

December 2020

From: **Russ Goddard, MRC, CRC** | Program Director, Summer Academy for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
PA Department of Labor & Industry | Office of Vocational Rehabilitation | Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

RE: 2021 DHH Summer Academy: Accepting Applications!
The program application deadline is **April 1, 2021**.

Good morning everyone,

I hope this finds you well. I am pleased to announce that we are now accepting applications from deaf and hard of hearing high school students to participate in our 2021 DHH Summer Academy program! The OVR-led and implemented program is being offered in partnership with the PA Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH), PDE's Bureau of Special Education's PaTTAN, and PDE's Bureau of Special Education's Educational Resources for Children with Hearing Loss (ERCHL). **The program will run from July 12-22, 2021, with an orientation session for students and their parents or legal guardians on July 8, 2021.** The mission of the Summer Academy for High School Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing is to provide a supportive environment to assist high school students who are deaf or hard of hearing with learning about all of the skills necessary to successfully transition from high school to post-secondary educational options or to a competitive integrated employment outcome. We are currently finalizing our curriculum, which will include instruction on self-advocacy skills in the college environment and the workplace, work-related skills, communication access options, audiological information, and social emotional skills.

There are three key differences between this year's program and previous year's programs:

- **New Training Format:** Previous programs were offered in person at Penn State's Main Campus. Due to the continuing uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 program will be offered through Zoom. As is the case in the past, interpreting and CART services continue to be offered.
- **Expanded Pool of Applicants:** Previous programs required that all Summer Academy participants have an open case with OVR. The change in our training format now allows us to expand the pool of applicants to include potential participants with any type of hearing loss who do not yet have an OVR case. Participants already receiving OVR services or are on the OVR waiting list are also welcome to apply for a spot at our program.
- **Expanded Admission Requirements:** Previous programs required that all Summer Academy participants have definite or possible plans for post-secondary education. For this year's program, we have expanded our admission requirements to also include participants who have definite or possible plans to pursue a competitive integrated employment outcome shortly after graduating from high school.

Our admission requirements for the 2021 DHH Summer Academy are as follows:

- Be currently enrolled in 9th, 10th, 11th or 12th grade in the 2020-2021 school year.
- Have definite or possible plans for either post-secondary education or in obtaining a job shortly after graduating from high school.
- Be deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind with any type of communication method (Listening & Spoken Language, ASL user, both, etc.)
- Have a current IEP or 504 plan.
- Be able to communicate fluently in their preferred method of communication.

- Have internet access at home or another place where one can consistently participate in the program.
- Have a computer, tablet, or smartphone that one can use to consistently participate in the program.
- Have a desire and willingness to participate in all activities at the Summer Academy.

The program will offer a minimum of two required sessions in the morning and one optional moderated session in the afternoon each day. Sessions will be offered on a two-week Monday-Wednesday-Thursday schedule to minimize concentration fatigue, as well as reducing the chance that participants would have the all-too-common experience of being “zoomed out”.

The program application deadline is **April 1, 2021**. Students will be notified of their acceptance by **May 1, 2021**.

For more information about the 2021 DHH Summer Academy program, or to have participants apply for this program, go [here](#). If you have any questions about our program, need additional information, or need to discuss whether it's appropriate for one of your customers to apply for our program, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

A Note on Potential Deafblind Applicants: This program may be appropriate for some potential applicants who have a combined vision and hearing loss, and whose hearing loss may be the more primary disability than vision loss. If you have any questions about whether this could be appropriate for your customers, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. This program does not conflict with the STRIVE ON program offered and run by BBVS, which is scheduled to be held during the spring.

Thank you so much for your interest in this invaluable program, and have a safe and healthy holiday season!

Please note: All OVR staff are working remotely until further notice. Please allow up to three (3) business days for a response via email or by phone. If you need immediate attention, please call the Central Office main line at (717) 787-5244.

Sincerely,

Russ Goddard, MRC, CRC | Program Director, Summer Academy for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Pronouns: He, Him, His

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