

# Active Support Service Provider (SSP) and CoNavigator (CN) Programs

## July 2022

***Note:*** *Services listed do not imply endorsement by HKNC. Information listed is self-reported by the program. Terminology used in this document is unique to each program (for example the spelling of the word “DeafBlind” or use of the term SSP or CoNavigator). This program listing is provided for informational purposes only. These are the known programs in the United States. Several other states/metropolitan communities have active work groups investigating the possibility of establishing SSP or CN services.*

## ALABAMA

**Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind**

PO Box 698 Talladega, AL 35161

Jennifer Oldenburg, lead provider for DeafBlind services

256-761-3241 cell

Josh Sharpton, director of Deaf services

256-375-6088 text/cell; 256-358-7555 VP

sharpton.josh@aidb.org

Tamera Hardaway, case manager for the Deaf

256-592-2003 office; 256-474-0114 VP

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[www.aidb.org](http://www.aidb.org)

Service Area:**Statewide**

Program Established: 10/01/2018

Funding Sources:  State Appropriation

Eligibility:  Dual Sensory Loss (vision and hearing)

Number of Individuals Served: 105 individuals annually, approximately 8 individuals per week

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: SSP support to and from medical appointments, surgical procedures, pharmacy (after medical or surgical appointment), therapy (short-term), major public transportation (bus, train, and airport); social service agencies, AIDB functions/classes, community activities/classes, consumer organization conferences/workshops.

Training Requirements:  Providers are trained by staff who hold certification as SSPs and/or in the area of DeafBlindness. Consumer training is currently being developed.

Program Coordination: Full-Time

Transportation: SSPs are able to provide transportation for consumers using a vehicle from the agency motor pool or using their personal vehicle (reimbursed mileage).

Other: n/a

## ARIZONA

**Arizona Commission for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing**

[100 N. 15th Ave.](https://maps.google.com/?q=100+N.+15th+Ave.+Suite+104,+Phoenix,+AZ++85007+%0D%0A+(602&entry=gmail&source=g) [Suite 104, Phoenix, AZ](https://maps.google.com/?q=100+N.+15th+Ave.+Suite+104,+Phoenix,+AZ++85007+%0D%0A+(602&entry=gmail&source=g)  [85007](https://maps.google.com/?q=100+N.+15th+Ave.+Suite+104,+Phoenix,+AZ++85007+%0D%0A+(602&entry=gmail&source=g)

620-542-3362 voice; 480-559-9441 VP

Vacant, DeafBlind Specialist

Carmen Green Smith, Deputy Director

c.green@acdhh.az.gov

[www.acdhh.org](http://www.acdhh.org)

Service Area: **ARIZONA Statewide**

Program Established: 2018

Funding Sources:  $192,000/yr from the Arizona legislature for SSP services

Eligibility: Arizona residents who are over 18 years old and meet the definition of “DeafBlind” as defined by the organization.

Number of Individuals Served: 20-25 individuals a month

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: 20 hours/monthly of SSP services outside of the home such as grocery shopping, medical appointments, and community events and inside the home to assist with reading mail, identifying items, etc.

Training Requirements:  SSPs must complete the ACDHH SSP training or similar approved training

Program Coordination: full-time

Transportation: transportation is provided through a contracted vendor

Other: The goal of this program is to provide DeafBlind persons with access to information that allows them to lead a self-determined life.

## ARKANSAS

**Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS)**

900 W. 7th Street, Little Rock, AR 72201

501-686-2800 voice

Cheryl Seymore, Area Rehabilitation Manager for Services for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Cheryl.Seymore@arkansas.gov

[www.arkansas.gov](http://www.arkansas.gov)

Service Area: **Central Arkansas**

Program Established: The DB Program was established in 1989 through a grant. It became a part of ARS in 1991. The agency began providing SSP services in 1997.

Funding Sources: Arkansas Rehabilitation Services funds the program which pays for SSPs who work on contract with the state program.

Eligibility: allowed up to 10 hours/week; have an SSP plan with consumer goals identified. Primary goals are socialization, independent living, and access to the community.

Number of Individuals Served: 30 individuals

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: reading mail, shopping, errands (drug store), exercise classes, monthly social group, and occasionally weddings or funerals.

Training Requirements: Many of the SSPs attend classes at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, interpreting program; SSP workshops are also provided with collaboration with UALR interpreting instructors and local consumers; an annual training/workshop is provided to allow SSPs to brush up on their skills. Anyone interested in becoming an SSP must first provide 100 volunteer hours working as a SSP before they are eligible to be paid. They must also maintain yearly CEU requirements.

Program Coordination: SSPs are contacted directly by the consumer to schedule their appointments. The ARS SSP program is run by its full time staff interpreters. Processing payments for working SSP’s is only one of their many responsibilities.

Transportation: SSPs do provide transportation but it is only for the purpose of getting to the place they will provide SSP services; they do not provide transportation services alone. When transportation is the only need, options recommended include public transportation, local Deaf Uber drivers, or contact family, friends or someone willing to volunteer.

Other: Arkansas has developed a SSP guidelines document

## CALIFORNIA

**Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center (DHHSC)**

5340 N. Fresno Street, Fresno, CA 93710

559-225-3323 voice; 559-478-2791 VP

Michelle Bronson, executive director

michelleb@dhhsc.org

[www.dhhsc.org](http://www.dhhsc.org)

Service Area: an **8 county region in Central California**

Program Established: The DeafBlind Services program was established in May, 2000, which includes the DeafBlind Support Group (DBSG).   This group continues to meet the second Wednesday of each month.

Funding Sources: The services provided specifically to the DeafBlind community include case management, SSP services, SSP training, and DBSG monthly socials. The DeafBlind Services Program received a one-year, non-renewable grant from the Department of Rehabilitation in 2005 to provide paid SSP services. The SSP program is currently operating on a volunteer basis. SSPs are recruited from several sources: the Interpreter Training Program at California State University Fresno, Certified Deaf Interpreters, Community Interpreters, ASL students, and family members of those who are DeafBlind. Tools used for recruitment include the DHHSC’s DeafBee on the website, DHHSC’s social media platforms, class presentations at the local colleges/universities, word-of-mouth, and annual workshops.

Eligibility: There are no set criteria but those receiving services. Those who provide SSP services are required to participate in SSP trainings.

Number of Individuals Served: average 5-10 individuals per month

Preferred Terminology: SSP or CoNavigator

Types of Service Requests: Transportation, shopping, reading mail, making phone calls, exercising, travel out-of-town to DeafBlind events, computer assistance, independent living assistance, and assistance at recreational and social events.

Training Requirements: Training is provided for all people interested in working with the DeafBlind community including interpreters, ASL students, interpreting students, and family members.   Training occurs in a workshop format and topics include causes of DeafBlindness, safe guiding, etiquette, communication techniques and DeafBlind protocol.

Program Coordination: Currently the program is overseen by the Services Personnel Director of DHHSC. The agency constantly searches for grant and fundraising opportunities in order to hire staff specifically for the DeafBlind Services Program.

Transportation: SSPs can drive DeafBlind clients in their own vehicles but they must first sign a waiver with DHHSC.

Other: Additional documentation is currently being developed to enhance services for the community. Interpreting services for DeafBlind individuals can be scheduled with Interpreting Services of Central California, a division of DHHSC – interpreting@dhhsc.org. Additionally, our agency has two Client Services Specialists who work with the DeafBlind:  Angelica Medina-Boersma at angelicamb@dhhsc.org and Joelene Spires at joelenes@dhhsc.org

**DeafBlind Access**

323 W. Second St., San Dimas, CA 91773

909-319-5216 voice/text

Dorene Holm, President/Director of Client Services

dorene@deafblindaccess.org

[www.deafblindaccess.org](http://www.deafblindaccess.org)

Service Area: **the counties of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside, & Orange**

Funding Sources: We are currently unfunded, relying on individual donations. We are a non-profit 501(c)3 organization and we are currently searching for a grant writer.

Eligibility: Must be Deaf or Hard of Hearing AND Blind or low-vision, 18 years and older

Number of Individuals Served: 26

Preferred Terminology: Use both SSP and CN

Types of Service Requests: It’s entirely up to the consumer, and includes shopping, hair appointments, doctor visits (CN only, no interpreting services provided) family events, parties, read and sorting mail and recipes, food labeling, Deaf social events, etc.

Training Requirements: SSP/CNs are either graduates from the College of the Canyons’ SSP/CN program or have received training through other organizations or the community.  Many of our SSP/CNs have worked in the DeafBlind community for many years and we allow for them to waive the formal training requirement with proof of competency as evidenced by the support of DeafBlind individuals as well as an assessment of their skills.

Program Coordination: This is a new program and consist of four individuals who work part-time to bring these services to the DeafBlind community.

Transportation:   We try to have the SSP/CN meet consumers at the destination, but there are situations like doctor visits and grocery shopping where the consumer needs a ride. Thus, some SSP/CoNavigators use their vehicles to drive, others use public transport or meet DeafBlind at the location.

Other: We work closely with the DeafBlind community to provide a variety of social events and SSP/CN Services as needed. Currently each consumer receives 10 hours per month. As we continue to seek funding for these critical services, we have a network of hearing and deaf SSP/CNs who volunteer their time to work with DeafBlind Access.

**Mind Your Language, Inc.**

811 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 1700-121, Los Angeles, CA 90017

323-230-0599 voice; 818-237-9239 VP

Lucas Soto, CEO

service@mindyourlanguageinc.com

lucas.soto@mindyourlanguage.com

[www.mindyourlanguageinc.com](http://www.mindyourlanguageinc.com)

Service Area: **Greater Los Angeles and neighboring cities**

Program Established: January 2017

Funding Sources:  California Department of Rehabilitation 80%, Private donations 20%

Eligibility:  Participants must be clients of the California Department of Rehabilitation. Otherwise, we would need additional time to provide funding. However, we are not known for turning down consumers.

Number of Individuals Served: Over 30

Preferred Terminology: CoNavigator

Types of Service Requests: Medical appointments, job interviews, errands related to employment, emergencies; and other activities require pre-approval

Training Requirements:  SSPs/CoNavigators require three sets of references from DB consumers. We are happy to adapt to the consumer's level of training and would suggest any training we would see fitting.

Program Coordination: Part Time

Transportation:  It depends on the funding source. Most likely it would be covered by state funding or donations.  If the DeafBlind consumer has an issue with the CN providing transportation, the CN can meet the client at a predefined destination.

Other: We are working on getting as many of our SSPs trained in ProTactile. As the owner of the company, I will be attending DBI this/next year in order to better understand and serve the community.

COLORADO
**Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

1575 Sherman Street, Garden Level, Denver, CO 80203

720-399-4227 voice/VP

Ryan Hawkins, DeafBlind Services Coordinator

ryan.hawkins@state.co.us

[www.ccdhh.com](http://www.ccdhh.com)
Service Area:  **Colorado Statewide**
Program Established:  2017
Funding Sources:  State and government department funding
Number of Individuals Served: 60
Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: General. Reading mail, attending DB social events and task force meetings, shopping, doctor appointments, legislative meetings, etc.  Each consumer is allowed 25 hours per month. SSPs are paid at $25.00 per hour, additional $5 during the evening hours on the weekdays and $10 on the weekends ($25/$30/$35).
Training Requirements:  SSPs must obtain a certification and meet the requirements to sign on an independent contractor with the Commission. The Commission is not responsible for SSP training because SSPs are independent contractors, to offer training they must be state employees. For now, HKNC is working with CCDHH and Colorado DB Task Force to identify a funding source to provide training until a national or state certification can be developed.
Program Coordination:  The position is full-time coordinator
Transportation: Transportation is provided as part of the SSP’s duties.

Other:  Background checks are done on all SSPs; Car and professional liability insurance are also mandatory.

## CONNECTICUT

**Communication Advocacy Network (CAN)**

151 New Park Ave, Suite 101, Box 83, Hartford, CT 06106

860-566-9490 VP (for information); 860-566-9489 VP (for director)

Susan V. Pedersen, director

CANCoordinator@outlook.com

Service Area:  **Connecticut Statewide**

Program Established:  August 2009

Funding Sources:  (state agency) Department of Rehabilitation Services with Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind;[http://www.ct.gov/besb/site/default.asp](https://exchange.hknc.org/owa/redir.aspx?C=Vjbs6j_YOEqpKu78_YX9-69yEXvL79BIdbFLgarBIraMlAS-Y6huByIeizzSjOoVdAw2XN6HT9c.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.ct.gov%2fbesb%2fsite%2fdefault.asp) and some grants and fundraising events

Eligibility:  legally blind and deaf, including low vision

Number of Individuals Served:  15

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests:  Support Service Providers (SSP), and deaf-blind services including monthly deaf-blind support group with guest speakers

Training Requirements:  Knowledge of ASL is preferred but not required; be familiar in the area of deaf-blind services; and to be able to work with hard of hearing deaf-blind consumers by using oral communication or other modes of communication.

Program Coordination:  part-time SSP program coordination

Transportation: Transportation is provided by SSPs.

Other:  Deaf-Blind distribution program available provided by the Connecticut Tech Act Project, <http://cttechact.com/att/#sthash.VcbtQEYt.dpbs>

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA / WASHINGTON, DC

**Gallaudet University – Student Success & Academic Quality (SSAQ) CoNavigation Program**

800 Florida Ave NE, College Hall 408, Washington, DC 20002

202-448-7036 voice

Jennifer Tuell, Accessibility Resource Coordinator

conavigators@gallaudet.edu

<https://sites.google.com/gallaudet.edu/conavigators/home>

Service Area: Currently only providing for **Gallaudet University’s sponsored events**

Program Established: January 2014 as an SSP program on campus; changed to CoNavigator program in 2022

Funding Sources: Gallaudet University

Eligibility: Services are only for current Gallaudet students, staff and faculty

Number of Individuals Served: 10 students

Preferred Terminology: CoNavigator

Types of Service Requests: Serving as a human guide for DeafBlind students by providing access on campus for traveling to and from class, dining, sporting events and other on-campus related activities.

Training Requirements: orientation training and bi-monthly refresher training in specified areas

Program Coordination: Part-Time

**Also see Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind in MD** who also serves the District of Columbia

## FLORIDA

**Florida CoNavigators in joint venture with ASPIRE Interpreting and Florida DeafBlind Association**

P.O. Box 2514, Tarpon Springs, FL, 34689

727-268-7910 voice/videophone

Keri Brooks, CEO

aspireinterpreting@gmail.com

<http://fcn.fldeafblind.org>

Service Area: **Florida Statewide**

Program Established: 2012 (FSSP) 2019 (FCN)

Funding Sources: Contractual, Self, and Volunteer

Eligibility: Persons who are DeafBlind

Number of Individuals Served: ASPIRE just started taking over FCN; currently serving 30 people

Preferred Terminology: CoNavigator

Types of Service Requests: Attending events; shopping; banking; doctor visits; travel; cruise; job sites when needed or applicable; school/college; and any other services where DeafBlind individuals need CoNavigators

Program Coordination: part-time

Transportation: do the CNs provide transportation/drive in their cars? Yes

Other: N/A

## GEORGIA

**Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA)**

450 Riverside Parkway, Suite 200, Rome, GA 30161

706-622-4421 VP/office & 706-591-6036 Text

Russell Fleming, state coordinator of deaf, hard-of-hearing, and deafblind services

Russell.Fleming@gvs.ga.gov

Shirley Robinson, state coordinator of blind services

Shirley.Robinson@gvs.ga.gov

[www.gvs.ga.gov](http://www.gvs.ga.gov)

Service Area: **Georgia Statewide – only if currently served by VR**

Program Established: 2015

Funding Sources:  GVRA state funded for clients of VR working toward their vocational rehabilitation goals.

Eligibility:  VR clients with dual sensory loss

Number of Individuals Served: ~ 25 people served; currently we do not have a service agreement between a provider and GA VR services for SSP services. At this time, if we need a SSP for interpretation or training, we use Georgia Interpreter Services Network (GISN) as they have a small list of interpreters that serve as CDI/SSP.

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: Currently, there are not providers for SSPs. It is hoped that with the new fiscal year, there will be providers to provide transportation, assistance with communication, interviews and training for deafblind VR clients.

Training Requirements:  Completion of SSP training from Georgia Association of the Deaf-Blind

Program Coordination: As needed

Transportation: It is the hope that SSPs will provide transportation in Georgia and be reimbursed for time and mileage.

