

# Speech and Hearing

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**M**ore people have a hearing loss than any other disability. Hearing loss ranks with arthritis, high blood pressure, and heart disease as one of the four most common health conditions in the United States. The National Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH) posts statistics on deafness on its Web site ([www.shhh.org](http://www.shhh.org)). Its data shows that 28 million of the approximately 52 million people in the United States who have a disability have a hearing loss. This is approximately 1 of every 10 people in the general U.S. population. At age 65, the numbers become one of every three people, and 90 percent of people over 85 have a hearing loss. Of the 28 million who have a hearing loss, 26 million are hard of hearing; the other 2 million are deaf.

A Gallaudet University publication titled *Demographic Aspects of Hearing Impairment: Questions and Answers* (Holt, Hotto, and Cole 1994) indicates that 49 percent of people who are deaf have some hearing in at least one ear, 23 percent cannot hear or understand any speech, and 18 percent have no hearing. More males than females at all ages have hearing impairments, but the percentage of males increases significantly after age 18. European Americans are twice as likely as African Americans or Hispanics to have a hearing loss. Three out of every four persons who had hearing but lost it experienced the loss after age 18. About 5 percent lost their hearing before the age of three.

The National Center for Health Statistics includes a summary of data on national disabilities as part of its *FastStats A to Z* Web site ([www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/disable.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/disable.htm)). The summary estimates that 34 million people have a hearing loss in the United States, and approximately 4.5 million of them use assistive technology devices. The most frequently used devices are hearing aids, amplified telephones, and closed-caption television. Sixty-nine percent of the people using assistive devices for hearing are over the age of 65. Many of these devices, such as a text telephone (TTY), are also used by many of the estimated 2.7 million people in the country who have a speech impairment.

The Wisconsin Bureau for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (BDHH) uses the 8.6 percent estimate (500,000) of the National Center for Health Statistics of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to estimate the number of people in Wisconsin who are deaf and hard of hearing. The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services also maintains data on disabilities in Wisconsin. Their data indicates slightly higher figures for 1997. When interviewed, they estimated that in 1997 there were 519,229 people who were hard of hearing in Wisconsin and 51,403 who were deaf.

## Deafness and the Deaf Community

The “deaf community” is generally considered to include people who are deaf, who are hard of hearing, and who use sign language, as well as their families, friends, and the professionals who work with them. Some people in this community use sign language, but others may communicate in writing. Some may read lips and use speech. The community includes people who are born deaf, people who lost their hearing as children, and adults who become hard of hearing later in life. It also includes people who are blind and deaf.

There is ongoing disagreement within the deaf community, primarily by those who use sign language, over the issue of deafness being perceived as a disability. Many people who are deaf perceive themselves as belonging to a minority group with its own culture and a language other than English. They do not think of

deafness as a disability, a problem, or a condition that requires a medical solution. For them, deafness is a normal and natural condition. They are proud to belong to the deaf community, which meets most of their social needs. They feel they can do everything they want to do, without restrictions caused by disabilities such as mobility limitations or blindness. They object strongly to any suggestion that they need a medical intervention or use of an assistive listening device to be “normal.” They feel their primary difference from the majority culture is the language they share.

Others view deafness as a disability in much the same way as blindness. Some people who are deaf or have a hearing loss do everything they can to distance themselves from the “deaf community.” They may perceive the term *deaf community* as referring only to people who use sign language. Many people who do not want to be included in the deaf community are adults who lost their hearing later in life, or parents who can hear but have children who are deaf. They may consider people who use sign language as having a severe disability or to be extremely different than themselves.

Adults who lose their hearing later in life, and parents who hear and have children who are deaf, tend to perceive deafness as a disability and a condition that if possible should be corrected medically. Parents may choose the hearing culture and community over the deaf culture for their children. The issue of cochlear implants for children is extremely controversial. Parents may feel that implants give their children a chance to hear normally, whereas some members of the deaf community may perceive implants as a mutilation of children who are already normal. Collections on deafness need to be balanced in regard to these differing perspectives.

## Causes of Deafness

There are several common causes of hearing loss. The Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center at Gallaudet University provides information on hearing loss on its Web site ([clerccenter.gallaudet.edu](http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu)). The following are among the known causes of hearing loss:

- Meningitis, the leading cause of hearing loss after birth, for 8.1 percent of all hearing loss cases
- Heredity, the leading known cause of deafness at birth and the cause of deafness for about 13 percent of the U.S. population of students who are deaf
- Complications during pregnancy and delivery such as Rh incompatibility, prematurity, and birth trauma

The most significant advance in preventing hearing loss after birth has been made in regard to reducing the incidence of maternal rubella, an effort started in 1982.

Hearing loss is typically classified as conductive or sensorineural. Conductive loss is caused by a problem in the outer or middle ear that prevents sound from reaching the nerves in the inner ear. Conductive hearing loss can often be reduced or eliminated with medical treatment. The hearing loss may be temporary, such as an infection that causes fluid to build up in the ear. If the loss is of short duration, there is usually no effect on language acquisition. But if it is chronic or repeated, it can affect speech and language development, which in turn may affect educational performance. If the problem cannot be resolved medically and it is long-term, hearing aids are often recommended. The issue is often how loud a sound has to be before it can be heard.

Common causes of conductive hearing loss include

- deformity in the outer- or middle-ear structure,
- ruptured eardrum,
- wax buildup in the outer ear, and
- fluid buildup in the middle ear.

Sensorineural loss is caused by damage to the nerves in the inner ear. It involves both distortions of sound and loudness. Typically, it is permanent and cannot be medically repaired. However, hearing aids can benefit many people who have this type of hearing loss. The eventual use of spoken language for people who have a hearing loss depends on how quickly the loss is diagnosed and addressed. If the loss occurs before a

child acquires spoken language, it is unlikely that language skills will develop normally. If the loss occurs after the child has learned to speak, the child's primary means of communication may remain speech. Many children and adults who are deaf have some residual hearing. The causes before or at birth can involve

- prenatal infections such as rubella, herpes, or syphilis,
- heredity,
- lack of oxygen at birth,
- low birth weight, or
- defects of the head or neck.

Later onset of sensorineural loss can be caused by such things as

- bacterial meningitis,
- exposure to intense or excessive noise,
- physical damage to the head or ear, or
- drugs.

### Number of People in United States Using Assistive Devices for Hearing Loss

Type of Assistive Device	All Ages	0–44 Years	45–65 Years	65+ Years
Any hearing device	4,484,000	439,000	969,000	3,076,000
Hearing aid	4,156,000	370,000	849,000	2,938,000
Amplified telephone	675,000	73,000	175,000	427,000
TTY	104,000	58,000	25,000	21,000
Closed-caption television	141,000	66,000	32,000	43,000
Listening device	106,000	26,000	22,000	58,000
Signaling device	95,000	37,000	23,000	35,000
Interpreter	57,000	27,000	21,000	9,000
Other hearing technology	93,000	28,000	24,000	41,000

*Source:* National Center for Health Statistics (1994).

## Hearing Loss and Literacy

Hearing loss and deafness have serious impacts on literacy, especially if the loss occurs before or as language is developing. When the primary means of communication is sign language, English, with its different grammar structure, must be learned as a second language. There is no data nationally on the reading levels for adults who are deaf or have severe hearing loss. But according to Gallaudet University, the current national mean reading score for 17- and 18-year-old students who are deaf is about the fourth-grade level. Other sources indicate the average is closer to a sixth- or seventh-grade reading level. Either figure shows a significant illiteracy rate within the deaf community.

Although many adults who are deaf can use written English with ease and are very competent, it can be assumed that literacy rates for adults who never attended school, did not have appropriate instruction while in school, or who dropped out will have low literacy skills. Librarians need to understand that written communication may be abbreviated both because of the low literacy levels of many people who are deaf and because of their use of English as a second language.

# Results of the Survey of Library Services to Adults with Special Needs

## Special Needs Survey Questions on Deafness and Hearing Loss

Question	Number of Libraries	
	Responding Yes	Percentage
• Library has added materials in past three years in the area of hearing loss, deafness, or sign language.	174	59%
• Library has closed-captioned videos.	107	37%
• Library staff attended training in the past three years on services for people with a hearing loss or who are deaf.	41	14%
• Library has a brochure that describes special services for people with limited or no hearing.	41	14%
• Library has a TTY (text telephone).	38	13%
• Lights are flashed as routine and emergency announcements are made in the library.	33	11%
• Library Web page has links to information about hearing loss and deafness.	28	10%
• Assistive listening devices are available at board and public meetings and all programs.	26	9%
• Assistive listening devices are available at the service desk.	26	9%
• Library has signed videos.	20	7%
• In the past three years, the library has had a planning process that included people with a hearing loss or who are deaf, or their family members or agency advocates.	18	6%
• A microphone is routinely used at library board meetings and all public programs.	12	4%
• Library has at least one periodical or newsletter intended for people with hearing disabilities.	12	4%

*Note:* In 2002, 293 of Wisconsin's 380 public libraries completed the survey, a 77 percent response rate. See chapter 12 for the complete survey and a summary of the results.

