



PROMOTING INSTALLATION OF THE HEARING LOOP IN HOUSES OF WORSHIP – GUIDELINES FOR THE ADVOCATE

Thank you for agreeing to be your chapter's Get in the Hearing Loop (GITHL) advocate. The role of GITHL advocate can be very rewarding both for you and the many people with hearing loss who will benefit from your work.

To become an effective advocate you need to be informed on hearing loop and telecoil technology. The GITHL task force has prepared a kit that contains fact sheets, brochures, links to videos, a PowerPoint presentation, relevant articles, and other material that you can review to give you a good understanding of the technology and the campaign. With this toolkit, you will be able to lead community members using large venues to consider the purchase and installation of a hearing loop system. The information in this packet is also available on the HLAA website along with additional information about looping that you will find helpful along with a guide to connecting and listening to loop systems.

The initial contact with house of worship leaders is usually made by a chapter member who belongs to a congregation and can open the door for you to make a presentation. These individuals are recruited by your chapter leader. A sample of the letter to chapter members is included in this packet. The member might or might not want to be involved in the meetings after initial contact but do keep the member informed of your progress. The relationship the member has with the venue can greatly assist you in your efforts.

INITIAL MEETING

The goal of this initial meeting is to support the chapter member and provide rationale for why installing a hearing loop in the venue would be worthwhile. Testimonials, such as yours and the chapter member, might be helpful during this initial meeting. There are also testimonials in this packet you can leave with officials to read and share. There are other pertinent materials in this packet that you might also want to consider bringing along with you to leave with venue officials. Brochures, for example, provide overviews and graphics which make it easier to visualize a hearing loop and how it functions.

In addition to explaining why a loop is needed, this meeting should explain what a loop is and how it works. Emphasis on the benefits of this system for other members of the congregation who might need assistance and do not have telecoils in their hearing aids or cochlear implants also makes worship services more widely accessible. Many worship spaces are equipped with Public Address (PA) systems but officials of the congregation need to learn the failure of this system alone in reaching people with hearing loss.

You might want to consider bringing along an audiologist with you who is familiar with looping technology and is supportive of your chapter efforts. This individual would be able to supplement any information you provide with more technical details, if needed.

Funding for installation of such a system is often raised during the initial meeting. Costs can vary dramatically depending upon a number of factors. The range can be from \$1,500 on up depending upon sanctuary structure, size, and other audio equipment already in place. An experienced installer can provide a more accurate estimate. Many HLAA members have found that while cost is often an issue, installation moves forward once the benefits for people with hearing loss and those without hearing aids or cochlear implants is made evident during your presentation. Find out if there are other sanctuaries in the community that are looped. See some web links at the of this document.

FOLLOW UP MEETINGS

Oftentimes, follow up meetings are requested to gain more information and, perhaps, meet with other stakeholders of the house of worship. Subsequent meetings would offer opportunities to provide more details about the benefits of looping and connect with key personnel positioned to grant monies dedicated to looping the worship space. This might be a meeting to present the PowerPoint presentation to your listeners; this and other materials are included in this packet and on the HLAA website.

If you know an installer of loops in large venues you can provide that information. The "Best Practices in Hearing Loop Procurement" in this packet might be helpful to the venue officials. Please note the installation should meet the international standards (IEC 60118-4) for hearing loops and the installer should guarantee that documentation will be provided.

AFTER THE INSTALLATION

Once the loop is approved and installed, the congregation needs to be fully informed of the benefits of the hearing loop and how to ensure that hearing aid and cochlear implant users are using the system successfully. Here is a suggested checklist for your involvement after the installation:

- Encourage the leadership to secure a supply of the GITHL brochure to be made available in the foyer for members and guests.
- Encourage the leadership to add information on the house of worship website and/or in any of their regularly distributed bulletins. This should also include information for members about what they must do to be sure that their hearing aids and cochlear implants are in good working order and ready to be used with the hearing loop. Special attention should also be directed to the posted telecoil loop signage. This reminds listeners to switch the hearing aid or cochlear implant to the telecoil position or request a headset/receiver.
- Encourage a formal event when the loop can be demonstrated to members of the congregation. This introduction and demonstration to the congregation can be done by you or you and the chapter member. Some advocates include

local audiologists and hearing care providers. Announcements should be made at start of services on special holidays, gatherings, and celebrations.

- Encourage the house of worship to draft a news release about the new hearing loop to be sent to local newspapers, radio and television stations.
- Encourage the leadership to designate a member of the congregation to become familiar with the hearing loop and be able to troubleshoot problems should they arise. Troubleshooting information is provided by the installer and can be found on the HLAA website.
- Last, but not least, stay in touch and check in every now and then to ensure success.

Sampling of Denominational Websites about Looping*

Catholic: todayscatholicnews.org

Episcopal: loopwisconsin.com/PDFfiles/LivingChurch.pdf

WELS Evangelical: wels.net/news-events

Unitarian: ohio.com/news/

UUA: uua.org/documents/equalaccess

Jewish: emanuelrochester.org/news/loop

*This list is not meant to represent all denominations or religions.