is made and confirmed to be DAR or DAR support.

CONSEQUENCES IF GOALS ARE NOT MET:

1. Staffing meeting between Participant, DAR staff and DOR counselor.
2. Referral back to DOR counselor for services that would meet participant need.
3. Discontinuation of Employment Services.

By signing this contract all parties agree to the expectations and will follow accordingly.

The following contract will be in effect for 90 days during the employment services process.

(Signature of Participant)

Date

(Signature of DAR staff)

Date

Both of these tools have served well in working with persons who are D/HH in assisting in the development of individual solutions, understanding of expectations and responsibilities and problem solving.

Each action taken follows the participants Individual Plan of Employment and is centered on the person's needs.

b. Career Exploration

People's interests are strongly influenced by what they have experienced in life. The reality for many people who are D/HH who need assistance in obtaining and retaining competitive employment, is that their life experiences have been very limited. As a result, a good planning process will need to include real opportunities for the individual to explore the world of work.

Assessment and Career Exploration Tools:

- America's Career InfoNet www.acinet.org
- O*NET <http://online.onetcenter.org>
- O*NET Career Assessment and Exploration Tools which include:
 - Interest Profiler
 - Work Importance Locator
 - Ability Profiler
 - www.onetcenter.org/product/tools.html

Other tools that have assisted persons who are D/HH in their job search activities:

- Informational Interviewing – involves meeting with an employer not for a job interview, but simply to gather information about the business. It also provides the opportunity to gain experience interacting with employers.
- Job Tours – Touring various businesses exposing the job seeker to a variety of jobs and work environments.
- Job Shadowing – involves spending time observing an individual as they perform a job. This can last for 1hour, 1 day or a series of days.
- Situational Assessment - A process for discovering an individual's ability to perform in workplace environments. It determines an individual's work stamina, abilities, interests, and work habits.
- Work Adjustment - Programs that help persons with disabilities learn the basic skills needed to maintain employment. These may include attendance, appropriate dress, social skills and how to get along with supervisors.
- Role Play/Reverse Role Play – Practicing in a role play setting, different workplace scenarios and how to respond or provide solutions.
- Mock Interviews – Practice in answering interview questions and how to respond to questions on communication with hearing supervisor and/or co-workers.
- Volunteer work – volunteering in a workplace setting as part of the career development process. This is a brief process with employment as the goal.

- Temporary Work Assignment – A short-term, temporary assignment to assist an individual to determine whether or not a job setting suits them and adds experience to the resume.

Dealing with Gaps in Work History

Sometimes persons who are D/HH have significant periods of unemployment or gaps in their work history. Unfortunately, these gaps are often a red flag to employers. If a job seeker has had periods of unemployment, the Service Provider can work with them to develop strategies to address these gaps.

- Designing a Resume to Reduce Attention to Work History Gaps
The traditional resume, organized chronologically, can call attention to such issues as gaps in work history or limited work experience. Experience has shown that using creative methods to downplay gaps can move the job seeker forward in the interview process:
 - A functional resume that highlights the skills rather than the work experience
 - Using only years, not months, for work dates
 - Not distinguishing between paid and unpaid work
 - Briefly summarizing, in positive terms, what the job seeker did when they were not working.
- Developing a Reasonable Explanation not to mislead the employer, but create a positive perception:
 - I had some health issues which are now taken care of
 - There was an illness in the family
 - I was taking care of my children or family member
 - I was doing volunteer work with a community organization
 - I had the opportunity to pursue some non-work interests
 - I took a few years to travel
- Emphasize the present, not the Past
 - Ultimately the most important strategy is to emphasize current activities. The job seeker needs to demonstrate that:
 - Whatever problems or issues they have had in the past are resolved or have been addressed
 - They are now fully capable of handling tasks on the job

- This is also where having done some temporary work assignments, short-term job tryouts, internships etc....can be helpful, as they can diminish any concerns the employer may have and demonstrate an individual's current capabilities.

Contacting Employers and Interviewing

On the Business side of Job Development, the Service Provider would consistently be building relationships in the community with Employers and Business Leaders. This Relationship building is key in advocacy for job seekers who are D/HH. The tools following will assist in Job Development for persons who are D/HH.

