­DeafBlind Interpreting:

Competencies Survey

2017

DeafBlind Interpreting National Training and Resource Center

Regional Resource Center on Deafness

**Western Oregon University

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 Regional Resource Center on Deafness

 Western Oregon University

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# Overview

The materials presented here on interpreting with DeafBlind people are intended for interpreters and interpreter educators, as well as for DeafBlind people seeking resources on advocacy and working with interpreters. There is also information useful to researchers, interpreter coordinators, vocational rehabilitation specialists, and others seeking to increase their knowledge in this area.

This document is available in electronic format on the DBI website at [www.dbinterpreting.org](http://www.dbinterpreting.org). It can also be found in the DBI digital repository online at <http://digitalcommons.wou.edu/dbi>, and in the NCDB Library.

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# About DBI


In 2017, Western Oregon University’s Regional Resource Center on Deafness (RRCD) was awarded five-year federal funding to establish a national center on DeafBlind interpreting.

With a strong commitment to evidence-based practice, the DeafBlind Interpreting National Training and Resource Center (DBI) was established. The goal of the Center is *to enhance communication access for persons who are DeafBlind by increasing the number of interpreters able to effectively interpret utilizing tactile communication and other strategies.*

The Center’s corpus of work falls within two broad-based activities: (1) conduction of a training program and (2) provision of a resource center and repository for service providers, including interpreters, who seek information to better serve their constituents.

DBI is located on the Western Oregon University campus in Monmouth, 25 miles west of the Oregon School for the Deaf in the capital of Salem. For over 50 years, Western has been awarded funding to support pre-professionals in fields such as interpreter training, Deaf and hard of hearing education, and rehabilitation counseling. Grant awards from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) continue to support innovative educational programs and emerging research and practice in these fields.

**DBI Vision**

DBI envisions a world that celebrates the life and culture of DeafBlind persons, a world where DeafBlind people have influence and control over their destiny and dreams.

**DBI Mission**

The mission of DBI is to honor the diversity and range of communication preferences of DeafBlind individuals, or those who have a combination of vision and hearing loss, by increasing the range and number of culturally-competent and qualified interpreters and mentors.

# Acknowledgements

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# Executive Summary

An online survey of 612 respondents conducted in October of 2017 assessed the perceived importance of eight competencies related to DeafBlind interpreting and the extent to which DeafBlind interpreters demonstrate these competencies on a regular basis.

These eight competencies present various skills and knowledge related to DeafBlind interpreting:

* Respect for DeafBlind individuals’ autonomy - making their own decisions
* An understanding of the different interpreting demands between visual ASL and tactile ASL (e.g., adding visual or audio description of the visual environment)
* Knowledge of different types of communication options and techniques needed for tactile communication, and the ability to match an individual’s language preference (signed languages, close vision/tactile, haptics)
* Fluency in ASL, TASL, and PTASL
* Respect for diversity in the DeafBlind community
* Knowledge and understanding of hearing loss and vision loss
* Knowledge and understanding of accessibility and how to use various technologies (e.g., ALDs, visual description, orientation and mobility)
* Familiarity with vocational rehabilitation and its various settings/community partners (e.g., appointments, job shadowing, job coaching, on the job training, job interviews, career counseling)

In general, all eight competencies are viewed as important. None of them is regarded as unimportant although there is some distinction between them. Overall, *Respect for DeafBlind individuals’ autonomy* was rated as very important by nine in ten respondents. In addition, it is also the highest ranked competency in terms of importance. In a related question, when asked to identify the most important skill to have as a DeafBlind interpreter, over one in four selected respect. However, only one in three felt that this competency is demonstrated by DeafBlind interpreters either almost always or very often.

Similarly, the remaining seven competencies were rated as important, with about four in five rating both *Knowledge of different types of communication options and techniques for tactile communication* and *Respect for diversity in the DeafBlind community* as very important. Both were subsequently ranked high in importance amongst the eight competencies. Once again, though, respondents did not see these competencies occurring frequently in DeafBlind interpreters.

The *rankings* in terms of importance for the eight competencies are below, together with the proportion of respondents ranking them highest. As these somewhat low proportions demonstrate, (for example, just 29.8% of respondents ranked *Respect for DeafBlind Individuals’ Autonomy* as the most important competency), respondents were divided about which competency to rank highest in terms of importance as they viewed them all as important skills to have. Rankings therefore varied from ‘1’ (highest) to ‘8’ (lowest) for the competencies. One notable exception is *Familiarity with vocational rehabilitation* where fully half of respondents ranked this as the least important competency. Only one-third rated it as very important.

* Respect for DeafBlind individuals’ autonomy - making their own decisions -29.8%
* Familiarity with vocational rehabilitation and its various settings/community partners – 14.7%
* Knowledge of different types of communication options and techniques needed for tactile communication, and the ability to match an individual’s language preference - 14.7%
* Fluency in ASL, TASL, and PTASL – 13.5%
* Respect for diversity in the DeafBlind community – 11.0%
* Knowledge and understanding of hearing loss and vision loss – 9.9%
* An understanding of the different interpreting demands between visual ASL and tactile ASL – 3.4%
* Knowledge and understanding of accessibility and how to use various technologies - 3.0%

While *Fluency of ASL, TASL, and PTASL* is seen as important overall, only 13.5% ranked it highest among the eight competencies. In a related question, however, two in five viewed knowledge of tactile/protactile ASL as the most important skill a DeafBlind interpreter should possess.

About two in five DeafBlind interpreters received formal training for DeafBlind interpreting through an Interpreter Training Program, and the remaining interpreters trained via workshops, conferences, or working with DeafBlind community members or other experienced DeafBlind interpreters. Subsequently, only about one-third are satisfied with their training. Among those who expressed dissatisfaction, nearly all are interested in additional training.

As these eight competencies are viewed as important for DeafBlind interpreting and training for DeafBlind interpreting has been found lacking, this is a clear indication that additional training focusing on these competencies would be of high benefit to the interpreter community as well as the DeafBlind community.

# Survey Background

The DeafBlind Interpreting National Training and Resource Center (DBI) conducted a needs assessment survey to assess how DeafBlind interpreters and other stakeholders rate and assess eight competencies of DeafBlind interpreters. The survey invitation was sent to all members of the DeafBlind Member Section of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, and the Professionals Serving DeafBlind Consumers email distribution list. Additionally, the survey invitation was distributed via the following Facebook groups and pages:

* DBI
* Discover Interpreting
* NTFDBI, the National Task Force on DeafBlind Interpreting
* Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
* Certified Deaf Interpreter
* Support Service Providers for our DeafBlind Community
* Seabeck DeafBlind Retreat
* State Coordinators of the Deaf Listserv
* The National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials
* The Regional Resource Center on Deafness at Western Oregon University

Online responses were captured using the Qualtrics survey platform. The survey opened on Tuesday, October 3rd and closed on Sunday, October 15th, 2017. An informed consent page explained the background and purpose of the survey; respondents who agreed to the terms were subsequently able to participate in the survey.

A total of 690 survey responses were collected. During the database preparation, two (2) respondents failed to agree to the consent form. Another 27 responses were completed by respondents residing outside of the United States; therefore, the respondents were also sent to the “thank you” page without answering any more questions. An additional 49 responses were deleted as the respondents answered only the first question. **The final database contains 612 responses**. As some questions were voluntary and other questions were based on specific previous survey answers (meaning respondents had to answer in a specific way to a previous question to see a follow-up question), respondents did not complete all questions; some also dropped out before they finished the survey.

