

# **Report on Support Service Providers (SSPs)/CoNavigators (CNs)**



**Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities  
December 2020**

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Randi Turner, Accessibility and Disability Rights Coordinator

Monica Villarreal, Research Specialist

Lindsey Zischkale, Community Outreach and Information  
Coordinator

Nancy Van Loan, Executive Assistant

## Executive Summary

People who are DeafBlind are valued members of society, ready to contribute to and participate in their communities, but they face many challenges that can make their participation extremely difficult. Barriers exist in their day-to-day routines and activities, such as raising a family, attending community events, managing and maintaining a household, running errands like grocery shopping, participating in workplace activities, getting medical care and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and many more. Texas does not currently meet the support needs of people who are DeafBlind. Support Service Providers (SSPs), also called CoNavigators (CNs), can provide services to overcome these barriers. SSPs/CNs are one vital tool available for people who are DeafBlind and provide support and information for them to lead independent, productive, and quality lives. Based on research from states that already provide SSP/CN services, the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities (GCPD) estimates that approximately five percent of the Texas DeafBlind population will use these services.<sup>1</sup>

An SSP/CN is an individual trained to act as a link between persons who are DeafBlind and their environment. They typically work with a single individual and serve as a guide and communication facilitator, relaying visual and environmental information. Although advocates have worked towards a paid program for over a decade, Texas does not currently have an SSP/CN program. This leads to the use of untrained volunteer SSPs/CNs, increasing the risk of safety issues, lack of reliability, isolation, and unhealthy reliance on family members and friends.

Establishing services throughout Texas would significantly and positively impact the lives of people who are DeafBlind by providing formalized SSP/CN services, enabling them to lead lives of greater independence and self-determination. This is especially true in small and rural communities with very limited services, including no means of transportation. GCPD recommends the 87th Texas Legislature establish an SSP/CN program to serve Texans who are DeafBlind.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C for research methodology.

## Background

People who are DeafBlind<sup>2</sup> face challenges in all aspects of their lives. Tasks like grocery shopping, maintaining a home, reading mail, and getting an education can be difficult for someone who has hearing and vision limitations. The support offered by trained SSPs/CNs is one valuable tool to help people who are DeafBlind overcome these barriers. Members of the [American Association of the DeafBlind \(AADB\)](#), a national organization by and for people with combined vision and hearing loss, in 2010 voted SSP/CN services as the number one need for their community.<sup>3</sup>

Advocates continue to work towards establishing an SSP/CN program in Texas. The DeafBlind Coalition of Texas (formerly called the SSP Bill Coalition), a group of advocates from across Texas, has been working to establish an SSP/CN program in the state for over a decade. Advocates from the Texas Association of the Deaf (TAD) have expressed concerns about the lack of support available to Texans who are DeafBlind, and in August 2020 TAD adopted the establishment of an SSP/CN program as one of their top policy priorities for the 87<sup>th</sup> Legislature. GCPD voted unanimously to recommend the establishment of an SSP/CN program to the 85<sup>th</sup> and 86<sup>th</sup> Legislatures. Bills were filed in both the 85<sup>th</sup> and 86<sup>th</sup> Legislative Sessions to establish the program; however, they were not passed. GCPD has reaffirmed this recommendation for the 87<sup>th</sup> Legislature.

## Definition of DeafBlindness

According to HHSC, “DeafBlindness” is a chronic condition in which a person:

- a) has deafness, which is a hearing impairment severe enough that most speech cannot be understood with amplification; and
- b) has legal blindness, which results from a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the person's better eye, with correction, or a visual field of 20 degrees or less.

In other words, DeafBlindness is a combination of sight and hearing loss that not only affects a person’s ability to communicate or access information, but may also require significant adaptive strategies in order for the individual to

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<sup>2</sup> DeafBlind is the spelling adopted by the [American Association of the DeafBlind \(AADB\)](#) to reflect the dual disability of hearing and vision loss for the cultural community of the DeafBlind.

<sup>3</sup> The American Association of the DeafBlind (April 2010), “Brief on Support Service Providers (SSPs).” Retrieved from [http://aadb.org/information/ssp/ssp\\_brief.html](http://aadb.org/information/ssp/ssp_brief.html) on May 8, 2020.

maintain independence. DeafBlindness is a diverse condition that encompasses a wide array of sensory impairments, and may include the presence of other disabilities. Additionally, the age of onset for vision and hearing loss can vary; they do not have to occur concurrently. According to the [Helen Keller National Center](#) (HKNC), approximately 70,000 people in the United States are DeafBlind. In Texas, the estimated DeafBlind population over the age of 18 is 2,446.<sup>4</sup>

## **Research Summary on SSPs/CNs**

SSPs/CNs are specially trained professionals who provide individuals who are DeafBlind with visual and environmental information, sighted guide services, and communication accessibility. Texas does not currently have a mechanism to fund SSP/CN services, meaning the people who provide these services are generally working as unpaid volunteers. This lack of funding leads to an unsustainable service model, often resulting in unskilled volunteers, and denies DeafBlind people of their privacy, autonomy, and access.

Data collected by the HKNC in May 2020 on SSP/CN programs from across the country shows the following:<sup>5</sup>

- A total of 30 states have an active SSP/CN program providing services either statewide or in specific local metropolitan areas;
- SSP/CN services are funded primarily either through grants and donations, on a temporary basis through vocational rehabilitation programs run by the state, or through state appropriation;
- The number of people served per year by each state varies from five to 100;
- SSP/CN services were most commonly requested for grocery shopping, running errands, reading mail, attending community events, employment-related tasks, attending appointments, and transportation to events;
- About half of the states allow for SSPs/CNs to provide transportation as part of the service;
- The number of service hours provided per month varies tremendously, with some states providing five hours and some providing as many as 80; and

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<sup>4</sup> Beth Jordan, Helen Keller National Center, data prepared June 9, 2020.

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed list of SSP/CN programs, see Appendix D.