- Meet with 10 Employers/Businesses/Hiring related events per week
- Create a culture of inclusion when it comes to hiring D/HH
- Visit often providing solutions in communication
- Present at as many meetings as possible to introduce the culture and language of D/HH
- Offer vocational related basic ASL workshops and cultural sensitivity to the Business
- Bridge any gaps in communication and needs

Preparing for the Interview the Service Provider should assist the job seeker who is D/HH to prepare.

- Making a positive impression –
 - Like any job seeker – persons who are D/HH should be prepared to sell themselves in a job interview and demonstrate that they are fully qualified for the position.
 - Job seekers who are D/HH should be able to explain the different uses of technology and other solutions to communication.
 - Job seekers should be able to respond well to questions asked and why they will be an asset to the organization.
- Other scenarios –
 - Service Providers should review with the job seeker how to handle various scenarios including, but not limited to:
 - Appropriate use of interpreting
 - What to do in a staff meeting
 - How to inform of an emergency/alarm
 - What alternatives are in place through technology

Disclosure of Disability with Solutions in Communication

- In working with the job seeker who is D/HH, the person's disability is usually, but not always, readily apparent.
- Disclosure will occur the first time the potential employer meets the individual
 - The disclosure may have happened at the time of the interview scheduling as letting the employer know the person would need an ASL interpreter
- Solutions to communication should be provided
 - ASL interpreter
 - Texting
 - Pen and paper
 - Job Coaching
- Conducting a Job Interview: Accommodating persons who are D/HH
 - Tips for Employers

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Deaf Accessibility & Cultural Sensitivity in the Workplace

Deaf Ability Resource www.deafabilityresource.com



When interviewing for a job, you only get one chance at a good first impression. You try to wear the right clothes, mentally prepare, and hope you have all the right answers. But what if none of that mattered? What if you didn't get the job because of the color of your eyes? Or because you were too tall? In 2016, this kind of hiring discrimination might sound absurd, but for deaf job candidates it is a difficult reality.



Workplace Deaf Accessibility

Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act gives deaf individuals legal protection against discriminatory hiring practices. According to this section of the ADA, an employer may not use ones' deafness as a basis for not hiring, not advancing, or terminating employment status. Qualified deaf applicants must be considered for career opportunities, so long as they meet the skill, experience, education, and other job-related requirements of a position– with or without reasonable accommodation.



Most hearing people rarely think about deaf accommodations. When it comes to hiring deaf employees, they are concerned that it will be a costly or inconvenient process. Potential employers might worry that communication will be challenging, and the deaf employee will have trouble integrating with the team. These fears are unfounded, and they usually stem from inadequate corporate cultural sensitivity education. The bottom line is that hearing employers simply don't understand what it means to be deaf, and so it seems easier to just hire a hearing person... even if they are less qualified for the job. This is discrimination, and it's sadly commonplace.

The first step to hiring a deaf employee is opening a comfortable line of communication. Not sure how? Just ask! Deaf people spend their whole lives learning to interact with mainstream culture, and each person does it a little differently. Some deaf people prefer written communication, others are ok with reading lips, and still others prefer an ASL interpreter– there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Trust us, you will not offend your deaf interviewee by asking him or her what type of communication they like to use!



When a business decides to hire a deaf candidate, some workplace adjustments will need to be made. Your training videos should already be captioned; if they are not, you can have them captioned for a very reasonable fee. According to the ADA, it is the deaf individual's responsibility to inform an employer where accommodations are needed. Employers are obligated by law to make any "reasonable accommodations" which enable their employee to work effectively. Most of these adjustments will depend on the person's individual preferences. Not sure? Just ask!



Businesses must provide deaf employees with the auxiliary devices they need to communicate equally. With unlimited access to email, text, and chats, it is easier than ever to make your workflow deaf-friendly. Generally, the most important device will be a video phone. Businesses can obtain video phones and Video Relay Services for free, VRS providers are reimbursed by the Interstate Telecommunications Relay Service Fund. Using the VRS, your deaf employee is connected with a communications assistant through video chat. The video interpreter will engage with the deaf person using their preferred modality, and vocally interpret for the hearing parties. This means that when a hearing client, manager, or coworker needs to discuss something with a deaf employee, they can just use the VRS to quickly and conveniently do so; whether they are across the country or just across the hall.



