
Mayor's Office on Disability



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Assistive Listening Devices

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that local government entities ensure that communication with individuals with disabilities is equally effective as communication with others. In order to provide equal access, the City and County of San Francisco is required to make available appropriate auxiliary aids and services upon request and regardless of the meeting size. Auxiliary aids and services include a wide range of services and devices that promote effective communication. Examples of auxiliary aids that are used by people who are hard of hearing are assistive listening devices also known as assistive listening systems.

What Are They?

Assistive Listening Systems are defined under the ADA as an amplification system utilizing transmitters, receivers, and coupling devices to bypass the acoustical space between a sound source and a listener by means of induction loop, radio frequency, infrared, or direct wired equipment.

When Do I Use Them?

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) certain fixed seating assembly areas that accommodate 50 or more people or have audio-amplification systems must have permanently installed assistive listening systems. Other assembly areas must have permanent systems or an adequate number of electrical outlets or other wiring to support a portable system. The minimum number of receivers must be equal to four percent of the total number of seats, but never less than two. Additionally, a special sign indicating the availability of the system is required. [Sample signage](http://www.sfgov.org/mod/temporary-accessibility-signage) can be found on our website (<http://www.sfgov.org/mod/temporary-accessibility-signage>).

Why Are They Required?

In some settings permanently installed assistive listening systems are not available; however, when it is expected that 50 or more people will be in attendance or an accommodation request has been made a portable assistive listening device should be provided. The assistive listening device usually uses a microphone to capture an audio source near its origin and broadcasts it wirelessly over an FM (Frequency Modulation)

transmission, IR (Infra Red) transmission, IL (Induction Loop) transmission, or other transmission method. The person who is listening may use an FM/IR/IL Receiver to tune into the signal and listen at his/her preferred volume.

Resources

The Mayor's Office on Disability (MOD) has a portable assistive listening device that it loans to City and County of San Francisco Departments free of charge. The device system broadcasts wirelessly over an FM transmission. It can be used in a one-on-one setting or within a group setting. The receiver will operate up to 100 to 300 feet when used with the transmitter. It includes 10 headphones, 10 receivers, 2 neck loops and one transmitter. The device system also includes 2 table-top microphones, 1 clip-on microphone for one person, 1 spliced cord for dual microphones, 2 seven foot cords to extend the mic, and 1 cord to connect media equipment to the receiver.

If your department would like to utilize this system for an upcoming meeting or event please review the [Assistive Listening Device Loan Policy](http://www.sfgov.org/mod/effective-communication) on our website (<http://www.sfgov.org/mod/effective-communication>). Please contact MOD at least 24 hours in advance about your request to help ensure availability.

Questions and inquiries about the portable assistive listening device can be addressed to MOD. For additional resources for hard of hearing individuals you can contact the following resource:

[Hearing and Speech Center of Northern California](http://www.hearingspeech.org/main/)

1234 Divisadero Street

San Francisco, CA 94115

Voice: Phone: 415. 921.7658

TTY: 415. 921.8990

(<http://www.hearingspeech.org/main/>)