Engage for Change | local

a conversation in Honolulu, HI

October 12, 2017
Overview of the National Deaf Center

The National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes (NDC) is a federally funded project that works toward systemic change to increase the quality of services and access to meaningful postsecondary opportunities for all deaf individuals. Meaningful postsecondary experiences contribute greatly to deaf individuals' quality of life. However, deaf individuals face a number of misconceptions and challenges that impede their ability to use their skills and talents in postsecondary settings and beyond.

Purpose of Engage for Change | local

For change to be effective, a broad range of stakeholders must be involved in the process. Yet it can be challenging to bridge the gaps between individuals, the community, institutions, and policymakers. NDC is committed to bringing together all parties to create a successful model of how community involvement leads to improved postsecondary outcomes for all deaf individuals.

Conversations led by members of the community explore challenges and solutions on the local level. Discussion questions focus on brainstorming solutions to local-level challenges that community members can implement to strengthen postsecondary opportunities for deaf individuals in their community.

What's Next?

This report summarizes key solutions and strategies that emerged from the discussions during the event, and it is intended to provide guidance for the Honolulu community to address important challenges. The report concludes with a list of action items for community members to consider as they connect with their networks to continue this important work.

NDC is offering a platform for continued work on Canvas if the Honolulu community chooses to take that route. Consider forming work groups to implement the strategies proposed at the event, on Canvas or elsewhere.

NDC uses the term deaf in an all-encompassing manner to include individuals who identify as Deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, hearing impaired, late deafened, and deafdisabled.
INCREASE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND RESOURCES

- Promote deaf community events through social media and reach out to hearing community members to foster cultural exchange.
- Establish a monthly community get-together with a big event organized every 2 years.
- Develop and maintain a community webpage for local communities.
- Develop and sponsor more youth programs (e.g., Youth Leadership Camp, Deaf Academic Bowl).
- Fund-raise to make community and youth events accessible for deaf youth. Consider including kids of deaf adults and partnering with other schools with deaf programs.
- Create and implement a one-stop shop for resources and advocacy. Explore the potential partnership with the Department of Education to improve collaboration between agencies and individuals.

PROMOTE CONFIDENCE FOR THE WORKPLACE

- Increase cultural awareness related to working with hearing people through programs to improve communication and coping skills for different occupational environments.
- Provide tours or field trips to job sites that expose deaf youth to different occupations.
- Develop and disseminate video or physical presentations of a variety of deaf workers discussing career experiences.
- Host career days for deaf individuals and invite companies to participate.

FACILITATE SMOOTH TRANSITIONS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSCHOOL LIFE

- Design and implement a program to teach basic skills for living independently. Include parents in goal development, program implementation, and progress tracking.
- Use fund-raisers to educate deaf students about financial decision-making and entrepreneurship. Funds can go to a scholarship or goal determined by students.
- Create a support group for students transitioning from school to postsecondary settings.
INCREASE ACCESS TO ROLE MODELS AND MENTORS

- Increase exposure to a variety of deaf adult role models and mentors.
- Design and build a “Hall of Fame” highlighting deaf individuals and their successes.
- Implement a program connecting deaf college graduates with deaf youth and their parents.
- Strengthen parent support groups and networks that include deaf adults.
- Establish an after-school tutoring program with deaf tutors.
- Facilitate video chats and connections with deaf students in other schools and programs.

INCREASE ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS FOR POSTSECONDARY SETTINGS

- Strengthen vocational training for elementary and middle school students.
- Design and provide a GED certification course combined with vocational training.
- Consider opportunities to increase work experience through half-day programs, internships, co-ops, and apprenticeships.
- Increase the involvement of students in college preparatory courses.
- Improve Division of Vocational Rehabilitation relationships with students to improve placements and connect students with counselors early.
- Host college fairs and invite local colleges, universities, and overseas campuses (e.g., Gallaudet University; National Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology; California State University, Northridge) to participate.
- Increase awareness of academic opportunities via scholarships and federal funding.
- In secondary settings, strengthen the focus on STEM education and English literacy.

IMPROVE INTERPRETER QUALITY AND USEFULNESS

- Improve current interpreter programs through awareness of issues working in the field.
- Improve and standardize the interpreter screening process.
- Design and implement a program to educate deaf individuals about appropriate roles and boundaries in the interpreter-client relationship.
- Increase feedback to local interpreting agencies.
Comments From Community Members Who Attended the Event

“I was pleasantly surprised. It was very well organized in first identifying issues to help our community and then [exploring how to] effectuate that change.”

“We will work together for a better future.”

“We need deaf leading deaf. It’s OK to include hearing [but I would] like to see young deaf people taking a more leadership role. Overall, very well done ... Would love to come back for a follow-up.”

“Awesome job. Thank you!”

Resources

NDC: www.nationaldeafcenter.org

NDC Listerv: https://utlists.utexas.edu/sympa/info/nationaldeafcenter

NDC Help Desk: help@nationaldeafcenter.org

Office of Special Education Programs: www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html