

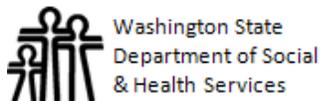
2013-2015 Business Plan

Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Eric Raff, ODHH Director

August 2012

Revised March 2013



Vision

Safe, healthy individuals, families, and communities

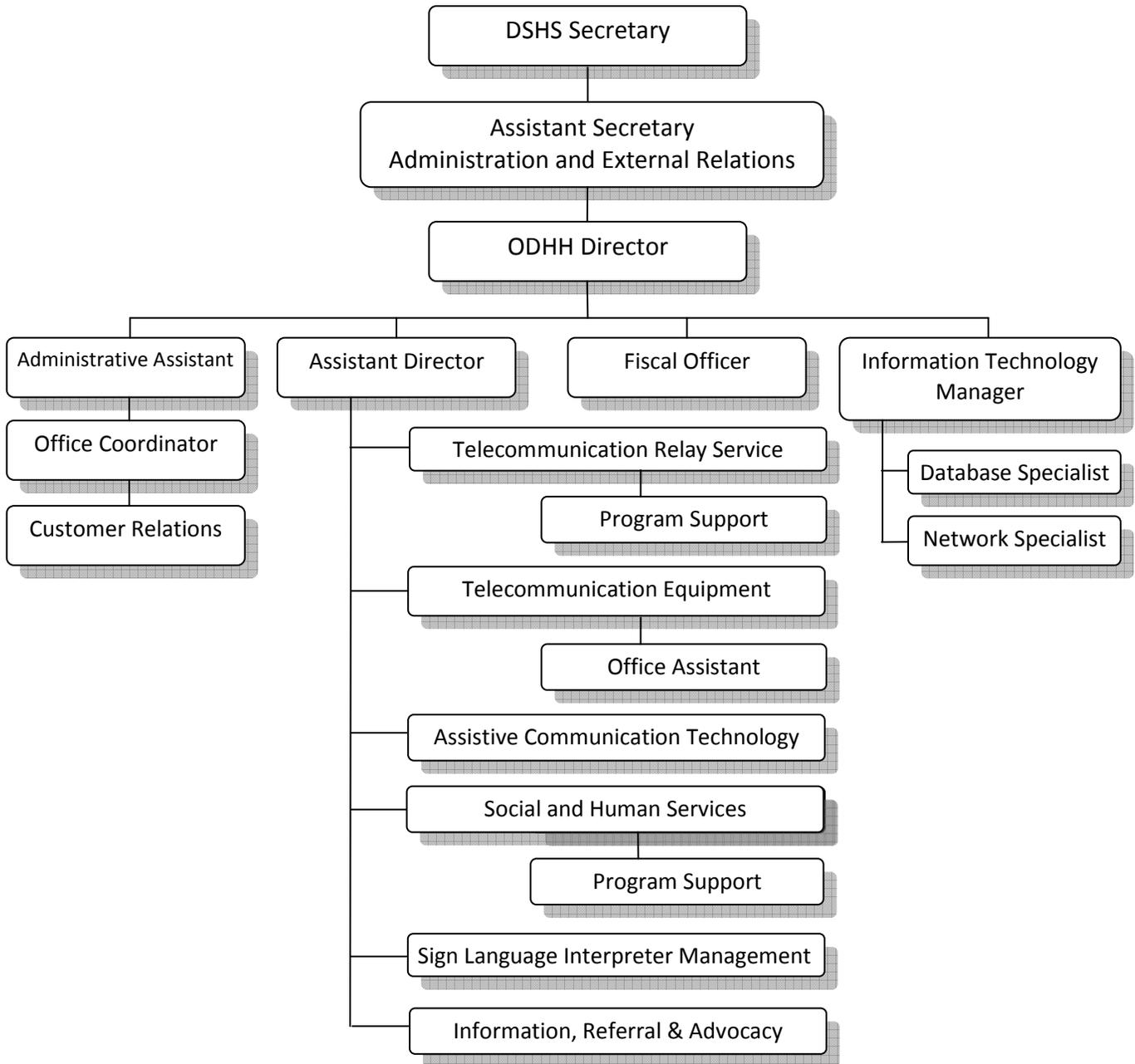
Mission

The Department of Social & Health Services will improve the safety and health of individuals, families, and communities by providing leadership and establishing and participating in partnerships.