All percentages given are based on those who answered the specific question. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. In questions with multiple responses, percentages do not add up to 100%.

The Research Institute (TRI) at Western Oregon University provided survey setup, online hosting services, and data analyses as well as reporting for this survey. Staff members of TRI include Sybille Guy, Ph.D., Center Director for the Center on Research, Analysis & Evaluation (CREA), and Patrick Aldrich, M.S., Statistician.

# Relationship to Deaf Blind Interpreting

## Identity with Regard to Hearing/Vision

By far, the majority of respondents (73.7%; N=451) identified as Hearing/Sighted. Nearly one in five (18.1%; N=111) identified as Deaf/Sighted. Only 20 respondents (3.3%) identified as DeafBlind.

### Table 1. Identity with Regards to Hearing/Vision

| **Identity (N=612)** | **Percent** | **Count** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| DeafBlind  | 3.3 | 20 |
| Deaf/Sighted  | 18.1 | 111 |
| Deaf/Low Vision  | 0.7 | 4 |
| Hard of Hearing/Sighted  | 3.3 | 20 |
| Hard of Hearing/Low Vision  | 0.7 | 4 |
| Hard of Hearing/Blind  | 0.2 | 1 |
| Hearing/Sighted  | 73.7 | 451 |
| Hearing/Low Vision  | 0.2 | 1 |
| Hearing/Blind  | 0.0 | 0 |

## Primary Relationship to DeafBlind Interpreting

About seven in ten respondents (72.1%; N=440) stated that their primary relationship to DeafBlind interpreting is the role of an interpreter (not necessarily for the DeafBlind community). Support Service Providers[[1]](#footnote-1) were the second largest group, with 7.4% (N=45) of respondents identifying as such. For some respondents who indicated “Other” as their primary role and then further specified their role, answers fit actual survey response options and were therefore incorporated into those. This also included some respondents who indicated multiple roles in their open-ended responses (2.6%; N=16).

### Table 2: Primary Relationship to DeafBlind Interpreting

| **Primary Relationship (N=610)** | **Percent** | **Count** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Interpreter (Deaf or Hearing) | 72.1 | 440 |
| Support Service Provider (SSP) | 7.4 | 45 |
| DeafBlind Individual | 4.1 | 25 |
| DeafBlind Advocacy Agency Personnel or Service Provider | 3.6 | 22 |
| Family member | 3.4 | 21 |
| Interpreter Educator | 2.8 | 17 |
| VR Counselor | 2.5 | 15 |
| Interpreter Referral Agency Personnel | 0.8 | 5 |
| Teacher of the Deaf/DeafBlind | 0.8 | 5 |
| Other (please specify) | 3.3 | 15 |

# Competencies (Skills and Knowledge) for DeafBlind Interpreters

Respondents were asked their opinions about the eight competencies (or skills and knowledge) a DeafBlind interpreter should possess. After rating the importance of each competency on a scale from 1 (not important) to 10 (very important), they further indicated how often they see interpreters demonstrating each competency. Lastly, respondents ranked the competencies on a scale from 1 (highest importance) to 8 (lowest importance).

## Importance of Competency

Please note that out of the 497 respondents who answered the question on importance and frequency, 81.9% (N=407) are currently working as interpreters while 63.0% (N=313) are also DeafBlind interpreters.

Respect for DeafBlind individuals’ autonomy was rated as very important (a ‘10’ on the scale) by nine in ten respondents (89.9%; N=447).

Four in five rated the following competencies as very important:

* Knowledge of different types of communication options and techniques needed for tactile communication, and the ability to match an individual’s language preference (signed languages, close vision/tactile, haptics)
* Respect for diversity in the DeafBlind community

By contrast, familiarity with vocational rehabilitation and its various settings/community partners was rated as very important by only one-third (36.2%; N=180), the lowest of all eight competencies.

### Table 3. Importance of Competency

| **Competency Rated 10 (Very Important) (N=497)** | **Percent** | **Count** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Respect for DeafBlind individuals’ autonomy - making their own decisions  | 89.9 | 447 |
| Knowledge of different types of communication options and techniques needed for tactile communication, and the ability to match an individual’s language preference (signed languages, close vision/tactile, haptics)  | 81.5 | 405 |
| Respect for diversity in the DeafBlind community  | 80.7 | 401 |
| An understanding of the different interpreting demands between visual ASL and tactile ASL (e.g., adding visual or audio description of the visual environment)  | 73.0 | 363 |
| Fluency in ASL, TASL, and PTASL  | 67.2 | 334 |
| Knowledge and understanding of hearing loss and vision loss  | 52.5 | 261 |
| Knowledge and understanding of accessibility and how to use various technologies (e.g., ALDs, visual description, orientation and mobility)  | 50.5 | 251 |
| Familiarity with vocational rehabilitation and its various settings/community partners (e.g., appointments, job shadowing, job coaching, on the job training, job interviews, career counseling)  | 36.2 | 180 |

Table 4 presents the importance ratings in detail for the eight competencies. Average ratings for each competency further demonstrate the importance the respondents attach to each, with a higher average rating expressing higher importance. While there might be some differences in actual ratings of “10” (very important), overall, respondents viewed all eight competencies as important.

### Table 4. Importance of Competency – Detailed Results

| **Competency (N=497)** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **10**  | **Average Rating** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Knowledge and understanding of hearing loss and vision loss  | 0.6%(N=3) | 1.0%(N=5) | 0.8%(N=4) | 1.2%(N=6) | 4.8%(N=24) | 4.6%(N=23) | 9.5%(N=47) | 13.1%(N=65) | 11.9%(N=59) | 52.5%(N=261) | 8.6 |
| Knowledge of different types of communication options and techniques needed for tactile communication and the ability to match an individual’s language preference (signed languages, close vision/tactile, haptics)  | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.0%(N=0) | 1.0%(N=5) | 0.4%(N=2) | 1.2%(N=6) | 3.4%(N=17) | 12.5%(N=62) | 81.5%(N=405) | 9.7 |
| Respect for diversity in the DeafBlind community  | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.2%(N=1) | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.2%(N=1) | 1.2%(N=6) | 2.4%(N=12) | 3.4%(N=17) | 11.9%(N=59) | 80.7%(N=401) | 9.7 |
| Respect for DeafBlind individuals’ autonomy - making their own decisions  | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.6%(N=3) | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.4%(N=2) | 0.8%(N=4) | 8.2%(N=41) | 89.9%(N=447) | 9.9 |
| Knowledge and understanding of accessibility and how to use various technologies (e.g., ALDs, visual description, orientation and mobility)  | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.2%(N=1) | 0.2%(N=1) | 1.0%(N=5) | 2.4%(N=12) | 4.4%(N=22) | 8.2%(N=41) | 14.7%(N=73) | 18.3%(N=91) | 50.5%(N=251) | 8.9 |
| An understanding of the different interpreting demands between visual ASL and tactile ASL (e.g., adding visual or audio description of the visual environment)  | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.8%(N=4) | 0.8%(N=4) | 1.6%(N=8) | 4.8%(N=24) | 18.9%(N=94 | 73.0%(N=363) | 9.6 |
| Fluency in ASL, TASL, and PTASL  | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.2%(N=1) | 0.0%(N=0) | 0.6%(N=3) | 1.4%(N=7) | 4.6%(N=23) | 7.4%(N=37) | 18.5%(N=92) | 67.2%(N=334) | 9.4 |
| Familiarity with vocational rehabilitation and its various settings/community partners (e.g., appointments, job shadowing, job coaching, on the job training, job interviews, career counseling)  | 0.6%(N=3) | 1.0%(N=5) | 2.0%(N=10) | 2.4%(N=12) | 4.8%(N=24) | 9.7%(N=48) | 12.7%(N=63) | 15.5%(N=77) | 15.1%(N=75) | 36.2%(N=180) | 8.1 |