Other:   n/a

## HAWAII

**Comprehensive Service Center (CSC) for People who are Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing or Deaf-Blind**

1953 S. Beretania St., Suite 5A, Honolulu, HI 96826

808-369-0499 voice/text; 808-447-2044 VP

Jennifer Tarnay, M.S., CCC-SLP, Co-PI

jennifer@csc-hawaii.org

Roz Kia, CSC Project Coordinator

roz@csc-hawaii.org

[www.csc-hawaii.org](http://www.csc-hawaii.org)

Service Area: **Hawaii Statewide**

Program Established: 2017

Funding Sources: State Appropriation in HI Department of Human Services/HI Division of Vocational Rehabilitation executive budget. CDS(CSC) funded via DVR Memorandum of Agreement/Request for Proposal SSP Project funded by CDS(CSC)/DVR Agreement.  Private donations also accepted. The program has a pay scale ranging from $25 to $40 an hour, depending on the consumer's needs, the SSP's skills and the specific nature of the assignment.

Eligibility: 1) any consumer referred to the program as "Deaf-Blind" by a recognized agency, or 2) individual application with support documents (from a doctor, DOE, DVR, etc.) documenting both vision and hearing loss.

Number of Individuals Served: 17

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: transportation, shopping, reading mail, making phone calls, job search, independent living assistance, and assistance at recreational and social events.

Activities include: appointments, community involvement, legislative participation, meetings/events, errands, social interactions, etc.

Training Requirements: Multiple SSP/consumer training sessions have been conducted over the years. Recent O&M training to recruit more SSPs. SSP-related materials shared. Topics for additional training are being considered.

Program Coordination: UH-CDS(CSC)

Transportation: SSPs are allowed but are not required to drive consumers.

Other: CDS(CSC) is a unit of the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

## KENTUCKY

**KY Office of Vocational Rehabilitation**

8412 Westport Road, Louisville, KY 40242

502-420-5921 voice

Tonia Gatton, statewide coordinator of deaf-blind services

Tonia.gatton@ky.gov

Amanda F. Friend, branch manager for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and State Coordinator of Deaf Service

amandaF.Friend@ky.gov

[www.kcc.ky.gov](http://www.kcc.ky.gov)

Service Area: **Kentucky Statewide**

Program Established: 2017

Funding Sources:  Vocational Rehabilitation Funds

Eligibility:  Consumers in an employment setting or receiving training in an in-state rehabilitation facility.

Number of Individuals Served: 0; identifying qualified SSPs

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: Orientation on a job site or rehabilitation skills training.

Training Requirements:  Completion of SSP approved training, reference letter, at least 50 hours experience.

Program Coordination: Full time

Transportation:  SSPs are not allowed to provide transportation to consumers. SSPs are paid to get to the consumer to provide services. Transportation for consumers can be done by paying for transportation to either the job site or rehabilitation facility through public transportation vouchers, mileage to an individual who has been approved as a vendor in our system, or by VR counselors assisting the consumer to network with family, friends, co-workers, or other available community supports.

## LOUISIANA

**Affiliated Blind of Louisiana (ABL)**

409 West St. Mary Blvd., Lafayette, LA  70506

337-234-6492 voice; 337-446-4648 VP

Vacant, SSP coordinator

Christine Scott, communication specialist

Tammy Szuszitzky, program assistant

Vacant, program liaison

abldbservice@gmail.com

[www.affiliatedblind.org](https://exchange.hknc.org/owa/redir.aspx?C=d2d67f81fb564b14bed275e6132f2606&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.affiliatedblind.org%2f)

Service Area: **Louisiana Statewide**

Program Established: February 2008

Funding Amount: $625,000 annually

Funding Sources: [Telecommunications Tax](http://www.legis.la.gov/legis/BillInfo.aspx?s=181ES&b=HB27&sbi=y) funded through legislation and managed by Louisiana Commission for the Deaf
Eligibility: The Louisiana Commission for the Deaf (LCD) provides SSP services to Louisiana residents who are DeafBlind as defined by [US legislature](https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/29/1905). Eligible participants will have:

* Central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in their better eye with corrective lenses or a visual field defect (such as Usher’s Syndrome)
* Chronic hearing loss so severe that most speech cannot be understood.
* Extreme difficulty in doing daily life activities, participating in social activities, or getting a job on their own.

If an individual cannot have their hearing and vision properly measured, but they have severe hearing and visual disabilities that make it extremely difficult to be independent, they may still be eligible for the program.

Number of Individuals Served: 82

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: A [Service Support Provider (SSP)](https://www.helenkeller.org/hknc/ssp-services) is a trained guide who works one-on-one with a person who is DeafBlind to communicate information. They act as a sighted guide to help their client perform everyday activities. SSPs provide information about a person's physical and social environmental via tactile sign language or other methods of communication. This empowers DeafBlind individuals to fully participate in activities in their community and live with more self-confidence.

Here are a few examples of the types of services an SSP can provide:

* Driving to and from the grocery store with you and helping you purchase items;
* Providing information about your physical surroundings, such as where you are;
* Providing social information, such as describing the mood of people around you;
* Communicating with people using the DeafBlind person’s preferred mode of communication (sign language, tactile communication, speech, etc); and
* Additional support such as shopping, visiting friends/family, eating at restaurants, looking around, mail reading, paying bills, phone calls, any medical/legal appointments, and/or exercising.

Training Requirements: SSP will engage in at least one 8-hour orientation to receive Deaf-Blindness training, which includes: policies/procedures, topics of DeafBlind related information, and SSP code of ethics. New hires will have an opportunity to observe approved DeafBlind Instructor classes and volunteer with three different DeafBlind individuals prior to starting employment. Individual training for DB clients can be provided by DB teachers upon request.

Program Coordination: Full-Time coordinator and assistance – scheduling, payroll, files, advocacy, etc.

Transportation: SSPs are allowed to provide transportation as part of the assignment but may not provide transportation as the only service.

Other: All qualified and registered DeafBlind residents are allocated 25 hours per month to use as they choose. For consumers who may require more than 25 hours per month, they must notify the SSP office and submit a written request outlining the need and how the need was determined in accordance with criteria provided by Louisiana Commission for the Deaf (LCD). LCD must authorize approval for over 25 hours in writing. Developing an assessment to determine each consumer’s number of hours per month.

## MAINE

**University of Southern Maine Linguistics Department**

Science Building, 70 Falmouth St, DeafSpace Room #410, Portland, ME 04103

207-780-4582 voice; 207-766-7098 VP

Regan Thibodeau, SSP coordinator

Regan.thibodeau@maine.edu

<https://usm.maine.edu/linguistics/location-and-hours>

Service Area: **Maine Statewide**

Program Established: Services began in 2010 under the Iris Network — Independence Without Fear (IWF). The University of Southern Maine assumed the program in 2019.

Funding Sources: Currently the program is unfunded. IWF used to have some funding via the Iris Network. Some items like gas are sometimes billable to the State of Maine.

Eligibility: People who identify as DeafBlind or having a dual sensory loss; who may use ASL or spoken English for communication.

Number of Individuals Served: 3 (The pandemic has prevented the program from running at full capacity.)

Preferred Terminology: SSP, CoNavigator, Access Provider – we allow the client to decide for themselves.

Types of Service Requests: The pandemic has reduced activity requests. Last fall there were requests to attend the Deaf Culture Festival with access to the ASL Live show. Prior to the pandemic, activities included travel, completing errands, appointments, attending events, etc.

Training Requirements: It is a two-step process. All students are trained by Regan Thibodeau in SSP/CN roles and duties and then Judy Shepard-Kegl screens them for safety and provides a certificate of completion. Training hours are at least three hours and then a buddy system is used for the first couple of activities for safety and then the providers are able to work with consumers independently. Those with concerns are encouraged to continue training until they pass Judy's screening.

Program Coordination: Part-Time

Transportation: Yes, often SSPs will provide transportation if available. Other times, SSPs will meet the consumer at the location.

Other: n/a

## MARYLAND

**Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind**

8720 Georgia Avenue, Suite 805, Silver Spring, MD 20910

240-737-5112 voice

Toya Horten, senior director of administrative operations

thorten@clb.org

[www.clb.org](http://www.clb.org)

Service Area: **Maryland Statewide and metropolitan Washington, DC area - specifically Arlington County, VA, and Montgomery County, MD**

Program Established: 2010
Funding Sources: Various limited city and county grants; State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies
Eligibility: certifiable/documented dual sensory disability (deafness and blindness) and resident of specific county/city; other criteria based on grant requirements
Number of Individuals Served: 5-15 (rolling based on grant criteria)
Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: CLB SSPs support clients with grocery shopping and medical appointments.