## Barriers to Service

Alex Slappy, superintendent of the Wisconsin School for the Deaf, explained in an interview that language is the barrier that most often prevents people who are deaf from receiving public library services. Because English is often a second language, people who are deaf may not use newspapers as their primary source of information. As a result, they may miss announcements about library programs or services in the newspaper. They may not read posters, which are often one of a library's primary marketing tools. He also pointed out that people who are late deafened tend to shy away from contact with librarians because they cannot speak well or do not want people to know they have a hearing problem. They do not want to be associated with the deaf community or use any of the techniques or assistance offered to people who are deaf.

The Wisconsin BDHH staff identified several barriers that are common in public settings, including public libraries. They described many libraries as not being "deaf friendly." No one on staff is likely to use sign language. The staff may not understand or be sensitive to people who are deaf, have a hearing loss, or have a

speech disability. Communication can be difficult. If staff are not trained to accept and use other than verbal means of communication, people who are deaf may get frustrated, leave, and refuse to return to a public library. There are basic tools such as a TTY, handheld sound amplification devices, and sound amplification devices for meetings and programs that may not be in most public libraries but that are generally needed and routinely used by people who are deaf or hard of hearing or who have speech disorders. Library staff may not know how to arrange for a sign-language interpreter or may not routinely indicate that the service can be arranged. Another barrier can be the lack of captioning services at public meetings and programs.

## Planning and Collaboration

In 1996 the Library Service to the Deaf Forum, a unit of the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies Division (ASCLA) of the American Library Association (ALA), published the *Guidelines for Library and Information Services for the American Deaf Community* (a revision is being planned). These guidelines may be useful in planning services for people who are deaf. Librarians can go to one of many organizations for assistance in identifying local people to help with a planning process. Staff at all of these organizations can make recommendations and help the library recruit people to assist them. Potential contacts include the following:

- BDHH regional coordinators
- Independent living centers
- Teachers for students who are deaf or hard of hearing in local schools
- Staff who work for an interpreting agency or business
- Wisconsin Educational Services Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, located at the Wisconsin School for the Deaf in Delavan
- Wisconsin Association for the Deaf
- Wisconsin SHHH organization
- Family members of people who are deaf

Any planning process intended to address the needs of people who are deaf or hard of hearing should anticipate the need for the services of a sign-language interpreter, assistive listening aids, and perhaps real-time transcribing to help these volunteers participate fully in the process.

The planning process should be sensitive both to people who consider themselves part of the deaf community and to those who have a hearing loss but do not consider themselves part of that culture. People in the latter group may be uncomfortable being asked to participate in a group that includes people who use sign language because they do not want to have their needs considered in the context of people who are deaf. The needs of both groups are different.

## Staff Training

Libraries cannot claim to have credibility with the deaf community without owning and using a TTY. *TTY* originally referred to a Teletype Writer. When portable TTY machines were developed, the acronym TDD, which stands for telecommunication device for the deaf, was adopted. This term is no longer used. Because people who are not deaf often use these devices for various reasons, standard usage reverted to TTY, although the initials no longer stand for any particular words. It is simply the preferred name for any telephone that uses text.

Training to use this telephone device can be helpful to all staff who work with the public, letting them recognize the TTY signal and accept voice requests for its use. Even if a library owns a TTY, library staff need to be familiar with the Wisconsin Telecommunications Relay for the Deaf system as well, because some

people use this system to make and receive calls. The system allows a TTY user to be called by anyone using a voice telephone. Check the introductory pages of the local phone directory for more information. The number for the relay system in Wisconsin is 1-800-947-6644, or simply 711, which was recently established as the universal number to call anywhere in the United States to be connected to the local relay system.

One interviewee suggested that if the library finds that staff skills with a TTY or the relay service are not used often enough to keep staff in practice, staff should practice by making calls to other libraries that have a TTY. They can also use the relay system to place calls to other libraries. This keeps staff in both libraries in practice. One problem related to the use of a TTY is the need to check for messages if an answering system is part of the TTY. If other patrons can leave messages, then people who use a TTY should also be able to leave a message and get a response in a timely fashion. Some TTYs have message-recording capabilities.

