MINNESOTA
COMMISSION OF THE DEAF,
DEAFBLIND & HARD OF HEARING

About the Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing (MNCDHH) and Accessibility Resources

About MNCDHH

- Founded in 1985.
- Independent state agency.
- Created by members of the deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind communities.
- Has 15 governor-appointed commission members – eight regional advisory members selected by advisory councils and seven at large – majority are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing.

Responsibilities

- Advises the governor, the legislature, the judicial branch, and commissioners of all state agencies on policies, programs, services, and legislation impacting Minnesotans who are deaf, deafblind, or hard of hearing. (Minn Stat. 256C.28: https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/256c.28)
- Develops public policy solutions to barriers faced by the community.
- Coordinates advocacy efforts to promote solutions.
- Encourages civic engagement through participation in task forces, education, voting, and building relationships with policy makers.

Civic Engagement

- MNCDHH regularly visits the Minnesota State Capitol to track and monitor bills that affect our community.
- MNCDHH also meets with legislators to discuss issues in our community and seek solutions through the legislation.
- MNCDHH helps public citizens testify for or against bills in the legislature and promotes public awareness of what is happening in the legislature and how it impacts our community.

Hearing Loss: Incidence Rate

With each decade of life, the rate of incidence of hearing loss doubles.

Information about newborn hearing screening can be found on the Minnesota Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI) site (http://www.improveehdi.org/mn/state/).

Dr. Frank Lin of Johns Hopkins University did a study, One in Five Americans Has Hearing Loss (https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/one_in_five_americans_has_hearing_loss),

which estimates 20% of the population has some degree of hearing loss. Dr. Lin was interviewed for our 2015 documentary on TPT Twin Cities PBS, Hearing Loss Matters (https://www.tpt.org/hearing-loss-matters/) (*26 mins*). In the video, he discusses the study and the ramifications of age-related hearing loss.

Accessibility Resources

A few sites you can visit.

MNCDHH

- The importance of good acoustics and looping (https://mn.gov/deaf-commission/advocacy-issues/communication-access/good-acoustics-looping/)
- Accessible videos (https://mn.gov/deaf-commission/advocacy-issues/communication-access/accessible-videos/) (If you are producing information in multiple languages, ASL should be one of them)
- Ask MNCDHH: Help with Captioning Videos (http://mn.gov/deaf-commission/news/index.jsp?id=1063-355743)
- Ask MNCDHH: DeafBlind Friendly Emails http://mn.gov/deaf-commission/news/index.jsp?id=1063-354722)

Legislative Coordinating Commission

- Disability Access – FAQ (https://www.leg.mn.gov/leg/faq/faq?subject=19)
- Minnesota Legislature Accessibility & Usability Comment Form https://www.leg.mn.gov/accessibility/) (Does your agency's site have a fillable form where people can report any barriers?)

Minnesota IT Services

- Office of Accessibility (https://mn.gov/mnit/about-mnit/accessibility/) (Includes a nifty video explaining why accessibility matters as well as tabs where you can find training, documents accessibility, maps accessibility, meetings (in person and electronic) accessibility, multimedia accessibility, social media accessibility, and web/apps accessibility.)
- Subscribe to MNIT's accessibility newsletter (https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNIT/subscriber/new?topic_id=MNIT_270) (Sent out monthly with a variety of interesting topics and helpful tips!)
- State of Minnesota Accessibility and Usability of Information Technology Standard (PDF) (https://mn.gov/mnit/assets/Stnd_State_Accessibility_tcm38-61585.pdf)
- Digital accessibility quick cards (https://mn.gov/mnit/about-mnit/accessibility/accessibility-quick-cards.jsp) (These are essentially cliff notes to making different types of mediums and documents accessible.)

Other

We like the University of Minnesota's Accessible U page (https://accessibility.umn.edu/).