

Annual Report 2014



NCDHH
Nebraska Commission
for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



**The NCDHH team helped
23,257
People to Better Communication
in the year 2014**



Where It All Begins



STATE OF NEBRASKA

NEBRASKA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

March 6, 2015

Pete Ricketts
Governor

Michael R. Brummer
Chairperson

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John Hogue
Falls City

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RE: 2014 Annual Activities Report

Enclosed is the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's annual activity report for 2014. Our mission is to bring a higher quality of life to the estimated 167,000 Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens of Nebraska. We primarily address communication barriers since effectively acquiring and communicating information are the greatest barriers faced by individuals with hearing loss.

The Commission's 2014 highlights include:

- Advancement of Legislative Resolution 517 regarding Sign Language Interpreters
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness night at the Lincoln Saltdogs game
- Collaboration with Nebraska Medicine and Creighton University on communication access enhancement
- Work on Legislative Resolution 574 to examine communication needs in residential facilities for Nebraskans who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- "Office for the Week" in Scottsbluff, Nebraska
- Enhanced Social Media and website use

Our other roles include advocacy and the promotion of increased accessibility to services statewide. The Commission serves as a clearinghouse of information for hearing loss related matters. The number of requests for information, interpreter referrals and equipment programs continue to increase. Since we are a service-oriented agency, we also respond to questions from other agencies regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act and other laws that impact Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nebraskans and those who serve them. We make every effort to continue our public service commitment to the State of Nebraska.

Sincerely,

Mr. Michael Brummer
Chairperson

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State Statutes

The following is a partial listing of services mandated by state statutes:

- 1. Inventory services available for meeting the problems of persons with a hearing loss and assist such persons in locating and securing referral to such services.** Services that the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing offers include hearing aid banks for individuals with financial needs; text telephones (TTYs) and assistive device loan programs, newsletters and making information available to the general public regarding hearing loss.
- 2. License interpreters under sections 20-150 to 20-159 and prepare and maintain a roster of licensed interpreters.** The roster shall include the type of employment the interpreter generally engages in. The roster is made available to local, state and federal agencies and is used for referrals to private organizations and individuals seeking interpreters.
- 3. Promote the training of interpreters for Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons.** NCDHH conducts skill assessments of interpreters by using the Mid-America Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST). NCDHH sponsors workshops and other learning opportunities in cooperation with the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), the national association of sign language interpreters.
- 4. Assist Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons in accessing comprehensive mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse services.** A Mental Health Specialist provides assistance, education, and training to mental health therapists regarding Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals' communication needs. A five-member advisory committee reviews the activities of programs quarterly.
- 5. Conduct a voluntary census of Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons in Nebraska and compile a current registry.** NCDHH makes an effort to identify Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nebraskans throughout the state via online registration, mailings and interaction.
- 6. Promote awareness and understanding of the rights of Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons.** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), passed by the federal government in 1990, protects qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination on the basis of disability. To promote understanding and awareness regarding hearing loss, NCDHH provides presentations, distributes information through fairs and conventions, conducts sensitivity training, such as workshops, and develops informational brochures.
- 7. Promote expanded adult educational opportunities for Deaf or Hard of Hearing persons.** NCDHH partners with agencies and service providers at major events to expand adult education opportunities including seminars on national issues, technology and various training opportunities.
- 8. Promote statewide communication services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons.** NCDHH drafted legislation that established the statewide telecommunication relay system and the equipment distribution program. NCDHH works in tandem with the Public Service Commission to provide free specialized telephone equipment to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nebraskans. NCDHH also offers sign communication classes to state agencies.

Statutory Authority

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was created by LB 101 in 1979 by the Nebraska Unicameral. The duties and responsibilities of the Commission can be found in revised statutes sections 71-4728 - 71-4728.05 and sections 20-150, 20-151, and 20-156, 2004.

Agency Vision

As a proactive and reactive state agency, the Commission strives to enhance collaboration by creating support, cooperation, and understanding to achieve fairness and equality in all aspects of the mainstream for all Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Nebraskans.

Agency Mission

The mission of the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is to promote and advocate for Nebraskans who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind or Hard of Hearing; to achieve equality and opportunity in social, educational, vocational, and legal aspects impacting their daily lives; and to enhance and monitor access to effective communication and telecommunication technology.

Agency Principles

The Commission's responsibilities include the following areas:

- Collect data and disseminate information on Nebraskans who have a hearing loss, and conduct research in the area of Deafness;
- Develop communication processes involving the training and licensing of sign language interpreters statewide, and promote an awareness of hearing loss to state and local community agencies;
- Inventory, monitor and assess services available to people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

The Commission's overall purpose is to ensure that people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing have the opportunity to be productive citizens of the State of Nebraska.

Strategic Planning Priorities

- 1. Expand programs and services in Nebraska for Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons.**
- 2. Implement new programs through collaboration with consumer groups, the Governor, legislature, organizations, institutions and agencies.**
- 3. Broaden the collection and dissemination of information on hearing loss and deafness.**
- 4. Ensure full access to comprehensive mental health, alcoholism and substance abuse services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons by collaborating with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, regional programs and other providers.**
- 5. To ensure and implement effective access of interpreting services by collaborating with consumer groups, organizations and agencies.**

Objectives for Goal 1

- 1.1 To contact agencies and consumers to conduct accessibility awareness and hearing loss education.
- 1.2 To increase promotion and visibility.
- 1.3 To conduct community awareness workshops annually for consumers, civic groups, service providers, etc. for awareness and educational needs for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.

Objectives for Goal 2

- 2.1 To create a political action network.
- 2.2 To develop a packet/poster of information for service providers.
- 2.3 To provide awareness training to hospitals and law enforcement. To create equal access in medical/legal settings.
- 2.4 To conduct a statewide awareness day on hearing loss and deafness.
- 2.5 To conduct a Technology Expo.
- 2.6 To conduct agency health fairs, booths, demonstrations.
- 2.7 To increase vendors throughout the state.

Strategic Planning Priorities (continued)

Objectives for Goal 3

3.1 To research, gather and expand the dissemination of information through electronic/visual mediums.

3.2 To disseminate brochures and service information through a yearly phased approach to audiologists, hospitals, nursing homes/assisted living facilities and others.

3.3 To disseminate information and education to persons with a hearing loss on emergency preparedness.

3.4 To promote the media center.

3.5 To create interim committees as needed to study particular issues.

3.6 To increase interpreter referral numbers.

Objectives for Goal 4

4.1 To expand collaboration with mental health regional programs.

4.2 To conduct routine training related to mental health topics to Deaf and Hard of Hearing organizations.

4.3 To expand awareness and training on a statewide level to Nebraska Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Coalitions and community domestic violence shelters and programs.

Objectives for Goal 5

5.1 To inform consumer groups and agencies about how to use an interpreter and our referral system.

5.2 To understand the relationship between interpreters and consumers.

5.3 To train and recognize Nebraska's interpreters for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

5.4 To coordinate with the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, RID, and its state chapter, the Nebraska Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, NeRID, in improving and enhancing interpreters academic environment.

A Look at Year 2014

Executive Director, John Wyvill



I am very blessed to work with an outstanding group of individuals who have devoted their careers to improving the lives of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. It is an honor and privilege to say I work with such extraordinary individuals on a daily basis. Working together we have helped people to better communications. Today we present our annual report to the people of Nebraska showing how we made a difference in 2014 by transforming the NCDHH Board vision into a reality on a daily basis. Please join us in the celebration of our accomplishments in 2014 and join us in the hope, promise and expectation of greater things to come in 2015 at NCDHH.

Moving forward, every person, every day.

Highlights

LR 517: In the Spring of 2014, NCDHH began working with stakeholders and those within the community on Legislative Resolution 517. The goal of this is to improve the quality, availability, and proficiency of Sign Language Interpreters in Nebraska. What started as an Interim Study has now become a Legislative Bill within the legislature. Through meetings and research with workgroups such as Education, Interpreter, Community/Medical, and Licensure, a compiled list of recommendations was sent to the NCDHH Full Board of Commissioners. Approved by the Full Board, these recommendations were then submitted to the legislature by Senator Ken Haar and a bill was filed.

Full Board Appointment of Dr. Frank Turk: In June of 2014, NCDHH welcomed Dr. Frank Turk onto the Full Board of Commissioners. Dr. Turk has long been an influential figure in the Deaf community; founding two successful camps: Youth Leadership Camp (YLC) and the National Leadership and Literacy Camp (NLLC).

LR 574: Senator Colby Coash introduced Legislative Resolution 574 as an interim study to examine the needs of Nebraskans who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing in residential facilities, such as nursing homes, assisted living, or a developmentally disabled home.

Nebraska Medicine: NCDHH met with Flower Nunez of Nebraska Medicine and other Nebraska Medicine representatives to discuss ways to improve communication access for Nebraskans who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in the medical setting.

Saltdogs Game: NCDHH worked with Lincoln Saltdogs President Charlie Meyer to create a Deaf & Hard of Hearing Awareness night at a home game in July of 2014. To raise awareness, there was a “Silent Inning” in which an inning of the game was played with no music, commentary, or announcements from the press box. Board Chairman Michael Brummer threw out the game’s first pitch, and there was an informational booth highlighting NCDHH’s services. Gary Theiler signed “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” during the 7th Inning Stretch. A great time was had by all, and it is our hope at NCDHH to continue this as a tradition each year!