Training Requirements: certified or qualified based on CLB established criteria
Program Coordination: full-time (Monday through Friday 9 AM to 5 PM)
Transportation: CLB SSPs provides transportation with mileage reimbursement at the federal rate.

Other: Each consumer is provided 15-20 hours per month based on availability of SSPs.  This is subject to grant funding and is analyzed annually.  All SSPs are contractors and work based on their availability.  Alternate SSPs can be requested.  SSP hours do not transfer and are not cumulative.  Each allocation is per month.  For ongoing service provision, each consumer must go through an intake process for eligibility to be determined based upon organization/grant requirements.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**DeafBlind Community Access Network (DBCAN)**

c/o D.E.A.F. Inc.

215 Brighton Avenue, Allston, MA 02134

617-860-3708 VP; 617-254-4041 voice

vacant, Director of DBCAN

DBCAN@deafinconline.org

[www.deafinconline.org](http://www.deafinconline.org)

Service Area: **Massachusetts Statewide**

Program Established: 2001 as an Act of the Massachusetts State Legislature. It was a result of intensive lobbying efforts on behalf of the DeafBlind Interpreter Alliance (DBIA) as well as members of the DeafBlind & Deaf community, Disability Policy Consortium, D.E.A.F. Inc., MA Commission for the Blind (MCB) and MA Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (MCDHH).

Funding Sources: The program is grant funded by MCB and overseen by MCB and operated by D.E.A.F. Inc.

Eligibility: up to 16 hours/month; and up to 8 hours/month additional with director approval

Number of Individuals Served: 78 consumers with 48 DBCAN providers

Preferred Terminology: DBCAN providers

Types of Service Requests: errands/appointments, reading mail, personal needs or food shopping, exercise, transportation and guidance to medical appointments, and social/recreational activities

Training Requirements: Providers must complete a 12-hour training program with certificate provided upon completion

Program Coordination: full-time director, full-time assistant director

Transportation: DBCAN providers can transport DBCAN consumers in their cars, with their own car insurance. Occasionally, consumers use public transportation but primarily depend on the DBCAN providers who are paid $0.58/mile for travel.

Other: Services are provided by DBCAN Providers, this is the preferred term rather than support service providers. The funding is $577,724 annually.

## MINNESOTA

**DeafBlind Services Minnesota (DBSM)**

Adult Community Services (SSP and Adult Intervener Programs)

1936 Lyndale Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55403

612-362-8454 voice

Matt Priebe, Adult Community Services Program Manager

Priebem@dbsm.org

SSP Community Specialist (position vacant)

[www.dbsmllc.org](http://www.dbsmllc.org)

Service Area: **Minnesota Statewide**

Program Established: 1986 (SSP Service established in 1996)

Funding Sources: Minnesota State Dept of Human Services–Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division; Hennepin County through Human Services and Public Health--Children, Family and Adult Services Division; Medical Assistance (Medicaid) Waiver Program–Community Access for Disability Inclusion (CADI). CADI services are considered “independent living skills” and must meet the requirements for CADI and be referred by CADI case manager.

Eligibility: Deafblind adults (age 21 or older, 18 if no longer covered by an IEP-Individualized Education Plan) must have a medically verifiable combined hearing loss and vision loss which interferes with individual’s ability to independently maintain their independence or access their community. The SSP program provides an average of 20 hours a month to participants, may vary based on available funding and program size. The Adult Intervener program provides an average number of hours to participants consistent with the Children, Youth and Family Services (CYFS) Intervener program. All participants must demonstrate no other funding sources available for SSP or Intervener supports.

Number of Individuals Served: approximately 55 deafblind adults with the majority residing in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Approximately 10 deafblind adults receive DBSM services in greater, outstate Minnesota.

Preferred Terminology: SSP and Adult Intervener

Types of Service Requests: SSP: grocery shopping, Post Office, reading mail, assisting with online work, errands of daily living, guiding to health appointments, community events access and communication assistance for community groups such as beading craft class. Adult Intervener: provide consistent Deafblind Intervener services to adults who benefit from assistance with: language or concept development; planning or initiating activities; socialization or strengthening peer networks; integrating into their home or community; personal autonomy and independence; and/or successful transition to adulthood.

Training Requirements: DBSM prefers to have staff who have American Sign Language skills. However, not all participants use sign language. DBSM currently employs around 35 part-time, hourly SSP and Adult Intervener staff—around half of staff are Deaf or hard-of-hearing. Staff receive paid training on the basics of deaf-blindness, including simulation activities, sighted-guide techniques, and the basics of Pro-Tactile communication. Adult Intervener staff receive additional training on Deafblind Intervention strategies and techniques. New hires are also trained to use the DBSM portal for submitting reports/time cards. When possible, new staff are offered “on-the-job” training (mentoring) and they shadow an experienced SSP or Adult Intervener before taking assignments. SSP staff pay range for new hires is around $15 to $16 an hour depending on experience, for Adult Intervener staff around $16 to $17 an hour depending on experience. Staff also earn the Federal Reimbursement rate for mileage-(2022) $.575 per mile-for any mileage while working with participant.

Program Coordination: Adult Community Services Program Manager is a full-time position which includes other duties beyond coordinating SSP and Adult Intervener services. The ACS Program Manager is additionally responsible for providing direct service, report writing, invoicing and contract compliance with the various funding sources. The SSP Coordinator/Community Specialist is a part-time position focused on coordinating SSP staff and participant assignments, arranging substitute SSP staff as needed and coordinating and running community activities and classes.

Transportation: SSPs and Interveners can provide transportation to consumers.

Other: the program was designed to provide support for a deaf-blind person to live as independently as possible. The SSP model works well for self-directed, proficient communicating deafblind consumers. DBSM also has a separate program that provides Independent Living Skills (ILS) instruction to Deafblind, Deaf, Blind and/or Hard-of-Hearing consumers who receive funding through Medicaid waivered services program Community Access for Disability Inclusion (CADI). DBSM also provides services to qualified deafblind adults living in group homes and nursing homes. DBSM’s Children, Youth and Family Services (CYFS) Program provides Deafblind Intervention in the home and community to deaf-blind children and youth from birth to age 18, age 21 if still covered by an IEP-Individualized Education Plan. The intervention assists deaf-blind children to develop age-appropriate independence, communication and social skills. The Children, Youth and Family Services Program Manager is Kim Johnson at 612-843-3401 voice; kjohnson@dbsm.org.

**Minnesota Department of Human Services - Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division**

**DeafBlind Consumer Directed Services Grant Program**

P.O. Box 64969, St. Paul, MN 55164-0969

Christy Leach, program manager

612-272-5233 voice

christy@yourfse.com

<https://mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing/>

Service Area: **Minnesota Statewide**

Program Established: 2002

Funding Sources: The state DeafBlind Consumer Directed Services grant funding was a direct appropriation from the Minnesota State Legislature.  The purpose is to serve more DeafBlind Minnesotans to access supports and services to live independently, interact with their families and communities, and develop knowledge and skills.

Eligibility: Individuals of any age who have a medically verifiable hearing loss and vision loss that interferes with acquiring information or interacting in the environment; applicants are considered to be deaf-blind if their hearing cannot compensate for their vision loss and their vision loss cannot compensate for their hearing loss.

Number of Individuals Served: 36 annually

Preferred Terminology: SSP, Co-Navigator, Intervener – consumers determine which terminology best suits the service they need, then train their staff appropriately.

Types of Service Requests: SSP, interveners, transportation, equipment, training, communication skills instruction (Note: this funding allows the consumer to determine which service they need. Not all consumers accessing this program will need/desire SSP support, but that is one option.)

Training Requirements: Each deaf-blind consumer decides what kind and how much training they want their SSP or other service provider to have.

Program Coordination: part-time; coordinator oversees other state grant funding for services to individuals who are deaf-blind.

Transportation: SSPs are allowed to provide transportation.

Other: The program allows individuals to purchase services or goods (equipment, technology, etc.) they need to remain independent, become more independent and integrated into their community. Deaf-blind children and their families purchase goods and services to develop the child’s independence, communication skills, or ability to integrate into their family and community. Each program participant identifies outcomes they want to achieve and then designs a budget to purchase the goods and services they need to accomplish the outcomes.

