

**Mission:** Our motivation is to serve, represent and provide a greater understanding of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals across the state.

**Strategic Near-Term Focus (FY2016)**

1. Increase compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in public facilities in Iowa.
  - a. Work with the Department of Administrative Services and other relevant state agencies to perform an audit of existing compliance with ADA for the Hard of Hearing.
  - b. Collaborate with the Department of Public Safety and other organizations to add hearing assistive technology to the building code adopted by the State of Iowa.
2. Enhance the availability of information on the Department of Human Rights website and through other media to serve the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
  - a. Increase access to information and education regarding hearing assistive technology
3. Annually request a proclamation from the Governor recognizing Better Speech and Hearing Month in the State of Iowa; Continue to proclaim Deaf Awareness Week/Month.

**Strategic Mid-Term Focus (FY2016 – FY2018)**

4. Find legislative sponsor, and establish a coalition to draft, support and pass legislation that requires hearing instrument specialists to provide full information about all available assistive technologies at the point of service.
5. Increase communication and service access for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
  - a. Create a directory of service providers that are accessible to/provide services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
  - b. Add an American Sign Language interpreter to the Deaf Services Commission.
  - c. Increase the availability of real time captioning for late-deafened adults
  - d. Increase assistance to the elderly Deaf community
  - e. Increase availability of accessible housing for them
6. Establish a means for an advocate to be available to members of the Deaf community in difficult legal situations.

**Strategic Long-Term Focus (FY 2016-FY2020)**

7. Find legislative sponsor, and establish a coalition to draft, support and pass legislation that mandates insurance companies to provide health insurance for hearing aids and other hearing-related assistive technology.
8. Increase the number and availability of interpreters for the Deaf
  - a. Create a “Teach for America” type program for interpreters to provide tuition assistance for interpreters.
  - b. Create an American Sign Language Interpreter major within Iowa’s universities and community colleges; provide workshops throughout the state to assist with improvement in the interpreters skills.
  - c. Increase the interpreter compensation fund at the Department of Human Rights to \$10,000.

9. Increase educational opportunities for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to be equivalent with education for the hearing.
10. Increase education in the public schools curriculum about the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
11. Increase access to transportation options for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, including providing Service Support Providers.
12. Increase access to meaningful employment for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
13. Create and implement a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Mentoring Program