

**FLORIDA COORDINATING COUNCIL
FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**
Virtual Quarterly Meeting
Thursday, August 10, 2023
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Members Present: Cory Parker (DOE/VR), Karen Goldberg (HLAA), Gina Halliburton (FRID), Cindy Simon (Audiologist), Jenny Rojas (Department of Elder Affairs)

Department of Health: Sean Isaac, Angie Green

Service Providers: Janelle Barnes and Natasha Moreno (Interpreters), Lisa Johnston (CART), Netza Rodriguez and Patrick Langan (A/V)

Minutes from May 11, 2023, meeting:

Cindy Simon made a motion to accept the minutes with corrections and it was seconded by Gina Halliburton. The minutes were voted on and accepted with corrections being made.

Staff Updates: Angie Green provided the following:

Organization Updates:

- 1) The Department of Elder Affairs has no updates to report.
- 2) The Audiologist has no updates to report.
- 3) The Department of Education and Vocational Rehabilitation (DOE/VR) has no updates to report.
- 4) The Florida Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (FRID) has no updates to report.

Committee Updates:

- 1) The Education Medical Technology Outreach (EMOT) has no updates to report.
- 2) The Budget Committee reports for Fiscal Year 2022-2023
 - a. Staff expense (Wage for Liaison) was \$51,595
 - b. Expenses (such as travel and supplies) was \$14,586.77
 - c. Contracted services (Audio/Visual, CART, Interpreters, Public Meeting Notice) was \$37,949.76
 - d. Total spent for Fiscal Year (FY) was \$104,949.67
- 3) Projected Expenses for FY 2023-2024
 - a. Staff expense is \$44,519
 - b. Expenses is \$17,978
 - c. Contracted Services is \$37,503
 - d. Total for FY 2023-2024 is \$100,000

Public Attendee Comments:

Anthony Verdeja is the Executive Director for Family Center on Deafness (FCD). FCD is based in the St. Pete/Tampa area and serves all of Pinellas County. There is a staff of 14 people. FCD has expanded their programs and services and have outgrown their facility so within the next year they will be looking to relocate. The number of participants and families being served has also greatly increased. FCD would like to collaborate with the FCCDHH, Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, working with and supporting each other. FCD is working with other organizations throughout their area, so Tampa Bay and other areas know

what they are doing while sharing resources and materials with them. The FCD had a collaboration with Pinellas County and hosted Pinellas County agencies, as well as different Deaf and Hard of Hearing programs from all different parts of the state, about what Pinellas County does: educating the agencies working with and supporting the deaf and hard of hearing community.

Shawn Norris is the President of FRID, Florida Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. He is a nationally certified interpreter. He coordinates interpreting services for the healthcare system in Northeast Florida. Shawn has a long history in the deaf community. His parents are both deaf. His dad went to FSDB, Florida School for the Deaf and Blind, in St. Augustine, Florida, while his mom was raised aural (she is hard of hearing). She became deaf as she got older in life. She knew sign language and used it. FRID recently had its board meeting and recognized that they are the only state with three CDIs (Certified Deaf Interpreter) on the Board of Directors. FRID hopes to support Deaf access to language, healthcare, public services, government, on using licensed interpreters. FRID doesn't just want certified interpreters, as the minimum, they want quality interpreters. FRID is working with HLAA, Hearing Loss Association of America, and collaborating and partnering with them, working with different healthcare accessibilities for them and working with ADA. The annual business meeting will be October 14, 2023. Morning will be the business meeting and the workshops will be in the afternoon. It is free for FRID members but will be a charge for non FRID members. The speaker will be June Ann LeFors, a CDI as a Board member representing Northern Florida. She is from St. Augustine and was the CDI when the Governor was sworn in.

Cara Wilmot, National Technical Institute for the Deaf Regional STEM Center (NTID), which is expanding into Florida to offer transition programming for middle school and high school students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Cara is in her 26th year of Deaf education in Florida. She has been collaborating with the NTID Regional Center since the inception on many different projects. They service 12 states and have always serviced Florida. Many of those students have had to travel to Alabama to receive those services. July of 2024 the first STEM Academy will open in Florida. Any student from those 12 states, including Florida, can attend. This repeats yearly for students 15 and older, in high school or just recent post-grads. It works on academics, social and emotional awareness, ASL, to improve and be college ready and career ready. Currently there is a three-week overnight intensive camp with a STEM focus. If the student does not want to attend a three-week camp, they offer one week long different camps. There are robotics camp, cybersecurity, and other ones already being offered in Florida where the marine lab in the Keys. The location is still being determined. This program serves hundreds of students. The STEM Academy has 25 students per location. A mini version of the NTID's transition program offers six weeks for first year college students to transition into college. By repeating this over several summers, this will help them become more college ready and less likely to drop out by having the academic skills they need. There is a lot of field trips, lots of STEM in a more relaxed environment. Small groups with lots of fun. Hearing loss levels do not matter. For every activity there is always two interpreters, one to voice and one to sign. The camp is not an embarrassing place to ask for accommodations. The camp provides self-determination and self-advocacy and building skills and hearing from other kids. Cara also works with the National Deaf Center on post-secondary outcomes on the Florida transition team. They are looking for students who are participating in work-based learning opportunities so they can showcase that and encourage more teachers of the Deaf to take advantage of those work-based learning experiences to try out different jobs and their internships.

