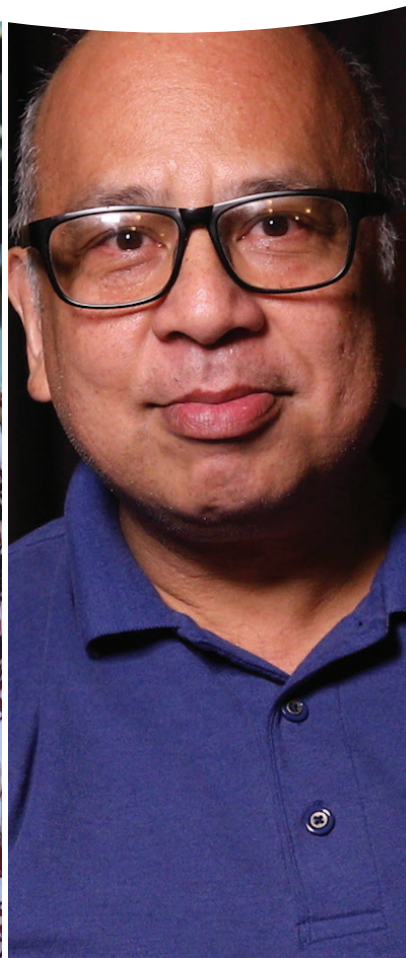
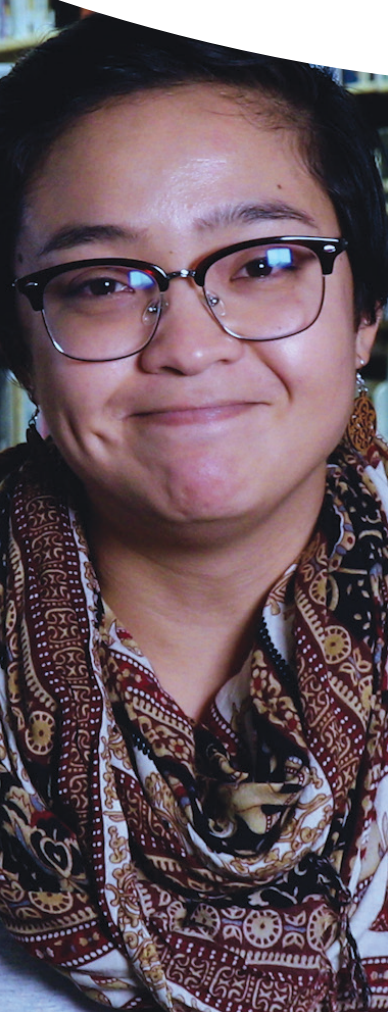




**NDC**  
National Deaf Center  
on Postsecondary Outcomes

# A Spark to Ignite #DeafSuccess

2019 IMPACT REPORT





## Outcomes in Year 3: Impact, Intention, Ingenuity

Dear Valued Colleagues,

Welcome to our 2019 Impact Report, which tells the story of Year 3 at the National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes (NDC).

Our mission is as urgent as ever – to close substantial gaps in education and employment of deaf people – and to provide results-driven accountability for our stakeholders, collaborators, and funding partners at the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

Three themes emerged at NDC in Year 3.

**IMPACT** In this report, we highlight the very real systemic barriers that deaf people face every day, then show how NDC activities address those barriers to effectively and efficiently achieve our mandate. Read the success stories and learn how our diverse stakeholders used NDC resources, tools, and evidence-based research and insights to improve outcomes for deaf youth transitioning to postsecondary life.

**INTENTION** In 2019, we built upon our infrastructure to address critical issues in very intentional ways. NDC expanded Engage for Change (EFC) models to focus on targeted content areas, created synergetic and seamless bundles of media-rich resources, and served stakeholders from multiple entry points and across different platforms.

**INGENUITY** When solutions seem hard to come by, we all need to see innovative possibilities to our work. In 2019, ingenuity was abundantly found in the passion and commitment of NDC staff, partners, task force members, and funders; in the tireless efforts of stakeholders on the front lines; and in the often-unacknowledged contributions of deaf people in every community and state. These are the sparks that ignite our success and light the way for NDC in Year 4.

