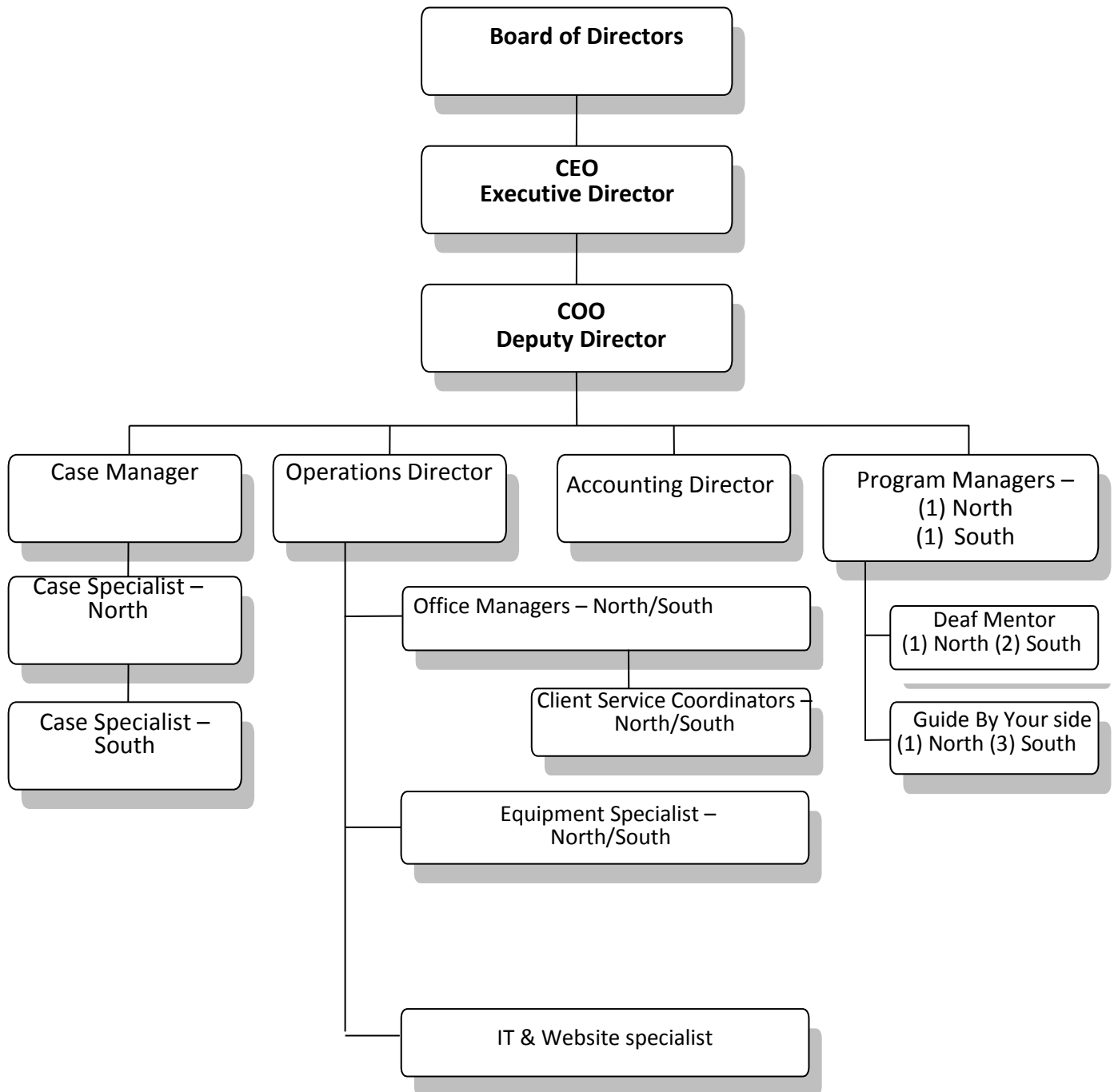

Deaf Centers of Nevada
Strategic Plan

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Deaf Centers of Nevada
Organizational Chart



Introduction

“People with hearing loss” is a broad term to describe all people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or Deaf-blind. Hearing loss affects people regardless of their age, ethnicity, religion, income, or other disability. Sometimes hearing loss is referenced as the “invisible disability” because it is not always obvious and is widely misunderstood by society at large. There are approximately over 38,000 individuals with a hearing loss in Nevada according to a 2014 Gallaudet University study, including individuals who are Deaf. Nevada also has a large Deaf-blind population.

