



Advisory Committee Handbook

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division

DHHS's website:

mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing/

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Contents

Dear Prospective or New Member 1

Introduction 2

Purpose of the Advisory Committee 2

Code of Conduct 3

DHHS Regional Representative to the MNCDHH Board 3

The Role of the Advisory Committee Chairperson 4

Matters that are not Advisory Committee Responsibilities..... 5

Advisory Committee Composition 5

 Selection and Appointment..... 5

Frequency of Advisory Committee Meetings 6

Compensation for Committee Members..... 6

DHHS Regional Representative to the MNCDHH Board 7

The Role of DHHS Staff 7

Appendix A: Minnesota Department of Human Services 9

 DHS Mission Statement..... 9

 DHS Core Values..... 9

Appendix B: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division..... 10

 DHHS Mission Statement..... 10

 DHHS Core Values..... 10

Appendix C: DHHS Regional Office Staff Duties and Responsibilities 11

 Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist 11

 Lead Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist..... 11

 Interpreter Coordinator 11

Regional Services Supervisor	11
Mental Health Specialist	12
Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program Specialist.....	12
Appendix D: Minnesota Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans	13
Appendix E: Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program and Minnesota Relay	14
Appendix F: Commonly Used Acronyms and Terms	15
Federal Departments	15
State Departments and Programs	15
Minnesota Organizations	17
DeafBlind or Combined Hearing and Vision Loss	17
Deaf	17
Hard of Hearing.....	17
Phone.....	18
Interpreting.....	18
Other.....	18

Dear Prospective or New Member

If you are thinking about becoming a member of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division (DHHSD) Advisory Committee, thank you for your interest. If you are an appointed member, thank you for your commitment to help improve services for Minnesotans who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing.

The information in this handbook is designed to help you understand how the DHHSD Advisory Committee works. The book will explain the responsibilities of the advisory committee and the role of members. If you have any questions after reading this handbook, please contact your regional representative. They will be happy to answer any questions you have.

Sincerely,

Dan Millikin, DHHSD Director

Introduction

In 1980, the Minnesota Legislature passed the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) Act (Minnesota Statute, Section 256C.233, Subd. 1) to address the developmental and social-emotional needs of Minnesotans who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing.

The Department of Human Services receives legislative appropriations for the division. Staff currently provide services throughout Minnesota from regional offices in St. Paul, St. Cloud, Duluth, Mankato and Moorhead. Additional staff are located in Hibbing and Rochester.

There are eight advisory committees across the state. Each committee represents a specific region. The director determines each advisory committee's regional boundaries.

Purpose of the Advisory Committee

Each Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division (DHHS) advisory committee is established to represent the interests of people who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing in its region. The advisory committee is described in Minnesota Statute, Section 256C.24, subd. 3.

Members are responsible to:

1. Provide input to DHHS from the perspective of consumers and professionals in the community.
2. Promote awareness of DHHS programs and activities within the community.

In addition to these responsibilities, DHHS staff may request feedback or information about new projects, and/or materials produced for consumers and stakeholders. Response to these requests for assistance is important and appreciated.

The committees advise the director on the needs of persons who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing, and service gaps in the committee's region.

The Minnesota Administrative Boards and Agencies procedures (section 15.0575) outline the process for compensation, removal of members and filling vacancies on the committee. For more information about compensation, see page 7.

Code of Conduct

The Minnesota Department of Human Services, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division is committed to maintaining a positive and respectful environment. To support this commitment, all advisory committee members are expected to follow a code of conduct while conducting division business.

- All advisory committee members are expected to treat other individuals with the utmost respect. This includes respecting other individuals' time, space, ideas, and thoughts.
- All advisory committee members are also expected to treat all people fairly, equally, and without discrimination regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, age, disability, communication preferences or political ideology.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division will not tolerate harassment or discrimination of any kind.

DHHSD Advisory Committee Member Responsibilities

1. Identify needs and gaps in services for people who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing and recommend solutions to regional problems.
2. Help assess the needs of individuals in the region who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing and bring this information to the attention of the representative and the region's MNCDHH representative.
3. Assist DHHSD to identify situations where human service agencies do not provide equal access to their services for people who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing. Make suggestions for how human services might be made more accessible and equitable.
4. Promote awareness of DHHSD programs and services within the community.

5. Inform deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing community members about the services offered by DHHSD. Share information about DHHSD's actions to address the needs and concerns they have raised.
6. Report to DHHSD on Minnesota Relay service provision. Issues and concerns with Minnesota Relay are sent to:
 - a. DHHSD Director,
 - b. Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program Administrator,
 - c. MNCDHH Executive Director, and
 - d. Department of Commerce, Telecommunications Access Minnesota (TAM) Administrator.
7. Submit items for the agenda prior to each meeting.
8. Notify the committee chairperson or the DHHSD regional representative if unable to attend a scheduled meeting. Members who represent agencies are encouraged to send a replacement from their agency or organization if possible.

