

***Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the  
Hard of Hearing***

***Quality Assurance Task Force 2007***

## **A-1. Assistive Technology**

**Finding #1:** Hearing aids and other assistive listening devices for persons who are Hard of Hearing are costly.

**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- Hearing aids can correct hearing loss in approximately 95% of cases, according to a 1999 report from the Better Hearing Institute.
- Digital models cost between \$1,700 and \$4,500.
- Six out of seven hard of hearing persons do not use a hearing aid, according to an estimate by the National Council on Aging.
- Only hearing aids are not covered by Arizona's assistive technology lemon law.
- Arizona Medicaid prohibits hearing aid coverage for adults.

**Recommendation #1.1:** Lobby for legislation creation.

**Recommendation #1.2:** Secure funding sources for community-based services to provide low-cost or loaner equipment.

**Recommendation #1.3:** Advocate for coverage of hearing aids and other assistive listening devices by insurance carriers.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- In 2007 the Arizona State Legislature passed SB 1348, requiring Audiologists and Hearing Aid Dispensers to educate consumers about telecoil technology and about the Arizona Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program.
- Telephone technology through the AZTEDP can offer some assistance in the absence of other affordable devices in the home and work environments. Demonstration sites have been expanded and now reach more rural populations.
- The AzRATED Board has made continued improvements in the functioning of AZTEDP. In 2007 a marketing push was implemented to recruit more AzRATED members and to expand visibility of this Board.

## **A-2. Assistive Technology**

**Finding #2:** Assistive technologies for persons who are Deaf-Blind are too costly for personal purchase.

**Population Data:**

- More than 93, 000 Americans are Deaf-Blind.
- Arizona has about 1,500 Deaf-Blind residents.
- A 1999 study reported 118 Deaf-Blind children in Arizona.

**Context:**

- In 2002, a basic telephone handset costs approximately \$10; a basic TTY \$249; and a Braille-capable TTY \$5,840.
- Comparison shopping is rarely possible as assistive technology devices are not mass-produced.
- IDEA requires school districts in Arizona to provide assistive technology devices and services to individuals who are Deaf-Blind in accordance with a written IEP.
- The Assistive Technology Lemon Law was enacted only in 1998, after approximately 30 other states passed similar legislation.
- When availability of assistive technology is not the issue, funding often is.

**Recommendation #2.1:** Secure funding to provide persons of all ages who are Deaf-Blind with scalable assistive technologies.

**Recommendation #2.2:** Secure funding for training on and support for assistive technology available to persons who are Deaf-Blind.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- Arizona Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (AzTEDP) provides most popular telecommunications devices specifically tailored for DeafBlind consumers. In 2007 new equipment, called PACMATE, was included in the AzTEDP inventory.
- AZTEDP offers training to DeafBlind individuals receiving equipment.
- ACDHH presented the needs of the DeafBlind to the Department of Economic Security (DES) along with a request to reevaluate screening criteria that appeared to be biased against DeafBlind individuals.
- ACDHH provided seed money to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) of DES to establish funding to create a DeafBlind Coordinator position

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- that will provide direct services to DeafBlind citizens as well as educate professionals within DES on the needs of the DeafBlind including assistive technology needs. However, the project did not go through.
- The DeafBlind Task Force has been active in updating ACDHH on available sources of support for the DeafBlind.

### **A-3. Assistive Technology**

**Finding #3:** Persons who are Hard of Hearing are often unaware of or untrained on available telecommunication technologies.

**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- Current telecommunication options are more extensive than those of 10 years ago.
- Telecommunication technologies can create solutions to communication barriers that affect issues at home, in the workplace, and between relationships.
- The Arizona Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program is a statewide program that offers free devices to persons with hearing loss.
- The Arizona Relay Service is an around-the-clock state-funded service that relay calls for persons who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Speech-Impaired, and Hearing.

**Recommendation #3.1:** Expand the staff of the Arizona Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program.

**Recommendation #3.2:** Establish telecommunication equipment demonstration sites throughout the state.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- AzTEDP added an administrative assistant staff member.
- AzTEDP partnered with Northern Arizona University and contracted with several demonstrations sites around the state for greater ease-of-access to consumers in rural areas. Demo sites are located in Phoenix, Flagstaff, Yuma, Tucson and Tuba City. These five-year contracts add stability to the program.

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- Listing of AZTEDP demo sites can now be found online at [www.acdhh.org](http://www.acdhh.org). The website has also been updated to include more detailed information about AzTEDP.
- As a result of the NAU contract monthly demonstration sites have been established in Mesa, Sun City and Sun City West locations.
- Articles focusing on AZTEDP offerings and demonstration sites have been published in area senior magazines.
- AzTEDP staff members have appeared on Community View throughout the year.

#### **A-4. Assistive Technology**

**Finding #4:** State resources on cochlear implants are limited.

**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- The majority of information on the cochlear implant is from medical providers, not community service providers.
- There are no activity groups for children with a cochlear implant.
- Cochlear implants cost as much as \$40,000 each.
- Schools and community organizations do not have support services especially for persons with a cochlear implant.

**Recommendation #4.1:** Create an information packet on the cochlear implant.

**Recommendation #4.2:** Develop a referral directory of resources on the cochlear implant.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH has informational packets and a video about cochlear implants. Packages are available to audiologists and other healthcare professionals around the state. Packet includes a referral directory of resources on cochlear implants as well.
- During Better Hearing and Speech Month, ACDHH partners with the local HLAA chapter to distribute information and education on cochlear implants.

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- The agency collaborates with professionals in the field of cochlear implant technology and surgery to offer informational events and support services to educate consumers and service providers.
- ACDHH has plans to host focus groups with cochlear implant companies.
- ACDHH created a media packet with information on cochlear implants.
- ACDHH received both print and broadcast media coverage for the Executive Director's personal journey of receiving a cochlear implant. This story received statewide coverage over several months' time.

## **A-5. Assistive Technology**

**Finding #5:** The public is still largely ignorant of existing accommodations.

**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- The Arizona Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program, around since 1986, is a statewide program that offers free devices to persons with hearing loss.
- The Arizona Relay Service was established in 1987 and offers an around-the-clock state-funded service that relay calls for persons who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Speech-Impaired, and Hearing.
- Training and informational materials are often not captioned.
- Transportation hubs and businesses such as hotels are not always accessible as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

**Recommendation #5.1:** Promote awareness of Arizona Relay Service and Arizona Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program to state agencies and businesses.

**Recommendation #5.2:** Promote awareness of available communication accommodations for public facilities through demonstrations, to include public TTY machines, hotel room kits, and open captioning at theatres.

**Recommendation #5.3:** Develop a resource guide on available accommodations.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH promotes the agency's services and programs through a number of booths and presentations statewide.

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- ACDHH compiles and distributes a "Communications Accessibility Directory" to hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living centers, and medical offices.
- Information is also provided by ACDHH to police departments, among other public entities.
- A media campaign to promote awareness of ACDHH and resources continues to prove very successful.
- Community View has expanded its viewership and is currently being aired in most parts of the state.
- ACDHH contracted with an outside marketing firm to promote visibility of Relay.
- ACDHH contracted with new Relay provider, Hamilton Communications. A new outreach person was also hired to promote Relay.
- A webpage is under construction to provide a directory of "looped" public places around the state.
- ACDHH is working with local movie theaters to provide better access to assistive technology and captioning.

## **B-1. Communication Access**

**Finding #6:** Persons who are Deaf encounter numerous communication barriers.

**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.

**Context:**

- Communication at home, schools, and medical offices are often compromised.
- One in four houses in Arizona is Spanish-Speaking and a language divide is common between parents who speak Spanish and children who use sign language.
- Research has shown benefits of an immersive sign language environment at home and at school for children who are Deaf.
- The shortage of qualified interpreters in Arizona is also a nationwide problem.

**Recommendation #6.1:** Increase the pool of certified interpreters in the state

**Recommendation #6.2:** Make emergency communication and notifications available to persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (see Finding #9).

**Recommendation #6.3:** Ensure a least restrictive environment for students who are Deaf through the passage of a "Students with Hearing Loss Bill of Rights."

**Recommendation #6.4:** Advocate for early exposure to sign language for children who are Deaf.

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**Recommendation #6.5:** Promote the use of sign language at home by parents of children who are Deaf.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH has implanted state licensure for sign language interpreters.
- The ACDHH Library has several titles to introduce sign language to young children, including “Baby Signs” and “Signing Time.”
- ACDHH is partnering with the Arizona Department of Emergency Management to create a voluntary database of contact information for the deaf and hard of hearing.
- ACDHH is exploring technology-based emergency alert options for the deaf and hard of hearing, possibly in partnership with ADEM.
- ACDHH participates on the Arizona Emergency Services Task Force for person with Disabilities to advocate for the needs of the deaf.
- ACDHH staff participated in a mock state of emergency event and provided feedback on strategies to best assist citizens who are deaf, deaf-blind and hard of hearing during emergency
- Technology on a national level has begun to provide for emergency notification services for deaf citizens.

**B-2. Communication Access**

**Finding #7:** Quality interpreting services are scarce.

**Population Data:**

- As of 2003, less than 90 interpreters in Arizona had state certification.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- The shortage of qualified interpreters in Arizona is also a nationwide problem.
- Persons who are Deaf depend on interpreters for communication facilitation in the workplace, when receiving medical services, and when receiving social services.
- Less than 20 interpreters in Arizona are qualified to work in legal settings such as courtrooms and police stations.
- The current ratio of certified interpreters to consumers who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Arizona is approximately 1: 4,600.

**Recommendation #7.1:** Increase the quality of current interpreters by including consumers in their continuing education and mentoring.

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**Recommendation #7.2:** Standardize curricula at interpreter training programs, to meet or exceed national standards.

**Recommendation #7.3:** Establish minimum standards for American Sign Language instructors teaching interpreting students.

**Recommendation #7.4:** Require mentoring and internships from interpreting students.

**Recommendation #7.5:** Implement a four-year interpreter training program that confers bachelor degrees.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH has implemented a partnership with Phoenix College to increase the quality of interpreting students and to provide mentoring opportunities.
- ACDHH is looking into a proposal by AzRID to promote mentoring of interpreting students.
- The agency has begun planning an Interpreter Campaign to promote awareness of the profession, provide support to professionals and focus on efforts to recruit individuals into the field. The staff has participated in three national events and advertised the recruitment efforts. The public relations plan included the video taping of freelance interpreters and referral agency owners with their stories about the benefits of working in AZ. Diverse groups within the deaf community were also video taped giving their accounts for the need of more interpreters from diverse cultures. This approach has been very well received.
- Several meetings have taken place to begin preparing the rules for the minimum standards for the certification of American Sign Language instructors.

**B-3. Communication Access**

**Finding #8:** Emergency measures and information are not always accessible to persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.
- Arizona has approximately 1,500 Deaf-Blind residents.

**Context:**

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- Emergency broadcasts and live reports are often not captioned.
- Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing cannot receive notifications through the radio or public announcement systems and rely on alternative media and friends, co-workers, and neighbors.
- An absence of information or misinformation creates dependence from persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing on emergency response personnel.

**Recommendation #8.1:** Establish a coalition consisting of emergency response personnel to periodically review readiness and communication procedures.

**Recommendation #8.2:** Ensure roadside TTY access and at all other public facilities.

**Recommendation #8.3:** Send out constant reminders of the FCC Rule of Order on emergency broadcasting to TV networks.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH, through its partnership with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), advises the state emergency planning committee on issues related to the deaf and hard of hearing.
- The Deaf Specialist continues to serve as a committee member of the 9-1-1 advisory group attends monthly meetings to gather and share information.
- ACDHH is partnering with the Arizona Department of Emergency Management to create a voluntary database of contact information for the deaf and hard of hearing.
- ACDHH is exploring technology-based emergency alert options for the deaf and hard of hearing, possibly in partnership with ADEM.

**B-4. Communication Access**

**Finding #9:** Spanish-speaking persons who are Hard of Hearing have no access to public information on hearing loss resources.

**Population Data:**

- The 2000 U.S. Census estimated one out of five Arizona households is Spanish-speaking.
- Latinos make up more than a quarter of Arizona's total population.
- The incidence of hearing loss is the same among the Latino community as with Arizonans in general.

**Context:**

- Informational materials on hearing loss are often available only in English.

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- There is a language divide among Latinos who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Latinos who are Deaf use American Sign Language while Latinos who are Hard of Hearing speak in Spanish.
- The Latino population is underrepresented in membership organizations organized by persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- There are no programs that are designed specifically for Spanish-language speaking persons who are Hard of Hearing.

**Recommendation #9.1:** Coordinate an annual media campaign targeted at Spanish-speaking persons who are Hard of Hearing.

**Responsible Agents:**

- ACDHH has Spanish-speaking staff available for consumers.
- A Spanish-language web page is under construction for the ACDHH website.
- Several brochures and a factsheet are being translated into Spanish.

## **B-5. Communication Access**

**Finding #10:** Persons who are Deaf-Blind face severe communication barriers.

**Population Data:**

- More than 93,000 Americans are Deaf-Blind.
- Arizona has approximately 1,500 Deaf-Blind residents.

**Context:**

- Those not born Deaf-Blind rely on technology to continue using their preferred communication avenues.
- Those born Deaf-Blind or progress into Deaf-Blindness usually have difficulty finding adaptive technologies that allow them to stay current with developments.
- Support Services Providers facilitate communication and provide environmental cues for individuals who are Deaf-Blind but are in short supply.
- Sign language interpreters familiar with Deaf-Blindness terminology are few.

**Recommendation #10.1:** Advocate for enhancements of current technologies such as two-way communication devices with Braille/digital text/large print/voice output capabilities, alerting devices, magnification devices, and tactile-based caller ID.

**Recommendation #10.2:** Enforce minimum accessibility requirements to the Internet.

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**Recommendation #10.3:** Encourage social events to arrange for DeafBlind accessibility, including Support Service Providers and transportation.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- The DeafBlind task force meets on a regular basis to discuss issues related to DeafBlind consumers.
- ACDHH and RSA continue to work together to advocate for the needs of the DeafBlind.
- The ACDHH website is in ADA compliance and compatible with communication software for the DeafBlind.
- PACMATE devices are available through AzTEDP.
- AZTEDP has increased the variety of options for telephone communication for the DeafBlind.

**B-6. Communication Access**

**Finding #11:** Ineffective communication frequently occurs in medical settings for persons who are DeafBlind.

**Population Data:**

- More than 93,000 Americans are Deaf-Blind.
- Arizona has approximately 1,500 Deaf-Blind residents.

**Context:** Individuals who are Deaf-Blind frequently seek medical consultation. A high rate of health care providers are unfamiliar with Deaf-Blindness.

