

**2500 ELIGIBILITY**

**2504 Special Considerations for Eligibility**

**2504.6 Hearing Impairments** ~~Each Division district has a Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf Blind (RCD) who is specially trained in the areas of deafness, hearing loss, and deaf blindness. The RCD reviews all audiological and otological evaluations obtained in the district and assigns appropriate disability codes prior to determination of the applicant's eligibility.~~

*A. Deafness and Hard of Hearing.* In order for an applicant to meet the eligibility criteria for substantial impediment to employment the applicant must demonstrate functional limitation(s) in communication, such as difficulty understanding speech, inability to participate in conversation without speech reading, sign language or other visual cues, cannot interpret telephone conversation, cannot hear or understand the content of spoken conversations or cannot be readily understood by others. These functional limitations in communication must result in a substantial impediment to employment and the applicant must experience at least one of the following conditions as verified by an Otolaryngologist (ENT) and a licensed Audiologist:

1. Average pure tone loss of 40 dB (ANSI) or more in the worst ear in the speech range (500, 1,000, and 2,000 cycles per second), unaided; or

2. Average pure tone hearing loss of 20 dB (ANSI) or more in the better ear in the speech range when pure tone average loss in the other ear exceeds 80 dB (ANSI), unaided in best ear; or

3. Speech discrimination of 80%, or less, at the Most Comfortable Level (MCL) in an unaided environment regardless of pure tone average loss; or

4. ENT statement of rapidly progressive and/or chronic condition, not contingent on upon decibel loss in either ear.

~~*A. Deafness and Hard of Hearing.* An applicant's eligibility is based on functional limitations imposed by the severity of a hearing loss and/or other related medical conditions (i.e. tinnitus, Meniere's disease). Identified functional limitations resulting from hearing loss and related medical conditions are analyzed in terms of the applicant's ability to secure and maintain employment.~~

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B. Deaf Blindness. In order for an applicant to meet the eligibility criteria for substantial impediment to employment the applicant must meet all of the following criteria: To establish eligibility under this disability code, the applicant must meet all of the following criteria:

1. The applicant must be either legally blind or have a progressive visual loss that may result in blindness; and,

2. The applicant must have a hearing impairment of 55db or more, unaided for either speech reception threshold (SRT) or pure tone average (PTA) in the better ear; and,

3. The applicant must have speech discrimination less than 50 percent or a statement by an Otolaryngologist (ENT) ~~a physician skilled in disease of the ear~~ indicating progressive loss.

C. Exceptions. Exceptions to these eligibility criteria will be submitted to the Assistant Director of Field Services through supervisory channels for review and approval.