



Deaf



Hard of Hearing



DeafBlind



Interpreters



Health Providers

Glossary

Accommodation

A service, device, or modification designed to enable a person with a disability to fully access communication, information, service, resource, or facility.

American Sign Language (ASL)

American Sign Language, or ASL, is a visual language which uses movements of the hand, face, and body to convey a complex language with its own grammatical structure and cultural heritage. ASL is not merely English words signed on the hands. It is the primary language of Deaf Americans. Many individuals with other types of hearing loss as well as with normally-functioning hearing also use ASL.

American Sign Language Interpreter

A professional who has the training and skills necessary to interpret effectively, accurately, and impartially between English and American Sign Language. Interpreters provide communication access for all parties. Interpreters adhere to a [Code of Professional Conduct](#).

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ([ADA](#))

A federal [civil rights law](#) that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in many major areas of life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.¹

Amplified Headset (For example: headphones, earbuds, etc.)

A headset used to amplify sound for a listener.

Amplified Phone

A phone capable of greatly increasing the volume to allow a listener to understand speech on the telephone. Some also include tone (pitch) controls as well.

Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR)

A software program on a computer or smart phone that converts speech to text using Artificial Intelligence.

Assistive Listening Device (ALD)

A device designed to improve speech understanding for hard of hearing people with or without hearing aids or cochlear implants. ALDs are especially helpful in reducing background noise, which allows the user to hear and understand the speaker.

Audio Loop

A device designed to transmit sound to a telecoil which can be included in a hearing aid or cochlear implant (types of loops can include neckloops, room loops, or countertop loops).



Captioned Phone

A telephone that produces text (captioning) of spoken words in addition to providing amplification and other features found on amplified telephones.

Captioning App (speech-to-text)

An automatic speech recognition (ASR) software program, or application, on a device, such as a smart phone, tablet or laptop that can produce text (captioning) from speech detected by the device's microphone.

Captioning App (for phone calls)

A software program, or application, placed on a compatible smartphone to provide text (Captioning) for speech for phone calls placed and received using that app. Captioning can be created using ASR or a human call assistant.

Close Vision ASL Interpreter

A professional who is trained to interpret for Deaf or Hard of Hearing people with vision loss. The interpreter sits or stands closely to the DeafBlind individual and adjusts their interpretation to accommodate the DeafBlind individual's unique vision needs. In addition to interpreting the conversation, they may also incorporate visual/environmental information. Close Vision Interpreters adhere to a [Code of Professional Conduct](#).

Cochlear Implant (CI)

A surgically implanted device with an external component that transmits sound to the internal component. It can provide a sense of hearing but does not restore normal hearing and understanding of speech, and other sounds can vary greatly among users.

Communication Access

A combination of practices, procedures, technology, auxiliary aids, and accommodations that ensures that an individual can understand, be understood, and fully interact with others.

Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART)

A service provided by a professional who uses specialized software to provide an instantaneous word-for-word transcription of spoken language and environmental sounds into text. See [DSDHH CART document](#).

Communication Barriers

Anything that prevents a person who is Deaf, Hard of Hearing or DeafBlind from having clear and effective communication.

Companion

A person who is Deaf, Hard of Hearing or DeafBlind and is a family member, friend, or associate of an individual seeking access to, or participating in, the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of a provider.

Cued Language

A visual mode of communication that uses hand shapes in particular placements around the face in combination with mouth movements and speech to make spoken language easier to understand.



Cued Language Transliterator

A professional who uses a visual mode of communication that uses hand shapes and placements in combination with mouth movements and speech to make spoken language accessible. These professionals adhere to a [Code of Professional Conduct](#).

Deaf

A person with hearing loss to such a degree that they rely on visual forms of communication such as sign language. American Sign Language (ASL) and visual communication as the binding factor of the Deaf community and Deaf culture. This population is diverse and consists of many subcultures.

DeafBlind

A person with a combination of hearing and vision loss in various degrees. Hearing loss can range from mild to profound and types of vision loss can range from requiring large print to read, to being legally blind to no light perception and totally blind. Other factors can contribute to vision loss such as having visual field loss, sensitivity to light, night blindness, color blindness, and contrast sensitivity issues. The DeafBlind population is a very diverse group of people with different ages of onset, degrees of loss, communication methods, and individuals who may or may not identify themselves as DeafBlind.

Deaf Interpreter (DI)

A professional who is deaf, possesses native-like fluency in American Sign Language, and has extensive knowledge and understanding of deafness, the Deaf community, and Deaf culture along with excellent communication skills. Because of these skills, a DI can bring added expertise to both routine and complex interpreting situations. A DI may also have specialized training and experience in the use of gesture, mime, props, drawings, and other tools to enhance communication and often works as a team with a hearing interpreter. Deaf Interpreters adhere to a [Code of Professional Conduct](#).

DeafBlind Interpreter

A professional who is an ASL interpreter and has extensive knowledge and understanding of how to meet the communication needs of DeafBlind people, the DeafBlind community, and DeafBlind culture along with excellent skills in modifying signs for Close Vision, Tactile and incorporating visual/environmental information. In addition, a DeafBlind interpreter knows how to provide human guiding support, and understands the importance of clothing contrast and background and appropriate lighting. DeafBlind Interpreters adhere to a [Code of Professional Conduct](#).

Direct Audio Input

Direct audio input improves hearing by connecting a cable directly to the hearing device and audio source. A special connector such as a "[boot](#)" may be required for the hearing device to accept a cable made especially for that hearing device.

Discrimination

When a person with hearing loss whose request or need for accommodations is ignored or refused outright, treated with an attitude shift, or treated differently than the general population.



Effective Communication

ADA requires public entities (state and local governments) and private entities (businesses and nonprofit organizations that serve the public) to provide auxiliary aids and services to make sure that individuals with speech, hearing and vision disabilities can understand what is said or written and can communicate effectively. The goal is to ensure that communication with people with disabilities is as effective as communication with people without disabilities. Effective communication rules also apply to companions (such as family members or friends) who have disabilities. For more information see this [document](#) on Effective Communication.⁷

Guidance on Nondiscrimination in Telehealth

In August of 2022, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Justice released [this guidance](#) that ensures accessibility to people with Disabilities and Limited English.

Hard of Hearing

Hard of Hearing refers to people with hearing loss of varying degrees and who usually communicate through spoken language. Depending on the person's accommodation needs and residual hearing, assistive listening devices and or Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) captioning can assist a person to better communicate effectively during an appointment.

Headset with Active Noise Cancellation

A headset designed to eliminate (or cancel) unwanted external noise to allow the listener to hear the preferred sounds clearly.

Healthcare Provider

A doctor or other designated professional authorized to meet with a patient virtually to deliver care or treatment such as mental health, physical health, prescription management, dental conditions, urgent care, physical and occupational therapy, and remote monitoring of chronic conditions.

Hearing Aid

FDA-approved device that detects sounds using microphones, then changes sound to make hearing/understanding easier, and amplifies them. Hearing aids come in a variety of styles and can have advanced features to help with hearing and other daily living needs. A user's speech understanding can vary widely, and no hearing aid can restore a natural sense of hearing.

Large Print Materials

The [large print format](#) provides the same content as standard print, only in larger font to help those with visual impairments read more easily. Large print is generally defined as print that is larger than print sizes of 8 to 12 points commonly used by the general population.⁵

Late-Deafened

Hearing loss occurs after the development of language and speech, and the person does not have enough hearing to rely on auditory information alone to communicate. They often rely on visual information such as captioning, notes, or speechreading.



MFA Hearing Aid (aka "made for all" hearing aid)

A hearing aid that is capable of connecting wirelessly to compatible Apple and Android products. Sound is streamed directly to the hearing aid from the device, allowing the hearing aid to act as a wireless headset.

MFi Hearing Aid (aka "made for iPhone" hearing aid)

A hearing aid that is capable of connecting wirelessly to compatible Apple products. Sound is streamed directly to the hearing aid from the device, allowing the hearing aid to act as a wireless headset.

Mobile Captioning App

An application, or "App," available on iOS or Android devices that enables a patient person with hearing loss to either use automatic speech recognition software or a relay service company to provide captioning during a telehealth appointment. Captioning is displayed on a smartphone or tablet.

Neckloop

A type of audio loop that is worn around the neck, can be wired or wireless, and transmits sound to a telecoil receiver in a hearing aid or cochlear implant.

Noise Cancelling Microphone

A device consisting of two microphones. One microphone targets your voice and the other picks up and electronically reduces background noise coming from other directions.

Notes from Healthcare Provider

Documentation from your provider about your appointment, lab or procedure results or instructions. Notes could be printed out or available to read on a patient portal.

