

EVENT CASE STUDY



AT A GLANCE

Event Name

TCS New York City Marathon

Partner

New York Road Runner NYRR

Location

New York, New York

Dates

November 2 – 6, 2022

November 1 – 5, 2023

October 29 – November 3, 2024

October 28 – November 2, 2025



INCLUSIVE GOALS

The TCS New York City Marathon is the world's largest race spanning through the five boroughs of NYC. The mission of the annual race organizers, the New York Road Runners, is to provide *everyone* on the planet both a reason to run as well as the means and opportunity to keep running and never stop. Inclusive Communication Services (ICS) helped make the marathon a truly inclusive and accessible global event, welcoming Deaf and hard-of-hearing runners from around the world.

SERVICES PROVIDED

Inclusive Communication Services (ICS) provided American Sign Language (**ASL**) **Interpreting** for race day and for events leading up to Sunday, including course strategy sessions, opening ceremonies, and social gatherings that welcomed runners to connect and build community. In 2022, the interpreter team began with 12 interpreters. In 2023, the team grew to 21 interpreters, expanding coverage to support the full week of events. By 2024 and 2025, teams of 30 and 32 interpreters, respectively, provided full access to all scheduled events, with interpreters on standby as requested.

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CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Across four years of collaboration with New York Road Runners, inclusive access has continued to grow and evolve. Here are some of the challenges we encountered, the adjustments we made in real time, and the recommendations we incorporated for future years.

2025 - Deaf Volunteers Requesting Access:

Challenge - Deaf runners submit their interpreting and accommodation requests during the registration process in a timely manner. However, Deaf volunteers use a different registration process, which can make it challenging for them to submit their accommodation requests in a timely manner.

Solution - As Deaf runner registration increases, family and friends within the Deaf community naturally want to show up, support, and contribute to the race day! NYRR has continued to be receptive of direct feedback from the Deaf Community, and we love their openness to evolving. Visibility of services on the NYRR website and all sign-up forms help to ensure the public knows how to request services.



2024 - Limited Credential Access:

Challenge - As a security measure, race credentials distributed to staff, volunteers, and runners have different tiers of access. The interpreter team did not have access to the full finish line including the medical tent and the ability to interpret for interviews.

Solution - NYRR was very receptive of this information in a debrief meeting. This was a particularly important and difficult topic as security is of utmost importance. NYRR incorporated the request for the 2025 race season allowing interpreters more access to the finish line and deaf runners to have more support where they needed it.

2023 - Dress Code Branding :

Challenge - With New Balance becoming an official sponsor of the race, interpreters couldn't wear shoes that were branded from competitors such as Nike or Brooks.

Solution - Tape was provided onsite for interpreters to cover branding. A detailed guidelines memo was created for future years outlining the preferred dress code.

2022 - Navigation:

Challenge - Interpreters navigating to certain events proved logistically challenging on foot due to red tape and police blockades.

Solution - ICS addressed this challenge by ensuring the interpreter team had pre-planned routes, scheduling their arrival 30 minutes before the start of their services to mitigate potential delays caused by obstacles.



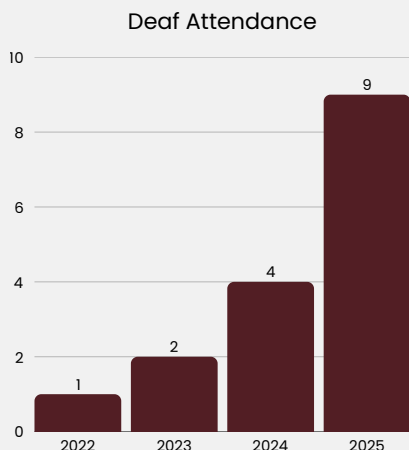


IMPACT

Increase of Deaf Attendance

Collaboration with the Accessibility Advocacy Group, along with direct feedback from the Deaf community, has led to a growing number of Deaf runners, their families, and volunteers participating in the event.

Note on Deaf Attendance: *There may have been additional Deaf and hard-of-hearing runners in attendance who did not disclose a disability on the registration form. Accessibility services also supported Deaf spectators, and the final number of Deaf attendees is unknown. Notably, participation has included international Deaf runners from Canada and Germany in 2025, as well as a Deaf handcyclist in 2024.*



BENEFITS

Positive Experience for Deaf Runners and Their Supporters

Accessibility matters for both Deaf runners and their supportive crew. Deaf runners performed at their best with confidence, thanks to access to all crucial race information and their hard work training. Additionally, family members of Deaf runners were pleasantly surprised by the interpreting services that effectively addressed communication gaps witnessed at previous athletic competitions they had attended. This not only enhances the overall race experience for Deaf runners but also fosters a supportive atmosphere for the greater running community.