People who are Deaf, hard of hearing, and Deaf-blind face communication barriers every day throughout the private, public and nonprofit sectors such as **healthcare, mental health, disaster preparedness, education, employment** and many more. When barriers to obtain services exist in a society, the quality of life is reduced.

Deaf Centers of Nevada promotes equal access opportunities, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Nevada Law Against Discrimination. This ensures people with hearing loss may participate in or benefit from public and private programs, services, and activities. To do this, Deaf Centers of Nevada provides reasonable accommodations and appropriate auxiliary aids and services where reasonably necessary to promote effective communication.

Deaf Centers of Nevada provides services to people who are Deaf, hard of hearing and Deaf-blind throughout Nevada so they may **enjoy self-sufficiency**. Deaf Centers of Nevada provides telecommunication relay services, distributes specialized telecommunication equipment, provides client services to individuals and families through regional and local service centers, provides case management, and ensures availability of sign language interpreters and other auxiliary aids and services. These services support the ADSD goal to **improve economic and independent living stability**.

Deaf Centers of Nevada services are designed to be **person and family-centered**, recognizing the broad range of communication preferences among various individuals that need to be addressed. This is accomplished by providing appropriate auxiliary aids to create equal access opportunities.

- Telecommunication Relay Service users can choose from a menu of various relay services and features to make telephone calls to people with normal hearing and speech.
- Individuals choose from an array of specialized telecommunication equipment to meet their telecommunication needs or visit a public videophone site to conduct video calls.
- Individuals can request a preferred auxiliary aids including sign language interpreters, real-time captioning and assistive listening system that would meet their communication needs when seeking access to state of Nevada services and activities.

- Individuals and families can identify their needs, accessibility barriers and/or other issues and seek assistance locally from the service centers of the Deaf and hard of hearing. The centers provide case management, information and referral, and education and training. Case management coordinates the use of services and resources available to individuals and families providing the opportunity for self-sufficiency.

In an effort to leverage limited resources and promote the One State, One Vision, One Community framework, Deaf Centers of Nevada collaborates and partners with various agencies/programs to address different areas of unmet need. Most of these **partnerships** demonstrate Deaf Centers of Nevada's role in supporting ADSD priorities and goals although it may not be identified as specific goals in this strategic plan. A few of the partnerships reflect **Deaf Centers of Nevada's orientation toward early childhood development**. For example, Deaf Centers of Nevada is:

- working with the Department of Aging and Disability's Early Intervention Program, Department of Education's Early learning and development; Early Hearing and Detection and Intervention program to address gaps in early intervention services.
- working with the Subcommittee on Communication Services studying gaps and unmet needs in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community where Deaf Centers of Nevada offers educational Instruction and Interpreting and assistive technology expertise.
- working with the Administrator of the Courts to implement court interpreter standards.
- working with the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health as well as community health resources that have specialized counselors to address disparities in equal access to mental health services.
- collaborating with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to close gaps in employment, including school-to-work transition services, job preparedness and placement services, and competent rehabilitation counselors.

ONE STATE – ONE VISION – ONE COMMUNITY

DCN Goal 1: Improve equal access to communication. Provide advocacy for Social and Human Services