- Nearby states, including Louisiana, Arkansas, and Arizona, have funded paid SSP/CN services, while other states rely on volunteers, though several are actively seeking ongoing funding.

GCPD surveyed the DeafBlind community of Texas with the goal of better understanding their lived experience and service needs. A total of 62 individuals responded, providing the following insights:

- People who are DeafBlind live all over the state.
- People who are DeafBlind use English, American Sign Language (ASL), protactile sign language,<sup>6</sup> and Spanish to communicate;
  - 80 percent identified English as their primary language, 40 percent identified ASL, 7.5 percent protactile sign language, and 5 percent Spanish. Individuals were able to select multiple languages; therefore, the sum of the percentages is greater than 100.
- The SSP/CN services identified as most needed were grocery shopping, attending community and workplace events, and traveling through the community; and
- Because Texas does not have an SSP/CN program, the survey asked how individuals are receiving services currently. Respondents identified various informal networks of support or stated they **do not** receive any services at all.

## **How do SSPs/CNs differ from Interveners?**

Interveners are a different type of service provider than SSPs/CNs; and unlike SSPs/CNs, they are trained to provide education and direct care to achieve functional daily living to individuals who are DeafBlind and who may have additional developmental disabilities. Individuals who use Interveners often rely on life-long parental or guardianship support, and do not have the same level of autonomy in decision-making and community involvement as do individuals served by SSPs/CNs.<sup>7</sup>

According to [Texas Administrative Code \(TAC\) §42.103](#), an Intervener is:

A service provider with specialized training and skills in deafblindness who, working with one individual at a time, serves as a facilitator to involve an individual in home and community

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<sup>6</sup> Protactile sign language is sign language developed by and for people who are DeafBlind based on touch.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix B for an illustration of the differences between SSP/CNs and Interveners.

services and activities, and who is classified as an "Intervener", "Intervener I", "Intervener II", or "Intervener III" in accordance with Texas Government Code, §531.0973.

The Intervener works intimately with people of all ages who are DeafBlind to understand their needs and help them connect with the broader community. The role of the Intervener is to provide specific intervention in three areas: access to information, access to communication, and access to social and emotional development. Interveners primarily serve in educational settings. The Intervener's personal connection with a person who is DeafBlind reduces the sense of isolation and helps build a bond of trust. The Intervener may be the one person in the individual's life who can help them interact with others, express preferences, make choices, solve problems, and develop self-esteem. Additionally, an Intervener is a paid position with a defined occupational career ladder.

An SSP/CN generally acts as a sighted guide and communication facilitator, and has a less intimate relationship with the individual than an Intervener. According to AADB:

An important aspect of the relationship between the person who is DeafBlind and an SSP/CN is that the former makes all decisions [...] The professional SSP/CN strives to be helpful but objective, supportive yet empowering, and sparing in expressing their personal preferences while providing services.

Services provided by SSPs/CNs include transportation to the store, communication in a social setting, serving as a human guide while walking, etc. Many SSPs/CNs are themselves deaf, and paid SSP/CN positions could create employment opportunities for the Deaf community. Hayley Broadway of the DeafBlind Coalition of Texas offers the following insights.<sup>8</sup>

SSPs/CNs can:

- Serve as a guide when escorting a person to or from a meeting room, a restroom, an unfamiliar building, through a lunch line, or when attending appointments and conducting business;
- Provide visual and environmental information, which can take several forms: describing the activity, mood, or people in a room; reading the menu and relaying that information; or co-navigating together to find desired or needed items in a store or other locations; and

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<sup>8</sup> See Appendix B for an illustration of the differences between SSPs/CNs and Interveners.



- Provide support to persons who are DeafBlind in their homes, at their place of employment, in their community, or elsewhere, such as sight-reading mail, bills, locating expiration dates on food items, and more.

SSPs/CNs do not:

- Provide personal care (e.g. bathing and grooming);
- Run errands alone for the person who is DeafBlind;
- Make decisions for the person who is DeafBlind;
- Teach or instruct; and
- Interpret in medical, legal, business, or similar settings.

## **Medicaid and the DBMD Waiver**

The HHSC [Deaf-Blind Multiple Disabilities \(DBMD\)](#) Waiver program “provides home and community-based services to people who are deaf-blind with multiple disabilities as a cost-effective alternative to institutional placement. The program focuses on increasing opportunities for consumers to communicate and interact with their environment.”<sup>9</sup> The program provides services that enhance, rather than replace, existing supports and resources for individuals. Services include residential habilitation, respite, Intervener, supported employment, employment assistance, and support consultation.

To qualify for the DBMD Waiver, an individual needs to be DeafBlind and have an additional disability, such as an intellectual disability. The diagnosis of the related condition has to occur before age 22, and the individual must meet the income eligibility criteria, meaning they have a monthly income no greater than 300 percent of the federal poverty level.<sup>10</sup> Individuals receiving services through this program are provided Intervener services.

In addition to the DBMD Waiver, people who are DeafBlind and who may have an additional disability may be eligible to receive services through other Medicaid programs. Both the Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS) and Home and Community-Based Services (HCS) waivers may provide Intervener services. However, no Texas Medicaid waiver program provides or reimburses for SSP/CN services. The waiver programs require an individual have an additional disability, usually an intellectual or

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<sup>9</sup> Texas Health and Human Services Commission (2019), “Deaf-Blind Multiple Disabilities Waiver (DBMD).” Retrieved on June 30, 2020, from <https://rad.hhs.texas.gov/long-term-services-supports/deaf-blind-multiple-disabilities-waiver-dbmd>.

<sup>10</sup> Texas Administrative Code Title 40, Part 1, Chapter 42: [https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac\\_view=4&ti=40&pt=1&ch=42](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=40&pt=1&ch=42)

developmental disability, to qualify, which exclude the DeafBlind population from being served by SSP/CN services.