Values

Excellence in Service
Respect
Collaboration and Partnership
Diversity
Accountability

Organizational Chart



Introduction

“People with hearing loss” is a broad term to describe all people who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind. Hearing loss affects people regardless of their age, ethnicity, religion, income, or other disability. Sometimes hearing loss is referenced as the “invisible disability” because it is not always obvious and is widely misunderstood by the society at large. Approximately 254,619 individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing live in Washington State. Washington also has a large deaf-blind population.

People who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind face communication barriers every day throughout the private, public and nonprofit sectors such as **healthcare, mental health, disaster preparedness, education, employment, early intervention** and many more. When barriers to obtain services exist in a society, the quality of life for them is reduced.

ODHH promotes equal access opportunities, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Washington Law Against Discrimination, so people with hearing loss may participate in or benefit from DSHS programs, services, and activities. To do this, ODHH provides reasonable accommodations and appropriate auxiliary aids and services where reasonably necessary to promote effective communication.

ODHH provides services to people who are deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind throughout Washington so they may **enjoy self-sufficiency**. ODHH provides telecommunication relay services, distributes specialized telecommunication equipment, provides client services to individuals and families through Regional Service Centers’ case management, and makes sign language interpreters and other auxiliary aids and services available. These services support the DSHS goal to **improve economic stability**.

ODHH services are designed to be **person and family-centered**, recognizing the broad range of communication preferences among various individuals that need to be addressed by providing appropriate auxiliary aids to create equal access opportunities.

- Telecommunication Relay Service users can choose from a menu of various relay services and features to make telephone calls to people with normal hearing and speech.

DSHS Goal 1

Improve the health status of vulnerable populations.

DSHS Goal 2

Improve economic stability, employment and self-sufficiency.

DSHS Goal 3

Improve individual and public safety.

DSHS Goal 4

Improve individuals’ readiness and ability to succeed in school.

DSHS Goal 5

Increase public trust through strong management practices that ensure quality and leverage all resources.

- Individuals choose from an array of specialized telecommunication equipment to meet their telecommunication needs or visit a public videophone site to conduct video calls.
- Individuals can request a preferred auxiliary aid including sign language interpreters, real-time captioning and assistive listening system that would meet their communication needs when seeking access to DSHS programs, services and activities.
- Individuals and families can identify their needs, accessibility barriers and/or other issues and seek assistance locally from the regional service centers of the deaf and hard of hearing. The centers provide case management, information and referral, and education and training. Case management coordinates the use of services and resources available to individuals and families so they may become more self-sufficient.

In an effort to leverage limited resources and promote the One Department, One Vision framework, ODHH collaborates and partners with various agencies to address different areas of unmet need. Most of these **partnerships** demonstrate ODHH's role in supporting DSHS priorities and goals although it may not be identified as specific goals in this business plan. A few of the partnerships include:

- working with the Department of Early Learning; Infant-Toddler Early Intervention Program, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction; Washington Sensory Disability Services and Department of Health; Early Hearing Loss Detection, Diagnosis and Intervention program, Center on Childhood Deafness and Hearing Loss to address gaps in early intervention services.
- working with the Administrator of the Courts to implement court interpreter standards and rates.
- working with the Behavioral Health and Service Integration Administration and specialized counselors to address disparities in accessing mental health care.
- collaborating with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to close gaps in employment, including school-to-work transition services, job preparedness and placement services, and competent rehabilitation counselors.
- Working with the Professional Educator Standards Board to implement educational interpreter standards as a tool for school districts to utilize.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies, Performance Measures

DSHS Goal 2: Improve economic stability, employment and self-sufficiency.

| STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES | STRATEGIES / ACTIONS | INTERDEPENDENCIES: OUR KEY BUSINESS PARTNERS | KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Remove barriers to telecommunications by providing current and emerging <u>telecommunication services and features</u></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide telecommunication relay services and features (TRS) • Develop and implement annual outreach plan (TRS) • Maintain deaf-blind ‘Communication Facilitator’ services (TRS) • Distribute specialized telecommunication equipment (TED) • Administer National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (TED-NDBEDP) | <p><u>Telecommunication Relay Services (TRS)</u> Sprint-Nextel Relay, National Association of State Relay Administrators, Deaf Blind Service Center</p> <p><u>Telecommunication Equipment Distribution (TED)</u> Equipment Trainers, Provail, Eastern Washington University, University of Washington, Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program Administrators</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call volume by types of services per month (TRS) • % of outreach deliverables completed per year (TRS) • Deaf-Blind Communication Facilitator call volume per month (TRS) • Number of clients served per month (TED) • Number of equipment distributed per month (TED) • Number of deaf-blind clients served (TED-NDBEDP) • Number of deaf-blind equipment distributed per month (TED-NDBEDP) |
| <p>Remove barriers to DSHS services by providing <u>reasonable accommodations with auxiliary aids</u></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure availability of sign language interpreter services (SLIM) • Implement a “Sign Communication Proficiency Interview” system (SLIM) • Assess employees’ sign language proficiency skills to determine eligibility for assignment pay: dual language (SLIM) • Establish a list of sign language interpreters for use by Washington Courts (SLIM) • Expand the assistive listening systems delivery system (ACT) • Provide Administrative Policy 7.20 training to DSHS employees (IRA) | <p><u>Sign Language Interpreter Management (SLIM)</u> Freelance interpreters, interpreter referral agencies, Washington State Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf, Washington State Association of the Deaf, Washington State Deaf Blind Citizens, DSHS Limited English Proficiency Coordinators</p> <p><u>Assistive Communication Technology (ACT)</u> Regional service centers of the deaf and hard of hearing, DSHS Lands and Building, captioning providers, Northwest Court Reporters Association, Hearing Loss Association of Washington</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of registered interpreters per year (SLIM) • Number of contractors per year (SLIM) • Availability of Sign Communication Proficiency Interview (SLIM) • Number of employees’ sign language proficiency assessments per year (SLIM) • Number of interpreters on the list for Washington Courts (SLIM) • Number of sites with assistive listening systems per year (ACT) • Availability of AP 7.20 training curriculum on Learning Management System (IRA) |

| STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES | STRATEGIES / ACTIONS | INTERDEPENDENCIES: OUR KEY BUSINESS PARTNERS | KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|--|
| Remove barriers to business, government and nonprofit sectors by providing <u>client services</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an array of services to individuals, families, professionals and organizations including employers (SHS) • Respond to public requests for information and referrals (IRA) • Conduct outreach activities (IRA) | <u>Social and Human Services (SHS)</u> Regional service centers of the deaf and hard of hearing <u>Information and Referral, Advocacy (IRA)</u> 211 Washington Information Network, Washington Connection, DSHS Visual Communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of clients served per year (SHS) • Number of education and training activities per year (SHS) • Number of outreach activities per year (SHS) • Number of requests for information & referral per year (SHS) • Number of booths at events/conferences per year (IRA) |

DSHS Goal 5: Increase public trust through strong management practices that ensure quality and leverage all resources.

| STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES | STRATEGIES / ACTIONS | INTERDEPENDENCIES: OUR KEY BUSINESS PARTNERS | KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS |
|--|--|--|---|
| Recruit, develop and retain an informed, inspired, diverse and engaged workforce, and maintain a safe working environment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Employee Survey action plan (Director) • Develop and implement individualized training plan (Executive Assistant) • Create innovative ways to recognize employees' success (Management) | DSHS Human Resources Division DSHS Research and Data Analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of ratings increase in the employee survey (Director) • % of employees who completed mandatory DSHS and competencies training (Executive Assistant) • Number of employee recognition events/activities per year (Management) |
| Use data, research and analyses to inform practice, policy and budget decisions, to monitor performance and to manage for success. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and maintain contract monitoring plans (Programs) • Finalize performance based measures and outcomes (Programs) • Develop biennial ODHH performance report (Director) • Research, design and implement case management best practices to improve Centers' caseload outcomes (SHS) | <u>Contracts</u> DSHS Central Contract Services <u>Performance</u> DSHS Office of Planning and Accountability <u>Case Management</u> National Association of State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, DSHS Research and Data Analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of monitoring plans completed (Programs) • Number of programs completing performance measures (Programs) • Biennial ODHH performance report completed (Director) • % of caseload outcomes successfully closed (SHS) |

