

# Best Practices

## A Guide and Checklist for Agencies Serving People Who Are Deaf, Hard of Hearing or DeafBlind

### **Best Practice: Serve as model agency in community.**

#### **I. Office Environment**

Makes office environment accessible to clients who are Deaf/HH/DeafBlind:

- All staff has basic sign language skills.
- Interpreter is available for appointments with people who use American Sign Language.
- Assistive listening devices are available for people who use their residual hearing for communication.
- Staff is provided sensitivity training and demonstrates positive attitude towards people who are Deaf/HH/DeafBlind.
- Staff has working knowledge about how to use assistive listening devices and how to work with interpreters.
- TTY is available to both receive and send calls and for client use.
- Amplified telephone is available for both receiving and sending calls and for client use.
- Technology is available for use by clients to make IP Relay calls.
- Technology is available for use by clients to make Video Relay calls.
- Directions for use of communication access equipment are available in print and in alternate formats (enlarged, disk and Braille).
- Access symbols are displayed to indicate the accessible services provided.

#### **II. Programs and Services**

Provides access to programs and services for clients who are Deaf/HH/DeafBlind:

- Clients are assisted in reading and interpreting, mail/email and completing forms, etc.
- Qualified sign language and oral interpreters, service support providers (SSPs)/tactile interpreters and assistive listening devices are made available for all meetings, trainings and programs.
- Access for people who are Deaf/HH/DeafBlind is advertised in all program brochures.
- Captioned videos are used for meetings, trainings and programs.
- Printed information is made available in alternate formats (large print, disk and Braille).
- Referral services for interpreters, equipment loan sources and vendors of hearing assistive technology (HAT), funding sources for hearing aids and HAT are available and current.
- Web site is Bobby approved.
- Newsletters and agency brochures are available in alternate formats (large print, disk, Braille and available on Internet).
- Meetings, trainings and programs are held in locations that are accessible via public transportation.
- Agency has a hearing assistive technology (HAT) loan or rental program or knows resources where HAT can be borrowed or rented.

### III. Safety

Provides for the safety of staff and clients:

- Smoke detectors with transmitters and both audio and visual alarms are in place and located throughout office for the safety and protection of staff and clients.
- Agency has internal crisis or disaster plan.

### IV. Population(s) Served

Programs and Services reflect only population(s) served and/or all populations served:

- Mission statement and goals accurately reflect population(s) served.
- Statistics used for funding purposes are prudent and reflect only the population(s) and/or all populations served.
- Agency newsletters and brochures reflect issues and services to only/or to all population(s) served.
- Population(s) served are represented on staff.
- Populations(s) served are represented on boards, councils, and policy development committees.

### V. Advocacy

Advocates for issues related to the population(s) served at the federal, state and local levels:

- Staff has working knowledge of disability laws related to the population(s) they serve.
- Staff knows appropriate agencies or government entities for referral of clients.
- Staff keeps informed of pending legislation/rules and regulations at federal and state levels through DODHH, membership in the Coalition for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People, the National Association for the Deaf, Self Help for Hard of Hearing People and the American Association of the Deaf-Blind Web sites.
- Agency actively advocates for legislation/rules and regulations that best serve the needs of the population(s) they serve through phone calls, letters and face-to-face contact.
- Staff provides information related to the impact of hearing loss to community entities.

### VI. Information and Support

Supports Deaf/HH/DeafBlind individuals, communities and statewide organizations.

- Subscribes to publications of state and national lead organizations for population(s) served.
  - NAD e-Newsletter (National Association for the Deaf)
  - The MDA Record (Michigan Deaf Association)
  - Hearing Loss Journal (Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH) )
  - SHHH e-News ([www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org) to subscribe)
  - The Michiganian (MI-SHHH)
  - The Deaf-Blind American Magazine (American Association of the Deaf-Blind (AADB))
  - SHI-M = DB e-Newsletter (Self Help for Independence in Michigan Equalizing the Deaf/Blind)
  - The Michigan Coalition for People with Hearing Loss Web site ([www.michdhh.org](http://www.michdhh.org))
- Network with and build coalitions with other agencies serving like population(s).
- Deaf/HH/DeafBlind communities are informed about current issues impacting their populations.

This guide/checklist was developed by a workgroup brought together by the **Division on Deaf and Hard of Hearing**. Distribution is encouraged. No changes are to be made to this document without the written permission of the DODHH Director. Contact the DODHH at: Victor Building-First Floor, 201 N. Washington Square, Lansing, MI 48909, Phone: 877-499-6232 T/V - FAX: 517-334-6637 – Video Phone IP: DODHH.net