For meetings, you will need to enlist a deaf service provider– either a captionist or interpreter. Meetings can be very involved and fast-paced. Even the most expert lip readers have difficulty keeping up when there are 20 people in the room discussing things out of turn. You want everyone in your organization to feel like their participation is valued, so be sure you ask your deaf employee how you can better facilitate this.

When hiring an interpreter or service provider , be sure to submit your request as far in advance as you are able. Deaf Ability Resource can assist with this process as needed.

As far as cost concerns, there are specific Federal tax credits and tax deductions available to employers, and you will find there are also other public and private sources of funding available for ADA required accommodations. This means service providers and equipment charges can often be reimbursed at little cost to your business.



Equality starts from the top down. Diverse leadership promotes social tolerance, and we are finally beginning to see deaf officials in major institutions such the White House and the FCC. When business owners, executives, and managers become educated about multicultural issues, the entire organization benefits. When your staff understands how to integrate a deaf individual onto the team, you are helping bridge the cultural divide and create true equality.



Home Depot has shown its forward thinking in having this patch on the apron of employees who use American Sign Language. What a positive way to communicate diversity.

Interaction with Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:

A to Z

Keep in mind that no two deaf or Deaf people are alike; these are all general points to remember, and may or may not apply to every person.

A – Ask a Deaf person how they wish to communicate. Not all Deaf people communicate in the same way. American Sign Language (ASL), Signed English (SEE), lip-reading/speechreading, writing, gesturing, and speaking are all methods of communication which may be utilized by different Deaf people.

B – Behind – Never approach a Deaf person from behind! Instead, walk around the person so he or she can see you are there, or otherwise signal your presence by touching their arm. If the deaf person is startled, don't feel bad... ask the best way to get his or her attention the next time.

Bluntness – Deaf people often seem blunt to a hearing person. While there is some debate about whether this is truly a Deaf culture issue or simply due to the lack of incidental education regarding appropriate use of language, the fact remains that hearing people who are used to the delicacy of social interaction are often shocked by the directness displayed by Deaf persons.

C – Culture – Culture is defined as a set of learned behaviors of a group of people who have their own language, values, rules of behavior, and traditions (Padden, 1988). Deaf people have a culture which centers on ASL, valuation of their community and history, behavioral expectations, and traditional Deaf events and activities.

D – Deaf vs. deaf – Be aware that if you see a capital “D” in the word “deaf,” this is a reference to a person who values her cultural identity within the Deaf community. As with any minority community, maintaining respect for self-identity is critical. Use of the small “d” is in reference to the state of having a profound to severe hearing loss, and is in no way indicative of a cultural state.

E – Eye Contact - In many social circles in America, in particular, eye contact has a specific meaning. This may range from aggression to romantic interest. In the Deaf community, however, eye contact is a critical part of communication, and should not be interpreted as anything more or less than paying attention and engaging in conversation.

F – Facial Expressions – As with bluntness, hearing people are often taken aback by the facial expressions exhibited by Deaf people. Facial expressions are an important part of communication in Sign. Additionally, deaf people learn to read facial expressions when communicating with hearing people. Be aware that body language and facial expressions are communicating a great deal to a Deaf person, intentionally or not.

G – Goodbyes – The “Deaf Goodbye” is both a humorous label and a fact of life within the Deaf community. Open social interaction was, for generations, limited to those occasions when Deaf people were physically together and could communicate freely, as opposed to the constant social interaction that hearing people had. Taking full advantage of the opportunity often meant that leaving was a protracted affair characterized by Gretchen Waech 2007 saying goodbye to nearly everyone in

the room! Thus, the “goodbye” phase of an event may actually take (or at least seem to take) longer than the event itself.

H – Hand Waving, Light Flashing, Foot Stomping – These are all appropriate ways to get a Deaf person’s attention. **Hugging** – Deaf people tend to hug each other on arrival and leaving, even if it is the first time they have met! This is sometimes jarring to an observer, but is an example of the instant camaraderie that often appears between two Deaf people even if they are from completely different backgrounds and areas of the country.

I – Intelligence – American society, in particular, takes stock of a person’s intelligence based on their skill or expertise with English. This is, of course, a grave mistake, and is often made with regards to Deaf people. Intelligence in the Deaf community, as with any group of people, varies... but is not at all dependent on the Deaf person’s grasp of English. **Incidental Learning** – Learning which takes place outside of a formal educational setting. Hearing people have access to a wealth of (primarily auditory) environmental information that is soaked up and processed from casual conversations, TV, radio, etc. Some research has shown that up to 80% of what we know about interaction with the world around us is due to incidental learning. Deaf people often do not have access to this information on the same level as hearing people, and there may thus be pieces missing from their general knowledge base that most hearing people would consider to be obvious.

J – Jargon – When using an interpreter, try to either supply the interpreter and the Deaf person with vocabulary ahead of time, or explain any jargon used in practical terms to the interpreter. This will ease the interpretation and ensure the Deaf person understands the concept you are attempting to convey.

K – Kmart interpreters – a somewhat humorous, but unfortunately accurate label. As the story goes, a hearing mother and her deaf son were at Kmart stocking up at the beginning of the school year. The cashier noticed the mother signing to her son, and began to laboriously sign to the child. The mother perked right up and said to the cashier, “We haven’t been able to find an interpreter for him for school... would you be willing to interpret for him?” This illustrates the common and shocking level of ignorance regarding what, exactly, makes someone qualified to interpret. Standards are now becoming more established nationwide; however, Kmart interpreters are still out there.

L – Labels - The term “hearing impaired,” which implies that Deaf people are broken in some way, is not an appropriate label. Nor is “deaf and dumb,” “deaf-mute,” or any mutation thereof. “Deaf” and “hard of hearing” are the preferred terms. “Person with a hearing loss,” while better than other labels, is still unwieldy and not generally preferred. **Lip-reading** – Lip-reading (or speechreading) is difficult at best for many deaf people. Only about 30% of the English language is actually visible on the lips; a skilled lip-reader can bring her comprehension level to 70% with cues and knowledge of the subject matter. However, the near-mythical abilities of deaf people to lip-read from afar are, by and large, mythical. Do not assume that all deaf people can read lips. This would be akin to assuming all hearing people can sing (which I’m sure you realize IS a myth!).

M – Muscles – When you listen, you are using no muscles. While you may become bored or tired of listening to a speaker, there are no muscles to become physically exhausted. Eyes, by contrast, have many muscles, and become physically tired. Deaf people must use their eyes constantly; for lip-reading, watching an interpreter, identifying visual cues in their environment, etc. Interpreters often

team up and interpret in short shifts so they get needed breaks; a deaf person does not get those breaks, and indeed is often seen to be rude if he closes his eyes briefly or leaves the room.

N – Noises – Deaf people are deaf, and generally not mute. They make noises while signing, may be oblivious to how loud they are when doing various things (i.e. closing doors, etc.), and in general are just not as quiet as most people think they would be.

O – Obstructions – Obstructions to communication for Deaf people are not always apparent to hearing people. Pens in the mouth, flowers on the table, a glass held at just the wrong angle... all can interfere with communication. Don't be surprised if a Deaf person moves the condiments off the table at dinner!

P – Paper and Pen - Many deaf people carry paper and pen to communicate with hearing people who don't understand sign language. They may also ask to borrow a pen to communicate. **Pointing**- is acceptable in the Deaf community, and is indeed often used as a means of establishing a reference point in ASL. This disconcerts many hearing people who were taught "it's not polite to point!"

Q – Qualified Interpreter – An interpreter may be certified, but not qualified. And a qualified interpreter may or may not be certified. An example: Someone who is certified to interpret and works as an interpreter with a five-year-old in kindergarten would generally not be qualified to interpret for that same child in a medical setting. Your best bet: ask the Deaf person if he or she is comfortable with this interpreter for this setting.