## **Policy Recommendations**

The State of Texas would significantly impact the lives of people who are DeafBlind by providing formalized SSP/CN services, enabling them to lead lives of greater independence and self-determination. This is especially true in small and rural communities with very limited services. GCPD proposes the 87th Legislature implement the following recommendations:

1. Establish a formalized SSP/CN program within HHSC, including training for providers. This will ensure services are provided in a standard, consistent manner.
2. Establish the following eligibility criteria for the program:
  - a. Individuals who meet the definition of DeafBlind as defined by HHSC.
  - b. Individuals who meet the income guidelines of a monthly income not greater than 300 percent of the federal poverty level, matching the financial criteria required for the DBMD Waiver.
3. Establish a pay rate for SSP/CN providers by rule. Pay should be based on SSP-level training requirements and ASL fluency. GCPD recommends a starting wage of \$20 per hour based on the national average.<sup>11</sup> This is comparable to the 2019-2020 State of Texas Salary Schedule for an Interpreter I position.<sup>12</sup>
4. Establish a voucher program to pay for SSP/CN services administered by HHSC. [The Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program \(STAP\)](#) may serve as a model.
5. Appropriate ongoing funding for the SSP/CN program.
6. Establish an initial proposed annual budget of \$584,400. This cost is derived as follows:
  - a. Estimated maximum number of hours per month for services to one individual (e.g. grocery shopping, attendance at a community event):

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<sup>11</sup> See Appendix D for active national SSP/CN programs.

<sup>12</sup> Texas State Auditor's office, 2019, "State Classification Job Description: Interpreter I." Retrieved from <http://www.hr.sao.texas.gov/Compensation/JobDescriptions/R5616.pdf>.

5 hours per week or 20 hours per month equals 240 service hours per year per person.

- b. 5 percent of the estimated 2,000 people who are DeafBlind, and not receiving services through Medicaid, will use SSP/CN services<sup>13</sup> equates to 100 individuals served.
  - c. Calculation for annual cost of program is \$528,000.
  - d. Administrative costs for the program (approximately 10 percent) are \$56,400.
  - e. Total annual program cost is \$584,400.
7. Establish the fee for service by rule to facilitate future changes.
8. Create an initial advisory committee to create the program, including individuals who are DeafBlind, SSPs/CNs, GCPD, and other organizations that serve individuals who are DeafBlind.

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<sup>13</sup> See methodology in Appendix C.

# Appendix A: Bill Language from Past Legislative Sessions

*From the 85<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2017*

By: Watson

S.B. No. 1997

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

Relating to establishing a pilot program for professional support service provider services for persons who are deaf-blind.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 81.001, Human Resources Code, is amended by adding Subsection (6) to read as follows:

(6) "Support service provider" means a person who is specially trained to enable persons who are deaf-blind to access their environments and make informed decisions by providing visual and environmental information, sighted guide services, and communication accessibility in the person's preferred language and communication mode. Preferred communication modes include auditory amplification with a personal FM system, visible Signed English, visible American Sign Language, or tactile sign language. A support service provider does not provide personal care, run errands alone for, or make decisions for a person who is deaf-blind, teach or instruct a person who is deaf-blind, or interpret for a person who is deaf-blind in formal settings, such as medical, legal, or business appointments.

SECTION 2. Chapter 81, Human Resources Code, is amended by adding Section 81.002 to read as follows:

Sec. 81.022. Support Service Provider Program Pilot. (a)

Out of funds provided for this program, the Department shall develop a pilot program for the provision of support service providers for persons who are deaf-blind.

(b) This pilot shall be located in two counties in the State where a significant deaf-blind population resides.

(c) The Department has the authority to develop rules to:

(1) administer the pilot program in a manner that balances maximum efficiency, serving the most people as possible, and how to best serve the deaf-blind community; and

(2) ensure those receiving compensation for service as a support service provider have a proper level of training.

(d) The Department shall establish a pay rate for the support service providers that utilizes a tiered wage scale based on a support service provider's:

(1) level of training;

(2) fluency in the deaf-blind person's preferred communication mode; and

(3) other skills in deaf-blind communication modalities.

(e) The agency shall begin planning for the implementation of this pilot during the year proceeding the starting date.

(f) This pilot is to begin September 1, 2018.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.

*From the 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2019*

By: Watson

S.B. No. 704

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the provision of certain support services to persons who are deaf-blind.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 81.001, Human Resources Code, is amended by adding Subdivision (1) to read as follows:

(1) "Commission" means the Health and Human Services Commission.

SECTION 2. Chapter 81, Human Resources Code, is amended by adding Section 81.014 to read as follows:

Sec. 81.014. SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF-BLIND. (a) In this section:

(1) "Communication mode" includes communication through:

(A) auditory amplification, such as through a personal hearing aid or assistive listening device;

(B) American Sign Language or Signed English; and

(C) tactile American Sign Language.

(2) "Deaf-blind support services" means services provided to a person who is deaf-blind that assist the person with

accessing the person's environment and allow the person to make informed decisions. The term includes providing visual and environmental information or sighted guide services and assisting with communication accessibility by communicating in the preferred language and communication mode of the person who is deaf-blind. The term does not include performing any of the following for the person:

(A) providing personal care services to the person;

(B) completing ordinary errands for the person;

(C) making decisions for the person;

(D) teaching or otherwise instructing the person;

or

(E) interpreting for the person in a formal setting, including a medical, legal, or business setting.

(3) "Program" means the deaf-blind support services program.

(4) "Provider of deaf-blind support services" means a person who is specially trained to provide deaf-blind support services.

(b) The commission shall operate a statewide deaf-blind support services program through which:

(1) deaf-blind support services are provided by providers of deaf-blind support services; and



(2) the commission reimburses the providers for the provision of the services.

(c) The executive commissioner by rule shall establish reimbursement rates to be paid to a provider of deaf-blind support services under the program. The reimbursement rates must use a tiered wage scale that is based on the provider's:

(1) level of training in communication modes for persons who are deaf-blind and in sighted guide-mobility techniques; and

(2) fluency in communication modes for persons who are deaf-blind.

(d) The commission shall ensure that quality deaf-blind support services are provided under the program by:

(1) monitoring the compliance of providers of deaf-blind support services with program rules;

(2) developing funding sources for the program that are in addition to state sources and will reduce reliance on the state sources for continuation of the program; and

(3) providing funding and technical assistance for training programs for:

(A) providers of deaf-blind support services under the program; and

(B) persons who are deaf-blind to enable those persons to effectively use the services offered under the program.

(e) The executive commissioner may establish an advisory committee to advise the commission in developing and operating the program, including operating the program in a manner that ensures the efficient use of state money. Subject to Section 2110.002, Government Code, the executive commissioner shall determine the number of members serving on the advisory committee, which must include persons who are deaf-blind and other stakeholders.

(f) The executive commissioner may adopt rules necessary to:

(1) operate the program in a manner that is efficient and maximizes the number of persons served; and

(2) ensure that providers of deaf-blind support services receiving reimbursement under the program have adequate training to provide those services.

SECTION 3. Not later than September 1, 2020:

(1) the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission shall adopt rules necessary to implement Section 81.014, Human Resources Code, as added by this Act; and

(2) the commission shall begin operating the program required by that section.

SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.

## **Appendix B: Service Roles within a Diverse Texas DeafBlind Community**

DeafBlind adults want to navigate their environment, participate in their community, make autonomous decisions, and live independently with greater quality of life, safety, and community access.

There is a gap in existing services for the estimated 2,446 DeafBlind adult Texans, who face barriers in addressing basic needs such as shopping, running errands, reading mail, and safely traveling to and attending events, including business, and health services. Professional Support Service Providers (SSPs) fill the gaps that sign language interpreters and interveners do not cover.

People who are DeafBlind have a wide range of individualized needs, depending on the impact on their hearing and vision, onset of DeafBlindness, and communication modes used. DeafBlind children receive services while in school, and those with an additional disability can receive lifelong intervener services through a Medicaid waiver program. Language-proficient, autonomous DeafBlind adults living in their own homes are not eligible for these services.

Interpreters provide language access for certain scheduled events, but that alone does not create true access due to mobility and information-gathering barriers. SSPs cover a range of situations that sign language interpreters do not.

The chart below further highlights the varying roles of these three professions.

	<b>SSP</b>	<b>Intervener</b>	<b>Interpreter</b>
Works with autonomous DeafBlind individuals who do not need guardians.	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
As a primary job duty, describes visual environmental information, including area layout, non-verbal responses, movements, and actions of people, to the autonomous DeafBlind person using his/her preferred mode of communication.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Offers professionally trained human guide services to DeafBlind individuals.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	

Accompanies autonomous DeafBlind individuals to access basic services such as shopping, business, errands, and health services.	<b>X</b>		
Briefly facilitates unscheduled communication needs (e.g.: cost of groceries, travel delays, inquiring the location of something).	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Interprets for autonomous DeafBlind individuals in scheduled community events (e.g.: religious, social, and life events; public presentations; medical settings; appointments and meetings).			<b>X</b>
Interprets in educational settings for DeafBlind individuals who use conventional* language.			<b>X</b>
Provides customized services to DeafBlind individuals who have developmental delays and/or additional disabilities.		<b>X</b>	
Facilitates learning and development of concepts, social skills, emotional awareness, sensory efficiency, self-determination, functional communication, and independent living.		<b>X</b>	
Is part of the IEP/ARD team, communicates with all team members, including parents, and provides input for IEP/ARD meetings.		<b>X</b>	
Are paid for their services.	<b>X</b> (Not in Texas)	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Keeps all information confidential according to laws, agency standards, and ethics.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
National certification available for this professional role.		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Certification and licensure required for this professional role			<b>X</b>

\* **Note:** Conventional language includes spoken English, visual or tactile sign language.

Compiled by Heather Pavey, Nancy Riley, Heather Withrow, and members of the Texas SSP Coalition, March 2019 ([www.txssp.info](http://www.txssp.info)).

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## Appendix C: SSP/CN Program Participation Methodology

- HKNC has identified 2,446 people who are DeafBlind over the age of 18 in Texas. *Note: This number is an estimate. HKNC counts those individuals who register with them; the total population may be greater.*
- 362 individuals who are DeafBlind over the age of 18 receive services through the Medicaid DBMD Waiver.<sup>14</sup>
- 85 individuals between the ages of 18 and 21 receive services through the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI).<sup>15</sup>
- The total number of people who are DeafBlind who could receive services from an SSP/CN program is 2,000.
- Assumptions:
  - An estimate of 5 percent to 10 percent of the total 2,000 individuals who are DeafBlind will participate in the SSP/CN program once it is established.
- Reasoning:
  - An analysis of the 30 states with an active SSP/CN program shows (from the states that were able to share the information) that between 5 percent and 10 percent of the state's total DeafBlind population participate in the program.
    - Alabama: 5 percent
    - Arizona: 8 percent
    - Colorado: 3 percent
    - Massachusetts: 10 percent
    - New Jersey: 9 percent
- GCPD believes 5 percent of the Texas DeafBlind population, or 100 people, would participate in an SSP/CN program if one existed.

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<sup>14</sup> Texas Health and Human Services Commission, data current through May 1, 2020. Report prepared June 16, 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Texas DeafBlind Project, data current through May 2020. Report prepared June 11, 2020.

