

Engage for Change | local

a conversation in Seattle, WA

September 21, 2017



NDC
National Deaf Center
on Postsecondary Outcomes





Overview of the National Deaf Center

Meaningful postsecondary experiences contribute greatly to quality of life for deaf individuals. However, misconceptions and obstacles stand in the way of being able to enjoy those experiences. The National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes (NDC) is a federally funded project that works toward systemic change to increase quality of services and access to meaningful postsecondary opportunities for all deaf individuals.

Purpose of Engage for Change | local

Effective change depends on involvement from all levels. Yet it can be challenging to bridge gaps between individuals, community members, institutions, and policymakers. NDC is committed to increasing community engagement, bringing all parties together to create a model of how community involvement leads to improved postsecondary outcomes for all deaf individuals.

These conversations, led by members of the community, explore challenges and solutions on the local level, focusing on strategies that community members can implement to strengthen postsecondary opportunities for deaf individuals in their community.

What's Next?

This report summarizes key solutions and strategies that emerged from the discussions during the event, and it is intended to provide guidance for the Seattle community as they continue to work together to address important challenges. The report concludes with a list of potential action items to consider as community members connect with their networks to continue this work.

NDC is offering a platform for continued work on Canvas if the Seattle community chooses to take that route. Consider forming workgroups to implement the strategies proposed at the event, on Canvas, or elsewhere.

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.



RAISE AWARENESS

- Strengthen the self-advocacy skills of deaf youth. Increase students' autonomy by teaching legal rights. Make this information accessible online.
- Educate employers on how to work with deaf students and the importance of providing them with opportunities.
- Increase resources, workshops, and training that are specific to deaf education.

INCREASE ACCESS TO ROLE MODELS AND MENTORS

- Increase the presence of role models and mentors for deaf youth. Consider replicating national mentoring program models or hosting events for families to connect with role models.
- Use technology to connect deaf youth with deaf professionals in the field.
- Plan job-shadowing opportunities for deaf youth.
- Coordinate field trips to workplaces that employ deaf professionals.

STRENGTHEN POLICY AND PRACTICE

- Establish higher standards for the qualifications of educational interpreters.
- Recruit culturally competent school counselors and teachers who can skillfully integrate deaf culture and American Sign Language into classroom lessons.
- Enforce data collection to monitor the effectiveness of programs for deaf students. Data-sharing programs allow for an understanding of what works and what does not.

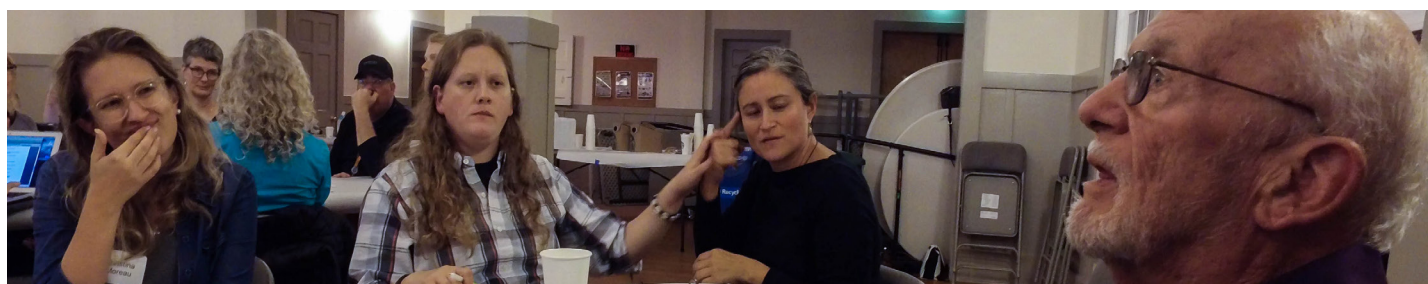


INCREASE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Increase opportunities for deaf individuals to volunteer or connect with local deaf youth.
- Strengthen partnerships with community organizations and businesses. Increase opportunities for internships or summer employment for deaf youth.
- Increase opportunities for informal community building within deaf communities.
- Urge schools to encourage deaf students to attend deaf events in the community as a way to reduce isolation. Consider making such events an opportunity to earn extra credit.