## Frequency of Competency Exhibited by DeafBlind Interpreters

Figure 1 demonstrates that respondents do not believe that DeafBlind interpreters demonstrate the use of these eight competencies on a regular basis. Only two in five (39.8%; N=198) indicated that interpreters almost always/very often show respect for diversity in the DeafBlind community. Likewise, just one-third (34.2%; N=170) felt that interpreters show respect for DeafBlind individuals’ autonomy on a regular basis. Very few (15.9%; N=79) felt that interpreters express knowledge and understanding of accessibility and how to use various technologies (e.g., ALDs, visual description, orientation and mobility) as frequently. Table 5 shows the results in detail.

### Figure 1. Frequency of Competency Exhibited by DeafBlind Interpreters

Table 5 shows the detailed results on frequency of use of the eight competencies by interpreters.

### Table 5. Frequency of Competency Exhibited by Interpreters – Detailed Results

| **Frequency of Competency Exhibited by Interpreters (N=497)** | **Summary Almost Always/ Very Often** | **Almost always** | **Very often** | **Often** | **Not often** | **Almost Never** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Knowledge and understanding of hearing loss and vision loss | 35.2%(N=175) | 11.3%(N=56) | 23.3%(N=116) | 38.8%(N=193) | 23.9%(N=119) | 2.6%(N=13) |
| Knowledge of different types of communication options and techniques needed for tactile communication, and the ability to match an individual’s language preference (signed languages, close vision/tactile, haptics) | 23.7%(N=118) | 7.2%(N=36) | 16.5%(N=82) | 36.2%(N=180) | 35.6%(N=177) | 4.4%(N=22) |
| Respect for diversity in the DeafBlind community | 39.8%(N=198) | 18.1%(N=90) | 21.7%(N=108) | 35.4%(N=176) | 21.3%(N=106) | 3.4%(N=17) |
| Respect for DeafBlind individuals’ autonomy - making their own decisions | 34.2% (N=170) | 14.7%(N=73) | 19.5%(N=97) | 35.4%(N=176) | 25.8%(N=128) | 4.6%(N=23) |
| Knowledge and understanding of accessibility and how to use various technologies (e.g., ALDs, visual description, orientation and mobility) | 15.9%(N=79) | 4.8%(N=24) | 11.1%(N=55) | 29.2%(N=145) | 43.5%(N=216) | 11.5%(N=57) |
| An understanding of the different interpreting demands between visual ASL and tactile ASL (e.g., adding visual or audio description of the visual environment) | 23.1%(N=115) | 9.5%(N=47) | 13.7%(N=68) | 31.8%(N=158) | 35.6%(N=177) | 9.5%(N=47) |
| Fluency in ASL, TASL, and PTASL | 20.7%(N=103) | 7.6%(N=38) | 13.1%(N=65) | 25.6%(N=127) | 41.4%(N=206) | 12.3%(N=61) |
| Familiarity with vocational rehabilitation and its various settings/community partners (e.g., appointments, job shadowing, job coaching, on the job training, job interviews, career counseling) | 21.7%(N=108) | 7.4%(N=37) | 14.3%(N=71) | 35.2%(N=175) | 29.8%(N=148) | 13.3%(N=66) |
| Frequency of Competency Exhibited by Interpreters (N=497) | Summary Almost Always/ Very Often | Almost always | Very often | Often | Not often | Almost Never |
| Knowledge and understanding of hearing loss and vision loss | 35.2%(N=175) | 11.3%(N=56) | 23.3%(N=116) | 38.8%(N=193) | 23.9%(N=119) | 2.6%(N=13) |
| Knowledge of different types of communication options and techniques needed for tactile communication, and the ability to match an individual’s language preference (signed languages, close vision/tactile, haptics) | 23.7%(N=118) | 7.2%(N=36) | 16.5%(N=82) | 36.2%(N=180) | 35.6%(N=177) | 4.4%(N=22) |
| Respect for diversity in the DeafBlind community | 39.8%(N=198) | 18.1%(N=90) | 21.7%(N=108) | 35.4%(N=176) | 21.3%(N=106) | 3.4%(N=17) |
| Respect for DeafBlind individuals’ autonomy - making their own decisions | 34.2% (N=170) | 14.7%(N=73) | 19.5%(N=97) | 35.4%(N=176) | 25.8%(N=128) | 4.6%(N=23) |
| Knowledge and understanding of accessibility and how to use various technologies (e.g., ALDs, visual description, orientation and mobility) | 15.9%(N=79) | 4.8%(N=24) | 11.1%(N=55) | 29.2%(N=145) | 43.5%(N=216) | 11.5%(N=57) |
| An understanding of the different interpreting demands between visual ASL and tactile ASL (e.g., adding visual or audio description of the visual environment) | 23.1%(N=115) | 9.5%(N=47) | 13.7%(N=68) | 31.8%(N=158) | 35.6%(N=177) | 9.5%(N=47) |
| Fluency in ASL, TASL, and PTASL | 20.7%(N=103) | 7.6%(N=38) | 13.1%(N=65) | 25.6%(N=127) | 41.4%(N=206) | 12.3%(N=61) |
| Familiarity with vocational rehabilitation and its various settings/community partners (e.g., appointments, job shadowing, job coaching, on the job training, job interviews, career counseling) | 21.7%(N=108) | 7.4%(N=37) | 14.3%(N=71) | 35.2%(N=175) | 29.8%(N=148) | 13.3%(N=66) |

## Ranking of Competency in Terms of Importance

Please note that out of the 436 respondents who answered the question on ranking, 83.5% (N=364) are currently working as interpreters, while 77.5% (N=282) are also DeafBlind interpreters.

Figure 2 shows the average rankings for the eight competencies in terms of importance. **A lower average indicates higher importance.** Respect for DeafBlind individuals’ autonomy was ranked as most important for a DeafBlind interpreter to have. Familiarity with vocational rehabilitation ranked lowest.

### Figure 2. Average Ranking of Competency in Terms of Importance

Figure 3 shows both the high and low ranking for each competency. While three in ten (29.8%l N=130) ranked respect for DeafBlind individuals’ autonomy as the most important competency among DeafBlind interpreters, few (9.6%; N=42) ranked it lowest among the eight competencies. In contrast, while 14.7% (N=64) ranked familiarity with vocational rehabilitation as the highest in importance, over half (50.9%; N=222) gave it the lowest ranking. This is by far the highest proportion among all eight competencies. As a score closer to ‘8’ means the lowest importance, its average rating of 6.1 demonstrates this further. (Table 6 shows the rankings in detail).

### Figure 3. Rankings of Competency in Terms of Importance

Table 6 shows the rankings for the eight competencies in detail.