The ability to function in the hearing world depends heavily on the ability to speak and use English. Many people who use sign language encounter communication barriers in a public library. In general, librarians can do some basic things when they need to communicate with a patron who is deaf or has a hearing loss. Smile and indicate a willingness to be helpful. It is useful to know a few words or phrases in sign language—“Hello,” “Can I help you?” “Thank you.” Ask them how they prefer to communicate. People who use sign language are experienced in meeting and interacting with people who do not use their language. Let the patrons choose their preferred method of communication. Often, it is in writing, so librarians can offer paper and pencil. The writing style may seem abbreviated, much as it might for anyone who uses English as a second language.

It is also helpful if staff understand that adults who have been deaf for a long time or all their lives are typically more comfortable communicating in writing than are seniors who have recently lost their hearing. Adults with a recent loss may be highly self-conscious and want to hide their disability. They would not want to communicate with paper and pencil. They may avoid asking questions or asking for assistance or may avoid even having a conversation with anyone in a library setting.

It helps if librarians face the person and not turn their heads when talking. They can shorten the distance between the speaker and listener and keep hands away from the face. Moving away from background noises to a quieter area often makes communication easier for people who have some hearing. It is also beneficial if staff stay in an area that is well lit so that the other person can clearly see facial expressions and lips. Rephrasing for clarification is often a useful technique. Staff can be encouraged to be patient, to try to use a little more animated expression than usual, and to slow their speech slightly if they normally talk fast. There is of course no reason to raise the volume of the voice when talking to someone who has no hearing. A list of additional tips to use when communicating with someone who is deaf or has a hearing loss is included in the section “Tips for Communicating with Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing People” later in this chapter.

Staff training can include basic operation of a microphone or sound system for programs or meetings, as well as any assistive listening devices the library may own. Policies and procedures for requesting and arranging a sign-language interpreter are important elements to cover in staff training sessions.

There are several sources of free training available to librarians:

- Ultratec, a Wisconsin company and a major manufacturer of TTYs, will train staff in the use of a TTY and assist in the selection of an appropriate device.
- TRS, the Telecommunication Relay Services, operated by Hamilton Communication Wisconsin, manages the Wisconsin Rely System for the Deaf and offers free training in using the system.
- TDI is Telecommunication for the Deaf, Inc., Silver Spring, Maryland, and provides various types of training related to serving people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- The Bureau for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and its regional offices offer free training for any organization on various issues related to deafness and how best to interact with and serve patrons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Contact information for those agencies is included in the References section for this chapter.

## Collections and Services

Those interviewed for this book universally stressed that the library should own a TTY, that staff need to know how to use it, and that it must be made available for patrons in the library to make outgoing calls. Another suggestion was to have available for patrons very simple written instructions for routine procedures. It is easier for some people to read instructions than to follow voiced instructions. Examples include signing up to use a computer or to reserve a meeting room. Very basic sentence structure and simplified language is appropriate. These instructions can also be useful to others who use English as their second language or who cannot read well.

Public libraries can provide many materials that are of special interest to people who are deaf. An up-to-date collection in both print and media on deafness and the deaf culture is important. Materials written with simple vocabulary, but of interest to adults, are typically used by adult new readers or middle and high school students with learning disabilities, but they can also be helpful for some adults who are deaf. Closed-captioned videos, videos that are signed as well as voiced, videos that teach sign language, and videos intended to help parents who can hear teach their children who are deaf to read are all excellent choices for inclusion in the library's collection. Specialized videos should be labeled to identify their special feature and to make them easy to find.

Many people who are deaf do not have computers at home, do not know how to use them, and may be unaware the library has them. Computer classes for people who are deaf are a needed service. Library collections can include catalogs for Harris Communication and Gallaudet University. Librarians can create Web page links to many of the state and national organizations that serve people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Public libraries can also provide a much-needed service by telling families about resources for people who are deaf and hard of hearing. The two most frequent opportunities to provide information are when parents first learn their child is deaf and when adult children are seeking assistance for their parents who have lost their hearing. The agency staff interviewed noted that there is a significant need for general referrals because doctors who perceive that there is nothing medically they can do often do not know about the support services and therefore do not make referrals for their patients.

## Accessible Buildings and Services

A TTY is most useful when it is placed at a public service desk rather than in a staff work area or office. Signage makes people aware of its availability. If it is not convenient to allow patrons to use the TTY at the service desk, it can be made available to be taken to a pay phone, or the pay phone can have a TTY feature. Pay phones should also have a sound amplification feature. A second way that some people may want to communicate with public libraries is via e-mail, so it is helpful if the library's e-mail address is readily available.