## MISSOURI

**Vancro Integrated Interpreting Services (VIIS)**

(Fully remote company)

Brett Wilhelm, DeafBlind Services Program Coordinator

636-542-8126 voice/text

Brett.wilhelm@vancro.com

[www.vancroiis.com](http://www.vancroiis.com)

DB Consumer Intake Form <https://airtable.com/shrAjVKLkHuG8Rqgg>

Application to Provide SSP Services:  [https://airtable.com/shra3SotLm0VNVTKC](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fairtable.com%2Fshra3SotLm0VNVTKC&data=04%7C01%7Ctaylor.ofori%40vancro.com%7C50e25c20e7cb4cb28bb808da0e80fd78%7C877c7c954f6f452db345a4f6a0b42f9d%7C0%7C0%7C637838244442088475%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=YsO0FFr%2FFS69BFUNFm%2FgWC5XFagwo35XySpggDuXKYI%3D&reserved=0)

Service Area: **Missouri Statewide**

Program Established:  2017 (Vancro took over the grant in 2021)

Funding Sources: Funded through legislation enacted by the Missouri Legislature and managed by the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH).

Eligibility: Service recipients must have varying levels of combined vision and hearing loss:  1) Vision - vision acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with corrective lenses, or a field loss such that the peripheral diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance of no greater than 20 degrees, or progressive visual loss with a prognosis leading to one or both of the above conditions; and 2) Hearing - chronic hearing disabilities so severe that most speech cannot be understood with optimum amplification, or progressive hearing loss having a prognosis leading to the above condition; the confirmation of vision and hearing loss must be provided in writing from a professional.  In addition, the DeafBlind participant must have the capacity in giving instructions and making decisions independently when utilizing SSP services. DeafBlind participants must provide a Missouri photo ID, which will prove if they have been a Missouri resident for at least one year and are age 15 years or older - anyone under the age of 18 will require parental consent to use SSP services.

Number of Individuals Served: 50 Missourians

Preferred Terminology:  SSP

Types of Service Requests: errands, business, entertainment, medical, educational, and other activities that create access for the DeafBlind service recipient.

Training Requirements: DeafBlind participants and SSPs must attend a Missouri SSP Program training session that includes the following: DeafBlind culture, state standards, requesting and providing services, professionalism, and mutual respect, as well as guiding techniques. One-on-one DeafBlind training as well as large or small group SSP training sessions are available to those interested; training can last anywhere from 4-8 hours.

Transportation: Public and private transportation funding is available for DeafBlind participants to access the community while utilizing state SSP services.

Other: The Missouri SSP Program is funded annually; organization program management is contingent on grant submission selection by MCDHH staff.  Program details and appropriations are subject to change on a yearly basis.

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

**Northeast Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services, Inc.**

56 Old Suncook Road, Suite 6, Concord, NH 03301

603-968-5889 VP; 603-224-1850 voice

Michelle McConaghy, Executive Director

michelle@ndhhs.org

Ivan Padial, SSP coordinator

ivan@ndhhs.org

<https://ndhhs.org/support-service-providers/>

[www.ndhhs.org](https://exchange.hknc.org/owa/redir.aspx?C=79b6fae7f7d34c39ae1b3baa62e0121a&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.ndhhs.org)

Service Area: **New Hampshire Statewide**

Program Established: 2008

Funding Sources: Grant from New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation via Administration Community Living

Eligibility: Deaf-Blind / low vision NH residents; must provide documentation of dual sensory disability (deafness and blindness); who may use ASL/Close Vision/Tactile or spoken English for communication.

Number of Individuals Served: 7

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: Guides for shopping, social events, errands (bank, barber shop/salon), etc

SSP Providers will:

* provide information about physical surroundings;
* provide social information, such as describing the mood;
* communicate with people using the DeafBlind person’s preferred mode of communication (sign language, tactile communication, speech, etc)

Training Requirements: SSP training course by the coordinator

Program Coordination: part-time

Transportation: The SSPs provide transportation as part of their services and are reimbursed for time and mileage. Must provide a copy of their Driver’s Abstract and proof of Automobile Liability Insurance (100/300 or higher).

Other: n/a

## NEW JERSEY

**DeafBlind Community Access Network of New Jersey, Inc.**

187 Stewart Avenue, Kearny, NJ  07032

201-978-5827 voice/text

Katherine Gabry, coordinator

dbcannj@gmail.com

[www.dbcannj.org](http://www.dbcannj.org)

Facebook page: Deaf Blind Community Access Network of NJ

Instagram: @dbcannj

Service Area: **New Jersey Statewide**

Program Established: 2016

Funding Sources:  donations, volunteer providers

Eligibility:  adults 18 and older who are deafblind and can provide leadership, direction and decision-making regarding services/activities

Number of Individuals Served: approximately 25 annually (We are on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic)

Preferred Terminology: Access Provider

Types of Service Requests: Educational, recreational, training, community service/education, social and shopping programs sponsored by DB CAN NJ

Training Requirements – Access Providers: Each candidate is evaluated as to their knowledge and experience. Individual, online and small group trainings are provided by DB CAN NJ as needed. Content categories include roles/responsibilities of the provider and deafblind person, deafblind community and culture, communication, human guide, environmental information, skills of touch, confidentiality/ethics and boundaries. All candidates undergo a 1:1 training in community settings and functional evaluation by deafblind trainers. All must sign an agreement regarding the provision and use of services.

Training Requirements – Deafblind: 1:1 training content includes roles/responsibilities of the provider and deafblind person; sharing preferences for communication, information access and guiding; confidentiality/ethics and boundaries. All must sign an agreement regarding the provision and use of services.

Program Coordination: part-time, volunteer staff

Transportation: On their own time, Access Providers may drive deafblind people ONLY (not their partners, family or friends) to/from our activities; they are not paid during the driving time. In addition to walking, APs may ride with deafblind people on ride services such as Uber and Lyft, taxis, paratransit and any mode of public transportation.

Other: DB CAN NJ is a nonprofit that prides itself on being responsive to the needs of the entire deafblind community, not just deafblind people, but also interpreters, APs/SSPs, VR counselors, organizations, social workers, job coaches, family, friends – everyone who cares about and believes in this vibrant community. Our services are separate from SSPNJ, and eligible consumers can use the services of both programs. APs are independent contractors; deafblind people select their AP from our approved list. Pay range is $25 - $30/hour and dependent on funds available, although many of our APs offer their services as volunteers.

**Support Service Providers of New Jersey (SSPNJ)**The College of New Jersey, School of Education

P.O. Box 7718, Ewing, NJ   08628

609-771-2795 voice; 609-508-3773 voice/text

Kathleen Spata, Statewide Program Coordinator

David Rims, Project Business Manager

sspnj@tcnj.edu

<https://njcscd.tcnj.edu/support-service-providers-of-new-jersey/>
Service Area: **New Jersey Statewide**
Program Established: April, 2010
Funding Sources:  NJ Department of Human Services, Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Eligibility: must be a client of the NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired with a vocational rehabilitation or independent living goal
Number of Individuals Served:  94

Number of SSPs: 34

Preferred Terminology: SSPs
Types of Service Requests: Our Approved Activities list includes the following categories: post-secondary education/training, employment, health/well-being, household management, community integration

Training Requirements:  SSPs must satisfactorily complete our 3-module, 10-hour training program as well as three probationary assignments; deaf-blind individuals must complete individualized training program
Program Coordination: Full-time position
Transportation: SSPs are not able to provide transportation. However, SSPs can support consumers utilizing public transportation. The consumers is responsible for arranging their transportation but they can opt to have the SSP meet them at home and accompany them using public transportation.

Other: DeafBlind individuals have 16 hours of services/month. These services are provided at no charge.

## NEW MEXICO

**Community Outreach Program for the Deaf – New Mexico (COPD-NM)**

**Deafblind and Special Services**

**Vancro Integrated Interpreting Services (VIIS)**

(Company is virtual)

505-934-2549 voice; 505-435-9283 VP

Sara Collins, Acting Program Director

NMDeafBlindServices@vancro.com

[www.vancroiis.com](http://www.vancroiis.com)

Service Area: **New Mexico** **Statewide**

Program Established: Service coordination and case management have been provided for several years. The Program’s SSP supports started in March 2011. Throughout the course of program administration, SSP and case management services were expanded to Deaf people with additional disabilities and Deaf Senior Citizens. In July 2011, SSP supports were extended to deaf-plus (individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing with significant disabilities). This program includes case management services available to the aforementioned three groups.