Note: DHHSD wants to ensure that all meetings are accessible to its members. New members should inform the DHHSD regional representative of their communication needs.

The Role of the Advisory Committee Chairperson

The advisory committee members or regional representatives elect a chairperson. The chairperson serves for one year, or longer if the DHHSD regional representative, chairperson and committee members agree.

The committee chairperson:

- Facilitates the advisory committee meeting.
- Conducts meetings in a manner consistent with Robert's Rules of Order or in whatever efficient manner most reflects the desires of the committee.

In the absence of anyone able or willing to assume the role of the chairperson, the DHHSD representative can appoint someone to the position for one year, or the DHHSD representative can facilitate meetings in lieu of a chairperson.

Matters that are not Advisory Committee Responsibilities

- Decisions related to the hiring, discipline, compensation or firing of DHHS staff.
- Personnel policies or labor contracts.
- Budget and/or allocation of money and resources, though the committee can make recommendations to the DHHS representative for program improvement.
- Official program assessment or monitoring. The committee may give feedback and make suggestions for program improvement to the DHHS representative.
- Administrative procedures.
- Contracts or grant awards.
- Legal requirements of the program.
- Legislative mandates of the program, though the committee can ask its MNCDHH representative to make recommendations to the full council of MNCDHH for legislative changes to the Governor's Office, the Legislature or DHHS.

Advisory Committee Composition

The advisory committee may have up to nine members:

- At least 50% of members must be deaf or deafblind or hard of hearing or have a communication disability.
- Members shall include:
 - Persons who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing or who have communication disabilities,
 - Parents of children who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing or who have communication disabilities, and
 - Representatives of county and regional human services, including representatives of private service providers.
- DHHS staff attend meetings as ex-officio members only.

Selection and Appointment

Individuals interested in serving on their region's advisory committee complete a nomination form and submit it to the appropriate DHHSD regional representative. The nominations include a short statement of the nominee's credentials. The DHHSD Director reviews nominations and appoints up to nine committee members to each advisory committee.

A letter is sent to all those who apply, informing them if they have or have not been appointed.

- Committee members serve for a three-year term. Members may be appointed to consecutive terms.
- Anyone can apply or recommend a person for appointment to the advisory committee. Contact any DHHSD staff member to nominate yourself or another person.
- A person must live or work in the DHHSD geographical region to serve on that region's advisory committee.

Frequency of Advisory Committee Meetings

The committee generally meets three times a year. DHHSD may schedule a fourth community advisory committee meeting to gather more information about regional needs and gaps in services for people who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing. Advisory committee members may be asked to help facilitate the meetings.

Compensation for Committee Members

Advisory committee members do not receive per diem.

Members may request reimbursement for mileage and parking expenses when they attend regularly scheduled advisory committee meetings and other advisory committee-related work. Members must submit receipts in a timely fashion for parking reimbursement. Mileage is reimbursed at the rate established by the IRS for the given calendar year. Some advisory committee members may be eligible to receive reimbursement for their meal expense if they meet certain criteria. For further details regarding any type of reimbursement, contact the DHHSD regional representative for your advisory committee.

DHHSD Regional Representative to the MNCDHH Board

The representative must be able to work with the Commission to address equal access issues, review current services, identify regional areas of need, and recommend improvements. The representative will report Commission activities to the regional advisory committee. It is important that the representative to the Commission represent all regional needs and not just their own interests.

DHHSD selects representatives to the Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans board in one of three ways:

1. Members of each DHHSD advisory committee may recommend a member.
2. A DHHSD regional representative may work with the advisory committee to identify a member.
3. An advisory committee member may volunteer.

Candidates will be open-minded and non-biased. They must be willing to represent all regional interests to the Commission.

Once a candidate has been selected, the recommendation will be presented to the DHHSD Director.

The DHHSD Director will discuss the recommendation with the Executive Director of the Commission to determine if the candidate has the necessary background, skills and interests to serve as an effective Commission member. Consideration will also be given to creating a diverse Commission board. The DHHSD Director makes the final determination.

Upon approval of the recommendation by the DHHSD Director, the DHHSD regional representative will ask the candidate to complete an application to the MN Secretary of State's office by mail, fax or in person.

The candidate must commit to attendance at **four** all-day Commission meetings per year. Travel costs are reimbursed.

