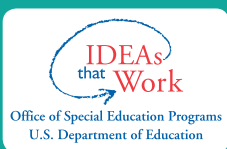




**NDC**  
National Deaf Center  
on Postsecondary Outcomes



# 2018 Year 2 Annual Report



# DEAFSUCCESS



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# From the Director's Desk



Greetings!

It's been a very meaningful and humbling year here at the National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes (NDC). Meaningful because we see so many people, every day, putting their very best selves into the work of supporting each other and seeking positive change in the world. Humbling because people are so generous with their gifts of time and talent for the benefit of others. Humbling also because there is still a lot of work to be done.

**Looking Back.** Year 2 at NDC saw the launch of many different initiatives that make up the slate of resources and activities designed to meet the needs of our diverse stakeholders. We celebrated the interactive game Deafverse, new e-learning courses, **NAV | on call**, a strong conference presence, and collaborations in the Pacific Rim. The **Engage for Change | local, state, and national** platforms continue to bring together people from diverse backgrounds to discuss how we can support and advocate for improved services and outcomes for deaf individuals. Your input on these experiences is invaluable as we continuously revise and improve our own work.

**Looking Forward.** We are grateful to enter this year with strong momentum and a renewed sense of focus. We will continue to develop evidence-based, dynamic, deaf-centered content across our online and face-to-face platforms. We are fortunate to have received additional funding from the Rehabilitation Service Agency under the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services to strengthen NDC resources and support for those implementing pre-employment transition services under the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act. We are so thankful for this opportunity.

But most of all, we want to take a moment to pause, stand in place, and take stock. We want to recognize the many people and organizations who have contributed to our mission: to improve postsecondary outcomes for deaf people from all walks of life. Thank you for being a part of this journey thus far; we look forward to what is ahead in 2019!

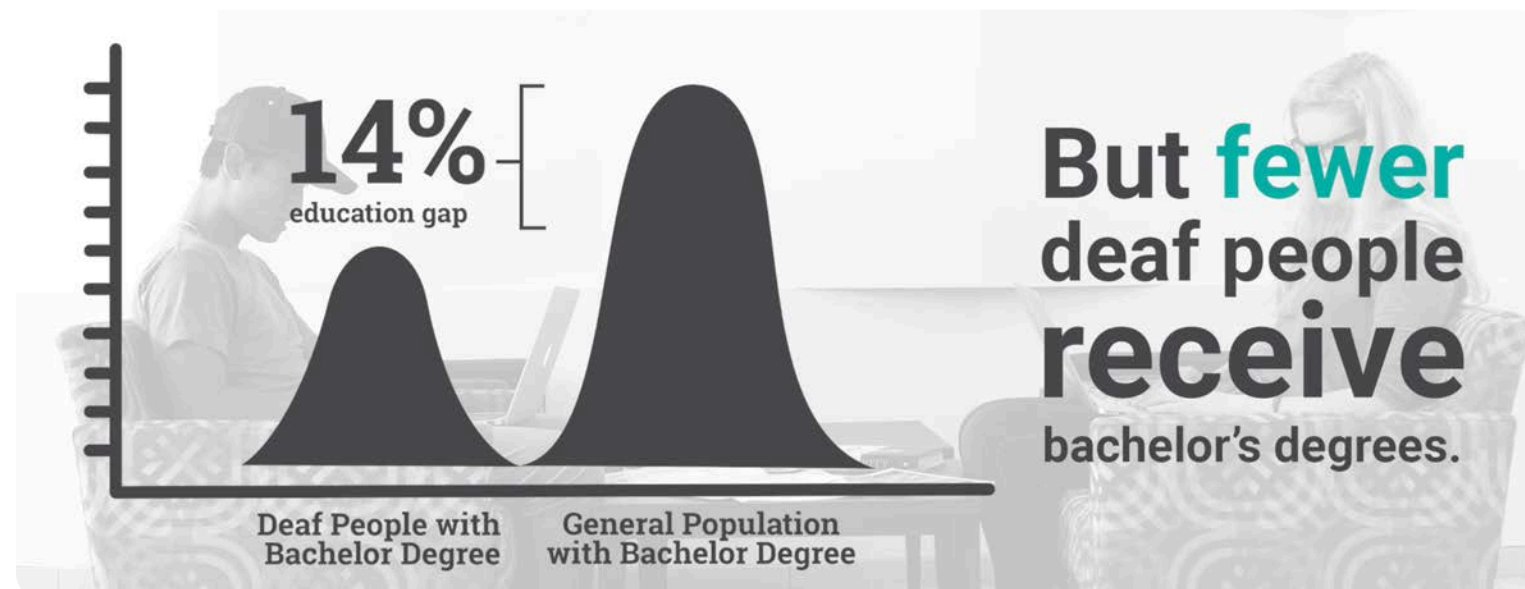
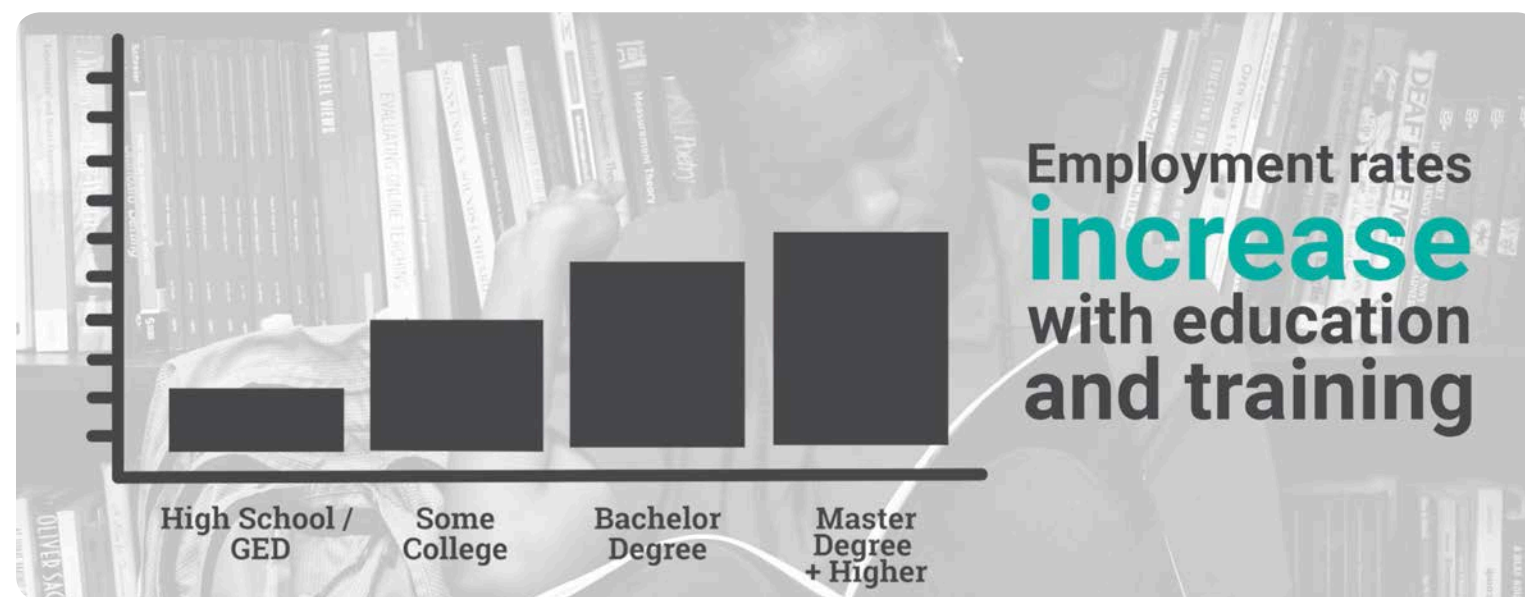
Happy New Year from all of us here at NDC.

