

SSP FAQ

What is an SSP?

A Support Service Provider, commonly referred to as an **SSP**, is a specially trained individual who provides access to the community for people who are **DeafBlind**. This allows the person who is **DeafBlind** to make decisions for themselves based on the visual, environmental and social information provided by the **SSP**.

Who is eligible to apply and what makes them eligible?

Anyone in the state of PA over the age of 18 who meets the commonwealth definition of DeafBlind (DB). There is no list that one must be on to receive services. Each provider does require paperwork to be filled out by the individual who is DB. Commonwealth Definition of DeafBlind: DeafBlindness is defined per the Helen Keller Act, 29 U.S.C. § 1905:

(2) the term "individual who is DeafBlind" means any individual—

- (A)(i) who has a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with corrective lenses, or a field defect such that the peripheral diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees, or a progressive visual loss having a prognosis leading to one or both these conditions;
 - (ii) who has a chronic hearing impairment so severe that most speech cannot be understood with optimum amplification, or a progressive hearing loss having a prognosis leading to this condition; and
 - (iii) for whom the combination of impairments described in clauses (i) and (ii) cause extreme difficulty in attaining independence in daily life activities, achieving psychosocial adjustment, or obtaining a vocation; and
- (B) who despite the inability to be measured accurately for hearing and vision loss due to cognitive or behavioral constraints, or both, can be determined through functional and performance assessment to have severe hearing and visual disabilities that cause extreme difficulty in attaining independence in daily life activities, achieving psychosocial adjustment, or obtaining vocational objectives

Do I have a choice where I can get SSP services?

ODHH has two Emergency Purchase Orders in place that allow 10 no-cost hours a month for eligible commonwealth citizens. The commonwealth has other SSP providers as well. Consumers may go wherever they like.

How do I contact the SSP Coordinator?

Keystone Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

Lori Fisher
Director of Client Services
Email: lfisher@bdhhs.org
Voice: 610-685-4523
Videophone: 484-388-4086

Counties Served: Adams, Franklin, Berks, Bucks, Chester, Cumberland, Perry, Dauphin, Delaware, Lancaster, Lebanon, Montgomery, Philadelphia, Schuylkill, York, Bradford, Tioga, Sullivan, Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton, Centre, Columbia, Luzerne, Lackawanna, Wyoming, Lycoming, Clinton, Mifflin, Union, Snyder, Juniata, Monroe, Northumberland, Montour, Pike, Wayne and Susquehanna

Deaf Stone Services LLC.

Jessica K Adams, CI & CT
Interim SSP Coordinator
Email: SSP@DeafStone.org
Phone/Text/FaceTime: 412-616-0061

Counties Served: Allegheny, Blair, Huntington, Bradford, Tioga, Sullivan, Butler, Cambria, Fayette, Indiana, Armstrong, Lawrence, Beaver, Somerset, Bedford, Fulton, Washington, Greene, Westmoreland, Clearfield, McKean, Elk, Potter, Cameron, Crawford, Warren, Erie, Mercer, Venango, Jefferson, Clarion and Forest

Preferred communication: Individuals who are DeafBlind and SSPs can communicate through their preferred method. This includes text, videophone, email, Postal mail, braille. They can use VCO phone, TTY, ASL/Tactile interpreter. *They do need to request or let providers know their preferred method of communication.*

SSP Programs/Providers do have a grievance or a complaint policy.

Grievance Policy: Each Provider has their own Grievance Policy. Should an SSP or Consumer who is DeafBlind not be satisfied with the outcome, they are welcome to contact the ODHH Director to appeal the decision. ODHH will conduct their own investigation.

Complaint process: Each provider has their own individual complaint process. Should an individual who is DB or an SSP not be satisfied with the outcome of this complaint process, they may appeal to ODHH. ODHH will then investigate the complaint and speak with the provider.

Will all SSPs be trained before providing services?

All SSPs must complete a training or provide proof they have completed an SSP training. ODHH will contract with Shannon Wright to train SSPs. These trainings will be held monthly starting in March and running through June of 2021; at least one day will be done in American Sign Language.

Can a family member be my SSP?

To ensure impartiality, SSPs do not provide services where there may be a conflict of interest. This means that SSPs do not provide a service in a situation where they have a personal connection and could gain personally, financially or in any other way. For example, while working with a person who is DeafBlind, an SSP would never hand out a business card or otherwise self-promote, nor would an SSP serve as an interpreter, social worker or any other role while also providing SSP services at the same time. In addition, an SSP would not provide paid services for a spouse, family member or other person with whom they have a close, personal relationship.