



**HANDS &
VOICES™**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hands & Voices Announces Award of HRSA Cooperative Agreement Award for Family Leadership in Language and Learning

Hands & Voices received notification of a three year, nearly \$1.3 million Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) cooperative agreement award to support the development of statewide newborn and infant hearing screening, evaluation, diagnosis, and intervention programs and systems by promoting the inclusion of families, parents and caregivers of deaf or hard of hearing infants/children identified through the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program as leaders in the statewide Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) system.

The goal of the Hands & Voices Family Leadership in Language and Learning Program is to ensure that statewide EHDI systems incorporate certain elements that support the families, parents and caregivers of deaf or hard of hearing infants/children identified through newborn hearing screening in optimizing language, literacy, and social-emotional development.

Janet DesGeorges, Executive Director of Hands & Voices, said “We are thrilled and honored to be working with all EHDI System stakeholders for the next three years as a part of this project. We are committed to ensuring that families receive the best possible resources and supports in order to achieve success for their children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing. We look forward to working with our program partners, the National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management, and the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center to achieve our goals. Hands & Voices will ensure that all families are served according to their child’s individual needs.”

Achieving the goals of the Hands & Voices Family Leadership in Language and Learning Program will require a coordinated set of methods that include resource development and dissemination, education and training, utilizing quality improvement methodology, assistance in replicating evidence-based best practices, policy initiatives, and collaborative partnerships with: national experts in language and literacy, state/territory-based family organizations that serve children who are deaf or hard of hearing, federal agencies, state/territory EHDI programs, deaf-based organizations, and professional organizations. These goals will be achieved by focusing the methods, support and technical assistance on: support to state/territory organizations that provide support to families of deaf or hard of hearing children; coordinating with the HRSA-supported National Technical Resource Center, state/territory EHDI programs; and collaborating with established Deaf Mentor programs for families.





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About Hands & Voices:

Hands & Voices began more than twenty years ago as an idea to bring parents and professionals together not based upon communication modes or methodology, but as a group of individuals who are in so many ways connected to each other through deafness or hearing loss. Supporting families without bias is embodied in the motto, “What works for your child is what makes the choice right” and is implemented by ensuring families are given support and information based on their own needs and preferences.

Hands & Voices is dedicated to supporting families with children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing without a bias around communication modes or methodology. It is a parent-driven, non-profit organization providing families with the resources, networks, and information they need to improve communication access and educational outcomes for their children. This effective model of parent and professional collaboration has been replicated around the United States and worldwide resulting in 47 chapters established or in process.

Hands & Voices operates several outreach activities, parent/professional collaborations, and advocacy efforts that are focused on supporting families in order to enable Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children to reach their highest potential. Several of the organization’s main operating programs and projects include: Guide By Your Side (parent support), O.U.R. Project (children’s safety), ASTra (educational advocacy), Deaf/Hard of Hearing Virtual Guide, Deafed.net, Annual H&V Leadership Conference, Chapter Support and Information Dissemination.

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