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**NEW MEXICO COMMISSION
FOR THE DEAF
AND
HARD OF HEARING**

1992
ANNUAL REPORT

March 1, 1993

Robert A. Geesey, Director

Susan Littlefield, President

**STATE
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INTRODUCTION

The New Mexico Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was created by the New Mexico Legislature, Laws of 1991, Chapter 72. The Commission is to consist of seven members, a majority of whom shall be deaf or hard of hearing persons, appointed by the Governor without regard for party affiliation, with the advice and consent of the Senate.

The Commission formally began service at a meeting on July 26, 1991. The persons appointed to the Commission were as follows:

Mr. Steve Hamerdinger, President, New Mexico Association for the Deaf, a deaf person.

Dr. Gilbert Delgado, Superintendent, New Mexico School for the Deaf, a hearing person.

Mrs. Lucille B. Trujillo, a parent of a deaf or hard of hearing child.

Mr. Gary Beene, designated representative of the Director of the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the State Department of Public Education.

Ms. Susan Littlefield, of Albuquerque, a professional person who is deaf or hard of hearing.

Mr. Julian Carrillo, of Las Cruces, a deaf person who resides in southern New Mexico.

Mrs. Daisy Rice, of Las Vegas, a hard of hearing person who resides in northern New Mexico.

OFFICERS

1991-1992

Chair - Steve Hamerdinger

Vice Chair - Mrs. Lucille Trujillo

1992-1993

Chair - Ms. Susan Littlefield

Vice Chair - Steve Hamerdinger

Secretary - Lucille Trujillo

COMMISSION STAFFING

The Commission, after a nationwide recruitment, hired Robert Geesey as its first Executive Director. Mr. Geesey began his employment with the Commission on October 14, 1991.

From October of 1991 until June of 1992, the Commission was housed in the offices of the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, DDPC rented a single office to the Commission, and under a Joint Powers Agreement, also provided some technical and manpower assistance.

In June of 1992, the Commission and the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council moved into new offices at 435 St. Michael's Drive, Building D, Santa Fe, New Mexico. The Commission leased four offices. At this time, with the additional space provided by this lease, the Commission hired additional staff. AS of January 1993, the staff members, the position they hold, and date of hiring, are as follows:

Greta Archuleta, Administrative Secretary, June 1992.

827-7584

Cathleen Rooney, M.A., C.A.C., Coordinator of Interpreting Services, July 1992.

Karen Laird, Planner III-D, January 1993.

A Clerk-Specialist will be recruited in March, 1993.

COMMISSION'S ACTIVITIES

From its inception, one of the major activities of the Commission has been provision of educational assistance to state agencies and, specifically, ensuring agency compliance with regulations pertaining to deafness promulgated pursuant to the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Commission has provided workshops on the A.D.A. in several cities in New Mexico. These workshops have been attended by professionals, state agency personnel, parents of hearing impaired persons, and deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

The Commission has offered its expertise on the A.D.A. to assist many state agencies in developing the A.D.A. compliance reports, offering information and assistance to those agencies requiring specific changes in policy and services. Agencies making use of this service include, but are not limited to, the State Personnel Office, the Environment Department, the Department of Human Services, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Highway and Transportation Department, and various divisions of other departments.

Interpreter Task Force

In September of 1992, the Commission established a Task Force on Interpreter Issues. The Task Force is composed of eight sign language interpreters selected by members of the New Mexico Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, eight deaf and hard of hearing consumers, and three agency representatives. The Task Force has been asked to look at all issues relating to sign language interpreting, including but not limited to professional fees, mileage for travel to assignments, ethics of interpreting, the need for and method of implementing a State Certification program, issues applicable to referral services, and continuing education of certified interpreters.

The Task Force has been, and will continue to be, meeting as a group at least monthly, and has been divided into three subcommittees which meet bi-weekly. A report is expected to be developed and disseminated by the end of June, 1993.

Interpreter Referral Service

In conjunction with the establishment of the Task Force on Interpreter Issues, the Commission also began an Interpreter Referral Service. The intent of the commission is to continue this referral service until the completion of the report of the Task Force, and then look into contracting this referral service out to a community service group, unless the Task Force Report recommends that the Referral Service be continued under the Commission. From its inception in July of 1992 to the end of January, 1993, the Commission's referral service has been able to assign interpreters in ninety-eight percent (98%) of requests.

The Interpreter Referral Service has also been serving as an information provider to agencies and businesses which have been unfamiliar with interpreting. The Commission provides information on the qualifications and training required of interpreters to fill specific needs. For example, the requirements of training are necessarily higher for an interpreter requested to interpret in a court case than are required of an interpreter in a one-on-one situation between a client and a doctor.