## Appendix D: Active SSP programs, May 2020

Source: Helen Keller National Center<sup>16</sup>

State	Program Name	Funding sources	Eligibility	Consumers Served	Types of Service Requests	Training Requirements	Transportation
AL	Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind  Statewide	State Appropriation	Dual Sensory Loss (vision and hearing)	105 consumers annually, approx. eight consumers per week	SSP support to and from medical appts., surgical procedures, pharmacy (after medical or surgical appt.), therapy (short-term), transportation (bus, train, and airport), social service agencies, AIDB functions, classes, community activities, consumer organization conferences and workshops	Providers are trained by staff who hold certification as SSPs and/or in the area of DeafBlindness. Consumer training is currently being developed.	SSPs are able to provide transportation for consumers using a vehicle from the agency motorpool, or using their personal vehicle (reimbursed mileage).
AZ	Arizona Commission for the	\$192,000/yr. from the Arizona	Arizona residents who are over 18	[Is this cell intentionally blank?]	20 hours/monthly of SSP services outside of the home such	SSPs and Deaf-Blind individuals must complete	SSPs are not allowed to provide

<sup>16</sup> Compiled by Beth Jordan, May 2020, Helen Keller National Center. *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 "deaf-blind" or use of the term SSP or CoNavigator). This program listing is provided for informational purposes only. These are the known SSP programs in the United States. A number of other states/metropolitan communities have active committees or task forces investigating the possibility of establishing SSP services. Several additional states provide training for SSPs in conjunction with a workshop/retreat or periodic event.*

	Deaf and the Hard of Hearing Statewide	legislature for SSP services	years old and meet the definition of "deaf-blind" as defined by the organization		as grocery shopping, medical appts., and community events	the ACDHH SSP training or similar approved training	transportation to consumers; they use public transportation options such as bus, light rail, taxi, and ride share services such as Uber and Lyft.
AR	Arkansas Rehab Services (ARS) Central Arkansas	ARS funds the program, which pays for SSPs who work on contract with the state program.	Allowed up to 10 hrs./week; have an SSP plan with consumer goals identified. Primary goals are socialization, independent living, and access to the community.	30	Reading mail, shopping, errands (drug store), exercise classes, monthly social group, and occasionally weddings or funerals	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	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.



						volunteer hours working as a SSP before they are eligible to be paid. They must also maintain yearly CEU requirements.	
CA	Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center  an eight-county region in Central CA	The services provided specifically for the deaf-blind community include case management, SSP services, SSP training, and DBSG monthly socials. The Deaf Blind Services Program received a one-year, non-renewable grant from the Department of Rehabilitation in 2005 to provide paid SSP services. The SSP	There are no set criteria but those receiving services. Those who provide SSP services are required to participate in SSP trainings.	average 5-10 consumers per month	Transportation, shopping, reading mail, making phone calls, exercising, travel out-of-town to DB events, computer assistance, independent living assistance, and assistance at recreational and social events.	Training is provided for all people interested in working with the deaf-blind community, including interpreters, ASL students, interpreting students, and family members. Training occurs in a workshop format and topics include causes of deaf-blindness, safe guiding, etiquette, communication techniques, and deaf-blind protocol.	SSPs can drive deaf-blind clients in their own vehicles and they sign a waiver with DHHSC.

		<p>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 Deaf-Blind. Tools used for recruitment include the DHHSC newsletter, DHHSCemail, class presentations at the local colleges, word-of-mouth, and</p>					
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		annual workshops.					
CA	Interpret THAT, Inc.  Primarily Southern CA	No source of community funding/donations. Paid work is through California Department of Rehabilitation	Must be a client of the CA Dept. of Rehabilitation or paid by other means (HKNC, employer, community donations, and volunteer work by provider)	20-25 Locally	Related to vocational goals, medical appts., some for leisure/pleasure. Services for personal needs difficult to provide without funding source.	Through community organizational partnerships (Southern California Association of the DeafBlind). In 2019, Interpret THAT hosted a DeafBlind Community Forum on CoNavigators to ask the DeafBlind community what their preferences/concerns with this service are locally.	Interpret THAT works with independent contractors who provide their own transportation. Occasionally, CNs/SSPs have used public transportation as an option for transportation. There is not a heavy demand for SSP/CN work, which prevents us from hiring W2 employees. It is our hope to hire regular employees for this type of work so we have more control and oversight in the transportation arrangements and regulation.
CA	DeafBlind Access	We are currently unfunded,	Must be Deaf or Hard of Hearing AND	26	It is entirely up to the consumer, and includes shopping,	SSPs/CNs are either graduates from the College	We try to have the SSP/CN meet consumers

	The counties of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Orange	relying on individual donations. We are a non-profit 501(c)3 organization and we are currently searching for a grant writer.	Blind or low-vision, 18 years and older		hair appointments, doctor visits (CN only, no interpreting services provided), family events, parties, reading and sorting mail and recipes, food labeling, Deaf social events, etc.	of the Canyons' SSP/CN program or have received training through other orgs or the community. Many of our SSPs/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.	at the destination, but there are situations like doctor visits and grocery shopping where the consumer needs a ride. Some SSPs/CNs use their vehicles to drive, others use public transport, or meet DeafBlind at the location.
CA	Mind Your Language, Inc. (dba Kemilyen)  Greater LA and neighboring cities	California Dept. of Rehabilitation 80 percent, private donations 20 percent	Participants must be clients of the California Dept. of Rehabilitation. Otherwise, we would need additional time to provide	Over 30	Medical appts., job interviews, errands related to employment, and emergencies; other activities require pre-approval	SSPs/CNs require three sets of references from DB consumers. We are happy to adapt to the consumer's level of training and would suggest	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

			funding. However, we are not known for turning down consumers.			any training we would see fit.	the CN providing transportation, the CN can meet the client at a predetermined destination.
CO	Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  Statewide	State and government department funding	[Is this cell intentionally blank?]	60	General services to include 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).	SSPs must obtain a certification and meet the requirements to sign on as an independent contractor with the Commission. The Commission is not responsible for SSP training because SSPs are independent contractors, and 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	Transportation is provided as part of the SSP's duties.

						certification can be developed.	
CT	Communication Advocacy Network (CAN)  Statewide	State Dept. of Rehabilitation Services with Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind; and some grants and fundraising events	Legally blind and deaf, including low vision	15	Support Service Providers (SSPs) and deaf-blind services including monthly deaf-blind support group with guest speakers	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.	Transportation is provided by SSPs.
DC	Gallaudet Interpreting Service Paraprofessional Program	Gallaudet University	Services are only for current Gallaudet-sponsored events for students, staff, and faculty	To be determined	Services are only for Gallaudet-sponsored events. Also see Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind in MD who also serves the District of Columbia	16 hours of program orientation training (including SSP and Tactile ASL workshops) and one semester of coursework as provided by the Department of Interpretation.	N/A
GA	Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA)	GVRA state funded for clients of VR working toward their VR goals.	VR clients with dual sensory loss	80+	Only for services conducted through the scope of VR	Completion of SSP training from Georgia Association of the Deaf-Blind	SSPs do provide transportation and are reimbursed for time and mileage.

	Statewide						
HI	Comprehensive Service Center (CSC) for People who are Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing or Deaf-Blind  Statewide	State Appropriation in HI Dept. of Human Services/HI Div. of VR executive budget. CDS (CSC) funded via DVR Memo of Agreement/Request for Proposal SSP Project funded by CDS (CSC)/DVR Agreement. Private donations accepted. The program has a pay scale ranging from \$25 - \$40 an hour.	1) Any consumer referred to the program as "Deaf-Blind" by a recognized agency, or 2) individual application with support docs (from a doctor, DOE, DVR, etc.) documenting both vision and hearing loss.	12	Transportation, shopping, reading mail, making phone calls, job search, independent living assistance, and assistance at recreational and social events.	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.	SSPs are allowed but are not required to drive consumers.
KY	KY Office of Vocational Rehabilitation	Vocational Rehabilitation Funds	Consumers in an employment setting or receiving training in an in-state	0; identifying qualified SSPs	Orientation on a job site or rehabilitation skills training	Completion of SSP approved training, reference letter, at least 50 hours experience	SSPs are not allowed to provide transportation to consumers. SSPs are paid to get to the

	Statewide		rehabilitation facility				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.
LA	Affiliated Blind of Louisiana (ABL) Statewide	Telecommunications tax funded through legislation and managed	The Louisiana Commission for the Deaf (LCD) provides SSP services to Louisiana	82	A Service Support Provider (SSP) is a trained guide who works one-on-one with a person who is DeafBlind to	SSP will engage in at least one 8-hour orientation to receive Deaf-Blindness training, which	SSPs are allowed to provide transportation as part of the assignment but



		<p>by Louisiana Commission for the Deaf</p>	<p>residents who are DeafBlind as defined by US Congress. 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</p>		<p>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.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Driving to and from the grocery store with you and helping you purchase items;</li> <li>· Providing information about your physical surroundings, such as where you are;</li> <li>· Providing social information, such as describing the mood of people around you;</li> <li>· Communicating</li> </ul>	<p>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.</p>	<p>may not provide transportation as the only service.</p>
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			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.		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.		
MD	Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind  Maryland statewide and metropolitan Washington, DC area - specifically Arlington County, VA, and	Various limited city and county grants; state Vocational Rehabilitation agencies	Certifiable/documented dual sensory disability (deafness and blindness) and resident of specific county, city; other criteria based on grant requirements	5-15 (rolling based on grant criteria)	CLB SSPs support clients with grocery shopping and medical appts.	Certified or qualified based on CLB established criteria	CLB SSPs provides transportation with mileage reimbursement at the federal rate.

	Montgomery County, MD						
MA	DeafBlind Community Access Network (DBCAN)  Statewide	The program is grant funded by MCB and overseen by MCB and MCDHH and operated by D.E.A.F. Inc.	Up to 16 hours/month; and up to 8 hours/month additional with director approval	80 consumers with 55 DBCAN providers	Errands/appts., reading mail, clothes or food shopping, going to the gym, transportation and guidance to medical appointments, and social/recreational activities	Providers must complete a 45-hour training program with certificate provided upon completion	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 \$0.45/mile for travel.
MN	DeafBlind Services Minnesota (DBSM)  Statewide	Minnesota State Dept. of Human Services–Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division; Hennepin County through Human Services and	Deafblind adults (age 21 or older, 18 if no longer covered by an IEP) must have a medically verifiable combined hearing loss and vision loss, which	Approx. 55 deafblind adults with the majority residing in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Approx. 10 deafblind adults receive	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	DBSM prefers to have staff who have sign language skills. However, not all participants use sign language. DBSM currently employs around 35 part-time, hourly SSP and Adult Intervener staff—around	SSPs and Interveners can provide transportation to consumers.

	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.	interferes with individual's ability to independently maintain their independence or access their community. The SSP program provides an average of 20 hrs./mo. 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	DBSM services in greater Minnesota.	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.	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	
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			must demonstrate no other funding sources available for SSP or Intervener supports.			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; in 2020, \$0.545 per mile for any mileage while working with participant.	
MN	Minnesota Department of Human Services - Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division DeafBlind	The state DeafBlind Consumer Directed Services grant funding was a direct appropriation from the Minnesota State	Individuals of any age who have a medically verifiable hearing loss and vision loss that interferes with acquiring information or interacting in	35 (in fiscal year 2019)	SSP, interveners, transportation, equipment, training, and communication skills instruction (Note: this funding allows the consumer to determine which service they need. Not all consumers accessing this	Each deaf-blind consumer decides what kind and how much training they want their SSP or other service provider to have.	SSPs are allowed to provide transportation.

	Consumer Directed Services Grant Program  Statewide	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.	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.		program will need/desire SSP support, but that is one option.)		
MO	Beyond Interpreting  Statewide	Funded through legislation enacted by the Missouri Legislature and managed by the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH)	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	50	Errands, business, entertainment, medical, educational, and other activities that create access for the DeafBlind service recipient	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	Public and private transportation funding is available for DeafBlind participants to access the community while utilizing state SSP services.

			<p>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;</p> <p>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</p>			<p>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.</p>	
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			<p>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 or older - anyone under the age of 18 will require parental consent to use SSP services.</p>				
NC	North Carolina Deaf-	All the services provided are	Consumers send in a request via	At this time, there has been at	The services range from transportation to and from doctor	The SSPs who agree to be on the volunteer	SSPs provide transportation to consumers.



