

# Wagner-Peyser Act

# Deaf and Hard of Hearing PY 25-26

# Award List and Project Summaries

On October 3, 2025, $2,699,862.11 of Wagner-Peyser 10% Governor’s Discretionary funds were awarded to five organizations under the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Program Year 2025-26 (PY 25-26) Solicitation for Proposals. Awardees and project summaries are listed below. Funding decisions are final.

## Award List

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| **Applicant Name** | **Counties Served** | **Award** |
| Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center | Fresno, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Monterey, San Benito, and Tulare | $110,981.00 |
| Deaf Counseling, Advocacy and Referral Agency (DCARA) | Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, and Santa Clara | $454,955.51 |
| Greater Los Angeles Agency on Deafness Inc. | Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino | $1,401,493.68 |
| NorCal Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing | El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, and Yolo | $305,581.92 |
| Preserving the Culture For All | San Diego | $426,850.00 |

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| Project Summaries |

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| **Applicant** | **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center**  5340 N. Fresno Street  Fresno, CA 93710 |
| **Contact** | Jesse Lewis, Project Director  1-559-225-3323  [jessel@dhhsc.org](mailto:jessel@dhhsc.org) |
| **Award** | $110,981.00 |
| **Counties to be Served** | * Fresno * Kings * Madera * Mariposa * Merced * Monterey * San Benito * Tulare |
| **Key Partners** | * Employment Development Department (EDD) * Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) * Clovis Unified School District (CUSD) * Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) * Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (FCSS) * Fresno City College (FCC) * Workforce Connection (WC) * America’s Job Center of California (AJCC) |
| **Project Description** | DHHSC will provide comprehensive employment services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) Community, primarily for residents within the Fresno-Madera Combined Statistical Area (CSA). Services are available to Deaf community members outside this CSA via videophone sessions, but in-person appointments can be arranged. This project consists of one Employment Specialist (ES) and one Employment Specialist/American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter. Services provided include intake, signing up for CalJobs, job development and placement, follow-up services to boost retention, interpreting as needed in the EDD AJCC including for UI appointments, desk counseling sessions, workshops, development of workplace skills, and Deaf Awareness Trainings provided to employers. Clients are also educated about the full range of EDD services available at AJCC. |
| **Outreach Plan for Targeted Populations to be Served** | DHHSC has deep roots in the San Joaquin Valley Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community, drawing Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, Deaf Plus, and Late Deafened individuals to all four of its offices, with the Headquarters in Fresno and outreach offices in Merced, Visalia, and Salinas. Our diverse events, both large and small, raise awareness about services, programs, and Deaf culture.  These activities also offer valuable skill-building volunteer opportunities, fostering traits crucial for employment readiness. For example, volunteers learn the importance of teamwork, communication, reliability, flexibility, following instructions and conflict resolution. These soft skills also translate into the workplace.  Information about our offerings is shared through the DHHSC website, Deaf Bee News, flyers, and participation in regional job and health fairs. EDD-funded staff actively engage in these events, promoting services, presenting at local schools with D/HH programs, creating online content, collaborating with the local Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf (RCD), and co-hosting workshops with the RCD or DHHSC’s Client Services Specialists (CSSs). EDD-funded staff are also involved with DHHSC’s Deaf Awareness Week and other Deaf events to further highlight EDD services and network with the community to recruit potential clients.  Through our Reaching Out and Communicating with our Kids (ROCK) program, our CSSs, funded separately by California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and other grants, discuss employment with parents of D/HH children early on, which instills a "Deaf Can" mindset. These same CSSs will further share about EDD resources and connect EDD-funded staff with the students at local schools with D/HH programs.  