



Executive Director Prospectus



DEAF & HARD OF HEARING SERVICES

About the Organization



Mission

Our mission is to provide *equal* communication access, education, and advocacy to the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing in pursuit of *all* life's opportunities.

VISION STATEMENT

Creating an inclusive West Michigan where Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing individuals have equal access to all life's opportunities.

CORE VALUES

RESPECT: Honoring the dignity and worth of every individual

SERVICE: Commitment to meeting community needs with excellence

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY: Fostering an environment where all can thrive

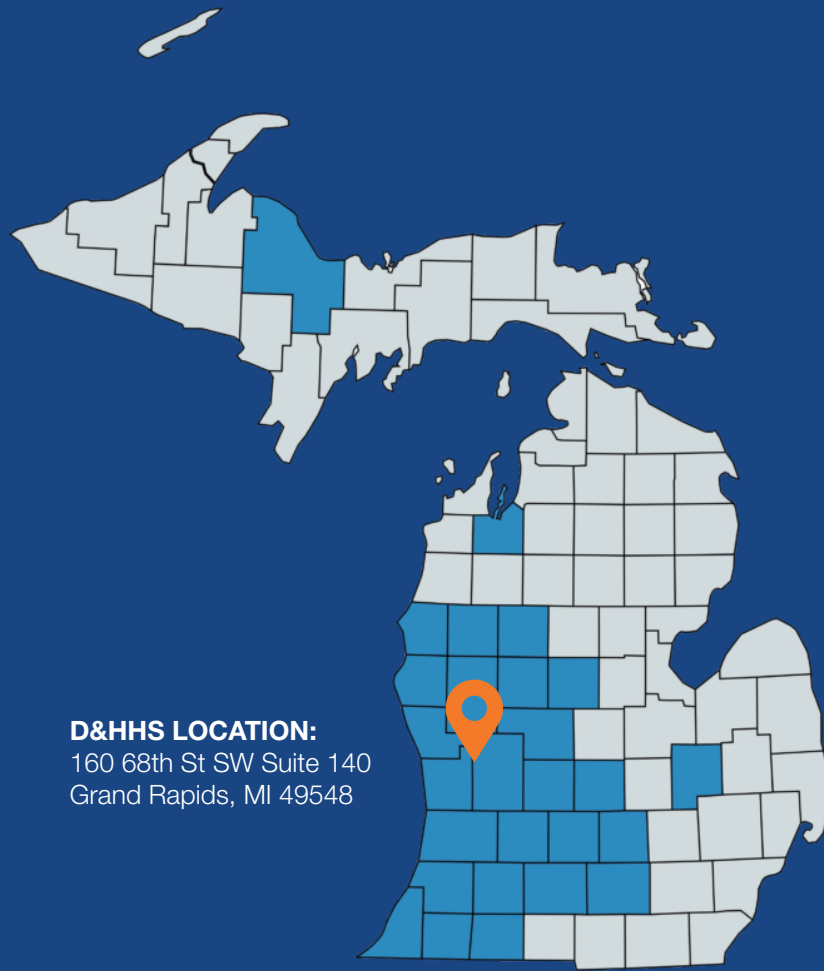
EMPOWERMENT: Building capacity for self-advocacy and independence

ADVOCACY: Fighting for rights and equal access

INTEGRITY: Acting with honesty and ethical standards in all endeavors

WHO WE ARE

D&HHS serves as the primary comprehensive, full-service agency focused on serving the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing communities across West Michigan. From toddlers to older adults, we offer excellent youth programming, hearing assistive technology, certified interpreters, advocacy, educational workshops, American Sign Language classes, and volunteer opportunities.



D&HHS LOCATION:
160 68th St SW Suite 140
Grand Rapids, MI 49548

We now serve *27 counties* and counting!