The Role of DHHSD Staff

The regional DHHSD staff assists the advisory committee to fulfill its function as required by law.

The DHHSD representative sends an accessible meeting agenda to committee members, interpreters and CART providers 7 to 10 days prior to the meeting.

The DHHSD representative or another designated staff person takes official minutes for each meeting. Minutes are typed and sent to all committee members within 21 working days of the meeting. Meeting minutes are also sent to DHHSD Director, TED Program Administrator, MNCDHH Executive Director, and Department of Commerce – TAM Administrator. When available, the DHHSD staff interpreter provides sign language interpreting services for committee meetings, or coordinates interpreting services.

The DHHSD representative also assures that real time captioning, assistive listening systems or other requested accommodations are available for committee meetings. The local DHHSD staff will also provide copying, mailing, use of telephone lines, conference call equipment, meeting facilities, and other support services to the committee at no cost.

Appendix A: Minnesota Department of Human Services

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is an agency within the State of Minnesota that administers programs and services for Minnesotans. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division's (DHHSD) offices are housed under the Community Supports Administration within DHS. Funding for DHHSD is part of the department's annual budget and is administered according to Minnesota state law.

DHS Mission Statement

The Minnesota Department of Human Services, working with many others, helps people meet their basic needs so they can live in dignity and achieve their highest potential.

DHS Core Values

The department's core values are the touchstones for our decisions:

- We focus on people, not programs.
- We provide ladders up and safety nets for the people we serve.
- We work in partnership with others; we cannot do it alone.
- We are accountable for results, first to the people we serve, and ultimately to all Minnesotans.

We practice these shared values in an ethical environment where integrity, trustworthiness, responsibility, respect, justice, fairness and caring are of paramount importance.

Appendix B: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division (DHHSD) is a permanent division within the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Regional offices and staff who are located with other agencies throughout the state are part of DHHSD.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, in partnership with other local, county, state and federal public and private agencies, is mandated to facilitate access to Minnesota's human service system for individuals who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing.

DHHSD is committed to assisting Minnesotans who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing to attain the maximum degree of self-sufficiency possible, consistent with their individual goals and capabilities. To these ends, DHHSD actively promotes the dignity, rights and empowerment of citizens who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing in pursuit of full and equal access to available resources statewide, and if necessary, the development of additional services.

DHHSD is made up of several interrelated programs: Direct Services, Mental Health Program, Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program, Community Grants and Contracts.

If you have any questions about this information, please contact the DHHSD representative for your region.

DHHSD Mission Statement

Promote equal access and opportunities for Minnesotans with hearing loss through effective communication, collaboration and direct services.

DHHSD Core Values

- Excellence in all we do
- Equality for all we serve
- Empowerment for our customers

Appendix C: DHHS Regional Office Staff Duties and Responsibilities

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist

- Provides information, referral, technical assistance, consultation and training to human service providers.
- Works with individuals who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing and their families to identify problems, make referrals to appropriate services, offer suggestions, and obtain access to the human services system.
- Promotes awareness of Deaf culture and hearing loss among the general public.
- Helps service providers make their services more accessible for people with hearing loss.

Lead Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist

In addition to the duties of a DHH Specialist,

- Provides leadership and guidance for advisory committee meetings, develops templates for meeting agendas and maintains committee membership details.
- Assumes responsibility for special projects as assigned.

Interpreter Coordinator

- Provides interpreter support services to DHHS staff and DHHS clients, and as time allows, to area human service agencies.
- Provides information, technical assistance and consultation to area agencies, businesses and interpreters regarding communication access and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Works to develop a pool of qualified interpreters to meet the needs of the area.

Regional Services Supervisor

- Supervises DHH Specialists and oversees regional office activities to assure the goals and objectives of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Act and the DHHS annual work plan are achieved.
- Coordinates services with other program supervisors.

Mental Health Specialist

Provides culturally affirmative mental health assessment, counseling, consultation and case coordination and referral services.

Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program Specialist

- Promotes the State of Minnesota's Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program within the DHHS region.
- Identifies qualified applicants, certifies their eligibility for the program, distributes appropriate assistive telecommunications equipment to the individual, and trains consumers on how to use the equipment.
- Provides assistance and guidance for individuals applying for discounted telecommunications or internet programs, and offers pre-screening assessment related to assistive technology.

Appendix D: Minnesota Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans

The Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (MNCDHH) advocates for communications access and equal opportunity with the 20% of Minnesotans who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing. They work with the community to:

- Identify barriers,
- Develop solutions,
- Empower by building community capacity and
- Advocate through civic engagement.

MNCDHH advises the Governor, the Legislature, and the commissioners of Human Services, Economic Security, Health, and Education on the development of policies, programs and services affecting people who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing, and on the use of appropriate federal and state money.

