

Open Letter to State Agencies “ADA-Access-Ready” Hearing Instruments

To: All Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind State Agencies

Request: Promotion and support of 1) “ADA-Access-Ready” hearing instruments and 2) Assistive Listening Systems (ALS)

We at the Center for Hearing Access (CHA) consistently find that users/patients are frustrated when they learn their hearing aids do not have telecoils, and, therefore, they are unable to access hearing loops, FM, and infrared assistive listening systems to which they are entitled under the ADA. Once they learn about the options available to them by having telecoils, they are frustrated that no one told them.



Recently, some providers are erroneously telling patients they don’t need/no longer need telecoils – “Auracast is coming.” Auracast is promising, but it will take time before it becomes commonplace, with limited availability of 1) Auracast-compatible hearing instruments and 2) publicly installed Auracast installations. Also, it’s problematic because, ironically, if users don’t have Auracast in their hearing instruments or cochlear implant processors, they need telecoils to use the Auracast receivers with neckloops.

What can your agency do. Feel free to use link(s) from CHA to save time. Links won’t change.

1. Hearing instruments

- *Encourage audiologists and hearing instrument specialists* to fit [“ADA-Access-Ready” Hearing Instruments](#) when purchasing devices in the next 5-7 years.
- *Encourage any hearing instrument programs*, such as vocational rehab, to require or strongly recommend only authorizing “ADA-Access-Ready” hearing instruments. [Postcard](#)

2. Agency website

- *Include information* about existing, relevant state ALS or building legislation; ADA info and rights about assistive listening systems; information about all types of assistive listening; assistive listening system locations in the state, including [hearing loop lists](#); [“ADA-Access-Ready” Hearing Instruments](#); Equipment available in agency office(s): hearing loop, FM/RF, or infrared (and in the future Auracast). Resource: [Promoting Your Assistive Listening System](#)

3. Agency office and technology program

- *Consider the availability of equipment for demos and use:* Installing permanent hearing loop: (counter hearing loop, TV, and/or in meetings/conference rooms); portable counter hearing loop; portable FM/RF system; Auracast streamed ALS (future). Resources: [Hearing loop equipment and installers](#) by state; Portable hearing loop summary; [Equipment for Professional Offices](#)

4. Integrate ALS in the yearly work plan

- *Insist that the location for all meetings* has a fully working ALS. Teach users during the meeting. Publicize its availability in media. [Promoting Your Assistive Listening System](#) and [Graphics](#).
- *Encourage information and signage* at all ALS locations throughout the state.
- *Support users in filing complaints* when the ALS is not working. Also, CHA has [Templates-Consumer Inquiries](#) and [Templates-Consumer Complaints and Feedback](#).
- *Evaluate* which pieces of the [“Unequivocally advocating for Changes to Access ADA Assistive Listening Systems”](#) the agency can incorporate

5. Ensure staff is up to date

- *Refresh knowledge* about all ALS technologies with articles and webinars. Be knowledgeable about every statement in this document, [Assistive Listening Systems Quick Guide](#)
- *Increase knowledge* about Auracast streamed ALS, and not commercial marketing. [Auracast-What is needed for Auracast streamed ALS to be available and usable](#)
- *Refresh ADA knowledge*. [ADA for Assistive Listening Systems](#)
- *Become aware* of the US Declaration, [ADA-Access-Ready Hearing Instruments](#)

How will your agency respond?

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