



# Tips for Consumers with Hearing Loss Accessing North Carolina Recreational, Entertainment or Cultural Venues

More than one million North Carolinians can be identified as Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deaf-Blind. Not every person's hearing loss is alike, and different people will use different methods to communicate. Places of public accommodation like venues for cultural activities such as museums, sporting arenas, zoos and theaters, to name a few, must follow the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) in providing communication accommodations to people with all kinds of hearing loss.



## What is the Americans with Disabilities Act?

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that public entities provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities. This includes the requirement to remove barriers to communication and to provide auxiliary aids and services where necessary to ensure effective communication. The law also states that effective communication should be provided in consultation with the individual.

## What does that mean for me?

It means that public places are required under the ADA to provide reasonable accommodations at no cost to the individual to allow a person with hearing loss the same access to the venue experience as that of a person who does not have a hearing loss.

## What kinds of accommodations are available?

A wide range of accommodations typically made available to people with hearing loss include American Sign Language interpreters, assistive listening devices, induction loop systems, open captioning, closed captioning, communication access real-time translation (CART) and computer assisted note-taking (CAN).

*continued on back*

## What can I do to be sure I get the accommodation I need?

The first step must be to prepare yourself to be an advocate for your needs. The key thing to remember is that the venue does not know you have a hearing loss unless you tell them. Locations within the venue like Information Desks, Box Offices and Guest Services offices can provide you with the information you need and can take your request for the appropriate accommodation. Following the simple suggested practices listed below can help guide you through your process:

- Each venue has specific required time periods for advanced notice of needed accommodation. This time period usually ranges between two weeks to one month notice. It is always a good practice to contact the venue well in advance of your planned visit.
- Most theaters advertise specific scheduled accessible performances on their web sites. If the scheduled dates do not meet your needs, then call the theater ticket box office for other arrangements.

- If you use a service animal, inform the box office when purchasing your ticket so an aisle seat can be arranged.
- Most venues have specific signs posted throughout, particularly in the lobby, indicating accessibility needs.
- If you need an assistive listening device, often an usher can obtain one for you upon request.

## Need more information?

The Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing can provide needed information and guidance for ensuring accessibility at N.C. recreational, entertainment and cultural venues. All services are provided at no charge to the customer. Please contact:

***North Carolina Division  
of Services for the Deaf  
and the Hard of Hearing***

***(800) 851-6099 (voice/tty)***

***(919) 890-0859 (VP for the Deaf)***

***[www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh)***



State of North Carolina • Pat McCrory, Governor  
Department of Health and Human Services • Aldona Z. Wos, M.D., Secretary  
Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing  
[www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dsdhh) • N.C. DHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider. Rev. 3/15