- Few interpreters are familiar with medical or Deaf-Blindness terminology.
- Personnel at doctor's offices and hospital are unfamiliar with interpreting services, from providing for an appointment to throughout a visit.

**Recommendation #11.1:** Provide all medical reports and information in large print or Braille.

**Recommendation #11.2:** Provide sensitivity training to medical students and health care professionals.

**Recommendation #11.3:** Have health care providers develop ear- and eye-related information materials for persons who are Deaf-Blind.

**Recommendation #11.4:** Develop a checklist for hospitals and health service providers on working with persons who are Deaf-Blind.

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**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH plans to contact University of Arizona among other healthcare schools to provide training to students and raise awareness of issues related to DeafBlind.
- The ACDHH "Communications Accessibility Directory" is sent to hospitals and medical offices statewide.

**C-1. Community Interaction & Empowerment**

**Finding #12:** When performing internal quality assurance, state and community health agencies seldom solicit feedback from persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.
- Arizona has approximately 1,500 Deaf-Blind residents.

**Context:**

- Services for persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing encompass programs dealing with education, domestic issues, mental illness, substance abuse, residential facilities, and employment.
- Persons who are Deaf often require services that take in account language and cultural implications.
- Many services and programs in Arizona that specially target persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing do not have advisory positions for them.

**Recommendation #12.1:** Undertake a joint in-depth review between ACDHH, the Department of Health Services, and the Behavioral Health Service bureaus which includes community members who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- The ACDHH Mental Health Roundtable recently paved the way for ACDHH to partner with the Arizona Department of Health Services (Behavioral Health Division) to put together a workgroup that will prepare an action plan related to mental health for people for hearing loss.
- The Mental Health Round Table Committee developed a Survey that will be developed into a directory of Mental and Behavioral Health Programs and Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing.
- The ACDHH weekly television show, "Community View" aired shows on a number of health topics in 2007.

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- ACDHH staff members participate as a member of Behavioral Health Services Cultural Competency committee representing the needs of the deaf and the hard of hearing.
- ACDHH is partnering with BHS to plan the 2008 statewide conference. Two tracks on deafness will be featured.

## **C-2. Community Interaction & Empowerment**

**Finding #13:** There are limited recreation options for youth who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

**Population Data:**

- In Arizona, approximately 250 babies are identified with hearing loss annually.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.
- Arizona has approximately 1,300 Deaf-Blind residents.

**Context:**

- In some instances, schools have only one or two students who are Deaf.
- There are no recreational summer camps for in Arizona.
- No community organizations in Arizona offer programs exclusively to youth who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

**Recommendation #13.1:** Establish summer camps and programs at community centers in Arizona.

**Recommendation #13.2:** Promote inter-scholastic activities among schools with programs serving students with hearing loss.

**Recommendation #13.3:** Offer opportunities for leadership development through the establishment of a statewide youth organization.

**Recommendation #13.4:** Implement an adult-youth mentorship program for persons who are Hard of Hearing.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH Executive Director will advocate for such services while serving as a member of the Board of Directors for the ASDB.

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- ACDHH Deaf Specialist provides information and referral services for such inquiries to local, state and national organizations of and for the Deaf.
- ACDHH Executive Director involved with Board of Hands & Voices group that works with deaf and hard of hearing youth and their families.

### **C-3. Community Interaction & Empowerment**

**Finding #14:** Youth who are Deaf have little or no understanding of the Deaf Community and American Sign Language.

**Population Data:**

- In Arizona, approximately 250 babies are identified with hearing loss annually.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.

**Context:**

- The Council on Education of the Deaf, a national professional organization that recommends best educational practices, endorses cultural awareness in curricula.
- Persons who are Deaf often are unaware of historical events and figures that have influenced the development of the American and international Deaf Community.
- Having historical role models can be significant in a youth's character development.

**Recommendation #14.1:** Incorporate Deaf Culture and Deaf History into schools' curriculum.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH allows opportunity for student participation by offering art contests and other events to display their talent during deaf awareness events, including the Arizona Deaf Festival.

### **C-4. Community Interaction & Empowerment**

**Finding #15:** Youth who are Deaf often are unaware of how to use sign language interpreters after school graduation.

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**Population Data:**

- In Arizona, approximately 250 babies are identified with hearing loss annually.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.

**Context:**

- Students who attend public schools do not realize that the role of the educational interpreter differs from that of interpreters who work in other settings.
- Students who are Deaf and attend one of the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf never encounter interpreters until after graduation.
- Adults who are Deaf rely on interpreters for communication access when interviewing for employment, receiving medical and social services, and visiting police stations and courts.

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| <b>Recommendation #15.1:</b> Provide workshops on interpreter usage. |
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**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH provides Information and Referral services for parents and teachers of deaf and hard of hearing youth.
- A web page is under construction specifically for parents and teachers of deaf and hard of hearing youth.
- ACDHH collaborates with schools statewide on access issues for students.

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| <b>C-5. Community Interaction &amp; Empowerment</b> |
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**Finding #16:** Public facilities are not always visually or aurally accessible to persons who are Deaf-Blind.

**Population Data:**

- More than 93,000 Americans are Deaf-Blind.
- Arizona has approximately 1,500 Deaf-Blind residents.

**Context:**

- Voice announcements or posted notices are often not received by individuals who are Deaf-Blind.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 mandates comprehensive accessibility at all public facilities.
- Support Services Providers facilitate communication and provide environmental cues for individuals who are Deaf-Blind but are in short supply.

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- People around individuals who are Deaf-Blind often do not know how to relay information tactually to the Deaf-Blind individual.

**Recommendation #16.1:** Work with legislators and community and aging organizations to provide low vision and audio options.

**Recommendation #16.2:** Enlarge signage and include Braille on all signage at public places.

**Recommendation #16.3:** Investigate technologies that can convert visual information into audio or tactile formats and audio information into visual or tactile formats.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- The DeafBlind task force is working to address accessibility issues.
- ACDHH continues to serve as a resource for consumers and organizations for information on accessibility.

**C-6. Community Interaction & Empowerment**

**Finding #17:** Persons who are Deaf-Blind do not receive sufficient pertinent environmental, safety, consumer, travel, and public accommodation information.

**Population Data:**

- More than 93,000 Americans are Deaf-Blind.
- Arizona has approximately 1,500 Deaf-Blind residents.

**Context:**

- Emergency broadcasts are often not received by persons who are Deaf-Blind.
- Simple announcements or alerts, such as a sign announcing that another door is to be used or the floor is wet, may not be received.
- Support Services Providers (SSPs) facilitate communication and provide environmental cues for individuals who are Deaf-Blind but are in short supply.
- People around the Deaf-Blind often do not know how to relay information tactually to the Deaf-Blind individual.

**Recommendation #17.1:** Increase the numbers of available Support Service Providers for tactile/aural reception of information on immediate surroundings and developments.

## **D-1. Education & Training**

**Finding #18:** Many teachers of the Deaf are inadequately qualified.

**Population Data:**

- In Arizona, approximately 250 babies are identified with hearing loss annually.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.

**Context:**

- There is an assessment tool known as the Sign Communication Proficiency Interview but it is not administered to applicants for teaching positions.
- Some teachers of the Deaf lack basic proficiency in expressing and receiving information in American Sign Language.
- Effective teaching of students who are Deaf requires fluency in American Sign Language.
- American Sign Language has received recognition as an official language by linguists.

