



# **Guidelines for Library Services to Deaf People**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**

(Revised edition of Professional Report No. 24)

**Edited by**

**John Michael Day**

**International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions  
IFLA Professional Reports, Nr. 62**

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**IFLA Headquarters, The Hague, 2000**

This publication is written for a general library audience. It is anticipated that national library associations may wish to modify or alter certain expressions that have definitions different to those assumed here. As these guidelines show, “. . . they are statements of general principles . . . [they] are international in scope . . . [and] they must be tempered by national and local limitations on practicality.”

J.M.D.

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# 1. PREFACE

The need for international guidelines initially occurred during a conference on library services for deaf people hosted by the State Library of New South Wales, Australia in 1988 and the formal guidelines were developed over the next three years with final acceptance and publication by IFLA in 1991. Over these past 10 years, there have been enormous advances in technology, specifically the development of the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW), which have fundamentally broadened the way libraries store and provide access to information, e.g., online catalogs and digital information databases. Likewise, these same technological advances have had a major impact on the way the deaf community communicates between and among its members and with individuals and organizations in the larger regional, national, and international communities, e.g., the electronic presence of the Kwa Zulu Natal Deaf Association on the WWW <<http://www.tradepage.co.za/kznda/>> is representative of the extent to which the web has been adopted by deaf people around the world. Because the Internet and the WWW are such major advances in communication and because communication is at the center of provision of library services to the deaf community, revision of the original guidelines was necessary. In addition, the 1991 guidelines have received the normal review that occurs as guidelines are put into practice; and, more extensively as the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA), a division of the American Library Association, modified these IFLA guidelines in the development of their Guidelines for Library and Information Services for the American Deaf Community, 1996, ed. Martha L. Goddard. Just as ASCLA derived benefit from the original IFLA guidelines in the development of their own publication, so too has this 2<sup>nd</sup> edition built upon the work of ASCLA.

The outline and rationale for the development of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition was presented to IFLA's Section of Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons (LSDP) during the 1998 IFLA Congress in Amsterdam and was shared with the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) during the autumn of the same year. The first formal draft was subsequently presented to the LSDP Standing Committee during its meetings in Aberystwyth, Wales in March of 1999 and, incorporating changes as therein suggested, presented to the WFD for review and endorsement during their congress in, Australia, August, 1999. The final draft was reviewed and accepted by the LSDP Standing Committee later that same month during the IFLA Congress in, Thailand and released to IFLA's Publication Committee for final acceptance and publication.

The following persons are the members of the Standing Committee of the Section of Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons who have given freely of their time, effort, experience, and expertise in the development of this 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

J. Day (Chair)	United States of America
B. Tronbacke (Secretary/Treasurer)	Sweden
K.-J. Carlsen	Norway
P. Craddock	United Kingdom
V. Eltsova-Strelkova	Russian Federation
A. Galler	Canada
C. Guerin	France
B. Irvall	Sweden
S. Lithgow	United Kingdom
V. Lehmann	United States of America
C. Mayol Fernandez	Spain
G. Skat Nielsen	Denmark
T. Pages Gilibets	Spain
N. Panella	United States of America
D. Stefanova	Bulgaria
G. Strong	United States of America
M. L. Toran Marin	Spain
J. Diaz Roque	Cuba

Special recognition is also due to Martha L. Goddard. As editor of the ASCLA Guidelines for Library and Information Services for the American Deaf Community, her own hard work and her leadership of the ASCLA Library Services to the Deaf Forum in the review of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of these IFLA guidelines for the development of the ASCLA guidelines provided an invaluable stepping-stone in the development of this 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

The development of original guidelines for the provision of library services to deaf people had been an interest of the Working Group to Identify the Needs of the Deaf within the IFLA Section of Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons for several years and was written in conjunction with the Division of Libraries Serving the General Public's project of preparation of guidelines as part of the 1988 Medium Term Programme of the Federation.<sup>1</sup> This project developed as a result of discussions and correspondence between the editor and Mr. William Anderson of Leeds Polytechnic, United Kingdom; Ms. Alice Hagemeyer of the District of Columbia Public Library, USA; and Ms. Valerie Moon of the State Library of New South Wales, Australia. The original outline from which subsequent drafts developed was distributed for review and comment at the meeting of the Library Services to the Deaf Forum of the American Library Association at its June, 1989 conference in Dallas, Texas and at the Deaf Way Conference and Celebration in Washington, D.C. in July, 1989. The initial draft, which included modifications from the Library Services to the Deaf Forum and Deaf Way meetings, was

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<sup>1</sup> International Federation of Library Associations. Professional Board. Medium Term Programme 1986 - 1991. The Hague: IFLA Headquarters, 1988, pp 37 & 39.

reviewed by the Working Group and the Section during the 1989 IFLA General Conference in Paris and, after incorporating changes from that initial review, the draft was submitted to the World Federation for the Deaf for its examination. The proposed guidelines were subsequently reviewed by the World Federation for the Deaf during the meeting of its Management Committee in January 1990 in Vienna and by the Working Group and the Section Standing Committee in April. The modified draft was submitted for evaluation by the World Federation of the Deaf at its Board of Trustees meeting in Brighton in August 1990 where it was accepted for endorsement by the Federation. The final draft of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition then, with the endorsement of the World Federation of the Deaf was brought before the Section of Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions where it received formal adoption at the 1990 General Conference in Stockholm.

The following documents were reviewed in the course of the development of these guidelines in order to ensure comprehensive coverage of the subject and to assist with the determination of consistent style and format. Particular credit must be given to Library Service to the Deaf and Hearing Impaired. Mrs. Dalton's work served as an overall benchmark in the preparation of these guidelines.

American Library Association. Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies. "Techniques for Library Service to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing." INTERFACE. Fall, 1981.

American Library Association. Committee on Standards. ALA Standards Manual. Chicago, Illinois: American Library Association, January 1983.

Anderson, William. "Helping the Hard of Hearing". Unpublished manuscript, 1985.

Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies. Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Standards for Multitype Library Cooperatives and Networks. "Multitype Draft Standards". INTERFACE. Vol. 11, (Fall 1988) 1, p. 4.

Carroll, Frances Laverne, and Beilke, Patricia F. Guidelines for the Planning and Organization of School Library Centres, rev. ed., Paris: Unesco, 1979.

Cylke, Frank Kurt, ed. Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped: An International Approach. München, etc.: K.G. Saur (IFLA Publications 16), 1979.

Dalton, Phyllis I. Library Service to the Deaf and Hearing Impaired. Phoenix, Arizona: The Oryx Press, 1985.

Hagemeyer, Alice. Tentative Guidelines for Library and Information Services to the Deaf Community. paper prepared for the American Library Association. (Photocopy.), 1988.

International Federation of Library Associations. Section of Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons. Guidelines for Libraries Serving Hospital Patients and Disabled People in the Community. The Hague: IFLA Headquarters, 1984 (IFLA Professional Reports, No. 2).

International Federation of Library Associations. Section of Public Libraries. Guidelines for Public Libraries. München, etc.: K.G. Saur (IFLA Publications 36), 1986.

International Federation of Library Associations. Section of Public Libraries. Standards for Public Libraries. Pullach/München: Verlag Dokumentation, 1973.

Lynch, Beverly, ed. "Standards for University Libraries". IFLA Journal, Vol. 13, (1987) 2, pp 120-25.

Massis, Bruce E., Ed. Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped: An International Approach, Vol. 2. München, etc.: K.G. Saur (IFLA Publications 23), 1982.

Moon, Valerie. Opening Doors for Closed Ears: Proceedings of the Conference on Library Services for Deaf and Hearing Impaired People. Sydney: State Library of New South Wales, 1988.

New York Library Association. Roundtable for Libraries Serving Special Populations. Guidelines for Libraries Serving Persons with a Hearing Impairment or a Visual Impairment. New York: New York Library Association, July 1987.

Sorenson, Liene S. Taking Action to Enhance Public Library Services for Persons with Disabilities. Skokie, Illinois: Skokie Accessible Library Services, Skokie Public Library, 1988.

The following list of persons includes the 1990 members of the Standing Committee of the Section of Libraries Serving Disadvantaged Persons and others who gave freely of their time, effort, experience, and expertise in the development of the original guidelines.

W. Anderson	United Kingdom
J. Beaudin	United States of America
S. Bruhn	Australia
K-J. Carlsen	Norway
G. Chavanis	France
J. Coleman	United States of America
F. Czajkowski	Poland
P.I. Dalton	United States of America
A. Dobbie	New Zealand



A. Galler  
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V. Moon  
P. Noaks  
M. Peillon  
B. Pors  
G. Rappaport-Bathenau  
M. Starmans  
K. Thulin  
H. Wagenaar

Canada  
Finland  
United States of America  
The Netherlands  
Japan  
Australia  
Sweden  
Federal Republic of Germany  
Australia  
United Kingdom  
France  
Denmark  
France  
The Netherlands  
Sweden  
The Netherlands

Particular recognition and credit must be given to the World Federation of the Deaf for its review, input, and endorsement of both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> editions of these guidelines and it should be noted that both federations, IFLA and WFD, have established a formal joint Consultative Status relationship.

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|  
Chair, Section of Libraries  
Serving Disadvantaged Persons

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 CONTEXT

For a number of reasons, most libraries have not considered focusing particular attention on the provision of services to persons who are deaf. Deafness has been called, with good reason, the “invisible handicap” because deaf people are not identifiable as deaf by casual observation and they tend to blend into the larger community. Additionally, people who are deaf from birth or from an early age often have difficulty reading and have a tendency to not use libraries. As a consequence, libraries and deaf people have mostly been unaware of each other; however, a substantial portion of the population is deaf and libraries have a responsibility to ensure that their collections and services are accessible to deaf people and that deaf people are aware of the services libraries can provide them.

The primary issue involved with the provision of services to deaf people is that communication often requires additional effort, knowledge, patience, and (where available) technological aids. The degree to which communicating with any individual deaf person requires these additional skills usually depends on the degree of hearing loss and the age at which the person experienced it, i.e., age of onset. Central to an understanding of these individual differences is an understanding of the difference that the age of onset can make. Generally, the older an individual is when the hearing loss is experienced, the more comfortable that individual is likely to be with indigenous oral and written languages. However, individuals who are born deaf or become deaf before acquiring speech may have speech that is difficult to understand or may use no speech at all, and may have difficulty with reading.

Because of this variation, and the variations in educational approaches, deaf people frequently have been arranged and rearranged into assorted categories under assorted labels. Librarians need to be aware of this variation and of the controversies regarding education and communication modes in order to build comprehensive and impartial collections of materials about deafness and of related materials otherwise of concern and interest to both deaf and hearing people. In designing library programs for deaf people, it is often useful to have one term to encompass all of the persons affected. Therefore, for that purpose, the term “deaf community” will be used in this document to refer to the following groups as a whole: native sign language users; users of native sign language and written language of the general public; oralists; late-deafened adults; hearing impaired elderly people; minimal language users; hard of hearing individuals; and hearing members of deaf persons’ families. Professionals associated with services to the deaf community are also included. See “Deaf Community” under Section 4, “Definitions.”

Libraries are often in the unique position of being a community’s sole source of impartial information and, therefore, have a responsibility to collect and provide such information to their deaf clientele. It must be noted, however, that the primary goal of

any specialized program to the Deaf Community must be to provide equal access to all programs and services that are enjoyed by the library's hearing clientele. The establishment of specialized programs and services is in response to the recognition of the additional needs of deaf clientele but the specialized program should not constitute the totality of the deaf clients' library experience.

## **2.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

These guidelines that follow are meant to inform librarians about the library and information needs of deaf people and pertain to all libraries that have deaf persons as any portion of their clientele. They apply to all types of libraries including public, school, and academic, as well as special libraries serving government, commerce and industry, the arts, military, hospitals, prisons and other institutions. They are statements of general principles and, as such, contain no quantitative prescriptions. They are, however, meant to serve both as an encouragement to establish services for deaf persons and as a means to assess the completeness and quality of such services. As these guidelines are international in scope, it must be understood that they need to be tempered by national and local limitations on practicality, e.g., the application of guidelines regarding the use of technology and technological aids should be dropped where such is not available.

