

Working With People Who Have a Hearing Loss

Recently, we had the opportunity to learn more about working with people who have hearing loss. [“Say What? Interacting with People who have a Hearing Loss”](#) a training led by Jennifer Anderson, Jennifer Koehn, and Caroline Ludka from the **Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**. The training offered guidance on understanding hearing loss, improving communication, and ensuring access for individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, late-deafened, or hard of hearing.

Hearing loss is often invisible, and people may work hard to hide it. As SHIP Counselors, small changes in how we communicate can make outreach and counseling more welcoming, respectful, and effective.

How can we be more Inclusive with Outreach and Counseling

- Add interpreter blurb to ADRC/event flyers using plain language. Be consistent with including interpreter information on all event flyers.
 - For example, “If you need ASL, real time captioning, an interpreter, or another accommodation, call xxx-xxx-xxxx by [date]”
 - Not everyone uses the same communication strategies, so it is best to ask what works best for them. Which can include lip reading, sign language, interpreters, or specialized phones: TTY phone, Caption phone, Video phone.
- Educate possible clients on how to specify their needs, deadlines, etc. when requesting assistance.
- The right space is key. Make sure the location is quiet and reduce background noise, when possible, make sure there is good lighting and avoid standing in front of bright windows which can limit what they see.
- Make information easy to follow by using plain language, repeat key points, write down important details like dates, names, and phone numbers.
- Communicate clearly and respectfully by getting the person’s attention before speaking, face them and keep your mouth visible, speak clearly at a normal pace and don’t shout. Make sure you are patient and allow extra time, don’t rush.

This project was supported by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services with financial assistance, in whole or in part, by grant number 90SAPG0091, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.

- Instead of asking: “Did you hear everything okay?” Try saying: “I want to make sure I explained this clearly let me repeat the most important part.”
- Group Presentations:
 - Face the Audience while speaking
 - Read aloud what is on the slides
 - Repeat questions before answering
 - Encourage people to sit where they hear best
 - Pause often to check for understanding
- When an interpreter is present:
 - Speak directly to the person who is deaf
 - Stand next to the interpreter if possible so the individual can see both you and the interpreter
 - Allow time for interpretation

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504: mandates interpreters for people who are deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind for any agency that receives federal funding.

Keep in mind that inclusive outreach is not about doing everything perfectly-it’s about being **aware, flexible, and respectful**. When we slow down, remove barriers, and check for understanding, we build trust and help ensure every person can make informed Medicare decisions.

When in doubt-ask, adapt, and listen.

Updated information on the GWAAR Medicare Outreach and Assistance Resources webpage.

→ Welcome to Medicare PowerPoints

- [English 2026 figures](#)
- [English 2026 customizable](#)

→ Welcome to Medicare Videos (not year specific)

[ASL](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Chinese](#) | [Hmong](#) | [German](#) | [Italian](#) | [Lao](#) | [Polish](#) | [Russian](#) |

This project was supported by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services with financial assistance, in whole or in part, by grant number 90SAPG0091, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.



Navigating Medicare

Medicare Mingle

Medicare Mingle is a casual and informative meeting aimed at supporting Wisconsin SHIP counselors in their role of guiding individuals through the Medicare process.

Medicare Mingle provides a chance for SHIP Counselors to:

- Connect with your peers
- Offer and receive support
- Seek advice
- Explore outreach strategies, what's working and what's not
- Discuss various Medicare topics

2026 Medicare Mingle Dates

Wednesday April 22	10:00am-11:00am	Zoom Link
Wednesday June 24	9:00am-10:00am	Zoom Link
Wednesday August 26	10:00am-11:00am	Zoom Link
Wednesday October 7	9:00am-10:00am	Zoom Link

This project was supported by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services with financial assistance, in whole or in part, by grant number 90SAPG0091, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.



Navigating Medicare