

Engage for Change | local

*a conversation* in Austin, TX

April 18, 2017



**NDC**

National Deaf Center  
on Postsecondary Outcomes





## The Importance of Community Engagement

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Effective change depends on involvement from all levels of the system we live in. Yet it can be challenging to bridge gaps between individuals, community members, institutions, and policymakers.

The National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes (NDC) is a federally funded project that works toward systemic change across all levels to increase quality of services and provide greater access to meaningful postsecondary opportunities for all deaf individuals. NDC is committed to increasing community engagement and bringing all parties together to create a successful model of how community involvement leads to improved postsecondary outcomes for all deaf individuals.

## The Purpose of Engage for Change | local

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Meaningful postsecondary experiences contribute greatly to quality of life for deaf individuals. Many obstacles, challenges, and misconceptions get in the way of deaf individuals' being able to use their abilities and talents in postsecondary settings and beyond. These community conversations are a way to assess local needs in collaboration with community members. The discussion questions at these community conversations asked how the community can come together to strengthen meaningful postsecondary opportunities for deaf individuals on the local level.

## What's Next?

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After the Austin community conversations, NDC analyzed and summarized data collected from participants. This short report is intended to provide guidance to the Austin community as community members work to address the important challenges they face. The report concludes with a list of potential action items for the local community to consider when connecting with their networks to continue this important work.

NDC uses *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 are shared by all members of our diverse communities while also honoring all of our differences.



## COLLABORATE TO PROMOTE PARTICIPATION

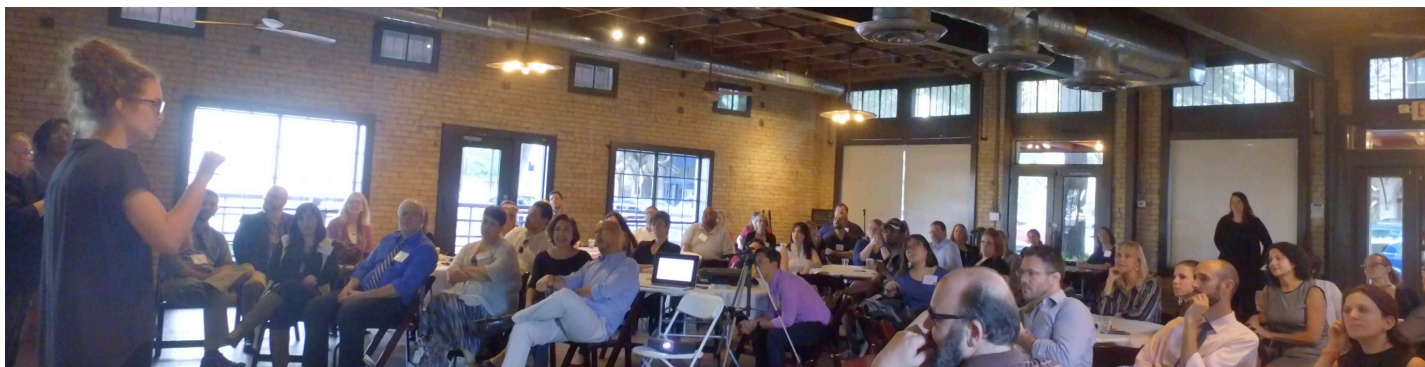
- Create opportunities for deaf students to meet with each other to get peer support.
- Get involved and be “agents” within the community by creating initiatives.
- Initiate a coalition and host conferences and workshops to exchange information and resources.
- Supply students with networking opportunities, job experiences, training and educational programs, apprenticeship opportunities, and more transitional support.
- Identify deaf role models and create opportunities for role modeling.
- Support young people of color in mainstream educational settings.
- Include more people of color and others from diverse communities in decision-making.
- Emphasize community accountability.

## CAPITALIZE ON EXISTING RESOURCES

- Develop and/or strengthen assessments for deaf youth.
- Provide comprehensive career evaluations.
- Allow credits to be duplicated and transferred across educational settings.
- Strengthen partnerships between community colleges and universities.
- Use social media to educate and guide others.
- Improve recruitment of families for the family weekend programs and camps.







## INCREASE TRANSPARENCY

- Schedule programs to take place earlier, in elementary school, rather than in high school.
- Identify resources and create a comprehensive list for dissemination.
- As doctors and audiologists may not be aware of all options for deaf children to succeed, contact clinics and hospitals to reach families in need of accurate information and resources.
- Increase transparency in vocational rehabilitation settings by giving deaf individuals opportunities to make better, informed decisions.
- Ensure that communication access and exposure to the world starts as early as possible to strengthen soft skills, which are valuable for future success.
- Use research and evidence to educate others.

## RAISE EXPECTATIONS

- Share more success stories of deaf individuals.
- Emphasize readiness for postsecondary education by providing strong support earlier.
- Promote access to quality communication.
- Educate and involve the community, including employers, teachers, and parents, in educational settings and the medical field to remove or reduce bias and increase expectations.
- Increase the representation of deaf role models to promote other deaf youth to adopt the “success mindset,” or the belief that they can succeed.



## PUSH FOR SELF-ADVOCACY

- Look for resources to learn about the rights of deaf people and make these resources available to families and deaf youth.
- Encourage deaf youth to practice self-advocacy by seeking out opportunities for higher education and/or employment.
- Take the following steps to create an action plan:
  - Organize resources and create a one-stop information and resource center online.
  - Set up and use a database to serve as a community directory.
  - Set up advisory committees that include deaf individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences.
  - Provide American Sign Language classes in the community for all ages to promote awareness, acceptance, and positive regard.
  - Establish a volunteering program for deaf youth to gain exposure to various employment opportunities, networking, etc.
  - Initiate a program for deaf youth to connect with deaf role models and use technology (i.e., video phones) to promote cross-state mentoring.
  - Increase access to quality mental healthcare with providers who are culturally competent and can offer direct services.
- Provide workshops and support groups for parents and deaf youth on the following topics:
  - Accommodations and assistive technology
  - Higher education and/or employment opportunities
  - Grants, scholarships, or other funding opportunities
  - Self-advocacy training regarding opportunities and resources in Texas
  - Time management skills

# About the National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes

NDC is a technical assistance and dissemination center funded by the Office of Special Education Programs. Our mission is to support postsecondary outcomes for individuals who are deaf, deafblind, deafdisabled, hard of hearing, or late deafened.

NDC activities draw on evidence-based strategies to educate and engage with stakeholders across the nation. We seek to create conditions for optimal success in a way that recognizes and honors the experiences, perspectives, and strengths of deaf individuals.

The NDC model for change includes impact across the system. NDC seeks to (a) collect critical data about policies, programming, and service provision for deaf individuals; (b) increase accessibility of postsecondary settings; (c) promote high expectations for success of deaf individuals; (d) strengthen community communication, investment, and networks; and (e) develop collaborative and integrated systems within states, institutions, programs, and communities.

## RESOURCES

NDC: [www.nationaldeafcenter.org](http://www.nationaldeafcenter.org)

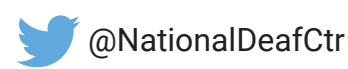
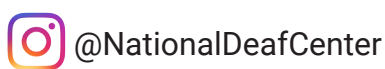
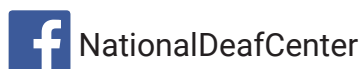
NDC Listerv: <https://utlists.utexas.edu/sympa/info/nationaldeafcenter>

NDC Help Desk: [help@nationaldeafcenter.org](mailto:help@nationaldeafcenter.org)

Office of Special Education Programs: [www2.ed.gov](http://www2.ed.gov)



This document was developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, OSEP #HD326D160001. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.  
[www.nationaldeafcenter.org](http://www.nationaldeafcenter.org)



The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the research and the need for a new approach. It then presents a detailed description of the methodology used in the study, followed by a discussion of the results and their implications. The paper concludes with a summary of the findings and a list of references.

The research was conducted in a laboratory setting, where the subjects were exposed to various stimuli and their responses were recorded. The data was then analyzed using statistical methods to determine the significance of the results. The findings suggest that there is a significant difference between the two groups, which may be due to the different levels of exposure to the stimuli.

The results of the study have important implications for the field of research, as they provide a new perspective on the relationship between the variables being studied. Further research is needed to confirm these findings and to explore the underlying mechanisms. The paper also includes a list of references to the relevant literature.