R – Restating - Oftentimes, when communicating via speech and lip-reading, people tend to repeat themselves if a deaf person doesn't understand what is said. This is fine... once. After repeating once, if a deaf person still doesn't understand, RESTATE rather than repeat. Find a different way to say the same thing, whether it's a different word or explanation of the concept. This will often give the deaf person enough cues to figure out what was said. **Referrals** – make sure that any referrals you make for a Deaf person are appropriate. For example: in referring a Deaf person to a therapist, make certain that therapist is prepared and willing to provide an interpreter for the Deaf person. If a referral is made to an inappropriate professional, the Deaf person will often simply give up in frustration.

Relay – Relay is a method of communication via phone which utilizes either an operator (traditional text-based relay) or an interpreter (video relay) for hearing people to communicate with deaf people and vice versa.

S – Speech – Do not assume that Deaf people cannot speak. Some can, but choose not to; some cannot. Compare this with hearing people and their ability or inability to sing... some can and choose not to, some cannot. Those Deaf people who do choose to speak will often have an accent which is sometimes difficult to understand; consider it an exotic adventure and don't give up!

T – Touch – Deaf people tend to touch during conversations, when greeting or taking their leave of each other. Additionally, it is perfectly permissible to touch a Deaf person to get their attention; this is in contrast with hearing social norms, which prohibit unsolicited touch. **Topics** – During conversation (and particularly in group situations) it is helpful to "feed" the deaf person the topic, in particular if he or she is attempting to lip-read. This holds true even if an interpreter is present.

U – Use concepts – When communicating with a deaf person, if a word is unfamiliar to him, try to explain the concept behind the word. Use small words as opposed to big words; an example would

be to use the words “gun, knife, baseball bat, big pot” in place of the term “weapon,” or explaining the idea of “taxation” as “you pay the government a bunch of your money to provide you with services you may or may not need or want.”

V – Visual Noise/ Environment – Visual noise is just as disruptive to a deaf person as auditory noise can be to a hearing person. Visual noise is found in an environment that is visually distracting and chaotic; think flowered wallpaper or a restaurant decorated with very bright patterns. If you must be in an environment with this sort of visual noise, try to position the Deaf person with his or her back to the chaos. Also, be aware of lighting; make sure there is adequate lighting for the Deaf person, but not shining in his or her eyes. This includes natural light from windows, which can be very overwhelming and blinding. **Visual Aids** – The value of visual aids and alerts cannot be overstated. This applies not only to communication (i.e. using handouts, overheads, PowerPoint presentations, flip charts, paper and pen) but also to things such as weather alerts, fire alarms, and the like. Keep in mind that many people (not only deaf, but hearing as well) learn best with the aid of visuals; in an educational setting, try to accommodate different learning styles, and you will also be accommodating a Deaf person’s needs. **Vibration** – Deaf people are often very sensitive to vibration. They may feel someone coming down the hall before a hearing person hears the approach, or a sound that a hearing person can ignore creates so much vibration that a deaf person cannot ignore it. Also, do not assume that a deaf person can work in a noisy environment; many have residual hearing on top of their sensitivity to vibration, and noisy environments are often just as difficult for them as for someone who can hear.

W – Walking through a conversation – When walking through a conversation between two signers, it is not necessary to crawl on the floor or stand and wait for a lull in the conversation. Simply walk quickly and politely between the signers.

X – eXtreme frustration of being deaf in a hearing world – There are two layers to this: the world and the personal. At the world level, there is what we call Hearing Privilege. The world is set up for people who can hear; for examples, look at drive through windows, phone menu trees, buzzers on shelter doors, intercoms on planes. When a deaf person asks for modification of these things, hearing people often act as if this is a huge imposition... thus making the deaf person feel of less value as a human being. At the personal level is something we call Hearism... the assumption that everyone can hear. Thus, when a deaf person does not respond to something which is said or announced, the assumption is that the deaf person is rude, stupid, or obstinate... instead of just deaf. Being confronted by these attitudes and behaviors on a daily basis is demeaning and frustrating for a Deaf person.

Y – Yelling – People tend to speak very loudly, and even yell, at deaf people, believing this will make it easier for the deaf person to understand them. A deaf person is DEAF... this means they cannot hear, and yelling is not helpful.

Z – Zero – zero reason to not learn, enjoy and practice cultural sensitivity in the workplace now that you know the particulars.

