



# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

---

Nebraska Commission for the  
Deaf and Hard of Hearing

# WELCOME MESSAGE



## NCDHH CHAIRPERSON, *FRANCES BEURIVAGE*

NCDHH was established to provide services, resources, information, and referrals. Each Governor-appointed board member has a purpose, passion, and interest in improving services and programs to benefit Nebraskans who are deaf or hard of hearing.

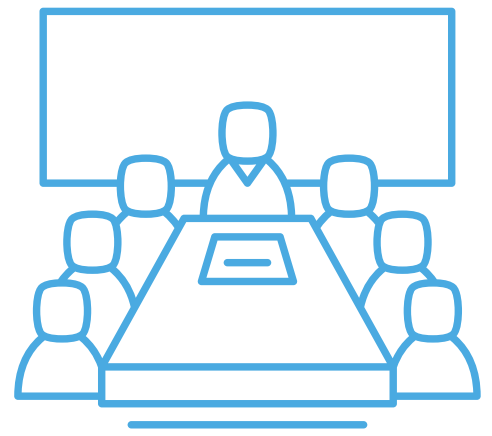
Collaboration with the deaf and hard of hearing community, stakeholders, and organizations is essential to advancing NCDHH's mission. Strong partnerships and continued engagement form the foundation of its work, ensuring greater impact and accessibility for those it serves.

In 2024, NCDHH made significant strides in advocacy and inclusivity. **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Outreach** events at zoos and baseball games created accessible experiences while educating the public. **Youth and Family Advocacy Services** provided training, resources, and mentorship opportunities to empower deaf and hard of hearing youth and their families. **Public Safety Days** connected first responders with the community, promoting awareness and emergency preparedness. **Sensitivity Training** educated professionals in emergency and legal sectors on effective communication and accessibility. These efforts strengthened inclusion, independence, and safety for Nebraskans who are deaf or hard of hearing.

We are proud of the Commission's accomplishments and are eager to see what 2025 has in store for residents of Nebraska!



# BOARDS & COMMITTEES



## FULL COMMISSION BOARD

Consists of nine members who are appointed by the Governor subject to approval by the Legislature. Statute 71-4720 requires that a majority of the Commission members who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing shall be able to express themselves through sign language. The Commission members shall include three Deaf persons, three Hard of Hearing persons and three persons who have an interest in and knowledge of deafness and hearing loss issues. The Commission was created to improve the quality and coordination of existing services for deaf and hard of hearing people and development of new services when necessary.

## INTERPRETER REVIEW BOARD

Created to develop guidelines and regulations for assuring competencies for sign language interpreters. Regulations were crafted and approved to include assurances that sign language interpreters have and maintain minimum levels of competency to interpret for state entities, courts, police and probation officials.

## MENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A special advisory committee is appointed by the Commission. Created to ensure full access of comprehensive mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse services are available for Nebraskans who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mandated in 1990 to appoint members to serve on the Relay Advisory Committee administered by the Nebraska Public Service Commission. The Committee advises the Public Service Commission on matters related to the telecommunications relay system, the Nebraska Specialized Telecommunications Equipment Program and its operations.

# BY THE NUMBERS

**2,546**  
**CLIENTS ASSISTED**

**204**  
**PRESENTATIONS & TRAININGS**

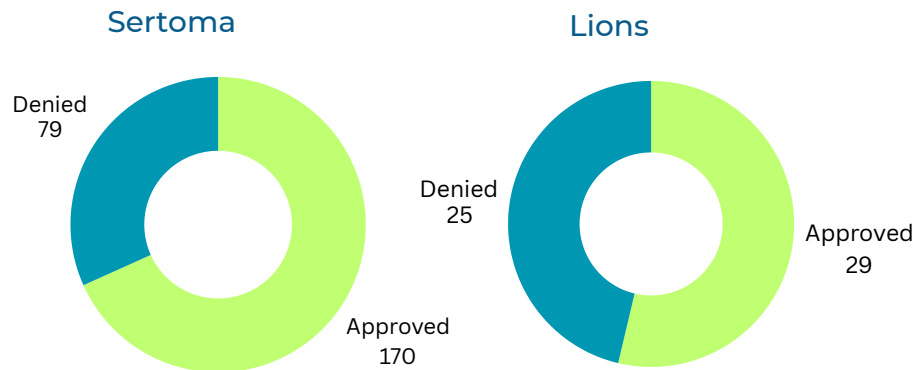
**723**  
**OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**

**7,025**  
**PRESENTATION ATTENDEES**

**23,752**  
**OUTREACH CONTACTS**

## Hearing Aid Banks

NCDHH works with the Barkley Memorial Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, HearU Nebraska, Sertoma, and the Nebraska Lions Foundation to provide hearing aids to individuals who qualify. HearU Nebraska provides hearing aids to children ages birth-18. Sertoma is an international organization providing refurbished hearing aids to individuals 65+. The Nebraska Lions Foundation promotes the collection, refurbishing and distribution of donated hearing aids to Nebraska residents ages 19-64. Applications to these programs are available through the Commission.



## Nebraska Specialized Telecommunications Equipment Program

Nebraska Specialized Telecommunications Equipment Program (NSTEP), an equipment program that provides monetary assistance to persons with disabilities. These persons will then use the financial assistance to aid in the purchasing of specialized telephone equipment such as amplifiers, signaling devices, cell phones and more. The Public Service Commission (PSC) was mandated to develop specific procedures necessary for implementation of the program and is responsible for management of the program.

A voucher will be issued to approved applicants for the purchase of telecommunication equipment. The specialized equipment can be purchased from any NSTEP participating vendors and wireless providers.

NCDHH teammates work around the state to educate and inform Nebraskans who could benefit from this equipment to help ease their communication access needs. NCDHH processed 149 applications in 2024.

# HIGHLIGHTS

## TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE WONDERFUL ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH MOMENTS OUR TEAM WORKED ON ACROSS NEBRASKA!

**Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Outreach:** NCDHH held awareness events at zoos and baseball games created inclusive experiences while educating the public. At zoos, interactive activities such as learning animal names in sign language, ASL-interpreted animal presentations, and connection to wildlife and conservation with interpreters ensure accessibility. Baseball games can feature ASL-interpreted national anthem, silent inning, and highlights of Deaf athletes. Interactive booths, sign language activities, and sensory-friendly accommodations further promote awareness and engagement. These initiatives foster inclusivity, ensuring that Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals can fully enjoy and participate in these community events.



**Youth and Family Advocacy Services:** NCDHH empowered deaf and hard of hearing youth and their families through advocacy, education, and accessibility initiatives. The commission also advocated for ADA compliance, offered deaf awareness training, and connected families with community programs, mentorship opportunities, and leadership development. These efforts fostered inclusion, independence, and equal opportunities for Nebraska's deaf and hard of hearing community.

**World Hearing Day:** To commemorate World Hearing Day, NCDHH launched a statewide outreach project to raise awareness about hearing loss and available services. By distributing promotional materials, NCDHH engaged medical service providers, encouraging them to share information about programs and resources with clients who are deaf or hard of hearing. This initiative aimed to expand awareness, improve accessibility, and connect more individuals to vital support services.



**Public Safety Days:** NCDHH partnered with a couple local law enforcement, emergency medical providers, and firefighters to strengthen communication between first responders and the deaf and hard of hearing community. This event helped first responders understand the importance of effective communication while also educating the deaf community on emergency services. By fostering mutual awareness, Public Safety Days promoted inclusivity, safety, and collaboration.

**Sensitivity Training:** NCDHH provided sensitivity training for professionals in emergency preparedness, medical, and criminal justice sectors. The training covered effective communication, accessible technology, diverse communication needs, and federal and civil rights regulations. This initiative helped professionals better understand and serve the deaf and hard of hearing community, promoting inclusivity and compliance in their fields.

**Deaf Centric Hospital Event:** Held at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), this event united medical providers, students, and hospital staff with the deaf and hard of hearing community to enhance healthcare settings. It involved various stakeholders and community representatives in interactive role-playing exercises, where UNMC students acted as "patients" receiving care from local deaf community members acting as "doctors." The primary goal was to address and reduce healthcare disparities affecting deaf and hard of hearing.



# LET'S CONNECT



[www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov](http://www.ncdhh.nebraska.gov)



*Nebraska Commission for the  
Deaf and Hard of Hearing*



*@Neb\_CDHH*

## OFFICE LOCATIONS

Lincoln

4600 Valley Rd. Suite 420  
Lincoln, NE 68510

Omaha

1313 Farnam Suite 304  
Omaha, NE 68102

North Platte

200 S. Silber Room 035  
North Platte, NE 69101

Scottsbluff

505A Broadway Suite 700  
Scottsbluff, NE 69361