

Communication @your library[®]

Library Access

Deaf people who are not able to use regular library materials, should be able to conveniently identify and obtain resources in a format they can use. This would include independent access to catalogs and databases and the support system necessary to obtain materials bibliographical and full text, in accessible format.

Full range of library and information services would be provided to them by the public library in cooperation with other appropriate libraries, institutions, agencies and organizations.

Library Resources

1. Large Print books
2. Easy to Read Books
3. Books in Braille by Mail
4. Assistive Devices for accessing catalogs, databases, and the Internet
5. Assistive Listening Devices and Systems (ALDS)
6. TTY, telecommunication relay services, FAX
7. Video Relay Services (VRS)
8. Videos, DVDs and Films: Captioned and/or in Sign Language
9. Communication Access Real time Translation (CART)
10. Signage (directions in a few words, pictures)
11. Interpreters: Voice to Sign Language, Sign Language to Voice, Oral, Tactile Signing and Close Vision
12. Alerting devices: flashing lamps as ringers, light/vibration signalers, flashing alarm systems, smoke detector and others
13. Collection on deaf culture and sign language
14. Collection on hearing issues and support services
15. Collection on disability issues and support services
16. Trained staff

Communication Tips

For non-signing library staff to communicate with co-workers and/or customers who are deaf:

1. Get the person's attention before speaking. A light touch on the shoulder, a wave, or other visual signals will help.
2. Look directly at the person when signing/speaking even when an interpreter is present.
3. Speak slowly and clearly without shouting; don't exaggerate or overemphasize lip movements.
4. Use body language and facial expression to supplement your communication.
5. Maintain eye contact.
6. If the person doesn't understand you, rephrase your message instead of repeating it more loudly. Use short sentences.
7. Keep your hands away from your face and mouth while speaking.
8. Make sure lighting makes your face clearly visible. Avoid situations where there is distracting black lighting. For example, do not stand in front of a sunny window.
9. Be aware that gum chewing, cigarette smoking, pencil biting, and similar obstructions of the lips will lessen the effectiveness of your communication.
10. Tell the person if the telephone rings or there is some other interruption.
11. Do not ignore the person and make her/him wait while you carry on a conversation with someone else. **THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.**
12. Be familiar with auxiliary aids, such as TTY, telephone relay services, video relay services (VRS) and assistive listening devices and systems (ALDS).
13. Respect people for making their choice to use auxiliary aids and services.
14. Be aware that many people share common values and beliefs based on their background, so please respect their culture.
15. Never ask people if they can read lips. Some do, but it can be a strain for them because many words look alike on the lips. Asking about reading lips seems to put the responsibility for communication on the other person, when it should be a shared exchange.
16. Use paper and pen to lessen misunderstanding
17. If you know sign language, tell them but please do not assume that all deaf people know or use sign language.