



April 15, 2019

**Communication Assistance Database**

For people who need occasional support communicating

Some people who have disabilities that affect their communication may want a person to assist them communicating in certain situations, such as an important meeting or appointment or when they need to give detailed, complex information or communicate in a high stress situation. At these times, they may want someone to support them understanding what the other person is saying and communicating everything they want to say.

While many people have family members or support staff who assist them communicating in these situations, there may be times that they want someone else to assist, such as when family and staff are not available or when they want to discuss private matters. In addition, there are many people who do not have someone that they trust to support them communicating.

The [Communication Assistance Database](#) is an online resource where people can find and hire someone to assist with communication. There are two categories of communication assistance.

1. Communication assistants support people communicating in non-critical, everyday situations
2. Communication Intermediaries are Speech-Language Pathologists, who support people communicating in police, legal and justice services.

The people listed on CDAC's database have taken our online course about how to support people communicating and have agreed to follow [the code ethics](#) which you can read on the database.

It is important to note that CDAC does not accredit, endorse or pay the communication assistants or intermediaries on its database. CDAC is also not accountable for the assistance given to a person.

It is the sole responsibility of the person looking for communication assistance, the family member or the organization to interview, check references and hire a communication assistant who can meet their needs. In the case of a communication intermediary, people should ask police, legal and justice services to pay for a communication intermediary in order to access these services.

**Using the Database**

When using the database, a person can see how far away the nearest assistant or intermediary is from their location, as well as their experience supporting people with different types of disabilities and communication methods.

**To use the database:**

1. Click on the [database](http://www.cdacanada.com/communication-assistance-database/) at <http://www.cdacanada.com/communication-assistance-database/> [Enter your postal code](#).
2. Select whether you want a communication assistant for everyday situations or a communication intermediary for supporting communication in police, legal or justice services.
3. Click on Select and the page changes.
4. Find an assistant or intermediary in your area who may have the experience to meet your needs. Note that this is a growing database, so there may not be someone in your area at this time.
5. Click Select on the assistant or intermediary that may meet your needs.
6. Enter your name and email and click on Send. An automated message is sent to the assistant or intermediary.
7. An assistant or intermediary should reply to you in 1-2 days.
8. You are now in email contact with an assistant or intermediary and you can get more information from them and set up a meeting, if you want to interview them for a future engagement.

**Paying a Communication Assistant or Intermediary**

Communication assistants and intermediaries set their own fees. Typically, a communication assistant charges approximately the same rate as an attendant service provider. A communication intermediary negotiates their rate with police, legal and justice services.

Paying for communication support services should be addressed in a similar way as sign language interpreting or attendant services. For example:

- Federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments entities should pay for communication assistance when hosting public forums and committee meetings.
- Healthcare services should pay an assistant if a person needs support to communicate about their services and to give informed consent to treatment.
- Police, legal and justice services should pay for communication intermediary services to support people in police interviews, legal meetings and in court.

**Support people to get the communication supports they may need by:**

- Telling them and their support network (if appropriate) about the database and showing them how to use it.
- Finding out if they want you to help them develop a personal communication support network and providing custom training to the assistants they select in their area.
- Asking if they know people who might be interested in taking our [online communication assistance course at https://courses.cdacanada.com/](https://courses.cdacanada.com/).
- Telling them about communication intermediary services that they can request in police, legal and justice services. Check [out our webinar at http://www.access-to-justice.org/education/people-with-communication-disabilities/](http://www.access-to-justice.org/education/people-with-communication-disabilities/)
- Encouraging them to take our [online course about how to find, hire and work with a communication assistant at https://courses.cdacanada.com/courses/working-with-a-communication-assistant/](https://courses.cdacanada.com/courses/working-with-a-communication-assistant/)