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*Governor*



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# Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults with Special Needs Presentation

ADSD/OCL

Nevada Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
and Las Vegas Deaf Seniors

February 23, 2026

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**Department of Human Services**

*Helping people. It's who we are and what we do.*

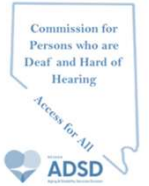


# Agenda



1. NV Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) State Plan FY2022-2027
2. 2024 Townhall Tour Community Feedback
3. Proposed 2025 Recommendations and Projected Impact
4. Proposed Bill Concepts
  - I. Closed Captions in Public Spaces
  - II. American Sign Language (ASL) as a Foreign Language Credit
  - III. Nevada School for the Deaf (NVSD) – an Inclusive/Bicultural Approach
  - IV. D/HH Community Living
  - V. DeafBlind Support Services
  - VI. Revisions to NRS 656A Interpreter Registry
5. Questions
6. Contact Information
7. Acronyms

# NV Deaf and Hard of Hearing State Plan FY2022-2027



## **NV State Plan for the Deaf (D), Hard of Hearing (HH), Speech Impaired (SI), Deaf-Blind (DB), and Deaf Plus (D+) SFY2022 – 2027**

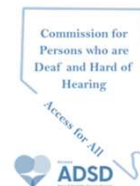
[https://adsd.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/adsdnvgov/content/Boards/NCPWADHHSI/CDHH%20State%20Plan\\_2021-2027\(3\).pdf](https://adsd.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/adsdnvgov/content/Boards/NCPWADHHSI/CDHH%20State%20Plan_2021-2027(3).pdf)

### **This state plan includes 8 recommendations which will be monitored and evaluated by the Commission:**

1. Government Accessibility
2. Quality Interpreters
3. Emergency Response and Management
4. Healthcare Access
5. Language Development
6. Post-Secondary Education Transition
7. WIOA Partnerships
8. Inclusion of the Community

The Commission uses this state plan to increase access for the target population, continue to engage the target population and partners, and advocate for the rights of the target population. Please see annual report and/or Data Analysis that highlights recommended activities, community feedback, and ally opportunities toward change.

# 2024 Townhall Tour Community Feedback



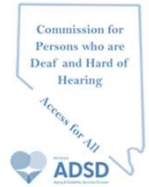
## October 2024 Statewide Qualitative Data Analysis Highlights

The following is a highlighted summary of the overall accumulative findings of the North, South, and Rural regions.

### 2024 Statewide Highlighted Cumulative Findings

- **Inclusion of the Community** (Recommendation #1) as outlined within our State Plan by 38% relevance statewide in Inclusion of the Community needs and relevance applicable in all themes (1-6), with a heavy emphasis on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance, D/HH Cultural Competency (Theme 2), and Nevada Systems and Advocacy Navigation/Training. (Theme 6) collectively 61% of needs and relevance within Recommendation 1.
- **Quality Interpreters** (Recommendation #3) as outlined within our State Plan by 22% relevance statewide in in all themes (1-6), with a heavy emphasis on Certified Hearing Interpreter (CHI), Certified/Deaf Interpreters (C/DI) Interpreter Deficit & Pipeline Development (Theme 1) at 66% relevance and impact specifically within the needs of Recommendation 3.
- **Healthcare Access** (Recommendation #5) as outlined within our State Plan by 20% relevance statewide in the areas CHI/C/DI Interpreter Deficit and Pipeline Development (Theme 1), ADA Compliance, D/HH Cultural Competency (Theme 2), D/DB/HH Specialist Service Providers, Equipment Accessibility (Theme 4), D/HH Education, D/HH Resource Services, D/HH Advocacy Center (Theme 5), and Nevada Systems and Advocacy navigation/Training (Theme 6) aside from DeafBlind Services, Resources, and Equipment (Theme 3).

# Proposed 2025 Recommendations & Projected Impact



## ED Proposed Data Driven 2025 Recommendation Priorities – NV Deaf Commission Approved

- Recommendation #1 Inclusion of the Community

Continue community engagement through town halls, roundtable discussions, statewide Deaf Awareness events, and annual Systems/Legislative Conference/Workshops. Increase focus on the Legislative Advocacy needs to readdress Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) Services with a direct service model that includes cultural competencies found in Deaf Schools and Deaf centered facilities/centers, and Offices of Deaf Services nationwide. Commission’s legislative advocacy efforts should reflect support for ADA Compliance in all areas of Deaf (D), DeafBlind (DB), Hard of Hearing (HH), and/or Deaf Plus (D+) access to fundamental resources and inclusion in Nevada. A legislative mandate for sensitivity training, along with a unified legislative guided practice of culturally competent providers under funding sources and services allocated to D/DB/HH/D+ constituents of Nevada is prudent.