New Business:

1. Cory Parker stated the Council needs to start thinking about and planning for the biennial report for 2025. The Council needs to think of the main topics, the writing, and the details needing adjusted.
2. Anthony Verdeja would like to add Family Center on Deafness (FCD) to the FCCDHH website. Anthony offered to help get the community to support the Governor appointing individuals to the open positions by writing letters or other support. Anthony would like to work with the Council in sending out a survey to attempt to collect accurate and current numbers of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals in the state of Florida. It was around 2007 when FTRI, Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc., collected this data.
3. Cara Wilmot stated the Florida Education for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Gainesville will be November 10-11, 2023.
4. Shawn Norris stated the FRID will have a conference typically in Valencia, near Orlando, but is waiting for approval. The date is not set but will probably be around October 14, 2023.
5. The FCCDHH will hold it's next Council Meeting November 2-3, 2023, hopefully in Tampa, Florida, with details still awaiting approval.
6. Cindy Simon will be running a conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, for people with misophonia, sometime at the beginning of November 2023.
7. Gina Halliburton would like to have a step-by-step guide for new members on what to expect at a meeting, whether online or in person meetings. She would like to see Robert's Rules explained into language a new Council member would understand. She would like the committees explained and which ones are available, how to apply, how to respond to the Chair if there is a question. Cindy Simon would like it to be explained that someone has to be watching between Zoom and the stream text chat.
8. It needs to be examined again if the Council would like the phone line added back to their meetings.
9. Cindy Simon brought up budgetary question about the technology being used by the Council at each meeting with Zoom. Angie Green stated that Zoom has been included in the budget with VanGuard for each meeting. Zoom does cost extra for the Council to use, while Teams would be free of charge for the Council. This would be a decision the Council would need to look into.
10. Chris Littlewood provided an email with a list of names to reach out to if a meeting is being held in Tampa, Florida. This list needs to be given to Sean Isaac so contacts can be made for the in person meeting to be held in November.
11. There was a streamline chat that stated HLAA Florida will be having a state association Zoom call, Saturday August 19, 2023, for their quarterly meeting, starting at 10:00 am.

Cindy Simon made a motion to close the meeting with Gina Halliburton seconding that motion. Karen Goldberg made a motion to keep the meeting going until the public comments section at 11:15 am could be fulfilled. Cory Parker asked for a motion to keep the meeting going until the conclusion of the public meeting. Cindy Simon withdrew her previous motion. Gina Halliburton seconded that motion.

Public Comments:

Amy Turner from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Center in Fort Myers, Florida asked if there is government funding for a deaf and hard of hearing center in Florida, from a federal or state level. She would like to know if there is any specifically for Deaf children. Amy stated the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Center in Fort Myers started a brand-new youth program for Deaf youth in

the five different counties they serve: Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Hendry, and Glades Counties. The Center hired a new Deaf youth program coordinator and will be having after-school programs, as well as Saturdays, with homework help, empowerment services, independent living skills, field trips, role models, etc.

Cindy Simon remarked how Residence Inn by Marriott has four hearing rooms that are clearly displayed. The hotel has many things all over for people with disabilities. She also stated that every cruise she has been on has sections with interpreters doing shows. There are signs for deaf and hard of hearing everywhere, along with special seating available.

Amy Turner stated the local Port Authority, the airport near her, recently posted an article on their Facebook page around 7:30 am. The article detailed the accommodations they were making for the Deaf and hearing impaired (wording used in the article). Amy thought the article was very valuable and shared the article (even knowing herself the wording was incorrect). Within the 20 minutes she shared it and arrived to her destination, she received six texts letting her know to contact the airport about the incorrect use of hearing impaired. Amy immediately called the airport to report it. The airport had let her know they received many calls reporting the issue and they had already taken it down and changed the wording. That is how sensitive the airport is to needs of the hearing community. They made the change immediately upon recognition that the wording was incorrect.

Cindy Simon motioned to adjourn the meeting with Gina Halliburton seconding that motion. Meeting adjourned at 11:48 am.