

Engage for Change | local

a conversation in Washington, DC

November 8, 2017



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.

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.

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.

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 Washington, DC, community to 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 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.

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

PROMOTE AWARENESS OF DEAF COMMUNITY

- Promote community through a strong social media presence.
- Design and implement outreach programs to inform parents and teachers about current news and community events.
- Use multilingual approaches to spread awareness and ensure greater accessibility.
- Connect with established nonprofit organizations to increase opportunities for collaboration and involvement.

INCREASE COMMUNITY OUTREACH

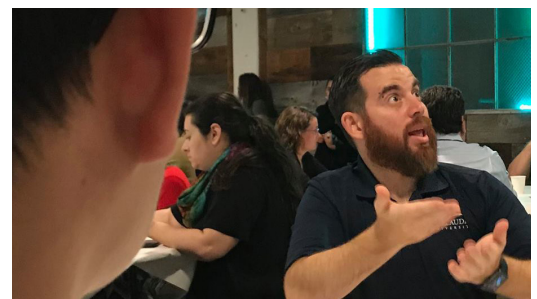
- Design and host local and national retreats with a variety of workshops focused on inclusion and strengthening the deaf community.
- Identify and develop more safe spaces for the deaf community to foster open dialogue about ideas and opportunities.
- Host community workshops, performances, meet-ups, and think tanks to encourage interaction and social learning without technology.
- Develop a task force to commit an hour weekly to identifying needs within the community and working on proposed solutions.

IMPROVE ACCESS TO CONNECTIONS AND RESOURCES

- Strengthen access to online resources that use sign language.
- Develop and implement strategies to improve connections between federal programs and those in need.
- Improve access to information concerning current legal rights and protections.

STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS WITH ROLE MODELS AND MENTORS

- Increase exposure to role models through online platforms geared toward a variety of ages.
- Implement programs to train mentors about leadership, cultural sensitivity, social issues, and empathy.
- Consider connecting young students with professional role models.
- Increase the number of mentors from diverse backgrounds.



CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE SHARING

- Connect deaf individuals with deaf-owned businesses and organizations for mentorship opportunities, co-ops, internships, and apprenticeships.
- Host community events for deaf business owners to discuss their experiences.
- Organize tours and field trips to job sites to expose deaf youth to different occupations and organizations.
- Strengthen online networking between deaf individuals and deaf business owners.
- Host a professional summit for deaf-owned businesses and organizations.
- Collaborate with pre-existing networks to provide workshops on starting a business and investing in professional opportunities.
- Design and implement programs connecting deaf-owned startup companies with larger, successful businesses for professional mentoring.

FACILITATE SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO LIFE

- Create opportunities for students to attend regional and national conferences.
- Design and provide training for youth on cross-cultural dialogue and soft skills, such as networking and writing effective e-mails in the workplace.
- Host career days with a variety of businesses and organizations in the blue-collar and white-collar sectors.
- Create and disseminate an information package that helps counselors connect deaf students with future job opportunities.

INCREASE ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS FOR POSTSECONDARY SETTINGS

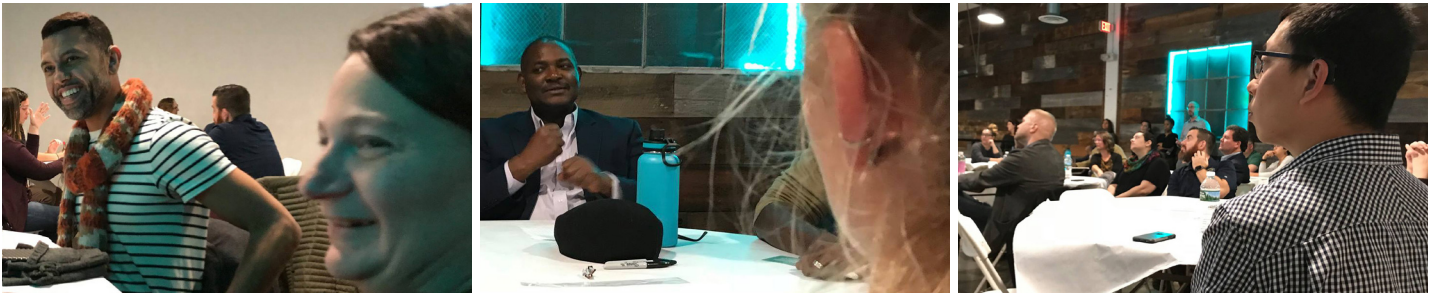
- Strengthen early vocational education in high school settings.
- Inform students about community colleges offering vocational certification or job trade programs.
- Establish a student-based learning program on workplace roles, skills, and rights for deaf individuals to participate in before they begin an internship or job.
- Increase involvement of students in college preparatory courses.
- Create workshops to help parents support their students through the college application process, including filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), scholarship applications, and registration papers.
- Fund-raise to make supplemental experiences, such as study-abroad trips, accessible for students.
- Design and open a career center to provide resources for deaf students in the area.

Comments From Community Members Who Attended the Event

"I believe that this event is great for me! ... Excellent job! I feel welcome."

"Always support any efforts to improve lives of deaf people."

We should "empower the deaf individuals in our society to help each other in as many ways as possible."



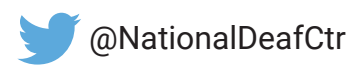
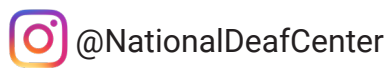
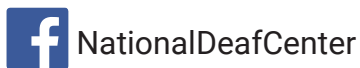
Resources

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/osers/osep/index.html



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