- Recommendation #3 Quality Interpreters

Continued support in the CHI and C/DI deficits and pipeline development needs are to continue heritage driven efforts of Nevada’s Deaf Camp and/or Pre-Employee programs like Vocational Rehabilitation’s “Beyond the Deaf Home” camp; college program developments of Interpreter Training Program (ITP) or Interpreter Preparation Program (IPP) and degree tract education found at College of Southern Nevada (CSN), Nevada State University (NSU), and University of Nevada Reno (UNR); mentor gap services like the ADSD Communication Access Services (CAS) Mentor Program; along with ASL being acknowledged as a foreign language credit in our high schools and charter programs for graduates.

# Proposed 2025 Recommendations & Projected Impact (Cont.)



## ED Proposed Data Driven 2025 Recommendation Priorities – NV Deaf Commission Approved (Continued)

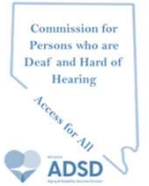
- Recommendation #3 Quality Interpreters (Continued)

As an ongoing concern, legislative advocacy and/or networking with local post-secondary options and ADSD CAS Program and Registry would be prudent in statewide efforts. This increase in engagement with training starting in early intervention through model of Deaf Mentors, cultural cultivating environments in immersive ASL settings, ASL development options, and post-secondary sites for increased opportunities for trained signers to become certified and registered in the state of Nevada will support the pipeline advocacy already taking place through our local post-secondary ITPs. The earlier exposure to American Sign Language (ASL) as a language option and model along with Deaf Culture norms, the greater chances of pipeline development towards the much-needed increase of CHIs and C/DIs.

- Recommendation #5 Healthcare Access

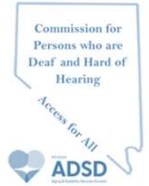
The ongoing recommendation is to increase D/DB/HH/D+ engagements in statewide advocacy for Policy and Legislative change as it pertains to medical settings and general community environments through increasing training awareness and instilling practical mandates/policies of accountability like SB188. This can and should increase the audience of those engaging narratives that impact the D/DB/HH/D+ community within Nevada. This can be done through a Deaf-led strategic models/planning with experts found nationally and locally in Deaf Schools, D/DB/HH/D+ non-profits, direct service partners, resource led organizations, and D/HH advocacy bodies that are commonly provided through Deaf Center models with full communication access D/DB/HH/D+ staff and/or ASL user friendly environments. As long-term goals, a Deaf and Blind School of Nevada and Deaf person-centered centers for Nevadans are still highly recommended to improve access, resources, and advocacy.

# Proposed Bill Concepts



- Closed Captions in Public Spaces
- ASL as a Foreign Language Credit
- Nevada School for the Deaf (NVSD) (Includes D/HH/DB/SI/D+)
  - Special Services and Assessment Center
  - Emphasis on Bicultural Approach to D/HH Services
- D/HH Community Living
- DeafBlind Support Services (i.e., SSPs and/or CNs)
- Revisions to NRS 656A Interpreter Registry

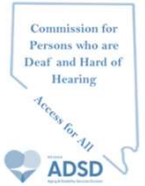
# Proposed Bill Concept: Closed Captions in Public Spaces



- Community Feedback and/or Need
  - To promote full and equal communication access to all in public spaces
- Historical Notes
  - ADA prohibits discrimination based on disability in activities of places of public accommodations
  - Section 508 mandates accessibility for disabled person a law-Equal access to electronic information technology
- Recommended Plan of Action or Proposed Drafted Language Ex.
  - Draft proposed language to amend the NRS/NAC
  - See reference document: “Closed Captions BDR Proposal 2nd Draft\_E. Schwartz”

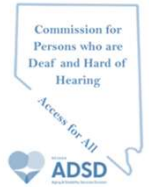
**Public Spaces Defined as:** Bars, restaurants, hospital/medical waiting rooms, health clubs, social recreation facilities, airport lounges, etc.