Yours in #DeafSuccess,

Stephanie W. Cawthon, PhD  
Director

### Table of Contents

Out-of-this-World  
Connection: Deafverse 3

Community Solutions:  
Engage for Change | local 4

#DeafSuccess in Every State:  
Engage for Change | state 5

Customized for Your Campus:  
Engage for Change | on site 6

Access Through Education:  
Online Courses and Presentations 7

The Personal Touch:  
NDC | help team 8

Modeling #DeafSuccess:  
Outreach 9

Project Opening Doors 10

Spotlight on 2019  
Resources 11

# Out-of-This-World Connection: **Deafverse**

## BARRIER

Deaf youth need accessible and engaging tools to develop self-advocacy skills, which are essential for successfully navigating schools, workplaces, and inaccessible environments.

## NDC APPROACH

**Deafverse**, the first ASL-accessible online video game, engages deaf youth in an exciting choose-your-own-adventure world that fosters self-advocacy and self-determination skills. Created by deaf people for deaf people, the game is a deaf-centered resource that provides educators with an innovative teaching tool and curriculum materials for the classroom.

## IMPACT

"I think it's an amazing experience because it applies to me in a big way."

**Deafverse** makes a real, personal impact on the everyday lives of the students who play the game, which can be seen in feedback from teachers and the players themselves.

"I have the right to say, 'Hey, I want a replacement, a different interpreter,'" one student said. "I can do that. I didn't realize that I can do that."

Those little things can make a difference in a successful transition from high school to beyond.

"You can experience different situations before you actually experience them in real life," one player said. "Sometimes there are scary situations out there."

Deafverse gives players a safe space to test out responses to those challenging situations.



And, since the information is presented in a fun, engaging way, the students actually pay attention.

"Our students loved it," one teacher said. "I have seen them play it during lunch time."

## BY THE NUMBERS

### 2019



## 2,501

PLAYERS IN 2019



## 29,686

VIEWS ON DAILY MOTH FEATURE



## 119,517

HOUSEHOLDS REACHED  
WHEN KXAN (NBC-TV)  
COVERED DEAFVERSE'S  
DEBUT



# Community Solutions: Engage for Change | local

## BARRIER

Robust local connections between families, schools, businesses, and agencies are often missing or lacking, preventing sustainable opportunities for deaf youth.

## NDC APPROACH

**Engage for Change | local** brings together youth, parents, and leaders to identify needs, share resources, and collaborate to create unique solutions for deaf youth in their community. These solutions reflect local values, amplify strengths, and provide a critical missing link in systems change.

## IMPACT

"More events like this are needed!"

The need to move the needle on #DeafSuccess is a national problem. But solutions can start at home. That's where **EFC | local** starts — by identifying community-specific opportunities and making a real impact with home-brewed solutions.

In Columbus, Ohio, local leaders saw the benefits of providing deaf youth with strong mentors, and are working collaboratively to create a new mentoring program for deaf people.

"I have seen struggles with students and their families to obtain services and resources," wrote one teacher of the deaf, describing the meeting as "a positive event to go forward to make excellent changes in the community."

The initial meeting in New York City introduced leaders from various agencies, and a follow up meeting got them really talking. They realized that each agency was collecting data that could be used by all the participants. They took action to create a central database of information and a deaf education listserv.



"This was a wonderful night and I truly learned so much," wrote one participant. "Having people from all aspects of the community come together to brainstorm is such a valuable/effective way of addressing issues like this from a holistic and intersectional level."

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 2019



# 181

PEOPLE ATTENDED  
4 EVENTS IN NEW CITIES



# 119

PEOPLE ATTENDED  
5 FOLLOW UP EVENTS

# #DeafSuccess in Every State: Engage for Change | **state**

## BARRIER

Leaders from state-level education and vocational rehabilitation agencies often work in silos, without easy access to their peers and tailored resources.

## NDC APPROACH

**Engage for Change | state** provides essential data, planning tools, and networks of shared leadership and peer support that would otherwise be unavailable for state teams. State leaders across agencies collaborate to build sustainable programs that close education and employment gaps for deaf youth.

## IMPACT

**EFC | state** makes an impact in countless intangible ways — by connecting people, sharing ideas, and supporting existing initiatives. Those connections are the heart and soul of our initiative to create #DeafSuccessInEveryState, because the tangible results are never far behind.