You Tube Lesson for ASL in the Workplace (Closed Captioned)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQDTyY9AmVo>

1. Hello/Hi	2. Bye
3. Hot	4. Cold
5. Temperature	6. Breezy
7. Broke	8. Electricity
9. Lights On	10. Lights Off
11. Door	12. Window
13. Lock	14. Restroom
15. Toilet	16. Clean
17. Dirty	18. Paper Towel Dispenser
19. Water	20. Dripping Water
21. Emergency	22. Alarm
23. Fire	24. Card Reader
25. Elevator	26. Table
27. Trash	28. TV
29. Captioning	30. Thank you
31. Please	32. You're Welcome
33. Sorry	34. No problem
35. Fine	36. Yes
37. No	38. Nothing
39. Good	40. Bad
41. Happy	42. Mad/Angry
43. Good Morning	44. Good Afternoon
45. Good Night	46. How are you?
47. Have a good day!	48. Have a good weekend!
49. Have a good night!	50. Is everything ok?
51. What time will it open?	

Alphabet

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Numbers

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- Pre-employment Inquiries and the ADA
 - While the ADA clearly states that a potential employer cannot ask questions concerning a person's disability prior to an offer of employment, this does not necessarily stop employers from making such inquiries, even if inadvertently.
 - An applicant with a disability, like all other applicants, must be able to meet the employer's requirements for the job, such as education, training, employment

experience, skills, or licenses. In addition, an applicant with a disability must be able to perform the "essential functions" of the job the fundamental duties either on her own or with the help of "reasonable accommodation." However, an employer does not have to provide a reasonable accommodation that will cause "undue hardship," which is significant difficulty or expense.

- Contacting Employers
 - Network
 - Community Meetings
 - On-site visits
 - Social Media
 - Drive the service area
 - America's Job Centers
 - Libraries
 - On-line search engines
- Financial Incentives for the Employer
 - The Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) provides the following programs to help employers find qualified applicants with disabilities:
 - The Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN) is a free, nationwide service that provides resources to help employers hire and retain people with disabilities
 - The Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities is a free, nationwide database of pre-screened, qualified postsecondary students and recent college graduates with disabilities who are available for permanent and temporary positions. Employers can search the database by state or job category and obtain specific information on candidates' qualifications.

ODEP also offers fact sheets to educate employers about laws pertaining to the hiring of people with disabilities. These laws generally are enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

<https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/hiring>

Recruiting and Hiring Practices

- Provides links to information on how to find qualified applicants with disabilities and comply with laws protecting people with disabilities in the workplace.

- Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program - The Work Opportunity Tax Credit program provides a tax credit for employers who hire certain targeted low-income groups, including applicants who are vocational rehabilitation referrals.
- Business Leadership Network The Business Leadership Network is a national program led by employers in concert with state Governors' Committees and/or other community agencies that engages the leadership. and participation of companies throughout the United States to hire qualified job candidates with disabilities.

How to use Sign Language Interpreters Effectively:

1. Speak at your natural pace, but be aware that the interpreter may wait to hear and understand a complete thought before beginning to interpret. The interpreter will let you know if you need to repeat or slow down.
2. When speaking to the deaf person, look at speak directly to them. Avoid things such as “tell him” or “tell her”. The deaf person will be watching the interpreter and glancing back and forth at you.
3. Remember that when the interpreter speaks, he/she is voicing the words of the deaf individual, and not a participant in the interaction. It is appropriate to respond directly to the deaf person.
4. When setting up the room or conversation it is typically best to consul the deaf individual and interpreter. Typically, you will position the interpreter next to you (the hearing person) or the person presenting the information, opposite the deaf person. This makes it easy for the deaf person to see you and the interpreter in one line of vision.
5. If you are handing out materials during a meeting, please give a copy to the interpreter to reference.
6. When utilizing visual aids remember to pause before giving your explanation of so that the deaf person has time to see it, look back at the interpreter and still keep up with the information being presented. If showing videos, please ensure that the videos are captioned. It is challenging for the deaf person to watch a video and the interpreter at the same time.

7. Be prepared that two interpreters will be assigned to a job over one hour in length. (In order to ensure that facilitation of communication flows smoothly and accurately interpreters will work as a team. One interpreter will actively interpret for 20-30 minutes while the other provides back-up to the active interpreter. The interpreters switch every 20-30 minutes.
8. As a reminder, the interpreter is present to facilitate communication between the hearing individuals and deaf individual. If you have questions about the deaf person or sign language, ask the deaf person directly and the interpreter will interpret your questions. The interpreter will not give advice or their personal opinion on anything that is discussed.

Partnership Connections for Persons who are D/HH

- Department of Rehabilitation Employment Coordinator
 - District Focus on D/HH
- Local America's Job Centers
- Employment Development Department
- WorkAbility III
- DAR Deaf Ability Resource and other Vendors
- Disability Coordinators

Recruiting qualified Job Developers

- Sales and Relationships
 - i. One of the best skills of a job developer is relationship building with experience in sales
 - ii. Interviewing should include strategies and processes used in the past to bring performance outcome
 - iii. This position needs to be with someone who is engaging, assertive, confident, social and speaks with integrity and honor
- Levels of Language
 - i. A basic understanding of the ASL culture needs to include emphasis on the levels of language that will be encountered with accommodation solutions for every level:

1. Person born to hearing parents and learned ASL in school, but family sign at home
2. Person born to deaf parents where ASL is encouraged and written English is understood
3. Person born out of country and ASL is a 2nd or 3rd language
4. Person born to hearing parents where ASL is discouraged, but lip-reading is encouraged
5. Person growing up with family sign and gestures only
6. Person able to sign in ASL, but concepts are not easily understood
7. Person may be fluent in ASL, but not understand written English
8. Person knowing basic ASL, but cannot keep focus on subject without repetitive attempts at language in explanation of words and concepts
9. Person born to hearing parents who encourage voice with maybe a choice of an implant
10. Person who is fluent in ASL and is highly visual and will have misunderstandings of facial expression and body language while assuming something that is not reality

- **Follow up and Follow Through**

Two crucial elements for a Job Developer is Follow up and Follow Through.

“Failure to meet deadlines, honor commitments, monitor leads, return calls and keep track of long-term relationships is the most underrated cause of chaos and failure in business life,” writes Stephanie Winston in *Organized for Success*.

“Follow-through is the cornerstone of execution, and every leader who’s good at executing follows through religiously. Following through ensures that people are doing the things they committed to do, according to the agreed timetable.”

Following through means taking action and keeping your word.

- When you say you’ll do something, be scrupulous in meeting your commitment, whether to a participant, employer, partner or team-member. If you can’t deliver it, don’t promise it.
- In job interviews and networking, rapid follow-up can mean the difference between landing the job and/or opportunity. Hiring decisions are often made very quickly after interviews. And

getting in contact with people soon after meeting them means they will remember you, increasing the likelihood they will utilize your services again.

- Be sure to send a thank you note after anything where there has been a courtesy. This will make you stand out from the others, inviting an ongoing relationship to develop, or continue to develop. Also, a short thank-you note gives you a great excuse to add anything you forgot to say in a meeting or interview, or to highlight details you only glossed over.
- All top job developers are masters at follow-through. Lack of follow-through is the primary element missing when opportunities in employment are not keeping pace with leads generated. You may have hundreds of leads with a great deal of potential. But unless you follow through and actively market/sell to these leads, they will not turn into jobs.
- Following through *after* participants have been placed also makes good sense. Securing additional openings from existing employers will be mutually beneficial.

Tips on Follow up and Follow through –

1. Return phone calls within 24 – 48 hours
2. Return emails within 24 – 48 hours
 - a. Make sure to have the out-of-office response if you are on the field, vacation or unavailable
3. Send thank you notes for all courtesies
4. Have regular meetings, roundtables and case meetings for all participants and their status
5. Attend social, community and business events regularly
6. Create triggers on calendar of business and participant milestones for congratulations
7. Keep active on LinkedIn for business purposes
8. Follow up on the result of interviews, background checks and drug testing with employers
9. Review and follow through with participant's application process especially assessments, for accuracy and completion
10. Follow up on all communication that may come from various sources for accuracy and coordination of support