Additionally, this document should serve as a guide in the development of national guidelines for library services to deaf people, as it may be easily modified to conform to local circumstances. In the absence of any local guidelines, these guidelines should apply.

### **3. GUIDELINES**

#### **3.1 PERSONNEL**

- 3.1.1 Responsibility for the development, implementation, and operation of library services to the deaf community should be assigned to a professional librarian holding the degrees, certification, and/or training pertaining to such professional status.**

##### COMMENTARY

Libraries strive to provide the best service possible to their clientele. It is imperative that the same level of service available to the general constituency of the library be equally available to clientele who are deaf. In order to achieve this goal, the attention of a trained, professional librarian is necessary in the design and operation of the service. The eventual continuing level of professional attention focused on the service will be dependent on many factors including the size of the library, the size of its general community, and the size of its deaf community. However, the amount of professional staff time devoted to the service should be sufficient according to the demands and practicalities of each library's individual circumstances. In libraries with a very small deaf community, the minimum might be that the design and supervision of the service would be done by a professional librarian having responsibility for a larger service in the district.

- 3.1.2 Library staff should receive training focusing on the issues involved in providing services to the deaf community.**

##### COMMENTARY

In order to provide adequate and appropriate services to deaf people, it is necessary for staff persons to have an understanding of their special needs, including those relating to varying communication needs, deaf culture, special collections of materials, captioning of video programs, assistive listening devices, specialized alerting devices, technological communication aids, reading levels, etc. (see also 3.2.1 regarding staff training in communication techniques). In metropolitan areas, it may be possible to make arrangements with other local groups serving deaf people to provide staff awareness training on site. In other situations, it may only be possible to send one staff member to receive formal training and to have that person be responsible for providing training for the rest of the library staff.

**3.1.3 When selecting staff to be involved with the provision of services to deaf people, libraries should attempt to employ persons who have or are likely to be able to obtain credibility within the deaf community.**

COMMENTARY

As is the case with employing other minority groups, libraries have much to gain by hiring deaf staff members. Libraries may be able to hire one or more deaf professional librarians or non-professional staff members to have responsibilities for its services to the deaf community either full or part time. When selecting staff that will provide services to deaf people, libraries should, at a minimum, ensure that any person selected has the necessary training, background, and/or exhibits such personal characteristics as to lead one to expect that the person will be able to obtain credibility within the deaf community.

**3.1.4 Schools of librarianship should provide training in the provision of services to the deaf community as a normal part of their basic curriculum to prepare librarians for their professional qualifications and as a part of their continuing education programs for all levels of library staff.**

COMMENTARY

Many schools of librarianship currently offer training in how to serve diverse populations. Training in the provision of all types of services to deaf people should be a required part of the certification process for all professional librarians. This training might be a separate course wholly devoted to library services to the deaf community where the demand for such a course would justify its provision or it might logically be a part of a more general course on provision of services to all disadvantaged persons and/or people of diverse cultures.

**3.1.5 Libraries having responsibilities at the national level, or where applicable at an appropriate regional level, should establish an office or department responsible for provision of advisory and consultation services to all libraries within their geographical boundaries in order to assist them in the provision of services to the deaf community.<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>2</sup> International Federation of Library Associations. Section of Public Libraries. Guidelines for Public Libraries. München, etc.: K.G. Saur (IFLA Publications 36), 1986. See pp. 54-55, guideline #'s 6.9 and 6.10 under National Support Services.

## COMMENTARY

Establishment of an office or department having responsibilities for the provision of such services within a geographical area has several advantages. First, it would function as a formal conduit for a network among all libraries providing services to deaf people and, thereby, ensure that the latest techniques, services, materials, etc. are communicated among those libraries; and, second, such an office would function as an incentive in the establishment of such service in all libraries within the geographical area. Depending on many factors, including the size of the geographical area covered, the number of libraries affected, and the size of the overall deaf population, this office might be responsible solely for services to deaf people, or it might have broader responsibilities, including services to additional groups of disadvantaged persons.