Supporting Information

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Despite the ODHH Advisory Committee being abolished by Executive Order 09-02 during February 2009, ODHH continues to seek stakeholder feedback. ODHH posts annually a draft annual budget on the website and through a distribution list invites stakeholders to review and submit comments. ODHH hosts public meetings throughout Washington State, inviting deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind to discuss community trends, needs, barriers and new initiatives.

PEOPLE WE SERVE

“People with hearing loss” is a broad term to describe all people who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind. The degree of hearing loss ranges from mild to profound. The onset of hearing loss can occur at birth or later in life for varying reasons. Each individual with hearing loss has unique communication method preferences. People with hearing loss tend to be categorized into three groups based on similarities: deaf, deaf-blind and hard of hearing.

People who are deaf tend to have permanent hearing loss with little or no residual hearing, which affects verbal and auditory capabilities. Generally, people who are deaf are unable to receive information conveyed through spoken language without the use of auxiliary aids. They may communicate through a preferred communication method to express themselves and use services or technology to receive information conveyed through spoken language.

Deaf (Capital “D”) people identify themselves as members of a Deaf community and culture and prefer using American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary language. These individuals share common experiences, traditions, norms and values.

Deaf-Blind people are either deaf or hard of hearing and have some degree of vision loss or are blind. Deaf-Blind (Capital “DB”) people identify themselves as members of a Deaf and Deaf-Blind community. There are deaf-blind people who are hard of hearing, are not members of the community, and use other auxiliary aids to communicate.

People who are hard of hearing have some degree of hearing loss with some residual hearing, either permanent or fluctuating, which affects communication. Generally, people who are hard of hearing are able to express or speak for themselves and may or may not use auxiliary aids to receive or understand spoken language. They may communicate through auditory means, with or without amplification, and may or may not have the ability to lip-read. Few know sign language; and if they do, it is usually not their primary mode of communication.

People with speech disabilities are individuals who have difficulty with expressive communication or who are unable to communicate vocally in one or more environments. Most of them can hear.

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

ODHH provides various programs and services to the deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind populations throughout Washington. Services are designed to meet the particular communication needs of people with hearing loss.

Telecommunication Relay Service (TRS) - The Telecommunication Relay Service eliminates barriers to the telecommunication network, providing equal access opportunities to the telephone as a person with excellent hearing and clear speech would. Telephone calls to persons who are hearing are typically done through a communication assistant who makes the telephone conversation process easier. A contract with a telecommunication relay provider provides various relay features to accommodate the consumer's degree of hearing loss or speech disability and preferred communication method.

Telecommunication Equipment Distribution (TED) – Following DSHS regulations, eligible clients apply to receive specialized telecommunication equipment and receive training to effectively use the equipment. Specialized telecommunication equipment distributed to clients matches each individual's degree of hearing loss or speech disability and preferred communication method. The equipment makes it possible for the client to access the telecommunication relay services and to make direct telephone calls with other parties.

Social and Human Services (SHS) – ODHH contracts with several Regional Service Centers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing throughout the state to provide client services to local communities. Currently the scope of services includes: information and referral, education and training, outreach, assistive technology loan and referral, and case management. Case management is about providing assistance or advocacy on the client's behalf to remove communication barriers to products, services and employment in the private, public and nonprofit sectors.

