



# Arizona Commission

for the deaf and the hard of hearing

2017 Fiscal Year Annual Report  
July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017



The Honorable Douglas Ducey

Governor, State of Arizona

1700 W. Washington  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Governor Ducey:

In accordance with A.R.S. §36-1944, I am pleased to submit the 2017 Annual Report on behalf of the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (ACDHH).

The ACDHH staff, with the leadership of Executive Director Sherri Collins, has experienced a very successful 40<sup>th</sup> year of service. The overall goal of improving the quality of life for Arizona's Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind and persons with speech difficulties. Numerous accomplishments are highlighted in this report.

On behalf of Arizona's more than 1.1 million Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind and persons with speech difficulties, I thank you for your strong support of the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing.

Respectfully,

Sue Kay Kneifel

ACDHH Chairperson



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## **About ACDHH**

The Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (ACDHH) was established in 1977 to improve the quality of life for deaf and hard of hearing residents. ACDHH serves as a statewide information referral center for issues related to people with hearing loss, oversees the Arizona Relay Service, the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program and licenses American Sign Language Interpreters. In addition, the agency serves citizens who are deaf-blind and who have speech difficulties as well. The agency name was changed in 1985 to the Arizona Council for the Hearing Impaired, and in 2000 was again changed to its present name.

ACDHH aspires to be a national leader in communication access, support services and community empowerment throughout the state. ACDHH staff members serve as the statewide resource on issues concerning the deaf and the hard of hearing communities by:

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

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

### **Mission**

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

### **Vision**

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

### **Statute and Regulatory Requirements:**

#### **The ACDHH Statute:**

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

The commission shall act as a bureau of information to the deaf and the hard of hearing, state agencies and institutions providing services to the deaf and the hard of hearing, local agencies of



government and other public or private community agencies and programs. In this capacity, the commission shall:

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

### **2017 Fiscal Year General Highlights**

- During this celebratory 40<sup>th</sup> year, the Commission's flagship accomplishment was the partnership formed with the Arizona State Legislature to launch the first Looping system in the nation at a state capitol (House and Senate Chambers, floor and hearing rooms)! The Looping technology sends a clear sound to a person's hearing aid or cochlear implant without distortion or background noise. This gives the 1.1 million Arizona adults living with hearing loss better access to their legislating process.



- The 40<sup>th</sup> celebration also brought legislators and constituents together on the legislative lawn. Legislators experienced simulations of varying degrees of hearing loss, deafness and the combination of hearing and vision loss (Deaf-Blindness). This activity allowed for great discussions among all attendees.
- Celebrations were held in various communities celebrating the work of the Commission.
- The Commission served as the lead host of the 2016 National Association of the Deaf conference in July 5 – 9.
- The Commission reached more than 15 million individuals through print and online media, telephone contacts, email correspondence, Facebook, Twitter and the weekly E-news distribution. Numerous newspapers around the state featured ACDHH, AZTEDP and AZRS in various sections of their publications. These articles were a result of proactive media relations efforts to promote the staff's ongoing efforts to provide trainings on deafness and hearing loss, educational seminars on telecommunication devices for the deaf and the hard of hearing and conference exhibits.
- The Commission entered into an agreement with the City of Phoenix Police Department resulting in the approval of the Commission's Public Safety Training as a requirement for the department's 2,000 sworn officers. With the recent rise in fatal officer involved shootings ACDHH was and is ahead of other states in the implementation of a mandatory training. The agreement will end June 2018.
- The Commission continued to partner with the Arizona Department of Emergency Management and Military Affairs, Arizona Department of Forestry and agencies such as the Red Cross in the development of the Emergency Response Interpreter Certification (ERIC) program. Partners provided training to American Sign Language Interpreters and Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) professionals for working in emergency response venues. Approximately 12 emergency events, mainly wildfire, included the support of ERIC professionals providing equal access to effective communication during emergencies for the deaf and the hard of hearing. There are approximately 25 professionals trained to provide specific services around the state.
- The Commission provided training and education to approximately 17,329 consumers, professionals and students during FY 2017, resulting in an approximately 10% increase from 2016.

### **Information and Referral**

- The Commission provides a weekly E-News email distribution for sharing information with the community. The announcements range from community events, agency activities, special agency projects and much more. There are 1,550 subscribers for ACDHH E-news! The E-News distribution totaled 83,007 contacts during FY '17.
- Website visits totaled 116,900.



### **Interpreter Licensure**

- At the close of 2017 approximately 360 American Sign Language interpreters were licensed.
- A total of six (6) complaints were filed.

### **Arizona Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program**

- The Arizona Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program distributed five hundred thirty three (533) telecommunication devices to citizens in need of TTYs, captioned telephones, amplified telephones or amplified telephones with accompanying large visual display.
- Two hundred fifty seven (257) equipment demonstrations were provided.
- The program maintained a 97% satisfaction rating.

### **Arizona Relay Service (AZRS) General Highlights**

- AZRS completed 330,955 call minutes.
- AZRS maintained a 96% satisfaction rate.



**Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing**  
**Fiscal Year 2017 Budget**

Revenue:	\$5,412,100
Appropriation:	\$4, 602,313
Expenditures:	
Personal Services/Employee Related Expenses	\$1, 302,700
AZRS (Relay) Contract	\$943,011
AzTEDP (Equipment Distribution)	\$83,890
Professional and Outside Services	\$573,600
Other Operating Expenses	\$609,743
Total	\$3,503,944



**Board of Commissioners**

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

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

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

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Position</u></b>	<b><u>Term expiration</u></b>
Sue Kay Kniefel	Acting Chair Department of Economic Security Representative	8/26/2017
Raymond Baesler	Secretary Interpreter Representative	8/26/2017
Robert Baber	Licensed Hearing Aid Dispenser	8/26/2018
Elizabeth Garcia	Hard of Hearing Representative	8/26/2017
Jeffrey Hebert	Hard of Hearing Representative	8/26/2017
Elizabeth Booth	Hard of Hearing Representative	8/26/2018
Judy Huch	Audiologist Representative	8/26/2018
Pv Jantz	Deaf Representative	8/26/2017
Annette Reichman	ASDB Representative	8/26/2019
Barbara Brimhall	Parent Representative	8/26/2019
Chris Schneck	Hard of Hearing Representative	8/27/2015



Cynthia Butts

Deaf Representative

8/26/2017

Vacant (2)

Deaf Representative



## **Commission Staff**

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Position</u></b>
Sherril L. Collins	Executive Director
Carmen Green	Deputy Director
Curtis Humphries	Business Manager
Noneshi Anderson	Information and Referral Coordinator
Beca Bailey	Deaf Specialist
Victoria Bond	Interpreter Outreach and Education Coordinator
Shari Burda	Business operations Coordinator
Giselle Galindo	Accounts Payable Technician
Emmett Hassen	Licensing Certification Coordinator
Jeremy McCown	Technical Operations Analyst
Michele Michaels	Legislative Liaison
Christine Milano	Voucher Technician
Aimee Mousavi	Deaf Specialist
Danielle Smith	Assistant/Executive Director
Vicki Thompson	Program Planner-AzTEDP