### Table 6. Rankings of Competencies in Terms of Importance – Detailed Results

| **Rating of Competency (N=436)** | **1 (Highest)** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8 (Lowest)** | **Average Rating** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Knowledge and understanding of hearing loss and vision loss | 9.9%(N=43) | 8.0%(N=35) | 12.6%(N=55) | 7.6%(N=33) | 13.5%(N=59) | 14.7%(N=64) | 18.1%(N=79) | 15.6%(N=68) | 5.0 |
| Knowledge of different types of communication options and techniques needed for tactile communication, and the ability to match an individual’s language preference (signed languages, close vision/tactile, haptics) | 14.7%(N=64) | 16.7%(N=72) | 18.1%(N=79) | 16.3%(N=71) | 11.5%(N=50) | 11.2%(N=49) | 7.3%(N=32) | 4.1%(N=18) | 3.8 |
| Respect for diversity in the DeafBlind community | 11.0%(N=48) | 20.2%(N=88) | 14.0%(N=61) | 15.8%(N=69) | 13.8%(N=60) | 11.0%(N=48) | 9.2%(N=40) | 5.0%(N=22) | 4.0 |
| Respect for DeafBlind individuals’ autonomy - making their own decisions  | 29.8%(N=130) | 19.5%(N=85) | 8.7%(N=38) | 13.1%(N=57) | 7.6%(N=33) | 4.8%(N=21) | 6.9%(N=30) | 9.6%(N=42) | 3.4 |
| Knowledge and understanding of accessibility and how to use various technologies (e.g., ALDs, visual description, orientation and mobility)  | 3.0%(N=13) | 8.5%(N=37) | 11.5%(N=50) | 9.4%(N=41) | 14.7%(N=64) | 22.7%(N=99) | 22.2%(N=97) | 8.0%(N=35) | 5.2 |
| An understanding of the different interpreting demands between visual ASL and tactile ASL (e.g., adding visual or audio description of the visual environment)  | 3.4%(N=15) | 10.1%(N=44) | 16.7%(N=73) | 20.0%(N=87) | 22.7%(N=99) | 18.6%(N=81) | 7.1%(N=31) | 1.4%(N=6) | 4.4 |
| Fluency in ASL, TASL, and PTASL | 13.5%(N=59) | 11.9%(N=52) | 16.5%(N=72) | 16.1%(N=70) | 12.6%(N=55) | 12.8%(N=56) | 11.2%(N=49) | 5.3%(N=23) | 4.1 |
| Familiarity with vocational rehabilitation and its various settings/community partners (e.g., appointments, job shadowing, job coaching, on the job training, job interviews, career counseling)  | 14.7%(N=64) | 5.0%(N=22) | 1.8%(N=8) | 1.8%(N=8) | 3.7%(N=16) | 4.1%(N=18) | 17.9%(N=78) | 50.9%(N=222) | 6.1 |

# Interpreting Services

## Use of Interpreting Service

Over half (56.7%; N=345) of respondents have used interpreting services at some time.

## Most Important for DeafBlind Interpreter to Possess

Clearly, knowledge of tactile or protactile ASL (42.3%; N=145) is viewed as most important for a DeafBlind interpreter to possess. Also viewed as most important by many (27.7%; N=95) is respect. Voicing skills, on the other hand, are not seen as most important in a DeafBlind interpreter (1.7%; N=6).

### Table 7: Most Important for DeafBlind Interpreter to Possess

| **Base: Have Used Interpreting Services (N=343)** | **Percent** | **Count** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Knowledge of tactile/protactile ASL  | 42.3 | 145 |
| Respect | 27.7 | 95 |
| Description of environmental information and the social mood and attitude in a setting | 13.1 | 45 |
| Signing skills | 7.6 | 26 |
| Positive Attitude | 7.6 | 26 |
| Voicing skills | 1.7 | 6 |

# Vocational Rehabilitation Services

## Use of Interpreting Services

Nearly one in four (23.7%; N=144) of all respondents say they have received vocational rehabilitation (VR) services at some point. Among these, 18.3% (N=26) are currently receiving VR services.

Respondents tend to access VR services at a young age, with seven in ten (70.4%; N=100) doing so before age 21. (See Table 8).

### Table 8: Age First Accessed Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

| **Age Range****Base: Have Accessed VR Services (N=649)** | **Percent** | **Count** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Age 15-20 | 70.4 | 100 |
| Age 21-30 | 19.0 | 27 |
| Age 31-40 | 6.3 | 9 |
| Age 41-50 | 2.8 | 4 |
| Age 51-60 | 1.4 | 2 |
| Age 61-70 | 0.0 | 0 |
| Age 71 and above | 0.0 | 0 |

Among those respondents who are currently receiving VR services, over two in five (42.3%; N=11) have worked with their current counselor for less than one year.

### Figure 4: Length of Time Working with Current VR Counselor

## Interpreting Services through Vocational Rehabilitation

Among respondents who indicated they had received VR services, more than two in five (44.4%; N=63) have used interpreters provided by a vocational rehabilitation agency at some time (for appointments, job shadowing, job interviews, etc.).

Among these, over two in three (68.3%; N=43) indicated they were satisfied with the interpreting services. Another one in five (22.2%; N=14) were not sure about their satisfaction with these interpreting services. The main reason cited for dissatisfaction was the belief that these interpreters were not highly skilled (83.3%; N=5).

### Table 9. Reasons for Dissatisfaction with Interpreting Services When Working with Vocational Rehabilitation

| **Reason****Base: Dissatisfied with Interpreting Services Provided by VR (N=6) (Multiple Responses Allowed)** | **Percent** | **Count** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| They were not highly skilled | 83.3 | 5 |
| I did not get to choose my interpreter | 16.7 | 1 |
| They were not available when I needed them | 0.0 | 0 |
| They didn’t have knowledge about the VR system | 0.0 | 0 |
| I’m not sure | 0.0 | 0 |

Among respondents who have not used interpreters provided by a VR agency, three in five (60.1%; N=47) stated that their counselor was able to communicate with them fluently. However, one in five (19.0%; N=14) also said the interpreters were not available when needed.

### Table 10. Reasons for Not Using Interpreter Provided by Vocational Rehabilitation

| **Reason****Base: Have Not Used Interpreting Services Provided by VR (N=77) (Multiple Responses Allowed)** | **Percent** | **Count** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| My counselor is able to communicate with me fluently | 60.1 | 47 |
| They were not available when I needed them | 19.0 | 14 |
| I was not aware of my communication choices | 15.6 | 12 |
| I do not use interpreters | 11.7 | 9 |

# Interpreters and Educational Background

## Working as an Interpreter

Among respondents who are either Hearing/Sighted, Hard of Hearing/Sighted, or Deaf/Sighted, over four in five (84.3%; N=484) are currently working as an interpreter. Three fourths (75.6%; N=366) are certified interpreters, with nearly two in three (62.0%; N=227) having completed an Interpreter Education Program. One in three (33.0%; N=75) earned an Associate’s degree, with slightly more (37.4%; N=85) earning a Bachelor’s.

### Figure 5. Interpreting Degree Earned

Over half (52.9%; N=120) of those who graduated from an Interpreter Training Program did so since 2001.

### Table 11. Time of Graduation from Interpreter Education Program

| **Years****Base: Graduated from Interpreter Education Program (N=227)** | **Percent** | **Count** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1970-1980 | 7.0 | 16 |
| 1981-1990 | 15.4 | 35 |
| 1991-2000 | 24.7 | 56 |
| 2001-2010 | 31.3 | 71 |
| 2011-2017 | 21.6 | 49 |

## Working as DeafBlind Interpreters

Among the respondents indicating that they are currently working as an interpreter, seven in ten provide interpreting services for the DeafBlind community (72.6%; N=350). Among these DeafBlind interpreters, three in four (75.7%; N=265) stated they are certified interpreters. While the majority of DeafBlind interpreters identified as Hearing/Sighted (79.7%; N=279), another 17.1% (N=61) identified as Deaf/Sighted, and 2.9% (N=10) identified as Hard of Hearing/Sighted.

American Sign Language (88.5%; N=309) is the most widely used form of communication when interpreting for the DeafBlind community, closely followed by close vision interpreting (84.5%; N=295) and Tactile Sign Language (83.4%; N=291). Protactile American Sign Language (PTASL) is used by nearly half (48.4%; N=169) of DeafBlind interpreters.

### Table 12. Method of Communication/Language When Interpreting for DeafBlind Individuals

| **Method/Language****Base: Currently Provide DeafBlind Interpreting Services (N=349) (Multiple Responses Allowed)** | **Percent** | **Count** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| American Sign Language (ASL) | 88.5 | 309 |
| Close vision interpreting | 84.5 | 295 |
| Tactile Sign Language (TASL) | 83.4 | 291 |
| Protactile American Sign Language (PTASL) | 48.4 | 169 |
| Other (e.g., draw pictures, gestures, use props) | 26.4 | 92 |
| Haptics/Touch Signals | 23.8 | 83 |
| Oral interpreting | 13.8 | 48 |
| Cued Speech | 0.6 | 2 |

Nearly half of DeafBlind interpreters (47.3%; N=165) have spent less than 21 hours interpreting for this community in the past year. However, there is a wide range of interpreting hours, with some respondents (14.9%; N=52) only interpreting for just up to five hours, while 14 (4.0%) respondents indicated they interpreted for over 400 hours in the past year.

### Table 13. Hours in Past Year Providing Interpreting for DeafBlind Individuals

| **Hours****Base: Currently Provide DeafBlind Interpreting Services (N=349)** | **Percent** | **Count** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 0-5 hours | 14.9 | 52 |
| 6-10 hours | 20.1 | 70 |
| 11-20 hours | 12.3 | 43 |
| 21-30 hours | 9.2 | 32 |
| 31-40 hours | 7.7 | 27 |
| 41-50 hours | 6.9 | 24 |
| 51-100 hours | 11.5 | 40 |
| 101-200 hours | 4.9 | 17 |
| 201-300 hours | 5.4 | 19 |
| 301-400 hours | 3.2 | 11 |
| 401 hours and above | 4.0 | 14 |

## Training to Interpret for DeafBlind Individuals

While workshops, trainings, and conferences are the most widely used forms of training for DeafBlind interpreters (79.4%; N=277), more informal training via DeafBlind community members or social activities (72.8%; N=254) is also mentioned. Three in five received training through other experienced DeafBlind interpreters (59.6%; N=208). Over two in five (44.1%; N=154) indicated that their training for DeafBlind interpreting was received through an Interpreter Training Program.

### Figure 6. Training to Interpret for DeafBlind People

Just over one in three respondents (36.6%; N=123) who received training for DeafBlind interpreting expressed high satisfaction with their training. Over one in five (22.6%; N=76) were definitely not satisfied. Among those who are not satisfied or only somewhat satisfied with the training they received for DeafBlind interpreting, nearly all (92.0%; N=213) are interested in additional training.

### Table 14. Satisfaction with Training to Work with DeafBlind Individuals

| **Satisfaction****Base: Received Training to Interpret for DeafBlind (N=336)** | **Percent** | **Count** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Net: Extremely/Very Satisfied | 36.6 | 123 |
| Extremely satisfied | 10.1 | 34 |
| Very satisfied | 26.5 | 89 |
| Somewhat satisfied | 40.8 | 137 |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | 13.7 | 46 |
| Very dissatisfied | 5.4 | 18 |
| Extremely dissatisfied | 3.6 | 12 |

# Demographic Information Survey Respondents

## Geographic Distribution

Respondents are widely distributed across the United States, with California providing one in ten (11.4%: N=70) of the respondents. Minnesota (6.9%; N=42) and Washington (7.4%; N=45) provided the next highest number of respondents. No respondents resided in Delaware, Montana, Puerto Rico, or Rhode Island.

### Table 15. Geographic Distribution of Respondents

| **State (N=612)** | **Percent** | **Count** | **State (N=612)** | **Percent** | **Count** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Alabama | 0.7 | 4 | Montana | 0.0 | 0 |
| Alaska | 0.2 | 1 | Nebraska | 0.7 | 4 |
| Arizona | 2.0 | 12 | Nevada | 0.7 | 4 |
| Arkansas | 0.5 | 3 | New Hampshire | 0.8 | 5 |
| California | 11.4 | 70 | New Jersey | 1.3% | 8 |
| Colorado | 1.8 | 11 | New Mexico | 0.8 | 5 |
| Connecticut | 0.5 | 3 | New York | 5.1 | 31 |
| Delaware | 0.0 | 0 | North Carolina | 4.7 | 29 |
| District of Columbia | 1.5 | 9 | North Dakota | 0.3 | 2 |
| Florida | 3.4 | 21 | Ohio | 5.1 | 31 |
| Georgia | 1.3 | 8 | Oklahoma | 1.0 | 6 |
| Hawaii | 0.2 | 1 | Oregon | 6.0 | 37 |
| Idaho | 1.0 | 6 | Pennsylvania | 2.1 | 13 |
| Illinois | 2.6 | 16 | Puerto Rico | 0.0 | 0 |
| Indiana | 1.3 | 8 | Rhode Island | 0.0 | 0 |
| Iowa | 1.1 | 7 | South Carolina | 0.7 | 4 |
| Kansas | 1.0 | 6 | South Dakota | 0.5 | 3 |
| Kentucky | 0.7 | 4 | Tennessee | 0.5 | 3 |
| Louisiana | 0.7 | 4 | Texas | 5.1 | 31 |
| Maine | 0.8 | 5 | Utah | 2.0 | 12 |
| Maryland | 4.9 | 30 | Vermont | 0.3 | 2 |
| Massachusetts | 2.8 | 17 | Virginia | 1.8 | 11 |
| Michigan | 2.1 | 13 | Washington | 7.4 | 45 |
| Minnesota | 6.9 | 42 | Wisconsin | 0.5 | 3 |
| Mississippi | 0.5 | 3 | Wyoming | 1.5 | 9 |
| Missouri | 1.6 | 10 |  |  |  |

Table 16 shows the state of residence for 29 respondents that identified as DeafBlind, Deaf/Low Vision, Hard of Hearing/Low Vision, or Hard of Hearing/Blind.

### Table 16. Geographic Distribution of Deaf and Low/No Vision Respondents

| **State****(N=29)** | **Deaf/Low Vision** | **DeafBlind** | **Hard of Hearing/ Blind** | **Hard of Hearing/ Low Vision** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Alabama |   | 1 |   |   | 1 |
| Arizona | 1 |   |   |   | 1 |
| California | 1 | 1 |   | 2 | 4 |
| District of Columbia |   | 1 |   |   | 1 |
| Maryland |   | 3 |   |   | 3 |
| Minnesota |   | 2 |   |   | 2 |
| New York |   | 1 |   |   | 1 |
| North Carolina |   | 1 |   |   | 1 |
| Ohio |   | 2 |   | 1 | 3 |
| Oregon | 1 | 1 |   |   | 2 |
| Pennsylvania |   |   | 1 |   | 1 |
| Texas |   | 3 |   |   | 3 |
| Virginia |   | 1 |   |   | 1 |
| Washington | 1 | 3 |   |   | 4 |
| West Virginia |   |   |   | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 4 | 20 | 1 | 4 | 29 |

## Demographics

Over four in five respondents (82.0%; N=364) indicated they are White/Caucasian, with few (4.4%; N=19) subsequently indicating they are Hispanic. Nearly four in five (77.0%; N=332) are women. Nearly half (48.7%; N=210) are between the ages of 41 to 60.

