

Enhancing Communication Access in Arkansas

(This handout is available in an accessible electronic version at this link:
[Explore Access: Communication Access Resources](#))

The Problem

- Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind Arkansans do not have access to services they need. Often agencies and businesses do not provide interpreters or other types of communication access like:
 - Captions
 - Transcription services
 - Accessible websites
- Without these services, equity and equality is not achieved.

Possible Options

- **Seek state funding** for a state supported commission or agency
- **Raise private funding** to establish a not-for-profit organization
- **Seek grant funding** if a fitting grant opportunity becomes available

Do you support the idea of a state funded agency or commission?



Tell us what you think:



[tinyurl.com/
Communication-Access-Arkansas](https://tinyurl.com/Communication-Access-Arkansas)

One Possible Solution: A State Supported Agency or Commission

Establish an agency to fill the gaps in services needed by Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind Arkansans.

Purpose

Promote communication access so that Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind people may fully participate in programs and opportunities provided throughout Arkansas.

This would be accomplished through **4 core services**:

Communication Access Services

- Respond to situations when Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind people are denied interpreting services, transcription services, support service provider services or other types of communication access services by:
 - Providing the needed service when appropriate; or
 - Providing information and assistance to the agency so that they can meet the requirement to provide effective communication.

Education & Outreach

- Provide training to businesses and agencies on topics related to effective communication for people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind.
- Provide training to people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind on communication access technologies and services, civil rights laws, and important initiatives.
- Develop resources to enhance knowledge on communication access.
- Support a coalition of key agencies to improve coordination of services in order to reduce service redundancy and improve collaboration.
- Establish mechanisms for collaboration, problem solving, and joint training across stakeholder organizations and/or groups involved with Deafness, Hard of Hearing, and Deafblind services.
- Provide technical assistance upon request to agencies seeking assistance in improving their capacity to provide effective communication.

Policy Development and Advocacy

- Identify gaps in services that result in barriers for people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind.
- Advance policies and practices that improve services and communication access.

Data Collection and Documentation

- Establish an electronic system for tracking and collecting data.
- Document services and reach to ensure accountability.
- Collect data for future planning of services and efforts.