

CHAPTER 256C

HANDICAPPED PERSONS

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256C.02 PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS.

The blind, the visually handicapped, and the otherwise physically disabled have the same right as the able-bodied to the full and free use of the streets, highways, sidewalks, walkways, public buildings, public facilities, and other public places; and are entitled to full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of all common carriers, airplanes, motor vehicles, railroad trains, motor buses, boats, or any other public conveyances or modes of transportation, hotels, lodging places, places of public accommodation, amusement, or resort, and other places to which the general public is invited, subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law and applicable alike to all persons.

Every totally or partially blind, physically handicapped, or deaf person or any person training a dog to be a service dog shall have the right to be accompanied by a service dog in any of the places listed in section 363A.19. The person shall be liable for any damage done to the premises or facilities by such dog. The service dog must be capable of being properly identified as from a recognized school for seeing eye, hearing ear, service, or guide dogs.

256C.233 DUTIES OF STATE AGENCIES.

Subdivision 1. **Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Division.** The commissioners of human services, education, economic security, and health shall create a distinct and separate organizational unit to be known as the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services Division to address the developmental, social, educational, and occupational needs of deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons through a statewide network of collaborative services and by coordinating the promulgation of public policies, regulations, legislation, and programs affecting deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons. An interdepartmental management team shall supervise the activities of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services Division. The commissioner of human services shall coordinate the work of the interagency management team and receive legislative appropriations for the division.

Subd. 2. **Responsibilities.** The Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services Division shall:

- (1) establish and maintain a statewide network of regional service centers for deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing Minnesotans;
- (2) assist the Departments of Human Services, Education, and Economic Security to coordinate the promulgation and implementation of public policies, regulations, legislation, programs, and services affecting deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons; and
- (3) provide a coordinated system of statewide interpreting or interpreter referral services.

[For text of subds 3 and 4, see M.S.2002]

History: 2003 c 130 s 12

256C.24 REGIONAL SERVICE CENTERS.

[For text of subd 1, see M.S.2002]

Subd. 2. **Responsibilities.** Each regional service center shall:

- (a) serve as a central entry point for deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons in need of services and make referrals to the services needed;
- (b) employ staff trained to work with deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons;
- (c) provide to all deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons access to interpreter services which are necessary to help them obtain services;
- (d) implement a plan to provide loaned equipment and resource materials to deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons;
- (e) cooperate with responsible departments and administrative authorities to provide access for deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons to services provided by state, county, and regional agencies;
- (f) collaborate with the Resource Center for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Persons, other divisions of the Department of Education, and local school districts to develop and deliver programs and services for families with deaf, deaf-blind, or hard-of-hearing children and to support school personnel serving these children;
- (g) when possible, provide training to the social service or income maintenance staff employed by counties or by organizations with whom counties contract for services to ensure that communication barriers which prevent deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons from using services are removed;
- (h) when possible, provide training to state and regional human service agencies regarding program access for deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons; and
- (i) assess the ongoing need and supply of services for deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons in all parts of the state and cooperate with public and private service providers to develop these services.

[For text of subd 3, see M.S.2002]

History: 2003 c 130 s 12

256C.28 COMMISSION SERVING DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING PEOPLE.

[For text of subds 1 to 3, see M.S.2002]

Subd. 3a. Duties. The commission shall:

- (1) assist deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons and parents of deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing students in advocating for equal access to services, programs, and opportunities;
- (2) advise the governor, the legislature, and the commissioners of the Departments of Human Services, Education, Economic Security, and Health on the development of policies, programs, and services affecting deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons, and on the use of appropriate federal and state money;
- (3) create a public awareness of the special needs and potential of deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons;
- (4) provide the governor, the legislature, and the commissioners of the Departments of Human Services, Education, Economic Security, and Health with a review of ongoing services, programs, and proposed legislation affecting deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons;
- (5) advise the governor, the legislature, and the commissioners of the Departments of Human Services, Education, Economic Security, and Health on statutes, rules, and policies necessary to ensure that deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons have equal access to benefits and services provided to individuals in Minnesota;
- (6) recommend to the governor, the legislature, and the commissioners of the Departments of Human Services, Education, Economic Security, and Health legislation designed to improve the economic and social conditions of deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons in Minnesota;

(7) propose solutions to problems of deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons in the areas of education, employment, human rights, human services, health, housing, and other related programs;

(8) recommend to the governor and the legislature any needed revisions in the state's affirmative action program and any other steps necessary to eliminate the underemployment or unemployment of deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons in the state's work force;

(9) work with other state and federal agencies and organizations to promote economic development for deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing Minnesotans; and

(10) coordinate its efforts with other state and local agencies serving deaf, deaf-blind, and hard-of-hearing persons.

[For text of subds 4 to 6, see M.S.2002]

History: 2003 c 130 s 12