- 3.1.6 Each national library association should establish a group within its structure that would function as that portion of its membership focusing on the provision of library services to the deaf community.**

## COMMENTARY

Librarians who are concerned with the provision of services to deaf people have much to gain by assembling to discuss issues of common interest, to make recommendations to the national association for action, and to share information. Additionally, such an assembly would be able to effectively function as an advocate of library services to the deaf community.

## 3.2 COMMUNICATION

- 3.2.1 All library staff should receive training in how to communicate effectively with deaf people.**

## COMMENTARY

People who are deaf communicate with hearing people in a variety of ways. Depending on their background, degree of hearing disability, cultural identity, and the situation, deaf people may use sign language, speak, write, gesture, or use any combination of the above. In the provision of library services, it is essential that library staff be aware of this variety and that they have the training necessary to know what to do in order to understand and to make themselves understood comfortably. Libraries with a large deaf clientele should seriously consider ensuring that at least one staff member who has responsibilities for the provision of services to deaf people be at least

moderately fluent in sign language and that other public service personnel have experience with basic signing as appropriate.

- 3.2.2 A text telephone (TTY) should be available at each main service point, e.g., the reference desk, in each library. Additionally, at least one TTY should be available for use by library clientele to make telephone calls from the library if the making of such calls is available to hearing clientele.<sup>3</sup>**

COMMENTARY

TTY's are the means by which deaf people make use of the telephone. Where hearing people can call into the library for reference services or to find information regarding library hours and other general information, and where libraries provide telephones for use by their clientele in making outgoing calls, those libraries should provide the means, i.e., TTY's, for deaf people to access those same services. All members of the library staff should receive training in the use of the TTY.

- 3.2.3 Telephones for use by library clientele or staff should be equipped with amplification.**

COMMENTARY

Amplifiers, i.e., volume control devices, assist persons with sufficient residual hearing to use the telephone without the use of a TTY. Libraries that provide telephones for use by their staff and clientele should provide handset amplifiers or other such assistive devices for persons who depend on them to use telephones effectively.

- 3.2.4 Libraries should ensure that their Internet presence is wholly accessible.**

COMMENTARY

Where libraries maintain an electronic presence on the Internet or World Wide Web, they need to make sure that all of the information presented is accessible to their deaf clientele. All audio tracks should be open-captioned and audio files should also be available as downloadable transcript files. Wherever audio feedback is given for interactions, e.g., a "click" sound when a web page

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<sup>3</sup> Recent advances in technology have made available new assistive devices that fall within this section on communication, e.g., TTY's (3.2.2), audio loops (3.2.6), etc. It is understood that these devices will not be readily available in many parts of the world and should be disregarded where such is the case. Nonetheless, the spirit of the guidelines in this section indicates that libraries should make use of whatever appropriate technological aids are available to them in the provision of services to their deaf population.

button is selected, visual feedback should also be given, e.g., the button flashes on the screen.

- 3.2.5 Libraries should use the latest advantages in technology for communicating with deaf people where such technology has proven beneficial within the deaf community.**

COMMENTARY

In addition to using TTY's for real-time communication with their deaf clientele, libraries should use whatever technology, largely accepted by the deaf community, in order to ensure easy and comfortable communication. For example, electronic mail (email) has proven to be a highly effective mode of communication among deaf people and between deaf and hearing people; and, wherever Internet services are available, email access to the library should be made available. As technology changes, libraries should be aware of communication modes accepted and widely used by their deaf clientele since, over time, email may be surpassed by newer, more effective means of communication.

- 3.2.6 Libraries should have communication aids such as assistive listening systems and equipment that can be used to support computer-assisted real-time captioning or computer-assisted note taking. These services should be available for meetings and programs upon request.**

COMMENTARY

Assistive listening systems, e.g., FM systems, infrared systems, audio loops, etc., are used by persons with hearing disabilities who need them to enhance auditory information. By using these assistive devices, many patrons can better understand lectures, meetings, music, and other programs. Computer-assisted real-time captioning and computer-assisted note taking allow patrons who do not benefit from interpreters or assistive listening devices to see a running text of information as it is being shared. Communications technology is changing rapidly, and libraries should maintain awareness of current developments.