Funding Sources: From the State of New Mexico’s legislature through the New Mexico Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Eligibility: Must meet the Program definition of deaf-blindness (combined auditory and visual losses), deaf-plus (deaf or hard of hearing with a significant disability), or Deaf Senior Citizen (deaf or hard of hearing age 60 or above).

Number of Individuals Served: 70+

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: Advocacy and support at appointments with doctors, the Social Security Administration, Human Services and Case Management Services, referrals to other sources such as Representative Payee Services and vocational services. SSP supports include transportation/travel support and access to environmental information. Personnel development training to other service providers in the state.

Training Requirements: Two days of initial training (SSP Basic Training), defensive driving class, 1 day-long supplemental training every year, 2-hour meeting/training once a quarter.

Program Coordination:

• Acting Program Director: Sara Collins, full-time

• Assistant Case Manager: currently vacant

• SSP Scheduler: Tammy Greeson, full-time

• SSPs: Currently 10 located across the state but the number fluctuates

Transportation: The program does allow SSPs to provide transportation to eligible New Mexicans.

## NEW YORK

**Center for Disability Rights, Inc.**

497 State Street, Rochester, NY 14608

585-286-2021 VP

Brooke Erickson, director of deaf services

berickson@cdrnys.org

[www.cdrnys.org](http://www.cdrnys.org)

Service Area: **Rochester, New York (Monroe County)**

Program Established: 2001 by RCIL (Regional Center for Independent Living); transitioned over in 2007 to the Center for Disability Rights, Inc.

Funding Sources: Currently using Independent Living funds and hoping to utilize the profits from our new interpreting agency to fund the SSP program. We are also looking into permanent state/federal funding.

Eligibility: Individuals with documented hearing and vision loss, age 18 and older

Number of Individuals Served: 17

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: grocery shopping, medical/legal appointments, and social events; community-based meetings

Training Requirements: 1-1 instruction and peer mentoring is provided by SSP personnel and Deaf-Blind consumers who utilize SSP services.

Program Coordination: 2 weeks of pre time to arrange scheduling and SSP assignments for deaf-blind consumers.

Transportation: SSPs provide transportation to consumers.

Other: The mission is to assist people who are deaf-blind to lead fully independent lives. We continue to do outreach in hopes to increase more deaf-blind individuals utilizing SSP services in Monroe County.

**Helen Keller National Center**

141 Middle Neck Road, Sands Point, NY 11050

516-321-4609 VP

Sonia Hernandez, volunteer and SSP coordinator

shernandez@helenkeller.org

<https://www.helenkeller.org/hks/get-involved>

Service Area: **HKNC - Agency only**

Program Established: September 2022

Funding Sources: HKNC general budget

Eligibility:  in-person program participants and HKNC employees

Number of Consumers Served: TBD Sept 2022

Preferred Terminology:  SSP

Types of Service Requests: SSP is offered for staff for work-related activities.  SSP is offered to program participants for both employment-related needs and recreational needs.

Training Requirements: SSPs and participants will be required to complete trainings. The SSP training is two days. Participant training will depend on their experiences.

Program Coordination: Full-time

Transportation: SSPs are allowed to drive agency vehicles with Motor Vehicle background check completed.

Other: n/a

## NORTH CAROLINA

**NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)**

**NC Driver/Support Service Provider Vendor List (DSSPVL)**

919-741-4511 VP

Ashley Benton, Contract Administrator

Ashley.benton@dhhs.nc.gov

Service Area:  **North Carolina Statewide**

Program Established: 2007

Funding Sources: DHHS hiring agency/facility is responsible for the payment of DSSP vendor’s services rendered.

Number of Individuals Served: 50 DeafBlind staff, consumers, and clients of DHHS programs/facilities.

Preferred Terminology: Driver/SSP

Types of Service Requests: The NC DHHS Driver/Support Service Provider Vendor List (DSSPVL) is a list of qualified individuals approved to provide driver and support services for DeafBlind clients, staff and consumers of the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) on an as-needed basis. NC DHHS has developed the vendor list to satisfy the demands of state and federal laws, the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as the NC DHHS Communication Accessibility Provision to benefit their clients, consumers and staff in providing reasonable accommodations which include drivers and support services.  Each NC-DHHS division and office can utilize the DSSPVL list to easily identify and secure qualified services for DeafBlind consumers, clients, or staff and/or mixed group meetings, trainings, community forums, or public hearings and other division or office events, in the shortest amount of time possible at a standard hourly rate.

Training Requirements: Eligibility:

* Applicant must be 18 years or older and possess a valid driver’s license for a minimum of two years and possess a good driving record as verified through the N.C. Department of Motor Vehicles.
* Applicant possesses necessary skills to perform services for DeafBlind individuals as stated in the scope of work, which includes: a) Provide transportation, b) Serve as Human Guide, c) Assist with communication in informal settings if vision is an issue, d) Provide access to printed materials and e) Provide visual, environmental and social feedback information.

Program Coordination:  Each NC-DHHS division and office can utilize the DSSPVL list to easily identify and secure qualified services for Deaf-Blind consumers, clients, or staff and/or mixed group meetings, trainings, community forums, or public hearings and other division or office events, in the shortest amount of time possible at a standard hourly rate.

Transportation: Driver/SSP vendors can provide transportation but a statement from their insurance company is required indicating the vendor has the minimum coverage as required by the application and acknowledgement that the vehicle is used for business/for hire.

Other:  The request for DSSPVL services must be related to DeafBlind consumers’ DHHS services, DHHS DeafBlind employees’ work duties or DeafBlind Medicaid beneficiaries’ or companions’ Medicaid-billable services and for any DeafBlind consumers’ needs for support for COVID-19 vaccinations.

## OHIO

**Columbus Speech & Hearing Statewide SSP Pilot Program**

510 E. North Broadway, Columbus, OH 43214

614-261-5429 voice

Julia Felts, Program Manager

jfelts@columbusspeech.org

Dawn Watts, SSP coordinator

dwatts@columbusspeech.org

[www.columbusspeech.org](http://www.columbusspeech.org)

Service Area: **Ohio Statewide**

Program Established: SSP services established in 2023

Funding Sources: State biennial operating budget through Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities.

Eligibility: The pilot program will serve a maximum of 10 adults with severe combined vision and hearing loss who can receive up to 15 hours/month who are not eligible for services through another provider. The SSP program is just one of many services provided by Columbus Speech & Hearing.

Number of Individuals Served: maximum of 10 Ohioans

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: grocery shopping, trips to the bank, eating out at restaurants, reading mail, making telephone calls, searching the web at the library, recreation, with some folks getting really creative such as using an SSP to watch sporting events on television or playing table games. Each consumer develops a routine and requests SSP support to achieve it.

Training Requirements: The agency provides informal training to new SSPs in sighted guide work and some ASL (for those consumers who sign), additional training is provided as needed.

Program Coordination: 5-10 hours a week

Transportation: SSPs do provide transportation.

Other: n/a

**Columbus Speech & Hearing SSP – Franklin County Senior Options (FCSO)**

510 E. North Broadway, Columbus, OH 43214

614-261-5429 voice

Julia Felts, Program Manager

jfelts@columbusspeech.org

[www.columbusspeech.org](http://www.columbusspeech.org)

Service Area: **Columbus, Ohio** **(Franklin County)**

Program Established: SSP services established in 2001

Funding Sources: Senior Options is Franklin County’s tax-levy program for senior citizens.  Funds support several programs that serve older adults including Meals-on-Wheels, hearing aids, transportation, and minor home improvements.

Eligibility: for adults 60 years and older who meet income guidelines through the tax-levy program and can receive between 10 - 15 hours/month.  The SSP program is just one of many services provided by Columbus Speech & Hearing.

Number of Individuals Served: 2–6

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: grocery shopping, trips to the bank, eating out at restaurants, reading mail, making telephone calls, searching the web at the library, recreation, with some folks getting really creative such as using an SSP to watch sporting events on television or playing table games.  Each consumer develops a routine and requests SSP support to achieve it.

