

Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

2022 Performance Evaluation Report

Overview

The Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing had an overall successful year, but we continue to face challenges. Our referrals are slowly increasing but the numbers are still a little lower than anticipated. Our ODD (Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities) partnership has been slowly improving compare to the 2021 referral program.

Our registration for American Sign Language (ASL) classes continue to grow and are quite successful. We would like to see more classes scheduled for private classes and/or families. We faced some difficulties in getting the classes up and running due to the lack of available ASL teachers and/or the reluctance of people to attend in person.

We were fortunate to hire Rachel Leffel as our new Operations Manager to assist us with the many office-related tasks and details of program registration. Kate Slosar was reassigned to Vocational Rehab Specialist to address the issues our def community faces in the job market.

In 2022, we served approximately 600 more clients than the previous year.

Breakdown of Services:

VR Service/Pre-ETS	108 Clients
Support Service	473 Clients
DV/SV	7 Clients
Support service and advocacy	1451 Hours
Advocate for Kids	8 Events
Community Outreach	12 Events
Training and Workshops	18 Total
Vlogs and information videos	31 Total
ASL classes	72 Students

Global Objective for 2022

The goals for 2022 were to continue to increase vocational rehabilitation services and increase community support in general. One of the limitations we struggled with is Language

Deprivation Syndrome (LDS). Many of our clients have difficulty communicating – in sign language or written communications, and with English in general – which makes it hard for them to understand instructions, keep appointments, meetings, and so on.

Another significant hurdle was the ongoing need to educate businesses and organizations on how to work and communicate with Deaf people, as well as make them aware of the ADA requirements for an interpreter/accessibility.

Program Services and Highlights of 2022

- CCDHH conducted a Thanksgiving Giveaway to provide 10 struggling families (about 43 people) with gift cards to be able to have food on the table. Funded by a grant, the gift cards totaled \$1,700.
- Our ASL program has continued to grow. We average around 30 new students for ASL 1 and 2 during our 10-week programs. We offer the 10-week programs about 3 times a year. We could expand this program if we were able to find more qualified ASL teachers.
- Around March and Early April, we were able to offer free tax preparation to 90 clients on 3 different dates to the Deaf community.
- In partnership with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Deaf Services Center in Columbus, our CCDHH developed statewide training for mental health clinicians. In 2022 we trained 134 mental health professionals and conducted five workshops. In addition, we developed an online training divided into three learning modules that provide clinicians with continuing education credits. This training lives on the ODMHAS website on their E-based Academy.
- We have been very successful in partnering with area businesses and organizations to educate staff and the community on Deaf culture, accessibility, and ASL training. Some unique opportunities were started in 2022 and will continue into 2023 and beyond with organizations such as Cleveland Rape Crisis Center, Cleveland Cavaliers, American Greetings, Garfield National Historic Site, and many more.
- Deaf/family-friendly social events were particularly well received and attended. Advocate for Kids helped us to be able to offer nine events in all. Our most successful events continue to be zoo outings, ice cream socials, and a visit to Majestic Meadow. The goal is for parents and kids to network and have a good time.

Accessibility of Services:

We serve our CCDHH clients at our main campus in University Circle. For those unable to access our Center due to transportation or other challenges, CCDHH staff will meet clients in their neighborhoods. We also continue to offer the Zoom platform and V.P. meetings for those who prefer a virtual approach. All CCDHH staff are fluent in American Sign Language, which is also

the primary language of the majority of employees in the department. We have not experienced any service challenges due to language or communication preferences. Besides our ASL classes, CCDHH provides services at no cost to our clients, community members, and partners. CHSC also offers the Audiology Patient Assistance Program (APA) for financial assistance in obtaining devices such as doorbell flashers, alarm clocks, baby criers, etc. We served 20 clients through our Basic Needs Funds which allows us to stock a small pantry with needed items. Consumers can come to our Center to pick up a bag of groceries, or staff can drop food at a client's home.

Staffing Model

Our staffing model in the CCDHH reflects the community we serve. Most of the CCDHH employees are members of the Deaf community. The CCDHH is humbled to serve the D/deaf community in northeast Ohio, and our model reflects our commitment to best practices of "deaf serving deaf." Just as linguistic and cultural competency is key to serving racial and ethnic minority populations, it is also best practice to help deaf individuals with knowledge, awareness, and respect for deaf culture and ASL as a language of equal value to English. All of our staff are fluent in American Sign Language and skilled in other communication modalities to meet our client's diverse needs, many of whom are not English proficient but have dysfluent or atypical language.

Our team in 2022:

- An Adult and Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist (V.R. & Pre-ETS Services) who provides job readiness skills, job search & placement, and coaching services: Kate Slosar
- A part-time Deaf advocate who provided violence prevention education as well as support in the criminal justice system: Sandra Hatibovic

**A part-time advocate who provides community outreach specialists as well provide training:
Maria O'Neil-Ruddock**

- A Deaf social worker who provided support services and case management: Aileen Reusche.
- A Deaf Operations Manager responsible for scheduling and day-to-day cohesion of the team: Rachel Leffel

The staff in the CCD are led and supervised by the Director of the Community Center for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Timothy Skaggs, who has been with the Center for 3 years.

ACTION PLANS for 2023

Provide DV/SV Training and ASL Instruction to CRCC

Explore Partnership with CCBDD – Continue to Develop and Promote DEAFinitely Learning

Continue to Work on Agency Accessibility Concerns and Challenges

Expand Mental Health and Deafness Training

Hire a Staff interpreter

Lobbyist for State Item Line Service for the Deaf to gain more support.

OVERVIEW IN NUMBERS for the Year 2022

CCD Hours	6,680
CCD Clients	473
VR Hours	1,451
VR Clients	108