### Table 17. Demographic Information

| **Demographic Criterion (Total N=444, Hispanic N=430, Gender N=431, Age N=431)****(Multiple Responses Allowed)** | **Percent** | **Count** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Race/Ethnicity: White/Caucasian | 82.0 | 364 |
| Race/Ethnicity: Black/African American | 4.1 | 18 |
| Race/Ethnicity: American Indian/Alaska Native | 3.2 | 14 |
| Race/Ethnicity: Asian | 1.1 | 5 |
| Race/Ethnicity: Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 0.7 | 3 |
| Race/Ethnicity: Prefer not to provide | 9.0 | 40 |
| Hispanic: Yes | 4.4 | 19 |
| Hispanic: No | 88.1 | 379 |
| Hispanic: Prefer not to provide | 7.4 | 32 |
| Gender: Male | 17.6 | 76 |
| Gender: Female | 77.0 | 332 |
| Gender: Trans/Non-binary | 0.0 | 0 |
| Gender: Prefer not to provide | 5.3 | 23 |
| Age: 18-21 | 0.2 | 1 |
| Age: 22-30 | 15.1 | 65 |
| Age: 31-40 | 22.3 | 96 |
| Age: 41-50 | 23.7 | 102 |
| Age: 51-60 | 25.1 | 108 |
| Age: 61-70 | 8.1 | 35 |
| Age: 70 and above | 1.4 | 6 |
| Age: Prefer not to provide | 4.2 | 18 |

## K-12 School Setting Attended

Among those respondents who did not identify as Hearing/Sighted, the majority attended a residential school for the Deaf (42.0%; N=66) or a mainstream school with a small group of other Deaf/DeafBlind or Hard of Hearing students (34.4%; N=54).

### Table 18. K-12 School Settings Attended

| **School Settings Attended (Multiple Responses Allowed)****Base: DeafBlind, Hearing/Low Vision, Hard of Hearing/Low Vision, Hard of Hearing/Blind, Hearing/Blind, or Deaf/Low Vision Deaf/Sighted, Hard Of Hearing/Sighted (N=157)** | **Percent** | **Count** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Mainstream school with no other Deaf or DeafBlind/Hard of Hearing\* students | 17.8 | 28 |
| Mainstream school with a small group of other Deaf or DeafBlind/Hard of Hearing\* students | 34.4 | 54 |
| Residential School for the Deaf  | 42.0 | 66 |
| Residential School for the Blind | 1.3 | 2 |
| Oral Program | 8.9 | 14 |
| Homeschool | 0.6 | 1 |
| Other  | 7.0 | 11 |

*\*Note: Question text adjusted based on identity*

## Method of Communication Used in School

Among those respondents who did not identify as hearing/sighted, American Sign language (ASL) (56.1%; N=88) and spoken English/Oral (41.4%; N=65) were the main communication methods in school. About one in four used either Pidgin Signed English or Total Communication/SimCom. Tactile Sign Language or Protactile Sign Language were not widely used; however, there were few respondents that are DeafBlind.

### Table 19: Method of Communication in School

| **Methods of Communication in School (Multiple Responses Allowed)****Base: DeafBlind, Deaf/Sighted, Hard of Hearing/Sighted, Hearing/Low Vision, Deaf/Low Vision, Hard of Hearing/Low Vision, Hard of Hearing/Blind, or Hearing/Blind (N=157)**  | **Percent** | **Count** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| American Sign Language (ASL) | 56.1 | 88 |
| Spoken English/Oral | 41.4 | 65 |
| Pidgin Signed English (PSE) | 26.8 | 42 |
| Total Communication/SimCom | 26.1 | 41 |
| Tactile Sign Language (TSL) | 1.9 | 3 |
| Cued Speech | 1.9 | 3 |
| Protactile American Sign Language (PTASL) | 1.3 | 2 |

## Primary Method of Communication

Over seven in ten (73.5%; N=447) respondents reported that their primary communication method is spoken English (over 70% identify as hearing/sighted). Another two in ten (22.5%; N=137) use American Sign Language as their primary language.

### Table 20: Primary Method of Communication

| **Method****(N=608)** | **Percent** | **Count** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Spoken English/Oral | 73.5 | 447 |
| American Sign Language (ASL) | 22.5 | 137 |
| Protactile American Sign Language (PTASL) | 1.5 | 9 |
| Pidgin Signed English (PSE) | 1.2 | 7 |
| Tactile Sign Language (TSL) | 0.8 | 5 |
| Total Communication/SimCom | 0.5 | 3 |
| Cued Speech | 0.0 | 0 |

## Primary Method of Communication by Relationship to DeafBlind Interpreting

Table 21 presents the primary method of communication broken out by respondents’ relationship to DeafBlind interpreting.

### Table 21: Primary Method of Communication by Relationship to DeafBlind Interpreting

| **Relationship to DeafBlind Interpreting** | **American Sign Language (ASL)** | **Tactile Sign Language (TSL)** | **Protactile American Sign Language (PTASL)** | **Pidgin Signed English (PSE)** | **Spoken English/ Oral** | **Total Communication / SimCom** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Interpreter (Deaf or Hearing) | 16.0% | 0.2% | 0.0% | 0.9% | 82.9% | 0.0% | 438 |
| Support Service Provider (SSP) | 40.9% | 2.3% | 0.0% | 2.3% | 54.6% | 0.0% | 44 |
| DeafBlind Individual | 28.0% | 8.0% | 36.0% | 0.0% | 24.0% | 4.0% | 25 |
| DeafBlind Advocacy Agency Personnel or Service Provider | 36.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 4.6% | 54.6% | 4.6% | 22 |
| Family member | 38.1% | 4.8% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 57.1% | 0.0% | 21 |
| Interpreter Educator | 35.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 58.8% | 5.9% | 17 |
| VR Counselor | 60.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 6.7% | 33.3% | 0.0% | 15 |
| Interpreter Referral Agency Personnel | 40.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 60.0% | 0.0% | 5 |
| Teacher of the Deaf/DeafBlind | 40.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 60.0% | 0.0% | 5 |

## Primary Method of Communication by Identity

Table 22 presents the primary method of communication by respondents’ identity with regard to hearing/vision.

### Table 22: Primary Method of Communication by Identity

| **Identity** | **American Sign Language (ASL)** | **Tactile Sign Language (TSL)** | **Protactile American Sign Language (PTASL)** | **Pidgin Signed English (PSE)** | **Spoken English/ Oral** | **Total Communication / SimCom** | **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| DeafBlind  | 31.6% | 15.8% | 42.1% | 0.0% | 5.3% | 5.3% | 19 |
| Deaf/Sighted  | 94.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 2.7% | 0.9% | 1.8% | 111 |
| Deaf/Low Vision  | 50.0% | 25.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 25.0% | 0.0% | 4 |
| Hard of Hearing/Sighted  | 35.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 5.0% | 60.0% | 0.0% | 20 |
| Hard of Hearing/Low Vision  | 25.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 75.0% | 0.0% | 4 |
| Hard of Hearing/Blind  | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 100% | 0.0% | 1 |
| Hearing/Sighted  | 3.6% | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.7% | 95.3% | 0.0% | 448 |
| Hearing/Low Vision  | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 100% | 0.0% | 1 |
| Hearing/Blind  | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0 |

## Years in Career Role

About one in three (34.7%; N=17) respondents who identified their primary relationship to DeafBlind interpreting as a VR counselor, interpreter educator, interpreter referral agency personnel, or DeafBlind advocacy personnel or service provider have been in this role for 21 years or longer. Likewise, over one in four (28.6%; N=14) have been in this career role for less than 6 years.

### Figure 7: Years in Career Role

# Conclusion

This needs assessment survey demonstrates that members of the DeafBlind community surveyed – the majority of which are current interpreters or DeafBlind interpreters – feel that all eight competencies as presented are important skills that DeafBlind interpreters should possess. Clearly, they also believe that DeafBlind interpreters do not exhibit these skills on a regular basis. In addition, nearly two in three DeafBlind interpreters who indicated they received training for their interpreting skills were not satisfied with their training and expressed a willingness to receive additional training. This demonstrates the need for improved training and education so that interpreters can better address the needs of the DeafBlind community. With the exception of a single sighted/hearing individual, only DeafBlind individuals indicated the use of protactile ASL as their primary method of communication, demonstrating a need for other individuals to become educated and familiar with this language.

# Appendix A: Needs Assessment Online Survey

## Online Needs Assessment Survey and Instructions

Thank you for participating in the DeafBlind Interpreting National Training and Resource (DBI) national needs assessment survey to assist us in identifying current and emerging practices in the field of DeafBlind interpreting. The goal of this survey is to identify specific competencies required for interpreters who work with DeafBlind consumers. The term DeafBlind will be used throughout the survey. We recognize the combined range of hearing and vision loss and how individuals may identify differently. For our survey purposes, the definition includes individuals who are DeafBlind, deaf-blind, and/or who have a combination of hearing and vision loss, those who are late-deafened with vision loss, hard of hearing with vision loss, close vision, or are oral DeafBlind.

This survey will take about 20 minutes to complete, depending on your answers to some of the questions. You must answer the first question so we can know you have read and agree with the Consent information. You may also save your work and continue at a later time if you wish. In order to save, please finish a page and click “Next.” Without this step, your answers to the questions will not be saved. **Please note that the survey will close Sunday, October 15, 2017, at 11:59pm and no responses can be accepted after this deadline.** Because this is a research project, we must provide you with information about the project and any risks involved. In order to complete the survey, you must review the brief informed consent information Next, please click on this link to the Informed consent form. It will open the informed consent form in another window. Please read it to understand your rights as a survey participant. You can also print the document. Once you have finished, click to close and return to this survey.

Q2 Please select your choice below. Clicking on the “Agree” button indicates that: - You have read the Consent information - You voluntarily agree to participate - You are 18 years of age or older

* Agree
* Disagree

Skip To: End of Survey If Q2 = Disagree

Q3 Q1. In which state do you currently reside?

▼ I do not reside in the United States ... Wyoming

Skip To: End of Survey If Q3 = I do not reside in the United States

Q4 Q2. Which of the following do you identify as?

* DeafBlind
* Deaf/Sighted
* Deaf/Low Vision
* Hard of Hearing/Sighted
* Hard of Hearing/Low Vision
* Hard of Hearing/Blind
* Hearing/Sighted
* Hearing/Low Vision
* Hearing/Blind

Q5 Q3. What is your primary method of communication?

* American Sign Language (ASL)
* Tactile Sign Language (TSL)
* Protactile American Sign Language (PTASL)
* Pidgin Signed English (PSE)
* Spoken English/Oral
* Total Communication/SimCom
* Cued Speech

Q6 Q4. What is your primary relationship to DeafBlind interpreting?

* DeafBlind Individual
* Interpreter (Deaf or Hearing)
* VR Counselor
* Interpreter Educator
* Interpreter Referral Agency Personnel
* DeafBlind Advocacy Agency Personnel or Service Provider
* Support Service Provider (SSP)
* Family member
* Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Display This Question:

If Q6 = VR Counselor

Or Q6 = Interpreter Educator

Or Q6 = Interpreter Referral Agency Personnel

Or Q6 = DeafBlind Advocacy Agency Personnel or Service Provider

Q7 Q5. How long have you been in this role?

* 0-5 years
* 6-10 years
* 11-15 years
* 15-20 years
* 21 years or more

Display This Question:

If Q4 = DeafBlind

Or Q4 = Hearing/Low Vision

Or Q4 = Hard of Hearing/Low Vision

Or Q4 = Hard of Hearing/Blind

Or Q4 = Hearing/Blind

Or Q4 = Deaf/Low Vision

Q8 Q6. Which of the following school settings did you attend during K-12?

* Mainstream school with no other Deaf or DeafBlind students
* Mainstream school with a small group of other Deaf or DeafBlind students
* Residential School for the Deaf
* Residential School for the Blind
* Oral Program
* Homeschool
* Other

Display This Question:

If Q4 = Deaf/Sighted

Or Q4 = Hard of Hearing/Sighted

And Q4 = Hearing/Sighted

Q9 Q7. Which of the following school settings did you attend during K-12? Please check all that apply.

* Mainstream school with no other Deaf or hard of hearing students
* Mainstream school with a small group of other Deaf or hard of hearing students
* Residential School for the Deaf
* Residential School for the Blind
* Oral Program
* Homeschool
* Other

Display This Question:

If Q4 = DeafBlind

Or Q4 = Deaf/Sighted

Or Q4 = Hard of Hearing/Sighted

Or Q4 = Hearing/Low Vision

Or Q4 = Deaf/Low Vision

Or Q4 = Hard of Hearing/Low Vision

Or Q4 = Hard of Hearing/Blind

Or Q4 = Hearing/Blind

Q10 Q8. What method of communication did you use in school? Please check all that apply.

* American Sign Language (ASL)
* Tactile Sign Language (TSL)
* Protactile American Sign Language (PTASL)
* Pidgin Signed English (PSE)
* Spoken English/Oral
* Total Communication/SimCom
* Cued Speech

Q11 Q9. Have you ever used interpreting services?

* Yes
* No

Display This Question:

If Q11 = Yes

Q12 Q10. Which of the following do you consider to be most important for a DeafBlind interpreter to possess?

* Voicing skills
* Signing skills
* Knowledge of tactile/protactile ASL
* Positive Attitude
* Respect
* Description of environmental information and the social mood and attitude in a setting

Q13 Q11. Have you ever received Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services?

* Yes
* No

Display This Question:

If Q13 = Yes

Q14 Q12. At what age did you first access VR services?

* 15-20
* 21-30
* 31-40
* 41-50
* 51-60
* 61-70
* 71 and above

Display This Question:

If Q13 = Yes

Q15 Q13. Are you currently receiving VR services?

* Yes
* No

Display This Question:

If Q15 = Yes

Q16 Q14. How long have you been working with your current VR counselor?