- 3.2.7 Libraries with television viewing facilities should provide closed caption television decoders for use by their clientele.**



## COMMENTARY

Depending on the local captioning standard, libraries should be collecting videotapes for client use which are closed captioned, open captioned, or signed (see section 3.3.4). Where libraries are collecting closed-captioned videotapes, they should provide closed caption decoders so that the videotapes may be used by those persons depending on captioning for their understanding. Where libraries provide closed captioned videotapes for home use, they should also provide for loan of closed captioned decoders so that access to the same level of information and service is available to all deaf people regardless of their ability to purchase the technology for themselves.

- 3.2.8 Libraries should offer to provide sign language and oral interpreters, computer-assisted real-time captioning, or computer-assisted note taking services for all library-sponsored programs upon request.**

## COMMENTARY

Library-related programs that are open to the public, e.g., bibliographic instruction, computer orientation, research workshops, storytelling, etc., must be accessible to clientele who have a variety of communication needs. Sign language and/or oral interpreter services and/or electronic text services should be provided at the library's expense when any library user who depends on one of these accommodations has made a commitment to attend.

- 3.2.9 Libraries should install visible warning signals in order to alert deaf clientele to problems and emergencies.**

## COMMENTARY

Since deaf people cannot hear auditory signals such as fire alarms, public address and security alarming devices, it is essential that libraries install visible systems for alerting their deaf clientele to announcements and to emergency situations. Such systems should include the addition of flashing lights, or other appropriate visual signals, wherever an auditory signal is produced. An inspection of the library premises or an evacuation exercise should ensure that all library staff and clientele have received any announcement and/or notification of an emergency situation.

## 3.3 COLLECTIONS

**3.3.1 Libraries should collect materials related to deafness and Deaf culture that will be of interest to both deaf and hearing clientele.**

COMMENTARY

The primary objective of any program to provide services to deaf people will be to incorporate deaf people into the library's general clientele in making use of all of the library's collections, programs, and services. However, libraries should also collect materials of special interest to deaf people and to hearing people who will need information or will have a general interest in deafness. Such materials would include current and historical materials related to deafness, works by and about deaf artists and other famous deaf people, materials related to sign languages and other communication modes, government documents, legal materials and periodicals related to deafness, etc. Because the full range of resources should be open to the library's deaf clientele, these materials should not be maintained as a physically separate collection but should be integrated into the total resources of the library.

**3.3.2 Libraries should collect, maintain, and offer information about educational options, referral agencies, and programs for deaf people in a wholly unbiased fashion.**

COMMENTARY

Methods employed in the education of deaf people and their modes of communication have constituted areas of intense controversy and competition for many years. Libraries are often in a unique position of providing complete information from an impartial and dispassionate perspective. Because of this position, libraries have the responsibility to exercise caution in ensuring that they collect materials from all viewpoints, particularly in such areas as information for deaf people, their parents, their other family members, and practitioners about programs and referral agencies.

**3.3.3 Libraries should assemble and provide access to a collection of high interest / low reading level materials of interest to deaf people.<sup>4</sup>**

COMMENTARY

For many deaf people, mastery of the oral and written idiom is a particular challenge. Libraries should strive to acquire general materials that may be understood by as many of their clientele as possible. Additionally, libraries should build and actively maintain a collection of high interest materials which are written purposefully with direct and simple vocabulary and which are

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<sup>4</sup> In some countries, these are known as "Easy-to-Read Materials" or "Easy Readers."

heavily illustrated where appropriate so that they may be easily understood by people who have yet to gain full mastery of the local oral and written language, including many deaf people as well as people from other linguistic minorities.

- 3.3.4 Visual non-print materials should form an integral part of any library's collections acquired in support of services to deaf clientele. Television video programs and other such media with audio portions should be captioned or signed so that they may be understood by persons unable to hear.**

COMMENTARY

Because deaf people need to rely on sight, visual media offer a particularly effective means of communicating information. Also, where one of the library's goals is to offer materials of an entertainment nature, television videotapes are especially attractive. Collecting videotapes produced with an open caption format would be the most efficient; however, where such is not desirable, libraries should collect closed-captioned videotapes and provide decoding equipment as necessary. See paragraph 3.2.7.