Key Counties: Kent, Ottawa, Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, and surrounding areas

Approximately
1.3 Million
Total population
across West Michigan

Approximately
260,000
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Individuals
(20% of population)

Approximately
13,000
DeafBlind Individuals
(1% of population)



History

D&HHS was founded in 1995 following a critical incident that highlighted the urgent need for comprehensive services. When Deaf community leader Marty Jansen suffered a heart attack, he and his severely hard of hearing wife Dianne encountered severe communication barriers with emergency services and healthcare providers. The 911 center repeatedly hung up on their TTY calls, and hospital staff struggled to provide interpreting services.

This experience galvanized the community. Interpreters, service providers, and Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers came together and declared "Enough is enough. We need a comprehensive, full-service agency addressing the needs of our Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities." Today, D&HHS remains the sole agency in West Michigan providing comprehensive services to these communities.



2024 BY THE NUMBERS

27
COUNTIES
SERVED

159 
INTERPRETER
WORKSHOP ATTENDEES

30 
CLIENTS PROVIDED
DIRECT ADVOCACY

7 
DEI&A
TRAININGS

51 
EIPA TESTS
PROCTORED

3,560
INTERPRETING
JOBS FILLED

151 
HEARING AIDS
FOR SENIORS

216 
LEARNING
SIGN LANGUAGE

1,975+
VOLUNTEER HOURS


237 
YOUTH PROGRAM
PARTICIPANTS

71 
COMMUNITY
WORKSHOP
ATTENDEES





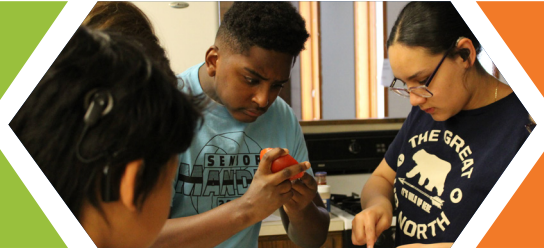
150+

ATTENDEES FOR
MAJOR EVENTS
(CODA screenings,
Deaf Awareness Month
celebrations)



**ASL
CLASSES**

SERVE STUDENTS OF ALL
SKILLS ONLINE AND
IN PERSON



400

APPROX. NUMBER OF
INTERPRETER SERVICES
ASSIGNMENTS FILLED
PER MONTH





Organizational Chart

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

D&HHS operates under a diverse board of directors that reflects the community served, including:

PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF DISABILITIES:

Members who are blind or have low vision
Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals
People with deafblindness (combined vision and hearing loss)
Representatives with cognitive/intellectual disabilities

PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE:

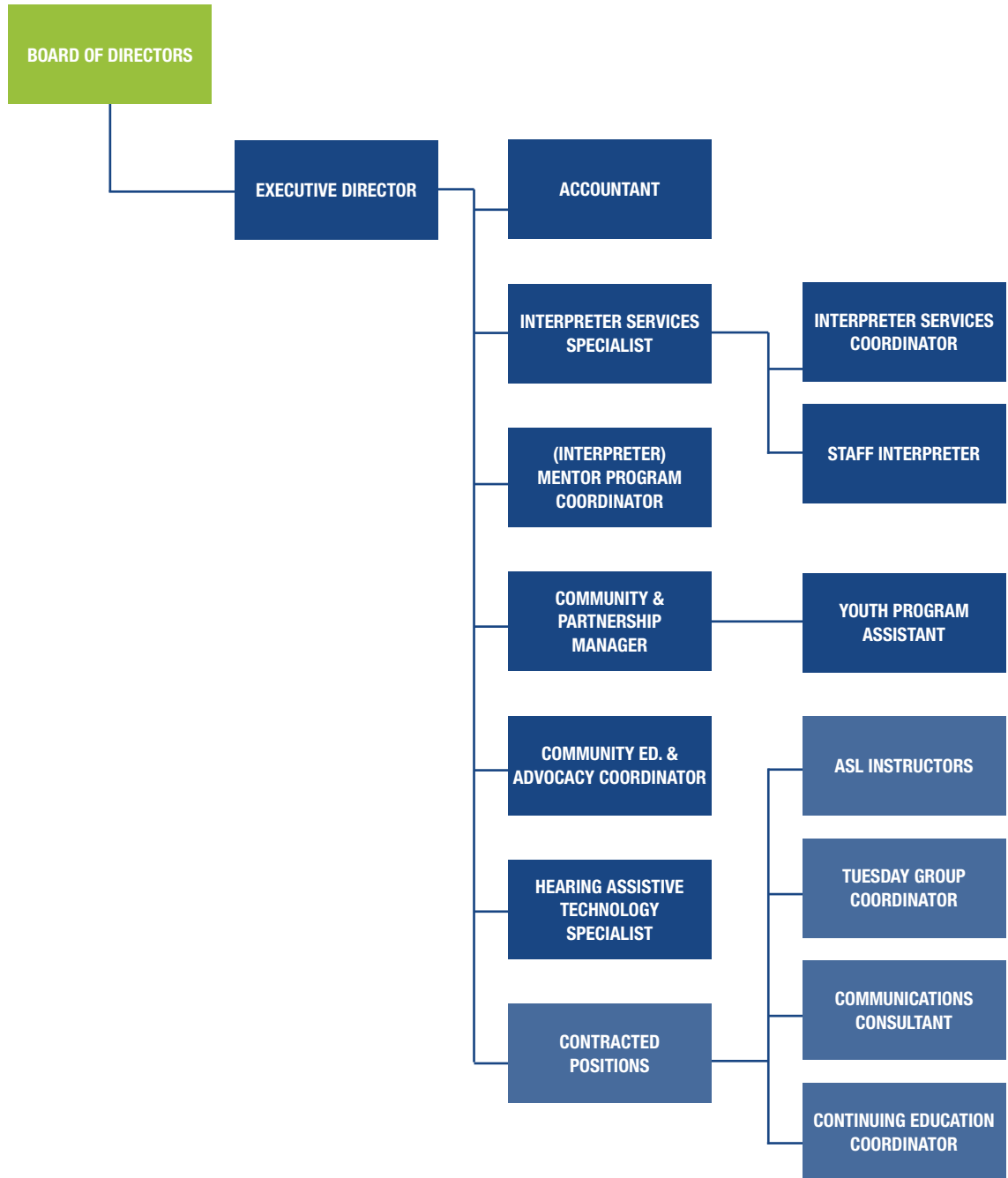
Educators and ASL (American Sign Language) specialists
Business owners and financial professionals

PERSONAL CONNECTIONS:

Parents and family members of people with disabilities

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION:

Long-time disability advocates
Former board leaders



Staff Structure

14
Employees

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Senior leadership position with extensive organizational experience and deep commitment to disability advocacy and community building

PROGRAM STAFF

COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIPS

MANAGER: Coordinates community outreach, event planning, marketing initiatives, grant management, cultural competency training, and youth programming development

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

COORDINATOR: Equips mentees with the competencies and understanding required to serve Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing individuals through the attainment of relevant professional certifications and endorsements

COMMUNITY EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

COORDINATOR: Deaf staff member providing cultural training, educational tutoring services, and direct advocacy support to community members and overseeing the ASL program

HEARING ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST:

Former hearing healthcare professional specializing in hearing aid consultation, assistive listening device support, and technology navigation

TUESDAY GROUP

COORDINATOR: Deaf staff member leading American Sign Language instruction and coordinating specialized programming for adults with developmental disabilities

ASL INSTRUCTORS

(MULTIPLE - DEAF): Deliver established curriculum both online and in person to community members interested in learning American Sign Language and gaining a deeper understanding of Deaf culture

YOUTH PROGRAM

SUPPORT STAFF: Coordinates youth-focused programming, events, and educational initiatives

INTERPRETER SERVICES

SPECIALIST: Manages interpreter scheduling, job placement, and service coordination for community requests

WORKSHOP

COORDINATOR: Organizes continuing education workshops, training sessions, and skill development opportunities for interpreters and service providers

ACCOUNTANT:

Oversees the daily operations of general business functions, financial management, maintains accurate financial records and ledgers, ensuring consistency and compliance from daily transactions to annual reports.