DHHSC ensures that clients who could be served under either CDSS or EDD will receive all the services they request or indicate a need for without duplication of effort. For example, DHHSC staff will refer a client needing Document Translation to our CDSS-funded staff and to our ES at the EDD office for employment services.  The ES might then find the client needing supplemental support and resources from the DOR and encourage the client to also become a DOR consumer. If approved to become a DOR consumer, the DOR ES and the EDD ES communicate regularly to streamline delivery of appropriate and consistent services.  When referrals come from DOR itself, they will be received by one of our CSSs who will then schedule the DOR consumer for an assessment. If it becomes apparent the DOR consumer would benefit from EDD services as well, then the DOR ES could collaborate with the EDD ES. If beneficial, the DHHSC client may receive services from both DOR and EDD simultaneously, and this will be carefully coordinated between the two ESs, with additional support from a CSS.  EDD-funded staff's consistent presence at Deaf events, along with partnerships and programs, cements connections and encourages future EDD clients. |
| **Proposed Outcomes** | Our Employment Specialist (ES) and Employment Specialist/Interpreter will provide employment services to the D/HH, and they will outreach through booths, schools, Deaf events, social media platforms, and health and job fairs. Once clients contact them for services, they will work individually with them and focus on identifying areas of strengths and challenges to prepare them for jobs, including doing mock interviews.  Our EDD-funded ES will prepare the job applicants for employment while our EDD-funded Employment Specialist/Interpreter provides both employment services and communication access as needed for EDD staff. After placement, our EDD staff will check in with both the employers and Deaf employees and mediate, if necessary. They will also offer Deaf awareness training to employers and coworkers, and this often leads to other possible job placements once they feel more comfortable with the idea of hiring more D/HH individuals.  The following is a list of our overarching outcomes:  **Communication Access**: We will provide communication access for D/HH individuals seeking to use EDD’s services, including ASL interpreters and visual communication methods.  **Language and Literacy Support**: We will address language and literacy challenges among D/HH individuals to facilitate tasks, such as using CalJOBS, creating resumes, applying for jobs, and participating in interviews.  **ASL Interpreters**: We will emphasize the importance of providing ASL interpreters during workshops, training sessions, meetings, and interviews to provide effective communication.  **Employment Challenges**: We will overcome barriers related to auditory processing, ensuring equal work environments, and addressing challenges faced by Late Deafened individuals.  **Soft Skills and Education**: We will provide support for acquiring necessary degrees or certificates, teaching soft skills directly to D/HH individuals, and addressing challenges related to English class requirements.  **Support for Families and Youth**: We will educate families about the importance of communication access from the outset including in the local schools with D/HH programs to foster soft skills and career awareness.  **Outreach and Awareness**: We will use various platforms and events to raise awareness about employment services available for the D/HH Community.  **Mediation and Communication**: We will address employer concerns regarding interpreting costs, clarify interpreter usage, discuss different communication methods, share about reasonable accommodations, and encourage communication with EDD-funded staff to mediate issues.  Our close collaboration between CSSs and EDD-funded staff is transforming our community's outlook on employment, particularly for D/HH youth. This shift is reinforced by programs like YES! and ROCK, which foster an "employment culture" over an "SSI culture." We start early, involving families, to promote independence and financial stability. Our CSSs and EDD-funded staff engage clients from the outset, providing ongoing support even after job placement. They do regular check-ins to gauge progress and address workplace concerns. We urge clients to consult us before quitting so we can facilitate mediation with employers for lasting solutions. Our goal is sustained employment, career growth, and increased wages. Positive employer relations expand D/HH representation in the workforce. |