**Stephanie Cawthon**

## —Our Mission—

NDC provides evidence-based strategies to deaf<sup>1</sup> individuals, family members, and professionals at the local, state, and national levels with the goal of closing education and employment gaps for deaf individuals.

<sup>1</sup>NDC uses the term "deaf" in an all-inclusive manner to include people who identify as Deaf, deaf, deafblind, deafdisabled, hard of hearing, late-deafened, and hearing impaired. NDC recognizes that for many individuals, identity is fluid and can change over time or with setting. NDC has chosen to use one term, "deaf," with the goal of recognizing experiences that all members of our diverse communities share while also honoring our differences.





Self-Determination Task Force, November 2018

# Year 2 Accomplishments

## Engage for Change | local

We hosted seven **Engage for Change | local** events—in Chicago, IL; Columbus, OH; Dallas, TX; Denver, CO; New York, NY; Spartanburg, SC; and Tumon, Guam. Participants shared ideas, strengthened community networks, and proposed strategies for systemic change at the local level. Additionally, we hosted two follow-up events—in Austin, TX, and Seattle, WA—where initial events took place in 2017.

## Engage for Change | state

**Engage for Change | state** offers state collaboratives—networks of shared leadership and peer support—to state-level education and vocational rehabilitation leaders committed to improving postsecondary outcomes for deaf individuals.

The second **Engage for Change | state** convening took place in June and was attended by 78 state education and employment representatives from 35 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. This year, Johnny Collett, assistant secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, gave a keynote speech on the federal perspective on how states can make strides to ensure that all students have what they need to achieve their goals. This speech was a launching point for states to examine relevant data in closing deaf education and employment gaps, draft action plans, and exchange feedback with other state teams.

Each state team has a unique focus based on what they find as they engage with stakeholders and review research, best practices, and state data.

The following are some examples of activities executed by state teams throughout the year:

- Implement a deaf youth summer camp focused on strengthening self-advocacy skills
- Create an online financial literacy course to develop independent living skills for deaf youth
- Host an internship fair to improve employment outcomes for deaf youth

## Engage for Change | national

The **Adult Education Task Force** convened in May to discuss strategies for deaf adults going into training or attending institutions of higher education. One of the participants, Dr. Matthew Daude-Laurents, noted: “Most institutions claim to be making ‘data-driven decisions,’ but what that often means is that we make a decision and then look for data to drive it. We need to get better at letting the data tell us a story before we decide.”

