

Hearing Loss and Accommodations

There are approximately 28 million Americans who are deaf or hard of hearing. According to the National Association of the Deaf, the term “deaf” refers to individuals who are not able to hear well enough to rely on hearing as a means for processing information. The term “hard of hearing” refers to individuals who have some hearing loss but are able to use hearing to communicate. The following is two types of communication that are used by those who are deaf or hard of hearing:

Tennessee Relay Service (TN Relay) is designed for people who work or live in Tennessee and is a telephone service that allows persons with hearing or speech disabilities to place and receive telephone calls. TN Relay uses operators, called communications assistants (CAs), to facilitate telephone calls between people with hearing and speech disabilities and other individuals. A TN Relay call may be initiated by either a person with a hearing or speech disability, or a person without such disability. When a person with a hearing or speech disability initiates a TN Relay call, the person uses a TTY or other text input device to call the TN Relay center, and gives a CA the number of the party that he or she wants to call. The CA in turn places an outbound traditional voice call to that person. The CA then serves as a link for the call, relaying the text of the calling party in voice to the called party, and converting to text what the called party voices back to the calling party. CAs provide exact translations of what they hear and voice exactly what is typed, unless the caller directs them otherwise.

What is TTY/TDD?

TTY/TDD stands for a group of telecommunication devices that make it easier for deaf and/or mute people to talk over telephone lines. TTY stands for telephone typewriter, teletypewriter or text phone. TDD stands for Telecommunications Device for the Deaf. Usually these devices are all categorized under TTY/TDD. Sometimes TTY means manual devices such as typewriters, TDD devices usually fall under computer assisted or digital devices.

For the most part, a TTY/TDD device is the size of a typewriter or a small computer. The vast majority of these devices have a QWERTY keyboard and some sort of display screen that either uses LED, LCD or other display technology. Many TTY/TDD devices also include a printer which can use many types of printing technologies; however some resemble typewriters and have a spool of paper. With devices that have printing technology, text can be printed, shown on a display device or both.

How TTD/TTY Works

The TTY enables people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired to converse on the telephone by typing messages that are sent through the telephone network. A TTY works by converting text messages into a sound-based code (loud beeps) that are transmitted through the telephone line. The person on the other end of the line must also use a TTY to decode the sounds back into text. Each party in the conversation takes a turn typing a message and then reads the response of the other person.

The comprehensive Career Center located in Dyersburg has a TTY machine that can be used to communicate with the deaf or heard of hearing. The number for the TTY is **731-286-8383**.

If you want more information on job accommodations for people with hearing loss, please go to this link: <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/media/deaf.htm> . As always, if you have any questions or want/need additional information, I am here to help you in any way that I can.

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