Training Requirements: The coordinator provides informal training to new SSPs in sighted guide and some ASL (for those consumers who sign), additional training is provided as needed.

Program Coordination: 5-10 hours a week

Transportation: SSPs do provide transportation.

Other: n/a

## Oklahoma

**Sight-Hearing Encouragement Program, Inc. (SHEP)**

PO Box 10495, Oklahoma City, OK 73140

620-482-0088 voice/text; 405-730-8182 DeafBlind text and voicemail request number

405-730-8182 SSP check in number

Vicky Helms, SHEP Operations Manager

vicky@shep-ok.org

[www.shep-ok.org](http://www.shep-ok.org)

Service Area: **Oklahoma Statewide**

Program Established: 2011

Funding Sources:  donations, state funded by providing contracted services with DHS - Department of Human Services of Oklahoma.

Eligibility: Must be Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing or Blind, Low Vision.

Number of Consumers Served:  35

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: Errands, Paperwork assistance, reading mail, checking voicemails, making phone calls, social events, training events, workshops.

SSP Training Requirements:  Two-day training for SSPs on how to interact with DeafBlind individuals, empathy, assertiveness, safety, guiding, communication, and testing for appropriate skill level in ASL. Need to provide the following: proof of personal identification, valid vehicle insurance, background check, SSP service agreement form signed, and a certification for a SSP ID. Community service of 20 hours within a year.

Consumers receive a one-on-one consultation on do's and don'ts of how to use an SSP and how to properly interact with a guide.

Program Coordination: Part-time

Transportation:  SSPs provide transportation to consumers but if transportation is not wanted by the deaf-blind participant per their consent, our program makes sure to communicate what transportation method the consumer prefers and arrange for SSPs to meet them at the designated areas.

Other: The goal of S.H.E.P. is to work with the DeafBlind, Deaf, hard of hearing and Blind or low vision individuals to achieve full and rewarding lives.  S.H.E.P. believes in having a positive mind and attitude no matter what life brings. Participants are encouraged to leave the program with motivation and acceptance of their lives in making it a success.  To advance the quality of lives by: a) Empowering, b) Promoting Opportunities, c) Building Confidence and d) Educating their Family and Community.

## OREGON

**Avamere at Chestnut Lane**

1219 NE 6th Street, Gresham, OR 97030

503-674-0364 voice; 503-405-4766 VP

Renee Rickard, Executive Director

rvairora@avamere.com

<https://www.avamere.com/avamere-at-chestnut-lane/>

Service Area: **Residents of Avamere Chestnut Lane Assisted Living for Deaf & DeafBlind in Gresham, Oregon**

Program Established: SSP services began in July 2012

Funding Sources: Medicaid reimbursement

Eligibility: Deaf & DeafBlind residents of Chestnut Lane, an Assisted Living Facility

Number of Individuals Served: 13

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests:  shopping, activities, videophone calls, reading mail, sending emails, escorts, and accompany on doctor appointments

Training Requirements: experience working with DeafBlind people

Resident Program Coordination: paid full-time, with SSP coordination as one of the many job responsibilities.

Transportation: SSPs can provide transportation to DeafBlind and Low Vision residents.

Other: 160 hours a week for SSP positions to provide DeafBlind residents’ needs.

## PENNSYLVANIA

**DeafCAN! – Deaf Community Action Network**

**A Human Services Program of Christ the King Deaf Church**

730 S. New Street, West Chester, PA 19382

484-319-4245 VP; 610-436-9751 voice

Scott Stoffel, SSP Coordinator

ScottMStoffel@yahoo.com

William Lockard, DeafCAN! Program Director

BillLockard@deafcanpa.org

[www.deafcanpa.org](http://www.deafcanpa.org) (features video of the SSP program)

Service Area: **7 counties in SE Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, Delaware, Chester, Montgomery, Bucks, Berks, and Lancaster)**

Funding Sources: Grants and other donations

Eligibility: Verify deaf-blindness and be able to direct the services of an SSP

Number of Individuals Served: 20; but we also provide volunteer SSPs at social events for consumers not registered with the service.

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: each consumer can have up to 10 hours of SSP service each month and can use SSPs at their own discretion.

SSP Training Requirements: Each candidate is evaluated as to their knowledge and experience and must pass a functional evaluation of the basic skills of being an SSP.

Program Coordination: Consumers can contact the coordinator or SSPs directly for requests, and then report any agreed assignments to the coordinator. The SSP coordinator is a part-time, paid position.

Transportation: The SSP’s role is during the actual assignment, not the transportation. Consumers negotiate their own agreements for transportation with the SSP which can include their personal car or public transportation. DeafCAN cannot pay for driving due to insurance regulations.

Other: This service is separate from the state’s DBLWS service. Consumers can and do use both services.

**Step Up Services, LLC**

1321 Montrose Ave, Bethlehem, PA 18018

610-417-4291 voice

Heather Snyder, owner

heather@stepupservicesllc.com

<https://stepupservicesllc.com/>

Service Area: **Pennsylvania Statewide**

Program Established: March 2023

Funding Sources: Funding through the PA Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH)

Eligibility: Age 18 or older, have hearing AND vision loss, and must be able to self-direct services

Number of Participants Served: 50 (increasing weekly)

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: DeafBlind consumers have 15 hours per month to use as they wish: errands, medical, recreation, hobbies, reading mail, paying bills, socializing, eating out, shopping, haircuts, almost anything!

Training Requirements: For DeafBlind Consumers: The Director of DeafBlind services will meet with you to discuss the program and your preferences. For SSPs: The SSP Coordinator will make sure all appropriate clearances and paperwork are on file. SSPs are required to attend an SSP Training provided by the PA ODHH.

Program Coordination: Full-Time

Transportation: Yes, if requested and the SSP is willing/able. It is not a requirement of the program.

## SOUTH CAROLINA

**South Carolina Commission for the Blind**

1430 Confederate Avenue, Columbia, SC 29201

803-898-8805 voice; 803-508-9408 text

Esther Muñoz, Bilingual Deafblind Coordinator

Esther.munoz@sccb.sc.gov

[www.sccb.state.sc.us](http://www.sccb.state.sc.us)

Service Area: **South Carolina Statewide**

Program Established: July 1, 2012

Funding Sources: Vocational Rehabilitation general funds

Eligibility: Must be an active Vocational Rehabilitation consumer, classified as deaf-blind, with the service required to achieve a vocational outcome.

Number of Individuals Served: 7 individuals

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: work readiness/independence enhancement, job training

Training Requirements: SSP vendors must have completed an official SSP training workshop sponsored by SCCB, SC Association of the Deaf (SCAD), or HKNC.

Program Coordination: Full time, as incorporated within the duties of the Bilingual Deafblind Coordinator.

Transportation: SSPs can transport consumers for VR-authorized activities.

Other: Services are currently limited to fifteen hours per week, per consumer.

## TENNESSEE

**Knoxville Center of the Deaf (KCD)**

3731 Martin Mill Pike, Knoxville, TN 37920

865-579-0832 voice; 865-299-6451 VP

Monica Shimmin-Orr, DeafBlind coordinator

mshimmin@kcdtn.org

Chrissy Davis, Executive Director

cdavis@kcdtn.org

[www.kcdtn.org](http://www.kcdtn.org)

Service Area: **Knoxville, Tennessee and 19 surrounding counties**

Program Established: March 2006

Funding Sources: The KCD Annual Golf Tournament provides the funding and ongoing financial support for the SSP program. SSPs are paid an hourly rate to provide services to DeafBlind individuals.

Eligibility: there are no formal eligibility guidelines; consumers are self-identified

Number of Individuals Served: 13 individuals

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: SSPs are contracted to provide services for shopping, and deaf senior citizen social group activities; assistance getting to/from doctor appointments where an interpreter is used for the actual appointment, but an SSP helps with transportation, guiding to and within the building, and provides environmental information while waiting for the appointment

Training Requirements: training is provided to interested SSPs and interpreters; emphasis on self-advocacy by DeafBlind persons

Program Coordination: part-time paid coordination

Transportation: Transportation can be provided to individuals by SSPs.

Other: DeafBlind consumers identified the need for the service and designed the program; almost all of the consumers use ASL as their primary language; all of the SSPs are Deaf.