The **Assessment Task Force** convened for the second time in October. Some academic and professional licensure tests focus on reading and writing skills and fail to let deaf people demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities. This task force convened to identify strategies to improve the accessibility of those tests, so that deaf individuals can get the certificates and licenses they need to work in the field of their choice. Additionally, the task force worked on three publications: *Why Deaf Individuals May Need Accommodations When Taking Tests*, *Test Accessibility for Deaf Individuals: What Professionals Need to Know*, and *The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing and Deaf Individuals*.

The **Self-Determination Task Force** convened in November to discuss common topics and develop goals and strategies for strengthening self-determination skills in deaf youth. Assessing and supporting self-determination skills requires a careful study of deaf individuals’ entire life, including their identities, schooling, home life, and communities.

The **Postsecondary Interpreting Task Force** convened for a second time in December to continue the work started in December 2017. Interpreters play a crucial role in facilitating access at postsecondary institutions and programs. Interpreting quality is an integral component of one of NDC’s key impact areas: designing accessible environments.



## Guam and the Marshall Islands

In Year 2, we made initial visits to Guam and the Marshall Islands to work with stakeholders, including professionals, parents, and deaf individuals. We learned about their educational systems and needs, offered resources, and helped think through strategies for supporting the success of deaf individuals in their communities.

These valuable experiences showed that although all deaf communities face similar struggles, each community has unique needs and situations that must be acknowledged and supported. We greatly appreciate the wonderful hospitality of the deaf communities in both Guam and the Marshall Islands and look forward to continuing to work together.

## Deafverse



We launched an interactive game called Deafverse to support the development of players' self-advocacy skills. In the game, players navigate situations in a variety of settings, including their community, school, and workplace, and experience challenges and conflicts that they will commonly encounter throughout life as part of the deaf experience. The game gives them the chance to test their responses to those situations, understand the impact of their responses, and learn more about their legal rights. In 2018, Deafverse was played by almost 2,000 players. Additionally, 10 different schools are participating in the Deafverse curriculum toolkit pilot! This toolkit provides professionals with resources that enhance players' learning before, during, and after playing Deafverse.

2,000 players in 2018!

## Project Opening Doors

Project Opening Doors also began in Year 2. Through surveys, the project aims to capture student and faculty member perspectives on accessibility and inclusion of deaf students at postsecondary institutions across the United States. We believe that every aspect of classroom and campus life should be accessible to improve deaf student postsecondary success. The results of these surveys will be used to enhance and customize technical assistance for students, faculty members, and institutions. Survey-takers' perspectives will help us better understand the current state of accessibility in higher education.

## Expanded e-Learning Courses

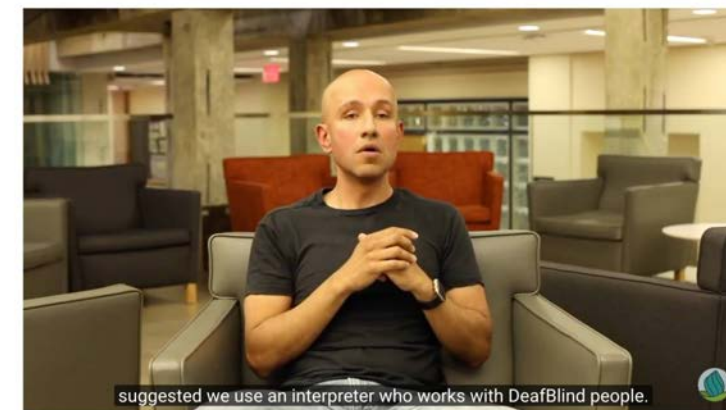
This year, we introduced two professional development course series, Effective Communication Access and Test Equity. Four of the new courses were self-paced. The fifth course was our first facilitated offering and served about 15 users, including disabled student services professionals, teachers of the deaf, and interpreters. These courses qualify for continuing education credit for members of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. They include real stories shared by deaf people across the country and offer course-takers opportunities to discuss concerns and challenges and learn from national experts. A total of 3,301 individuals took at least one of our courses in 2018.

3,301 users in 2018!

### Community Stories: Felix's Story

As you view Felix's story, consider the following:

- What are some of Felix's communication preferences in a classroom setting?
- How did the faculty member help design an inclusive classroom?
- What procedures were in place for evaluating and improving Felix's access to instruction?



"I especially appreciated the questions at the beginning of each module to guide our reading. The community stories were also very helpful."  
— Course-taker

# Reports and Resources

Nearly 100 resources are available for free download on the NDC website: [nationaldeafcenter.org/resources](http://nationaldeafcenter.org/resources). They have been downloaded nearly 15,000 times. The following were released in Year 2.

## Interactive Process Tools

In this process, which follows Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines, deaf individuals and disability services professionals discuss the impact of deafness and accommodations to mitigate barriers. These tools guide discussions and encourage deaf individuals to express their experiences.

## Laws Concerning Accommodations: Summary of Section 504, IDEA, and ADA

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act work together to protect children and adults with disabilities from exclusion, discrimination, and unequal treatment in education, employment, and the community.

## Test Accessibility for Deaf Individuals: What Professionals Need to Know

Many test-taking issues affect deaf students, but linked to all are the differing experiences with English, professionals who do not have a full understanding of the learning experiences or backgrounds of deaf individuals, and the lack of testing standards. This summary for professionals looks at ways to address test accessibility for deaf individuals.

## The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing and Deaf Individuals

These standards emphasize that fairness is an essential part of the validity of score interpretations and that the characteristics of all possible test takers should be considered throughout testing. This document focuses on fairness considerations for young deaf adults transitioning from secondary education to higher education or to jobs and training.

## Why Deaf Individuals May Need Accommodations When Taking Tests

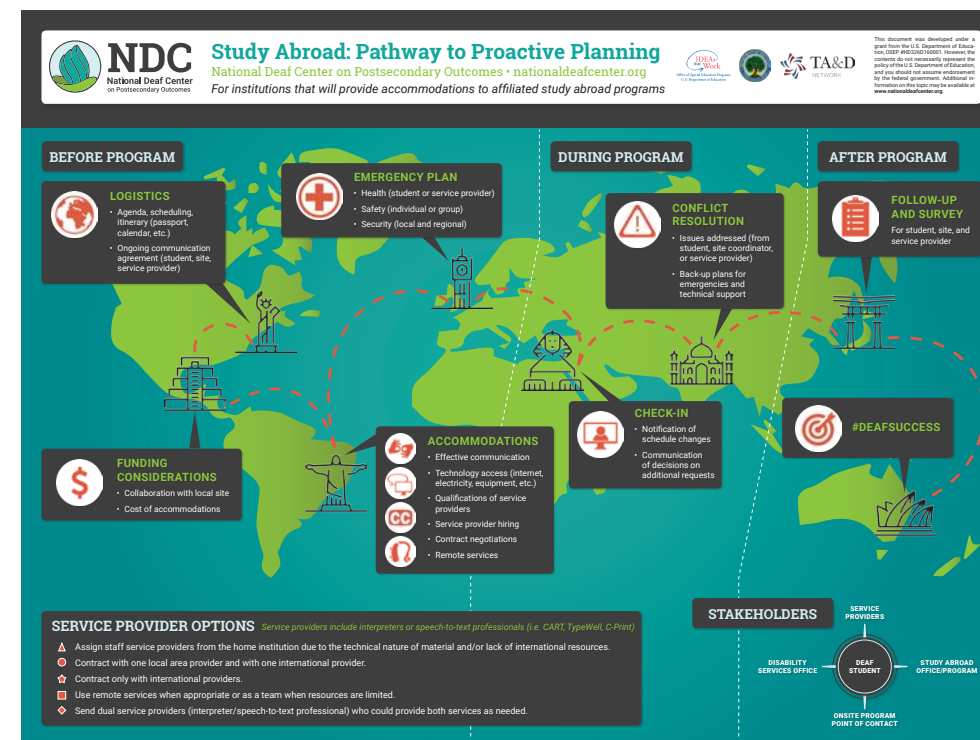
Assessment accommodations are changes in testing materials or procedures that lessen barriers to access but do not change the test construct, or what the test is intended to measure. This brief describes why deaf individuals may need accommodations to increase access to test content.

## Root Causes of Gaps in Postsecondary Outcomes of Deaf Individuals

NDC conducted a root cause analysis of current data and existing literature to identify four underlying root causes that affect postsecondary outcomes for deaf people: (1) limited access to language and communication, (2) reduced social opportunities, (3) negative attitudes and biases, and (4) a lack of qualified and experienced professionals.

## State Rankings of Postsecondary Achievement for Deaf People: 2012–2016

This report is based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey data collected from 2012 to 2016 and provides both national and state statistics. The data compare deaf and hearing individuals' high school and bachelor-level attainment, as well as employment outcomes.



## Self-Advocacy: The Basics

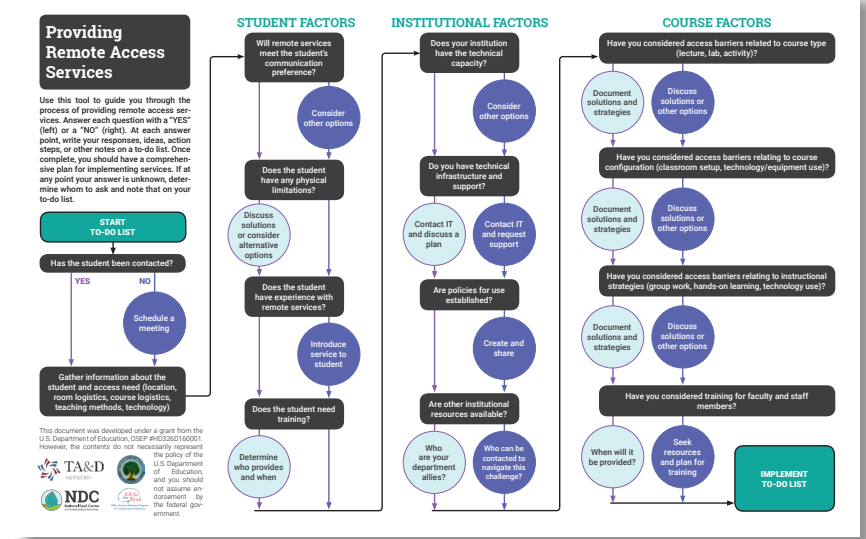
Self-advocacy is the ability to articulate one's needs and make informed decisions about the support necessary to meet those needs. For individuals with one or more disabilities, including deaf individuals, an increase in self-advocacy skills contributes to an increased quality of life, sense of agency, and overall well-being.