Facebook: Social media is a crucial part of agency awareness and promotion with the community. The NCDHH Facebook page is constantly being updated with the latest news relating to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. Whether it be a new “Boss of the Month,” a video in American Sign Language, or an interesting article in the paper, it is our duty as a state agency to keep the general public informed. Our Facebook page is constantly growing with more individuals and agencies tuning in to the latest news from our corner!

A Look at Year 2014 (continued)

Scottsbluff: In June, some of the NCDHH team made the trip out west to Scottsbluff, Nebraska to make Scottsbluff the “Office for the Week.” During the week there were Support Groups for Deaf and Hard of Hearing residents in the area, training at the Scottsbluff Police and Fire Department, and a Town Hall Meeting for feedback on improving the quality and availability of sign language interpreters in the area.

Creighton: NCDHH and representatives of Nebraska Association of the Deaf met with Father Lannon, President of Creighton University to discuss ways of enhancing the relationship and betterment of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students at Creighton.

Continuation of BOTM: The “Boss of the Month” at NCDHH is still going strong, in its second year of certificates for influential, educational, and involved members within the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. If you know of someone deserving recognition, please contact John Wyvill at john.wyvill@nebraska.gov

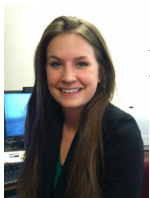
Deaf History/Awareness week: In the months of April and September, NCDHH helped celebrate Deaf Awareness and Deaf History week throughout Nebraska. These weeks are dedicated to the awareness of deaf culture and history, and are a special time at NCDHH to continue to strive for our agency mission: promoting and advocating for Nebraskans who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Proclamation: In conjunction with Deaf Awareness Week, NCDHH attended the Proclamation at the State Capitol where (former) Governor Dave Heineman proclaimed Deaf Awareness week for September 21-27th, and Sign Language Interpreter Day being September 21st.

NAD Conference: Executive Director John Wyvill attended the 2014 National Association of the Deaf Conference in Atlanta, Georgia.

Hearing Aid Bank/Dr. Ray: Audiologist Dr. Stacie Ray was featured in the Lincoln Journal Star about detecting early stages of hearing loss with children. Dr. Ray was featured as a Boss of the Month for March, and is the administrator of the Sertoma and Lions Hearing Aid Banks.

2014 Staff Hires



Mrs. Kelsey Cruz was hired in February of 2014 as the Public Information Officer for the agency; tending to media relations and creating awareness to the public about the agency mission.

Ms. April Guthrie was hired in August of 2014 as a Field Representative serving the Tri-City area of Nebraska.



Mrs. Crystal Pierce was hired in October of 2014 as the Interpreter Program Assistant. As a licensed Sign Language Interpreter, Crystal works with the agency on duties such as interpreter licensure and also the referral service.

Mrs. Maribeth Jensen-Darnall was hired in December of 2014 as the Administrative Assistant for the Omaha office.



Staff Member Participation

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) staff actively participates in many committees. These efforts, on behalf of NCDHH, aid Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities in creating awareness for communication and service delivery issues.

John Wyvill, Executive Director - Statewide



Nebraska Specialized Telecommunications Advisory Committee: The Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was mandated in 1990, to appoint members to serve on the Telecommunication Relay Services Advisory Committee administered by the Nebraska Public Service Commission. This committee advises the Public Service Commission on matters related to the telecommunications relay system, the equipment distribution program and its operation. The relay system provides prompt and accurate relay of all messages 24/7 to Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. Any person using the system is not charged for access to the system other than the charges billed for in-state and out-of-state long distance service. The relay provider for the state

is Sprint Relay.

Nebraska Assistive Technology Partnership: The Executive Director is a voting member of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), which meets on a quarterly basis. The Assistive Technology Partnership is dedicated to helping Nebraskans with disabilities, their families and professionals in obtaining assistive technology devices and services.

Sign Language Interpreter Review Board: The Executive Director of the Commission is a voting member of the Interpreter Review Board that promulgates rules and regulations for sign language interpreters. This board is responsible for establishing and monitoring policies and procedures for the evaluation and licensure of sign language interpreters who work for the state, its courts and law enforcement.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Committee of the Special Education Advisory Council (Nebraska Department of Education): The Executive Director is a voting member of this standing committee which meets bi-annually. D/HH SEAC review issues, current events, and formulate opinions on potential future events and issues. D/HH SEAC Standing Committee is dedicated to helping school-aged Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, their families and professionals in obtaining the best education possible.

Advisor to the Nebraska Association of the Deaf: The Nebraska Association of the Deaf is a statewide organization promoting equal access for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in all phases of life. The Executive Director is an advisor to this organization mainly on legislative issues brought up in the Nebraska Unicameral.

Mountain-Prairie Upgrade Partnership-Itinerant Project (MPUP-I): The Executive Director is a member of this vital committee. MPUP-1 committee provides advisement to the University of Nebraska at Lincoln in developing itinerant teachers who work with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students in public schools. The program also prepares teachers for working with students with cochlear implants, and with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students who also have additional disabilities that impact the ease of language acquisition. The committee meets twice a year.

National Association of State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NASADHH): The Commission is a member of this association. The Executive Director represents the Commission in NASADHH during their biennial meetings.

Staff Participation (continued)

Peggy Williams, Mental Health Specialist - Statewide



Sexual Violence Prevention Advisory Committee (SVPAC) - Statewide: The goal of this program is to develop and implement a comprehensive primary prevention plan for the State of Nebraska.

BryanLGH Hospital Independence Center Advisory Committee - Lincoln: Serves as a liaison between the agency and the community to ensure that the program is responsive to the needs of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. This committee meets quarterly.

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS): The purpose of this group is to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of consumers, especially through multi-agency collaborations and partnerships. This committee meets quarterly.

Lincoln Correctional Center (LCC) Community Involvement Committee: This committee exists to understand services and programs provided by LCC and provide input and recommendations on special services needed for special populations. This committee meets quarterly.

Southeast Nebraska Regional Program Advisory Committee: The purpose of this board is to provide advice and feedback for programming and services for students, families and staff associated with the Southeast Nebraska Regional Program. This board meets quarterly.

Heartland Deaf Abuse Advocacy Services: Serves as an advisory member to this committee by offering suggestions and recommendations, ensuring that those who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing have access to domestic violence and sexual assault programs and services.

Beth Ellsworth, Field Representative - Omaha



Mayor's Commission for Citizens with Disabilities: The purpose of the commission is "To promote quality of life, accessibility and equity in all aspects related to the City of Omaha on behalf of and in cooperation with the citizens of Omaha who experience disabilities."

Hearing Loss Association of America – Omaha Chapter: HLAA provides information, education, advocacy and support to those who have a hearing loss and their family, friends, and the hearing public at large.

Hearing Loss Support Group - Omaha: The purpose of this group is to provide information, education, advocacy and support to those who have a hearing loss, their families and friends through peer support and networking with agencies and service providers. This group meets monthly.

Hands and Voices: Dedicated to supporting families with children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, without a bias around communication modes or methodology. It is a parent-driven, non-profit organization providing families with the resources, networks, and information they need to improve communication access and educational outcomes for their children. Its outreach activities, parent/professional collaboration, and advocacy efforts are focused on enabling Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children to reach their highest potential.

Staff Participation (continued)

Kim Davis, Field Representative - Lincoln



Coordinated Funding Committee: This committee is comprised of representatives from various state and local, primarily Lincoln, agencies. Its purpose is to provide an avenue of communication between agencies. It enables each agency to make better informed referrals and decisions regarding services needed between committee members agencies. Health and Human Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Assistive Technology Program are examples of agencies that participate on this committee.

National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program State Partners National Monthly Conference Calls: This group is comprised of national lead agencies and of state partners from various states who coordinate the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP) in their respective states. Its purpose is to collaborate with all lead agencies and state partners on various updates and procedural activities; involving but not limiting to, Rolka Loube Saltzer Associates (RLSA) monthly and Federal Communications Commission (FCC) semi-annually reports, outreach and marketing projects, operations of NDBEDP equipment and software programs, and general field information from state partners.

Nebraska Association of the Deaf (NeAD) Conference Planning Committee: This committee is comprised of a number of NeAD members responsible for planning the state association's biennial conference in the year 2015. The conference provides empowerment workshops, entertainment, a banquet, exhibits, a general board meeting and social activities to interested attendees.

Brenda Chappell, Field Representative - Omaha



Partnerships in Aging: The mission of Partnerships in Aging is to build partnerships and secure funding and resources to expand services for older adults and their families

League of Human Dignity: The mission of the League of Human Dignity is to actively promote the full integration of individuals with disabilities into society. To this end, we will advocate their needs and rights, and provide quality services to involve these persons in becoming and remaining independent citizens.

Heartland Deaf Abuse Advocacy Service (HDAAS): Committee on Fundraising.

Nebraska School for the Deaf Alumni Association (NSDAA): Secretary. The purpose of the NSDAA is to keep all the alumni connected through its programs, to build bridges and to educate the public that Deaf can do anything!

Omaha Deaf Senior Citizens: Represents NCDHH while visiting Deaf Senior Citizens, socializing and learning how its members want to improve the Deaf community with regard senior citizens.