MNCDHH has a fifteen-member advisory board appointed by the Governor. The board:

- Reviews current services.
- Identifies areas of need.
- Recommends improvements to the Governor, the Legislature, and the commissioners of Human Services, Economic Security, Health, and Education.
- Promotes the well-being of Minnesotans who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing.

Appendix E: Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program and Minnesota Relay

The Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program and Minnesota Relay are two programs established in 1988 to improve access to phone communication services for Minnesotans who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing, or who have speech or physical disabilities.

The **Telephone Equipment Distribution (TED) Program** provides specialized phone equipment to individuals who have difficulty using the phone because they are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing or have speech or physical disabilities. Equipment is provided at no cost to those who meet eligibility guidelines.

Minnesota Relay facilitates both personal and business calls between traditional telephone users and those who use captioned telephones, TTYs or other assistive technology to communicate over the phone.

Questions about Minnesota Relay services should be directed to Minnesota Relay outreach (Minnesota Relay email: mn.relay@state.mn.us, Minnesota Relay website: <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/your-phone/minnesota-relay/>).

Both the TED Program and Minnesota Relay are funded through a surcharge on all private phone lines. The Department of Commerce – Telecommunications Access Minnesota (DOC-TAM) administers Minnesota Relay. The Department of Human Services, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division administers the TED Program.

Appendix F: Commonly Used Acronyms and Terms

Federal Departments

DOJ: Department of Justice

FCC: Federal Communications Commission (regulates video relay, telecommunications relay and captioned telephone services)

EEOA: Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action

EEOC: Equal Employment and Opportunity Commission

State Departments and Programs

CAF: Central Accommodations Fund

DEED: Department Employment and Economic Development

CAP: Client Assistance Program

CFC: Career Force Center

SSB: State Services for the Blind

VRS: Vocational Rehabilitation Services

WIOA: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

DHHSD: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division, or “The Division.”

DHS: Department of Human Services

AASD: Aging and Adult Services Division

AAA: Area Agencies on Aging

CFS: Children and Family Services

CSA: Community Supports Administration

CCOA: Continuing Care of Older Adults (also referred to as CC: Continuing Care)

DSD: Disability Services Division

DOC: Department of Commerce, which funds Telecommunications Access Minnesota

DOC: Department of Corrections

DPS: Department of Public Safety

EHDI: Early Hearing Detection and Intervention

IEP: Individualized Educational Program (Age 3+)

IFSP: Individual Family Service Plan (Birth to Age 3)

MDE: Minnesota Department of Education

MDH: Minnesota Department of Health

MDHR: Minnesota Department of Human Rights

MMB: Minnesota Management and Budget

MNCDHH: Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind & Hard of Hearing Minnesotans. Sometimes called "The Commission."

PUC: Public Utilities Commission

RBA: Results-Based Accountability

RFP: Request for Proposal

TAM: Telecommunications Access Minnesota, under the Minnesota Department of Commerce (DOC-TAM)

TED: Telephone Equipment Distribution

Minnesota Organizations

HWP: Health and Wellness Program

MCIL: Minnesota Council of Independent Living

MEC: Minnesota Employment Center, under RISE Inc.

ThinkSelf: Formerly CSD of MN, focus on ABE (Adult Basic Education) and Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault services

Deafblind or Combined Hearing and Vision Loss

AEI: Aging Eye Initiative

DBCDS: DeafBlind Consumer Directed Services

DBSM: DeafBlind Services of Minnesota

MDBA: Minnesota DeafBlind Association

PT: ProTactile, and ProTactile interpreting

Deaf

BDA: Black Deaf Advocates

MADC: Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens

MDS: Metro Deaf School

MDSC: Minnesota Deaf Senior Citizens

MSAD: Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (and MSA for the Blind)

NAD: National Association of the Deaf

Hard of Hearing

ARHL: Age-Related Hearing Loss

CART: Communication Access Realtime Translation, or word-for-word captions of all that is said

HAAA: Hearing Loss Association of America

HAAA-TC: Hearing Loss Association of America, Twin Cities Chapter

PSAPs: Personal Sound Amplification Products, less regulated products available over-the-counter as an alternative to hearing aids.

Phone

Captioned telephone: Shows real-time captioning of what the other party says on a screen. The caller can listen and read the captions, and respond using their own voice.

VRS: Video Relay Service

Interpreting

ASLIS: American Sign Language Interpreting Services

KIS: Keystone Interpreting Services

MEI: Middle English Interpreting Services

MRID: Minnesota Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

RID: Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf

Other

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act

800-657-3663

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