

Tennessee Council for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing



2012 Annual Report

July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

Tennessee Department of Human Services

Division of Rehabilitation Services

400 Deaderick Street

Nashville, TN 37243

The Tennessee Council for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (TCDHH) was created in 1978 by the Tennessee General Assembly. The applicable statute can be found at Tennessee Code Annotated 71-4-2102. The Council is located within the Tennessee Department of Human Services and is an integral part of the Division of Rehabilitation

Our Mission

The Tennessee Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing exists to serve as an advocate for services affecting Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind persons through coordination, public awareness, and consultation in areas of public service, health care, education, and employment.

Responsibilities

The Tennessee Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has the statutory responsibility to:

1. Advocate for services affecting the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the areas of public services, health care, education, vocational rehabilitation, and employment;
2. Act as a bureau of information for state agencies and public institutions providing health care, educational, vocational, and/or employment related services to persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, and to local agencies and programs;
3. Collect facts and statistics and special studies of conditions affecting the health and welfare of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in this state;
4. Provide for a mutual exchange of ideas and information on the national, state, and local levels;
5. Encourage and assist local governments in the development of programs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing;
6. Cooperate with public and private agencies and units of local, state, and federal governments in promoting coordination in programs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing;
7. Authorize the Executive Director to prepare an annual report to the Council which reviews the status of state services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The Council will submit the approved report to the General Assembly and make this report available to organizations serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; and
8. Make recommendations for needed improvements and to serve as an advisory body in regard to new legislation affecting the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Major Activities

The Council was involved in a number of activities during the last fiscal year. They included:

- Meeting with key groups regarding requirements for educational interpreters
- Conducting a Town Hall Meeting in Jackson to report our activities and to listen to concerns
- Promoting hearing aid insurance legislation
- Promoting mental health services for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind
- Promoting suicide prevention for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind
- Promoting awareness of this population's special needs to the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency
- Providing information regarding financial assistance for hearing aids
- Providing information regarding telecommunication equipment
- Providing information regarding interpreting services in Tennessee
- Providing information regarding legal rights of the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind
- Supporting Deaf Awareness Activities across Tennessee
- Providing technical support and resource information to Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Provided guidance and support to an emergency awareness association benefitting the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf-Blind, and Late-Deafened population
- Conducted several meetings with directors of these community centers for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind regarding a shift of focus of services that can be provided with their state contracts
- Executive Director has resigned from the following councils due to the constraints of funding directive: TN Suicide Prevention Network (State, Regional, and Intra-State Department), Technology and Rehabilitation Enhancing Deaf-Blind Supports (Deaf-Blind Children's Assistance Program), Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist), Tennessee Relay Service, Telecommunication Distribution Access Program, and Emergency Awareness and Readiness Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Tennesseans for Behavior Health Access for the Deaf Community.

Community Centers for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The Division of Rehabilitation Services provides funding for Community Centers for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Johnson City, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Nashville, Jackson, and Memphis. These Community Centers report to the Council during quarterly meetings and submit their statistical data to the Executive Director of TCDHH who compiles it for the Division. This was the last fiscal year that these centers will have this listing of services to be provided to DRS. Due to restrictions connected to the funding source, services starting in fiscal year 2013 will reflect services only benefitting Vocational Rehabilitation Services. The Division provided \$1,020,000.00 in funding in performance based contracts for these six (6) regional community centers to provide:

- Coordination of Interpreting services
- Information and referral
- Peer counseling
- Help in accessing community services

The following statistics demonstrate the wide array of VR Supporting services provided by the six centers:

Numbers of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Served	14,030
Number of Interpreting Assignments for Vocational Rehabilitation	14,163
Units of Technical Assistance Provided to Employers	659
Units of Independent Living Skills Taught	727
Sign Language or Speech Reading Class Hours Taught	1,361
Workshop/Seminars on Deafness	46
Units of Information and Referral	5,216

Membership

Members are appointed to the Council by the Governor and serve voluntarily without compensation. Most seats on the Council are mandated by statute. The current members of the Council are:

Michael Friedman	Tennessee Association of the Deaf (Central)	Chattanooga
Dana Hughes	Tennessee Association of the Deaf (President)	Knoxville
Randy Chappell	Tennessee Registry of Interpreters f/t Deaf	Bartlett
Alan Mealka	Tennessee Dept. of Education (School f/t Deaf)	Knoxville
Paulette Melton	Tennessee Department of Human Services	Lexington
Margie Ulrich	Consumer Representative (Audiologist)	Chattanooga
Lordy Smith	Tennessee Association of the Deaf (West)	Memphis
Cherrell Campbell-Street	Tennessee Division of Rehabilitation Services	Nashville
Deborah Harris	Consumer Representative (Educator of the Deaf)	Memphis
Kate Kanies	Tennessee Department of Mental Health	Nashville
Vacancy*	Tennessee Association of the Deaf (East)	

Thom Roberts
Executive Director

**Nominees for this vacancy have been sent to Governor Haslam in February 2012*

"Helping Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind Tennesseans Live the Successful Lives They Deserve"