

Douglas A. Ducey
Governor

Sherri L. Collins
Executive Director



Five Year Strategic Plan
FY 17 – FY21

Mission

Established in 1977, ACDHH serves as a statewide information and referral center for issues related to people with hearing loss. ACDHH is a national leader in communication access, support services and community empowerment throughout the state. Our mission, in partnership with the public and private sectors is to ensure accessibility and improve the quality of life for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind and persons with speech difficulties and their families.

Issue 1

Increase public awareness of accessibility issues and lack of services for persons who are Deaf-Blind

The needs of Arizonans who have a combined hearing and vision loss, the Deaf-Blind, receive very limited services from the State of Arizona. These citizens are impacted in all areas of life due to barriers in communication when accessing goods and services in healthcare (including mental health), employment, education, travel and socialization, and more.

Strategy:

Additional information on the Deaf-Blind issues will be added to the agency website, agency brochures and public education and outreach efforts will be increased.

Issue 2

To increase the hourly units of Support Service Provider (SSP) services to the Deaf-Blind

Support Service Providers are the conduits to the world for the Deaf-Blind. These professionals provide critical environmental information to the Deaf-Blind allowing full participation needed to access communication in any environment. The provision of such services allow these citizens to conduct and address daily life; attend medical appointments, enjoy entertainment, seek employment, access education, recreation and social activities to improve the overall quality of life. To date there are only two nonprofit organizations that provide SSP services for the Deaf-Blind.

Strategy:

The agency will utilize funding identified to partner and contract with an agency or agencies in the provision of SSP services. Additional research and collaboration will be conducted to identify other sources of state funding in programs that are required to serve individuals who are Deaf-Blind.

Issue #3

To partner with colleges and universities and other partners to promote the establishment of training certification and degree programs to develop professionals in the fields of deafness, hearing loss and deaf-blindness.

Strategy:

The ACDHH, in partnership with the University of Arizona has created a curriculum for SSPs. The curriculum will be used by ACDHH and other partners to certify SSPs to provide services for the Deaf-Blind as identified in Goal 2.

Issue 4

Establish ACDHH Hearing Healthcare Program

Conduct research, education and outreach identifying available hearing healthcare resources for the hard of hearing resulting in the optimum delivery of quality hearing healthcare services in the diagnosis, treatment of hearing loss, purchase of hearing aids, personal sound amplification products and other goods and services.

More than 1.1million adult Arizonans have clinically significant hearing loss and tens of thousands of these citizens are low-income without any resources to afford hearing healthcare. Hearing loss impacts economic ability, social, cognitive, mental health, safety and physical functioning of adults. Increased knowledge of resources will benefit citizens and professionals as well. Education and outreach will assist citizens with and without insurance coverage to navigate systems of service. Additional research will allow us to further identify unmet needs and address issues to improve the quality of life for the hard of hearing. ACDHH is well aware that there is no one size fits all approach to hearing healthcare and advocates for a continuum of services for Arizonans.

Strategy:

Program Development- Year One (FY 17)

Through the addition of one FTE the following will be accomplished:

3.1 Research hearing healthcare plans and services available to Arizonans.

3.2 Provide consultation services to link Arizonans to appropriate hearing healthcare plans and options for improvement of overall hearing health.

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The mission of the Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing is to ensure, in partnership with the public and private sectors, accessibility for the deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing, and persons with speech difficulties to improve their quality of life.

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3.3 To document, monitor, and assess the needs of the underserved for the provision of a Hearing Healthcare Hearing Aid Assistance Program.

3.4 To provide consultation, outreach and education to citizens, hearing healthcare professionals, medical providers.

Issue 5

To monitor all facets of equal access to functionally equivalent telecommunication services for Arizonans who are deaf, hard of hearing, Deaf-Blind or persons with speech difficulties.

Strategy:

To increase outreach, education and training efforts to inform service providers about the Arizona Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program and the Arizona Relay Service. In addition to the traditional outreach and education provided there will be increased education to public safety answering points (PSAP/911) focusing on best practices when communicating with the deaf via text to 911 services.

Issue 6

To maintain statutes and rules governing the licensing of American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters.

It is important that the quality of professional services provided by ASL interpreters continue to improve. Outreach and education will be provided to professionals to better understand the impact of statutes and rules on the profession. Professional development opportunities will continue to be offered.

Strategy:

Continuation of quarterly workshops on the code of professional conduct, examination preparation, specialized areas of works; medical, legal mental health, emergency preparedness and many more special focus topics will be offered through partnerships and collaborative efforts.

Issue 7

To increase agency outreach, education and training through advanced technological resources.

It is critical that ACDHH continue to be on the cutting edge of technological advances in order to provide equal access for the communities we serve. Technology, as it does for the mainstream, allows consumers to participate remotely in meetings and forums offered by the agency that include full access through the provision of ASL interpreters and Communication Access Realtime Transcription (CART). Costs associated with auxiliary aids for accessibility may be reduced with advances in technology. The Commission continues to set the bar for all state agencies for full inclusion for citizens receiving services as well as its employees.

7.1

Research technology to continue to provide and improve current accessibility.

7.2

Expand outreach and education to consumers via remote access while reducing staff travel costs associated with the Consumer Education Series.

7.3

Expand outreach and education to professionals in health care, public safety, employment and higher education through the development of training modules, webinars and teleconferencing, resulting in reduced travel time and costs.