

# GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING



## ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2022



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**Larry Hogan**  
Governor



**Boyd Rutherford**  
Lt. Governor



**Kelby Brick**  
Director

# GOVERNOR'S LETTER



LARRY HOGAN  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MARYLAND  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Dear Marylanders,

I am pleased to share with you the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing 2022 Annual Report.

This year, Maryland was recognized as one of the leading states in the country for American Sign Language access to state COVID-19 press briefings. Our administration also invested \$2.5 million in the Maryland Deaf Community Center to establish a permanent facility, which will support education, communication, and referral work in the community. I am exceedingly proud of our accomplishments as these important milestones are mission critical to achieving equal and full access to resources, services, and opportunities for all Marylanders.

On behalf of the State of Maryland, I thank both the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and our many partners in the Deaf and hard of hearing community for their leadership and tireless advocacy.

Together, we have made important strides toward improving accessibility and expanding opportunities within the workforce for Maryland's 1.2 million Deaf and hard of hearing individuals. I look forward to seeing continued progress in the years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Larry Hogan".

Larry Hogan  
Governor

# DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear friends,

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is proud to present our annual report for fiscal year 2022.

Together, we have made notable accomplishments over the past year. In addition to being recognized for being among the leading states for American Sign Language access during the COVID-19 pandemic, we also expanded government-level cultural and linguistic awareness and policy improvements for individuals who are Deaf and hard of hearing throughout the state, including the cities of Baltimore and Frederick, the Motor Vehicle Administration, and Maryland Relay. With continued cooperation, we helped secure \$2.5 million to support the establishment of the Maryland Deaf Community Center and increase the Maryland School for the Deaf's budget by \$3.25 million. In the community, we celebrated the Silent Orioles Club's 100th anniversary, the Maryland Association of the Deaf's 65th anniversary, and the Eastern Deaf Bikers's 20th anniversary. We have much to be proud of and look forward to continued collaboration with our many partners who help us carry this work forward.



I am proud to have been a part of the Hogan administration for the past eight years, working to make Maryland a better place for 1.2 million Deaf and hard of hearing individuals to live, work, raise a family, and retire. As we greet 2023, the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will continue to lead by building upon our progress as we look toward the future.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelby N. Brick". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Kelby Brick  
Director  
Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

# GOVERNOR'S COORDINATING OFFICES

The Governor's Coordinating Offices serve as direct agents of the governor, aligning tasks and priorities with the governor's agenda. Each office practices specific expertise, allowing for close collaboration, coordination, and information sharing with agencies and other entities across the state. In turn, the governor is provided with access to real-time knowledge of Marylanders' needs.

The Governor's Coordinating Offices include:

**The Governor's Grants Office**

**The Governor's Office of Community Initiatives**

**The Governor's Office of Service and Volunteerism**

**The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

**The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth & Victim Services**

**The Governor's Office of Small, Minority & Women Business Affairs**

All of the Governor's Coordinating Offices are located at 100 Community Place in Crownsville, Maryland.

To learn more about the Governor's Coordinating Offices, please visit [gco.maryland.gov](http://gco.maryland.gov).

# RESPONSIBILITIES

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The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was established in October 2001 through Chapter 537 of the Acts of the 2001 General Assembly. In accordance with State Government Article section 9-2407 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the office promotes the general welfare of Deaf and hard of hearing individuals by addressing policy gaps, providing expertise related to Deaf and hard of hearing issues, and facilitating the ability to access resources and services.

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing believes that all constituents who are Deaf or hard of hearing should have equal and full access to resources, services, and opportunities for participation in all aspects of community life through the provision of appropriate accommodations.

# PRIORITIES

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GODHH's priorities include the following:

## **EXPANDING THE DEAF ECOSYSTEM**

Expanding the economic mobility of Deaf and hard of hearing individuals, organizations and businesses.

## **ENSURING SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER QUALITY**

Addressing fraudulent and unqualified interpreters in the state of Maryland.

## **IMPROVING STATE SERVICES FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING MARYLANDERS**

Collaborating with state services, agencies, and programs to improve efficiency and quality of services.

# EXPANDING THE DEAF ECOSYSTEM

Due to systemic barriers in society ranging from inaccessibility to limited educational and training opportunities, the ability to secure long-term, well-paying employment has been difficult for Deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders. More than 80% of the Deaf and hard of hearing population are either underemployed or unemployed. Deaf and hard of hearing business owners have also faced societal barriers, hindering their ability to maintain and expand businesses.

Building the Deaf Ecosystem—a system designed to empower the economic mobility of Deaf and hard of hearing individuals, organizations and businesses—is critical in combating the pervasive underemployment and unemployment that many Deaf and hard of hearing individuals experience. As commonly experienced within many other minority groups, the Deaf and hard of hearing community's collective wealth and opportunities are often exploited and dispersed into the larger society. Because resources tend to leave the community, Deaf and hard of hearing individuals are disempowered with severe negative impacts on their socio-economic status.

To empower the economic mobility and purchasing power of Deaf and hard of hearing individuals, the Deaf Ecosystem's fundamental approach is to retain and harness the collective socio-economic power among the community's individuals, organizations, and businesses through collaboration and support. This includes fostering an inclusive entrepreneurial environment that empowers Deaf and hard of hearing people to realize their potential without any barriers.

A strong Deaf Ecosystem will lead to increased social and economic clout from the retention and expansion of jobs, resources, and wealth. The community's increased influence is leveraged to support the community in turn, creating a synergistic effect. The synergy leads to more healthy, productive, and empowered Deaf and hard of hearing constituents. Learn more at [odhh.maryland.gov/deaf-ecosystem](https://odhh.maryland.gov/deaf-ecosystem).



# DEAF & HARD OF HEARING BUSINESS OWNERS

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As of FY22, Maryland is home to more than 90 businesses owned and operated by Deaf and hard of hearing people who are actively contributing to the Deaf Ecosystem in Maryland.

To advance support for Maryland's Deaf and hard of hearing entrepreneurs and small business owners, the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing regularly meets with them and makes visits at incubators and community events. The office also developed a video series featuring Maryland Deaf Ecosystem spotlights that are shared via social media to inspire patronage for these businesses.

To share resources and connect business owners with the Deaf and hard of hearing community and Maryland at large, the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing maintains and updates a directory of Maryland Deaf and hard of hearing owned businesses at [odhh.maryland.gov/directory/#dhhbizs](https://odhh.maryland.gov/directory/#dhhbizs).





# DEAF & HARD OF HEARING EMPLOYEES & JOB SEEKERS

To ensure that all Deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders have an equal footing in employment, the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing shares key state employment resources, including those from the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), Telecommunication Access of Maryland, Maryland School for the Deaf, the Maryland Department of Disabilities, the Maryland Department of Health, and Deaf Culture Digital Library (DCDL).

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing encourages state agencies to hire Deaf and hard of hearing employees and contractors, especially those that serve Deaf and hard of hearing individuals. A part of this includes emphasizing cultural and linguistic competence and highlighting specific expertise or skill sets that have historically been undervalued by employers. This has resulted in significantly more job postings that require ASL fluency or that certain positions be filled by Deaf or hard of hearing individuals. Several recent postings include the Director of Maryland Relay, Superintendent of the Maryland School for the Deaf, the Statewide Coordinator of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services at DORS, the DCDL Coordinator, correctional officials at the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS), and the Maryland Relay Manager. Many of these postings have since been filled, but DPSCS continues to seek Deaf and ASL-fluent correctional officials to work with Deaf inmates.

These initiatives have contributed to the reduction of unemployment rates in Maryland. Such statistics, including the 2022 [Managing for Results Report](#), show that the Deaf Ecosystem is working.



# ENSURING SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER QUALITY

## THE NEED FOR CERTIFIED INTERPRETERS

As required by state and federal law, private and public entities must provide qualified interpreters and other accommodations (such as real-time captioning) for Deaf and hard of hearing constituents. The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing advises entities to use interpreters who are certified by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID), which sets the minimum national standards for interpreting.

Certification of sign language interpreters is extremely important to help protect entities from liability exposure and miscommunication between both parties. Certification also allows for appropriate and ethical access for consumers. Entities have the right to seek bids from different interpreting service agencies for the interpreting job. To view a listing of interpreting service agencies in Maryland, visit: [marylandcdl.org/topic/services/interpreting](http://marylandcdl.org/topic/services/interpreting).

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has promoted the growth and use of the Deaf interpreter profession by ensuring that Deaf interpreters are used in state emergency broadcasts in Maryland, the Governor's State of the State address, open public official meetings, situations that involve the mental health setting, and meetings that involve children or DeafBlind constituents. Native or near-native fluency in various American Sign Language (ASL) dialects is critical to ensure cultural and linguistic competence. In many settings, Deaf interpreters are the most qualified people to provide high-quality services because ASL is their primary and native language.

