

# State of North Carolina

**ROY COOPER**  
GOVERNOR

**DEAF AWARENESS MONTH**

**2024**

**BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

**A PROCLAMATION**

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina is projected to experience a 33 percent increase in adults with hearing loss, from 1.2 million people in 2019 to 1.65 million in 2030; and

**WHEREAS**, the Deaf population of North Carolina includes individuals born profoundly deaf who use American Sign Language (ASL) as a primary means of communication, and those who use hearing aids, cochlear implants, assistive listening devices, or other forms of amplification; and

**WHEREAS**, ASL is a rich and sophisticated language, with its own syntax, morphology, structure, and a capacity to convey complex thoughts, ideas, and emotions; early exposure to language, including English and ASL, provides a strong linguistic foundation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, fostering meaningful attachments with their parents, and increasing their readiness for kindergarten, capacity to regulate their own behaviors and emotions, and their future success as self-sufficient adults; and

**WHEREAS**, people who identify as Deaf belong to a cultural and linguistic community, with shared language, social norms, rules of behavior, and history; and

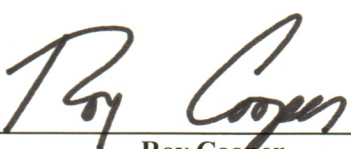
**WHEREAS**, North Carolina recognizes September as Deaf Awareness Month to commemorate the first Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf, held in September of 1951, and the United Nations' proclamation of September 23 as the International Day of Sign Languages; and

**WHEREAS**, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), through the Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) and its Regional Centers, provides advocacy for communication access, consultation, Deaf culture and ASL awareness, information and referral, to people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or DeafBlind, and their families in this state; and

**WHEREAS**, DSDHH joins DHHS divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Use Services, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and organizations including the North Carolina Association of the Deaf, North Carolina Black Deaf Advocates, Deaf Seniors of North Carolina, North Carolina Deaf-Blind Associates, North Carolina American Sign Language Teachers Association, and North Carolina Early Hearing Detection and Intervention in encouraging increased awareness, understanding, and recognition of the many contributions made by Deaf people across our state;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, ROY COOPER, Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim September, 2024, as **"DEAF AWARENESS MONTH"** in North Carolina, and commend its observance to all citizens.



  
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Roy Cooper  
Governor

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capitol in Raleigh this twentieth day of August in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-four and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-ninth.