Programs should be held in acoustically friendly rooms. Use of a microphone at all public meetings and programs can be made routine. Most people who have a hearing loss need only to have the volume increased. A microphone often helps everyone in the audience, not just those with hearing losses. It is an example of an accommodation that has a much wider impact than for one targeted group. Microphones are not typically perceived as adaptive technology for people with disabilities, but they are an example of a very basic accommodation.

Librarians may want to consider the purchase and use of a closed sound system or loop system. A loop system is usually a part of a permanent room design, whereas some closed systems are portable. Both involve the use of a device to amplify sound only for people who wear the receiving device. Typically, the system is designed to work with or without a personal hearing aid.

Several people interviewed stressed how important it is for a public library to model the use of adaptive equipment and to make it a natural part of every program. This helps raise community awareness of the

technologies that are available and helps promote community acceptance of them. In this way, the library becomes an advocate for people who have a hearing loss. Libraries that have sound loop systems may want to post a sign in the room indicating the equipment is available and leave the equipment in the room at all times. People passing by the equipment as they enter the room for a program or meeting are much more inclined to ask to use it than they might be if they have to make a special request.

Library policy and procedures often explain how to request accommodations such as a sign-language interpreter. Training to help all staff understand how to respond to such a request and how to arrange for an interpreter is needed. Real-time captioning (RTC), or communication access real-time translation (CART), is becoming a popular way to keep people who are deaf actively aware and involved in public meetings and programs. This technology involves the use of a computer, a stenotype machine, and real-time captioning software. The process provides real-time text of what is being said in a meeting or program. The person who does the typing should be a certified stenocaptioner.

To use these technologies, a personal transcriber sits with the person who is deaf and types the conversation onto a laptop computer. Alternatively, the discussion is projected onto a screen for the whole audience. This technology is used routinely at large conventions when everyone in the room has a hard time hearing what is being said, even though there may not be anyone in the audience who has a hearing loss.

## Marketing

It is extremely important to advertise and promote library accommodations rather than wait for a request. Stationery, flyers, reports, and other publications that list the library's phone number can also list the TTY number. The regular number is often followed by the word "voice" in parenthesis, and "(TTY)" follows the second number. If the same number is used for both, the notation is often "(voice/TTY)."

Interviewees advised that the best way to reach people who are deaf is by mail or in writing. The Wisconsin Association of the Deaf offered to post library information on its Web page. Interviewees also advised getting publicity out at least three weeks in advance to give the people time to request an interpreter and to give the library time to make the arrangements.

Another suggestion for marketing library services to the deaf community was to have a booth at the state conferences, conventions, and forums for deaf and hard-of-hearing people that are held around the state. The regional offices for the BDHH can help identify local networks. The BDHH has an electronic newsletter and is willing to announce library services in that posting.

If the library is just starting to offer services to the deaf community, one way to generate interest could be to offer a series of presentations on various aspects of deafness and community services. Libraries can ensure that their promotions reach the targeted audience by asking the regional offices of the BDHH to help with advertising and with selecting topics that will be of interest to the deaf community.

## References: Speech and Hearing

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## Additional Resources

### Periodicals

- Deaf Life*. <[www.msmproductionsltd.com](http://www.msmproductionsltd.com)>. The nation's premier independent slick-format deaf monthly and the number-one magazine of the deaf community. It is the most widely read deaf-oriented publication in the United States. It is published by the National Association of the Deaf.
- Deaf Watch Newsletter* and *Silent49er News Wire*. <<http://members.tripod.com/~deafwatch/deaf.htm>>. This is a personal news service created and managed by Richard Roehm. It indexes news articles of interest to people who are deaf.
- Hearing Loss: The Journal of Self Help for Hard of Hearing People*. <[www.shhh.org](http://www.shhh.org)>. A bimonthly magazine about hearing loss. This is a publication of the national SHHH organization.
- HIP Magazine*. <[www.hipmag.org](http://www.hipmag.org)>. A publication for children and teens ages 8–14 who are deaf or hard of hearing, and their parents, teachers, and caregivers.
- Odyssey*. <<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/Odyssey/>>. A magazine for parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children and their teachers. It is published by the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center at Gallaudet University.