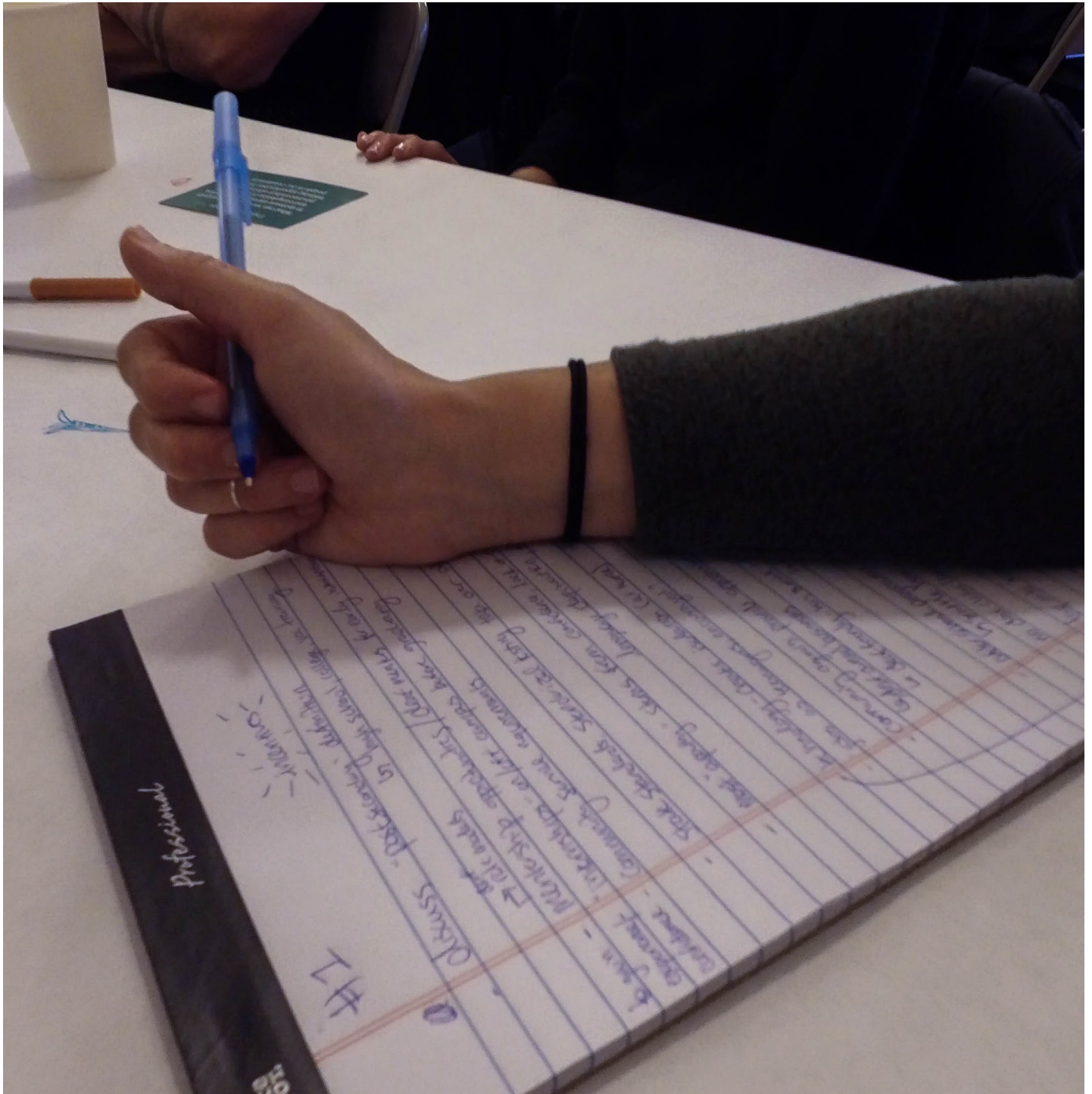
STRENGTHEN TRANSITION PLANNING

- Recognize that there are multiple options after high school, such as vocational training, trade school, and community college. Remove stigma surrounding technical trades.
- Collect data about services received during the transition period and associated outcomes.
- Strengthen earlier stages of transition during kindergarten to grade 12.
- Have vocational rehabilitation representatives commit to attending individualized education program meetings.
- Strengthen transition planning and resources for undocumented individuals.
- Set expectations for deaf youth to pursue jobs, internships, and community service.
- Strengthen services at local community colleges and transition education programs for deaf students.
- Set up statewide transition programs where deaf individuals and their families can make informed choices with more viable options.
- Increase opportunities for summer camps and programs for deaf students.



FOLLOW UP

- Form an action committee, or a coalition of deaf leaders, to develop plans and build a network for deaf students, professionals, and others to easily locate needed supports.
- Create and fund job positions (e.g., grant writer) to raise funds, host events, provide professional development opportunities, and strengthen networks.



Comments From Community Members Who Attended the Event

"I was thrilled to be part of the process."

"My students face barriers to accessing equal employment opportunities. I face barriers to establishing quality work experience placements for them. [My kids] have both faced obstacles to part-time employment while in college. Their outlook will be better with a degree, but I know they too will face barriers in obtaining employment after graduation."

"I am dedicated to doing what I can as an educator, parent, and community member to address the unemployment rate and underemployment for deaf and hard of hearing youth and stand as an ally to make a change."

"There is a great deal of work left to do to help our community understand the value of this untapped, skilled workforce."

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



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