Commission Boards and Committees

Full Commission Board

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was established by the State Legislature in 1979. The Commission consists of nine members who are appointed by the Governor subject to approval by the Legislature. Statute 71-4720 requires that a majority of the Commission members who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing shall be able to express themselves through sign language. The Commission members shall include three Deaf persons, three Hard of Hearing persons and three persons who have an interest in and knowledge of Deafness and hearing loss issues. The Commission was created to improve the quality and coordination of existing services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people and development of new services when necessary. Meeting schedules and minutes can be found on the NCDHH website at www.ncdhh.ne.gov/boards.html.

The members are appointed to represent various domains as listed below:

Deaf Representatives:

Dillard Delts

Steven Manning

Dr. Carol Lomicky

Dr. Frank Turk: beginning June 2014

Hard of Hearing Representatives:

Regina (Gina) Frerichs: beginning February 2014

John Hogue

Diane Muelleman

Interest and Knowledge in Deafness and Hearing Loss Representatives:

Michael Brummer

Dr. Jan Moore

Margaret Propp

Commission Boards and Committees (continued)

Sign Language Interpreter Review Board

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was mandated in July 2002 to appoint members to the Interpreter Review Board to develop guidelines and promulgate regulations for assuring competencies for sign language interpreters. Regulations were crafted and approved to include assurances that sign language interpreters have and maintain minimum levels of competency to interpret for state entities, courts, police and probation officials. Meeting schedules and minutes can be found on the NCDHH website. The Board has eight voting members, of whom the majority has knowledge of sign language.

The Sign Language Interpreter Review Board provided advice to the Full Commission Board regarding language that would amend sections 20-150, 20-151, 20-156, 20-159, and 71-4728 of current Nebraska Statutes. Language was developed to reflect the future discontinuation of the Nebraska Quality Assurance Screening Test, development of new certification types as well as provide powers to NCDHH to recognize equivalent certifications as proof of qualification for licensure.

The members are appointed to represent various domains as listed below:

Health and Human Services:

Vonda Apking

Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing:

Ms. Peggy Williams, Mental Health Specialist

Mr. John C. Wyvill, Executive Director

Deaf Representatives:

Jerry Siders, retired educator

Sign Language Interpreters:

Pam Duncan, Private Practice Interpreter

Barbara Woodhead, Private Practice Interpreter

Bethany Koubsky, Private Practice Interpreter

Local Government:

Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell, Counselor with Vocational Rehabilitation

Cheryl Poff, Orienteering Counselor with NCBVI

Pat Bracken, Program Director with Vocation Rehabilitation Services

Commission Boards and Committees (continued)

Telecommunication Relay Advisory Committee

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was mandated in 1990 to appoint members to serve on the Relay Advisory Committee administered by the Nebraska Public Service Commission. The Committee advises the Public Service Commission on matters related to the telecommunications relay system, the Nebraska Specialized Telecommunications Equipment Program and its operations. Meeting schedules and minutes can be found on the NCDHH website. The Committee has seven members.

The relay system provides prompt and accurate relay of all messages 24/7 to Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. Any person using the system is not charged for access to the system. Charges are still billed for in-state and out-of-state long distance service. The relay provider for Nebraska is Sprint Relay.

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing reviews and authorizes applications for the equipment vouchers issued through the NSTEP program by PSC. Only one person per household can be a recipient of the telecommunications equipment and the residence listed must have phone service.

The members are appointed to represent various domains as listed below:

Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing: Dillard Delts

Deaf Representative: Tami Richardson-Nelson

Hard of Hearing Representative: Diana McIntosh

General Public: Albert Sparks

Public Service Commission: Tim Schram

Speech Impaired: Vacant

Telephone Industry: Kim Remington

Technical Advisor: John Wyvill

Commission Boards and Committees (continued)

Mental Health Advisory Committee

In 1995, LB 25 was passed to extend duties of the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) to ensure full access to comprehensive mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in Nebraska. A special advisory committee was appointed by the Commission to serve for a three year term. The advisory committee meetings are held four times a year. Meeting schedules and minutes can be found on the NCDHH web page at www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov/boards.html.

The Commission has appointed technical members representing various domains, which are listed below:

Counselor Position: Vacant

Counselor Position: Jackie Prater, Child Guidance Center

Counselor Position: Mandy Leamon, Fremont Area Medical Center, Outpatient Psychiatric Services

Counselor Position: Lisa Vogel, West Maple Counseling Association

Human Services Position: Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell, Vocational Rehabilitation

Human Services Position: Sakura Yodogawa-Campbell, YWCA-Omaha

NCDHH Representatives:

Mr. John Wyvill, NCDHH Executive Director

Peggy Williams, Mental Health Specialist

Technical Advisor: Ann Thompson, Heartland Deaf Abuse Advocacy Services

Technical Advisor: Diane Meyer, Metro Area Regional Program

Technical Advisor: Jill Bird, Southeast Nebraska Regional Program

Technical Advisor: Lorelei Waldron, Sign Language Interpreter - Lincoln

Technical Advisor: Bethany Merchant, Sign Language Interpreter - Lincoln

Technical Advisor: Karen Potter-Maxwell, Sign Language Interpreter - Omaha

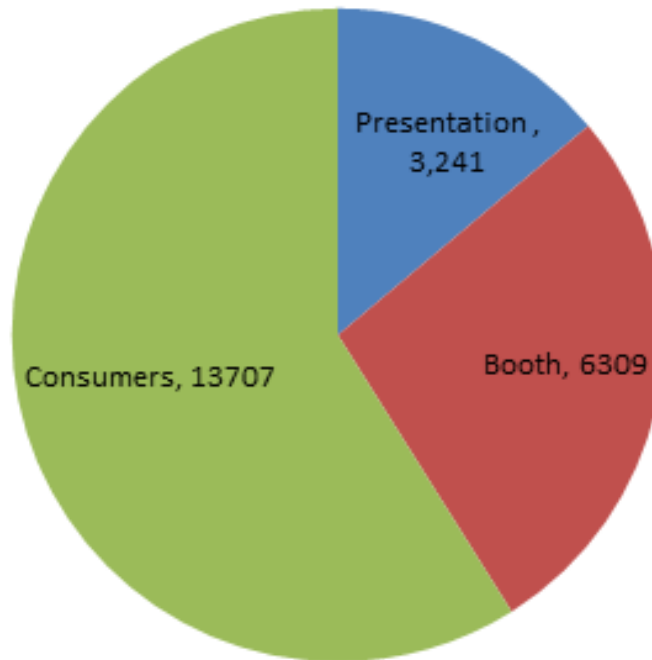
Technical Advisor: Jan (Loretta) Goracke, DHHS Division of Behavioral Health – Lincoln

Technical Advisor: Barbara Woodhead, Sign Language Interpreter - Lincoln

Information and Referral Contacts

When the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) was created, one of its enabling legislations mandated that the agency was to act as an information and referral service for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing of Nebraska. NCDHH staff tabulate the number of consumers served annually.

Total Consumers Served



Consumers Assisted: 13,707

Presentation Attendees: 3,241

Booth Attendees: 6,309

Total Number of Consumers Served: 23,257

Information and Referral Contacts (continued)

Consumers Assisted by Category

NCDHH categorizes and records the areas in which assistance was provided.

*In the months of January to June: data was measured by *customers*, in the months of July to December, data was recorded in total *minutes with customers*. Please note the chart below:

NCDHH booths provided information at Health Fairs, County Fairs, and Conventions 35 times, meeting 6,309 Consumers.

	January to June # of Customers	July to December* # of minutes spent with customer
Advocacy	503	14,005
Equipment Loan	266	9,430
Media Center Loan	65	0
Equipment Demonstration	272	10,725
Information and Referral	2,470	51,195
Lions Hearing Aid Bank	258	3,450
Interpreter Licensing	98	975
NDBEDP	90	0
NSTEP	1,356	31,840
QAST	87	1,815
RID Continuing Education	71	520
Sertoma Hearing Aid Bank	651	10,510

Information and Referral Contacts (continued)

Presentation Topics

As Nebraska's Information and Referral Service on topics regarding hearing loss, NCDHH staff members presented to **3,241** total consumers in 152 instances. The table below shows the amount of consumers contacted by primary presentation topic.

Advocacy	5
Aging	25
Communication Tips	40
Deaf Awareness & Culture	412
Equipment Training	70
Hearing Loss	343
Hospital Training	2
Interpreting	4
Law Enforcement Training	285
Mental Health	151
NCDHH Services	1, 376
Noise Awareness	14
Sign Language Class	157

NCDHH staff members are trained and continually updated on events that impact the Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities. Staff members are able to present this information to a wide variety of audiences in correlation to the information type requested. The majority of the presentations made were related to NCDHH's services in general, explaining how we serve Nebraskans. Staff also actively initiate contact with audiences that can benefit from information we present. Some of these include nursing homes, law enforcement, private businesses, and consumer groups.

Information and Referral Contacts (continued)

Mental Health Summary

The graph below shows the number of consumers served by the Mental Health Specialist by type of activity.

