

MISSOURI COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING



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Michael L. Parson
Governor

Greetings on behalf of the 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 improve the lives and opportunities of all Missourians with hearing loss. MCDHH strives to be a proactive resource connecting consumers and service providers.

MCDHH seeks to ensure that all shelters to understand their legal obligations with respect and serving deaf and hard of hearing patients' need. The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) "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:

- Shelters are required to provide qualified American Sign Language Interpreter. Do not rely on family, friends, employees, or staff if they say 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. A qualified certified and licensed interpreter is necessary to communicate with Deaf and hard of hearing consumers.
- Shelters should not exclude, deny, segregate, or treat individuals with disabilities differently from individuals without disabilities. Ensure equal access to your facilities with auxiliary aids or services.
- Shelters are strongly encouraged to consult Deaf and hard of hearing consumer to determine the most effective way to communicate.
- Shelters are responsible for the auxiliary services that do not result in such alteration financial in service or burden. Such services must be provided at no cost and with the consult of Deaf and hard of hearing consumers.
- Shelters are responsible to understand that auxiliary aids and services are not limited to Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI), Video Remote Interpreters (VRI), and Communication Access Realtime Transcription (CART).
- Shelters cannot charge Deaf and hard of hearing consumers requesting auxiliary aid or service for those services.
- Shelters 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 consumer as the same as direct telephone calls.
- Shelters provide classes, support group, and other activities involve in your facility that are open to the public must also provide accessible to deaf and hard of hearing.

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Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please feel free to contact our office if you have any questions regarding making your shelter facilities and services accessible to deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

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-cXZA/view?utm_content=DAE9rzbyvvl&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=publishsharelink