* Less than 1 year
* 1-2 years
* 3-4 years
* 5 or more years

Display This Question:

If Q13 = Yes

Q17 Q15. Have you ever used interpreters provided by VR (appointments, job shadowing, job coaching, on the job training, job interviews, career counseling)?

* Yes
* No

Display This Question:

If Q17 = Yes

Q18 Q16. Were you satisfied with the interpreting services provided when working with VR?

* Yes
* No
* Not sure

Display This Question:

If Q18 = No

Q19 Q17. Why were you not satisfied with your interpreting services provided when working with VR? Please check all that apply.

* They were not highly skilled
* I did not get to choose my interpreter
* They were not available when I needed them
* They didn’t have knowledge about the VR system
* I'm not sure

Display This Question:

If Q17 = No

Q20 Q18. Why have you not used an interpreter provided by VR? Please check all that apply.

* My counselor is able to communicate with me fluently
* I do not use interpreters
* They were not available when I needed them
* I was not aware of my communication choices

Display This Question:

If Q4 = Deaf/Sighted

Or Q4 = Hard of Hearing/Sighted

Or Q4 = Hearing/Sighted

Q21 Q19. Are you currently working as an interpreter?

* Yes
* No

Display This Question:

If Q21 = Yes

Q22 Q20. Are you a certified interpreter?

* Yes
* No

Display This Question:

If Q22 = Yes

Q23 Q21. Did you complete an Interpreter Education Program?

* Yes
* No

Display This Question:

If Q23 = Yes

Q24 Q22. What is the highest interpreting degree that you earned?

* Certificate
* AA
* BA
* MA
* PhD

Display This Question:

If Q23 = Yes

Q25 Q23. When did you graduate?

* 1970-1980
* 1981-1990
* 1991-2000
* 2001-2010
* 2011-2017

Display This Question:

If Q21 = Yes

Q26 Q24. Do you currently provide interpreting for DeafBlind individuals?

* Yes
* No

Display This Question:

If Q26 = Yes

Q27 Q25. What methods of communication/languages do you use when you interpret for DeafBlind individuals? Please check all that apply.

* American Sign Language (ASL)
* Protactile American Sign Language (PTASL)
* Tactile Sign Language (TSL)
* Close vision interpreting
* Oral interpreting
* Haptics/Touch Signals
* Cued Speech
* Other (e.g., draw pictures, gestures, use props)

Display This Question:

If Q26 = Yes

Q28 Q26. Over the past year, how many hours did you provide DeafBlind interpreting?

* 0-5 hours
* 6-10 hours
* 11-20 hours
* 21-30 hours
* 31-40 hours
* 41-50 hours
* 51-100 hours
* 101-200 hours
* 201-300 hours
* 301-400 hours
* 401 hours and above

Display This Question:

If Q26 = Yes

Q29 Q27. Where did you receive your training to work with DeafBlind individuals? Please check all that apply.

* DeafBlind community members/Social activities
* Interpreter Education Program/Interpreter Training Program
* Workshops/Trainings/Conferences
* Other experienced DeafBlind interpreters
* ⊗I did not receive any training

Display This Question:

If Q29 = DeafBlind community members/Social activities

Or Q29 = Interpreter Education Program/Interpreter Training Program

Or Q29 = Workshops/Trainings/Conferences

Or Q29 = Other experienced DeafBlind interpreters

Q30 Q28. How satisfied are you with the amount of training you received to interpret for DeafBlind individuals?

* Extremely satisfied
* Very satisfied
* Somewhat satisfied
* Somewhat dissatisfied
* Very dissatisfied
* Extremely dissatisfied

Display This Question:

If Q30 = Somewhat satisfied

Or Q30 = Somewhat dissatisfied

Or Q30 = Very dissatisfied

Or Q30 = Extremely dissatisfied

Q31 Q29. Are you interested in receiving more training to interpret for DeafBlind individuals?

* Yes
* No
* Not sure

Q32 Based on our research, we have identified the following Competencies (knowledge and skills) interpreters should possess when interpreting for DeafBlind individuals. Read each statement carefully and rate how important the Competency is to you, using a scale from 1 (not being important) to 10 (very important), and how often you see interpreters demonstrating the Competency. Here are two definitions that will assist you: **Protactile ASL** is an emerging tactual language, borne out of American Sign Language, with its own linguistic features and cultural parameters, distinct from ASL. PTASL interpreting utilizes the receiver’s hands and body as a reference for communication, conveying information and affirming the DeafBlind individual’s autonomy through touch. **TASL** is a modality that makes the reception of visual ASL accessible through touch.

Q33 Q30. Please rate each competency in terms of its importance to you; then rate how often you see interpreters demonstrate the competency.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Importance of Competency | See interpreters demonstrate Competency |
|  | 1 (Not important) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 (very important) | Almost always | Very often | Often | Not often | Almost never |
| Knowledge and understanding of hearing loss and vision loss.  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Knowledge of different types of communication options and techniques needed for tactile communication, and the ability to match an individual’s language preference (signed languages, close vision/tactile, haptics)  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Respect for diversity in the DeafBlind community  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Respect for DeafBlind individuals’ autonomy - making their own decisions  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Knowledge and understanding of accessibility and how to use various technologies (e.g., ALDs, Visual description, orientation and mobility)  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| An understanding of the different interpreting demands between visual ASL and tactile ASL (e.g., adding visual or audio description of the visual environment)  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Fluency in ASL, TASL, and PTASL  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Familiarity with Vocational Rehabilitation and its various settings/community partners (e.g., (appointments, job shadowing, job coaching, on the job training, job interviews, career counseling)  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Q34 Q31. Please rank these eight Competencies in terms of their importance, with 1 = highest in importance and 8 = lowest in importance.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Knowledge and understanding of hearing loss and vision loss.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Knowledge of different types of communication options and techniques needed for tactile communication, and the ability to match an individual’s language preference (signed languages, close vision/tactile, haptics)

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Respect for diversity in the DeafBlind community

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Respect for DeafBlind individuals’ autonomy - making their own decisions

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Knowledge and understanding of accessibility and how to use various technologies (e.g., ALDs, Visual description, orientation and mobility)

\_\_\_\_\_\_ An understanding of the different interpreting demands between visual ASL and tactile ASL (e.g., adding visual or audio description of the visual environment)

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Fluency in ASL, TASL, and PTASL

\_\_\_\_\_\_ Familiarity with Vocational Rehabilitation and its various settings/community partners (e.g., (appointments, job shadowing, job coaching, on the job training, job interviews, career counseling)

Q35 Q32. If you would like to be contacted about future training opportunities please provide the following information:

* First name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Last name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* City: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* State: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Zipcode: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Email address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* ⊗Prefer not to provide

Q36 Q33. Which of the following represents your race/ethnicity? Please check all that apply.

* White/Caucasian
* Black/African American
* American Indian or Alaska Native
* Asian
* Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
* ⊗Prefer not to provide

Q37 Q34. Are you Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish?

* Yes
* No
* Prefer not to provide

Q38 Q35. What is your gender?

* Male
* Female
* Trans/Non-Binary
* Prefer not to provide

Q39 Q36. What is your age?

* 18-21
* 22-30
* 31-40
* 41-50
* 51-60
* 61-70
* 70 and above
* Prefer not to provide
1. Support Service Provider (SSP): A trained worker who has appropriate communication skills (typically this means at least a minimum level of fluency in sign language) and the ability to guide a blind/DeafBlind person safely as well as skill in providing information about the visual environment. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)