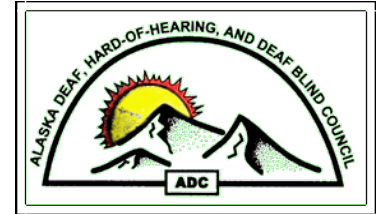




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Persons who are deaf in Alaska no longer have a location or place to call their own. The community speaks of integration, yet there is no possible way that generalized community centers can effectively accommodate persons of all disabilities. Persons who are deaf need appropriate and effective communication and support to feel a part of their community. Currently there is no single community resource in Alaska where a deaf person can go to receive assistance in translating standard English to ASL, assistance in understanding legal documents, updates on news, receive support in independent living or socialize. The hearing community is unaware of the needs of the deaf as their ability to communicate is ever present. Generalized resources are inadequate to meet the social, emotional and cognitive needs of the deaf community. The deaf community is asking for a place to congregate; a safe haven with resources accessible to persons in remote locations via video conferencing. A place where people can become connected and feel a part of the Alaskan community.

- There are an estimated 3,000 Alaskans who are Deaf and more than 50,000 who are hard of hearing. **About 2 to 4 of every 1,000 people in the United States are "functionally deaf,"** though more than half became deaf relatively late in life; **fewer than 1 out of every 1,000 people in the United States became deaf before 18 years of age.**
- However, if people with a severe hearing impairment are included with those who are deaf, then the number is 4 to 10 times higher. That is, **anywhere from 9 to 22 out of every 1,000 people have a severe hearing impairment or are deaf.** Again, at least half of these people reported their hearing loss after 64 years of age.
- Finally, if everyone who has any kind of "trouble" with their hearing is included then **anywhere from 37 to 140 out of every 1,000 people in the United States have some kind of hearing loss,** with a large share being at least 65 years old.
<http://gri.gallaudet.edu/Demographics/deaf-US.php>

The Alaska Deaf Council (ADC) is working in partnership with Alyeska Vocational Services (AVS) to establish a deaf center. AVS is an extension of Washington Vocational Services, a nonprofit organization serving people with disabilities for the past 34 years in the State of Washington with an annual budget of \$3,000,000. Alaskan Services began in 2005 with Alyeska Vocational Services that manages an annual budget of approximately \$325,000 in billable service hours between Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and other miscellaneous contracts.

ADC/AVS has obtained support from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (Trust) to explore the establishment of a deaf center in Alaska. Technical assistance, market analysis, research, and funding options will be conducted using resources that are available through the Trust and its following partners:

- Denali Commission

- Rasmussen Foundation
- Mat Su Health Corporation
- Foraker Group

AVS and ADC have established preliminary revenue that would be used to sustain the operation of a deaf center. They are as follows:

- Profits generated through a local integrated café will be funneled to the deaf center (\$80,000 annually)
- Fee for service revenue (financial reports annually \$325,000)
- Grants
- Donations
- Contracts
- Fund raising

The Alaska Deaf Council and Alyeska Vocational Services would like to **ask** your support to improve the quality of life for Alaskans that are deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf blind. Through most of our preliminary research and analysis, we believe the best way to do this is to establish a deaf center. We believe an Alaska Deaf Center will provide an open, inspiring place that empowers and includes persons who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind, in every aspect of our Alaskan Communities.

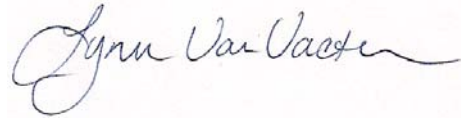
Sincerely,



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