a.g.bell
Association for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing



LOFT

Leadership Opportunities for Teens

2027 PROGRAM GUIDE



BUILDING TOMORROW'S LEADERS TODAY

LOFT OVERVIEW

Since 1996, Leadership Opportunities For Teens (LOFT) has been guiding teens in developing skills in individual leadership, teamwork, group dynamics, public speaking, and self-advocacy. 15-18 year olds come together for five days and make life-long friends and connections.

AG Bell is pleased to be working towards welcoming teens to the 2027 LOFT program in Washington, D.C, from July 27– July 31. Attendees will be split int o a freshman-sophomore group and a junior-senior group.

APPLY FOR LOFT HERE:

APPLY NOW

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

5-DAY LOFT D.C. TRIP*

DAY 1	
1:00 – 5:00 P.M.	Facilitators/Staff meet teens at airport
6:30 – 8:00 P.M.	Casual Dinner & Icebreaker Activities
8:00 – 10:00 P.M.	Unstructured social time or Organized Fun Activity
10:00 – 11:00 P.M.	In-room Free Time
11:00 P.M.	Lights Out

DAY 2	
8:00 – 9:00 A.M.	Breakfast
9:00 – NOON	Leadership Exercise
NOON – 1:00 P.M.	Lunch
1:00 – 4:30 P.M.	Debate Activity Technology Session
4:30 – 6:00 P.M.	Dinner & Free Time
6:00 – 10:00 P.M.	Teambuilding or Social Group Activity
10:00 – 11:00 P.M.	In-room Free Time
11:00 P.M.	Lights Out

DAY 3	
7:30 – 8:30 A.M.	Breakfast
8:30 A.M. – NOON	Group Activity
NOON – 1:00 P.M.	Lunch
1:00 – 5:00 P.M.	Self-Advocacy Part 1
5:00 – 10:00 P.M.	Teambuilding or Social Group Activity

10:00 – 11:00 P.M	In-room Free Time
11:00 P.M.	Lights Out

DAY 4

7:30 – 8:30 A.M.	Breakfast
8:30 – NOON	Group Activity
NOON – 1:00 P.M.	Lunch
1:00 – 5:00 P.M.	Self-Advocacy, Part 2: Appreciation Exercise
5:30 – 8:30 P.M.	Reception and Dinner
6:00 – 10:30 P.M.	Write Thank You notes to Sponsors and Guest Presenters
10:30 – 11:00 P.M.	In-room Free Time
11:00 P.M.	Lights Out

DAY 5

8:00 – 9:00 A.M.	Breakfast
9:00 - 11:00 A.M.	Graduation
11:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.	Travel to Airport – facilitators accompany teens to the airport
1:00 – 6:00 P.M.	Teens travel home

*May not be indicative of finalized schedule.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications will open November 16 and will be accepted until mid-night, March 1.

CRITERIA

In order to be eligible for this program, applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

- Applicants must have a pre-lingual bilateral hearing loss in the mild to profound range or a pre-lingual unilateral hearing loss in the moderate to profound range (degrees of hearing loss: Moderate: 41 to 55 dB; Moderately severe: 56 to 70 dB; Severe: 71 to 90 dB; Profound: 91+ dB).
- Listening and Spoken Language must be the applicant's primary mode of communication.
- LOFT participants are typically ages 15 to 18. Eligible teens must have completed at least one year of high school by the time they attend LOFT and must be in high school at the time they apply in order to participate.

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

Applicants will be notified via email whether or not they have been selected for LOFT 2027. Applicants who are not selected for this year's program are strongly encouraged to apply in future years.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the popularity of this program, more applications are often received than can be accommodated in a given year. Submission of an application is not a guarantee for program participation.

FEES

The program fee for 2027 is **$989 per registrant**. This covers hotel lodging, all meals, snacks, activity fees, and ground transportation from arrival to departure. A credit card will be required to cover any incidental expenses the teen may incur at the hotel.

There is no cost to submit an application.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Once accepted into the LOFT program, the following terms & conditions apply.

SESSION ASSIGNMENT

One session of LOFT is being planned. Participants will be split into a freshman-sophomore group and a junior-senior group.

INFORMATION AND FORMS

Notification regarding program acceptance is done no later than April 16, 2027. Following acceptance into the LOFT program, parents and teens will receive an e-packet of information with links to forms to complete online. These forms must be completed by end of day at 11:59 p.m. ET on May 7, 2027.

LOFT REGISTRATION FEE (DUE DATE)

The LOFT Registration Fee covers meals, snacks, activity fees and ground transportation during the program as well as lodging in a double room for the four nights of the LOFT program. Each teen will share a room with another participant of the same gender; roommates are assigned by AG Bell.

Please note LOFT is a sleep-away program. All participants are required to stay at the hotel for the program.

Payment is due to AG Bell by May 7, 2027. Payment by credit card or check is acceptable. If paying by check, credit card information is also required to cover any incidental expenses the teen may charge to the room. Payment Instructions will be given in the Acceptance Packages with information.

CANCELLATION/REFUNDS

Refunds for the LOFT program, less a $50 administrative fee, will be made only if cancellation is received in writing by June 4, 2027. No refunds will be issued for cancellations received after this date; this includes refunds due to illness, late arrival, weather conditions and/or other travel difficulties.

AIR OR GROUND TRANSPORTATION

Parents must arrange for and cover the cost of airfare to Washington, D.C.

(Ronald Reagan National Airport - DCA) for their teen in coordination with the LOFT program arrival/departure schedule.*

For those within driving distance, parents may choose to drop off/pick up their teen at the hotel in coordination with the drop off/pick up schedule.

COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Parents must equip their teen with a communication device with texting capabilities for communication with LOFT staff during pickup and drop off at the airport and in the event of an emergency.

The use of mobile phones and/or texting devices is not allowed during program activities (generally 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. local time). Teens are asked to limit the use of their mobile phones during lunch, dinner and free time. This is not to restrict communication with parents, rather to encourage the teens to interact personally with the other teens at the program. It is not acceptable for participants to play games on their phone or text friends back home during meals or free time.

SUPERVISION

Participants are met at baggage claim at the airport or at the hotel. They are supervised during waking hours until they leave the program. Teens will remain with a LOFT staff member until they go through the security gate. A LOFT staff member will remain at the airport until the last teen's plane has departed.

Curfews are in place during sleeping hours (generally 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.). Participants are not permitted to leave their room during curfew, except in the case of an emergency.* Room checks by LOFT counselors will take place within an hour of curfew.

*Each room is provided with one shared smoke detector and bed shaker alarm clock.

Participants are not allowed in any room other than their own during curfew. Boys and girls are not allowed in the same sleeping room at any time without the supervision of a LOFT counselor.

Participants will not be allowed to leave the hotel or activity areas at any time without the permission of a LOFT counselor. In the event that a participant needs to leave the activity premises, he or she will be accompanied by a LOFT counselor.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to communicate via phone or text with their teen outside of session/ activity hours.

Parents may choose to accompany their teen to Washington, D.C. and vacation in the area.

Observation of the LOFT program or direct parental involvement on site (personal interaction with your teen, other LOFT teens or the hotel staff on behalf of your teen) is not permitted. In the event of a medical emergency, parents will be contacted immediately.

DISMISSIBLE OFFENSES

Possession and/or consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs by LOFT participants is strictly forbidden and will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Possession and/or use of dangerous or unauthorized materials such as explosives, firearms, weapons or similar items by LOFT participants is strictly forbidden and will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Blatant and persistent disrespect for counselors and/or other teens in the program will result in dismissal from the program.

Any expenses, travel or otherwise, associated with an early dismissal from the program will be the responsibility of the parent.





FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

AG Bell wants to welcome all deaf and hard of hearing teens to the LOFT program but recognizes that families may have additional financial pressures.

Scholarships for the LOFT program are intended to assist families with some costs associated with participation in the program. Teens selected for a scholarship will receive a scholarship for full or partial tuition. Depending on the availability of funds, the number of applications received, and the family's financial need, recipients may also receive support for round-trip airfare.

All costs not covered by the scholarship will be the family's responsibility.

Scholarship application deadline: March 1, 2027, 11:59 p.m. ET

Please complete one application per teen when applying for a scholarship. To be considered for a LOFT scholarship, you must also submit a LOFT program application.

If you have any additional questions about costs or need further assistance, please email loft@agbell.org.

APPLY FOR A LOFT SCHOLARSHIP HERE:

APPLY NOW

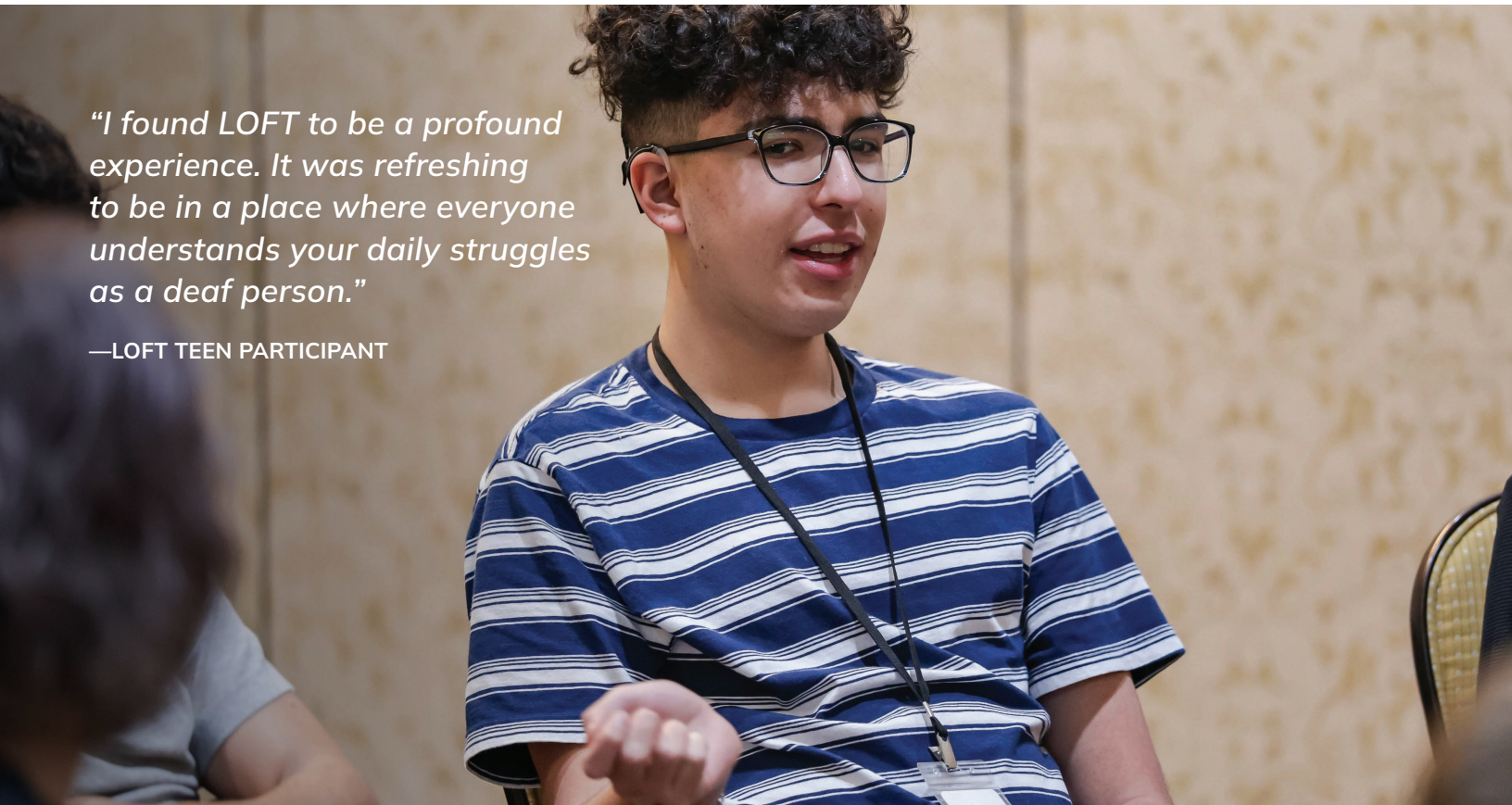
TESTIMONIALS

AG Bell LOFT participants are deeply affected by their experience in the program. Teens often experience a new sense of belonging and describe the positive effects of having a new support system through other LOFT participants.

COMMON THEMES INCLUDE:

- LOFT is empowering
- LOFT helps break down barriers
- LOFT builds trust and openness
- LOFT is life-changing

We also hear from LOFT parents and teens that within weeks of returning home, they are already using skills and knowledge they learned at LOFT. Parents of the LOFT attendees tell us that their teen gained confidence, a sense of belonging and acceptance, and true friends who understand the challenges of living with hearing loss. Below is a selection of testimonials from teens and parents about their LOFT experience:





"My experience at LOFT not only gave me lifelong friends, but helped me develop leadership and collaboration skills in many aspects of life. I am so incredibly thankful for the memories and connections I made during my time at LOFT."

—LOFT TEEN PARTICIPANT

"It was such a great experience – I learned to believe in myself. I appreciated meeting so many other teens who know what it's like to sometimes struggle and not fit in. We learned to work with our abilities and accept and trust ourselves. I am ready to take on my senior year and then college!"

—LOFT TEEN PARTICIPANT







"LOFT made me feel like I belonged. It gave me a purpose and a place where I could feel comfortable finding who I am in accepting my hearing loss."

—LOFT TEEN PARTICIPANT



"LOFT was an amazing experience. Seeing other people break out of their shell made me reflect on how people like me feel in their lives daily. Sharing moments of hardships gave me perspective on how hard being deaf is in a hearing world. No matter what, there will be struggle, but there are ways to minimize it and grow from it."

—LOFT PARTICIPANT

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