### National Organizations

- About Deafness/Hard of Hearing. <[deafness.about.com/mbody.htm](http://deafness.about.com/mbody.htm)>. An Internet index to topics about deafness.
- Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. <[www.agbell.org](http://www.agbell.org)>; 202-337-5221 (TTY); 3417 Volta PL NW, Washington, DC 20007. A resource center on hearing loss and spoken language approaches and related issues with books, brochures, instructional materials, videos, CDs, and audiocassettes related to hearing loss. It has many resources available on-line.
- Hearing Dogs. <[www.agbell.org/sections/dhhs/resources/dogs.html](http://www.agbell.org/sections/dhhs/resources/dogs.html)>. Information on service dogs for people who are deaf.
- American Sign Language Access. <[www.ASLAccess.org](http://www.ASLAccess.org)>; 703-799-8733; 703-799-4896 (TTY); 4217 Adrienne Drive, Alexandria, VA 22309. A source for videos in which the narration is both voiced and signed.
- The Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA). <[www.alda.org](http://www.alda.org)>; 877-907-1738; 708-358-0135 (TTY); 1131 Lake Street, #204, Oak Park, IL 60301. Serves the needs of late-deafened people through education, advocacy, and role models.
- Captioned Media Program, National Association of the Deaf. <[www.cfv.org/about.asp](http://www.cfv.org/about.asp)>; 864-585-1778; 864-585-2617 (TTY); 1447 E. Main Street, Spartanburg, SC 29307. Offers free captioned videos by mail, including to public libraries.
- Deaf Mall. <[www.deafmall.net](http://www.deafmall.net)>. An electronic mall that offers gifts and information on events, travel, interpreters, and technology, as well as chat rooms for people who are deaf.
- DeafZone. <[www.deafzone.com](http://www.deafzone.com)>. Web site that has numerous links to resources for people who are deaf.
- Gallaudet University. <[www.gallaudet.edu](http://www.gallaudet.edu)>; 202-651-5000 (voice/tty); 800 Florida Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002. The only liberal arts university in the world designed exclusively for deaf and hard-of-hearing students.
- Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center. <<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu>>; 202-651-5051; 800 Florida Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002. This center, which is part of Gallaudet University, strives to improve the quality of education for deaf and hard-of-hearing children and youth from birth through age 21.
- National Association of the Deaf (NAD). <[www.nad.org](http://www.nad.org)>; 301-587-1788; 301-587-1789 (TTY); 814 Thayer Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910-4500. Programs include advocacy, captioned media, certification of American Sign Language profes-

sionals, information, legal assistance, policy development and research, public awareness, and youth leadership development.

Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH). <[www.shhh.org](http://www.shhh.org)>; 301-657-2248; 301-657-2249 (TTY); 7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1200, Bethesda, MD 20814. A consumer educational organization devoted to the welfare and interests of those who cannot hear well, their relatives, and friends.

## Wisconsin Organizations

Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. <[www.coperesources.net/iris/fox0ilyjj.htm](http://www.coperesources.net/iris/fox0ilyjj.htm)>; 414-790-1040; 3505 N. 124 Street, Brookfield, WI 53005. Provides rehabilitation services, speech and language therapy, audiology services, independent living services, and a parent-child program for people who are deaf or hard of hearing in the Milwaukee area.

Wisconsin Association of the Deaf (WAD). <[www.wi-deaf.org](http://www.wi-deaf.org)>. Contact is the current president, Linda Russell, 262-724-4244; WAD president, P.O. Box 397, Darien, WI 53114. Ensures that a comprehensive and coordinated system of resources is accessible to Wisconsin people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Wisconsin Council of the Deaf. <[www.dhhcouncil.state.wi.us](http://www.dhhcouncil.state.wi.us)>. An advisory to the Bureau for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The Web site lists the current council members, their contact information, the agenda, and minutes of their meetings.

Wisconsin Deaf Sports Club (WDSC). <[www.wi-deafsports.org](http://www.wi-deafsports.org)>. Contact is through the Web site. Sponsors outings and social events for people who are deaf and who enjoy sports. It coordinates teams and has affiliate clubs throughout the state.

Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, Bureau for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (BDHH). <[www.dhfs.state.wi.us/sensory/](http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/sensory/)>; 608-266-3118; 1 W. Wilson Street, P.O. Box 7851, Madison, WI 53707-7851. Provides information and referral services, support to individuals, and service providers and training. BDHH manages a telecommunications assistance program, manages certification in communication and sign language areas, and publishes a newsletter. It also maintains a contact list of sign-language interpreters.

Interpreters' Directory. <[www.dhfs.state.wi.us/sensory/WITA/InterpreterDirectory.htm](http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/sensory/WITA/InterpreterDirectory.htm)>.