# Proposed Bill Concept: ASL as a Foreign Language Credit



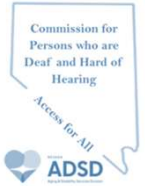
- **Community Feedback and/or Need**
  - To recognize American Sign Language (ASL) as a foreign language promotes inclusivity for Deaf individuals and enhances understanding of Deaf culture.
  - Severe shortage of quality interpreters
- **Historical Notes**
  - Traditional foreign language requirements often implicitly prioritized spoken languages, reflecting a historical bias towards oral communication.
  - Recognized by many colleges and universities
- **Recommended Plan of Action or Proposed Drafted Language**
  - Draft proposed language to amend the NRS/NAC to explicitly include ASL as an approved foreign language in Secondary and Post Secondary settings.
  - Work through Department of Education (DOE) rulemaking and stakeholder input.
  - Prepare a fiscal note/impact analysis to address potential statewide implications. The DOE can likely help with this.
  - See reference document: “2027 PROPOSED DRAFT FOR ASL AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE.docx”

# Proposed Bill Concept: Nevada School for the Deaf (NVSD)



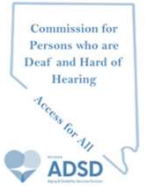
- **Community Feedback and/or Need**
  - Many D/HH students in Nevada are receiving an inadequate education.
  - There are only a handful of teachers of the deaf and speech/language pathologists that are trained and knowledgeable in Deaf education.
  - Many families and staff report inadequately trained and experienced ASL interpreters working in school settings.
  - There is no statewide data collected on education outcomes for D/HH students.
- **Historical Notes**
  - A charter school for the D/HH existed at one time in Las Vegas – closing in 2011
  - Several small programs have tried to serve the D/HH Educational needs; however, no uniformed curriculum exist to serve the needs of the D/HH in our state; Therefore, the gap remains.
  - Commission education subcommittee is working on a statewide survey to gain better data on these issues.

# Proposed Bill Concept: Nevada School for the Deaf (NVSD) (Cont.)



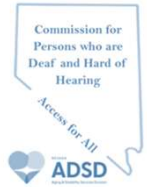
- Historical Notes (Continued)
  - Most states have state funded Deaf Schools. In many states a Deaf School is a public, state-supported, fully inclusive system.
  - In these states the school for the Deaf serves as a focal point for sharing and gaining best practices in D/HH education – building capacity in the state to improve D/HH educational outcomes
- Recommended Plan of Action or Proposed Drafted Language Ex.
  - Review and implementation of current standard practices to best address fiscal impact
  - Implement Nevada School for the Deaf (NVSD) Inclusive model (Includes D/HH/DB/SI/D+)
    - Emphasis on Bicultural Approach and Specialized Designed Instruction in D/HH Services
    - Support Services and Assessment Center (i.e., Pediatric Audiologist, Speech and Language Pathology, Psychology and Counseling Services, Orientation and Mobility Services, Behavioralist, Health and Nurse services, Social Worker supports, Adolescent DeafBlind Services, etc.)

# Proposed Bill Concept: D/HH Community Living



- **Community Feedback and/or Need**
  - D/HH Senior Citizen Community have expressed the lack of accessible Community Living
  - Senior Community Living Centers Communication access need as modeled in other Senior Living Centers
  - Significant disparity in access to traditional assisted living amenities, need to connect and communicate has a profundity effect on seniors' intellectual and social well-being.
- **Historical Notes**
  - Last Session AB395 Failed – due to fiscal impact
  - Nevada has high numbers of seniors who have hearing loss in comparison with other states
  - In total of 34 states have a community living for D/HH individuals
- **Recommended Plan of Action or Proposed Drafted Language Ex.**
  - Recommended language – See reference document: “AB395\_R1 Recommended Language.docx”

# Proposed Bill Concept: DeafBlind Support Services (i.e., SSPs and/or CNs)



- Community Feedback and/or Need
  - DeafBlind Service request for Support Service Providers (SSPs) and/or Co-Navigators (CNs) continue without ongoing support provisions accessible to constituents in need.
  - State does not have agencies or state supported services for DeafBlind needs outside of restrictive provisional care.
  - Continued request are coming to Non-Profit Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) Advocates and Service Providers with no supported recourse toward action.
- Historical Notes
  - Current practice of Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) are not currently adequate for service provision as SSPs and/or CNs
  - Other States provide SSPs nationwide through resources like Helen Keller National Center: <https://www.helenkeller.org/resources/ssp-tool-kit/>
- Recommended Plan of Action or Proposed Drafted Language Ex.
  - New BDR needed for DeafBlind Services (I.e., SSPs and/or CNs)