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| **Applicant** | **Deaf Counseling, Advocacy and Referral Agency (DCARA)**  14895 E. 14th Street, Suite 200  San Leandro, CA 94578 |
| **Contact** | Michelle Camara, Deputy Director  1-510-564-9316  [michelle.camara@dcara.org](mailto:michelle.camara@dcara.org) |
| **Award** | $454,955.51 |
| **Counties to be Served** | * Alameda * Contra Costa * San Francisco * Santa Clara |
| **Key Partners** | * Toolworks (Concord and San Francisco) * Work2Future (San Jose) * Tri-Cities Career Center (Newark) * Deaf Plus Adult Community (DPAC) (Newark) * Regional Center of East Bay (RCEB) (San Leandro) * PRIDE Industries (San Jose) * City College of San Francisco (San Francisco) * Goodwill Industries (Oakland) * Bay Area Coalition of Employment Development (Oakland) * California School for the Deaf, Open House and Work Readiness Program (WRP Fremont) * Deaf Services Network (Fremont) * Fremont Resource Center (Fremont) * Ohlone Deaf Program (Fremont) * People with Disabilities Foundation (San Francisco) * San Francisco Public Library - Deaf Services Center (San Francisco) * Pittsburg Adult Education Center (PAEC Pittsburg) * San Jose State University Career Center (SJSU San Jose) * Deaf Community Counseling Services (DCCS San Francisco)   Internally DCARA's Employment Services Department's partners include the Community Empowerment Services Department (with offices in Fremont, San Jose, Concord, San Leandro, Fairfield, Humboldt, and Santa Rosa) and the Youth and Family Services Department. |
| **Project Description** | DCARA’s Employment Services (ES) provides direct language and communication access and direct services to individual clients. DCARA provides a barrier free for the Deaf\* clients. ES Staff are experts and provide services in American Sign Languages as well as other communication preferences a client may request a Various communication modes include the following-tactile signing (a communication mode some DeafBlind individuals use), ASL including document translation skills for clients have who have limited English proficiency or live with language deprivation. DCARA ES provides the necessary access including communication services for all job preparation, job placement, and follow-up; advocacy to assure Deaf\* individuals receive equal access to public and private employment services; job development and placement services; employment counseling and problem solving after placement. |
| **Outreach Plan for Targeted Populations to be Served** | DCARA has a solid and proven track record of services to the Deaf\* community that creates referrals through sign of hand; by community members of their family, friends, peers and colleagues to DCARA services. DCARA’s Community Empowerment Services Department and Youth & Family Services Department also refers clients to DCARA/EDD services.  DCARA’s ES outreach and recruitment methods for identifying and contacting Deaf\* clients reflect the program’s Deaf-centered approach. As a community-based agency DCARA’s ES is well known and well respected as a resource for Deaf\* community members to gain assistance in seeking, obtaining, and retaining employment.  DCARA utilizes social media and written word, as well as online and in-person individual meetings and workshops. DCARA has an informational postcard outlining Employment Services Department (ES) for Deaf\* population. This postcard is shared online for outreach and recruitment purposes, at each of DCARA offices and 5 AJCC offices, at each in-person event or appointment, and at all booth events and job fairs.  With over 63 years of service in the Deaf\*community, DCARA has multiple working partnerships with other service providers that refer clients to DCARA programs and services. Examples include the Department of Rehabilitation, local educational institutions, California School for the Deaf-Fremont, Ohlone College, and other state and local government programs. DCARA’s ES staff outreach to Deaf organizations, attend Deaf community events, and make presentations to employers to ensure that DCARA's employment services are well known. This approach also will ensure that the Deaf\* communities are informed about and empowered the valuable employment services that DCARA-EDD offered. |
| **Proposed Outcomes** | Once the Deaf\* client has completed DCARA’s intake form, DCARA's ES staff work alongside the client to register with CalJobs. The Deaf\* client and ES staff create a CalJobs resume, specialize in initial assessment for “job ready” or not, and then proceed to connect with prospective employers through the site. Staff discuss current job search trends, resume development, ONETOnline, practice interview skills, and tapping into the job market. Throughout the process, DCARA's ES staff have ongoing discussions to ensure that the client’s expectations of their job search are realistic and equivalent to the client’s experience, qualifications, and education.  Clients who are assessed as job ready, work with DCARA’s Employment Specialists for placement work to ensure they have a basic understanding and use of math, written english literacy, and computer skills; know how to utilize job search resources at EDD’s America’s Job Centers of California; can complete applications; attend job fairs, learn self-advocacy skills, and can effectively communicate at their place of employment. |

