

**FLORIDA COORDINATING COUNCIL
FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
Quarterly Meeting in Kissimmee, FL.**

Thursday, November 3, 2022

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mary Hodges (FDOEA), Cindy Simon (Audiologists), Glenna Ashton (FAD), Chris Littlewood (ALDA), Cory Parker (DOE/VR), Karen Goldberg (HLAA), Gina Halliburton (FRID)

Members Present on Zoom: Debbe Hagner (HLAA) and John Jackson (DCF),

Department of Health Staff: Sean Isaac, Angie Green, Khyati Master

Online Department of Health Staff: Anna Simmons (Bureau Chief)

Service Providers: Brenda Stansbury, Chris Costa, April Perry, and Kelly Gagain (Interpreters), Tammy Milcowitz (CART), LaShay Lewis (A/V), Patrick Langan (A/V)

Online Providers: Janelle Barnes and Cori Jacobs (Interpreters on Zoom)

Minutes from August 18 and 19, 2022 Meeting and Agenda for February 2023 Meeting:

Karen Goldberg made a motion to accept the minutes and it was seconded by Cindy Simon. The minutes were voted on and accepted with a couple minor changes. Cindy Simon made a motion to accept today's agenda, and Cory Parker made a motion to second. The agenda was voted on and accepted.

Staff Updates: Angie Green provided the following:

1. A summary of the phone calls from citizens needing to purchase or upgrade their hearing aids.
2. Emotional and Service Animal Registration calls.
3. Removing Close Captioning TV feature.
4. Updates on the Florida Coordinating Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (FCCDHH) meeting scheduled February 9 and 10, 2023 in Tallahassee.
5. Betty Easley Room for conference.
6. Updates on the virtual FCCDHH meeting May 11 and 12, 2023.
7. August 10 and 11, 2023 meeting scheduled to be held in Boca Raton. The Council would like to see that changed to Hollywood, FL near the Dania Point Mall.
8. November 2 and 3, 2023 is scheduled for St. Petersburg. The Council would like to see that changed to Jacksonville.
9. The new Florida Department of Health (FDOH) Deaf and Hard of Hearing Handbook updates. Council members suggested the use of consistent language within the handbook.

Organization Updates:

1. Mary Hodges Florida Department of Elder Affairs (FDOEA) will be retiring. The agency is looking for someone to take over the council on her behalf.

2. Cindy Simon (Audiologists) stated if consumers see a professional first, they have a 30-day refund timeline. However, consumers may not receive a refund when purchasing the new Over the Counter (OTC) hearing aids. Some medical issues could go unnoticed with OTC hearing aids.
3. Karen Goldberg Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) stated legislation passed for new OTC hearing aids make them more affordable. HLAA had its National Convention in June 2022 in Tampa, FL. Debbe Hagner received recognition and a prestigious award.
4. Debbe Hagner (HLAA) attended the HLAA Convention and the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) convention. She also attended Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA). Next year's (2023) HLAA convention will be in New Orleans, LA.
5. Chris Littlewood (ALDA) stated ALDA is working hard and communicating with Pasco Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. ALDA has just as many members in Pasco County as they do in Pinellas County. ALDA is having a wine tasting fundraiser tomorrow and Chris was asked to do the announcements and the drawing. ALDA is doing a joint Friendsgiving with Pasco County so everyone can get together and celebrate Thanksgiving. The ALDA convention was in San Diego, CA. Next year (2023) the convention will be in Austin, TX. Chris attended part of the HLAA convention. He forwarded the information for a survey he's been working on with Family Center on Deafness. ALDA gave Chris an award for his service. He received the I. King Jordan award for outstanding achievement and for his work in disability advocacy.
6. Glenna Ashton Florida Association of the Deaf (FAD) stated FAD will have a Zoom meeting November 19 to elect a new secretary and board and conduct its general meeting. FAD may need time to rebuild. Center for Independent Living (CIL) is becoming more active in providing workshops. The Florida Deaf Artists Show is growing as well. Deafopia will have the next one on December 10, 2022. Glenna recommended FCCDHH obtain a booth.
7. Cory Parker Department of Education/Vocational Rehabilitation (DOE/VR) stated VR hosted The Southeast Regional Institute on Deafness (SERID) October 13-16, 2022. Twenty-four states around the country had representation. There were thirty vendors and three hundred people. In 2023, SERID will host the conference in Charlotte, NC. In 2024, SERID will host the conference in South Carolina, with location undecided at this time. VR is bringing out what's called the model state plan which is a guideline that states used to set up VR services. Florida Educators for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's conference is next week (November 2022).
8. Gina Halliburton Florida Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (FRID) stated there has been a lot of changes in terms of positions and people coming in and changing assignments. FRID will host a business meeting next week (December 2022). FRID is trying to resurrect the licensing of interpreters again. People want to use family members instead of licensed (businesses) because of trust issues.