EFC | state holds a convening every year. In June, more than 80 leaders from 39 states gathered to dive deep into NDC data and develop state priorities and initiatives.

The members of the West Virginia state team went home after the convening with an idea. After reviewing NDC's research on the value of a well-implemented summer camp, they enrolled in the Developing Accessible Summer Programs online course. Then, they enlisted the help of other state leaders to help them build a program that would work for their state.

As a result, numerous young deaf people have made new friends, connected with mentors and seen the limitless opportunities available for people like them as they transition from high



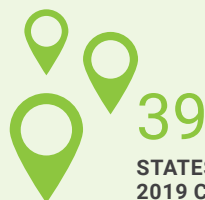
school to higher education, training or careers. They learned the skills they need to advocate for themselves and drive their own futures.

Rachel Torrence from the West Virginia state team said the state convening helped spur needed change.

"We are collaborating together and inviting more people to the table, starting a discussion that should have happened before," she said. "I see a lot of change, and hopefully it will grow into the future."

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 2019



STATES ATTENDED THE  
2019 CONVENING



SITE VISITS  
TO STATES



CHECK-INS WITH STATE  
TEAMS DURING THE YEAR

# Customized for Your Campus: NDC | on site

## BARRIER

Colleges struggle with how to meet the needs of deaf students, and deaf students struggle with unmet needs on campus.

## NDC APPROACH

**NDC | on site** is a hands-on, holistic strategy to address accessibility needs on campus. The team does a deep dive and supports disability professionals as they gain administrative buy in, use tools to identify gaps in services, and create policies and practices that are responsive to the experiences of deaf students.

## IMPACT

Madison Area Technical College (MATC) wanted to improve access for deaf students, but campus leaders did not know where to start. They reached out to **NDC | on site**.

“MATC’s mission includes providing open access to quality higher education. We were looking to strengthen this promise to ensure inclusion of our deaf and hard of hearing students,” said Scott Ritter, Director of Disability Resources & Testing and Assessment Services. “Our partnership with NDC has provided the tools and resources necessary to do just that.”

Collaboration began when the NDC | on site team went to the Wisconsin campus.

“The team took the time to visit us in person and get to know our story, then provided a realistic and detailed action plan that was tailored to our college,” said Jana Mauldin, Interpreter Coordinator. “Ongoing questions have been answered thoroughly.”

MATC took the action plan and ran with it, making changes in a number of different areas, including study abroad programs.



But a major impact was the creation of a new organization on campus, Deaf Community Association (DCA), to connect deaf students to each other. NDC research shows that deaf students who are active in campus organizations are also more likely to graduate.

“I became really invested in [DCA], because growing up I was mainstreamed. I always felt kind of outcast, so this felt like a great opportunity to meet people like me,” student Chynna McNair told MATC’s campus newspaper.

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 2019



# 3

CAMPUS VISITS FOR CUSTOMIZED  
ONSITE ANALYSIS



# 39

ACTION STEPS RECOMMENDED  
TO CAMPUSES

# Access Through Education: Online Courses and Presentations

## BARRIER

There is a shortage of online professional development to better understand and serve deaf people in educational and workplace settings.

## NDC APPROACH

Innovative online course offerings meet the needs of professionals at different stages in their careers and practice. These courses integrate personal stories from deaf people, research summaries, models from the field, and practical application activities to provide an efficient and effective wrap-around approach.

## IMPACT

For deaf people to succeed, their environments need to be accessible and welcoming. People make decisions every day that create those environments — sometimes with little understanding about deaf people or their lives.

NDC's **online courses and presentations** are designed to improve understanding and expand knowledge, whether people are having their first experience with a deaf person or have worked with deaf people for years.

"Taking the Effective Communication classes has given me so much to think about," said an ASL interpreter who works in elementary and secondary schools.

Another professional said the course material was immediately applicable to new responsibilities: "My current role is as a temp coordinator of communication services at a college. I was thrown into it and this course came at exactly the right time to help me with much-needed information."



Another way NDC expands access through education is by impactfully incorporating deaf people's personal stories into the online course content. These stories connect data and research to real people and their experiences.

"[The course] helped me learn about situations that need accommodations that I had never even thought about before," a participant said. "One of the stories that really stuck out to me was the girl who was in a class and the group met outside of class to work. I have had a lot of classes myself in which we met outside of class but never thought about accommodations for that."

