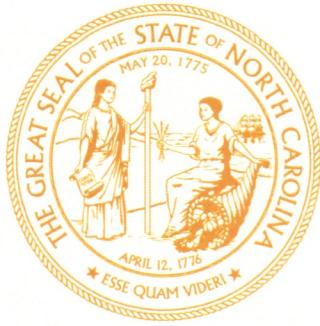




State of North Carolina

JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR

DEAF AWARENESS MONTH

2026

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, North Carolina is projected to experience a 27 percent increase in adults with hearing loss, from 1.3 million people in 2024 to 1.7 million in 2040; 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 deep capacity to convey complex thoughts, ideas, and emotions; and 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 or caregivers and increasing their readiness for kindergarten, capacity to regulate their own behaviors and emotions, and 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 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, through the Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) and its Regional Centers, provides services including 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 organizations including but not limited to the North Carolina Association of the Deaf; North Carolina Black Deaf Advocates; Deaf Seniors of North Carolina; North Carolina DeafBlind Associates; North Carolina Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; North Carolina American Sign Language Teachers Association; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction: Office of Exceptional Children; North Carolina Division of Employment and Independence for People with Disabilities: Deafness and Communicative Disorders; North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services: Deaf Services; 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, JOSH STEIN, Governor of the State of North Carolina, do hereby proclaim September 2026 as "DEAF AWARENESS MONTH" in North Carolina and commend its observance.



A handwritten signature of Josh Stein in black ink, written over a horizontal line.
JOSH STEIN
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 twenty-seventh day of August in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-sixth and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifty-first.