Regional offices of the BDHH:

Northeastern Region. 800-228-2637 (voice/TTY) or 920-448-5295 (voice/TTY); 200 N. Jefferson, Suite 311, Green Bay, WI 54301-5191. Counties covered include Brown, Calumet, Door, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marquette, Marinette, Menomonie, Oconto, Outagamie, Shawano, Sheboygan, Waupaca, Waushara, and Winnebago.

Northern Region. 715-842-1211 (TTY); 2801 N. Seventh Street, Wausau, WI 54401-3281. Counties covered include Ashland, Bayfield, Florence, Forest, Iron, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Price, Sawyer, Taylor, Vilas, and Wood.

Southeastern 1 Region. 800-321-2137 (voice/TTY); 262-548-5858 (TTY); 141 NW Barstow Street, Room 157, Waukesha, WI 53187. Counties covered include Jefferson, Kenosha, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha.

Southeastern 2, Milwaukee Region. 414-302-2767 (TTY); 912 Hawley Road, Milwaukee, WI 53213. County covered is Milwaukee.

Southern Region. 608-243-5733; 608-243-5732 (TTY); 2917 International Lane, Suite 230, Madison, WI 53704-3135. Counties covered include Adams, Columbia, Crawford, Dane, Dodge, Grant, Green, Iowa, Juneau, La Fayette, Richland, Rock, and Sauk.

Western Region. 715-836-2107; 715-836-3085 (TTY); 610 Gibson Street, Suite 1, Eau Claire, WI 54701. Counties covered include Barron, Buffalo, Burnett, Clark, Chippewa, Douglas, Dunn, Eau Claire, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pierce, Pepin, Polk, Rusk, St. Croix, Trempealeau, Vernon, and Washburn.

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. <[www.dwd.state.wi.us](http://www.dwd.state.wi.us)>; 608-266-3131; 608-267-0477 (TTY); 201 E. Washington Avenue, P.O. Box 7946, Madison, WI 53707-7946.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. <[www.dwd.state.wi.us/dvr/](http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/dvr/)>; 608-243-5633; 608-243-5681 (TTY); 2917 International Lane, Madison, WI 53707; Obtains, maintains, and improves employment for people with all types of disabilities through assessment, career searches, job placement assistance, and job coaches.

Wisconsin Hispanic Association of the Deaf (WHAD), El Asociación de los Sordos Hispanos en Wisconsin. <[www.geocities.com/Heartland/Ranch/6142/whad.html](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Ranch/6142/whad.html)>; 414-647-1642 (voice/TTY); 1539 S. Pearl Street, Milwaukee, WI 53204. Serves Hispanic people who are deaf and live in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. <[www.wisrid.org](http://www.wisrid.org)>. Contact is through the current chair, Laurie Sanheim, 414-727-2066; 1431 S. Seventy-sixth Street, Apt. 4, West Allis, WI 53214. Furthers the profession of interpretation of American Sign Language. The organization maintains a listing of members and credentials.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. <[www.dpi.state.wi.us](http://www.dpi.state.wi.us)>; 800-441-4563; 125 S. Webster Street, P.O. Box 7841, Madison, WI 53707-7841.

Blind and Deaf-Blind Education. <[www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsea/een/vision.html](http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsea/een/vision.html)>; 608-266-3522. Provides supervisory and consultation services to local educational agencies and private schools serving approximately 1,400 children with visual and dual sensory impairments.

Deaf and Hearing Impairments. <[www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsea/een/hi\\_deaf.html](http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsea/een/hi_deaf.html)>; 608-266-7097. Provides supervisory and consultations services to local educational agencies and private schools serving children with hearing loss.

Wisconsin School for the Deaf. <[www.wsd.k12.wi.us](http://www.wsd.k12.wi.us)>; 877-973-3323; 877-973-3324 (TTY); 309 W. Walworth Avenue, Delavan, WI 53115. A state-managed residential school for children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Wisconsin Educational Services Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WESPDHH). 877-973-3323; 877-973-3324 (TTY); 309 W. Walworth Avenue, Delavan, WI 53115. A new outreach program offered by the Wisconsin School for the Deaf to help extend its services to the whole state. The center will help school districts develop curriculum and instructional materials, provide additional access to educational technology and materials, teach American Sign Language, and provide training and in-service to teachers.

Wisconsin State Association of SHHH (WI-SHHH). <[www.wi-shhh.org](http://www.wi-shhh.org)>; 920-648-3137 (TTY). Contact is primarily through the Web site or the national SHHH organization. Creates awareness of hearing loss within Wisconsin through awareness, education, and self-help.