*In the months of January to June: data was measured by *customers*, in the months of July to December, data was recorded in total *minutes with customers*. Please note with the two charts below:

	January to June # of Customers	July to December* # of minutes spent with customer
Advocacy	13	1471
Client Contact	63	0
Client Follow-up	28	0
Coordinate Services with...	31	201
MH/Substance Abuse Info & Referral	277	3802
Monitor Programs & Services	218	1060
Promotion	469	1140
Other		1261

Staff Sign Language Interpreting

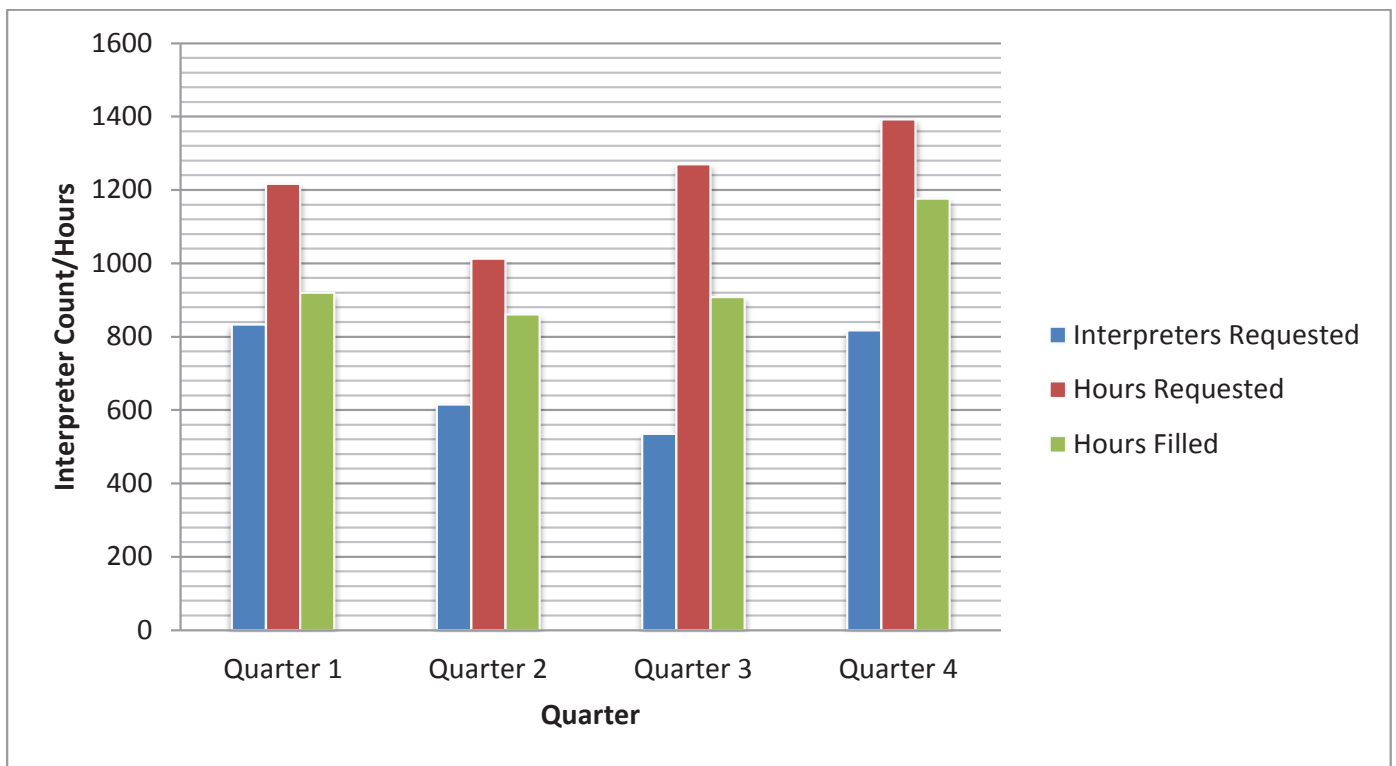
NCDHH records instances of staff interpreting provided by situation.

	January to June # of Customers	July to December* # of minutes spent with customer
Booths	9	168
Client	18	
Meeting	57	
External	2	
Phone Call	19	
Presentation	7	

Interpreter Referral Service

The Nebraska Sign Language Interpreter Referral Service can be contacted by phone through our local Lincoln number (402) 471-3593 or through the toll free number, 1-800-545-6244. Requests to obtain an interpreter can also be made electronically through our web page located at www.ncdhh.ne.gov. An after-hours emergency interpreter list is available on our web page as well. The process to contact an interpreter begins with the highest skilled interpreters being contacted first, based on the geographical location of the assignment.

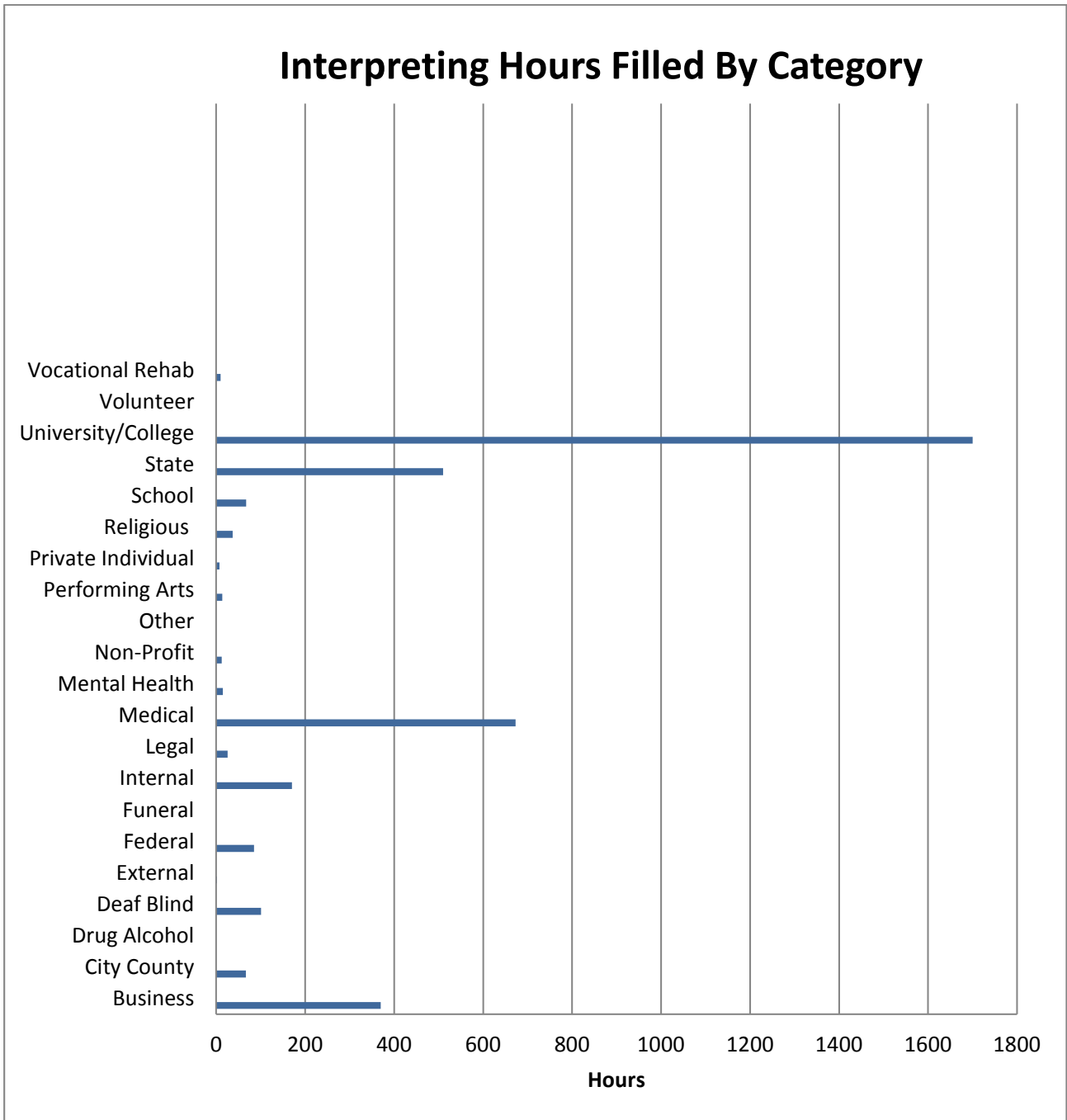
The chart below reflects, in 2014, the number of interpreters requested, the number of hours requested, and the number of hours filled through our Interpreter Referral Service.



	1	2	3	4
Interpreters Requested	833	615	535	817
Hours Requested	1,217	1,012.25	1,270.25	1,392.25
Hours Filled	920	860.75	907.75	1,176
Percentage Filled	75%	85%	71%	84%

Interpreter Referral Service (continued)

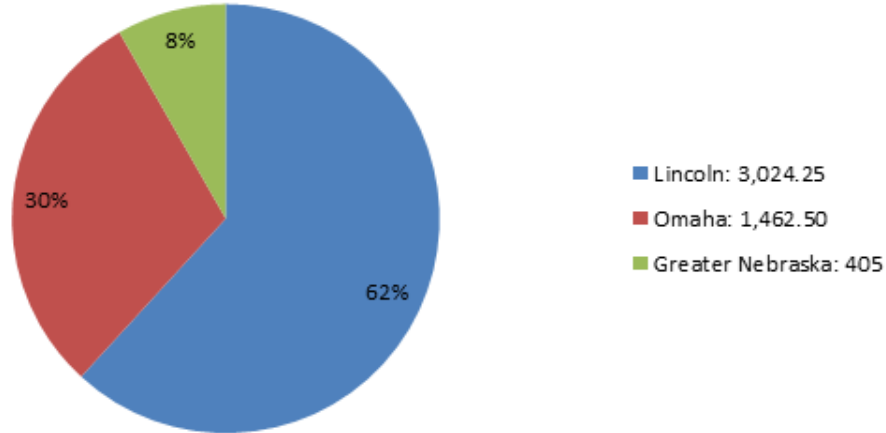
This chart references the number of hours of interpreting services filled by service categories in 2014. NCDHH continues to see an increase in demand in several categories, specifically in the medical and university/college categories. Public service providers have the ability to contact interpreters directly for services by using NC-DHH's online listing.



Interpreter Referral Service (continued)

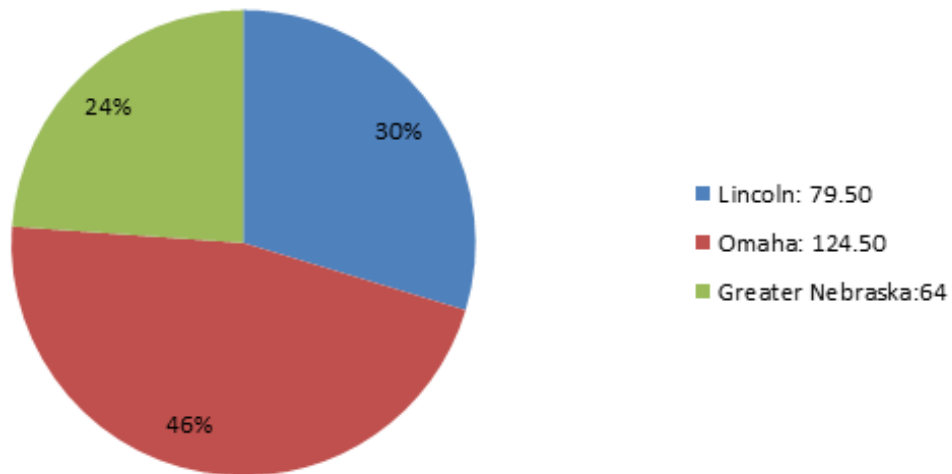
Filled Interpreter Request Hours by Region

The chart below gives reference to the number of hours that were filled through the NCDHH Referral Service. This data does not reflect the total number of hours interpreted in Nebraska. Because sign language interpreters are regarded as independent contractors, they are able to market their services outside of NCDHH's Referral Service.



Unfilled Interpreter Request Hours by Region

The chart below gives reference to the number of hours that went unfilled through the NCDHH Referral Service.



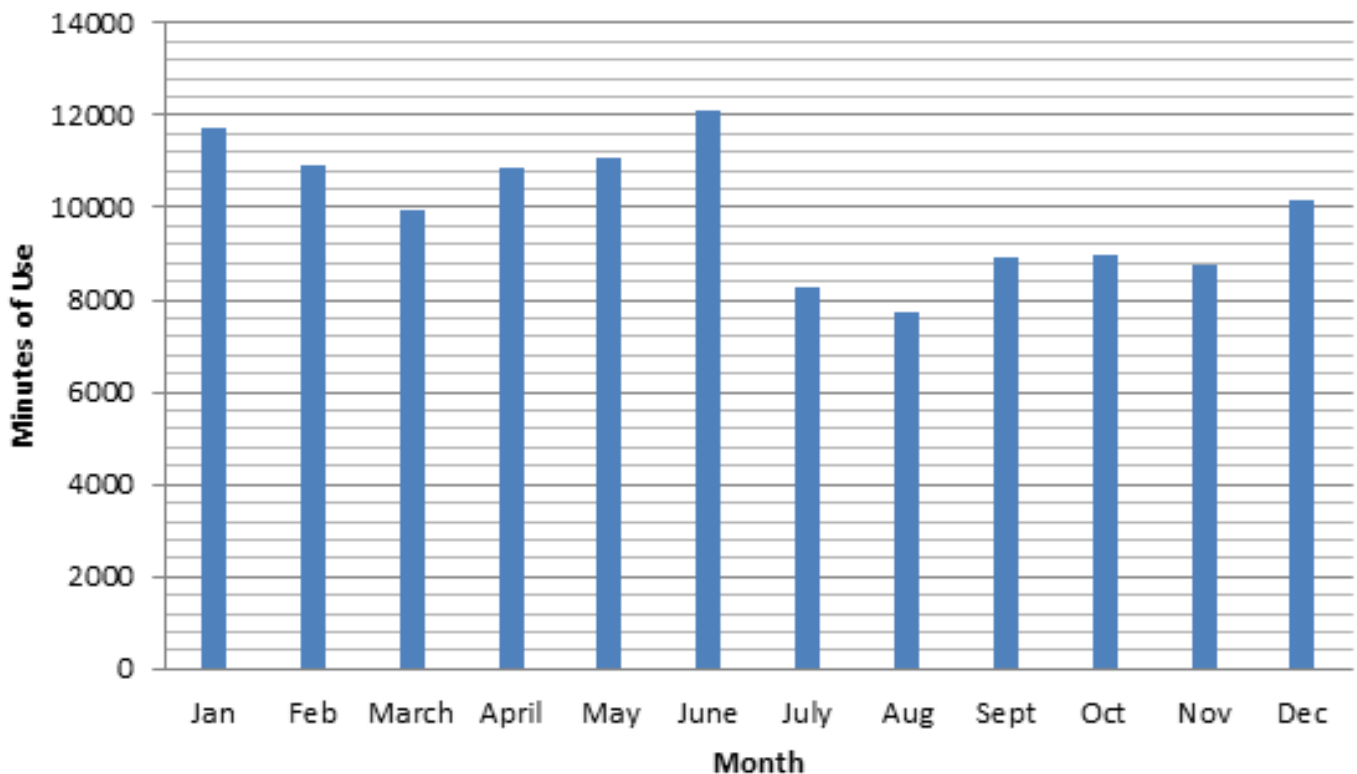
Statewide Communication Services

Nebraska Telecommunications Relay System, TRS

The Nebraska Telecommunications Relay System (TRS) provides full and simultaneous communication between a person who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing and the public using specialized and conventional phone equipment. Sprint Relay provides this service to Nebraska. For more information about this service, please visit www.sprintrelay.com or www.nebraskarelay.com or call (800) 676-3777 V/TTY.

The Public Service Commission administers the relay system with the advice of a seven-member committee appointed by the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The service is funded annually beginning July 1 of each year. For fiscal year July 2013-14, the surcharge was between \$.02 and \$.03. The surcharge is assessed on a per access line or functional equivalent line basis, including wireless and Voiceover Internet Protocols, VoIP, customers statewide.

The chart below shows the number of Relay minutes used for each month of 2014. The total number of minutes of Relay System use, 119,447, reflects the number of phone calls made through the system, 51,494.

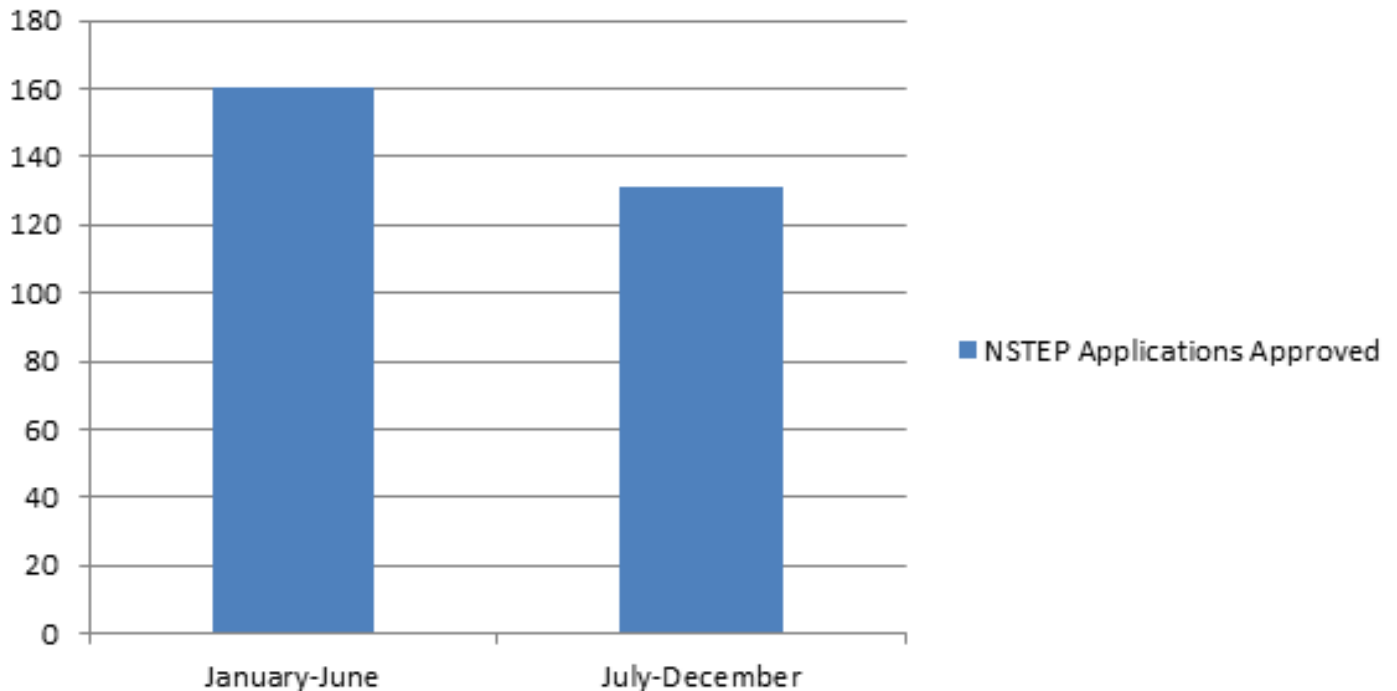


Statewide Communication Services

Nebraska Telecommunications Relay System, TRS

The Public Service Commission administers a statewide voucher program for the provision of specialized telecommunications equipment for qualified Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind or Speech-Impaired persons. The value of the voucher is limited to \$1,000 per household. Vouchers are available to qualified residents of Nebraska over the age of three who demonstrate the ability to use the equipment and have telephone service. Applications are available through the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

NSTEP Applications Approved



Media Center

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing maintains a media center offering books and videotapes related to Deafness, interpreting and hearing loss. A listing of materials is available on the Commission's web site. Materials can be borrowed for up to five weeks. Requested materials can be mailed to any Nebraska resident living outside of Lincoln, with the understanding that they are responsible for the return postage.

The NCDHH Media Center is a unique resource used primarily by those wishing to learn more about sign language. We are Nebraska's resource for materials in regards to sign language and those who use it. Students learning sign language and their instructors represent the majority of users of the Media Center. The Media Center covers many aspects of sign language, basic to advanced sign language skill building techniques, history of Deaf culture, interpreting, and entertainment in sign language.

NCDHH continues to make investments in our Media Center. Deaf culture, history, cochlear implants and interpreter resources are some recent areas of focus. NCDHH continues to be Nebraska's best resource for information related to Deafness, hearing losses and their impact on society and individuals.

The NCDHH Media Center was used 129 times in 2014.

Equipment Loan Program

NCDHH loans or provides TTYs, Pocketalkers, and Amplified Phones to individuals, agencies, organizations and businesses that employ or serve Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.

In 2012, NCDHH began the process of designing an online tracking tool for equipment available through the NCDHH Equipment Loan Program. NCDHH completed the design, transferring functionality and data in 2013. This new online tool enables staff to quickly respond to equipment requests and streamlines the inventory process.

NCDHH continues to refer clients to AT4ALL, a program under the Nebraska Department of Education, for more permanent solutions to equipment needs. AT4ALL can be accessed online at www.at4all.com.

In 2014 NCDHH was able to loan:

57 Assisted Listening Devices

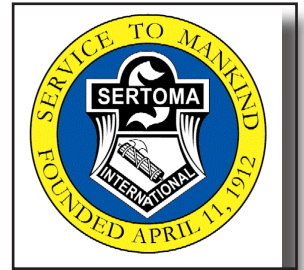
55 Amplified Phones

7 Teletypewriters (TTY)

Hearing Aid Banks

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing coordinates referrals, applications, and awareness of two hearing aid banks: the Sertoma Hearing Aid Bank and the Lions Hearing Aid Bank.

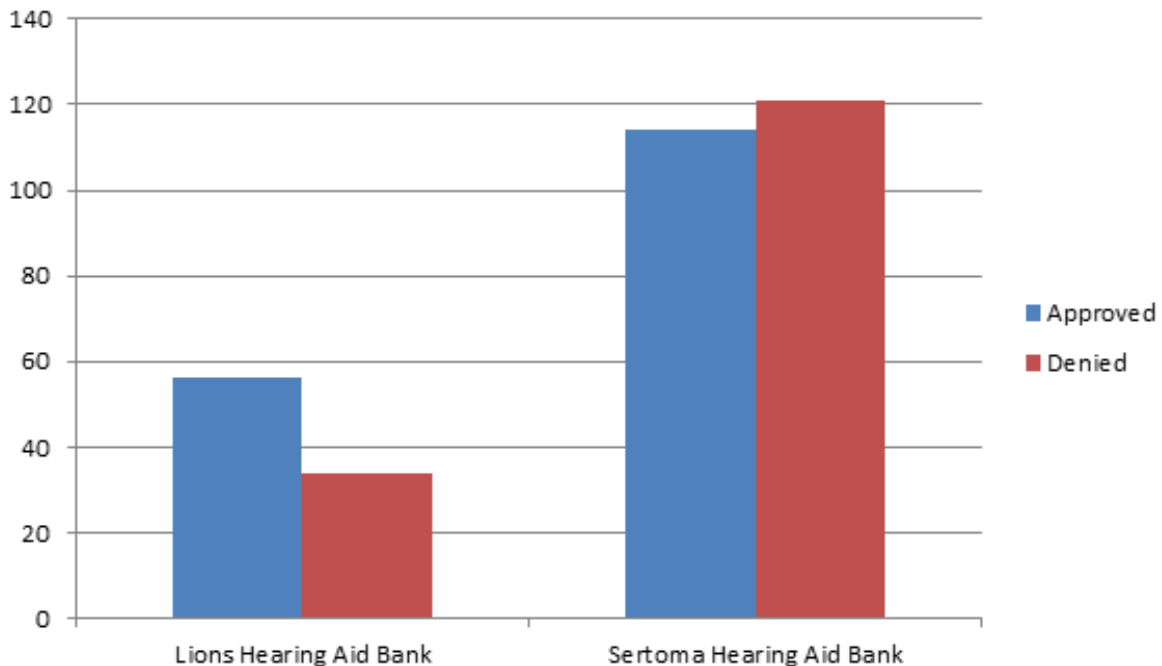
The Sertoma Hearing Aid Bank is a cooperative effort of the Sertoma Speech and Hearing Association of Nebraska, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Speech and Hearing Clinic and NCDHH. The purpose of this hearing aid bank is to serve individuals age 65 and older.



The Lions Hearing Aid Bank is the cooperative effort of the Nebraska Lions Foundation, the University of Nebraska Medical Center and NCDHH. This hearing aid bank serves people under the age of 65.

NCDHH coordinates all hearing aid bank referrals and processes the applications in accordance with guidelines established by the Lions and Sertoma Clubs. NCDHH approves applications, informs applicants of the necessary testing and fitting procedures and assists the applicants in the overall process.

Approved Hearing Aid Bank Applications



NCDHH Online

For over 15 years NCDHH has maintained a website, sharing information and resources with our stakeholders: online and available at any time. In 2014, the NCDHH Full Board of Commissioners recently approved a new design, style, and layout of the website to make navigating more user-friendly. Whether you are searching for yourself, a friend or family member, the website is designed to narrow your search with resource tabs titled Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, Sign Language Interpreters, Professionals in the Hearing Loss field, and Parents.

Our website is also a direct link to our Interpreter Referral Service. Through this program, individuals or businesses seeking an interpreter can access the On-line interpreter request form- either via e-mail or phone. There are also options for the after-hours emergency list, court related requests, and Video Remote Interpreting.



NCDHH on Facebook



Our Facebook page is a very important part of our agency as it is a key piece to notifying and informing our stakeholders, Deaf and Hard of Hearing community and general public of news, happenings, and information related to NCDHH. In the beginning of 2014, the NCDHH Facebook page had 318 “Likes” from around the world. At the end of 2014, our Facebook page now has 587 “Likes”.

On our Facebook page you will find posts with other stakeholders affecting the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, informational links, and pictures of the NCDHH Staff in action. There are also videos posted in American Sign Language (ASL).

Registry Information

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing conducts a statewide *voluntary* census of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. The numbers listed for each county indicate the number of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nebraskans located in each county. In Nebraska, 1% of the population are deaf. The voluntary census total number of Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind individuals for the entire state of Nebraska is **10,633**.

As provided in the originating legislation, the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing conducts a statewide, voluntary registry of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nebraskans. The information provided by this registry assists in the planning of services. Registry cards are made available to speech and hearing centers, hearing aid dispensers, hearing aid bank applicants and nursing homes. The cards are also available at the Commission offices, or can be completed online.

Continuing efforts are made to generate awareness among all Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nebraskans of the registry and urge their participation. A breakdown of the current registry data by county follows.

County	Deaf	Deaf / Low Visio	Hard of Hearir	Hoh/Low Vision	Late Deafene	Other	Speech Impaire	Total
Lancaster	97	1	674	4	8	3	1	788
Adams	6		116			1		123
Antelope	1		21	1				23
Arthur			1		1			2
Banner	1		11					12
Boone	2		42					44
Box Butte	3		69		1	2		75
Boyd	1		16		1			18
Brown			9			1		10
Buffalo	6		280	4	4	1		295
Burt	4		28					32
Butler	5		43		1			49
Cass	13		78	1	1	1		94
Cedar	1		27					28
Chase			20					20
Cherry	1	1	20					22
Cheyenne	1		40		1			42
Clay	1		32					33
Colfax	1		30		1			32
Cuming	1		27					28
Custer	2		61	1	2			66
Dakota	3		15	1				19
Dawes			47	1	2			50
Dawson	3		124	1	1	1		130
Deuel	1		15					16
Dixon			16					16
Dodge	10	1	172				1	184
Douglas	211	4	1609	12	18	10	2	5850
Dundy			14					14
Fillmore	2		23					25
Franklin	1		21		1			23
Frontier			22					22
Furnas	1		45					46
Gage	5		58					63
Garden	3		24					27
Garfield	1		25					26
Gosper	1		19					20
Grant			4					4
Greeley			25					25
Hall	6		263	1	1	2		273

Registry Information (continued)

County	Deaf	Deaf / Low Visic	Hard of Hearir	Hoh/Low Vision	Late Deafene	Other	Speech Impaire	Total
Hall	6		263	1	1	2		273
Hamilton	1		44					45
Harlan			16					16
Hayes			8			1		9
Hitchcock	2		30		2			34
Holt	5		72	1	1			79
Hooker			7					7
Howard	3		49		1			53
Jefferson			28					28
Johnson	1		7					8
Kearney			61		2			64
Keith	3		52		2			57
Keya Paha			5					5
Kimball	1		33			1		35
Knox			36			1		37
Lincoln	10		263	4	4	1		282
Logan			3					3
Loup			2	1				3
Madison	6		131	1				138
McPherson			2					2
Merrick	2		46					48
Morrill	3		33					36
Nance			20		1	1		22
Nemaha	1		15				1	17
Nuckolls			18					18
Otoe	7		44	1				52
Pawnee			17					17
Perkins			19		1			20
Phelps			50					50
Pierce	1		25					26
Platte	11		155	1	1			168
Polk	2		17					19
Red	3		80		1			84
Richardson	1		23					24
Rock	1		11					12
Saline	6		43	1				50
Sarpy	42		368		1		1	412
Saunders	5		66					71
Scotts	11		419	2	2	2		436
Seward	3		47					50
Sheridan			43	2				45
Sherman			34		1			35
Sioux			9					9
Stanton			19					19
Thayer			16		1			17
Thomas	1		5					6
Thurston			19					19
Valley	1		34					35
Washingto	4		69			1		74
Wayne			19		1			20
Webster	2		16					18
Wheeler			5					5
York	4		56	1				61

Interpreter Workshops



As Nebraska's only official Continuing Education Unit Sponsor of Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) activities, we maintain the integrity of the education that interpreters receive through the RID through strict policies and procedures. Below are listed the titles of workshops that NCDHH sponsored for CEUs in 2014.



1. AEYC Kaleidoscope Conference 2-1-2014
2. Using Process Time: Why it is important and Techniques to Improve Process Time 2-8-2014
3. Understanding Prosodic Features Used in ASL to Enhance Your Interpretations / Effectively Utilizing Space in Your Interpretations 3-29-2014
4. Charting the Course: Avoid Getting Lost – Learn Effective Discourse Mapping Strategies 4-5-2104
5. Improving Interpreting in the Mental Health Environment 5-30-2014
6. Identifying and Resolving Secondary Trauma 5-31-2014
7. 3-Day Intensive Skills Workshop 7-30-2014
8. Strategies for Handling Complex Concepts: Trying on Expansion Techniques 10-11-2014
9. EIPA Incorporating Classifiers 12-6-2014

NCDHH provides opportunities to enhance skills and knowledge for anyone interested in learning more about sign language. Resources and materials can be found through our free Media Center and our website.

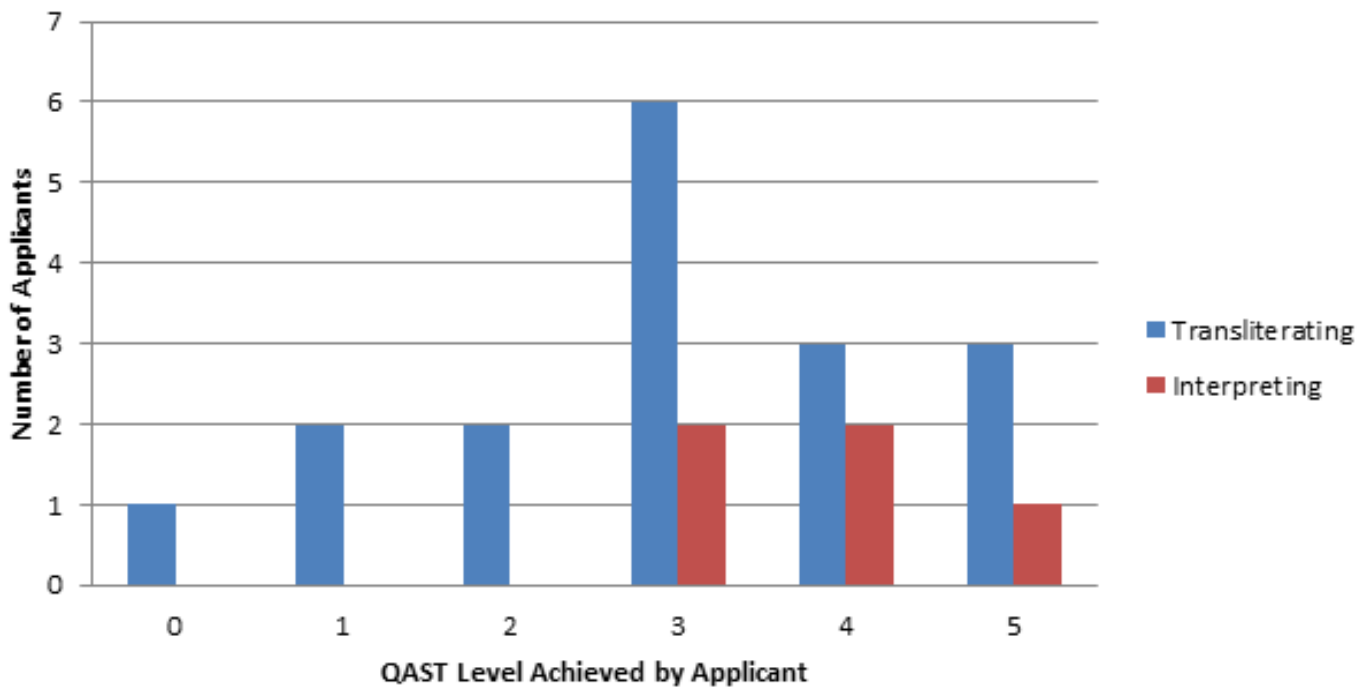
Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST) Performance Evaluations

The Quality Assurance Screening Test, QAST, provides an assessment of an interpreter’s expressive and receptive skills in the areas of interpreting and transliterating. The written portion of the test measures their knowledge of the Code of Ethics and general interpreting aptitude. The chart displayed below references the results of testing administered by NCDHH in 2014.

This information assists NCDHH in determining whether an interpreter is qualified and is used by our agency for referral to outside agencies. The level assigned to the interpreter and feedback from the evaluators assists the interpreter in selecting workshop training and independent study relevant to their particular weaknesses.

Level 5 is the highest rating and is considered an “Accomplished Level” in which there are no restrictions. Most interpreters achieve level 2 or level 3. Level 3 is the minimum qualification for Nebraska Interpreter/Transliterating License. Interpreters holding a Level 2 qualify for a Nebraska Provisional Interpreter/Transliterating license.

QAST Results 2014



The Nebraska QAST Performance Test was enhanced in 2013, enabling applicants to be rated I through V with a single stimulus. Prior to the improvement, applicants were given the option to test using a “novice/intermediate” or “advanced” stimulus.

Mental Health, Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Training Programs

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) Mental Health Specialist performs the following:

1. Monitors and provides advice to mental health and substance abuse programs providing treatment to Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals.
2. Coordinates intervention/prevention and training programs to consumers and programs that serve them, educators, interpreters and general public about mental health and substance abuse disorders.
3. Advises and guides program service providers and representatives of community based organizations on program service questions.
4. Coordinates and oversees the Mental Health Advisory Committee for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.
5. Ensures full access to comprehensive mental health, alcoholism and substance abuse services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons by collaborating with Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and other providers.

Mental Health Awareness Programs

The mission of the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's Mental Health services is to "assist providers, consumers and the general public in promoting accessible mental health and alcohol/drug services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens in Nebraska."

Serving the mental health needs of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals population presents special challenges. Cultural and communication issues that arise present problems for general service delivery professionals, who do not have the background, experience or the assessment tools necessary to effectively serve this population.

The NCDHH Mental Health Specialist provided the following training programs and workshops in 2014 in an effort to fulfill the mission and goals of the Commission's program.

Training Program: Effective Healthcare for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Patients

Date: March 21, 2014

Community Served: College of Health Science Nursing Students

Training Program: NCDHH Awareness/Culture/Language

Date: June 11, 2014

Community Served: Scottsbluff, NE Police Department

Training Program: Deaf Culture, Language and Hearing Loss

Date: June 12, 2014

Community Served: The Doves Program, Scottsbluff, NE

Training Program: Communication Barriers

Date: June 12, 2014

Community Served: Scottsbluff, NE Fire Department

Training Program: Police and the Deaf Community

Date: August 15, 2014

Community Served: 2014 Spring Lincoln Police Department Academy

Training Program: Domestic Violence and the Deaf Community

Date: September 10, 2014

Community Served: Voices of Hope

Training Program: The Impact of Domestic Violence on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community

Date: September 23, 2014

Community Served: The S.A.F.E. Center – Kearney, NE

Training Program: Effective Healthcare for Patients Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Date: November 13, 2014

Community Served: College of Health Science Nursing Students

Training Program: Web guest – Counseling and Mental Health Services for Adults and Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

