



COMMUNITY CENTER FOR  
THE DEAF & HARD OF HEARING

Cleveland Hearing & Speech Center  
Community Center for the Deaf and  
Hard of Hearing  
Program Evaluation Summary 2025

## **Summary of Services:**

2025 has been a strong and productive year for CCDHH, with many meaningful accomplishments and expanded services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. During 2025, CHSC's Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH) served 165 active clients, providing a total of 1537.7 hours of direct support services. These hours reflect services delivered across multiple program areas, with some clients benefiting from more than one type of service.

CCDHH programs and services included:

Community Support and Case Management

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (job readiness, job development, and job retention)

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Support Specialist Services

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Education and Training Programs

Advocacy Services

Support for Victims and Survivors of Trauma and Abuse

American Sign Language (ASL) Education

Community Events for Youth and Families

## **Breakdown of Services**

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services: 56 clients

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS): 4 students

Support Services and Advocacy: 140 clients with 1179 service hours

Domestic Violence/Sexual Violence Support and Advocacy: 6 clients

General Support Services and Advocacy: 83 clients

Advocates for Kids Events: 8 events

Community Events: 9 events

## **Training and Workshops:**

6 sessions

## **Program and Service Highlights of 2025:**

One of the most significant achievements this year was preparing and renovating our building to better serve our community. When CCDHH first moved into the space, the building still resembled its previous use as a bank. With generous support from donors and community partners, we successfully raised funds to develop a new meeting room and community space.

Since completing the renovations, the center has become a welcoming hub for the Deaf community. The new space allows us to host ASL classes, meetings, workshops, and community gatherings, significantly improving the services we provide.

### **Deaf Tax Day**

Our annual Deaf Tax Day event was especially successful this year. The new facility provided additional space and privacy for Deaf clients and tax preparers. Over the course of two days, we served 31 clients served with tax preparation services. We extend a special thank you to Enterprise, which has partnered with us for several years to make this event possible.

### **Community Training and Partnerships**

CCDHH expanded its community partnerships and training initiatives throughout 2025. One of our newest partners, the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center, received Cultural Competency Training to help staff more effectively serve Deaf clients.

### **Additional training was also provided to:**

University Circle Police Department

Legal Aid Society of Cleveland

Family Justice Center

Journey Center

Hotels

Libraries

These trainings help increase accessibility and understanding of Deaf culture and communication needs across community organizations.

### **Statewide Mental Health Training**

In partnership with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OMHAS) and the Deaf Services Center in Columbus, CCDHH helped develop a statewide training program for mental health clinicians.

### **In 2025 we achieved the following:**

106 attendees completed Part 1 of the training

62 clinicians completed Part 2

5 workshops were conducted

Additionally, we developed an online training course consisting of three learning modules that offer continuing education credits for clinicians. The training is now available through the ODMHAS E-Based Academy.

Dr. Jerry and Dr. Maria O'Neil-Ruddock are currently collaborating with Director Timothy Skaggs to expand and update the training content for 2026.

#### DEAFinitely Learning Project

CCDHH also continued work on the DEAFinitely Learning project, which focuses on teaching important life skills such as:

Healthy eating and nutrition

Physical activity and wellness

Coping strategies

Financial management

Building healthy relationships

Although funding for this program decreased compared to last year, we continued offering classes on a smaller scale. Participation has increased from an average of 7 participants per class last year to approximately 10 participants per class this year, showing growing interest and community engagement.

## Advocates for Kids (A4K) Program

The Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was proud to present its 2025 Summer Program for Advocates for Kids (A4K). This initiative provides enriching community experiences for Deaf and Hard of Hearing youth, Children of Deaf Adults (CODAs), and their families across the Greater Cleveland area.

Running from June through September, the program promoted social connection, language development, and family engagement through a variety of community events.

### **Highlights included:**

Four ASL Ice Cream Socials were held in Strongsville, Westlake, Beachwood, and Dairy Grove to ensure families across the region could participate.

A new partnership event at Dairy Grove with the program Laugh, Grow, and Learn, along with collaboration from TRIAD.

Our Annual Cleveland Metroparks Zoo Event, supported by interpreter students from Kent State University, helping ensure full accessibility.

A visit to Noel Castle, an indoor attraction featuring festive holiday displays.

Mini Golf at Aileen Vacation Mini Golf as a fun family activity.

Guardians Deaf and Hard of Hearing Night, which brought 150 community members together to enjoy a baseball game.

Our Gingerbread Family Event, where families enjoyed storytelling, gingerbread building, and time to connect with one another.

## **Diabetes Awareness Initiative:**

Another initiative for 2025 focused on diabetes education within the Deaf community, recognizing the need for accessible health information.

To launch this effort, CCDHH hosted a presentation by a diabetes expert and began developing additional resources such as:

Educational vlogs

In-person workshops

Community events

Ongoing discussions and planning meetings

This initiative will continue to expand in the coming year as we work to increase awareness and accessible health education.

## **Shopping Days Program:**

The Shopping Days Program returned for its third year, successfully supporting 48 families in our community.

Through generous donations, we collected items such as:

Clothing

Toys

Craft supplies

Blankets

Household items

These donations allowed us to provide meaningful support to families in need during the holiday season.

## **ASL Community Program**

Our ASL Community Program continues to grow and remains highly successful. In 2025, we served 56 individuals through community-based ASL classes and corporate training programs, helping expand access to communication and Deaf cultural awareness.

### **Staffing Model**

The staffing model at the Community Center reflects the community we serve. Most CCDHH employees are members of the Deaf community themselves, and we are proud to embody the philosophy of “Deaf serving Deaf.”

This approach recognizes that linguistic and cultural competency are essential when serving any minority community. Understanding Deaf culture and respecting American Sign Language (ASL) as a fully developed language equal in value to English is central to our work.

All CCDHH staff are fluent in ASL and are trained in multiple communication strategies to support clients with diverse language needs, including individuals who may not be fluent in English or who have atypical language patterns.

## **2026 CCDHH Team**

Kate Slosar – Adult and Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist (VR & Pre-ETS)

Sandra Hatibovic – Part-time Deaf Advocate specializing in violence prevention and justice system support

Aileen Reusche – Deaf and Hard of Hearing Support Specialist (DDHHSS)

Rachel Leffel – Deaf Operations Manager overseeing scheduling and daily operations

Maria O’Neil-Ruddock – Community Outreach Specialist

Todd Smith – Staff Interpreter

Timothy Skaggs – Director, Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
action Plan for 2026

## **Our action plan includes the following priorities:**

Provide mentorship and professional training for CCDHH staff

Revise and improve the Client Satisfaction Survey

Provide DV/SV training and ASL instruction for Cleveland Rape Crisis Center staff

Explore more partnership with our agency

Continue development and promotion of DEAFinitely Learning

Address ongoing agency accessibility challenges

Expand Mental Health and Deafness Training in partnership with OMHAS

Expand Diabetes Awareness and Community Education (DAC) initiatives