Blind Associates (NCDBA) Statewide	done by volunteers. A statewide fundraiser, the Southeast Helen's Run/Walk is coordinated by the Southeast HKNC office, NCDBA, and state agencies who serve deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind to raise funds for the program to eventually pay the volunteers for their services. Currently, the Communication Access Committee is working on setting up the paid service now by developing policies and procedures.	email or contact their State Deaf & Deaf-Blind Specialists to assist with sending in a request, which then goes out to a statewide database of approximately 200 volunteers. Those who can assist will then contact the consumer, agree on the services needed, and make the needed arrangements.	least one consumer a month getting services in the community. Approximately 25-45 consumers are served during the local conference, camp, and various DB events across the state all year.	appointments, family functions, and sporting activities to attending local conferences, camp, and other DB events. Informal communication is facilitated for social functions, sighted guide, and transportation.	database have gone through six to 10 hours of training provided by the NCDBA Communication committee in partnership with the Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Services for the Blind. Proof of completing training in this area will be required.	
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		Until this is completed, the organization is still sending out volunteer requests.					
NC	NC Dept. Health and Human Services (DHHS)  NC Driver/Support Service Provider Vendor List (DSSPVL)  Statewide	DHHS hiring agency/facility is responsible for the payment of DSSP vendor's services rendered.	[Is this cell intentionally blank?]	No limit, it is an ADA accommodation for staff, consumers, and clients of DHHS programs/facilities.	The NC DHHS Driver/Support Service Provider Vendor List (DSSPVL) is a list of qualified individuals approved to provide driver and support services for Deaf-Blind 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 ADA, as well as the NC DHHS Communication Accessibility Provision to benefit their clients, consumers, and staff in providing reasonable	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 Deaf-Blind individuals as stated in the scope of work, which includes: a) Provide transportation, b) Serve as Human Guide, c) Assist with communication	SSPs can provide transportation but a statement from their insurance company is required indicating the SSP has minimum coverage as requires by the application and acknowledgment that the vehicle is used for business/for hire.

accommodations, which include drivers and support services. Each NC DHHS div. office can utilize the DSSPVL list to easily identify and secure qualified services for Deaf-Blind consumers, clients, 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.

in informal settings if vision is an issue, d) Provide access to printed materials, and e) Provide visual, environmental, and social feedback information.

NH	Northeast Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services, Inc.  Statewide	Part B	Deaf-Blind/low vision NH residents	7	Guides for shopping, social events, errands, etc.	SSP training course by the Coordinator	The SSPs do provide transportation as part of their services.
NJ	DeafBlind Community Access Network of New Jersey, Inc.	Donations, volunteer providers	Adults 18 and older who are deafblind and can provide leadership, direction, and decision-making	Approx. 25 annually	Educational, recreational, training, community service/education, social, and shopping programs sponsored by DB CAN NJ	Access Providers: Each candidate is evaluated as to their knowledge and experience. Individual, online, and small	On their own time, Access Providers may drive deafblind people ONLY (not their partners, family, or friends)

	Statewide		regarding services/activities			<p>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. Deafblind: 1:1</p>	<p>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.</p>
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						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.	
NJ	Support Service Providers of New Jersey (SSPNJ)  Statewide	NJ Department of Human Services, Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired	Must be a client of the NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired with a vocational rehabilitation or independent living goal	100	Our Approved Activities list includes the following categories: post-secondary education/training, employment, health/well-being, household management, and community integration	SSPs must satisfactorily complete our three-module, 10-hour training program as well as three probationary assignments; deaf-blind individuals must complete individualized training program	SSPs are not able to provide transportation. However, SSPs can support consumers utilizing public transportation. The consumer is responsible for arranging their transportation, but they can opt to have the SSP meet them at home and

							accompany them using public transportation.
NM	Community Outreach Program for the Deaf – New Mexico (COPD-NM) Deafblind and Special Services  Statewide	From the State of New Mexico’s legislature through the New Mexico Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, from contracts with the New Mexico Centennial Care Medicaid Waiver Program, and FCC’s National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program	Must meet the Program definition of deaf-blindness (combined auditory and visual losses) or deaf-plus (deaf or hard of hearing with a significant disability)	70+	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 requests include text-translating and transportation. Access technology through the FCC’s National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (iCanConnect). Personnel development training to other service providers in the state.	Three and a half days of initial training (SSP Basic Training), six hours of defensive driving class, one day-long supplemental training every six months, two-hour meeting/training once a month	The program does allow SSPs to provide transportation to consumers.
NY	Center for Disability Rights, Inc.	Currently under Wegman’s grant. Will try	Individuals with documented hearing and vision loss,	20; expecting to accept 3-5 more by Fall 2020	Grocery shopping, medical/legal appointments, and social events;	1-1 instruction and peer mentoring is provided by SSP personnel and	SSPs provide transportation to consumers.

	Rochester, NY (Monroe County)	to renew for another year.	age 18 and older		community-based meetings	Deaf-Blind consumers who utilize SSP services.	
OH	Columbus Speech & Hearing Center  Columbus, OH (Franklin County)	Senior Options is Franklin County's tax-levy program for senior citizens. Funds support programs that serve older adults, including Meals-on-Wheels, hearing aids, transportation, and minor home improvements.	Adults 60 years and older who meet income guidelines through the tax-levy program and can receive between 10-15 hrs./mo. The SSP program is just one of many services provided by Columbus Speech & Hearing Center.	2-6	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.	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.	SSPs do provide transportation.
OK	Sight-Hearing Encouragement Program (S.H.E.P.)  Statewide	Donations, state funded by providing contracted services with Department of Rehabilitation Services of Oklahoma	Must be Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, or Blind	46 DeafBlind individuals served	Errands, paperwork assistance, reading mail, checking voicemails, making phone calls, social events, training events, and workshops.	Two-day training for SSPs on how to interact with DB, empathy, assertiveness, safety, guiding, communication, and testing for appropriate skill level in ASL. Consumers receive a one-	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

