

“Hello! The “Complaints” page is a very important part of this website because many deaf and hard of hearing people have experienced being discriminated throughout their life. This is the right place for you to start filing a complaint. We have a list of different grievance procedures depending on what type of situation you are in. For example, American with Disabilities Act (ADA) covers many entities in general. There are 5 parts of ADA: Title I, Title II, Title III, Title IV, and Title V. Title I is related to employment. Title II applies to local and state governments only. Title III is public accommodation (movies, recreational events, shows, services, etc.). For instance, if you have been denied an interpreter for your doctor appointment, you may file a complaint through this page. You would check the list to find which one is most appropriate. For this case, Title III of ADA applies to the doctor that had violated your right.

Each link on the list has instructions as to how to proceed through grievance procedure. If you need assistance to write up the complaint, please do not hesitate to stop by our office. We can help you.

If you do not have communication access on the plane or part of airline services, you may want to click “Air Carrier Access Act”.

Next on the list is “Closed Captioning”. Do you know that all new TV programs (100%) must be closed captioning effective January 1, 2006? If you noticed that there is no closed captioning on a new TV program, you may click on “Closed Captioning”. Doing that will lead you directly to the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) website and to its grievance page where you can file a complaint on the captioning problem.

“Equal Employment Opportunity Commission” is also on the list. That is for anyone who has experienced discrimination at their employment site. For example, a lack of promotion. You may

feel like you are being discriminated when many people pass you climbing up the ladder in the workforce and when promotions are not made to you or when others took more challenging jobs or added more responsibilities but not you.

There is “Interpreter” on the list as well. This is not about the Interpreter Referral Service but it is about the quality and services of a professional interpreter you have used. This link will go directly to the Registry of the Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. website where they have a grievance procedure. On their website, you may file a complaint against this person for violating their code of ethics such as breaking confidentiality or behaving unprofessionally. Another way to file a grievance is to file a complaint through the Department of Health Interpreter Licensure Board. The board would review the complaint and would discipline the licensed interpreter by revoking their license, recommending them to take more training before they start working again, etc. Each decision is on a case by case basis.

Now, I would like to discuss the Interpreter Referral Service, not about the interpreter. You may click on “Interpreter Referral Service” and file a complaint if you feel that the Interpreter Referral Service does not do a good job. Examples would include tardiness in responding, frequent double bookings, lack of responsiveness, etc. Instructions as to how to file the complaint is available there.

Now, next on the list is “Telephone Relay Services”. The state relay service is provided by Hamilton Relay. There will be a request for proposal (RFP) for a new contract with the state in providing relay services in the middle of 2006. If you want to address your issues related to the Relay service, you may send your comments there. Issues might include VCO, Traditional TTY, IP relay, Video Relay Service, CapTel, etc.

The "Others" subject is general. This subject is if you are not sure which place is the right place to file a complaint. We can help you to identify which avenue to take depending on the case you have. We need to know which law has been violated or which entity should be alerted of your complaint.

Most importantly, when you proceed in filing a complaint, the entity would be required to respond to your comments promptly typically within 7-10 days and they would have an opportunity to improve or correct it. If you don't send your complaint, nothing would happen, nothing would change, and nothing would improve. If you act on it, you would see some changes for better but the changes would take time. It will not happen overnight. It may take a few days, weeks or months to see a change depending on what type of change is required and the significance of your complaint. If you actually file, you would make a difference! If you do not do anything, then nobody would know about this ongoing problem. Be assertive and believe in yourself. Be a successful advocate! Please keep in mind that you as a deaf or hard of hearing person have the same rights to have equal access as anyone who can hear. Good luck!!"

(Translated in American Sign Language by Steven A. Florio)



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