**Recommendation #18.1:** Require state licensure for teachers of the Deaf.

**Recommendation #18.2:** Implement a performance assessment system for teachers of the Deaf.

**Recommendation #18.3:** Evaluate for American Sign Language competency among teachers of the Deaf.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH is researching the feasibility of obtaining and providing "Signed Communication Proficiency Interview" (SCPI) testing to other state agencies. This would allow state agencies to measure the signing aptitude and develop a baseline for employees who are assigned to communicate with deaf consumers but do not necessarily possess an interpreting certificate.
- ACDHH executive director is on ASDB Board.

## **D-2. Education & Training**

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**Finding #19:** There is a shortage of quality interpreting services K-12.

**Population Data:**

- In Arizona, approximately 250 babies are identified with hearing loss annually.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- Educational interpreters are exempt from licensure requirements.
- The certification rate among educational interpreters working in Arizona is low.
- An evaluation tool known as the Educational Interpreter Proficiency Assessment is available but the minimum passing score is waived if there are no qualified applicants.
- Educational interpreters, either working for the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind or not, are not paid competitively in comparison to interpreters who work in other settings.
- The shortage of qualified interpreters in Arizona is also a nationwide problem.

**Recommendation #19.1:** Require state licensure for educational interpreters.

**Recommendation #19.2:** Provide ongoing professional development opportunities to teachers & educational interpreters.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- The Arizona Department of Education is responsible for educational interpreters.
- ACDHH continues to consult with DOE in regards to educational interpreters.

**D-3. Education & Training**

**Finding #20:** School materials are not always accessible to students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

**Population Data:**

- In Arizona, approximately 250 babies are identified with hearing loss annually.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.

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**Context:**

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires the consideration of assistive technology be part of each Deaf and Hard of Hearing student's individualized education plan but does not ensure their accessibility.
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 both prohibit discrimination in school on the basis of hearing loss, meaning accommodation is required.
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is an accessible information technology bill and deals only with the federal government but could serve as a baseline for Arizona.

**Recommendation #20.1:** Ensure accessibility of technologies in the classroom.

**Recommendation #20.2:** Ensure accessibility of learning materials, including the captioning of all audio information.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH staff members attend transition conferences when invited.
- ACDHH can provide some materials for transition conferences.

## **D-4. Education & Training**

**Finding #21:** Adult basic education programs do not provide adequate or appropriate interpreting services to adults who are Deaf.

**Population Data:**

- As of 2003, less than 90 interpreters in Arizona have state certification or approximately one certified interpreter for every 4,600.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- Adults and senior citizens who are Deaf often have no access to computer training and Internet usage, financial planning, and nutrition information.

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- Adults and senior citizens who are Deaf have no access to trainings and workshops that could keep them abreast of current trends.
- Interpreters at adult basic education programs sometimes are non-certified.
- The shortage of qualified interpreters in Arizona is also a nationwide problem.

**Recommendation #21.1:** Advocate for minimum standards for interpreters.

**Recommendation #21.2:** Encourage the utilization of Deaf intermediaries for the education of non-native American Sign Language users.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH is mandated by 2007 to license all general interpreters in the State of Arizona.
- Interpreter training programs are being encouraged to incorporate lessons on Deaf and Hearing interpreter teams when expanding program offerings.

**D-5. Education & Training**

**Finding #22:** Learning options for basic education are limited for adults who are Deaf.

**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- Interpreter availability is a vital component of adult basic education for persons who are Deaf.
- Approximately two-thirds of the disabled do not participate in the labor force.
- Only one in five of those with a disability who work, work full-time.

**Recommendation #22.1:** Expand opportunities to include the subject areas of computer literacy, English as a second language, GED, self-advocacy, and leadership.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

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- ACDHH will partner with the Phoenix Association of the Deaf to offer workshops on topics of interest within the deaf community.
- ACDHH has communicated the need for these workshops to community stakeholders.

## **D-6. Education & Training**

**Finding #23:** Students who are Hard of Hearing receive inadequate support services and hearing loss education at school.

**Population Data:**

- In Arizona, approximately 250 babies are identified with hearing loss annually.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- Some schools do not have loaner FM systems and assistive technologies.
- Some schools do not have classrooms outfitted with surround-sound systems.
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires that each student receive transition services starting at age 14.
- Educational interpreters who provide oral interpreting often are not certified.
- State curricula do not incorporate hearing conservation and schools often do not observe Better Hearing and Speech Week.

**Recommendation #23.1:** Increase accessibility to audiological evaluations.

**Recommendation #23.2:** Collaborate with school systems in providing FM systems.

**Recommendation #23.3:** Coordinate a poster child & public awareness campaign at public schools.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH consults with high schools and colleges regarding technology such as using FM Systems along with other ALD's.
- During "Better Hearing and Speech Month" educational posters on hearing loss conservation were sent to schools statewide.

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- ACDHH has partnered with elementary schools statewide to provide teaching material for the “Dangerous Decibels” program, teaching hearing protection to students K-12. A media launch of this program was successfully completed at a local elementary school with print media coverage statewide.

## **D-7. Education & Training**

**Finding #24:** Parents of children with hearing loss are often unaware of assistive technology options appropriate for use at schools.

**Population Data:**

- In Arizona, approximately 250 babies are identified with hearing loss annually.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- Some schools and districts have loaner equipment available to students.
- Not all persons with hearing loss require the same accommodations.
- Maladaptive behavior and fatigue are symptomatic of hearing loss in students.
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 both prohibit discrimination in school on the basis of hearing loss, meaning accommodation is required.

**Recommendation #24.1:** Develop informational materials for parents on oral interpreting, FM systems, captioning, and real-time transcribing.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- The Arizona Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (AZTEDP) through ACDHH provides some training at school districts statewide.
- ACDHH specialists continue to provide presentations to high school students, college students, parents and teachers regarding hearing loss and assistive technology.
- The ACDHH Library offers a variety of education materials on hearing loss.

## **E-1. Public Awareness**

**Finding #25:** Public understanding of American Sign Language is low.

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**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- American Sign Language has received recognition as an official language by linguists.
- ASL is taught in select schools throughout the state as a foreign language.
- Indigenous forms of sign language have received constitutional recognition in Denmark, Ecuador, England, Finland, Portugal, Thailand, Uganda, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

**Recommendation #25.1:** Promote greater awareness of ASL as a bona fide language.

**Recommendation #25.2:** Recognize ASL as a foreign language subject in schools.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH has stressed awareness of ASL as a vibrant language utilized by the Deaf community to both the media and the general public.
- Deaf Awareness Week activities provide an opportunity to emphasize/recognize the existence and use of American Sign Language.
- “Community View” has promoted sign language programs, like “total immersion.”

**E-2. Public Awareness**

**Finding #26:** Public awareness of hearing loss issues is low in Arizona.

**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- The Better Hearing and Speech Month occurs annually in May.

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- The National Deaf Awareness Week takes place the last week of every September.
- The International Deaf Awareness Day falls on the fourth Sunday of September.

**Recommendation #26.1:** Develop an online hearing aid resource site.

**Recommendation #26.2:** Conduct statewide awareness campaigns during Better Hearing and Speech Month, Deaf Awareness Week, and International Deaf Awareness Day.