						on-one consultation on do's and don'ts of how to use an SSP and how to properly interact with their guide.	what transportation method the consumer prefers and arrange for SSPs to meet them at the designated areas.
OR	Avamere at Chestnut Lane  Residents of Avamere Chestnut Lane Assisted Living for Deaf & DeafBlind in Gresham, OR	Medicaid reimbursement	Deaf-Blind residents of Chestnut Lane, an Assisted Living Facility	13	Shopping, activities, video and phone calls, reading mail, sending emails, escorts, and accompany to doctor appointments	Paid full-time, with SSP coordination as one of the many job responsibilities	SSPs can provide transportation to residents.
PA	DeafBlind Living Well Services Center for Independent Living of Central Pennsylvania	The current grant is funded by the PA Statewide Independent Living Council (PA SILC) and is administered	Must be at least 18 years old and completed K to 12 school-age system, complete an application, demonstrate	50 and steadily increasing	Individuals who are deafblind request SSP services to do everyday tasks, such as grocery shopping, reading mail, hobbies, and leisure activities.	SSPs: Individuals who want to contract with the CILCP to provide SSP services, must: · participate in DBLWS's SSP training	SSPs do not provide transportation services. DBLWS works with each individual who is deafblind to explore



	<p>nia (CILCP)</p> <p>Statewide</p>	<p>by the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation . The current grant started on October 1, 2019, and ends on September 30, 2020. It may be renewed four times (max of five years).</p>	<p>the combined hearing and vision loss causes difficulty with daily living activities, manage their SSP services independently or with the assistance of another individual, and actively participate and complete an individualized orientation with the DBLWS' Education &amp; Outreach Coordinator</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· take the required mandatory reporter trainings</li> <li>· undergo three background checks</li> <li>· review/sign documents</li> </ul>	<p>transportation options in their area.</p>
PA	<p>DeafCAN! – Deaf Community Action Network - A Human Services Program of Christ the King Deaf Church</p>	<p>Grants and other donations</p>	<p>Verify deaf-blindness and be able to direct the services of an SSP</p>	<p>20; also provide volunteer SSPs at social events for consumers not registered with the service</p>	<p>Each consumer can have up to 10 hours of SSP service each month and can use SSPs at their own discretion.</p>	<p>Each candidate is evaluated as to their knowledge and experience and must pass a functional evaluation of the basic skills of being an SSP.</p>	<p>The SSP's role is during the actual assignment, not the transportation. Consumers negotiate their own agreements for transportation with the SSP</p>

	Seven counties in SE PA (Philadelphia, Delaware, Chester, Montgomery, Bucks, Berks, and Lancaster)						which can include their personal car or public transportation. DeafCAN cannot pay for driving due to insurance regulations.
SC	South Carolina Commission for the Blind  Statewide	Vocational Rehabilitation general funds	Must be an active Vocational Rehabilitation consumer, classified as deaf-blind, with the service required to achieve a vocational outcome	Less than five	Work readiness, independence enhancement, and job training	SSP vendors must have completed an official SSP training workshop sponsored by SCCB, SC Association of the Deaf (SCAD), or HKNC.	SSPs can transport consumers for VR authorized activities.
TN	Knoxville Center of the Deaf (KCD)  Knoxville, TN and 20	KCD is funded in part by the Tennessee Department of Human Services. The KCD Annual Golf	There are no formal eligibility guidelines; consumers are self-identified.	Approx. 13 consumers	SSPs are contracted to provide services for shopping and deaf senior citizen social group activities; assistance getting to/from doctor appointments	Training is provided to interested SSPs and interpreters, with emphasis on self-advocacy by deaf-blind persons.	Transportation can be provided to consumers by SSPs.

	surrounding areas	Tournament provides the funding and ongoing financial support for the SSP program. SSPs are paid an hourly rate to provide services to deaf-blind individuals.			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.		
UT	Div. of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DSBVI)  Statewide	DSBVI is allocated \$238,000 each fiscal year by the state of Utah	Adults out of the public school system; consumers must be able to independently make choices and give directions to SSPs; Legally Blind and Pure Tone Average of 40 or worse in both ears.	Approx. 45-55 consumers; DB 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.	Shopping, mail reading, paying bills, legislative participation, looking for jobs/filling out job applications, personal activities (attending a child's school activity, scrapbooking, gardening, skiing), religious activities, meetings, writing Christmas cards, exercising, socialization, keeping up-to-date with local and national news, and searching the Internet. Involvement in the community is	Provided as needed; not formalized; exception: 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 three year intervals. Background checks are required before hire.	SSPs can provide transportation.

					encouraged. No personal medical or self-care services are provided (e.g., help with blood testing for diabetics, bathing, etc.), however, help getting to an appointment and during an appt. at a facility providing those services is allowed (i.e. doctor's appointment).		
WA	DeafBlind Service Center (DBSC)  Statewide	Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, City of Seattle, private donations, fundraising events, and foundation grants	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 they become a resident, the person will then go through intake screening to	Approx. 80 consumers	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.	SSPs - 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	SSPs provide transportation.

			determine eligibility. Guidelines are reviewed with all new consumers. New DeafBlind participants with no experience of using an SSP are required to take "How to Use SSP Service" training.			DeafBlind participants, and includes some basic Protactile techniques. DBSC also provides workshops about DeafBlind culture and other workshops.	
WI	The Center for Deaf-Blind Persons, Inc.  Metro. Milwaukee; attempting to address SSP needs statewide	Foundations, civic orgs, 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	Youth and adults (of any age) with combined hearing-vision impairments	11 by paid SSPs	Mail reading, bill paying, copy signing, VP calls, exercising, apartment search, labeling, home organization, medical appointments, airport assistance, and clothing, grocery, and gift shopping	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	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.

		Hard of Hearing made Universal Service Funds available to cover costs of some SSP services.				experiences to individuals interested in providing SSP services.	
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