



# Key Points for Communicating with People who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

## ■ Sign language is not another form of English.

Sign language is an official language with its own grammar, context and rules.



## ■ Not all persons who are deaf use sign language.



## ■ Not all persons who are deaf write and read.



## ■ Speak directly

Speak directly to the person who is deaf or hard of hearing even in the presence of sign language interpreter.



## ■ Gain attention

Speaking with persons who are deaf to get their attention in a polite way before trying to communicate with them. A hearing person may tap a deaf taxpayer on the shoulder or give a quick hand wave to get his or her attention. There's no need to raise your voice, go through any exaggerated movements or do anything to startle the person.



## ■ Ask if there is a preference

There are a wide range of hearing losses and communication methods. Respect deaf or hard of hearing persons by asking him or her communication preference when a sign language interpreter isn't available. Maybe he or she prefers to lip-read or communicate by a pen and paper method.



## ■ Use a normal voice

Speak in a regular tone of voice at a normal pace while keeping natural facial expression, gestures, body language to facilitate communication to person who are deaf or hard of hearing.



## ■ Be willing to rephrase statements for comprehension when requested.



## ■ Maintain eye contact as much as possible.



## ■ Check the light

Be sure the light or glare of light in the room will not make it difficult for the deaf or hard of hearing person to see a person clearly.



## ■ Ask

According to Deaf culture, it is acceptable to ask for information directly or state something. Don't be vague it will be considered rude.



## ■ Use "Deaf" or "Hard of Hearing"

In the Deaf community, the appropriate term is "Deaf" or "Hard of Hearing". If anyone is unsure of the deaf or hard of hearing person preference, ask him or her directly.

