

# Deaf Statistics

## Guide Information

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## American deaf-blind population

### American deaf-blind population

This is an especially difficult number to find. As noted in the [Introduction](#), the number of *deaf* persons in the U.S. is difficult to estimate, beginning with the very definition of "deaf" that can vary widely from one person or agency to another. This difficulty gets compounded when you add the similar vagaries of defining "blindness", and then combining both conditions in the same individual.

According to one source (Turkington and Sussman, 2000), "...a national study commissioned by the Department of Education in 1980 estimated between 42,000 and more than 700,000, depending on how deaf-blindness is defined." That's a range of nearly 1 to 17 between low and high estimates!

Fortunately, we can determine a generally more-useful number from data supplied by a reasonably authoritative source. The National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness (NCDB) has a [web site](#) with much information on deaf-blindness. One page on this site is Barbara Miles' paper "Overview on Deaf-Blindness" ([HTML](#) or [PDF](#), revised October, 2008), which cites these figures:

"As far as it has been possible to count them, there are over 10,000 children (ages birth to 22 years) in the United States who have been classified as deaf-blind (NCDB, 2008). It has been estimated that the adult deaf-blind population numbers 35-40,000 (Watson, 1993)."

The NCDB citation is to the 2007 annual NCDB count (of children only) in their report [The 2007 National Child Count of Children and Youth who are Deaf-Blind](#). Adding the 2007 figures for children plus Watson's 1993 adult figures gives us roughly 45,000 to 50,000 deaf-blind individuals in the U.S. For further analysis of the issues involved in determining the demographics of the American deaf-blind population, as well as more information, see the NCDB's [demographic topic page](#).

Citations:

- Baldwin, V. (1994). *Annual Deaf-Blind Census*. Monmouth, NH: Teaching Research Division.
- National Consortium on Deaf-Blindness. Retrieved July, 2010, from <http://nationaldb.org/index.php>
- Turkington, Carol, and Allen E. Sussman, eds. (2000). *The Encyclopedia of Deafness and Hearing Disorders*, second edition. New York: Facts on File, Inc., p.62.
- Watson, D., and Taff-Watson, M., eds. (1993). *A Model Service Delivery System for Persons Who Are Deaf-Blind*, second edition. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas.

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