## UTAH

**Div. of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DSBVI)**
250 North 1950 West Suite B, Salt Lake City, UT 84116-7902

801-323-4358 voice; 385-212-2699 VP

Christopher Wakeland, deafblind specialist

cswakeland@utah.gov

<https://jobs.utah.gov/usor/dsbvi/resources/deafblind.html>

Service Area: **Utah Statewide**

Program Established: July 2001 through strong consumer advocacy seeking assistance through the Legislature

Funding Sources: DSVBI is allocated $325,000 each fiscal year by the state of Utah

Eligibility: adults out of the public school system; consumers must be able to independently make choices and give directions to SSPs; visually impaired at 20/70 or less in the best eye with correction, or progressive vision loss at 20/50 or less in the best eye, or field loss of 20 degrees or less in the best eye or legally blind 20/200 or less and Pure Tone Average (PTA) of 50 or worse in the best ear.

Number of Individuals Served: approximately 45-55; DeafBlind individuals receive 10 hours per week for a variety of activities to assist them with their vocational rehabilitation case, independent living goals, and inclusion in the community.

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: shopping, reading mail, paying bills, legislative participation, looking for jobs/filling out job applications, personal activities (attending a child's school activity, scrapbooking, gardening, skiing, going to the bank, going to doctor appointments), navigating public transportation, religious activities, meetings, writing email messages or letter correspondence, exercising, socialization, keeping up to date with local and national news, searching the Internet, using social media, navigating smartphones and other assistive technology. Involvement in the community is encouraged.  No personal medical or self-care services are provided (e.g., help with blood testing for diabetics, bathing), however, help getting to an appointment and during an appointment at a facility providing those services is allowed (i.e. doctor’s appointment).

Training Requirements: provided at hire and throughout the year. Required state employee training such as State of Utah safe driving and sexual harassment prevention training must be completed before an SSP may begin working with consumers and are required again at two-year intervals. Background checks are required before hire.

Program Coordination: full-time with additional secretarial support provided by DSBVI

Transportation: SSPs can provide transportation, drive clients’ cars or schedule and use a state-provided vehicle. (Transportation is only for the client)

Other: Consumers are allowed to identify their own SSPs through natural resources or are recruited from the community.  SSP's are all encouraged to work with at least 2 consumers. The 10 weekly hours cannot be carried over from week to week.  Consumers are responsible for entrance fees and parking fees to activities. SSPs are not volunteers, they become state employees and therefore cannot already be employed full-time by the state of Utah. SSP positions are at-will, paid hourly at the approved rate determined by the State of Utah HR department, have no benefits (annual and sick leave) and SSPs drive their own vehicles and must show proof of auto insurance.  SSPs are reimbursed mileage at the State-approved rate when using their personal cars for transportation within mileage limits set by the agency each year. There is no cost to the DeafBlind client to receive the SSP service.

## VERMONT

**Vancro Integrated Interpreting Services (VIIS)**

Satellite Office at - PO Box 1273 Middletown Springs VT 05757 and Main Office 4370 Fort Apache Rd #300, Las Vegas NV 89147

802-275-0104 VP; 802-271-0103 and 802-236-8409 Main Landline;

802-468-7780 DeafBlind Services Main Number -Voice/Text

Cory Brunner, Vice President and René Pellerin, Program Specialist

cory.brunner@vancro.com and rene.pellerin@vancro.com and general inquiries to: deafblindservices@vancro.com

[www.vancroiis.com](http://www.vancroiis.com)

Service Area: **Vermont Statewide**

Program Established: November 2022

Funding Sources: Vermont Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Eligibility: individuals with dual sensory hearing and vision loss that impacts a person’s ability to do activities

Number of Participants Served: 8 can serve unlimited.

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: To run errands, attend events, attend appointments, read mail, assist with in-house tasks like setting up computers access and online shopping.

Training Requirements: 2-day training

Program Coordination: part-time

Transportation: SSPs are allowed to drive; public transportation.

Other: This is a 2-year statewide pilot program.

## VIRGINIA

**Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

1602 Rolling Hills Drive, Suite 203, Henrico, VA 23229-5012

800-552-7917 voice

Lynn Odom, Community Services Manager

supportserviceprovider@vddhh.virginia.gov

[www.vddhh.virginia.gov](http://www.vddhh.virginia.gov)

Service Area: **Virginia Statewide**

Program Established: January 2023

Funding Sources:  2-year grant

Eligibility:  deafblind, deaf low vision, priority for those with onset of vision-hearing loss prior to age 21

Number of Participants Served: 15

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: Everyday activities, community events, meet ups

Training Requirements:  SSPs - 5-week online training including in person weekend training; DeafBlind participants required weekend training

Program Coordination: Part-time

Transportation:  TBD (To Be Determined)

Other: This is a pilot project for 2-years and the grant will expire December 2024.  VDDHH will seek a more permanent solution.

**Also see** **Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind in MD** who serve Arlington County and the City of Alexandra, VA

## WASHINGTON

**DeafBlind Service Center (DBSC)**
1620 18th Avenue, Suite 200, Seattle, WA 98122-7007

206-452-0062 VP

Jessica Phillips, SSP Coordinator

ssp@seattledbsc.org

[www.seattledbsc.org](http://www.seattledbsc.org)

Service Area: **Washington Statewide**

Program Established: 1985

Funding Sources: Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, City of Seattle, private donations, fundraising events and foundation grants

Eligibility:  DeafBlind Washington residents, ages 18 and older receive up to 20 hours a month.  New DeafBlind persons must be a Washington resident before receiving any SSP services and once s/he becomes a resident, the person will then go through intake screening to determine eligibility. Guidelines are reviewed with all new consumers. New DeafBlind participants with no experience of using a SSP are required to take “How to Use SSP Service” training.

Number of Individuals Served: 65

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: grocery shopping, errands, material reading, basic banking, self-care activities such as exercise and attending social activities, and transportation to airport, train or bus station.

Training Requirements: SSPs - (10-15, depending on experience) 15 hours of training and must already be fluent in ASL (minimum ASL 3). Exemption from ASL skills depends on the need for hearing SSPs to work with non-ASL hard of hearing consumers preferring oral communication. DBSC provides training on guiding, how to convey visual and environmental information to DeafBlind participants, and includes some basic Protactile techniques. DBSC also provides workshops about DeafBlind culture and other workshops.

Program Coordination: 20 hours per month is ideal for the program of this size

Transportation: SSPs provide transportation.

Other:  Some SSP services are paid and some are volunteered.  SSPs are required to have Washington State business license to work as independent contractor as well as driver’s license and auto insurance to be copied and filed. A background check is also required.  SSP mentorships are also offered to SSPs to gain skills and confidence.  During mentorship, the mentor is paid while the SSP volunteers their time.

## WISCONSIN

**Center for Deaf-Blind Persons, Inc.**

8306 West Lincoln Avenue, West Allis, WI 53219-1763

414-481-7477 voice

The videophone is a public phone, so please call the voice line and ask to be called back via VP

Joan M. Schneider, Executive Director or Lisa Crissey, Program Coordinator

jschneider@deaf-blind.org or Lcrissey@deaf-blind.org

[www.deaf-blind.org](http://www.deaf-blind.org)

Service Area: **Metropolitan** **Milwaukee; attempting to address SSP needs statewide**

Program Established: Center established in 1985; SSP program in 1997 with a local grant

Funding Sources: Foundations, civic organizations, churches, businesses, individuals, memorials and service agreements: DVR, county adult service and county older adult services. In 2016, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing made Universal Service Funds available to cover costs of some SSP services.

Eligibility: Youth and adults (of any age) with combined hearing-vision impairments.

Number of Individuals Served: 12 by paid SSPs.

Preferred Terminology: SSP

Types of Service Requests: Mail reading, bill paying, copy signing VP calls, social events, exercising, apartment search, labeling, home organization, medical appointments, airport assistance, and clothing/grocery/gift shopping.

Training Requirements: Paid staff members participate in ongoing staff development sessions. The Center offers in-service training and workshops on etiquette, safe guide techniques, communication methods, relaying visual information, eye diseases, use of assistive listening devices, and simulation experiences to individuals interested in providing SSP services.

Program Coordination: Part-time

Transportation: The consumer is responsible for transportation. The SSP can meet the consumer at the home and ride to and from a location. The SSP coordinating agency or SSP can provide information to locate public transportation services.

Other: SSP and consumer guidelines are discussed with new consumers and SSP providers. The goal of the SSP program is to empower – not to create dependence.