# Proposed Bill Concept:

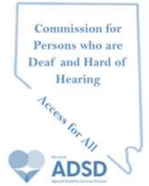
## Revisions to NRS 656A Interpreter Registry: Community Feedback



- Community Feedback and/or Need
  - Deaf Community express concerns of lack of qualified interpreters in community settings and/or interpreters with educational interpreting assessment scores interpreting in community setting with little evident skill proficiency for medical appointments, therapy appointments, entertainment settings, and high-risk environments (i.e., emergency response settings), therefore negatively impacting professional interpreters in community settings.
    - Interpreters' express concerns with not passing qualification testing/assessments due to skill readiness and access to testing sites.
  - Community expresses a need for revisions to NRS 656A and NAC 656A to align better with national standards of grievance process, authority for accountability for those in noncompliance, and grandfather clauses for professional experience and ongoing maintenance of skill allowances to work.
    - Community expresses concern with process awareness and understanding of how to engage NAC 656A revisions as practiced in 2023.

# Proposed Bill Concept:

## Revisions to NRS 656A Interpreter Registry: Historical Notes

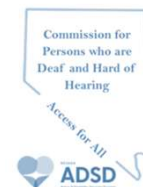


- Historical Notes

- NRS Established in 2001 prior to current understandings of local needs and continual impact on Communication Access from a Deaf perspective.
- 2023 NAC revisions made help aligning the Nevada Interpreter/Communication Access Real-Time (CART) Registry with national standards. However, as stated in feedback, community expresses concern with process awareness and understanding how to engage these efforts.
- Other states have implemented accountability through councils/committee oversight for audits, education to improve the interpreting skills, and education to reinforce knowledge and accountability needs or requirements.
  - State examples:
    - <https://dial.iowa.gov/about-dial/boards/sign-language-interpreters/about-board>
    - <https://pr.mo.gov/interpreters-verification.asp>
    - <https://dsps.wi.gov/Pages/BoardsCouncils/SLIC/Default.aspx>

# Proposed Bill Concept:

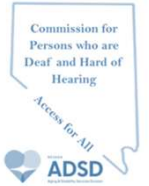
## Revisions to NRS 656A Interpreter Registry: Recommendations



- Recommended Plan of Action or Proposed Drafted Language
  - Establish a board/or advisory committee to audit Registry reported grievances, oversee interpreting agencies and/or independent contractor working the state of Nevada to ensure compliance to Interpreting Code of Ethics/ Code of Professional Conduct (CPC), and Local State Laws.
  - Grievance process established with educational support consequences, repeated offense suspension time, and/or Registry fines pending severity of offense.
  - Graduating Interpreter standards for a degree in Interpreting to include partial completion of nationally recognized assessment/certification exam in either knowledge or performance prior to commencement of degree.

# Questions?

# Contact Information



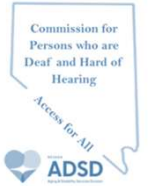
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[https://adsd.nv.gov/Boards/NCPWADHHSI/Nevada Commission for Persons Who Are Deaf Hard of Hearing or Speech Impaired/](https://adsd.nv.gov/Boards/NCPWADHHSI/Nevada%20Commission%20for%20Persons%20Who%20Are%20Deaf%20Hard%20of%20Hearing%20or%20Speech%20Impaired/)

# Acronyms



- AB – Assembly Bill
- ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act
- ASL – American Sign Language
- ADSD – Aging and Disability Services Division
- CART – Communication Access Realtime Translation
- CAS – Communication Access Services Program
- CNs/SSPs – Co-Navigators/ Support Service Providers
- Cont. – Continued
- CPC – Code of Professional Conduct
- CSN – College of Southern Nevada
- D/HH – Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- DB – Deaf Blind
- D+ – Deaf Plus
- DOE – Department of Education
- Ex. – Example
- EIPA – Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment
- ITP – Interpreter Training Program
- IPP – Interpreter Preparation Program
- K-12 – Kindergarten to Twelfth Grade
- LVDS – Las Vegas Deaf Senior
- MA – Master of Arts
- NV – Nevada
- NAC – Nevada Administrative Code
- NRS – Nevada Revised Statutes
- NVSD – Nevada School for the Deaf
- NSU – Nevada State University
- OCL – Office of Community Living
- PACs – Personal Care Attendants
- RID/NIC – Registry or Interpreters for the Deaf/ National Interpreter Certification
- Sammy’s D.E.N. – Sammy’s Deaf Empowered Now Deaf Center
- SB – Senate Bill
- UNR – University of Nevada Reno
- VP – Video Phone
- WIOA – Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act