All Web sites listed in this section were accessed in November 2002.



## Tips for Communicating with Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing People

- Be sure the person knows you are talking to him or her (touch his or her arm, say his or her name). Face the person directly and stand close enough for him or her to see, and to hear. If the person wears a hearing aid, do not try to talk into the person's ear piece or lean so close that he or she cannot see your face. Even a slight turn of the head can obscure the person's vision. Other distracting factors can include beards and mustaches.
- Ordinarily, speak in a normal tone and volume (but if a little volume or projection will help, then adjust accordingly).
- Use normal enunciation; do not shout. Speak a little more slowly if you are a fast talker.
- Be sure the light is adequate and falls on your face, not on the other person's face.
- If the person does not understand you the first time, try to rephrase your statements (for example, "What is your address?" could become "Where do you live?"). Not all people who have a hearing loss can read lips, and even the best speech readers miss words.
- Realize that the person may have special difficulty in groups or noisy places. Make an effort to include the person. If necessary, move to quieter surroundings. Perhaps in certain situations, you may wish to take notes for the person.
- Do not talk with cigarettes, pipes, food, and so on in your mouth or cover your mouth with hands or other objects when talking.
- Beware of talking while laughing. A laugh can disrupt speech reading altogether.
- Be patient with the person.
- Do not make the person feel "stupid" or "helpless" (sometimes this is done unconsciously by the tone of voice or expressions).
- Try to show facial expressions and body expressions when speaking. It is not necessary to be a pantomime expert to do this.

These tips are based on those from the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, Bureau for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.



## Getting Started with Little Money and Time: Speech and Hearing

The following are some ideas for public libraries to use when designing services for people with speech and hearing problems.

### BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

- Greet and smile at everyone who comes into the library. If staff are aware of a patron who is deaf or has a hearing loss, wave a hello as it is voiced.
- Train staff to flash the lights every time they make an announcement. Make this a routine procedure every evening to announce that the library is closing, even if staff people walk through the building and tell people who may not hear the announcement. This is a universal alerting signal for people who are deaf and hard of hearing. Use it.

### STAFF TRAINING

- Remind staff that if a person who uses sign language approaches them to ask for assistance, the first step is to ask verbally how they would like to communicate. They will likely indicate that they can read lips or that they will use paper and pencil. Let the patrons choose the method they prefer to use. They may signal their preference by pretending to hold a pen and paper and write.
- Arrange with the regional office of the BDHH for free staff training on how to interact with people who are deaf, how to use a TTY, and how to make and receive a call from the Wisconsin Telecommunication Relay for the Deaf. Review procedures for requesting and hiring a sign-language interpreter.
- Learn a few basic words in sign language. “Thank you” is an easy one. “Can I help you?” is an important phrase.

### COLLECTIONS AND SERVICES

- Weed the collection of out-of-date materials on deafness, and use review sources to identify current materials.

### ACCESSIBLE BUILDINGS AND SERVICES

- A public library will not have credibility with the deaf community until it has a TTY. Local service groups that have a special interest in disabilities may be willing to purchase a TTY for the library. Lions Clubs and the Knights of Columbus have a special interest in people with disabilities, but another community group may be willing to take this on as a short-term project. Make a few phone calls, explain the need, and ask for a one-time-only donation of a TTY.
- If the library has a microphone or an assistive listening system, make setting up the equipment a routine part of preparing for a meeting or program. Use them or have them out, even if no one has requested them.

### MARKETING

- If the library has a TTY, look over all stationery, brochures, business cards, and other printed items and make sure the TTY number appears everywhere the regular library number is printed.
- Review printing procedures for every library program and meeting notice to ensure that accommodations are offered along with instructions on how to request them.
- Make plans to celebrate Better Hearing and Speech Month ([www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org)) and National Stuttering Awareness Week ([www.stuttersfa.org](http://www.stuttersfa.org)), both in May, and National Deaf Awareness Month ([www.dhfs.org](http://www.dhfs.org)).

state.wi.us/news/pressreleases/DeafAware.htm) in September. Put up a display of materials on deafness and resources for parents of deaf children and adult children whose parents are losing their hearing. Host a family program that is signed, even if no one has requested signing. Hire a performer who can tell a story in sign as well as voice, or a singer who includes signs for the songs. Better yet, hire a performer who is deaf. Host a program that demonstrates the special tools people who are deaf use every day.

All Web pages listed here were accessed in November 2002.