EXTERNAL SUPPORT

COMMUNICATIONS

CONSULTANT:

Provides strategic storytelling support and communications planning

Staff Expertise Areas

The team includes professionals with backgrounds in:

- Disability advocacy and community organizing
- Deaf culture and ASL instruction
- Hearing healthcare and assistive technology
- Grant writing and program development
- Special education and youth programming
- Interpreter services and coordination
- Marketing and community outreach
- Professional development and training facilitation
- Strong leadership in staff supervision, with expertise in budgeting, accounting, and organizational efficiency

Staff Demographics by Hearing Status

DEAF:

Multiple staff members

HARD OF HEARING:

Several staff members

HEARING:

Multiple staff members

COMMUNICATION MODALITIES:

Staff fluent in ASL, spoken English, and various communication modalities



DEAF & HARD OF HEARING SERVICES

Programs & Services

Advocacy Program

Provides support to individuals facing discrimination or challenges related to their hearing loss. Our advocates educate entities on ADA compliance responsibilities, assist with applications for housing and social security, and manage the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program in West Michigan, offering culturally sensitive support for people living with HIV.

Youth

Youth Programs

• KIDSIGNS (AGES 3-12):

Events and activities providing increased language

access and strengthening socialization and self-esteem

- **TEENSIGNS (AGES 13-19):** Activities focused on education, career options, and life skills development
- **ANNUAL EVENTS:** Kids Camp, Fall/Halloween events, Signing Santa, and community outings

ASL Classes and Tutoring

From beginner to conversational, our four-level ASL program offers full voice-off immersion—offered both in-person (Grand Rapids) or connect online:

- **ASL I:** ABCs, numbers, names, family, sentence structures, and Deaf culture basics
- **ASL II:** Advanced vocabulary, classifiers, rhetorical questions, and basic Deaf history
- **ASL III:** Deeper exploration of advanced vocabulary, Deaf history and culture
- **CONVERSATIONAL ASL:** Advanced classifiers, pronouns, dialogue

Additional services include specialized tutoring for Deaf children and families, including multilingual families (Spanish and Burmese speaking families). Customized classes available for corporations, agencies, and groups.

Education

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility (DEI&A) Education

Cultural competency training for businesses and service providers on appropriately serving Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing communities, including ADA compliance and accommodation provision.

Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT) Center

Provides access to test devices including flashing fire alarms, bed shakers, captioned phones, and pocket talkers. Offers devices through government programs, donations, and county senior millage programs.

HAT

Hearing Assistive Technology

Hearing Aid Assistance

Helps individuals understand financial resources for hearing aids, including insurance coverage and assistance programs, with special support for low-income seniors.





Interpreter Services

- Professional ASL interpreters for in-person and virtual appointments
- Support for healthcare providers, courts, law enforcement, educational institutions, and businesses
- Approximately 400 assignments per month (medical appointments most common)
- All interpreters are state or nationally certified through RID or LARA/BEI
- Public education on ADA compliance and Michigan interpreter laws

Human Services

development, practice, networking, and exposure to the culture of the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing community through a totally voice-off weekend. This event attracts participants from across Michigan and neighboring states.

- **DEAFBLIND WORKSHOPS:** Specialized training in "DeafBlind 101 & Haptics" with hands-on activities and environmental awareness training
- **EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (EIPA):** D&HHS serves as the only site in Michigan proctoring the EIPA, a national test provided by Boys Town National Research Hospital. LARA requirements for Michigan mandate a score above 4.0 (scoring scale 0.1-5.0) to legally work as an educational interpreter in K-12 public schools. Kent ISD partners with D&HHS to provide secure laptops and network connection for the written portion. D&HHS maintains two current Local Test Administrators (LTAs): Jen Kolhoff and Erica Chapin.

- **REGISTRY OF INTERPRETERS FOR THE DEAF (RID) CMP/ACET:** D&HHS is listed with RID as an approved sponsor to process Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for interpreters' professional development opportunities—a requirement for Michigan licensure. This CEU approval process is known as the Certification Maintenance Program and Associate Continuing Education Tracking System (CMP/ACET). Jennifer Kolhoff is currently trained as an approved sponsor.

Community Engagement

- **EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS FOR CERTIFIED INTERPRETERS** to gain CEUs and strengthen professional skills
- **SILENT WEEKEND:** An annual in-person fully immersive experience into the signing world held the 2nd or 3rd weekend in February at the YMCA overnight camp in Middleville, MI. The goal of Silent Weekend is to provide professional

Community Programs

- **TUESDAY GROUP:** Weekly program for Deaf adults with additional developmental disabilities focused on language, social opportunities, and skill building
- **FRIENDS OF D&HHS (FODHHS):** Monthly community meetings with guest speakers and social opportunities that provide the community with accessible presentations to learn about other services and resources in the community

Strategic Plan

D&HHS operates with focus on four key strategic areas:

1 Youth Development and Empowerment

- Establish positive Deaf identity in young people
- Provide accessible language and learning opportunities
- Create inclusive events for children and families
- Introduce educational and career opportunities

2 Community Education and Cultural Awareness

- Educate the hearing community about Deaf culture and communication needs
- Provide DEI&A training to businesses and organizations
- Expand ASL education opportunities
- Promote awareness of ADA rights and responsibilities

3 Access and Advocacy

- Ensure effective communication access in all settings
- Advocate for individual rights and accommodations
- Support policy development and systemic change
- Connect individuals with needed resources and services

4 Professional Development and Quality Services

- Maintain high standards for interpreter services
- Provide ongoing education for interpreters and community professionals
- Develop innovative programs to meet emerging needs
- Foster collaboration with partner organizations



West Michigan Overview

West Michigan encompasses urban centers like Grand Rapids and rural communities throughout Kent, Ottawa, Allegan, and surrounding counties. The region is known for strong healthcare systems, educational institutions, manufacturing base, and growing technology sector.

Grand Rapids serves as the regional hub with approximately 200,000 residents, while the greater metropolitan area includes over 1.3 million residents. The region hosts several colleges and universities, major healthcare systems, and a thriving arts and culture scene.



Community Partners

Key partnerships include major healthcare systems like Corewell Health, local school districts with Deaf education programs, and various advocacy organizations. D&HHS remains the only comprehensive service agency in West Michigan that is specifically focused on the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing population in the region.



DEAF & HARD OF HEARING SERVICES

Leadership *Profile*

D&HHS seeks an Executive Director who embodies the agency's mission and values, with deep commitment to serving the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing communities in West Michigan.



Community-Centered Advocate & Cultural Bridge-Builder

The Executive Director demonstrates exceptional cultural and linguistic competency, with fluent ASL skills and comprehensive understanding of Deaf culture. This leader serves as a skilled bridge-builder between different demographics—Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind communities—maintaining respect for all communication modalities and individual preferences.

Ideally a fluent ASL user with lived experience and authentic understanding, this leader connects personally with individuals across all age groups. They actively participate in community events, stay current with community happenings, and maintain strong intergenerational engagement. Their leadership transforms D&HHS from an organization working in isolation to one deeply embedded in community life.



Strategic Nonprofit Leader *with* Equity-Driven Vision

This leader brings proven nonprofit leadership experience with exceptional financial management skills and expertise in grant writing, fundraising, and donor relations. They balance day-to-day operational excellence with long-term strategic planning, ensuring expanded programming that serves all demographics within the community.

The Executive Director develops innovative funding models and community partnerships while improving D&HHS visibility and awareness. Their strategic approach includes comprehensive communications enhancement and consistent community presence.





Inclusive Community Builder & Organizational Culture Transformer

This leader fosters collaborative leadership that empowers staff expertise while building organizational cohesion and improving team morale. They create supportive environments encouraging professional growth, strong work ethics, and cross-program collaboration.

Understanding the need for generational renewal, this leader actively recruits and retains volunteers across all age groups. They champion inclusive language practices and enhance communication strategies to ensure D&HHS becomes widely known and accessible.