- 3.3.5 Libraries should assemble and maintain a collection of videotapes and/or films in sign language and provide sufficient equipment necessary to view them.**

COMMENTARY

Sign language is the basic communication means in the lives of many deaf people. Some countries produce video programs or films in sign language; e.g., translations of television programs, fairy tales, deaf folklore, news programs, sign language instruction, etc. Where available, libraries should collect and lend such media as an essential service to deaf people, parents with deaf children, and people learning sign language.

## **3.4 SERVICES**

- 3.4.1 All of the library's collections, services, and programs should be made accessible to its deaf community.**

COMMENTARY

In addition to whatever specialized services libraries establish as part of their programs in support of their deaf community, it is imperative that libraries

design and implement such programs with the fundamental understanding that these programs are only a part of and are in addition to the primary objective of making all of the libraries' collections, services, and programs which are accessible to hearing people also accessible to deaf people. For instance, where libraries provide training in the use of access technology, e.g., training in the use of the World Wide Web for searching, sign language interpretation of the training should be offered and publicized.

**3.4.2 Members of the library's deaf community, as defined in these guidelines, should be involved in the design and development of the library's services to deaf people, including the development of services and collections, and in the establishment of advisory committees, service organizations, and networks.**

COMMENTARY

The success of any service depends upon its content and quality and upon the acceptance of the service by the clientele for whom it is designed. Until such time as a program of services has been established and is proven popular and successful within the library's deaf clientele, it may be necessary for the individual who is responsible for program design to go out into the community and to actively solicit interest and assistance from deaf individuals. After such relationships are established, the continued success of the service will depend on the continued success of this network between the library and the deaf community.

**3.4.3 Libraries should offer programs conducted in sign language.**

COMMENTARY

Libraries become, by nature, major cultural centers in their communities and often provide both cultural and social programs. It is essential that all programs and public meetings held in libraries be made accessible by provision of sign language interpreters, oral interpreters, computer-assisted real-time captioning, or computer assisted note taking as requested. Nevertheless, some programs should be offered for deaf clientele in sign language, with voice interpreters for hearing clientele. Provision of programs in sign language, e.g., storytelling and programs related to Deaf culture, would be of interest and benefit to all groups within the community.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> International Federation of Library Associations. Section of Public Libraries. Guidelines for Public Libraries. München, etc.: K.G. Saur (IFLA Publications 36), 1986, p. 19, "Cultural and Social Provisions" and p. 24, Guidelines # 1.81.

**3.4.4 Libraries should provide information on local literacy programs that are accessible to deaf non-readers. Libraries should ensure that library-sponsored literacy programs meet the needs of deaf individuals.**

COMMENTARY

Many persons who were either born deaf or deafened at an early age have difficulty learning to read because they did not grow up hearing the local spoken language. Each country's sign language, the language of many of its deaf people, has a grammatical structure entirely different from that of the local spoken language. Libraries must consider the unique needs of deaf individuals when developing literacy programs, at a minimum by consulting with professionals knowledgeable about methods used to educate deaf students.

**3.4.5 Libraries should include local deaf-related information in its online community information and referral database.**

COMMENTARY

With the emergence of the World Wide Web (WWW), many libraries have created online community information and referral databases in order to provide a central reference point for local community information. Because electronic communication and the WWW have proven to be extraordinarily effective media for deaf people, it is important that libraries use such means to provide local information of particular interest to their deaf clientele.

**3.4.6 Libraries should include an unbiased variety of deaf-related electronic links in their online databases.**

COMMENTARY

Deaf and deaf-related organizations worldwide have made exceptional use of the World Wide Web in providing information of interest to deaf people. Particularly because of the unusual extent and richness of reference, cultural, and news information provided online by and for deaf people, it is a responsibility of libraries to provide access to such information where such libraries have access to the World Wide Web. Wherever possible, libraries providing such links should enlist the assistance of a broad spectrum of their deaf community in ensuring that their collected links encompass the wide variety of philosophical and cultural viewpoints regarding deaf people and Deaf culture (see Guideline 3.3.2 and attendant commentary).

## **3.5 PROGRAM MARKETING**

### **3.5.1 Libraries should aggressively market their programs and services to their deaf community.**

#### COMMENTARY

Because people who are deaf from birth or an early age very often have difficulty with reading, they have a tendency, in general, to not use libraries. It is essential, therefore, for libraries to target their deaf clientele for special marketing efforts; otherwise, labor and resources allocated for providing services will have minimal value. For these same reasons, this effort will need particularly careful planning.

### **3.5.2 All library publicity should provide for access to the library's deaf community.**

#### COMMENTARY

Libraries need to make use of all available means to inform their communities of their accessibility to deaf people. They should include the TTY number on all stationery, announcements, brochures, fliers, etc. and ensure that all televised information and promotions are captioned. All general library publications should include information on programs and services for deaf people.

## 4. DEFINITIONS

The following terms are used in this document and the definitions given are meant only to assist in understanding and applying these guidelines in libraries. No application of these terms outside of the limits of this document is intended.

<b>Assistive Listening System</b>	A hearing enhancement system consisting of a transmitter and a receiver - generally a hearing aid or a device connected to a hearing aid - designed to eliminate the background noise interference caused by extraneous factors. There are several different types of communication access systems, e.g., audio loop systems, AM systems, FM sound systems, and infrared systems.
<b>Audio Loop</b>	See <b>Assistive Listening System</b>
<b>Captioned</b>	Refers to films, or video programs, where the dialogue is also shown, in print, on the screen along with the rest of the picture. The printed dialogue may be either always visible (open captioned) or visible only with the addition of a decoder machine (closed captioned) that translates the invisible signal into visible print.
<b>Closed Captioned</b>	See <b>Captioned</b>
<b>Computer-Assisted Note Taking</b>	A system whereby a note taker types on a computer keyboard what is being said during a meeting. After a short lag time, the notes are displayed on a projection screen or a monitor.
<b>Computer-Assisted Real-Time Captioning</b>	A system whereby a highly skilled court reporter uses a shorthand machine and a computer to translate spoken language into written text. The verbatim text may be read on a video monitor or on a projection screen immediately.

**Deaf Community**

This term has different meanings in different contexts. For the purposes of this document, it refers to:

- Sign language users
- Bilingual users of sign language and spoken or written language
- Persons with hearing disabilities who communicate primarily through spoken language and speech reading
- Late-deafened adults
- Older adults with hearing loss due to age
- Deaf people who use neither sign language nor written language
- Hard of hearing individuals
- Deaf-blind individuals
- Hearing family members
- Professionals who serve the above

**Deaf Person**

A person who is either partially or wholly unable to hear.

**Decoder**

A machine which, when attached to or built into a television, translates the electronic signals of a closed captioned video program into words printed on the screen along with the rest of the video images.

**Easy-to-Read Materials**

High interest / low reading level materials, including captioned media, for all groups with reading or comprehension problems regardless of age.

**Hard-of-Hearing Individual**

A person who has a mild to moderate hearing loss.

**Interpreters**

Individuals skilled at translating spoken communication into either sign language or clear oral speech. **Sign Language Interpreters** are skilled at translating the meaning of spoken language into sign language and translating sign language into



spoken words. **Oral Interpreters** silently mouth a speaker's words for a deaf person who communicates primarily by using spoken language and speechreading. They use no sign language and are skilled at making substitutions for words that are difficult to speechread.

**Late-Deafened Adult**

An adult who loses hearing after acquiring speech and experiences a significant life change as a result.

**Minimal Language User**

A person who has very limited knowledge of any formal spoken, signed, or written language.

**Native Sign Language User**

A person whose first language is sign language.

**Open Captioned**

See **Captioned**

**Oralist**

A person who is deaf and who communicates primarily through speech and speech reading.

**TDD**

See **TTY**

**TTY**

A device with an electronic text display and a keyboard that allows persons with hearing or speech disabilities to have a visual, two-way telephone conversation.

**Visual Warning Signal**

A flashing or revolving light that draws the attention of deaf people to audible signals such as fire alarms or public announcements.