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES / ACTIONS	INTERDEPENDENCIES &	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Remove barriers to telecommunications by providing current and emerging <u>telecommunication services and other assistive technology</u>	Provide telecommunication relay services and features Develop and implement annual outreach plan Distribute specialized telecommunication equipment Maintain telecommunication equipment demonstration sites Maintain public videophone sites, services and features Maintain Deaf-blind Communication services	<u>Telecommunication Equipment Distribution</u> Equipment Trainers, Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program Administrators, Hearing, Speech & Deafness Center <u>Communication Access Network</u> State and Local Service Centers to assist Deaf and hard of hearing and /or Deaf Blind Communication Facilitator	Call volume by types of services per month % of outreach deliverables completed per year Number of clients served per month Number of equipment distributed per month Number of clients served at demo sites per month Number of videophone users served per month Number of Deaf-blind clients served per month
Remove barriers for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind services by providing <u>reasonable accommodations with auxiliary aids</u>	Ensure collaborative relationship with sign language interpreter services Implement video remote interpreting services (SLIM) Design and develop an assistive listening device delivery system	<u>Sign Language Interpreter referral services</u> Freelance interpreters, interpreter referral agencies, NVRID, College of Southern Nevada interpreter training program, Nevada State Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf individuals. Limited English Proficiency Coordinators <u>Assistive Communication Technology</u> Regional and Local service centers for the Deaf and hard of hearing, and Deaf-blind.	Availability of video remote interpreting services Number of employees sign language proficiency assessments per year Usage volume of assistive listening systems per year Availability of real-time captioning services
Remove barriers to business, government and nonprofit sectors by providing <u>client services</u>	Provide an array of services to individuals, families, professionals and organizations including employers Respond to public requests for information and referrals Conduct outreach activities	<u>Social and Human Services (SHS)</u> Regional and Local service centers for the Deaf and hard of hearing Information and Referral, Advocacy 211 Nevada Relay Communications	Number of clients served per year (SHS) Number of education and training activities per year (SHS) Number of outreach activities per year (SHS) Number of requests for information & referral per year (SHS) Number of booths at events/conferences per year (IRA)

ONE STATE – ONE VISION – ONE COMMUNITY

DCN Goal 2: Increase public trust through strong management practices that ensure quality and leverage all resources

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES / ACTIONS	INTERDEPENDENCIES &	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
Recruit, develop and retain an informed, inspired, diverse and engaged workforce.	Recruit to fill vacant positions on July 1, 2016 Implement Employee Survey action plan (Director) Develop and implement individualized training plan (Executive Director) Create innovative ways to recognize employees' success (Management)	ADSD Human Resources Division, ADSD Research and Data Analysis College of Southern Nevada Nevada State College Robert Half Technology UNR	% of vacant positions filled % of ratings increase in the employee survey % of employees who completed mandatory DCN and competencies training Number of employee recognition events/activities per year (Management)
Expand and leverage data and performance management practices to improve decision making and client outcomes.	Develop and maintain monitoring plans (Programs) Finalize performance based measures and outcomes (Programs) Research, design and implement case management best practices to improve Centers' caseload outcomes Implementation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Information System (Information Technology)	Relationships – Agencies with Letter of Support Performance - ADSD Office of Planning and Accountability Case Management – ADSD bi Annual audit of compliance Information System – ADSD Information System Services Division, Research Data Analysis	Number of monitoring plans completed (Programs) Number of programs completing performance measures (Programs) % of caseload outcomes successfully closed
Establish and strengthen common Departmental messages to improve consistency and clarity of communications.	Overhaul design and layout of DCN internet and intranet websites (Information Technology) Captioning of DCN -produced video productions (Information Technology)	ADSD Information System Services Division, Department of Information Services, ADSD Visual Communications	# of hits on internet and intranet websites (IT) % of videos posted on DCN website that are captioned (IT)

Supporting Information

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Despite the Deaf Centers of Nevada having newly renamed the organization, Deaf Centers of Nevada continues to seek stakeholder feedback. Over 180+ stakeholders attended the “Deaf Centers of Nevada Town Hall” meeting event on March 23rd, 2016. In addition, approximately 100 Stakeholders were in attendance at the ADSD moderated forums to gather stakeholder feedback on the following topics: education, interpreting, early intervention, employment, ADA Title II, and mental health.

Deaf Centers of Nevada posted ADSD surveys and meeting requests on social media, inviting stakeholders to review and submit comments. Deaf Centers of Nevada will continue to host public meetings throughout the state of Nevada, inviting families with Deaf and hard of hearing children, Deaf and hard of hearing individuals and Deaf-blind to discuss community trends, needs, barriers and new initiatives.

