

**PROGRAM
FOR
BETTER SERVICES
TO THE
ADULT DEAF**



This brochure was sponsored and printed with funds contributed by members of the Utah Association for the Deaf.

Although hearing loss leaves no visible defacing mark, it may alter profoundly all normal relationships at home, at school, at work, and at play.

—Margaret Lane Washington

UTAH ASSOCIATION FOR THE DEAF

INCORPORATED 1956

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January 1965

To Members of the
Utah State Legislature
and the Public:

In December of 1962, the Community Services Council, Salt Lake Area, was asked to look into the problems of the adult deaf. The situation was deemed to be of sufficient importance that a study was undertaken to determine the needs of and community resources for the adult deaf. The study was accomplished with the cooperation of the Utah Association for the Deaf.

Upon completion of the study, "Services to Adult Deaf, Salt Lake Area," the council appointed a committee to seek ways of implementing the recommendations of the study.

This marked the first time in Utah history that the adult deaf had received outside help in solving their problems. The question reasonably can be asked, "Why do the adult deaf people now find themselves in need of help?"

This informal brochure attempts to answer this question and what can be done to help the adult deaf meet the increasing problems encountered in the changing world in which they live and compete.

Utah Association for the Deaf

HIGHLIGHTS

1. In 1963 the Community Services Council, Salt Lake Area, made a painstaking study of needs of the adult deaf, titled "Services to Adult Deaf, Salt Lake Area."
2. This study proved the need of the adult deaf for specialized professional help to enable them to understand and be understood in order for the adult deaf to effectively utilize existing community services and to assist them with their unique problems.
3. The study proved that the deaf are inadequately served in the community, mainly because of communication barriers.
4. It was recommended that a Unit of Services for the Adult Deaf be established in the Division of Rehabilitation. The State Board of Education accepted and approved this recommendation.
5. A supplemental budget request has been submitted by the Division of Rehabilitation to staff this unit with at least one specially trained professional person to work half-time as a coordinator, the other half as a vocational rehabilitation counselor with a budget for necessary rehabilitation services.
6. The adult deaf need and want these services and earnestly solicit acceptance of and support for them.
7. On January 26, 1965, the general membership of the Community Services Council voted to support the proposed establishment of better services to the adult deaf; such services to be housed and administered through the Department of Public Instruction, Division of Rehabilitation.

PROPOSAL FOR BETTER SERVICES TO THE ADULT DEAF IN UTAH

January 1965

Recognition of Problems of the Deaf

Although the adult deaf people of Utah have established an enviable record for individual achievement and group self-sufficiency, changing social conditions and the changing composition of the deaf community itself have radically altered the picture.

Twenty or 30 years ago, well over half the children in our School for the Deaf were adventitiously deaf—that is, they had acquired language and speech before losing their hearing. Today, thanks to medical advances, such children are becoming a rarity. But, unfortunately, there has been an increase in the number of children born with hearing defects—or at least surviving long enough for the defect to become apparent, and many of these children have multiple handicaps. These people are now beginning to take their place in an increasingly sophisticated and competitive adult world in which they are at a comparatively greater disadvantage.

Because of the communication barriers between them and their fellow citizens who hear, they are unable to benefit from many essential community services that might otherwise be available, and they often are in dire need of interpreter assistance to understand and to make themselves understood. Outside of the School for the Deaf, *direct* services of which are available only to a limited number of the deaf of young age, there is no agency in the state equipped with staff professionally trained to communicate with the deaf at a level of efficiency that reaches to the center of their problems.

Findings of a Study of the Adult Deaf

The Council study revealed clearly that adult deaf persons represent a group for whom community services, though available, cannot readily be rendered. This is so in large part because of inability of persons requesting the services to communicate with those who offer the services and the lack of agency personnel who can effectively coordinate such services.

Great harm to the adult deaf and their families results from their inability to communicate and receive counseling, interpretive, and adjustment services in such vital areas as legal, personal, social, emotional, family, financial marital, health, educational, vocational, recreational and job placement activities. A well qualified professional social service worker, or workers, able to "manually" and "orally" communicate with and understand the unique problems of the deaf, could be of inestimable value in helping to prevent or to untangle serious problems and deprivations suffered by the deaf for lack of such *an agency supported service*. The deaf are often at the mercy of their handicap when confronted with buying homes, and other principal goods and services, in court dealings, and in meeting certain day-to-day crises.

State Board of Education Viewed as Logical Administrative Authority

Subsequent to the completion of the study referred to above, the Council appointed a second committee to explore among both private voluntary and public agencies one in which its findings could be implemented, preferably on a state-wide basis since adult deaf are found throughout the state (but predominantly along the Wasatch Front area). The Council subcommittee concluded that the State Division of Rehabilitation of the Department of Public Instruction is well equipped in most essential ways to carry out the service of coordinating services to the adult deaf, especially since it already carries out a social service function to the vocationally handicapped in all political sub-divisions of the state. Further, the State Board of Education under which it functions already has administrative jurisdiction over the School for the Deaf. These areas of newly identified need for intensified services for the adult deaf frequently run parallel to vocational rehabilitation services for the deaf, which the Division is already engaged in.

Suggested Unit of Services—Within the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

It is proposed that a Unit of Services for the adult deaf be established in the Division of Rehabilitation, to be staffed initially by a coordinator and a secretary. This person would engage in counseling and social service functions with those

deaf having serious problems in areas already mentioned. Straight state money would be needed to finance the so-called "non-rehabilitative" services, whereas under the Vocational Rehabilitation Act services rehabilitative in nature would be supported by state funds which would also earn federal matching funds. The staff position involved would be a half-time vocational rehabilitation counselor for the deaf and half-time coordinator of services for the deaf. The Community Services Council presented its study to the State Board of Education, which after considering this matter for two months, approved it, and in so doing authorized presentation by the Division of Rehabilitation of a supplemental budget in support of this modest but extended program of services to the deaf of Utah. The administration of the Division of Rehabilitation is strongly in favor of this service to the adult deaf, recognizing that in many respects the deaf have been "short changed."

Expected Accomplishments

There being approximately 800 deaf people in the state of Utah, it is estimated that 40 per cent (320) of these are of employable age. Of the employable adult deaf, 75 per cent are satisfactorily employed, leaving approximately 25 per cent or 80 people in the area of inadequate vocational adjustment, or with no vocational readiness at all. During Fiscal Year 1964, nine deaf persons were vocationally rehabilitated. It is estimated that with a counselor skilled in communication with the deaf this number could easily be doubled or tripled. Even so this would be meeting only a fourth to a third of the need of the presumptively eligible adult deaf for vocational rehabilitation services.

Aside from these needing vocational rehabilitation, a Unit of Services for the Adult Deaf would serve a great number of deaf with various kinds of badly needed social services. The study referred to found that there are many social agencies which could better serve the deaf if only the communication could be clear. The professional person proposed to be employed to man this unit could enable these agencies better to serve the deaf through his ability to interpret for them and to serve as their counselor and coordinator in reaching understandings and solutions to classic problems of adult deaf people.

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