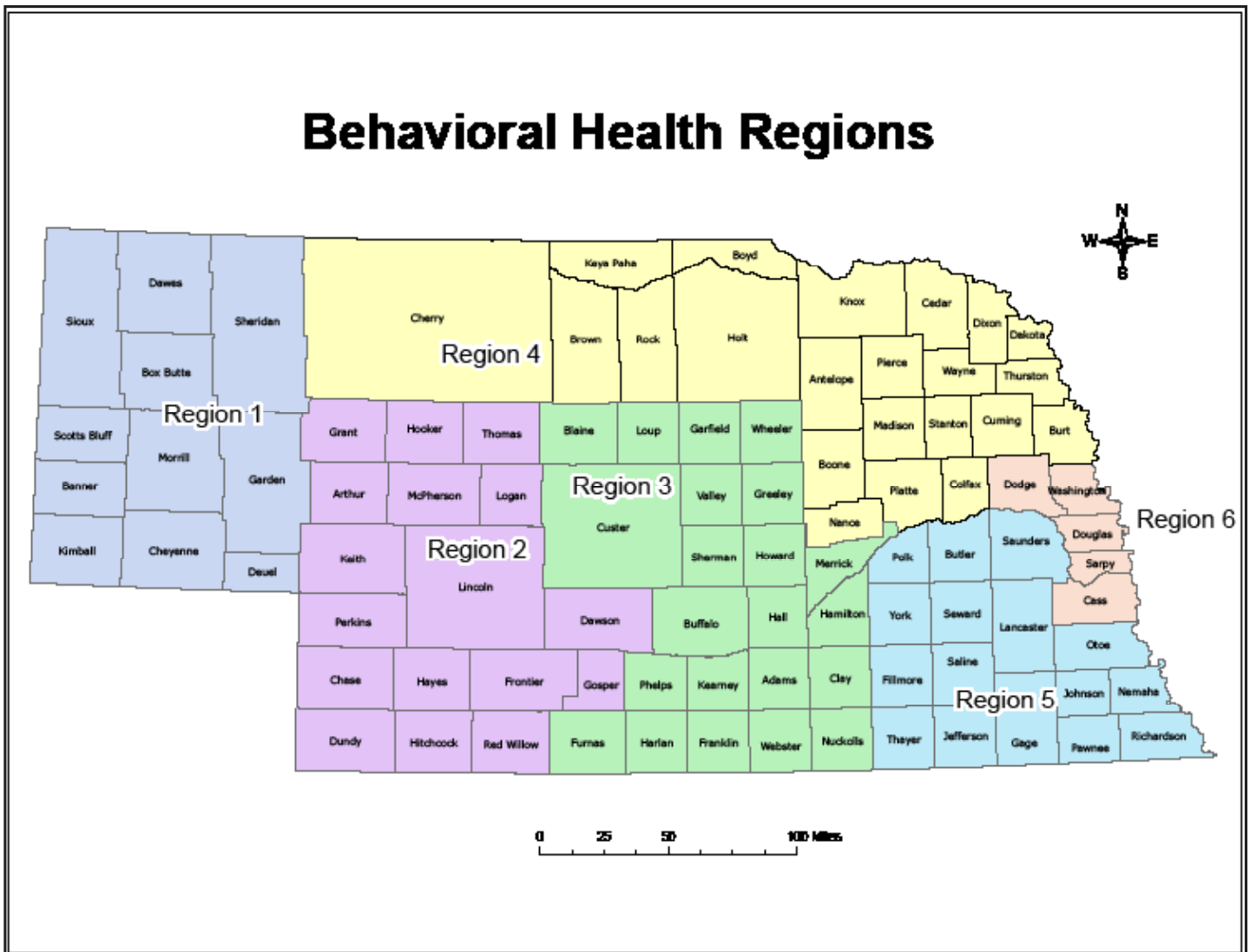
Date: November 11th – 15th, 2014

Community Served: Deaf Education Teachers – University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Behavioral Health Regions

Nebraska is divided into six Behavioral Health regions. These are local units of government that partner with the state government to do planning and service implementation.

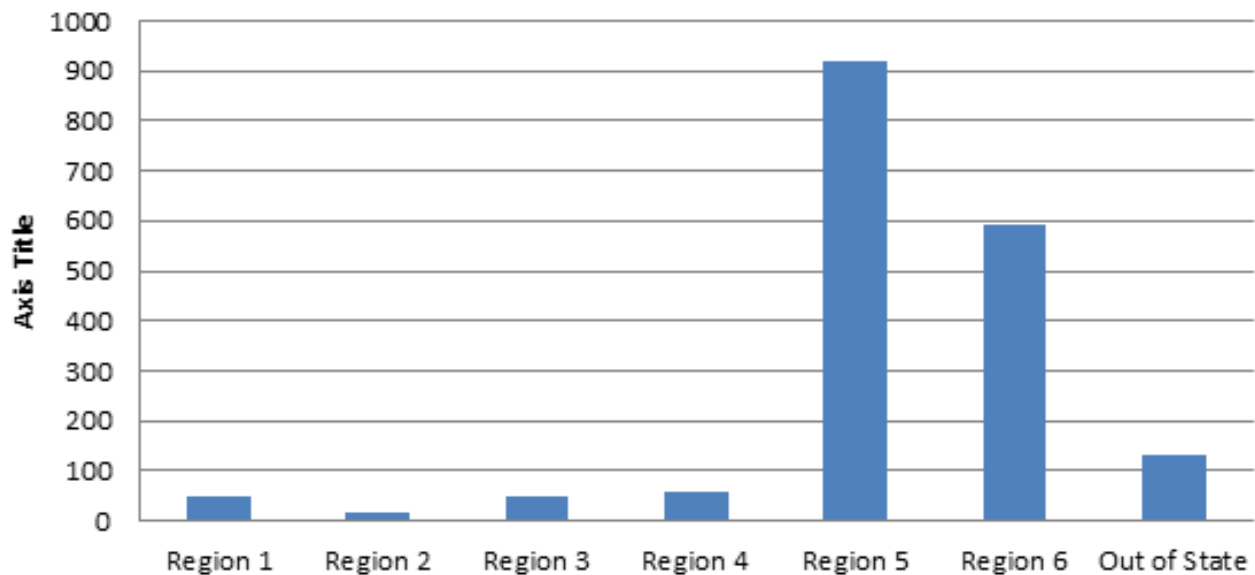
The Behavioral Health Regions system allows clients to receive services from local providers. Providers are able to focus their services on local clients. NCDHH's Mental Health Specialist maintains contact with each region ensuring equal access to services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nebraskans.



Regions Served by Mental Health Specialist

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) Mental Health Specialist serves the entire State of Nebraska, in addition to serving a number of citizens who reside out of the State of Nebraska.

Frequency of Assistance Provided by Mental Health Specialist by Region



Counties Included in Each Region

Region 1: Sioux, Dawes, Box Butte, Sheridan, Scotts Bluff, Morrill, Garden, Banner, Kimball, Cheyenne and Deuel.

Region 2: Grant, Hooker, Thomas, Arthur, McPherson, Logan, Keith, Lincoln, Perkins, Chase, Hayes, Frontier, Dawson, Gosper, Dundy, Hitchcock and Red Willow.

Region 3: Blaine, Loup, Garfield, Wheeler, Custer, Valley, Greeley, Sherman, Howard, Buffalo, Hall, Phelps, Kearney, Adams, Clay, Furnas, Harlan, Hamilton, Merrick, Franklin, Webster and Nuckolls.

Region 4: Cherry, Keya Paha, Boyd, Brown, Rock, Holt, Knox, Cedar, Dixon, Dakota, Thurston, Wayne, Pierce, Antelope, Boone, Nance, Madison, Stanton, Cuming, Burt, Colfax and Platte.

Region 5: Polk, Butler, Saunders, Seward, Lancaster, Otoe, Fillmore, Saline, Thayer, Jefferson, Gage, Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee, York and Richardson.

Region 6: Dodge, Washington, Douglas, Sarpy and Cass.

2014 Commission Members

Mr. Michael Brummer, Chairperson, Interest & Knowledge in Deafness and Hearing Loss Representative
Omaha
February 2013-January 2016

Ms. Margaret Propp, Vice Chairperson, Interest & Knowledge in Deafness and Hearing Loss Representative
Lincoln
February 2013-January 2016

Dr. Carol Lomicky, Secretary, Deaf Representative
Kearney
February 2011-January 2017

Mr. Steven Manning, Deaf Representative
Omaha
February 2009-January 2015

Dr. Jan Moore, Interest & Knowledge in Deafness and Hearing Loss Representative
Kearney
February 2009-January 2015

Ms. Diane Muelleman, Hard of Hearing Representative
Omaha
March 2010-January 2015

Ms. Regina (Gina) Frerichs, Hard of Hearing Representative
Columbus
February 2014-January 2017

Mr. Dillard Delts, Deaf Representative
Omaha
February 2008-January 2014

Mr John Hogue, Hard of Hearing Representative
Falls City
February 2011-January 2014

Dr. Frank Turk, Deaf Representative
Omaha
June 2014-January 2017

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VP 402-509-1157

Peggy Williams

Mental Health Specialist - Statewide
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VP 402-206-2971

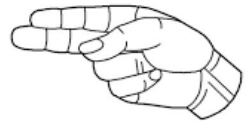
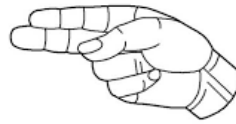
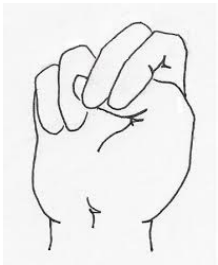
April Guthrie

Field Representative - Tri City Area
april.guthrie@nebraska.gov



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