



Deaf + Blind = Hearing Loss + Vision Loss

What is Deaf-Blind?

The term “Deaf-Blind” is a general term used for the population who has combined hearing **and** vision loss in varying degrees. Often, when we see the word “deaf-blind,” we think of a person who is totally deaf and blind. However, each individual who has hearing and vision loss is different.

What are the types of vision loss?

- **Visual acuity:** 20/70 or higher requiring large print to read.
Legal blindness: 20/200 or higher.
- **Visual field loss:** peripheral vision loss; experiences difficulty in locating things in a timely manner, bumping or hitting things that are out of their visual field. A person is legally blind if vision field is less than 20 degrees in their better eye.
- **Light sensitivity:** (1) Sensitive to light/glare requiring adaptations to the environment, (2) Lack of sensitivity to light requiring more light than a normal person would or (3) night blindness—difficulty seeing in dark/dim environments as well as at night.
- **Contrast sensitivity:** Has difficulty seeing similar colors (i.e.: white/yellow, black/blue, red/pink, blue/green) requiring high contrast in clothing, printed text).

How do you identify a person with combined hearing and vision loss?

- **Hearing:** Misses certain sounds, has difficulty understanding in certain situations, or has difficulty understanding any speech, (relies on other avenues of communication such as printed text, sign language or gestures). Some people wear hearing aids.

continued on back



State of North Carolina • Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing
www.ncdhs.gov/dsdhh • N.C. DHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider. 3/11

Deaf + Blind = Hearing Loss + Vision Loss

- **Vision:** The individual may exhibit one or any combination of the following:
 - 1) Difficulty reading regular print and prefers reading large print or is unable to read any print.
 - 2) Misses certain items in the environment, or needs “guiding” assistance by following a person or by holding a person’s arm. Some use white canes.
 - 3) Has difficulty seeing things because of too much or too little light in the environment.

What label do I use for individuals who have combined hearing and vision loss?

When interacting with individuals who have both hearing and vision loss, ASK them how they identify themselves:

- Hard of Hearing-Visually Impaired
- Hard of Hearing-Blind
- Deaf-Blind
- Deaf-Visually Impaired

Use their preferred identifying label. RESPECT is one of the most important considerations in working with this population.

For more information contact the Deaf-Blind Services Specialist at the Charlotte Regional Center (704-568-8558 or 800-835-5302) or the Wilson Regional Center (252-243-3104 or 800-999-6828).

How to contact us:

We have seven Regional Centers throughout the state to assist you with your needs. Please contact the center nearest you for assistance:

Asheville:

12 Barbetta Drive
Asheville, NC 28806
828-665-8733 V/TTY • 828-333-5830 VP
800-681-8035 TTY • 800-681-7998 V
828-670-5054 Fax

Charlotte:

5501 Executive Center Dr., Suite 101
Charlotte, NC 28212
704-568-8558 V • 704-918-1554 VP
704-568-8505 TTY • 800-835-5302 V
800-835-5306 TTY • 704-568-9615 Fax

Greensboro:

122 North Elm Street, Suite 900
Greensboro, NC 27401
336-273-9692 V/TTY • 336-429-5644 VP
888-467-3413 V/TTY • 336-256-0689 Fax

Morganton:

517 C West Fleming Dr.
Morganton, NC 28655
828-432-5335 V • 828-475-6606 VP
828-432-5336 TTY • 800-999-8915 V
800-205-9920 TTY • 828-432-5341 Fax

Raleigh:

2301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-2301
919-874-2250 V/TTY • 919-890-0858 VP
800-999-5737 V/TTY • 919-855-6872 Fax

Wilmington:

3340 Jaeckle Drive, The Randall Bldg., Suite 104
Wilmington, NC 28403
910-251-5702 V • 910-777-5770 VP
910-251-5767 TTY • 800-205-9915 V
800-205-9915 TTY • 910-251-2677 Fax

Wilson:

2705 Wooten Blvd SW
Wilson, NC 27893
252-243-3104 V • 252-674-1141 VP
252-243-1951 TTY • 800-999-6828 V
800-205-9925 TTY • 252-243-7634 Fax

Home Office:

919-874-2212 V/TTY • 919-890-0859 VP
800-851-6099 V/TTY • 919-855-6872 Fax

www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh