

To All:

After being exposed to Creative Access and their programs for the deaf and hard of hearing through Carol Finkle, I realized that the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission is deficient in our sensitivity to this culture and is in need of training for our staff and Commissioners throughout the agency to further sensitize us to the major issues affecting those who communicate primarily through American Sign Language or other alternate methods. I envision a two hour training as a first step in rectifying this gap in our cultural competency to expose our agency to a variety of issues which impact those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

I thought that Philadelphia would be a good place to begin this program since Creative Access is based in this city and already has a relationship with the Mayor's Commission on Disabilities. Before we can proceed we need to establish specific goals and objectives for this training through a series of meetings with the interested parties. Our Executive Director, Homer C. Floyd, will need to determine how this training program will be integrated into our schedule of activities so that it will be both effective and respectful of other staff obligations already in place.

Jim Holt has been coordinating our Disability Stakeholders quarterly meetings and would also be a valuable asset in bringing these trainings to fruition. Following our chain of command, I would suggest that our Philadelphia Regional Director meet with Mr. Floyd and Jim Holt along with myself and a representative from Creative Access to develop this program in a way that will be the greatest benefit to our agency personnel without interfering with other priorities. May I suggest that we have this meeting (either in Philadelphia or in Harrisburg) shortly after the New Year prior to our Disability Stakeholders meeting on January 20th in Harrisburg, so that we can begin to formulate an action plan and a timetable to execute it.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I consider this to be an important priority.

With warm regards to all,

Stephen A. Glassman, Chairperson
Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission