**Lora Turner**

**Panel Questions**

* Panelist Introductions (Organization, Your Name, and Title). Lora Turner, Rehabilitation Supervisor, DETR Vocational Rehabilitation
* Please prepare to respond in 2 minutes or less for each question. All questions may not be addressed during our panel session.

**1.     What is the biggest challenge in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community at the moment from your organization’s perspective?**

There are still many barriers, for instance accessibility and effective communication in both the public and private sectors. Specifically related to Vocational Rehabilitation mission we have significant challenges with employers. They lack Knowledge in providing accommodations and working with individuals with hearing loss.

**2.     What are the legislative issues facing the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community and what changes need to be made?**

In general, the Deaf and Hard of hearing community has similar issues in Nevada- accessibility, transportation, and housing.  From the VR perspective, we are focused on increasing accessibility and awareness. We have grown our DHH team within our internal staff. We have had an open recruitment for a contract staff interpreter position with no success. We hope to request a full time staff interpreter state position this next legislative session.  We plan on improving our outreach efforts with students and families at a younger age, providing Pre Employment transition Services, transition planning including our statewide DHH camp.

1. **What are the most critical changes that we must make to face the future effectively?**

Frankly, reduce oppression and audism. This is the most common feedback we hear from community members.

**3.     What are common issues that prevent people from being advocates for themselves or for the community?**

Burnout. We spend so much time and effort on educating the community. The community endures not feeling heard and supported. It’s a lot. We need to find a way to reduce the impact and not burnout our leaders and support their self-care to continue the work.

**a.     What is one piece of practical advice you would give to someone starting out as an advocate?**

Use your voice. At VR, we are focused on our transition aged youth, they are our future. Providing support and resources so they can pave the way.

**4.     How do we include the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community in planning for the legislative changes?**

Ensure accommodations for public meetings and encourage participation. Most state agencies and programs have annual townhall meetings for community feedback. Agencies review this feedback to form their strategic priorities and plans for legislative change. Join our Nevada State Rehabilitation Council (NSRC) meeting and/or join the council. There are vacant positions.