TTY Equipment Loan Program

Through a Grant from the Technical Assistance Program of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Commission has been able to purchase twelve (12) telecommunication devices for the deaf. This equipment is being offered to low income persons on a short term loan basis when there is deemed to be an emergency need for access to telephone communication, and to help some persons determine if the usage they make of the equipment justifies the expense of purchasing their own equipment. Data obtained from this program will also be applied to a possible future program which will provide TTYs to low income deaf and hard of hearing persons free of charge.

New Mexico Relay Services

The Commission has worked closely with the Board of Directors of the New Mexico Relay Service, a non-profit organization, to ensure continuance of this essential service. The Commission worked with the General Services Department, the State Corporation Commission, and local and long distance telephone industry representatives in drafting a proposed Telecommunications Access Act which will provide more comprehensive relay services in New Mexico as required by the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

1-800 TTY Newslines

In November, 1992, the Commission established an 1-800 TTY Newslines to assist in informing deaf and hard of hearing persons on public hearings, public meetings, and other essential items of interest to this constituency. The Newslines is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to persons who use TTYs. The TTY Newslines service generates an average of 15 calls per day. This number is expected to rise as the public becomes aware of the service.

Closed Captioning of Local News Programs

The Commission, in conjunction with the Albuquerque Quota Club, the New Mexico Association for the Deaf, Self Help for the Hard of Hearing, and various other organizations, lobbied all of the local television studios in New Mexico for the inclusion of Closed Captioning on their local newscasts. KQRE TV Channel 13 in Albuquerque purchased the equipment necessary to provide Closed Captions, and on January 13, 1993, began the service.

The Commission assisted KQRE in setting up an Advisory Committee of consumers to give input on improving their service.

NMCDHH BOARD MEETINGS

The Commission hold quarterly board meetings, alternating the meeting location around the state.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
August 24, 1991	Santa Fe, New Mexico School for the Deaf
September 21, 1991	Albuquerque
December 7, 1991	Las Cruces, Branekin Library
March 14, 1992	Roswell, ENMU Roswell Campus
June 6, 1992	Farmington, San Juan College
September 3, 1992	Santa Fe, New Mexico School for the Deaf
January 9, 1993	Albuquerque, Presbyterian

The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for March 6, 1993 in Clovis at the Clovis Community College Campus.

TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

- November 1991 Participated in Youth Leadership Conference at New Mexico School for the Deaf.
- January 1992 Los Alamos National Labs - met with A.A./E.E.O staff and hearing impaired employees regarding ADA requirements.
- February 1992 Participated in Career Day event s at the New Mexico School for the Deaf.
- April 1992 A.D.A. Workshop in Roswell. Approximately 30 persons were in attendance.
- June 1992 A.D.A. Workshop in Hobbs for more than 25 persons.
- August 1992 A.D.A. Workshop in Alamogordo, attended by 32 persons, including Principals from Alamogordo and Tularosa Public Schools.
- September 1992 Trained LCS staff on the use of TTYs.
- October 1992 A.D.A. Workshop for NMRID members and other interpreters in Santa Fe, 45 persons attended.
- December 1992 Gave three A.D.A. Workshops at New Mexico School for the Deaf. Leadership Workshop for Deaf and Hard of Hearing persons.
- December 1992 Participated in the Governor's Conference in Albuquerque. Set up a booth at the Conference for information.

GOALS OF THE COMMISSION

Mental Health

From its inception, the Commission has received requests for assistance in a wide variety of Mental Health services to deaf and hard of hearing persons. Specialized services are totally lacking in New Mexico for this constituency, and integration of deaf and hard of hearing persons into existing programs for hearing persons has not been very successful.

The Commission wishes to plan a Statewide Conference on Mental Health and Deafness to address issues as diverse as substance abuse, DWI, dysfunctional families, and severe mental retardation. An outcome of such a Conference possibly would be a Task Force on Mental health and Deafness to develop plans to address these needs.

Adult Continuing Education

The Commission assisted the Otero County Association of the Deaf in obtaining classroom space for a model Adult Basic Education program in Alamogordo. It is expected that the experience gained from this program will assist the Commission in developing similar programs in other localities. Preliminary surveys have shown there is widespread need for

remedial reading and mathematics education in the adult deaf and hard of hearing population. In addition, there is interest in this constituency for participation in other adult education classes such as arts, recreation skills, automotive maintenance, etc.

Job Placement Services

After interpreting services, mental health, and adult education, job placement service is the largest area of requests for assistance the Commission receives. Many deaf and hard of hearing persons have the vocational training and skills necessary for employment, but do not have the skills necessary in resume writing and interviewing to successfully obtain employment. Existing job placement services often do not have the expertise to educate employers on issues related to deafness that affect employment of this population.

The Commission will work with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and technical programs at the state's community colleges towards development of strategies to improve the success of job placement of deaf and hard of hearing persons.