Committee Updates:

1. Budget Committee:
 - a. The total expense budget is \$17,978. So far, the FCCDHH has spent \$2,053. The balance of the expense funding is currently \$15,925.

- b. The total budget for contracted services is \$37,503, and so far, the FCCDHH has spent \$5,464. The balance of the contracted services funding (committed to contracts) is \$31,962.
2. Legislative Committee: The first day of the Florida Legislature session will be March 7, 2023, which is also the last day to file bills. The last day of the session is May 5, 2023. Most of the committee meetings will occur December 2022 to March 2023. The talking points that we want to have will come from the 2023 biennial report.
3. Website Committee: The Website needs to update the picture. The Facebook site would love for people to post their events on their site.
4. EMOT: The letters still are not finished. Those need finished and mailed out.
5. Biennial Report: The FCCDHH continues to work on the report. The FCCDHH went through Glenna's article and made changes.

Presentation: Phil Kwiek, Staffing Coordinator, Amazon Workforce Staffing

His team works through the entire northern Florida area and the coastal parts of Georgia and South Carolina. Amazon offers great benefits, paid time off, 401(k), medical coverage, and career advancement. Two years in the warehouse counts as an associate degree in a lot of positions Amazon posts. Amazon has a flexible work schedule with guaranteed 40 hours a week. **Amazon has a huge focus on diversity, equality, and inclusion.** All training is specific as if you had zero experience with any of it and will be taught from the ground up. Amazon was the first to raise the wage from \$7.25 to \$15 an hour. Amazon offers \$5,200 a year for full-time college students. They have a goal of hiring 100,000 veterans and military spouses by 2024. **Amazon has a program called ACAT (Applicant Candidate Accommodation Team) that is dedicated to making sure that every candidate has the opportunity that they can have within reasonable accommodations.** An American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter can be assigned the first day, second and so on. Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) options are available as well. When deaf associates are promoted to positions of leadership, they have consistent interpreting services, meaning for their whole shift. It is expected that the employee can lift 49 lbs. No Commercial Driver's License (CDL) is required. Amazon has just under 70 staff interpreters that are full-time, permanent staff. They rely on contract interpreters as well due to the large amount of deaf/hard of hearing. There are 100 deaf associates nationwide who are at least assistant managers or higher, many promoted or hired within the past six months to a year. Amazon does offer classes to those co-workers and managers to learn sign language for better communication. Project Makari is a television set up in the facilities that teaches basic signs for conversation and work-related communication. There are several accommodations for individuals, including those who are wheelchair bound and blind.

Public Comments: ASL Anywhere is a new company. Its mobile app download is called the Future Is Here. It is for deaf people that need interpreters on the spot. It comes in 15-, 30-, and 60-minute increments. There is no contractual agreement. There is one app for the person looking for interpreter (white app) and one app for the interpreters themselves (blue app). It is not under the FCC requirements because the consumer is paying for their services.

The Hope Organization in Orlando and the North Florida School for Special Education in Jacksonville have transitional housing plans. Nathaniel's Hope serves persons with disabilities, including the deaf community in transitional housing. APD, Agency for People with Disabilities, has a lot of different programs for transitional housing.

The council would like to invite people from Centers for Independent Living (CILs) to our public comments. Ability First and Disability Resource Center should be contacted while in Tallahassee.

Bylaws discussion:

New Business:

Deafopia will be meeting December 10, 2022, at Sawgrass Mills in Sunrise, FL and the FCCDHH would like to have a booth there.

The DSA, Deaf Seniors of America, is having its national conference in Hollywood, FL the last week of June 2023.

The FAD, Florida Association of the Deaf, has a meeting November 19, 2022.

The FCCDHH considers if it should become a commission versus a council.

The Council was never informed how they are allowed to collect money. How do we deposit? How do we spend it?

The FCCDHH will look into making sure that people can submit public comment online, create an E-mail address, a link on the website or something like that so that they can submit a comment.

The FCCDHH considers inviting the deaf community to speak. The Council may ask Fred Beam to present.

The FCCDHH is considering presenting an Advocate Award. This would recognize a citizen advocate for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Cindy made a motion to adjourn, and Chris seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.