

Telecoil and Auracast functionalities should be standard requirements for hearing aids and other hearing devices eligible for public health procurement

Motion to approve Position Statement on Public Procurement of Hearing Devices and their Accessibility Features 18 April 2026

“Accessibility is a pre-condition to participation”
Art. 9 UNCRPD

People who are Hard of Hearing should not be forced to choose between Auracast™ and telecoil-based access. Both technologies are essential for inclusive participation in society. EFHOH calls on policy makers to make a requirement for both telecoil and Auracast™ technology to be present in the hearing aids and cochlear implants that are part of public health services procurement.

The Importance of Assistive Listening Systems in Public Spaces

Assistive listening systems in public spaces are crucial for ensuring clear sound access for people who are Hard of Hearing and for anyone requiring enhanced speech or audio clarity. These systems play an essential role in enabling individuals to hear, participate in conversations, and comprehend spoken information more effectively.

Such accessibility is fundamental for promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Current assistive listening systems:

- **Telecoil:** Telecoil technology connects hearing aids and cochlear implants to hearing loops installed in public spaces, delivering clear sound directly to the user.
- **Auracast™:** Auracast broadcast enables wireless audio streaming, allowing users to receive broadcasted sound from multiple sources in real time.
- **FM/RF:** FM/RF systems transmit sound using radio frequencies, offering assistive listening solutions in classrooms, theaters, and meeting rooms.
- **Infrared:** Infrared systems use light waves to send audio signals, commonly used in secure environments like courtrooms and cinemas.



Audio Clarity and Direct Connection

Audio clarity is best achieved when consumers can directly connect their hearing aids and cochlear implants to assistive listening systems. This direct connection delivers optimal sound quality and supports effective communication.

Historically, people who are Hard of Hearing have used telecoils with hearing loops or paired with neckloops to access clear sound. Examples of compatible systems include on-board airline entertainment, tour guide audio, and museum audio tours. These solutions help expand accessibility in various public settings.

With the recent development of Auracast live broadcast, there are new opportunities for mainstreaming of hearing access in public spaces.

EFHOH has noted that some hearing instrument manufacturers have been tempted to remove t-coil feature from their devices leaving consumers with no other choice but changing hearing aids manufacturer or having to invest in new accessories.

The need for an assistant device to select the Auracast stream adds a layer of complexity for hearing device users, while the removal of the t-coil feature puts a burden on venues to replace existing installations of hearing loops, RF and IR systems rely on telecoil connectivity to interface with hearing aids.

Risks: Removing telecoil features from hearing aids and cochlear implants poses significant challenges for older users who rely on hearing loops in many public spaces. Without telecoil, individuals may lose access to established, reliable assistive listening systems, undermining their ability to participate fully in community life.

Comprehensive Access Through Dual Technology

EFHOH's position is that full accessibility is achieved only when hearing instruments incorporate both telecoil and Auracast technology. This dual approach enables users to utilise all four assistive listening technologies: hearing loop, FM/RF, infrared, and Auracast streamed assistive listening systems for the foreseeable future.

Call to Action: Policymakers are urged to strengthen accessibility by implementing procurement guidelines that require both telecoil and Auracast functionality in all publicly funded hearing aids and cochlear implants. To ensure comprehensive access, policy development should include consultation with accessibility experts and hearing aid user groups. This dual technology approach will enable users to benefit from all four major assistive listening systems - hearing loop, FM/RF, infrared, and Auracast - creating an inclusive environment for people who are Hard of Hearing.

