

# National SSP Surveys Results

## Survey of Experienced SSPs

- More than 100 questions
- Circulated Feb 1 - May 1, 2017
- 279 respondents

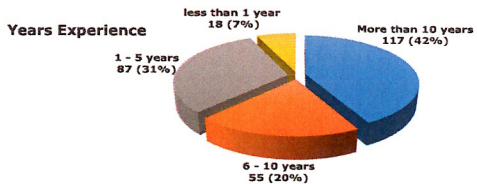
Gender **71% (198) WOMEN**

Age **OLDER THAN 45 (59%/164)** 31-45 (28%/77) <30 (13%/38)

Have a personal relationship or friendship with someone who is DeafBlind **77% (216)**

Hearing & sighted **54% (151)**

Deaf/HOH & sighted **42% (116)**

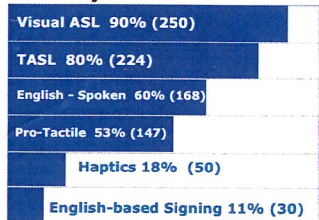


## Essential Characteristics

- Keeps confidentiality: 91% (253)
- Good communication skills: 90% (250)
- Respects consumer choice: 89% (248)
- Patient: 88% (244)
- Flexible: 81% (227)
- Punctual: 81% (225)
- Knowledge of DeafBlind culture: 79% (221)



## Languages/Methods Used by SSPs



## Acknowledgements

Thanks to the nearly 500 SSPs and DeafBlind people who took the surveys and shared their personal insights. We were also fortunate to have an entire community of volunteers who shared their thoughts with us, edited, tested the surveys, tested the accessibility and provided general feedback - *not once, but again and again!* - prior to the surveys being released. Our heart-felt thanks to:

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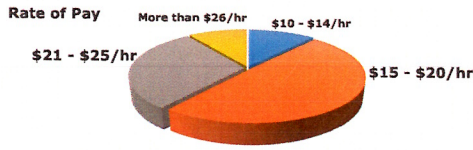
## Goals of the Surveys

- Determine core competencies, standards & best practices essential for a national SSP training curriculum, leading to the process of national certification of SSPs

## Who is an "experienced" SSP?

1. Completed at least 15 paid and/or volunteer assignments; *and*
2. worked with at least five different clients; *and*
3. in the assignments, used a variety of language, mobility and communications skills.

Volunteer: All/mostly **59% (165)**  
 Paid: All/mostly **40% (111)**



## SSP Training

SSPs trained at more than 55 different agencies/organizations

Attended formal training **66% (185)**

Attended 2 or more trainings/workshops **55% (153)**

Felt prepared for the role after training **YES 62% (115) NO 38% (70)**

## Intro to DeafBlind

### Content Examples:

- Definition of DeafBlind
- Vision Simulators
- Eye Conditions

### General Info

#### Content Examples:

- Establishing trust & comfortable working relationship
- Roles of consumer, SSP
- Respect for consumer
- Importance of asking first & respecting consumer choice
- Role of the SSP vs interpreter
- Practice in community settings

## Visual & Environmental Info

### Content Examples:

- Defining visual/environmental info
- Describing without judgment
- Practice
- Confirming consumer choice

## Communication Practice

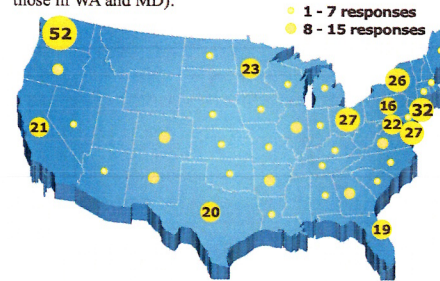
### Content Examples:

- Including DeafBlind in conversations
- Getting the attention of the person who is DeafBlind
- Actions & information to be communicated
- Determining your own level of comfort
- Communication through touch

- Begin building a National SSP Database
- Outline DeafBlind roles/responsibilities in SSP use
- Provide research support to current and new SSP programs in their quest for funding initiatives

## Where SSPs Responded Across America

Respondents report working in 38 of the 50 states. The number of responses is indicated below by the size of the dot (note that some SSPs work in multiple states and/or volunteer at camps, such as those in WA and MD):



## Training Satisfaction Rating

Formal Training **8.2**  
 DeafBlind Mentors **8.6**

**90%** of SSPs would welcome national certification

## The Professional SSP

### Content Examples:

- Confidentiality, Code of Ethics, trust
- Recognizing your own personal/physical limitations
- Managing challenging situations
- Setting boundaries
- Taking care of yourself

## SSP Environments

### Content Examples:

- Respecting consumer choice
- Ensuring safety
- Appropriate info/descriptions

## DeafBlind Culture

### Content Examples:

- Hand-under-hand technique
- Meeting/socializing w/DeafBlind
- Touch as DB culture/philosophy

## Mobility & Safe Travel

### Content Examples:

- Human guide practice
- Basic O&M skills & tools
- Guiding techniques/balance issues

## Communication

### Content Examples:

- Clear, respectful communication
- Appropriate positioning/modifications
- Communication through touch
- ASL, TASL, PTASL, SEE
- Spoken language, ALDs
- Technology, POP, print

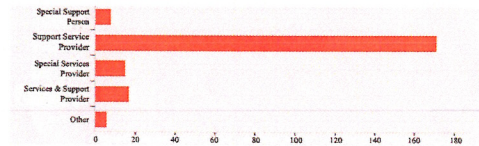
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 National SSP Development Alliance  
 (formerly National SSP Task Force)

## Survey of DeafBlind People

- 10 question survey
- Circulated Aug 12 - Nov 5, 2017
- 217 respondents

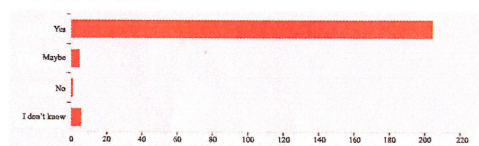
## Is the acronym "SSP" known?

**YES**, identified as Support Service Provider by 171 (79%)



## Do SSPs provide an important service?

**YES**, 206 (95%)



## Perspective on Role of the SSP

- Guiding: 179 (82%)
- Providing visual information: 177 (82%)
- Providing environmental information: 166 (77%)
- Promoting independence: 156 (72%)
- Providing transportation: 130 (60%)
- Assisting with transportation such as Uber, public transportation and paratransit services: 101 (47%)

## Comments on SSP Role

"SSPs play a very important role in the independence of the deafblind."

"SSPs help assist in doing things like using YP, helping me to doctor's office to connect to interpreter, assist in shopping at department and grocery stores."

"SSPs fill in communication gaps so we can access our communities."

"Most avenues are inaccessible to the deafblind and most customer service personnel can't handle deafblind clients. I renewed a passport through an SSP. Try that with the government staffers."

"Some of the great benefits of SSPs are less worries and reducing fears."

"When I am with an SSP, I sure do feel more secure, and more relaxed than I do when I don't have one."

"I find what is most helpful is SSP visualizing what is around me in words."

"Sadly, limits of activities is often defined by the funding source."

"The individuals who have been most helpful have provided mainly environmental information and a modest amount of commentary."



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