## Remote Services Tool Kit

This tool guides users through the process of providing remote access services. Once complete, users have a comprehensive plan for implementing services.

## Transition Planning

Transition is the process all students go through as they move from a high school setting to what lies beyond. Transition planning is essential for deaf students, who experience unique educational and life challenges as a result of their hearing loss, such as communication barriers, lack of effective accommodations, and intentional and unintentional discrimination.



## Study Abroad Tool Kit


This poster provides information for institutions that will provide accommodations to affiliated study-abroad programs.

## Deaf Individuals and Access to Mental Health Care for Trauma

There is a lack of evidence-based, culturally relevant, and accessible approaches to mental health services for deaf individuals. One such area is trauma and how deaf individuals access care. Recovery from trauma requires a holistic approach, including both clinical treatment and resources in the community.

# Expanding Our Reach

## NDC on the Web

 We made various improvements to our website, including revamping the Resources page to improve user experience and adding new pages to highlight features introduced throughout the year, such as Deafverse and Project Opening Doors. Our website had 30,184 unique visitors, generating more than 137,000 page views and 14,824 resource downloads.



## NDC on Social Media

Through social media, we placed a significant focus on reaching a wide variety of stakeholders, including deaf individuals, their families, and the professionals who serve them.

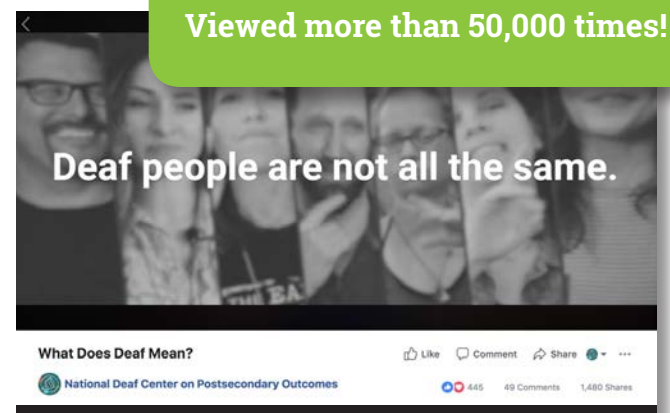
### SOCIAL MEDIA: THE NUMBERS

- **Facebook:** 5,691 followers (+63% from December 2017)
- **Twitter:** 773 followers (+176% from February 2018)
- **Instagram:** 1,185 followers (+270% from February 2018)

### STANDOUT POSTS

#### Facebook

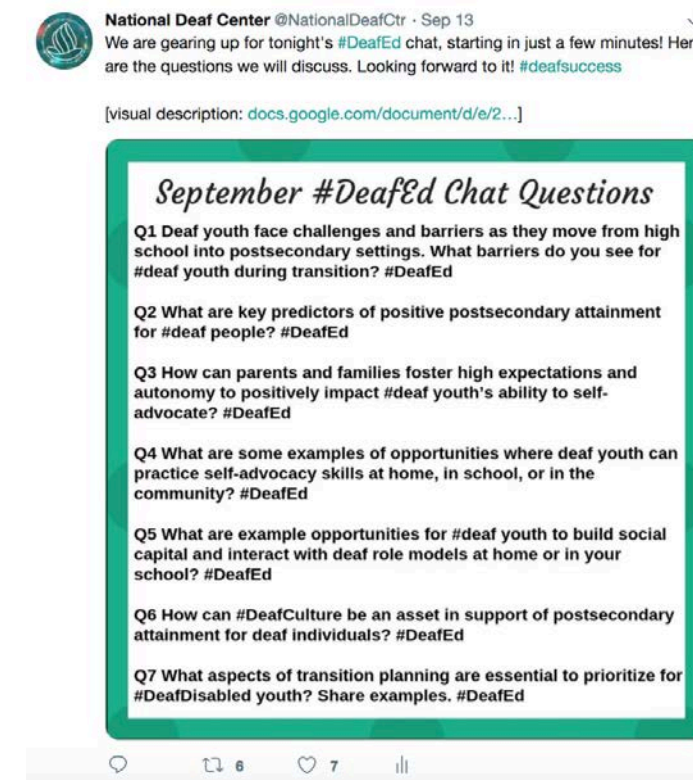
Our most popular post on Facebook was our “What Does Deaf Mean” video, which celebrates the wide variety of identities within the deaf community. It was posted at an opportune time—Deaf Awareness Month in September during an important conversation within the deaf community about the meaning and implications of “deaf” as an identity.



### NOTABLE SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

#### #deafatwork Campaign

This campaign aligned with National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October. We sent out a call for deaf individuals to submit photos of themselves at work along with details such as location, job title, and advice for other deaf individuals who may be seeking work in a similar field. A total of 28 individuals were featured across our social media platforms.



#### #deafed Twitter Chats

The popular #deafed Twitter chats, organized by Helping Educate to Advance the Rights of Deaf Communities every second Thursday of the month, have become a reliable opportunity for us to share our many resources and services. The #deafed chat participants mostly consist of K–12 deaf education professionals, but our team has also seen parents of deaf individuals participate. In these real-time discussions, topics related to transitioning, self-determination, and accommodations often come up and give us the opportunity to raise awareness for the support we can provide.




In September, we co-hosted a #deafed chat on the topic “Preparing Deaf Youth for Postsecondary Success” and prepared a list of 10 questions for participants. By establishing NDC as a center for resources related to deaf individuals and postsecondary outcomes, we strengthened our reputation among the #deafed community on Twitter.

## NDC Listserv

NDC's listserv involves a community of professionals who share strategies, helpful tips, and experiences on a variety of topics related to deaf individuals in postsecondary environments. This year, the number of participants grew to more than 1,000 subscribers.


## NDC e-Newsletter

To keep our stakeholders informed, we send bimonthly newsletters and purpose-specific newsletters as needed. The e-mail list is approximately 47,000-strong and consists of a broader variety of stakeholder types.



NDC is excited to announce additional funding support from Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)! The purpose of this funding is to strengthen NDC resources and support for stakeholders implementing pre-employment transition services under the [Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act \(WIOA\)](#). This funding represents a collaborative partnership between both the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to improve postsecondary education and employment outcomes for deaf individuals across the country and its territories. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with OSERS on this effort.

Be on the lookout for new resources and activities across NDC in early 2019! Stay informed by joining our [listserv](#), following us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and/or [Twitter](#), and exploring our website. Thank you again for all of your support!



# The Nav Team

## Providing Direct Support

The Nav Team responded to just under 950 inquiries, primarily received by e-mail and through our website. There was a significant increase in technical assistance inquiries about assistive listening devices and captioned media practices in postsecondary settings. In addition, we received inquiries about interpreting and speech-to-text practices, assessment accommodations, policies related to accommodations use, and planning for accommodations use in postsecondary settings. Inquiries came from a wide range of stakeholders, including disability service professionals, deaf individuals, administrators and directors, faculty members and teachers, sign language interpreters, and families of deaf individuals. Currently, the Nav Team reaches more than 1,000 subscribers across the country and the territories with our weekly Trending Topic Tuesday listserv posts.

In addition, the Nav Team launched **NAV | on site**, a partnership between selected institutions and NDC. The institution commits a period of time to work with NDC in the first 6 months of the partnership to assist in developing a plan for the institution and receives a summary of its institutional strengths, areas of improvement, and recommended resources.

## Testimonials

As the following testimonials suggest, the Nav Team's assistance has been well received.

"I am stunned by the thoroughness of your response to my questions and VERY appreciative of all the resources you provided. I can't wait for the survey to arrive, so I can rate your response highly."

"Thank you; this is excellent. My colleague is not a disability services provider; she is a professor of interpreter education. But it had come to her attention that deaf students in another program were being discriminated against and that it was actually their disability services office making the unreasonable suggestions. I'll pass along your information provided as well."

"Thank you so much for your reply! This helped immensely in clearing up whether they completed the training. We have found that the quality of notes provided to our students has increased thanks to the training. We require them to complete the training before they are hired for the position."

"Thank you for this thorough information and explanation of what is needed for the various services. I have seen the Nav Team's posts to others on the listserv, and even if I'm not dealing with the situation mentioned in the post, I still find the information valuable to keep for later reference."

