

## **Programs and Services**

By an Act of Congress, Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) is the only national organization dedicated to providing quality services to promote the quality of life for individuals who are deaf-blind. With 50+ years of specialized employment and rehabilitation services to individuals with combined vision and hearing loss, HKNC is committed to provide individualized training to meet the participant's needs and preferences to maximize their potential in the community of their choice.

### **Our specialized training programs are designed:**

#### **To further the participant's employment pursuits,**

- Vocational interests are explored and informational interviewing opportunities are available to assist participants in identifying an employment path that is matched with aptitudes, interests and experiences;
- Situational work assessments are provided to recognize strengths and discover employment prospects that take place in the surrounding communities on Long Island and in the five boroughs of New York;
- Paid community work experiences are offered. Also, any job supports, strategies and accommodations needed to achieve vocational success are identified in competitive employment work trials;
- Access to HKNC's network of "national employers" is provided for work assessments, many of which lead to employment opportunities in the person's home community including, but not limited to, companies such as Apple, Panera Bread, Best Buy, PETCO, 1-800-FLOWERS, Hilton Hotels, CVS pharmacy, and Adecco.
- Access to HKNC's National Employment and Business Relations Specialist (NEBRS) to connect with employers nationwide.

#### **To actualize the participant's perception of one's social identity,**

- Opportunity to meet and train with other individuals who also have dual sensory loss and shared life experiences, creating learning and mentoring experiences;
- Involvement in peer support groups with people with similar challenges;
- Participation in self-advocacy training facilitated by staff who are deaf-blind, and build awareness about their legal rights, resources to tap into, and strategies for positive resolution on accessibility barriers; and
- Increased participation in the decision making process to make informed choices with confidence.

#### **To maximize the participant's access to one's environment,**

- Opportunity to explore an array of assistive listening devices and hearing amplification;
- Exposure to current software, apps, and technology to enhance employment outcomes, independence and quality of life;
- On-staff audiologist with expertise working with persons with combined hearing and vision loss;
- Weekly access to ophthalmologist and low vision services;

- Assessment and training in a fully accessible communication environment, which includes American sign language, tactile sign language, speech, braille, and the use of Haptics, a standardized system for providing and/or receiving visual and environmental information as well as social feedback via touch signals on the body; and
- Interpreting services available upon request;
- Mobility instruction for persons with combined vision and hearing loss, including
  - alternate techniques/tools for street crossing,
  - use of the white cane, and
  - techniques for effective community access.

**To bolster the participant's confidence in the home,**

- Independent residential and community-based training to gain skills needed for budgeting, meal preparation, scheduling, using a variety of transportation options, and cleaning;
- Exposure to apartment life experience through the participation in either or both of the two apartment programs: on-campus apartment within the HKNC residence with staff on standby for assistance, and an off-campus apartment two miles from the HKNC facility;
- Navigation in one's community and building confidence in mastering errands such as banking and grocery shopping.

**To foster the applicability of the participant's knowledge and skills,**

- Application of transdisciplinary model for creative and practical solutions in the home, community and workplace, promoting full participation in society;
- Use of a Transition Plan/Portfolio with an updated resume, contact information for team members, resources and action steps for the participant's return to the home community;
- College readiness preparation through advocacy, post-secondary counseling and collaboration with college disability services to ensure full integration in the classroom and online experience;
- Contracted with Vocational Rehabilitation in multiple states to provide CRP (Community Rehabilitation Program) services to deaf-blind participants by HKNC Deaf-Blind Specialists available in multiple states to offer a continuum of services leading to successful employment outcomes in the participant's home community;
- Access to the local HKNC regional representative for lifelong advocacy, guidance and support regardless the status of services provided;

**Other campus and community-based services including:**

- Deaf-Blind Immersion Experience – short-term five-day lifestyle assessment and training program for individuals who are deaf-blind and have intellectual disabilities and their community-based support team;
- Confident Living Program – specifically for senior adults with vision and hearing loss with an emphasis on community resources and peer support, on-campus or on the road;

- Programs for Youth – a variety of summer training options for young adults seeking competitive employment experience or interested in exploring their post-secondary options.

For more information on our Comprehensive Vocational Rehabilitation Program (CVRP), follow this captioned video or transcript: <https://www.helenkeller.org/hks/comprehensive-vocational-rehabilitation-program>

Adam, a former student, shares his experience regarding his assessment and training at HKNC in this video and transcript: <https://www.helenkeller.org/hks/hknc-success-story-adams-career-journey-begins>

Browse HKNC's website <https://www.helenkeller.org/hknc>

To find your nearest Regional Representative office, follow this link: <https://www.helenkeller.org/hknc/nationwide-services>