

Overview: Changes Needed to Access ADA Assistive Listening Systems

"I had no idea that assistive listening systems even exist, nor did I know that I was entitled under the ADA."

"No one taught me how to use the telecoil, so I never have used it."

"I don't see myself buying an Auracast hearing aid until we see Auracast in lots of venues."

"Sonnet 3 does not include a telecoil. If you use your telecoil, please send a complaint to MED-EL."
-Sonnet 2 user



Frustrations from people with hearing loss

"Much of the time when I try the T-coil program, the volume levels are too low or non-existent."

"There are no listening systems for water aerobics-yet there are waterproof systems for coaches and swimmers."

"As a DeafBlind user, I can't easily use audio description and assistive listening simultaneously, one for each ear."

Assistive Listening Systems are mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to give people with hearing loss clarity that is impossible to receive with hearing instruments alone. However, there are multiple challenges for people to access them: lack of education, awkwardly designed equipment, poor assistive listening system installations, no telecoils inside hearing instruments, and marketing hype about future capabilities. Users have no control – *they are stuck with inadequacies and inequities based on others' decisions.*



To guide the critical changes needed, the Center for Hearing Access has issued a new 2024 United States Declaration, "ADA-Access-Ready Hearing Instruments: Auracast™ and Telecoils," and posted on its [Declarations](#) webpage, this timely statement comes on the heels of 15 years of national and international documents, and gives specific actions that have not been specified before.

This four-page Declaration calls for specific actions in five areas: Hearing instrument manufacturers; audiologists and hearing instrument providers; professional organizations for audiologists and other hearing instrument providers; assistive listening system manufacturers; and assistive listening system installers.

"As a lifelong hearing aid user myself, I wish there was one model that was **all in one**, but after 15 years in the industry - I feel like I'm asking for the moon. I also don't want something that is so big it's slightly uncomfortable, but at this point, that's the other thing manufacturers fight is that most people want smaller devices. I would certainly argue that size for newer users can be a huge factor, so a manufacturer of hearing technology, always thinks of this when they are designing their latest technology. This means at times, they choose to take out the telecoil due to space."



Frustrations from Audiologists

"I have noticed that many manufacturers are **not putting a telecoil** in all their new hearing aid models. For example, Phonak has telecoils in their rechargeables RICs, but not in their regular battery RICs (those most often used by folks with significant hearing loss) and they do not have a telecoil receiver in their Roger ON. ReSound has removed the telecoil from their rechargeables and has it in their MultiMic (which folks do not always have with them - let alone remember to charge). Widex rechargeables do not have a telecoil - moving the function to the Sound Assist remote microphone. I could go on and on..."

Center for
Hearing Access
at The Shedd Institute

www.CenterForHearingAccess.org

Founded in 2024, the nonprofit Center for Hearing Access is a national advocacy and education initiative of The John G. Shedd Institute in Eugene, OR. We champion and educate users, sites, audiologists, and hearing instrument specialists about all ADA-compliant assistive listening systems and other strategies to increase access to theaters, libraries, conferences, government offices, courtrooms, places of worship, and other public and private spaces. Effective hearing access can be life-changing for people with hearing loss to maintain community engagement.

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