## BY THE NUMBERS

### 2019



# 2,975

ONLINE COURSES  
COMPLETED



# 30

PRESENTATIONS GIVEN  
AT 18 CONFERENCES



# 651

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
CREDITS EARNED



# The Personal Touch: NDC | help team

## BARRIER

Many people don't know where to turn for help navigating accommodations or accessibility for deaf students, family members, or employees.

## NDC APPROACH

Assemble a team of dedicated professionals from diverse backgrounds who answer questions from the field every day, including on an active listserv. They bring together available research, evidence-based practices, case law, and real-world insights in timely, tailored responses, typically within two days.

## IMPACT

Navigating accommodations and access can be daunting. Deaf people and their families may not know where to start or their rights under the law. Schools and employers struggle to balance their own resources and best practices.

That's where the **NDC | help team** shines. It provides individualized assistance, support, and resources to ensure access for deaf people at school, work, or any setting – and creates real impact, one response at a time.

In 2019, a parent reached out to the NDC | help team about her son's clinical rotation – required for his graduate degree in physical therapy, yet a struggle for him to access.

"We should be able to use this information to educate and guide the professional staff both at the school and in the clinical settings," the parent responded. "Also, it has put my mind at ease to know that they cannot just pull the rug from under him without giving him the support he needs and deserves. He has worked too hard to lose the ability to achieve his goal now!"



A disability services professional turned to the NDC | help team when one student required an assistive listening device (ALD) for class and another student requested ASL interpreting services – two new requests at this college.

"Your [team] helped me locate and purchase the appropriate ALD [and] locate and employ a sign language interpreter," the professional wrote, grateful for the help to support deaf students on campus.

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 2019



# 419

PERSONALIZED RESPONSES  
TO PEOPLE'S QUESTIONS

SUBSCRIBE



# 1,370

SUBSCRIBERS TO THE LISTSERV  
FOR PROFESSIONALS



# Modeling #DeafSuccess: Outreach

## BARRIER

Examples of how deaf youth can thrive in strong support systems are frequently not emphasized in translations of research-to-practice.

## NDC APPROACH

Curate and disseminate information across multiple communications platforms to boost visibility of #DeafSuccess and go beyond simply sharing resources and connecting stakeholders. Utilize best practices in accessibility standards for all deaf-disabled audiences, with a deaf-centered commitment to empower and motivate transition-age youth.

## IMPACT

"I see that students learned ... to be who they want to be, or to be someone who would pay it forward."

The work we do at NDC is about so much more than statistics and reports. It's about believing in deaf students, and showing them how they can thrive and achieve their dreams.

Whether we are reaching out digitally — through our listserv, newsletter or social media — or in-person at conferences, task force meetings and more, we constantly strive to show, rather than tell, what #DeafSuccess means.

As part of this overall strategy, our social media platforms are the perfect way to directly and indirectly spread that message to countless students across the country.

For example, Scott Daily shared NDC's #DeafAtWork video featuring his story about becoming a deaf police officer on his personal account. Thanks to that post, he connected with



a mother of three deaf children who wanted to meet him and see first-hand how he built the career he wanted. She wasn't the only person to reach out.

"I teach deaf education for middle school kids," responded Rachel Pipkin on Facebook. "One of my students told me he wanted to be a cop but that he couldn't because of being deaf. I am so excited to show this to him tomorrow!"

## BY THE NUMBERS 2019



220,964  
WEBSITE VISITORS

FOLLOW



13,884  
FOLLOWERS ON  
SOCIAL MEDIA



38,896  
NEWSLETTER  
SUBSCRIBERS

# Project Opening Doors

Project Opening Doors is an initiative that, along with on site and other campus access activities, includes a survey for students, faculty, and disability support professionals on campus that is meant to better understand – and improve – the college experience for deaf students. A full report of the results of the survey will be released in February 2020, but initial results already show areas for improvement.



