

October 2019

## Role and Function of the State Coordinator

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### Recommended Citation

Harrelson, L. M., & Reese, R. E. (2019). Role and Function of the State Coordinator. *JADARA*, 9(4). Retrieved from <https://repository.wcsu.edu/jadara/vol9/iss4/6>

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## **ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE STATE COORDINATOR**

**Leader: Larry M. Harrelson**

**Recorder: Ron E. Reese**

**Charge: To define the role and function of the State Coordinator of Services to Deaf Persons (SCD).**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION**

The SCD, as the coordinator for services to deaf persons, is directly responsible to his State agency administrators. He must, therefore, maintain continuing, regular reporting procedures on all matters relating to the agency programs for deaf persons; recommend policy and procedures; and recommend budget for implementation of accepted recommendations for special program emphasis and more effective service delivery for deaf clients. It is crucial to the success of the program that the SCD develop and maintain positive relationships with his agency administrators and that he develop and maintain similar relationships with other community agency personnel on as broad a basis as possible. In addition to such relationships within his state the SCD should maintain communications at national and regional levels through appropriate governmental and organization relationships.

While it may be possible to designate the SCD as a position with line authority, it may not be the most desirable administrative role. In general, the consensus was that the SCD should be designated as a staff position and that this would allow the SCD to function, most appropriately, as a coordinator primarily. As a coordinator, the SCD could be more effective in coordinating planning and development of the State agency program for services to deaf persons. Even with line authority, on the other hand, daily or regular supervision to rehabilitation counselors for deaf clients (RCDs) would not be feasible and would very likely serve to diminish the effectiveness of the SCD as a coordinator.

Although the role of the SCD is seen as primarily staff, he should also accept responsibility for interaction with field administrators and supervisors in order to assist in providing technical assistance, especially with regard to relationships with other (local) agencies which may provide services to deaf persons.

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The SCD should also be available to provide direct assistance to RCD's and other counselors as might be helpful, especially in terms of the unique problems deaf clients may present to counselors with insufficient background. Many general counselors, for example, may need such information as to how to understand an audiogram and/or other audiological information he might receive.

### **SPECIFIC FUNCTION AREAS**

A number of areas were identified by the various discussion groups and, while it is not intended that the SCD should limit himself to only these areas, it is felt that most of the significant areas are represented. It may be readily seen that the SCD must be prepared to function across a wide range of areas if the agency program is to be effective in service delivery for deaf clients.

#### **Program and Financial Plan (PFP)**

The SCD must find the means whereby he is enabled to provide substantial input each spring to the PFP prepared by his state agency for RSA relative to services for deaf and other hearing impaired clients. Further, he must be able to justify his recommendations in such a fashion that a substantial amount, if not all, of the recommended program is incorporated into the PFP and implemented after acceptance and approval.

#### **Staff Development**

In cooperation with his agency training officer, the SCD should assist in developing and coordinating inservice programs for RCD's. He should be able to identify optimum skill levels and training needs of the RCD's in the agency in order to assist in effective planning and inservice training implementation. He should also explore, with the agency training officer, the need for orientation to deafness training of other agency personnel and be willing to assume the major responsibility to conduct such training. One means to implement special inservice training is through regional RSA short-term training funding and the possibility for such funding should be explored.

The SCD, too, could benefit from short-term training opportunities in areas related to his unique role and function. As training needs are identified, whether regionally or nationally, provision for such training should be provided

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through regional RSA offices or at the national level. In addition to specialized training needs, the SCD must also be prepared to participate in general state inservice training activities in order to improve his ability to function most effectively within his agency as a team member.

### **Program Evaluation**

In order to stay abreast of the current status of programs for deaf clients in his state and to help him identify areas of strength as well as weakness in service delivery, the SCD should participate in special program reviews within his state. Should the opportunity arise, he should also attempt to participate in program reviews outside his state in order to improve his perspective about programs in his own state.

### **Service Delivery**

The SCD should promote the use of qualified interpreters in every area of service for which there may be a need in order to insure adequacy of service to the deaf client. Such areas may include diagnostics, evaluation, personal adjustment training, vocational training, placement, and others including those times when the deaf client is meeting with a counselor without the requisite communication skills. The SCD should also explore ways in which volunteers may be used to increase effectiveness of service delivery and encourage such use. Volunteers needing it should receive special training and work under supervision. The SCD should be aware that deaf persons, too, may offer voluntary service for such purposes as assisting in local sign language instruction and that parents of deaf children may be a source of assistance in encouraging establishment of community emergency and other services for deaf persons.

### **Community Resources**

The SCD should be active in the promotion and development of community resources which may supplement the rehabilitation agency program of services for deaf clients (e.g., diagnostic service, evaluation, mental health, adjustment, social services, postsecondary education and training, and others). He should also seek assist in grant proposal reviews which purport to increase/improve services to deaf persons, especially the severely handicapped deaf population. In other words, he should be the consulting expert available and responsive to such requests and for technical assistance.

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### **Advisory Council**

To assist the SCD in his role as the primary source for information on the needs of the deaf population within his state agency, the SCD should make every effort to assist in the establishment of an advisory group made up of members of the deaf community in his state. The advisory group should be expected to work with the SCD in such areas as need identification, program implementation, program evaluation, resource development and maintenance, and similar areas.

The SCD could serve as the liaison between the advisory council and the state agency.

### **Telecommunications**

If he is not already, the SCD should become familiar with the current status of programs and devices (all TTY equipment) in his state in the area of telecommunications for deaf persons. He should also assist in providing information about the programs and devices in an effort to assist in the securing of more devices and adequate repair resources at the least possible cost to the consumers. Inasmuch as telecommunications refers to television also, the SCD should promote as he is able television programs for deaf people and televised information on vocational rehabilitation services to deaf people.

### **Community Resources**

The SCD should be active in the promotion and development of community resources which may supplement the rehabilitation agency program of services for deaf clients (e.g., diagnostic service, evaluation, mental health, adjustment, social services, postsecondary education and training, and others). He should also seek to assist in grant proposal reviews which purport to increase/improve services to deaf persons, especially the severely handicapped deaf population. In other words, he should be the consulting expert available and responsive to such requests and for technical assistance.

### **Hearing Aid Procurement**

As the key representative of the agency which is one of the largest volume purchasers of hearing aids, it would be in the best interest of the agency and its clients for the SCD to establish and promote healthy relationships between the

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vendors and himself and the RCD's within the agency. In addition, every effort should be made to be active in developing and modifying agency policy on hearing and speech services for deaf and other hearing impaired clients and for the purchase and servicing of hearing aids.

### **Deaf/Blind**

It would be most appropriate that the SCD serve on an Advisory Committee on Services to Deaf/Blind Persons in his state. Where such advisory committees are in existence, they are usually found in the state Department of Education. Should there not be such an advisory committee, the SCD should consider ways in which he might be helpful in establishing one.

### **Personnel Recruitment and Hiring**

Whenever a position vacancy occurs for an RCD, whether it be a newly authorized position or one which has become vacant, the SCD should be the prime resource for assistance in recruitment and hiring of a person for the position. The SCD, therefore, should be prepared with the necessary information which describes the necessary qualifications for the RCD and to evaluate whether an applicant possesses the requisite qualifications.

A resource which has been developed by the Professional Rehabilitation Workers with the Adult Deaf (PRWAD) may assist in identification of potential candidates for positions. A Personnel Resource Book has been established and computerized and is available for use by employing agencies seeking personnel to work with deaf people. Forms describing qualifications and other pertinent information may be requested from PRWAD, 814 Thayer Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. Upon receipt the data are fed into the computer and a list of people (with their addresses) is produced and forwarded to the employing agency for their use. In many cases, this service may represent a saving in time, effort, and money. Further information desired may be obtained from the above address also.

## **CONCLUSION**

As may be seen from the foregoing, the role and function of an SCD, who wishes to be effective, is of necessity a formidable appearing challenge. But SCD's and RCD's are specialists in their particular positions because they choose a challenge worthy of their talents. The SCD/RCD knows he can do the job; he may need some help along the way, but he knows he can do the job and he will do the job.