

Engage for Change | **local**

a conversation in **New York City**

— September 28, 2018 —



NDC

National Deaf Center
on Postsecondary Outcomes



Overview of the National Deaf Center

The National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes (NDC) is a federally funded project that works toward systemic change to increase the quality of services and access to meaningful postsecondary opportunities for all deaf individuals. Meaningful postsecondary experiences contribute greatly to deaf individuals' quality of life. However, deaf individuals face a number of misconceptions and challenges that impede their ability to use their skills and talents in postsecondary settings and beyond. We believe that change is possible and that local communities can contribute to that change. We are here to provide support and guidance. E-mail help@nationaldeafcenter.org if you have any questions.

Purpose of Engage for Change | local

For change to be effective, a broad range of stakeholders must be involved in the process. Yet it can be challenging to bridge the gaps between individuals, the community, institutions, and policymakers. NDC is committed to bringing together all parties to create a successful model of how community involvement leads to improved postsecondary outcomes for all deaf individuals.

NDC uses the term *deaf* in an all-encompassing manner to include individuals who identify as Deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, hearing impaired, late deafened, and deafdisabled.

Conversations led by members of the community explore challenges and solutions on the local level. Discussion questions focus on brainstorming solutions to local-level challenges that community members can implement to strengthen postsecondary opportunities for deaf individuals in their community.

This Report

This report summarizes key solutions and strategies that emerged from the discussions at the event, and it is intended to help the New York City community address important challenges. The report concludes with a list of action items for community members to consider as they connect with their networks to continue this important work.

NDC offers a platform for continued work on Canvas if the New York City community chooses to take that route. Consider forming work groups to implement the strategies proposed at the event, on Canvas, or elsewhere.

Solutions and Strategies

TOP THREE COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

1. Form a community coalition consisting of leaders and advocates from different segments of the community.
2. Reach out to, support, and involve parents and family members in community events and advocacy.
3. Identify and use local and digital resources to centralize information about community events and services.

TOP THREE STEPS FOR MEANINGFUL CHANGE

1. Encourage understanding and acceptance of individual differences and communication access preferences.
2. Foster self-advocacy and assertiveness skills in students and community members through workshops and training.
3. Establish a mentorship program that connects deaf students with deaf role models to foster independence and leadership skills.

MORE SOLUTIONS AND STRATEGIES

Supporting Postsecondary Transitions

- Increase the availability of information about postsecondary expectations, opportunities, training, and resources for students and families at the local, state, and national levels.
- Encourage students' exposure to and early exploration of postsecondary career opportunities.
- Increase awareness of postsecondary opportunities, including internships, through job fairs.
- Support postsecondary education completion by offering tutoring and notetaking services and fostering universal access.
- Educate students about the professional skills necessary for workplace culture.
- Increase postsecondary vocational training opportunities.
- Encourage colleges to provide support for transition students.
- Establish a mentorship program for students transitioning from high school to postsecondary settings.
- Provide access to remedial English courses to improve language readiness for postsecondary settings.
- Ensure that all students have access to life skills training and information for postsecondary life settings.

Advocacy for and Awareness of the Deaf Community

- Form a community coalition with advocates and leaders representing a variety of organizations.
- Foster deaf community partnerships with deaf education leaders, teachers, and administrators.
- Identify long-term plans for raising awareness of issues.
- Advocate for communication access in medical settings.
- Improve the understanding of the differences between medical and humanistic perspectives.
- Spread awareness about deaf culture through deaf awareness week events.
- Educate businesses and organizations on deaf culture, hearing loss, and working with deaf community members.

Family Inclusion and Support

- Encourage parents to maintain high expectations for their deaf children.
- Designate a position with the role of supporting, reaching out to, and sharing resources sharing with parents and families.
- Create opportunities for families, deaf community members, and service providers to connect with each other.
- Increase opportunities for families' early and continuous involvement in the deaf community.
- Educate parents about their deaf children's rights and opportunities, as well as their own rights and opportunities.
- Encourage families to learn ASL to communicate with deaf family members.
- Create a "families with deaf children" support and mentorship group that connects deaf families with deaf children's hearing family members.

Provide Mentorship and Access to Role Models

- Establish a mentorship support program for community members.
- Develop a big brother/big sister mentorship program that connects deaf students and adults.
- Connect students with deaf role models to foster acquisition of leadership skills.
- Connect deaf students in mainstream programs with deaf students in deaf schools/programs to increase peer support.
- Increase students' access to and knowledge of deaf role models.
- Use digital communication to connect students with deaf role models.

Community and Individual Support

- Encourage the deaf community members to advocate for themselves and the community as a whole.
- Support the deaf community through workshops and opportunities for self-improvement.
- Foster self-advocacy skills in students and deaf community members and set high expectations for obtaining communication access.
- Provide student and community workshops on self-advocacy and assertiveness skills.
- Provide community training on disability and individual differences support.



Government Representation and Policy Influence

- Develop stronger representation in local, state, and national associations.
- Connect with and lobby local, state, and national policymakers.
- Increase visible advocacy to educational committees and agencies.
- Support equal access to education and standardized test equity.
- Encourage community members to be politically active in showing support for the deaf community's rights.
- Educate community members on the current Americans with Disabilities Act and its impact on their rights.
- Show communitywide support for current legislative action (e.g., LEAD-K movement).

Communication Access

- Identify and address existing communication barriers within the community.
- Spread awareness that communication access is a human right.



- Increase availability of communication access resources.
- Spread awareness of communication barriers and needs in the community and workplace.
- Develop middlemen positions to facilitate communication access in schools, businesses, and medical settings.
- Support the understanding and acceptance of different communication preferences.
- Educate service providers on communication needs of the deaf community.
- Develop and provide sign language training programs for medical professionals.

Community Connections

- Encourage deaf community members with diverse backgrounds to connect with each other.
- Find and designate a physical location for deaf community gatherings.
- Host a variety of deaf events for the purposes of networking, education, and entertainment.
- Establish more deaf-friendly spaces.
- Provide community support for individuals' personal and mental health issues.
- Provide opportunities for professional networking and outreach between deaf community members and businesses.

Identify and Use Available Resources

- Identify and address areas of need, including the lack of resources and support from organizations.
- Collaborate with other states' associations to gather information about resource effectiveness.
- Increase the number and availability of services within the state.
- Identify statewide VR opportunities.
- Increase knowledge of available resources for the workplace.
- Spread awareness about available resources to mainstream and deaf schools/programs.

Digital Resources

- Establish a digital hub for community connections, information sharing, and resources.
- Use social media platforms and online forums to connect members of the deaf community and spread awareness.
- Educate the deaf community on new technology and provide opportunities to try it.
- Create an online database containing information about colleges with deaf students and businesses/organizations with deaf employers and/or employees.

Language Acquisition Support

- Develop creative solutions to improve the English linguistic delays in students and adults.
- Encourage early exposure of young deaf children to sign language and English.
- Design and offer a literacy boot camp for students and adults.

Now What?

Consider taking the following steps to continue working with your local community members.

- Reconnect with your core team and attendees.
- Find out when everyone is available for a follow-up meeting.
- Review the action plan template and think about which strategies you could implement.
- Attend a follow-up meeting to discuss your notes and ideas.
- Form smaller work groups to focus on the action plan you are excited about.
- Think about how you can contribute to the action plan. Small contributions matter!
- Do your part!
- Be ready to support others in your work group or other groups.
- Observe the process and continue to meet with your group to discuss progress.
- If results motivate you, continue to the next goal!

Note: In 1 to 3 months after the follow-up meeting, NDC will send you a brief survey to learn more about your progress. We are excited to see the outcomes of your work! We believe that small changes can, and do, make a difference.

Drafting Your Action Plan

A good action plan is clear and specific, incorporates your community's ideas, and takes advantage of available resources. A clearly articulated and specific action plan ensures that everyone on your team remains focused on the same goal, and it enables you to better evaluate your progress and support your efforts based on what you learn along the way. It can also help you communicate and engage with others.

In articulating your action plan, make sure to address the following.

- **What:** What problem do you want to solve?
- **Why:** Why is it important to solve this problem?
- **Who:** Who will benefit from the solution?
- **How:** How will you implement it?
- **Expected results:** What kind of change do you expect to see?
- **Action steps:** Who will be part of the solution, when, and how?

Example

Suppose your local community believes there are not enough internships available for deaf youth. Employers say they are unable to find and hire deaf applicants, and they lack knowledge of how to accommodate deaf interns. Here is an example of an action plan related to building skills for deaf youth and increasing their opportunities in your local community.

- **What:** Limited internship opportunities exist for deaf youth; employers lack knowledge about how to accommodate deaf interns; and deaf youth have little experience with finding internships, interviewing, and self-advocating.
- **Why:** It's important for employers to become more aware of accommodations so that they can hire deaf applicants, and it's important for deaf youth to grow more confident in self-advocating so that they can enjoy more social and professional opportunities.
- **Who:** Deaf youth, employers, and community networks
- **How:** Organize a day of training sessions and workshops, including the following:
 - Job coaching workshop for deaf youth
 - Accommodations 101 for employers
 - Testimonial panel for deaf youth, with employers in the audience
 - Networking opportunities
- **Expected results:**
 - Deaf youth will gain hands-on experience in finding internships, going through interviews, and advocating for their accommodation needs.
 - Employers will report increased knowledge of accommodation resources.
 - Networks between deaf individuals, teachers, parents, and employers will strengthen.
- **Action steps:**
 - Find partners for the event (e.g., local association for the deaf, vocational rehabilitation agency, transition specialists, deaf youth, families).
 - Choose a date and a venue (date, point person).
 - Develop an agenda (date, point person).
 - Invite stakeholders (date, point person).
 - Work with presenters (date, point person).

In putting together this series of workshops aimed at increasing internship opportunities in your local area, your goal might be to strengthen local networks, make local employers aware of how to recruit and retain deaf interns, and increase deaf youth's experience in obtaining and retaining an internship.



Action Plan Template

Action Plan for: _____

What *(What problem do you want to solve?)*

Why *(Why is it important to solve this problem?)*

Who *(Who will benefit from the solution?)*

How *(How will you implement it?)*

Expected Results *(What kind of change do you expect to see?)*

Action Steps *(Who will be part of the solution, when, and how?)*



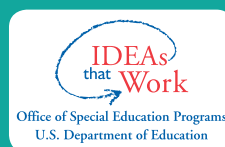
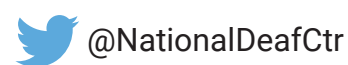
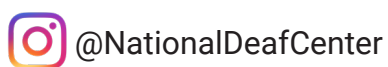
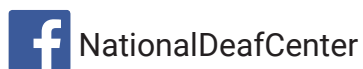
Resources

NDC: www.nationaldeafcenter.org

NDC Listerv: <https://utlists.utexas.edu/sympa/info/nationaldeafcenter>

NDC Help Desk: help@nationaldeafcenter.org

Office of Special Education Programs: www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osep/index.html



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