## BY THE NUMBERS

2019

Participants  
in the ongoing  
Campus  
Accessibility  
Survey:

449  
STUDENTS

200  
FACULTY

116  
DISABILITY SERVICE  
PROFESSIONALS



Initial findings from the study show:

77%

report videos their classmates share **are likely to not have captions**

64%

report campus housing **does not have adequate accessibility features** such as flashing-light doorbells

56%

reported being **unable to connect with role models** on campus

48%

of students report that **formal feedback about their service providers (e.g., interpreters) is not collected**

## Defining Deaf

### What we mean when we say “deaf”

The National Deaf Center is using the term **deaf** in an all-inclusive manner, to include people who may identify as 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.



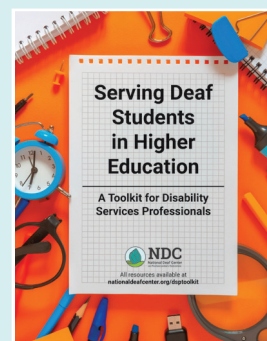
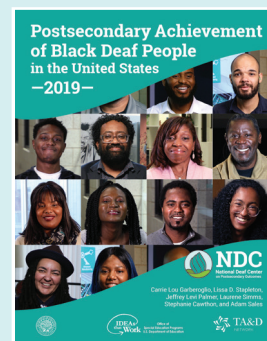
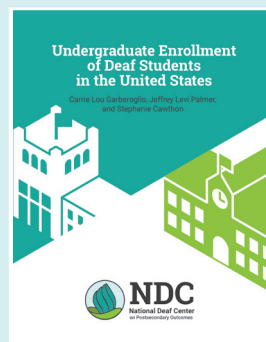
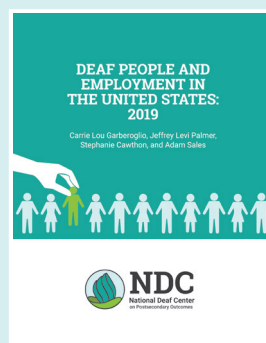
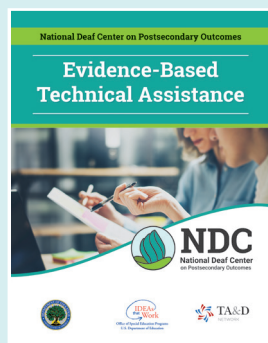
# Spotlight on 2019 Resources

New publications, findings, and resources provided evidence-based insights and data to decision-makers, professionals, educators, and families throughout the United States and its territories. They include:

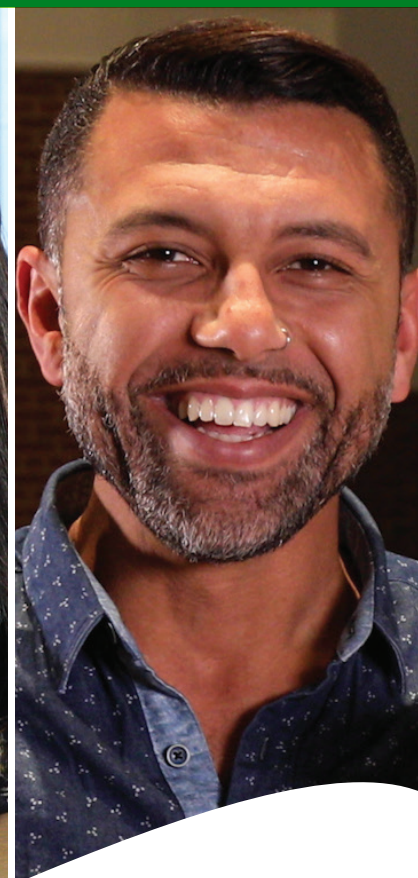
- Redefining “Evidence-Based”
- Supporting Deaf Veterans
- Serving Deaf Students in Higher Education: A Toolkit for Disability Services Professionals
- Postsecondary Achievement of Black Deaf People in the United States: 2019
- Deaf People and Employment in the United States: 2019
- Undergraduate Enrollment of Deaf Students in the United States



**27,397**  
NUMBER OF RESOURCES  
PEOPLE DOWNLOADED  
FROM THE NDC WEBSITE  
IN 2019







**NDC**  
National Deaf Center  
on Postsecondary Outcomes

[nationaldeafcenter.org](https://nationaldeafcenter.org)

[help@nationaldeafcenter.org](mailto:help@nationaldeafcenter.org)



This publication was developed under a jointly-funded grant through the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) #H326D160001. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the federal government.