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| **Applicant** | **Greater Los Angeles Agency on Deafness Inc.**  2222 Laverna Ave.  Los Angeles, CA 90041 |
| **Contact** | Dr. Patricia Hughes, Chief Executive Officer  1-323-892-2205  [phughes@gladinc.org](mailto:phughes@gladinc.org) |
| **Award** | $1,401,493.68 |
| **Counties to be Served** | * Los Angeles * Orange * Riverside * San Bernardino |
| **Key Partners** | * Center on Deafness-Inland Empire (CODIE) * Greater Los Angeles Agency on Deafness Inc. (GLAD) * Orange County Deaf Equal Access Foundation (OCDEAF) * Tri-County GLAD (TCGLAD) * Bakersfield GLAD (BGLAD) * Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) * LIFESIGNS, Inc |
| **Project Description** | GLAD and the state of California’s Employment Development Department (EDD) have successfully collaborated for 40 years to provide services in eight America’s Job Center of California locations for deaf, hard-of-hearing, deafblind, and deaf disabled (DHH) consumers of EDD services.  GLAD-Employment Services (GLAD-ES) provides DHH participants with culturally and linguistically competent recruitment and assessment, employment counseling, CalJOBS access, resume and interview preparation, and sign language interpreters for interviews, orientations, and other auxiliary services to enhance consumers’ employment potential. Post-placement follow-up and support activities include referrals to GLAD and collaborative agencies for advocacy and independent living skills.  For legal, personal, and sociocultural issues that may affect employability, GLAD-ES also refers consumers to GLAD, CODIE, OCDEAF, TCGLAD, and BGLAD for supplemental support from advocates, including follow-up assistance with discrimination.  GLAD-ES also works with local and regional employers and service providers, assisting with interpreters for interviews and orientations, sensitivity and awareness trainings, and technical assistance regarding workplace accessibility. For immediate and post-hire needs, GLAD-ES shares information and makes referrals to agencies such as DOR, to ensure a seamless transition to the workplace for both employers and new hires. |
| **Outreach Plan for Targeted Populations to be Served** | GLAD-ES conducts outreach through its community partners and provides support to cross-enrolled consumers receiving DOR services. GLAD-ES also identifies potential consumers through word-of-mouth referrals, referrals from GLAD, CODIE, OCDEAF, TCGLAD, BGLAD, DOR, other social services, governmental, and community agencies. GLAD-ES staffs booths at DHH community events, consumer trade shows, cultural gatherings, and other social and cultural venues frequented by potential enrollees. Online, GLAD and GLAD-ES market services via a dedicated page on GLAD’s website and social media, including vlogs on GLAD’s website and YouTube. GLAD-ES staff also deliver presentations to local K-12 programs and colleges with a significant DHH student population, where recruitment opportunities exist. |
| **Proposed Outcomes** | The end goal for the project is long-term unsubsidized employment. Outcomes that support and lead to this goal involve several stages through the life of an individual consumer case.  First, identification and recruitment of program participants through outreach; intake/assessment of consumers, including determining if they are “job ready” or not; and providing referrals to DOR for additional personal, social, and vocational skills training for those individuals that are not “job ready”.  The next set of outcomes concerns supplemental training and support with job-search activities: identifying and applying for job leads, resume development and updates, and mock interviews to bolster employability.  The final stage is provision of interpreters for interviews and orientations to achieve equal communication access and supporting job candidates through the final stages of the hiring process.  Outreach outcomes aimed at employers and service providers includes increasing community awareness of GLAD-ES services through in-person contacts at job fairs, hiring events, on-site EDD events, “cold call” visits at offices and businesses, and collaborative efforts with partners such as DOR that have their own network of mutually beneficial contacts. Once initial introduction to employers and service provides have occurred, additional steps and outcomes include employer education about tax credits, legal obligations per the Americans with Disabilities Act, communication tips and resources, communication technology support, and information about deafness and cultural aspects of American Sign Language and DHH culture. An additional objective is to develop a network and ongoing collaboration with employers and service providers that will strengthen the potential for improved consumer outcomes and the program goals. |
| **Applicant** | **NorCal Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing**  4044 N. Freeway Blvd  Sacramento, CA 95834 |
| **Contact** | Sheri Farinha, CEO  1-916-349-7500  [sfarinha@norcalcenter.org](mailto:sfarinha@norcalcenter.org) |
| **Award** | $305,581.92 |
| **Counties to be Served** | * El Dorado * Placer * Sacramento * Sutter * Yolo |
| **Key Partners** | * Sacramento Employment and Training Association -SETA * California Department of Rehabilitation-DOR * AARP Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) * Alta Regional Center |
| **Project Description** | NorCal, through coordination with EDD and two America’s Job Centers of California (AJCC) sites, will provide comprehensive job development and placement services to deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) job seekers. Key staf include one fulltime Employment Specialist and one fulltime Employment Interpreter at the Mark Sanders Job Center and one fulltime Employment Specialist and one fulltime Employment Interpreter at the Hillsdale Job Center. Services include job counseling, job search training and assistance, employment placement, and follow up. In addition, interpreting and communication assistance are provided for program-related activities and for DHH consumers to access EDD or AJCC services. |
| **Outreach Plan for Targeted Populations to be Served** | All services including our outreach services are fully accessible and provided in American Sign Language (ASL) and provided in the preferred language or communication of DHH community. NorCal provides outreach, recruitment and community education activities through the use of flyers and brochures, social media posts in ASL, exhibit booths at job fairs and Deaf Community events, and workshops for DHH job seekers. NorCal will continue to host Career Day which draws deaf and hard of hearing high school and community college students. Outreach to employers includes providing Deaf Awareness presentations, networking through business consortia and participating in employer recruitment at our local AJCCs. |
| **Proposed Outcomes** | Outcomes that help us accomplish our goals involve building long-term employer relations and conducting ongoing outreach to DHH consumers, including those who are working but want better employment. We support participants in finding their career paths by helping them find employment with good pay and benefits, ensure they have appropriate accommodations to understand and perform their job duties, and have the support to maintain long-term employment. |

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| **Applicant** | **Preserving the Culture for All**  814 Morena Blvd. Ste 204  San Diego, CA 92110 |
| **Contact** | Ebony Montgomery, Chief Executive Officer  1-562-335-7867  [ptcfaest2023@gmail.com](mailto:ptcfaest2023@gmail.com) |
| **Award** | $426,850.00 |
| **Counties to be Served** | * San Diego |
| **Key Partners** | * Self Determined Futures (San Diego) |
| **Project Description** | Preserving the Culture for All (PCFA) proposes to build upon our five years of dedicated service to deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals in the San Diego region through comprehensive employment services that address the unique cultural and communication needs of this underserved population. Our organization will provide culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate employment services that prioritize the individual's preferred mode of communication while emphasizing self-determination, independence, and decision-making skills.  PCFA specializes in serving Black and Brown deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals who face compounded barriers due to intersectional identities. Our program will offer complete communication services, including on-demand professional interpreter services with RID certification, for all employment-related activities. Our services include specialized job development tailored to each client's unique skills and communication preferences, advocacy to ensure equal access to public and private employment services, employment counseling, including peer counseling by deaf and hard-of-hearing staff, and comprehensive follow-up support after placement to ensure sustainable employment outcomes.  With five years of established relationships with employers and community partners in the San Diego region, PCFA has developed effective strategies to connect deaf and hard-of-hearing job seekers with inclusive employment opportunities while educating employers about appropriate accommodations. Our project emphasizes long-term career development rather than just job placement, focusing on industries with growth potential and advancement opportunities. PCFA's staff includes deaf and hard-of-hearing professionals who serve as role models and provide culturally competent services across diverse communication methods, including American Sign Language, tactile signing, cued speech, and written communication. |
| **Outreach Plan for Targeted Populations to be Served** | PCFA will implement a multifaceted outreach strategy specifically designed to reach deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities who are typically underrepresented in traditional service models. Our approach includes partnering with cultural centers, religious institutions, and community organizations serving these populations to conduct targeted outreach sessions in accessible formats. We will host monthly community information sessions at various locations throughout San Diego County, with professional interpreters and multilingual materials available.  Digital outreach will include ASL video content on social media platforms frequented by deaf and hard-of-hearing communities, with particular emphasis on platforms popular within BIPOC communities. Our website and all digital materials will be fully accessible and available in multiple languages, reflecting the diversity of San Diego County. We will also implement a peer ambassador program, where current and former clients share their experiences and refer others to our services, creating a trusted referral network within these communities.  PCFA will continue our partnerships with educational institutions, including community colleges and adult education programs, to identify potential clients transitioning from education to employment. Our staff will maintain a regular presence at community events serving Black and Brown communities, disability resource fairs, and cultural celebrations to connect directly with potential clients and their families. Additionally, we will work with healthcare providers and social service agencies to establish referral pathways for individuals who may benefit from our specialized employment services. |
| **Proposed Outcomes** | Our performance goals reflect our commitment to job placement, career development, and communication access. We will achieve these goals through a structured implementation approach that begins with intensive staff training and community partner coordination during the first 30 days, followed by participant recruitment and assessment in months 2-3 and service delivery beginning in month 3.  Our targeted outreach will ensure enrollment of 75 participants, with 55 completing job readiness training and 55 securing employment that aligns with their skills and communication preferences. Key milestones include establishing partnerships with up to 5-10 new employers committed to hiring deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, expanding our network of specialized interpreters for technical fields, and creating ASL-accessible training materials for five high-demand occupations.  The anticipated impact extends beyond employment numbers. Participants will demonstrate increased self-efficacy, with 85% reporting improved ability to advocate for workplace accommodations. We expect 65% of participants to report reduced reliance on public benefits and increased financial independence, with a particular focus on housing security.  Employment outcomes will emphasize quality over quantity. Based on our previous placement data, we project that 50% of participants will secure positions paying at least $18/hour with benefits, exceeding minimum wage by at least 30%. Industries of focus include healthcare support roles, government services, manufacturing, and technology support—sectors we've identified as both communication-friendly and offering advancement pathways.  Long-term retention will be ensured through our post-placement support model, which includes monthly check-ins for the first six months, on-call communication assistance for workplace challenges, and quarterly professional development sessions. This approach has previously yielded 75% retention at 12 months, compared to 52% before implementing this support system. Additionally, our employer education program creates lasting change in workplace cultures, benefiting future deaf employees beyond our direct clients.  These outcomes will contribute to meaningful change in the workforce system by creating more inclusive pathways for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, particularly those from Black and Brown communities. They will also demonstrate the value of culturally responsive employment services that honor individual communication preferences and self-determination. |