**Recommendation #26.3:** Establish a toll-free hotline.

**Recommendation #26.4:** Develop public service announcements for broadcast.

**Recommendation #26.5:** Create a forum on hearing loss issues for audiologists, doctors, speech-language pathologists, and consumers with hearing loss.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- Public Service Announcements regarding ACDHH were prepared in English and distributed to broadcasters.
- The Deaf Specialist helped plan for the Arizona Deaf Fest 2007 in collaboration with the Phoenix Library and organizations of and for the Deaf.
- ACDHH has planned Hard of Hearing satellite offices to increase outreach statewide.
- The ACDHH website has updated to include hearing aid resources.
- ACDHH provides yearly media campaigns for Better Hearing and Speech Month and Noise Awareness Day.
- A web page specifically for audiologists and hearing aid dispensers is under construction.

**E-3. Public Awareness**

**Finding #27:** Public awareness of hearing loss issues is even lower among Native Americans and Spanish-speaking persons.

**Population Data:**

- Latinos make up a quarter of Arizona's total population, or 1¼ million.
- Native Americans make up 5% of Arizona's total population, or 250,000.

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- The incidence of hearing loss is the same among both Native Americans and the Latino community as with Arizonans in general.

**Context:**

- A majority of rural area residents are Native Americans and Spanish-speaking persons.
- Announcements on activities during Better Hearing and Speech Month and Deaf Awareness Week usually are advertised in English.
- There is a language divide among Latinos who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Latinos who are Deaf use American Sign Language while Latinos who are Hard of Hearing speak in Spanish.

**Recommendation #27.1:** Ensure translations of all informational materials.

**Recommendation #27.2:** Coordinate outreach activities at reservations.

**Recommendation #27.3:** Foster collaborations between agencies and organizations serving persons with hearing loss and serving persons who are Native American or Spanish-speaking.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH has translated past brochures and materials into Spanish and will continue to do so.
- The HOH Specialist serves on the Resource Development Team with Inter Tribal Council of AZ, Inc. Area Agency on Aging, Region 8 and the Annual AZ Indian Council on Aging Conference Committee as well as provides many presentations to the various tribes.
- Arizona Relay Service has focused on the Hispanic community.
- ACDHH collaborates with the Intertribal Deaf Conference.
- ACDHH was a major sponsor of the Intertribal Deaf Council in 2007.
- ACDHH plans on more outreach at reservations.
- ACDHH is working on Spanish translations of several brochures and one factsheet.

**E-4. Public Awareness**

**Finding #28:** Late-deafened adults and winter residents are often unaware of available state resources.

**Population Data:**

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- As of 2000, more than 650,000 Arizonans or 17% of the state residents were 60 years of age or above.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.
- Senior Citizens grew 38% in number from 1990 to 2000 but the greatest increase is expected to occur from 2010 to 2020 with the Baby Boomer generation.

**Context:**

- Persons who do not reside year-round in Arizona are still eligible for equipment from the Arizona Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program.
- Senior citizens often do not acknowledge their hearing loss; six of seven persons who could benefit from hearing aids do not wear them.
- Public awareness of issues facing persons who are Hard of Hearing is low among service providers.

**Recommendation #28.1:** Develop video material for and provide awareness training to police, hospitals and medical service providers, and the American Medical Association.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH presents at a number of assisted living centers, nursing homes, activity centers and other locations geared towards late-deafened adults and seniors.
- Arizona Relay Services hosts a booth on their services at numerous senior fairs.
- ACDHH contributes a regular column on hearing loss for a senior magazine.
- Efforts are underway to have presentations by ACDHH staff available on VHS, and DVD materials.

**E-5. Public Awareness**

**Finding #29:** There is insufficient public understanding of hearing conservation.

**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- Trauma to the ears is among a leading cause of adult onset hearing loss.
- The Baby Boomer generation is expected to bring an unprecedented increase to the Arizona Hard of Hearing population.

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- There is no period of observation set aside for hearing conservation.

**Recommendation #29.1:** Create an information kit.

**Recommendation #29.2:** Host a hearing conservation month.

**Recommendation #29.3:** Collaborate with Tinnitus organizations in implementing noise prevention measures at schools and residential facilities for the aging.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- For Better Hearing and Speech Month, informational materials on hearing conservation were drafted and distributed statewide.
- Annual events continue to be sponsored to raise awareness of hearing conservation and loss.
- ACDHH has partnered with elementary schools statewide to provide teaching material for the “Dangerous Decibels” program, teaching hearing protection to students K-12. A media launch of this program was successfully completed at a local elementary school with print media coverage statewide.
- ACDHH has created and distributed a factsheet on hearing loss prevention tips.

**E-6. Public Awareness**

**Finding #30:** Ignorance on Deaf-Blind issues is still widespread.

**Population Data:**

- More than 93,000 Americans are Deaf-Blind.
- Arizona has approximately 1,500 Deaf-Blind residents.

**Context:**

- Helen Keller is frequently the extent of public awareness on Deaf-Blindness
- ACDHH has no office dedicated to Deaf-Blindness.
- Only in late 2001 was the World Federation of the Deaf-Blind formed, linking national organizations together.
- Deaf-Blind individuals themselves may not know of community resources, assistive technologies, or alternative techniques.
- There is virtually no mention of the Deaf-Blind in both publications of the Deaf and of the Blind.

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**Recommendation #30.1:** Produce and broadcast public service announcements on Deaf-Blindness and low vision.

**Recommendation #30.2:** Disseminate articles discussing Deaf-Blind issues.

**Recommendation #30.3:** Promote Deaf-Blind Awareness Week, occurring yearly during the last week of June.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- The DeafBlind task force meets regularly to discuss issues related to DeafBlind individuals.
- "Community View" highlighted assistive technologies available to the DeafBlind.

**E-7. Public Awareness**

**Finding #31:** Community resources and options are not always known to medical professionals who work with parents of children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

**Population Data:**

- In Arizona, approximately 250 babies are identified with hearing loss annually.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.

**Context:**

- Family and caregivers often are unaware of available community resources

**Recommendation #31.1:** Develop an information packet on community resources for parents of children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and the medical professionals who work with them.

**Recommendation #31.2:** Encourage and offer continuing education training to medical professionals who work with parents of children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH has developed and distributed a "Communications Accessibility Directory" to hospitals and medical offices statewide that explains ADA law, provides an interpreter directory and contains other information specific to the medical setting.

## **E-8. Public Awareness**

**Finding #32:** Family and caregivers of persons who are Deaf-Blind are often unaware of adult service options.

**Population Data:**

- More than 93,000 Americans are Deaf-Blind.
- Arizona has approximately 1,500 Deaf-Blind residents.

**Context:**

- Family and caregivers often are unaware of available community resources.
- Family and caregivers may not realize that IDEA requires a transition plan for Deaf-Blind children beginning at age 14.
- Role models for the Deaf-Blind are not plentiful.
- Family and caregivers may be unaware of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which ensures reasonable accommodations in the workplace.
- A range of assistive technologies for the workplace is available, but is not known or is not financially feasible to individuals, family members, and caregivers.
- 66.7% of students with disabilities complete high school, compared to 82.4% without; for college, the comparison is 9.6% with disabilities to 22.9% without.\*

**Recommendation #32.1:** Train family members and caregivers on a one-one-basis regarding issues and aspects of Deaf-Blindness.

**Recommendation #32.2:** Educate parents, family members, caretakers, and teachers on the need for transition and development of appropriate individual transition program goals.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- The DeafBlind task force meets on a regular basis to discuss issues pertaining to DeafBlind consumers.
- ACDHH coordinates trainings and workshops that offer educational opportunities for both caregivers and family members of Deaf-Blind individuals.
- ACDHH collaborated with Helen Keller National Center and the Northern Arizona Vision and Hearing Center Loss center to promote educational workshops.

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\* LaPlante, M.P., Kennedy, J., Kaye, H.S. & Wegner, B.L. (1996, January). Disability and Employment. Disability Statistics Abstracts, No.11. Washington, D.C.: National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, U.S. Department of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 427 472).

## **F-1. Service Delivery**

**Finding #33:** Hearing screening of babies do not see statewide consistency.

**Population Data:**

- In Arizona, approximately 250 babies are identified with hearing loss annually.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.

**Context:**

- A reliable hearing screen costs as little as \$35.
- Unlike 38 other states, Arizona has no mandate for newborn hearing screening.
- Children misdiagnosed with a developmental disability might actually only have moderate hearing loss.
- ACDHH is mandated by ARS §36-1944(8) to “make recommendations to the legislature regarding statutory changes needed to implement a statewide newborn child hearing loss screening program.”

**Recommendation #33.1:** Pass legislation mandating minimum standards for statewide newborn hearing screening.

**Recommendation #33.2:** Implement a statewide newborn hearing screening service to perform data tracking and ensure statewide compliance.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH is working with the Arizona Department of Health Services and other organizational partners to seek a legislative mandate for statewide newborn hearing screening, tracking and follow-up systems to be centralized under the auspices of ADHS.
- A bill passed for the Newborn Screening Program. The draft rules were developed on the basis of discussions with representatives of stakeholders.

## **F-2. Service Delivery**

**Finding #34:** Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and with additional disabilities do not always receive early intervention services.

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**Population Data:**

- In Arizona, approximately 250 babies are identified with hearing loss annually.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.

**Context:**

- The Arizona Early Intervention Program—made up of five state agencies and guided by the statute in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C, CFR 303—serves only kids aged 0-3.
- Children misdiagnosed as having a developmental disability might actually only have moderate hearing loss.
- Parents, caretakers, educators, and diagnosticians often do not know sign language, making it difficult to detect age-appropriate communication.

|                                                                                                                                                                  |
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| <p><b>Recommendation #34.1:</b> Develop better diagnostic assessment tools to identify additional disabilities in students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.</p> |
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**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH is a member of the Arizona Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) workgroup, and serves as a consultant to the members of this group, on a number of hearing loss-related issues.

### **F-3. Service Delivery**

**Finding #35:** Access to quality mental health services is limited for persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- Arizona is bound by federal laws—including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964—to compel accessibility of its mental health systems.
- Two-way communication between mental health professionals and clients who are deaf is usually dependent on an interpreter.
- Group and residential therapies present communication barriers for individuals who are Deaf.

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- The Better Hearing Institute reported in 1999 that as many as 15 million individuals refuse help because of stigmatization and embarrassment.

**Recommendation #35.1:** Identify mental health professionals who know sign language.

**Recommendation #35.2:** Create training materials for professionals at regional behavioral health associations and curriculum materials for colleges offering degrees in counseling.

**Recommendation #35.3:** Offer training opportunities to interpreters who work in mental health settings.

**Recommendation #35.4:** Establish a speaker bureau of professionals—audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and educators—to educate counselors on hearing loss issues.

**Recommendation #35.5:** Establish a state-funded position charged with oversight of state programs offering mental health services to persons who are Deaf.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH is working on a survey to providers to gather information on challenges.
- Based on the findings of the Mental Health Roundtable, ACDHH has created a workgroup with Arizona Department of Health Services to review and prepare materials related to the mental health issues of deaf and hard of hearing Arizonans.
- Efforts are underway to create a directory of Mental Health and Behavioral Programs and Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing.
- Behavioral Health has added categories of deaf and hard of hearing on its intake surveys.

**F-4. Service Delivery.**

**Finding #36:** Senior citizens who are Deaf do not receive appropriate services at residential facilities for the aging.

**Population Data:**

- As of 2000, more than 650,000 Arizonans or 17% of the state residents were 60 years of age or above.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

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**Context:**

- There is no housing facility in Arizona for senior citizens who are Deaf and communicates primarily in sign language.
- No senior citizen housing facility in Arizona has a full staff fluent in sign language.
- Senior citizens who use sign language and live at retirement homes are unable to communicate with other residents, placing them at greater risk for depression.

**Recommendation #36.1:** Establish a residential facility for senior citizens who are Deaf.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH has attended several meetings with the Deaf Senior Citizens group to discuss the possibility of a home for Deaf seniors.
- The Deaf Specialist serves on the housing committee under the AZ Deaf Senior Citizens Coalition (ADSCC) to establish independent living apartments.

**F-5. Service Delivery.**

**Finding #37:** Senior citizens who are Deaf face communication barriers to community services and public information.

**Population Data:**

- As of 2000, more than 650,000 Arizonans or 17% of the state residents were 60 years of age or above.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- Senior citizens often rely on public services such as transportation, Medicaid, and social security.
- Senior citizens who are Deaf often have no access to computer training and Internet usage, financial planning, and nutrition information.
- Adults and senior citizens who are Deaf have no access to trainings and workshops that could keep them abreast of current trends.
- There is a statewide shortage of qualified sign language interpreters.

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**Recommendation #37.1:** Establish a centralized community resource for senior citizens who are Deaf.

**Recommendation #37.2:** Provide consumer training specially suited to senior citizens who are Deaf.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH and Arizona Relay Service (AZRS) support numerous events organized by the Phoenix Association for the Deaf (PAD).
- The Deaf Specialist has assisted in the coordination of presentations on topics of interest to seniors such as Medicare, living wills and housing.
- ACDHH is helping with the planning of the 2008 Deaf Seniors Conference.

**F-6. Service Delivery**

**Finding #38:** Statewide services for persons who are Hard of Hearing are inconsistent throughout the state.

**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- Rural area residents are generally underserved and with reduced state resources.
- The majority of community programs and support services available to persons who are Hard of Hearing are located in Phoenix and Tucson.
- The cost of contracting with oral interpreters and captionists are prohibitive in rural areas because of travel surcharges.

**Recommendation #38.1:** Establish linkages between metropolitan and rural area hospitals.

**Recommendation #38.2:** Create a unique category in the telephone directory listing hearing loss resources.

**Recommendation #38.3:** Produce inserts listing hearing loss resources for inclusion in community information and referral directories.

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**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH created a "Rural Resource Directory" that provides information on rural services available to the deaf and hard of hearing. The directory provides information on education, health services, community services, housing assistance grants and other public programs.
- The ACDHH website has been updated to include hearing loss resources.

**F-7. Service Delivery**

**Finding #39:** Persons with adult onset hearing loss living at facilities for the aging have no awareness of or access to information on hearing aids.

**Population Data:**

- As of 2000, more than 650,000 Arizonans or 17% of the state residents were 60 years of age or above.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.
- Senior Citizens grew 38% in number from 1990 to 2000 but the greatest increase is expected to occur from 2010 to 2020 with the Baby Boomer generation.

**Context:**

- Hearing loss ranks third among serious health issues facing the elderly, behind arthritis and hypertension.
- The two leading reasons for rejection of hearing aids are price and denial.
- Attempted correction of maladaptive behavior stemming from hearing loss anxiety is usually done with medication, not hearing aids.
- Research states that hearing loss contributes to elderly individuals' feelings of loneliness and isolation, and in severe cases, depression and paranoia.

**Recommendation #39.1:** Distribute hearing aid information packets to residential facilities for the aging.

**Recommendation #39.2:** Train residential staff on hearing loss awareness and assistive technology.

**Recommendation #39.3:** Have assistive technology demonstrations at residential facilities for the aging.

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**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH provides numerous in-service trainings regarding hearing loss issues at residential facilities for the aging.
- The Arizona Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (AzTEPD) hosts numerous demonstrations to residential staff on telecommunications equipment available through the state.
- These services are on-going.

**F-8. Service Delivery**

**Finding #40:** Persons who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and living in rural areas receive no local services.

**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- Rural area residents are generally underserved and with reduced state resources.
- The majority of community programs and support services available to persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing are located in Phoenix and Tucson.
- The cost of contracting with interpreters and captionists are prohibitive in rural areas because of travel surcharges.

**Recommendation #40.1:** Establish a toll-free hotline.

**Recommendation #40.2:** Create a statewide resource directory that is available on the Internet and for mail out.

**Recommendation #40.3:** Maintain a calendar of regional special and recurring events.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH has created a "Rural Resource Directory" that provides information on rural services available to the deaf and hard of hearing. The directory provides information on education, health services, community services, housing assistance grants and other public programs.
- ACDHH partners with organizations of and for the Deaf as well as service providers to improve local and statewide access to programs and services.

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- The ACDHH website has a calendar of events and an email distribution program is under construction.
- ACDHH posts community event news to a Yahoo group distribution list.

## **F-9. Service Delivery**

**Finding #41:** Support services and programs available to Deaf-Blind persons are severely limited to nonexistent.

**Population Data:**

- More than 93,000 Americans are Deaf-Blind.
- Arizona has approximately 1,500 Deaf-Blind residents.

**Context:**

- Funding dedicated to individuals who are Deaf-Blind is scarce.
- Federal Law 371.11 mandates program funding for Deaf-Blind children but is little-known.
- Services available are usually tailored for either the Deaf or the Blind, not both
- State funding is available in intervention and technical assistance for school-age Deaf-Blind children, but not older.
- The Arizona School for the Deaf and the Blind is not appropriated to create programs that focus exclusively on Deaf-Blind students.
- Only in late 2001 was the World Federation of the Deaf-Blind formed, linking national organizations together.

**Recommendation #41.1:** Seek funding to hire and train Support Service Providers, especially in rural and urban areas.

**Recommendation #41.2:** Lobby for funding for services to Deaf-Blind adults, providing for staffing and an infrastructure.

**Recommendation #41.3:** Encourage community groups to write grants that specify their target population as Deaf-Blind, not Deaf or Blind.

**Recommendation #41.4:** Lobby for funding for support services and educational opportunities for persons who are Deaf-Blind, caretakers, and families.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

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- The DeafBlind task force discusses barriers that exist, preventing equal access for the DeafBlind, and the task force will make recommendations to appropriate agencies and organizations for improvement on accessibility-related issues.
- Efforts continue to increase accessibility for the DeafBlind.

## **F-10. Service Delivery**

**Finding #42:** Arizona has no permanent training program for Support Service Providers.

**Population Data:**

- More than 93,000 Americans are Deaf-Blind.
- Arizona has approximately 1,300 Deaf-Blind residents.

**Context:**

- A national curriculum for interpreters and support services providers has recently been developed by Northwestern Connecticut Community College and the U.S. Department of Education.
- As of 2002, there is a short-term, grant-funded program for SSPs in Tucson.
- There are no minimum qualifications for SSPs.
- SSP services provided vary from person to person.
- The SSP is ultimately responsible for assisting individuals who are Deaf-Blind with communication, interaction, and mobility.
- State funding is available in intervention and technical assistance for school-age children, but not older.

**Recommendation #42.1:** Establish a centralized state resource to coordinate and train Support Service Providers.

**Recommendation #42.2:** Develop an assessment tool to evaluate the competency of Support Service Providers.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- House Bill 2495 specifically addressed and provided funding for the training of Support Service Providers for the DeafBlind. ACDHH will work with colleges and universities to encourage training programs.

## **F-11. Service Delivery**

**Finding #43:** Persons who are Deaf-Blind are often unsure of the exact role of the Support Services Provider.

**Population Data:**

- More than 93,000 Americans are Deaf-Blind.
- Arizona has approximately 1,300 Deaf-Blind residents.

**Context:**

- SSP services vary from person to person.
- There is no established certificate program for SSPs in Arizona.
- A national curriculum for interpreters and support services providers has only recently been developed by Northwestern Connecticut Community College and the U.S. Department of Education.
- As sight or hearing deteriorates, the Deaf-Blind individual may not realize that the SSP can adapt job performance to provide compensatory support services.

**Recommendation #43.1:** Provide ongoing orientation to persons who are Deaf-Blind on the usage and roles of Support Service Providers.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH continues to collaborate with the state's Association of the DeafBlind in efforts to provide consumer training.
- ACDHH participates in the DeafBlind Task Force.

## **F-12. Service Delivery**

**Finding #44:** Parents have few options for professional care of infants and children with hearing loss.

**Population Data:**

- In Arizona, approximately 250 babies are identified with hearing loss annually.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.

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**Context:**

- Kindergarten and pre-school programs are not always inclusive.
- Language acquisition is optimal during the formative years of age 0-3.
- Research has shown benefits of sign language communication with tots.

**Recommendation #44.1:** Implement programs at schools for tots who are deaf and Hard of Hearing.

**Recommendation #44.2:** Offer learning opportunities to kindergarten and preschool personnel for basic sign language and awareness.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH is a member of the Arizona Early Hearing, Detection and Intervention (EHDI) workgroup and serves as a consultant to the agencies and groups represented on this task force.

**F-13. Service Delivery**

**Finding #45:** Spanish-speaking parents of children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing have no access to parental services.

**Population Data:**

- In Arizona, approximately 250 babies are identified with hearing loss annually.
- The 2000 U.S. Census estimated one out of five Arizona households is Spanish-speaking.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.

**Context:**

- One in four houses in Arizona is Spanish-Speaking and a language divide is common between parents who speak Spanish and children who use sign language.
- The Arizona Early Intervention Program is a one-size-fits-all program.
- There are no programs that are designed specifically for Spanish-language speaking parents of children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

**Recommendation #45.1:** Create a database of Spanish-speaking parents of children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

**Recommendation #45.2:** Establish support groups of their own.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH Specialists provide presentations in collaboration with Arizona Schools for the Deaf and the Blind in an effort to reach parents.
- A web page is under construction specifically for parents and teachers of kids who are deaf or hard of hearing.

**F-14. Service Delivery**

**Finding #46:** There are few specialized resources for parents of Deaf children.

**Population Data:**

- In Arizona, approximately 250 babies are identified with hearing loss annually.
- An estimated 0.9% of Arizona's population is Deaf, or 42,000.
- An estimated 8.4% of Arizonans are Hard of Hearing, or 375,000.

**Context:**

- Most programs available to parents of children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing bring them together with parents of children with other disabilities.
- The Arizona Early Intervention Program—made up of five state agencies and guided by the statute in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C, CFR 303—serves only kids aged 0-3.
- The Parent Information Network, under the state Department of Education, in 2003 finally established a program for Hearing parents of children who are Deaf.

**Recommendation #46.1:** Establish an information network for Deaf parents of hearing children.

**Recommendation #46.2:** Provide mentorship to parents of children with hearing loss.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- Phoenix Day School for the Deaf (PDSD) also houses the "Center for Hearing Impaired Children" which provides independent resources and information to parents of children with hearing loss.

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- A web page is under construction specifically for parents and teachers of kids who are deaf or hard of hearing.

## **F-15. Service Delivery**

**Finding #47:** American Sign Language instructors are not always qualified.

**Population Data:**

- As of 2003, less than 90 interpreters in Arizona have state certification, or approximately one certified interpreter for every 4,600; all interpreter students take sign language courses.
- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss; some who are considered hard of hearing try to learn sign language.
- In Arizona, approximately 250 babies are identified with hearing loss annually; many parents enroll in sign language classes.

**Context:**

- Language has been proposed for rulemaking on ASL instructor certification, expected to see implementation in 2005.
- American Sign Language instruction is an essential component of interpreter training programs.
- Arizona has a state member chapter of the ASL Teachers Association, a national professional organization.
- Currently, ASL instructors in Kindergarten through grade 12 classrooms are required to meet state certification requirements, while minimum requirements for college ASL instructors vary.

**Recommendation #47.1:** Establish minimum standards for American Sign Language instructors.

**Recommendation #47.2:** Provide continuing education opportunities to American Sign Language instructors.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH is responsible for developing the criteria for American Sign Language Teachers. The mandate for licensure includes ASL instructor certification.
- ACDHH has participated in several meetings to gather information on criteria or consideration for ASL Teacher certification.
- ACDHH has received feedback from the Language Articulation Task Force with recommendations for certification criteria to be considered during the rule writing process.

## G-1. Transition Planning & Employment

**Finding #48:** Employment preparation performed at schools is inadequate.

**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.

**Context:**

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires that each student receive transition services starting at age 14.
- The Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind serves students aged 0-22 and currently has over 2,000 students enrolled.
- Arizonans of adult age qualify for services from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation under the Department of Economic Security, but not if they are still enrolled in school.
- Youth who are deaf may not receive meaningful paraprofessional job opportunities, leaving them with fewer desirable skills and little or no experience.
- Approximately two-thirds of the disabled do not participate in the labor force.
- Only one in five of those with a disability who work, work full-time.

**Recommendation #48.1:** Require students who are Deaf to enroll in career education classes that provide basic transition training.

**Recommendation #48.2:** Establish a career day at schools with programs that serve students with a hearing loss.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH is able to provide support and Informational and Referral services for meetings regarding Individual Education Plans (IEP).

## G-2. Transition Planning & Employment

**Finding #49:** Public ignorance of services provided by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is high.

**Population Data:**

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- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- One out of three senior citizens has moderate to severe hearing loss.
- Arizona has approximately 1,500 Deaf-Blind residents.

**Context:**

- Services other than placement provided by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation include employment preparation, financial aid for education, and voter assistance.
- The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is under the Department of Economic Security and coordinates its services with all other sister agencies, which include children services, family services, Medicaid, and health services.
- Families and caretakers of persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing are often unaware of available resources.

**Recommendation #49.1:** Promote awareness of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation among rural & mainstreamed students and their parents.

**Recommendation #49.2:** Provide in-service training to special education personnel on services provided by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

**Recommendation #49.3:** Establish satellite vocational rehabilitation offices on the campus of schools and programs serving students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH proposes to work with the Department of Economic Security (DES), division of Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), to improve services that will impact deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind Arizonans.
- ACDHH Specialists have provided training for staff in RSA's One Stop Service Centers.

**G-3. Transition Planning & Employment**

**Finding #50:** Persons with hearing loss face restrictive work environments.

**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- Arizona has approximately 1,500 Deaf-Blind residents.

**Context:**

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- Employers are often unaware of incentives for hiring individuals who are deaf.
- Youth who are deaf may not receive meaningful paraprofessional job opportunities, leaving them with fewer desirable skills and little or no experience.
- Employers might be incapable of assessing the skills of Deaf candidates.
- Employers' attitudes toward individuals who are Deaf may be a barrier.
- Approximately two-thirds of the disabled do not participate in the labor force.
- Only one in five of those with a disability who work, work full-time.

**Recommendation #50.1:** Increase awareness among human resource personnel of training on deafness and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

**Recommendation #50.2:** Promote awareness of available workplace accommodations.

**Recommendation #50.3:** Utilize Support Service Providers in the workplace instead of job coaches for persons who are Deaf-Blind.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- The Arizona Relay Service (AZRS) is coordinating a Business Relay Partner kit which will be utilized to train employers and their employees about using the 7-1-1 Relay number.
- ACDHH coordinates a number of in-service trainings for companies statewide. These services continue to be offered throughout the state.

## **G-4. Transition Planning & Employment**

**Finding #51:** Persons with hearing loss have difficulty finding employment.

**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- Arizona has approximately 1,500 Deaf-Blind residents.

**Context:**

- Job developers no know how to work with them.
- Persons with hearing loss may not receive meaningful paraprofessional job opportunities, leaving them with fewer desirable skills and little or no experience.

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- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 mandates reasonable accommodations in the workplace and accessibility at all public facilities.
- Approximately two-thirds of the disabled do not participate in the labor force.
- Only one in five of those with a disability who work, work full-time.

**Recommendation #51.2:** Promote awareness of tax credit for hiring persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

**Recommendation #51.3:** Educate employers on the relative low cost of workplace accommodations.

**Recommendation #51.4:** Increase accessibility of internship programs for college students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

**Recommendation #51.5:** Expand the role of Arizona Job Services in providing services to persons who are Deaf-Blind.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- Specialists offer training to all the DES One Stop offices on Deaf and Hard of Hearing issues

**G-5. Transition Planning & Employment**

**Finding #52:** Barriers to effective communication often exist in the workplace.

**Population Data:**

- An estimated 700,000 Arizonans have hearing loss.
- That population is expected to increase dramatically in the near future.
- Arizona has approximately 1,500 Deaf-Blind residents.

**Context:**

- The majority of accommodations are low-cost.
- The Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing and several community organizations offer training on communication strategies.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits discrimination in the workplace.

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**Recommendation #52.1:** Provide in-service on sensitivity, assistive technology, and communication strategies.

**Recommendation #52.2:** Provide awareness training on assistive technology and communication strategies to employment seekers receiving services from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- The Deaf Specialist and Hard of Hearing Specialist continue to represent employees with hearing loss in the workplace and provide a number of trainings to employers annually. These services are provided to agencies and organizations.

**G-6. Transition Planning & Employment**

**Finding #53:** Individualized Transition Plans for persons who are Deaf-Blind do not always include employment goals.

**Population Data:**

- More than 93,000 Americans are Deaf-Blind.
- Arizona has approximately 1,500 Deaf-Blind residents.

**Context:**

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires a transition plan for Deaf-Blind children by the time they are 14.
- Job coaches who function as support services providers is provided for up to 9 months by the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation; as soon as the Deaf-Blind individual is employed, this service stops even though there still may be an occasional or ongoing need.
- Approximately two-thirds of the disabled do not participate in the labor force.
- Only one in five of those with a disability who work, work full-time.
- Deaf-Blind persons may not receive meaningful paraprofessional job opportunities, leaving them with fewer desirable skills and little or no experience.

**Recommendation #53.1:** Require employment goals from students who are Deaf-Blind up to post-school work placement.

**Recommendation #53.2:** Provide job coaching to students who are Deaf-Blind to help them attain their employment goals as outlined in their Individualized Transition Plan.

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**Action Steps Taken or Planned:**

- ACDHH is working with the Department of Economic Security (DES), division of Rehabilitation Services Administration, to possibly implement an agreement on various services that will impact Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind Arizonans.