



# SUCCESS STORIES



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## AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL) COURSE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING POPULATIONS

*Rochester Institute of Technology*

### About the Practice

Staff from the American Sign Language and Interpreting Education (ASLIE) program at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) have developed curriculum for hearing staff at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) in New York, of which NTID is a part. The training will teach hearing staff the basics of deaf culture, how to recognize someone who is deaf or hard of hearing, and how to communicate basic emergency phrases to the deaf or hard of hearing. This program, offered in early December 2010, was integrated into the Faculty Staff Sign Language Program and was offered to (but not limited to) all area and building “marshals” that are part of Building Emergency Action Plan organizations.

Staff from NTID (a school comprised of approximately 1,500 deaf or hard of hearing students, plus staff and faculty) agreed to create a three-hour course—mainly for marshals—to teach such hearing staff signs associated with emergencies under three main categories: evacuation, shelter-in-place, and relocation. Staff from NTID developed the curriculum, the course materials, and provided the instructors. The course is open to anyone on campus. The first course was in early December 2010, followed by classes offered once per quarter. Course components will eventually be incorporated into drills.

### Overcoming Challenges

It was somewhat challenging for the instructors who designed the course to find the time to work on the project. In addition, the person who originally agreed to oversee the development of the course left NTID, and it took some time to find a replacement.

### Replicating Success

If representatives from other institutions want to use the materials NTID developed, these materials will be shared with the REMS TA Center as they become available (see <http://rems.ed.gov>). To administer the course, other institutions may need to contact external organizations that have professional sign language interpreters who would be able to teach the course.

Be patient. Try to focus the initial training toward people who would have some responsibility in an emergency response. Coordinate well with your academic operations and student affairs divisions.

—Lynn Daley, director of business continuity, Rochester Institute of Technology

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf has an online form that enables users to search

for interpreters in their communities. Centers for Independent Living (CILs) are consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential, private nonprofit agencies designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities. CILs often provide sign language interpreting referrals. A national directory of centers for independent living is available from the National Council on Independent Living website. Other potential collaborative resources may include a local college or university for the deaf and hard of hearing.

### **For More Information**

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Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf  
<https://www.rid.org/acct-app/index.cfm?action=search.members>

The National Council on Independent Living, Centers for Independent Living directory  
<http://www.ncil.org/directory.html>

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The REMS TA Center was established in October 2007 by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS). The center supports schools and school districts in developing and implementing comprehensive emergency management plans by providing technical assistance via trainings, publications, and individualized responses to requests. For additional information about school emergency management topics, visit the REMS TA Center at <http://rems.ed.gov> or call 1-866-540-REMS (7367). For information about the REMS grant program, contact Tara Hill ([tara.hill@ed.gov](mailto:tara.hill@ed.gov)).

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