



International Week of the Deaf- With Sign Language, I am Equal September 19-25, 2016

FIVE POINTS

The International Week of the Deaf (IWD) is the only week in the year that sees a united global advocacy to raise awareness about the Deaf community on different levels, initiated by the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD). The Canadian Association of the Deaf-Association des Sourds du Canada (CAD-ASC) is affiliated with the WFD as an Ordinary Member. We promote and protect the rights of Deaf people in Canada who use American Sign Language (ASL) and langue des signes québécoise (LSQ).

WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF 2016 THEME

The World Federation of the Deaf has announced the theme for the 2016 International Week of the Deaf: **“With Sign Language, I am Equal.”** The year 2016-2017 includes key milestones, as we will: 1) celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the World Federation of the Deaf; 2) commemorate the 10th year Adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD); and 3) acknowledge the recent adoption of the [UN's 2030 Agenda of the new Sustainable Development Goals](#).

A full summary of WFD's Campaign Key Messages can be found at <https://wfdeaf.org/news/iwd-2016-will-take-place-theme-sign-language-equal-19-25-september>

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Canada ratified the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#) in March 2010. The CRPD is an international human rights instrument of the United Nations, which protects the rights and promotes equality of persons with disabilities. The CRPD also sets a framework for Deaf people's rights, filling an important gap in international human rights legislation. The Convention mentions Sign language seven times in five different articles. These articles are:

- Article 2 – Definition
- Article 9 – Accessibility
- Article 21 – Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information
- Article 24 – Education
- Article 30 – Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF-ASSOCIATION DES SOURDS DU CANADA KEY POINTS

This year, the Canadian Association of the Deaf-Association des Sourds du Canada (CAD-ASC) announces the 5 key points to address, in connection to the WFD theme, to ensure an inclusive and accessible Canada for Deaf people with the principle of basic human rights in Sign languages and Accessibility:

1. Recognition Of Our National Sign Languages (ASL and LSQ)

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) ensures the right to Sign language recognition in their [Article 21](#). The federal government must introduce federal accessibility legislation that will allow the recognition, promotion, and protection of our human rights to Deaf people's first languages in Canada-- American Sign Language (ASL) and langue des signes quebecoise (LSQ). The recognition of ASL and LSQ will value the linguistic identity of the Deaf community as we integrate into both English and French societies.

2. Bilingual Education

- Bilingual Education is the key to linguistic and cultural identity that provides Deaf and hard of hearing students with the opportunities to achieve full citizenship, education and employment. The provincial and territorial governments must ensure that Deaf children have access and the freedom to use our national Sign languages at Provincial Schools for the Deaf and in regular schools. This in turn will facilitate social and cognitive development with ASL and LSQ proficiency at an early age and also will lead to high levels of English/French literacy.

3. Equal Employment Opportunities

- The provincial and territorial governments, private and public sectors, profit and not-for-profit organizations must provide equal opportunities for Deaf people to participate fully in the labour force, including training opportunities. This requires the strengthening of employment equity legislation, more educational and informational campaigns to eliminate business concerns about the cost of accommodation, and more funding for Deaf community agencies and programs to enable them to sustainably employ, train, and promote Deaf workers.

4. Accessibility

- Deaf people must have equal access to services and programs. Governments must take real action to enforce the elimination of barriers and to promote accessibility, effective participation, quality of opportunity, and strong leadership in accessibility:
 - Federal jurisdiction- the Government of Canada's own departments, public services, crown corporations, agencies and their services; banking and financial services; inter-provincial and international transportation; official languages; aboriginal; agriculture; copyright; census taking and statistics; national defence; immigration law; foreign affairs; telecommunications and broadcasting; citizenship; criminal law; private sectors; and profit and not-for-profit organizations; and
 - Provincial and territorial jurisdictions- the Provincial and Territorial Government's own departments, crown corporations, agencies and their services such as regional health authorities; emergency management; court administrative services; public sectors (colleges; universities; school divisions; emergency services; stores, restaurants, hotels, bars, conference centres, and etc.); employment, education; immigration services; agriculture; municipalities; prisons; natural resources; transportation; health care; social programs; private sectors; and profit and not-for-profit organizations.

5. Sign Language Interpretation

- Federal and provincial/territorial governments must provide a legal structure to recognize and promote certified, qualified and professionally-trained ASL-English interpreters, LSQ-French interpreters, Deaf Interpreters, and ASL-LSQ interpreters to provide communication between Deaf individuals and hearing persons through public and private sectors; and profit and not-for-profit organizations; education; employment; immigration services; court administrative services; health care; and social programs.

Please contact the CAD-ASC for more information, and if you want to find out about local or provincial IWD activities, please contact your local or provincial Deaf association.