From deaf-blind to deafblind: Time for CDBS to make the change
By Maurice Belote, CDBS Project Coordinator

Summary: CDBS will be switching our terminology from “deaf-blind” to “deafblind” to better correspond with deafblind groups’ use of their own preferred terms.

Back in September 2009, I wrote a blog post on the CDBS website explaining why CDBS continued to use the term “deaf-blind” with the hyphen, while many others, including a few state deaf-blind projects, had switched to the unhyphenated spelling of “deafblind.” At that time, CDBS had decided to follow the lead of the American Association of the Deaf-Blind (AADB), which was the leading U.S. consumer group of individuals who are deaf-blind. The American Association of the Deaf-Blind is no longer an active organization, although we hope that with time it can spring back to life and continue the good work that it pioneered.

A new national organization—Deafblind Citizens in Action—has evolved that now seeks to become the national voice for teens and adults with deaf-blindness. Deafblind Citizens in Action (DBCA) seeks to increase awareness of deaf-blindness and promote legislation and public policy that promotes full integration into the broader society.

DBCA has chosen to adopt the term “deafblind” and explains their decision on the DBCA website:

DBCA doesn’t insert the hyphen. We also do not capitalize the “d” and “b” (i.e. DeafBlind). We believe it conveys the dual nature and recognizes it as a single, unified disability. We also champion the advancement of the entire worldwide community of persons with combined vision and hearing loss, and “deafblind” is more widely used around the world, which not only benefits Americans but also the entire world. [From the DBCA website:http://dbcitizens.org/]

CDBS has always been committed to following the lead of deaf-blind consumers on issues related to self-determination, and rightful terminology is a core feature of self-determination.

Therefore, beginning with this issue of reSources, CDBS will follow the lead of DBCA and adopt the term “deafblind.” All new written materials (e.g., technical assistance notes, articles, Facebook posts, etc.) will now reflect this. Changes to our logo, letterhead, etc. might take a little time to change and archived materials will reflect the use of “deaf-blind” as it was used at the time.

Comments? California Deafblind Services would love to hear from you! And check out Deafblind Citizens in Action and learn about the wonderful work they’re doing: [http://dbcitizens.org/who-we-are](http://dbcitizens.org/who-we-are).