Systems Change Agent & Multi-Level Advocate

The Executive Director serves as a powerful advocate for civil rights enforcement and systemic change, possessing deep knowledge of ADA requirements, interpreter laws, and disability rights legislation. They tackle ongoing challenges with healthcare providers, court systems, and educational institutions while developing long-term strategic solutions.

With exceptional public speaking and relationship-building skills, they engage effectively with legislators and build coalitions for equitable policy change. This leader commits to repairing and building community relationships while staying current with cultural shifts and community preferences.





Job Summary

The Executive Director organizes and directs operations of D&HHS, including advocacy, information and referral, education, public relations, fundraising, and finances, in conformity with the mission and policies of the Board of Directors.

Key Responsibilities

OUTREACH

- Coordinate public relations programs to enhance public understanding
- Advocate at state, local, and legislative levels as subject matter expert
- Attend virtual or in-person meetings and conferences
- Communicate with businesses, hospitals, schools, and media outlets
- Provide advocacy through coordination with other agencies and ADA compliance referrals

DEVELOPMENT

- Develop and implement annual planning sessions with Board and staff
- Increase fundraising efforts by identifying potential revenue streams
- Execute contracts, grants, and commitments as authorized
- Maintain knowledge of local, state, and federal laws and pending legislation
- Ensure adequate presence of staff and volunteers within budget limits

COLLABORATION

- Plan, organize, and oversee programs and services with quality evaluations
- Provide liaison and staff support to board members and committee chairs
- Offer feedback to Board of Directors on agency programs and community issues
- Develop organizational culture promoting transparency and collaboration

ADMINISTRATION

- Perform employee lifecycle duties including hiring, evaluations, and dismissals
- Oversee drafting and enforcement of all organizational policies
- Develop, implement, and monitor annual budget with monthly Board reports
- Approve expenditures and sign checks as budget details

Requirements

- Bachelor's degree or higher from accredited program in relevant field with management and administrative experience
- Five or more years of immersion in Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing culture and history
- Demonstration of American Sign Language competency
- Proven community leadership and staff team building experience

Essential Skills

- Effective communication through speaking, writing, and/or conversational signing while respecting all language modalities
- Strategic and creative thinking with ability to work independently and collaboratively
- Strong project management skills balancing competing priorities and tight deadlines
- Ability to establish connections and attend functions enhancing stakeholder relationships

Compensation and Benefits

- **SALARY:** Annual pay 70 thousand dollars and potential increase based on performance
- **POSITION TYPE:** Full-time, exempt
- **EXPECTED HOURS:** 40 hours per week with some evening and weekend obligations
- **REPORTS TO:** Board of Directors
- **BENEFITS:** Paid vacation, paid PTO, bonuses, 403(b), flexible schedule, partially employer-funded health and dental insurance and professional development

Work Location

- **PRIMARY LOCATION:** 160 68th St SW, Suite 140, Grand Rapids, MI 49548
- **RELOCATION REQUIRED:** Must relocate to Grand Rapids, MI area before starting (relocation assistance available)



How to *Apply*

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, and three references to:

<https://www.innivee.com/apply>

All applications submitted by the deadline October 17th at 11:59 PM EST will receive full consideration.

For questions, please contact apply@innivee.com.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

D&HHS honors and complies with the federal and state laws (i.e., Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act of 1976, respectively) regarding equitable practices. Examples include hiring, training, promoting, and compensating practices. Each employee, volunteer, and vendor have the right to work in an environment free of unlawful discrimination, including harassment.

Basing work performance on OCBs organically prevents D&HHS employees from violating anti-discrimination and harassment of federal and state laws. This prevention extends beyond subordinates and colleagues to the clients. The result is fostering and sustaining a DEI-based, positive, and productive work culture for all individuals to thrive. Annual compliance training ensures a consistent understanding of relevant federal and state laws across all individuals affiliated with D&HHS.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
about the Deaf & Hard of
Hearing Services, please
visit deafhhs.org.