

**256C.233 DUTIES OF STATE AGENCIES.**

Subdivision 1. **Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services Division.** The commissioners of education, employment and economic development, and health shall advise the commissioner of human services on the activities of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services Division. This division addresses the developmental and social-emotional needs of persons who are deaf, persons who are deafblind, and persons who are hard-of-hearing through a statewide network of services and advocates on behalf of and provides information and training about how to best serve persons who are deaf, persons who are deafblind, and persons who are hard-of-hearing. The commissioner of human services shall coordinate the work of the interagency advisers 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 culturally affirmative services for Minnesotans who are deaf, Minnesotans who are deafblind, and Minnesotans who are hard-of-hearing;

(2) work across divisions within the Department of Human Services, as well as with other agencies and counties, to ensure that there is an understanding of:

(i) the communication challenges faced by persons who are deaf, persons who are deafblind, and persons who are hard-of-hearing;

(ii) the best practices for accommodating and mitigating communication challenges; and

(iii) the legal requirements for providing access to and effective communication with persons who are deaf, persons who are deafblind, and persons who are hard-of-hearing;

(3) assess the supply and demand statewide for interpreter services and real-time captioning services, implement strategies to provide greater access to these services in areas without sufficient supply, and build the base of service providers across the state;

(4) maintain a statewide information resource that includes contact information and professional certification credentials of interpreting service providers and real-time captioning service providers;

(5) provide culturally affirmative mental health services to persons who are deaf, persons who are deafblind, and persons who are hard-of-hearing who:

(i) use a visual language such as American Sign Language or a tactile form of a language; or

(ii) otherwise need culturally affirmative therapeutic services;

(6) research and develop best practices and recommendations for emerging issues;

(7) provide as much information as practicable on the division's stand-alone website in American Sign Language; and

(8) report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over human services biennially, beginning on January 1, 2019, on the following:

(i) the number of regional service center staff, the location of the office of each staff person, other service providers with which they are colocated, the number of people served by each staff person and a breakdown of whether each person was served on-site or off-site, and for those served off-site, a list of locations where services were delivered and the number who were served in-person and the number who were served via technology;

- (ii) the amount and percentage of the division budget spent on reasonable accommodations for staff;
- (iii) the number of people who use demonstration equipment and consumer evaluations of the experience;
- (iv) the number of training sessions provided by division staff, the topics covered, the number of participants, and consumer evaluations, including a breakdown by delivery method such as in-person or via technology;
- (v) the number of training sessions hosted at a division location provided by another service provider, the topics covered, the number of participants, and consumer evaluations, including a breakdown by delivery method such as in-person or via technology;
- (vi) for each grant awarded, the amount awarded to the grantee and a summary of the grantee's results, including consumer evaluations of the services or products provided;
- (vii) the number of people on waiting lists for any services provided by division staff or for services or equipment funded through grants awarded by the division;
- (viii) the amount of time staff spent driving to appointments to deliver direct one-to-one client services in locations outside of the regional service centers; and
- (ix) the regional needs and feedback on addressing service gaps identified by the advisory committees.

Subd. 3. **Health.** The commissioner of health shall establish standards for screening for hearing loss with special emphasis on screening of persons from birth through school age and persons over age 65.

Subd. 4. [Repealed, 1Sp2017 c 6 art 1 s 54]

**History:** 1996 c 392 s 2; 1999 c 149 s 2,3; 2003 c 130 s 12; 2004 c 206 s 36; 2009 c 86 art 1 s 89; 1Sp2017 c 6 art 1 s 36,37