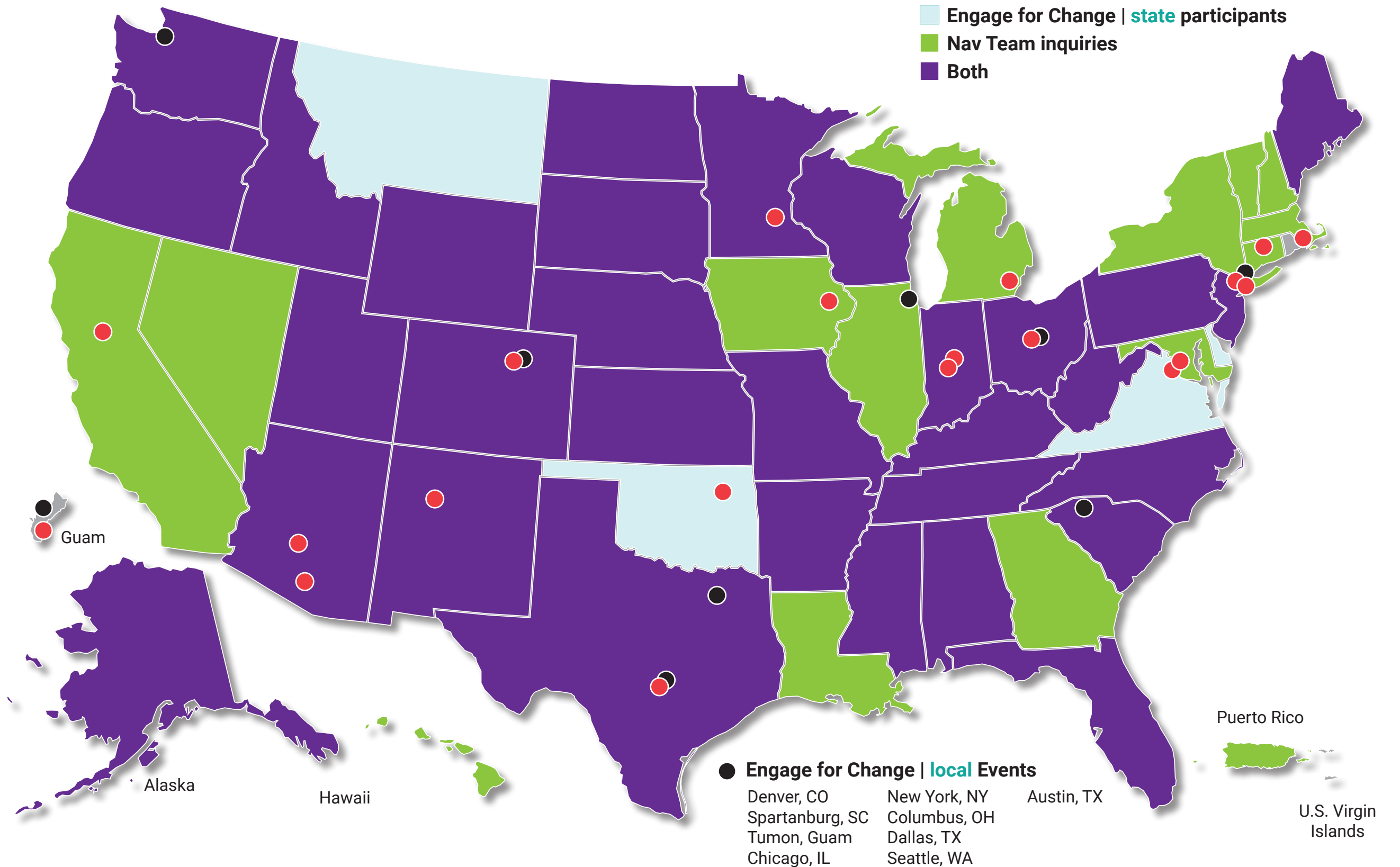


# Reaching Our Stakeholders

In 2018, we attended 21 conferences and hosted nine **Engage for Change | local** events. The Nav Team served a wide variety of stakeholders in 780 cities. This map shows where NDC traveled for conferences, where NDC hosted **Engage for Change | local** events, and Nav Team inquiries originated.

## ● Conferences

- Oklahoma Leadership Day (Tulsa, OK)
- ACE-DHH (Tucson, AZ)
- California Educators for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (Sacramento, CA)
- Indiana Transition Conference (Indianapolis, IN)
- Annual Assistive Technology Conference (Guam)
- National Summit for Educational Equity (Arlington, VA)
- AERA (New York, NY)
- National Coalition of Latinx With Disabilities (Austin, TX)
- Allied Media Conference (Detroit, MI)
- IDEEIC (Indianapolis, IN)
- HLAA (Minneapolis, MN)
- CODAhaven Annual Conference (Providence, RI)
- Games 4 Change (New York, NY)
- NAD/NDEC (Hartford, CT)
- AHEAD (Albuquerque, NM)
- OSEP Project Director's Conference (Washington, DC)
- Arizona Transition Conference (Scottsdale, AZ)
- Disabled & Proud Conference (virtual)
- DCDT (Cedar Rapids, IA)
- AHG (Westminster, CO)
- OCALICON (Columbus, OH)