PEOPLE WE SERVE

“People with hearing loss” is a broad term to describe all people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, and/or Deaf-blind. The degree of hearing loss ranges from mild to profound. The onset of hearing loss can occur at birth or later in life for varying reasons. Each individual with hearing loss has unique communication method preferences. People with hearing loss tend to be categorized into three groups based on similarities: Deaf, Deaf-blind and hard of hearing.

People who are Deaf tend to have permanent hearing loss with little or no residual hearing, which affects verbal and auditory capabilities. Generally, people who are Deaf are unable to receive information conveyed through spoken language without the use of auxiliary aids. They may communicate through a preferred communication method to express themselves and use varied services and/or technology to receive information conveyed through spoken language.

People who are hard of hearing have some degree of hearing loss with some residual hearing, either permanent or fluctuating, which can affect communication. Generally, people who are hard of hearing are able to express or speak for themselves and may or may not use auxiliary aids to receive or understand spoken language. They may communicate through auditory means, with or without amplification, and may or may not have the ability to lip-read. Few know sign language; and if they do, it is usually not their primary mode of communication.

People who are Deaf-blind have concomitant hearing and visual impairments. This combination can be the cause of severe communication, developmental, and educational needs that cannot be accommodated in special education programs developed solely for individuals with Deafness or individuals with blindness. The hearing and vision losses may occur in varying degrees. Some may show only one of the behaviors that indicates a hearing impairment; but show several of the behaviors that indicate a vision impairment. **The combined effects of both of these sensory losses, even if both are mild, qualifies the person as Deaf-blind.**

People with speech disabilities can be individuals with expressive communication impairment who have difficulty with or who are unable to communicate vocally in one or more environments. The majority of people with speech disabilities have typical hearing.

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

Deaf Centers of Nevada provides various programs and services to the Deaf and hard of hearing and Deaf-blind populations throughout Nevada. Services are designed to meet the particular communication needs of people with hearing loss.

Telecommunication Relay Service - The Telecommunication Relay Service eliminates barriers to the telecommunication network, providing equal access opportunities to the telephone as a person with excellent hearing and clear speech would. Telephone calls to persons who are hearing are typically done through a communication assistant who makes the telephone conversation process easier. A contract with a telecommunication relay provider provides various relay features to accommodate the consumer's degree of hearing loss or speech disability and preferred communication method.

Telecommunication Equipment Distribution - Following state and federal regulations, eligible clients apply to receive specialized telecommunication equipment and receive training to effectively use the equipment. Specialized telecommunication equipment distributed to clients matches each individual's degree of hearing loss or speech disability and preferred communication method. The equipment makes it possible for the client to access the telecommunication relay services and to make direct telephone calls with other parties.

Health, Human and Social Services - Deaf Centers of Nevada contracts with several State agencies to provide client services to local communities. Currently the scope of services includes: information and referral, education and training, outreach, assistive technology loan and referral, and case management. Case management includes providing assistance or advocacy on the client's behalf to remove communication barriers to products, services and employment in the private, public and nonprofit sectors.

Sign Language Interpreter Referral services - A collaborative relationship with local Interpreting agencies with a pool of freelance interpreters is available on the behalf of clients, employees or local businesses. The program's activities are to improve the access to sign language interpreter services. Technical assistance and consultation is available to local or state businesses lacking the expertise to arrange interpreter services. Providing access to interpreters fulfills the Americans with Disabilities Act mandate to provide equal access opportunities to local and state agencies, programs and services.

Communication Access Network - An ongoing telecommunication network of videophone sites established throughout Nevada State within the Regional and Local Service Centers. Each site includes a workstation utilizing videophone technologies.

These sites are used to access video relay services and make face-to-face videophone calls. Technical assistance and training activities to use videophones are provided to ADSD clients at the sites.

