

Hard of Hearing/Deaf

Assistive technology related to individuals who are hard of hearing or deaf, applies to such areas as: maximizing the listening environment, as well as increasing the independence of deaf people at home and in the community. Such assistive listening devices may include hearing aids, or special telephone systems. Here are a few of the devices that can assist you in your daily life:

Alarm Systems: Many alarm clocks, voice monitors, fire alarms, and doorbells are now modified to either emit a flashing strobe light signal, or send a vibrating signal to a pager unit to alert individuals in the home. Telephone monitors can also be hooked up to a flashing light signal that goes off when the phone rings.

Telephone Modifications: For those who are hard of hearing, simple attachments can amplify a caller's voice and make it easier for the person to hear. A Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) allows you to type your message to another individual, and you can receive a message back. Answering machines are also available with the TDD system. If you sometimes have difficulty hearing the phone, you may want to use an adjustable amplifier that makes the ring as loud as you need it to be.

Television and Radio: To better hear the television or radio, amplifiers can be attached to the unit to enhance the sound and to make it easier to hear. Captioning is also available on all television sets made after 1993. If your television was made before this date you may use a converter box that prints the dialogue on the screen for you.

Things you can do to make life easier:

- Pay phones now have TDD boxes so that you can make calls outside of your home. Special buttons on most pay phones also allow you to increase or decrease the volume.
- You may want to attach bells or chimes to certain doors to alert you when someone is entering a room.
- Hearing aids are often good remedies to individuals with minimal hearing loss.
- If you are buying appliances with alarms, make sure that they are loud enough move for you to hear.
- A few churches in North Dakota now provide headsets that amplify the service for those who are hard of hearing. Check with your church to see if these services are provided.
- Contact the North Dakota Center for Independent Living nearest you (see Additional Resources section) and ask about the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP).