

# Information About SSPs

A support service provider (SSP) can be anyone trained to act as a link between persons who are Deaf-Blind and their environment. An SSP typically works with a single individual, and acts as a guide and communication facilitator. An SSP may be deaf, hard of hearing or hearing.

Deaf people who are familiar with a variety of communication modes are the best candidates. CAN will provide training in HAPTICS and PRO-TACTILE. The SSP serves as the eyes and ears of the person who is Deaf-Blind. Three key components of an SSP's function are:

1. SSP provides access to the community by making transportation available, and serves as a human guide while walking.
2. SSP relays visual and environmental information that may not be heard or seen by the person who is Deaf-Blind.
3. *A Deaf-Blind SSP relationship serves to empower the Deaf-Blind consumer's independent choices.* SSP provides information to this individual to assist in considering options, but DB makes own choices.

An SSP does not function as a sign language interpreter but may help in other ways with communication.

# INFORMATION ABOUT DEAF-BLINDNESS

How do people become deaf-blind?

About 50 percent of people in the deaf-blind community have Usher Syndrome (US). This is a genetic condition where a person is born deaf or hard of hearing, or with normal hearing, and loses his or her vision later on in life from retinitis pigmentosa (RP). There are three kinds of Usher Syndrome. A person with Usher 1 is born deaf, and starts to lose vision usually in the teen years. A person with Usher Syndrome 2 is born hard of hearing, and starts to lose vision later on. With Usher 3, a person is usually born with normal vision and hearing, or with a mild hearing loss, and starts to lose both senses later in life.

Other common causes of deaf-blindness include birth trauma, optic nerve atrophy, cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration, or diabetic retinopathy. Some people may be born with both hearing and visual impairments through birth trauma or rare causes such as CHARGE Syndrome or cortical visual impairment. Others may become deaf-blind through accidents or illness.

[www.aadb.org](http://www.aadb.org)

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*Deaf-Blind people needed vision, hearing and environmental information that will enable them to access their community more easily through Support Service Providers (SSPs).*

*Deaf-Blind Consumer Support Group meets at CAN monthly, and covers issues about Deaf-Blindness and other related topics.*

## What an SSP does:

Serves as a guide when escorting a Deaf-Blind person to/from any site such as shopping center, grocery store, meeting room and many other daily living activities.

Provides visual and environmental information which can take several forms:

- Describing who is in a room, the activity and mood;
- Reading mail or any printed material if the print is not legible;
- Voicing or interpreting printed matters to the person who is Deaf-Blind;
- Locating food items or other necessities;
- Providing transportation to appointments or food shopping
- Escorting to social, family, sports, theatrical events, camping, workshops, museum tours and others as assigned.
- Respecting Deaf-Blind consumers' requests.

What SSPs Cannot Do:

- Provide personal care, e.g. bathing and grooming;
- Run errands alone for the person who is Deaf-Blind;
- Make decision for the person who is Deaf-Blind;
- Teach or instruct;
- Interpret in medical, legal or business.

## Contact for Information:

Contact us for

- Presentations about Deaf-Blindness
- Questions about SSP Training and employment
- Making donation.



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## DEAF-BLIND SERVICES



## Definition of DEAF-BLINDNESS

*"Deaf-Blindness refers to an individual with both hearing and visual disabilities. The amount of loss in either vision or hearing or loss of both will vary from person to person."*