Assistive Communication Technology - This program benefits people who are either hard of hearing or Deaf-blind. The program aims to improve a new ADSD-wide referral and loan system to provide auxiliary aids (e.g. assistive listening systems and other assistive technology). Providing auxiliary aids fulfills the Americans with Disabilities Act mandate to provide equal access opportunities to local and state agencies, programs and services.

Information and Referral, and Advocacy - Deaf, hard of hearing and Deaf-blind individuals, families, professionals and the general public may not know where to obtain specific information about specialized programs and services related to hearing loss. Deaf Centers of Nevada responds to such requests for information, resources and/or referrals. The regional and local service centers advocate on behalf of individuals' legal rights. Deaf Centers of Nevada removes barriers through collaboration, revised regulations, policies and contracted services.

Deaf Centers of Nevada provides outreach and training activities to promote awareness and develop employees. These activities are intended for audiences of professionals, organizations, and Deaf, hard of hearing and Deaf-blind communities. Examples of outreach and training activities include: diversity initiatives, exhibits at events and conferences, distribution of publications, giving presentations, and training on use of assistive technology. Outreach activities heighten the public awareness of Deaf Centers of Nevada programs, Deaf culture, and other issues related to hearing loss. Training activities introduce sensitivity awareness or cultural competency concepts with knowledge and skills to competent ADSD staff to effectively serve the Deaf, hard of hearing and Deaf-blind individuals and meet their individualized communication needs.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD) and State Auditor Office models of performance-based audits have heightened the need to review how Deaf Centers of Nevada conducts performance assessments. Logic models were developed and performance based outcomes are being refined. The next step is to develop meaningful reports that demonstrate how well the programs are performing with the goal of posting an annual performance report on the website.

Audits and Reviews - Deaf Centers of Nevada has been subject to internal audits by Cory Wright and Associates CPA firm and by ADSD independent audits by the State Auditor Office.

Internal Reviews - Executive management reviews Deaf Centers of Nevada fiscal management via Monthly Fiscal Status Report meetings. Deaf Centers of Nevada uses the annual Enterprise Risk Assessment and Self Evaluation (ERASE) to identify and minimize areas of risk.

Performance Assessments - Deaf Centers of Nevada participates in the annual Agency Self-Assessment, Employee Survey and the Client Satisfaction Survey. These activities are tools to close performance gaps. Deaf Centers of Nevada uses the Agency Self-Assessment results to identify Deaf Centers of Nevada strengths and opportunities. Deaf Centers of Nevada uses the employee survey to review management, communication, personnel, resources, job characteristics, co-workers and other themes. Two client satisfaction surveys assess client satisfaction as it relates to their interaction with the Telecommunication Equipment Distribution program and with the Centers' provision of case management services.

INTERNAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Organizational and Workforce Capacity - Deaf Centers of Nevada is a Non Profit 501© 3 agency providing resource services and advocacy to the Deaf and hard of hearing and deaf-blind population. Deaf Centers of Nevada will have (23) full time positions that will allow the centers to operate at a high level of efficiency and provide professional services, resources and advocacy. A 3-year workforce growth plan assumes minimal staff turnover and possibly a few new positions added to support new services offered to clients. It includes prospective new positions addressing policy and quality assurance initiatives and additional administrative support for new programs and services.

Technology Capacity - With the establishment of an Information Technology (IT) team, the Deaf Centers of Nevada will be able to aggressively improve its technology capacity. A comprehensive management and data information system is being implemented to improve data management, meet performance and accountability requirements as well as IT standards. Critical needs include internet, intranet and internal web development, electronic document retention solutions, internal policies and procedures.

Financial Capacity - The ADSD RFP for Communication Services Program for the Deaf and hard of hearing and deaf-blind services is used to finance Deaf Centers of Nevada activities. The annual budget operates on a state fiscal year basis July 1-June 30 of each year. The revenue comes from the PUC tax which is based on the number of landlines. The number of landlines has been declining 2-3% annually. Traditional Telecommunication Relay Service expenditures have been declining due to the popularity of internet-based relay services. The Nevada State ADSD Budget allows for \$1.6 million to be used to fund fiscal year 2016-2017. This Funds will support Deaf Center of Nevada operations throughout FY17.