On-Site interpreting

An ASL interpreter provides interpreting at the site of a healthcare provider's office or other facility. It is important to note that many people requesting an interpreter will ask for a "live interpreter." When a person requests a "live interpreter" they are actually asking for an "on-site interpreter" and not a video remote interpreter.

Oral Interpreter

A professional who silently mouths the speech for a non-signing deaf or hard of hearing individual. These interpreters use facial expressions and gestures to enhance speech understanding for those who read lips. Oral Interpreters adhere to a [Code of Professional Conduct](#).

Personal Amplifier

About the size of a cell phone, these devices increase volume levels and reduce background noise for a listener. Some have directional microphones that can be pointed toward a speaker or other source of the sound. Features of these devices vary, with some including tone control and telecoil mode.



Rehabilitation Act (504)

[Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#) is a federal law that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability. The nondiscrimination requirements of the law apply to employers and organizations that receive financial assistance from any Federal department or agency, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).² These organizations and employers include many hospitals, nursing homes, mental health centers and human service programs.

Same Screen Interpreting

The ASL interpreter may be positioned in the same office, standing/sitting next to the provider and appear on the same screen with the provider during telehealth visits.

Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

[The section](#) prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics), in covered health programs or activities. 42 U.S.C. 18116.³

Speechreading/Lipreading

This is a technique where one is "reading" the visual cues of a spoken message, meaning the movements of the lips, tongue, the lower jaw, the eyes, the eyebrows, and the facial expression and gestures of the speaker. This is done as an effort to process all of the available visible, situational, and auditory cues by a person with a hearing loss.

Support Service Provider (SSP)

A specially trained individual who provides visual and environmental information, serves as a human guide, and facilitates basic communication for a person who is DeafBlind. The SSP might also provide transportation services to and from healthcare appointments.

Signs and Symptoms

Signs are indications of a condition that are observed and measured by a healthcare provider through physical examination and diagnostic procedure. Examples could include temperature or pulse rate or blood pressure. Symptoms are physical or mental indications of a healthcare condition that are perceived by the patient such as "I have a cough," "I have had pain in my left elbow," or "I have felt stressed lately".

Tactile ASL (TASL) Interpreter

A professional who is trained in interpreting for Deaf or Hard of Hearing people with vision loss. The interpreter uses modified sign language to interpret for the DeafBlind individual who places their hands on the hands of the interpreter to feel the sign language. In addition to interpreting the conversation, the interpreter incorporates visual/environmental information. TASL Interpreters adhere to a [Code of Professional Conduct](#).

Telecoil (T-Coil)

A small coil of wire inside of hearing aids and cochlear implants that receives electromagnetic signals transmitted by compatible telephones, loops, and other devices so the sound is delivered directly to the user's ear. This helps overcome interference from background noise and can improve speech understanding.



Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS)

This is a relay service, with an operator service that allows people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind or speech-impaired to place calls to a standard telephone user, via a keyboard or assistive device.

Telehealth

Sometimes called telemedicine – Telehealth is done primarily online with internet access on your computer, tablet, or smartphone.⁶ Telehealth refers to a broader scope of remote healthcare services than telemedicine. These can include non-clinical services such as provider training, administrative meetings, and continuing medical education.

Telemedicine

Refers specifically to remote clinical services. Telemedicine lets your health care provider treat you without an in-person office visit.

Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA)

Updates federal communications law to increase the access of people with disabilities to modern communications. [The CVAA](#) makes sure that accessibility laws enacted in the 1980s and 1990s are brought up to date with 21st century technologies, including new digital, broadband, and mobile innovations.⁴

Video Platform/App

Virtual meeting space that is used for telehealth appointments that can be downloaded onto a laptop, tablet, personal computer, or smartphone.

VRI – Video Remote Interpreting

Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) is a fee-based interpreting service that uses videoconferencing technology, equipment, and high-speed internet to provide remote or offsite sign language interpreters. Video Remote interpreting is typically charged on a per-minute basis.

VRS – Video Relay Service

Video Relay Service (VRS) is an interpreting service to allow Deaf people who use American Sign Language to make and receive phone calls through video equipment with an interpreter. VRS is available 24-hours a day and is provided at no cost because it is an ADA Title IV accommodation funded by the federal government through tax dollars.

Cited

1. [What is the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)?](#)
2. [Your Rights Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act](#)
3. [Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act](#)
4. [21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act \(CVAA\)](#)
5. [What is Large Print?](#)
6. [What is telehealth?](#)
7. [Effective Communication](#)

