Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

Empowering people to effectively access services in their communities

Minnesotans who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing can get help to live independently, engage with their families and participate in their communities. Services are available statewide through five regional Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) offices and community-based providers.

What services are provided?

- DHHS regional offices provide information and resources to Minnesotans who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing and late deafened. Services include:
  - Help to families and adults in navigating complex service systems so they can continue to live independently and productively in their home communities
  - Help to make informed decisions, including training, consultation, direct assistance, advocacy and collaboration
  - Training and technical assistance to providers on how to make services accessible
  - Technical assistance in development of community and in-home service options that meet the needs of people who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing.

- The DHHS Mental Health Program provides culturally affirmative mental health therapy and counseling in American Sign Language to adults who are deaf and have mental illness. Other services include crisis intervention, case coordination, after-care planning and community placement help. Training is available to mental health service providers who currently work with individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or deafblind or who are interested in doing so.

- The Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program provides telephone equipment to people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, or have a physical or speech disability and need adaptive equipment to use the phone. The equipment is provided to eligible consumers at no cost as a long-term loan. Available equipment includes captioned, amplified phones, light-flashing ring signalers, Teletypewriters for the Deaf (TTys), amplified telephones, loud ringers and hands-free speakerphones.

- DHHS community-based services funded by state grants include:
  - Mentors for families with children who are deaf or hard of hearing who help families learn American Sign Language and other means of communication to improve the quality of interaction and informal learning opportunities
  - Sign language interpreter services in Greater Minnesota for 12-step recovery groups, funerals; travel subsidies to bring interpreters to underserved areas; increasing availability of interpreters
  - Support services for adults and children who are deafblind

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Mental health services, including individual and family counseling and emotional or behavioral assessments for children and youth, certified peer support counselors
Real-time captioning of news programming statewide.

Who is eligible?

DHHS provides services to Minnesotans of any age who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, late deafened, parents and family of those with a hearing loss, human service providers, employers and business, schools, and other interested individuals and communities.

How many people receive services?

In state fiscal year 2017:

- **DHHS regional offices:**
  - Served 269 consumers with high needs
  - Provided assistance to 3,143 contacts from agencies and 5,186 contacts from clients
  - Provided training to 3,722 individuals and information to 2,879 event participants.
- **DHHS regional mental health offices served 165 clients, providing more than 3,430 hours of service to individuals, couples and families.**
- **Community-based DHHS grant-funded programs served:**
  - 281 people in mental health programs
  - 241 adults and children in deafblind programs
  - 37 families in deaf mentor and hard of hearing role model programs
  - 99 people with targeted interpreting service needs in Greater Minnesota.
- **The Telephone Equipment Distribution program:**
  - Served 439 first-time clients and 1,186 repeat clients
  - Distributed more than 550 pieces of equipment to new clients.

How much does Minnesota spend on deaf and hard of hearing services?

In state fiscal year 2017, Minnesota spent $1.8 million on DHHS grant-funded programs. The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services regional offices and mental health programs are funded separately through the general fund. The TED program operates with special revenue funding.
Where can I learn more?

For more information, see the [DHS Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services website](http://dhs.state.mn.us), which includes contact information for regional offices around the state.

For accessible formats of this publication or additional equal access to human services, write to dhs.info@state.mn.us, call 651-431-4671, or use your preferred relay service. (ADA1 [9-15])