

# MISSOURI COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING



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Michael L. Parson  
Governor

Greetings on behalf of Missouri Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing,

The Missouri Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) is a state agency that works with individuals, service providers, businesses, organizations, and government agencies to advocate on behalf of Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind citizens of Missouri.

It is MCDHH's mission to be proactive in supporting both Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind citizens as well as law enforcement to result in accessible and adequate services and interactions. Please read and consider the following to ensure the rights of the citizens you serve pertaining to the Americans with Disabilities Act which "prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in several areas, including employment, transportation, public accommodations, communications and access to state and local government programs and services."

The specific requirements are listed below:

- Courts/Legal counsel are required to consult Deaf and hard of hearing clients to determine the most effective way to communicate.
- Courts/Legal counsel are required by state policy (OSCA) once they become aware that a person is deaf or hard of hearing, to provide the deaf or hard of hearing person "their choice of auxiliary aids and services". (SEE LINK BELOW)
- Courts/Legal counsel are required to provide a requested qualified American Sign Language Interpreter. Interpreters must have appropriate certification and carry a license to work in the state of Missouri. Do not use family, friends, employees, staff if they know American Sign Language. Being a relative of a Deaf and hard of Hearing person does not mean they are qualified as an interpreter.
- Courts/Legal counsel should not exclude, deny, segregate, or treat individuals with disabilities differently from individuals without disabilities. Ensure equal access to your facilities with auxiliary aid or services.
- Courts/Legal counsel are responsible for the auxiliary services. Such services must be provided at no cost and with the consult of the Deaf and hard of hearing
- Courts/Legal counsel are responsible to understand that additional auxiliary aids and services could be necessary to ensure adequate accommodations are met. Such services could be a Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI), Video Remote Interpreters (VRI), and Communication Access Realtime Transcription (CART). Law firm offices/lawyers cannot charge Deaf and hard of hearing patients requesting auxiliary aid or service for those services.
- Courts/Legal counsel must accept a call or make a call from or through video relay services (VRS) or text-based telecommunication relay services (TRS) to communicate Deaf and hard of hearing clients as the same as direct telephone calls

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Missouri Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Sources:

American with Disabilities Act:

<https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/ada>

National Association of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing:

<https://www.nad.org/resources/advocacy-letters/>

American Sign Language Interpreting Agency in Missouri:

[https://www.canva.com/design/DAE9rzbyvvl/WC1Bb9buswcNQ--C-cAXZA/view?utm\\_content=DAE9rzbyvvl&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_source=publishsharelink](https://www.canva.com/design/DAE9rzbyvvl/WC1Bb9buswcNQ--C-cAXZA/view?utm_content=DAE9rzbyvvl&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=publishsharelink)

Office of State Administrators (Missouri)

<https://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=1698>