Sign Language Interpreter Management (SLIM) - A statewide contract with a pool of referral agencies and freelance interpreters is available for agencies to purchase interpreter services on behalf of clients, employees or customers with hearing loss. The program's activities are to improve the delivery of sign language interpreter services. Technical assistance and consultation is available to agencies lacking the expertise to arrange interpreter services. Providing interpreters fulfills the Americans with Disabilities Act mandate to provide equal access opportunities to DSHS agencies, programs and services.

Assistive Communication Technology (ACT) - This program benefits people who are hard of hearing. The program aims to expand a DSHS-wide referral and loan system to provide auxiliary aids (e.g. assistive listening systems and other assistive technology). Providing auxiliary aids fulfills the Americans with Disabilities Act mandate to provide equal access opportunities to DSHS agencies, programs and services.

Information and Referral, and Advocacy (IRA) - Deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind individuals, families, professionals and the general public may not know where to obtain specific information about specialized programs and services related to hearing loss. ODHH responds to such requests for information, resources and/or referrals. The Regional Service Centers

advocate on behalf of individuals' legal rights. ODHH removes barriers through collaboration, revised regulations, policies and contracted services.

ODHH provides outreach and training activities to promote awareness and develop competency. These activities are intended for audiences of professionals, organizations, and deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind communities. Examples of outreach and training activities include: diversity initiatives, exhibits at events and conferences, distribution of publications, giving presentations and training on use of assistive technology. Outreach activities heighten the public awareness of ODHH programs, deaf culture, and other issues related to hearing loss. Training activities introduce sensitivity awareness or cultural competency concepts with knowledge and skills to support DSHS staff so they can effectively serve the deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind individuals and meet their individualized communication needs.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

State initiatives and best practices regarding performance-based outcomes and measures guide ODHH on how to conduct performance assessments. Logic models were developed and performance-based measures and outcomes are being refined. An ongoing activity is to develop meaningful reports that demonstrate how well the programs are performing with the goal of posting a biennial performance report on the website.

Audits and Reviews – ODHH has been subject to an internal Information Technology Security audit conducted by the State Auditor Office (SAO) under Information Systems Services Division (ISSD) purview. ODHH was commended for the low number of only three minor audit findings.

Internal Reviews - DSHS executive management reviews ODHH fiscal management via Monthly Fiscal Status Workgroup meetings. ODHH uses the annual Enterprise Risk Assessment and Self Evaluation (ERASE) to identify and minimize areas of risks.

Performance Assessments - ODHH participates in the annual Agency Self-Assessment, Employee Survey and the Client Satisfaction Survey. These activities are tools to identify and close performance gaps. ODHH uses the Agency Self-Assessment results to identify ODHH strengths and opportunities. ODHH uses the employee survey to review management, communication, personnel, resources, job characteristics, co-workers and other themes. Two client satisfaction surveys assess client satisfaction with the contracted trainers of the Telecommunication Equipment Distribution program and with the Centers' provision of case management services.

INTERNAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Organizational and Workforce Capacity – ODHH is a small program within DSHS with eighteen (18) positions. A 5-year workforce plan assumes a need for a succession plan due to anticipated retirements of three employees. The current emphasis is to encourage additional training to improve staff skills and core competencies and implement the DSHS Talent Management initiative.

Technology Capacity - The three-member Information Technology (IT) team has allowed ODHH to aggressively improve its technology capacity. A comprehensive management and data information system has been implemented to improve data management, meet performance requirements and IT standards. The new internet website to be released shortly will have more information and tools for the general public. Critical needs include intranet and internal web development.

Financial Capacity – “Fund 540” or the “Telecommunications Devices for the Hearing and Speech Impaired Account” is used to finance ODHH activities. The annual budget operates on a state fiscal year basis July 1-June 30 of each year. The revenue comes from the excise tax which is based on the number of landlines. Historically, the number of landlines has been declining 3-5% annually. Lately, the rate of decline has been 12%. Traditional Telecommunication Relay Service expenditures have been declining due to the popularity of internet-based relay services; however, a captioned telephone service is experiencing growth. ODHH projects that the reserves in Fund 540 will be depleted by June 30, 2015.