Excellence at Expos

Multiple Deaf runners expressed their admiration for the inclusion of interpreters, not only during the race but also at the expos. Expos offer valuable opportunities to connect with resources and engage with the running community. Additionally, an accessibility services booth was set up in the convention building, fostering an inclusive experience by ensuring that interpreters were readily available and easy to find.

Video Collaboration

Our Accessible Media Services and Marketing team partnered with New York Road Runners to create interpreted video content welcoming Deaf community runners ahead of the marathon. Highlighting ASL services helped reinforce interpreter presence and accessibility throughout the event.

Inclusive Global Branding & Leadership

As noted in the case study, New York Road Runners' mission is to "provide everyone on the planet both a reason to run as well as the means and opportunity to keep running and never stop." "Everyone" includes athletes with disabilities. By providing ASL interpreters, the organization has welcomed Deaf runners and strengthened its reputation as a truly inclusive leader in the running community.



SPOTLIGHT ON DEAF RUNNERS

Deaf athletes around the world have led advocacy efforts to raise awareness, expand education, and improve accessibility so they can compete alongside their hearing peers. Often, it takes one trailblazer to help pave the way, giving Deaf and hard-of-hearing runners the confidence to pursue their dreams knowing accessibility will be there.

As this case study shows, once foundational services like ASL interpreting were in place, the race continued to attract more runners each year. One of the first Deaf runners to help build these partnerships was Thomas Eller. We invite you to read our interview with Thomas and sincerely thank him for inspiring future generations of Deaf athletes to chase their goals.

- **Read the blog:**

<https://inclusiveasl.com/accessibility/an-interview-with-deaf-world-runner-thomas-eller/>



EVOLVING TOGETHER

Co-creating inclusive and welcoming spaces and improving access throughout this partnership is something we're proud to do at ICS. Step by step, here's how the race day and expo events have evolved over the years.

2022

- ASL services provided for opening ceremonies and race day.

2023

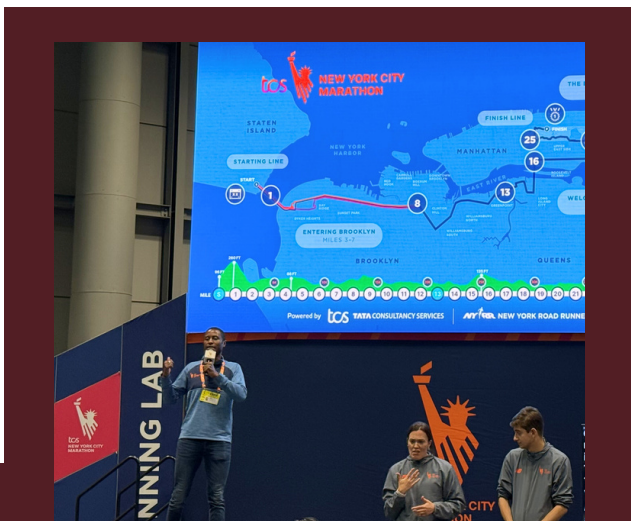
- ASL services were expanded to cover additional expo events and course strategy sessions.
- An accessibility booth was established at the expo.

2024

- ASL services were expanded to cover the full week of expo and race day events.
- ICS joined the Accessibility Advocacy Group to help lead planning efforts and ensure runners from around the world were supported.
- A "Deaf Runner" race bib was added.

2025

- The accessibility booth was moved to a higher-traffic location in the Expo Center, increasing visibility of services for attendees.
- Parking was made available for interpreters at the start line on race day.
- The interpreter team received excellent preparation materials in advance.



ASL interpreter team pictured in bottom right of photo.



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Conclusion



"The inclusion of ASL interpreters at the New York City Marathon Opening Ceremony in 2023 was a significant milestone, allowing me to fully immerse myself in the incredible atmosphere. The dedication and proficiency of the interpreters left a lasting impact, for which I am immensely grateful."

~ Thomas Eller
Six-Star Deaf Runner

Thank You New York Road Runners!

New York Road Runner's continued commitment to accessibility elevates the Marathon experience and reinforces its reputation as an inclusive and forward-thinking leader in athletic competitions. We are especially grateful for the collaborative partnership, through thoughtful planning meetings, post-event debriefs, open discussions, and the meaningful involvement of Deaf community members in decision-making. This level of care and proactiveness is deeply appreciated in making inclusion possible.

"As an ASL interpreter who's been part of the marathon since 2022, it's been really exciting to see more Deaf runners show up each year. I look forward to this event every year because it keeps growing in ways that truly include Deaf and hard of hearing runners so they too can feel the thrill of the rush as they cross the finish line."

~ Sarah Hanvey
(ASL Interpreter)

INCLUSION STARTS HERE

Email ICS at **info@inclusiveasl.com** to explore how we can help make your next conference or event fully accessible. Prefer a quick conversation? Scan the QR code to schedule a meet & greet with our team so we can learn more about your goals, timeline, and the support you need.



**Scan to
connect**



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