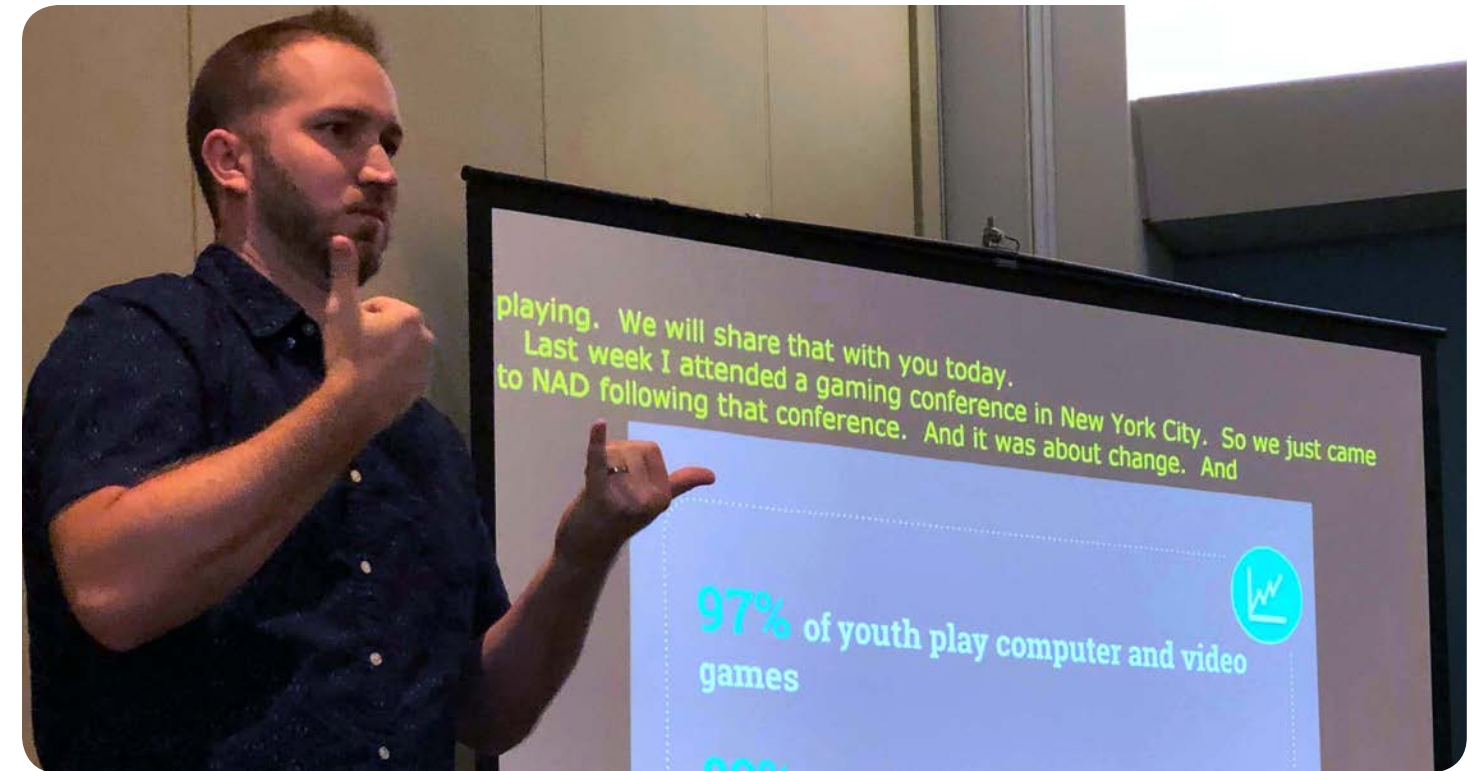
# Looking to the Future

In 2019, NDC looks forward to expanding its stakeholder reach and focusing on the following:

- Hosting **Engage for Change | local** events in new cities
- Releasing new worlds in Deafverse with supplemental resources
- Launching a curriculum for Deafverse to support educators and transition professionals
- Expanding our resources for deaf youth
- Providing support and outreach on pre-employment transition services mandated by the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act
- Expanding e-learning courses and introducing new topics
- Presenting at new, strategically selected conferences
- Launching the Accessible Media Task Force with a focus on identifying what *accessible media* means to our stakeholders



**Engage for Change | local** participants engaged in discussion



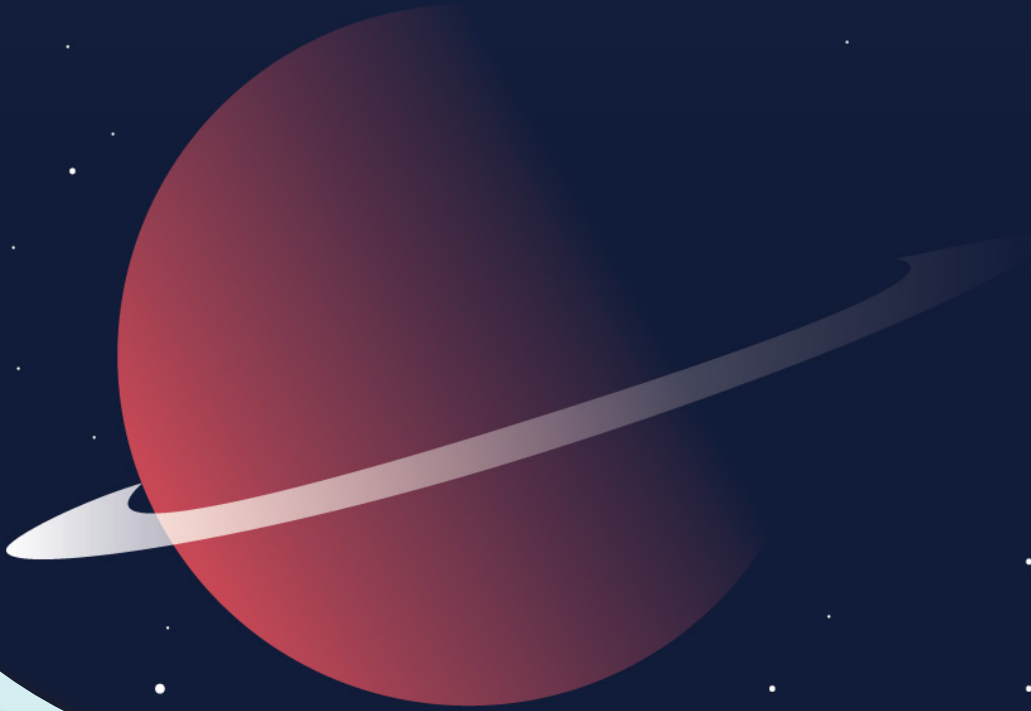
Kent Turner, NDC gaming coordinator, presenting about the Deafverse game for deaf youth



Attendees at the **Engage for Change | state** convening in June 2018 eagerly watch Johnny Collett, assistant secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), present. At right is Kimberly Richey, deputy assistant secretary for OSERS. At left are an interpreter and Jen Higgins, NDC model dissemination coordinator.



# DEAFVERSE

CHOOSE YOUR FUTURE



# NDC

National Deaf Center  
on Postsecondary Outcomes

 @NationalDeafCtr  
  @NationalDeafCenter