

# NCDHHS Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Resource List (3/25)

## Summary of Services:

Effectively communicating emergency alerts, information and services is critical to the health and safety of all North Carolinians during a disaster or emergency event. However, individuals who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind (hereafter described as individuals with hearing loss) often experience limited or no access to emergency information and services. This limited, or lack of communication access to services, alerts and information may result in misunderstandings between professionals and consumers, with these populations being overlooked and their health and lives being put at risk. It is important for emergency service providers to understand that individuals with hearing loss communicate in various ways – ***One way of communicating does not fit all!*** According to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990,<sup>1</sup> any press conferences, shelters, medical facilities, disaster recovery centers, case management agencies, town hall meetings, long-term recovery groups, and other locations and events where emergency services and information are provided must also be accessible to individuals with hearing loss.

The NCDHHS Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) collaborates with state and local authorities by providing support, consultation, resources, and training to ensure that individuals with hearing loss receive appropriate communication access to emergency alerts, information and services.

On a statewide level, DSDHH has an Emergency Preparedness Coordinator whose role is to provide support, consultation, and resources to statewide emergency service providers, ensuring that they have in place communication plans that include being accessible to individuals with hearing loss to be used before, during and after disaster events. For example: the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator can share information and resources related to American Sign Language interpreting services and other communication access accommodations.

On the local level, DSDHH has seven regional centers that serve all 100 counties. Each center has a Community Accessibility Specialist (CAS) who is the point of contact for collaborating with city and county government emergency services on communication access issues. The CAS can provide support, resources, and consultation to ensure that local emergency communication is accessible to residents with hearing loss.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ada.gov/topics/effective-communication/>

Collaboration efforts by the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and the Community Accessibility Specialists can take place by:

- Providing assessments to determine what kinds of communication or other assistance individuals with hearing loss need at a shelter, disaster recovery center, medical facility, and other locations that provide emergency services either on-site, or remotely.
- Sharing information and resources about:
  - Communication tools for interacting with individuals who have hearing loss
  - Sign language interpreting services
  - Captioning services
  - Telecommunications (i.e., TTY, amplified phone, captioned phone) and assistive listening equipment loan services if available
- Consulting with state and local government on incorporating sign language interpreters and captioning services for press conferences, town hall meetings, and public service announcements.

## **Contact Information**

### **State Office**

#### **Primary Point of Contact:**

**Name:** Donna Platt, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

**Phone:** (919) 578-1262 voice, (919) 270-1999 text only

**Email:** [Donna.Platt@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Donna.Platt@dhhs.nc.gov)

**Service Area Location:** Statewide agency serving 100 counties in North Carolina

#### **Secondary Point of Contact:**

**Name:** David Payne, Communication Access Manager

**Phone:** (919) 218-0299

**Email:** [David.T.Payne@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:David.T.Payne@dhhs.nc.gov)

**Service Area Location:** Statewide agency serving 100 counties in North Carolina

### **Local Offices**

#### **Asheville Regional Center**

**Counties Served:** Buncombe, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, Mitchell, Polk, Swain, Transylvania and Yancey

**Contact person:** Stephen Drabicki – [Stephen.Drabicki@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Stephen.Drabicki@dhhs.nc.gov) or (828) 665-8733 (o), (828) 230-3272 text only

### **Charlotte Regional Center**

**Counties Served:** Anson, Cabarrus, Gaston, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Richmond, Rowan, Stanly and Union

**Contact person:** Tiffany Cummins – [Tiffany.Cummins@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Tiffany.Cummins@dhhs.nc.gov) or (704) 568-8558

### **Greensboro Regional Center**

**Counties Served:** Alamance, Davie, Davidson, Forsyth, Guilford, Randolph, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry and Yadkin

**Contact person:** Jessica Register – [Jessica.Register@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Jessica.Register@dhhs.nc.gov) or (336) 273-9692 (o), (366) 894-4629 (m)

### **Morganton Regional Center**

**Counties Served:** Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Cleveland, Iredell, McDowell, Rutherford, Watauga and Wilkes

**Contact person:** Kay Smith – [Kay.S.Smith@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Kay.S.Smith@dhhs.nc.gov) or (828) 430-7185 (o), (828) 443-4852 (m)

### **Raleigh Regional Center**

**Counties Served:** Caswell, Chatham, Cumberland, Durham, Franklin, Granville, Harnett, Hoke, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Nash, Orange, Person, Vance, Wake and Warren

**Contact person:** Martina Moore-Reid – [Martina.Moore-Reid@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Martina.Moore-Reid@dhhs.nc.gov) or (919) 439-0354

### **Wilmington Regional Center**

**Counties Served:** Bladen, Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, Duplin, Jones, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender, Robeson, Sampson and Scotland

**Contact person:** Herbie Aguilar – [Herbie.Aguilar@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Herbie.Aguilar@dhhs.nc.gov) or (910) 215-5702 (o), (910) 619-4945 (m)

### **Wilson Regional Center**

**Counties Served:** Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Craven, Currituck, Dare, Edgecombe, Gates, Greene, Halifax, Hertford, Hyde, Lenoir, Martin, Northampton, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrrell, Washington, Wayne and Wilson

**Contact person:** Merri Schermerhorn – [Merri.Schermerhorn@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Merri.Schermerhorn@dhhs.nc.gov) or (252) 243-3104