



# DEAFBLIND SERVICES STILL NEEDED IN OHIO

## With FY 24-25 Pilot Program funding of \$100K a year

# 33

DeafBlind adults served by CSH

Ohio Residents with Dual Sensory Impairment (DSI)\*:

# 84,797

Columbus Speech & Hearing's (CSH) statewide Support Service Provider Pilot Program is **servicing DeafBlind adults around four major cities in Ohio, maintaining independent living and supporting basic quality of life.**

Trained SSPs provide mobility guiding, visual or audio information, and communication assistance for persons with deafblindness.

The Support Service Provider (SSP) Program, budgeted to serve 10 DeafBlind (DB) adults, is serving 30+. We continue to receive service applications from DB across Ohio. **However, these services are at serious risk due to the removal of GRF 415515 DeafBlind Fund from the Ohio Biennial Budget.**

## WITHOUT MY SSP

I cannot have access and guiding to:

- environmental/social surroundings
- identify and interact with people
- basic tasks: i.e., clothing and grocery shopping, reading mail, paying bills, banking, scheduling doctor visits
- make informed, autonomous choices
- attend religious and social activities
- develop trust with a consistent provider
- complete forms for services
- know danger and safety issues

### Who will serve the DeafBlind?

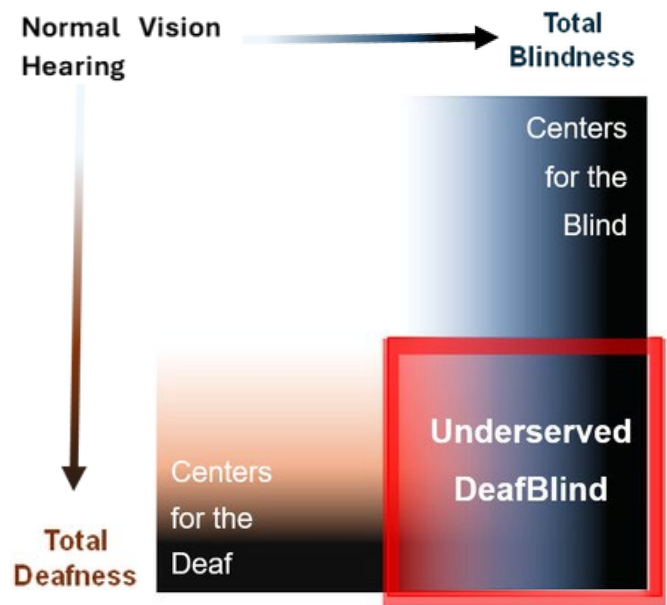
Deafblindness is a spectrum of dual sensory impairment. Those with deafblindness are a critically underserved population. Services must be tailored based on unique combinations of vision and hearing loss.

### Unique Service Needs and Communication Modes Among DB\*\*

61% Speech Users

45% Visual + Tactile ASL

>100% due to DB who use both communication modes



\*Conway, M. & Brown-Ogilvie, T. (2024) Individuals with Combined Hearing and Vision Loss: Data from the American Community Survey. Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youth and Adults.

\*\*Brown-Ogilvie, T., Alleman, J., & Conway, M. (2024). Recognizing the Needs of Older Adults with Combined Vision and Hearing Loss. [Research to Practice Paper]. Helen Keller National Center for DeafBlind Youths and Adults.



# The Community Supports SSP Services

Columbus Speech & Hearing is grateful to recognize strong partners and support for our work.



Ohio Deaf and Blind Education Services  
 The Ohio Center for DeafBlind Education: University of Cincinnati  
 Speech & Hearing Centers throughout Ohio  
 Ohio Association of the DeafBlind  
 Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
 Columbus State Community College  
 Kent State University  
 Ohio Deaf Association  
 I Can Connect (ICC)  
 Center of Science and Industry (COSI)  
 Ohio Deaf Friends of the Library

Disability Rights Ohio  
 Sinclair Community College  
 Columbus Colony Housing  
 Columbus Colony Elder Care Nursing Home  
 Ohio Center for Autism & Low Incidence (OCALI)  
 Spring Grove Cemetery and Arboretum  
 Ohio Deaf Friends of the Library  
 Good Sign Coffee  
 Art Possible  
 National Federation of the Blind  
 Community Centers for the Deaf throughout Ohio

Community collaborations include partnering to create events such as the **Columbus Zoo and Aquarium’s “Blind, Deaf, and DeafBlind Accessibility Day”** and the **Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council’s “My Life, My Story”** live presentations by DeafBlind individuals at the **Columbus Museum of Art**. These partnerships are resulting in improved access, increased community awareness, and enhanced opportunities for advocacy.

## Comments from the Community .

**“... I wish there was support for those of us DB who are alone. Can be hard to find trusted help. Can be scary.” \***

**“Ohio needs to fund the expanding demand of services for the DeafBlind.”**

**Although services for youth with a disability exist in Ohio, the schools that work closely with our DeafBlind population ‘wonder where their young adult graduates will access services.’**

**“Isolation impacts my physical and mental health. Without my SSP, I am completely isolated.”**

## DeafBlind Population Increasing

Most become DB after aging out of school services.  
 As the aging population continues to grow in Ohio and nationwide, we will see increases in age-related deafblindness. In fact, the largest population experiencing deafblindness are adults 55 and older.\*