## CENTRALIZED INTERPRETING FUND STUDY

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has conducted research on ways to increase fiscal responsibility and improve the efficiency and quality of sign language interpreting services within state agencies in Maryland. The office worked with the Department of Budget and Management to create a new comptroller code for all state agencies to use to record their expenditure and request activity on [sign language interpreting services](#).

The standard use of a Designated Object Line code 0834 (Sign Language Interpreter Services) began in FY18 to enable an accurate assessment of cost savings and aid in the fiscal evaluation of establishing a centralized source for state procurement of sign language interpreter services. Preliminary findings indicate the potential for cost-savings under a centralized budget while making the state government more efficient and responsive. The office continues to monitor this code to make budget decisions and recommendations for various agencies.

# ADDRESSING INTERPRETING QUALIFICATIONS

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing receives and helps address complaints and concerns about unqualified and fraudulent sign language interpreters from constituents and businesses across Maryland. Unqualified and fraudulent interpreters in courts, government, schools, hospitals, and many other settings can cause significant harm to Deaf and hard of hearing constituents by failing to convey information. This leads to the deprivation of knowledge, miscommunication, and isolation from the community at large.

To ensure equitable communication and language accessibility for all Deaf and hard of hearing constituents in Maryland, the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing monitors information on fraudulent practices involving unqualified sign language interpreters and refers constituents to the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights and the Office of Health Care Quality for follow-up.

In FY20, the Maryland legislature asked the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to provide recommendations that may help protect Deaf and hard of hearing individuals from fraudulent and unqualified interpreters. An ASL video recap and complete response is also available at [odhh.maryland.gov/JCR2020](https://odhh.maryland.gov/JCR2020).

In FY21, the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing released a survey to collect data on unqualified interpreters and inform interpreting requirements in Maryland that will remain open for submissions until further instructed by legislation. The link to the survey is available at [bit.ly/interpretingsurvey](https://bit.ly/interpretingsurvey).



# STATE EMERGENCY BROADCASTS

In the past, Deaf and hard of hearing constituents raised concerns about the absence of sign language interpreters during state emergency broadcasts. In FY16, the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing developed and distributed a memorandum to media outlets in Maryland regarding the on-screen framing of the speaker and interpreter, which is still in use today as a CDI team is now regularly included for many of Governor Hogan's broadcasts. This memorandum can be found at [www.odhh.maryland.gov/broadcasts](http://www.odhh.maryland.gov/broadcasts).

The Hogan administration has demonstrated its commitment to accessibility for Deaf and hard of hearing people by ensuring that State House press conferences are captioned and interpreted, including by qualified Deaf Interpreters.

In FY21, a [survey](#) showed that Maryland was among the top states in the nation for equitable information access during COVID-19—a direct result of the ongoing use of interpreting teams in Governor Hogan's broadcasts since 2015.



# IMPROVING STATE SERVICES FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING MARYLANDERS

To improve the efficiency and quality of services provided to Deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders, the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing collaborates with state programs and agencies on a daily basis, providing expertise to various advisory groups, boards, focus groups, and policy meetings.

## **EARLY LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND BILINGUALISM**

Across the country, many Deaf and hard of hearing children show up to school with language delays or no language at all, putting them at a disadvantage that sometimes continues for the rest of their lives. Language deprivation is often the result of children not having access to learning ASL, which also limits their capacity to learn another language—including English.

Language deprivation is an ongoing issue at the local and national levels. Maryland's Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Advisory Council, which comprises parents, professionals, and Deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Director Kelby Brick serves on the council, focusing on combating language deprivation by working to ensure that every family receives access to visual language services (such as state Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) services, early intervention programs, and access to language resources) as soon as possible.

The council supports a program that aims to ensure that every baby born in Maryland receives a newborn hearing screening and that hearing status is identified at the earliest age possible—preferably by three months of age. The program also coordinates with providers statewide to help ensure that babies who are identified as Deaf or hard of hearing receive early intervention services—preferably by six months of age.

## **EARLY LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND BILINGUALISM (CONT'D)**

Given that most of Deaf and hard of hearing infants are born to hearing parents who often have very little to no knowledge or command of ASL, it is critical to develop strong support systems for families. A critical component of support is ensuring that parents are provided with accurate information. A common misconception is that ASL is a communication option rather than a bona fide language. Another misconception is that parents need to choose between ASL and English even though [data](#) repeatedly shows that these options are not mutually exclusive. To help prevent language deprivation for most Deaf and hard of hearing children, it is necessary to provide them with access to both languages within months of birth.

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing assists the Maryland State Department of Education to expand the Hearing Aid and Language and Communication Video Loan Bank to include videos and resources to help families learn ASL to communicate with their child. To learn more, visit [bit.ly/loan-bank](http://bit.ly/loan-bank).

## **MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

The Office works closely with MDH with several of its departments and programs, including the Behavioral Health Administration, Developmental Disabilities Administration, Early Hearing Detection and Intervention, and the Office of Health Care Quality.

### **Behavioral Health Administration**

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing serves on the statewide Behavioral Health Administration Advisory Council and chairs the Cultural and Linguistic Competence committee to ensure that Deaf and hard of hearing individuals are able to access quality behavioral health services.

In FY20, the Cultural and Linguistic Competence committee approved a plan to address a severe lack of cultural and linguistic competency among providers within the behavioral and mental fields. The Behavioral Health Administration then began offering educational seminars across Maryland to educate Local Behavioral Health Authorities about positive behavioral support, and Local Addiction Authorities about cultural and linguistic competency. The Cultural and Linguistic Competence committee expanded to reflect representation across Maryland through membership recruitment including parents of children with disabilities, caregivers, educators, therapists, social workers, members of underserved populations including Native Americans.

## MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (CONT'D)

### Developmental Disabilities Administration

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing provides technical assistance to the Developmental Disabilities Administration, including a survey to collect information from more than 100 support services providers in Maryland to identify gaps in service areas.

The office has also worked with the Developmental Disabilities Administration to address access to staff reporting processes, which brings attention to adjusting audio devices to improve accessibility for Deaf and hard of hearing staff. In addition, the office has encouraged the hiring of more Deaf and hard of hearing staff in organizations that serve DDA clients, and to increase compensation for such staff.

### Office of Health Care Quality

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing works closely with the Office of Health Care Quality in various capacities, such as providing technical assistance for appropriate and legal accessibility for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals and frequently refers constituents to file formal complaints with the Office of Health Care Quality for appropriate response. The Office of Health Care Quality licenses and certifies facilities and programs throughout Maryland. The Office of Health Care Quality surveys these facilities and programs to determine compliance with state and federal regulations, which sets forth minimum standards for the delivery of care.

### DEAF CULTURE DIGITAL LIBRARY

The Deaf Culture Digital Library is a one-stop information center that provides Maryland residents, local public library staff, college and university librarians, and other libraries with access to online resources on Deaf culture, Deaf cultural programs, and training programs for library staff. The Deaf Culture Digital Library is one of the only three state agencies with a statutory requirement that the lead administrator be Deaf or hard of hearing with appropriate expertise.

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing provides guidance and assistance as requested to ensure maintenance and improvement of the program.



## **DEAFBLIND SERVICES**

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing advocates for improved access to services for DeafBlind Marylanders, including work with Maryland Relay, the Maryland State Department of Education Division of Rehabilitation Services, and the Maryland Department of Disabilities.

Maryland Relay's work group focuses on strengthening telecommunications access for DeafBlind constituents. Currently, Maryland Accessibility Technology oversees the new Communication Navigators program and is working on hosting pro-tactile training for the communication facilitators. The office works in collaboration to provide support and resources as needed.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services' work group finds more effective ways for the community and partners to provide specialized and sustainable services to help increase economic self-sufficiency and competitive employment outcomes for DeafBlind Marylanders.

## **MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is currently working with the Maryland Department of Labor to facilitate cultural competency training, to ensure that on-site interpreting and video remote interpreting access is available at all Workforce Center sites, and to expand apprenticeship opportunities for the Deaf and hard of hearing.

## **MARYLAND INSURANCE ADMINISTRATION**

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing routinely refers constituents to the Maryland Insurance Administration to resolve issues with health insurance and help Deaf constituents receive services from out-of-network providers who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or fluent in ASL at in-network cost.

## **MARYLAND COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS**

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing refers constituents to file formal complaints, provides information about the process, and operates as a person of contact for technical assistance in appropriate areas, including employment discrimination. Jeff Rosen, Esq., a Deaf lawyer, was appointed to serve on the commission for a six-year term. The Commissioners' duties are at [mccr.maryland.gov/Pages/Commissioners](https://mccr.maryland.gov/Pages/Commissioners).





## **MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES**

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing provides technical assistance and cultural and linguistic expertise on various projects including emergency preparedness and Telecommunication Access of Maryland.

## **MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing refers Deaf constituents who are in need of public assistance to the Department of Human Services and continuously works with the department to help improve service administration to the Deaf and hard of hearing community.

## **MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services worked together in various capacities from human resources, training commissions, and law enforcement services such as ensuring compliance with the settlement emanating from the Jarboe, et al v. Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS), et al, settlement in the U.S. District Court of Maryland. Examples include ensuring access to videophone, ASL interpreters, assistive devices, cultural humility training, and more.

## **MARYLAND DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES**

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing assisted with recruitment for employment opportunities, distributing information about new laws, and supporting various efforts including communicating about any changes in tax exempt employment (both state and federal).

## **MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Department of Housing Community and Development are working together to identify state funds available for housing while discussing the best model to improve access to appropriate funds for appropriate services for Deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders.

## **MARYLAND MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINISTRATION**

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration collaborated to address the quality of services for Deaf constituents and provided technical assistance to help ensure accessibility while making appointments, taking driver's exams, renewing licenses or updating personal information.

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS

According to an Abell Foundation report on the digital divide in Maryland, “520,000 Maryland households, or about one in four, do not have a home wireline broadband subscription.” This includes some 108,000 households with children under the age of 18 and are disproportionately African American, Hispanic, and people with disabilities. With the majority of the country’s population now using cell phones instead of landlines and 70% of 911 calls coming from cellular users, it is critical that all citizens, especially Deaf and hard of hearing individuals, are able to text 911 for emergencies. In addition to being able to text 911, access to high-speed internet is critical for Deaf and hard of hearing residents who use videophones to make and receive phone calls.

In FY20, Maryland Relay was rehomed to the Department of Disabilities. The Office assisted with the transition from the Department of Information Technology. Legislative changes in this process included the requirements of:

- The Director shall be an individual who is Deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind, or speech disabled and is a user of telecommunications relay services.
- The Director shall advise the Department and the Secretary of Disabilities on regulatory policy and the administration of the Universal Service Trust Fund.
- Establishing a communications facilitator program to allow DeafBlind individuals and other individuals to access telecommunications relay services.

These requirements have been implemented as a new Deaf Director has been announced, and the team is implementing the communications facilitator program. Current work towards improvement of the communications facilitator program is ongoing.

In FY20 and 21, K-12 schools and universities transitioned to virtual learning, limiting some individuals' access to education. To address the digital divide among students, including Deaf and hard of hearing students, the governor in June of 2020 [announced \\$45 million](#) in educational funding. In August of 2020, Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Director Kelby Brick provided a [summary](#) of the governor’s press conference announcing broadband assistance as provided by the CARES act. Most recently, in FY22, a Request for Proposal was initiated between the Maryland State Department of Education and a captioning vendor to continue to reduce the digital divide.

The office also shared a [video](#) created by Federal Communications Commission with guidelines in applying for broadband access at a reduced cost. Access to affordable and reliable internet service is critical for the Maryland Deaf and hard of hearing community to fully participate and thrive in the digital economy.

## **MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has been working with MDOT to improve accessibility for the Ignition Interlock devices, which are currently inaccessible for Deaf and hard of hearing drivers. Ignition Interlock devices are used by Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration as an alternative to prison and/or fines for drivers with DUI/DWIs. Device is installed in the vehicle, usually in the cupholder, and sends out a random alert for drivers to pull over and take a breathalyzer test. If the driver does not comply, the car will shut down and the random testing periods will be extended, imposing additional fines. The devices are not equipped for higher volumes and flashing lights; therefore, Deaf and hard of hearing drivers who can not see or hear the alerts are often penalized. The Motor Vehicle Administration has tightened regulations on accessibility for the devices and testing is underway. The ongoing work with the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will improve visual alerts on Ignition Interlock devices.

## **BALTIMORE VICTIM WITNESS UNIT**

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing provided Baltimore City's Victim Witness Unit with resources and technical assistance to ensure the use of Certified Deaf Interpreters during witness statements and interviews, especially in cases with minors and Deaf individuals with limited literacy.

## **PUBLIC WORKS FREDERICK**

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing made referrals on behalf of DeafBlind constituents to Public Works Frederick to make safety improvements within the City of Frederick, including installment of sidewalks and new signals. The office continues to monitor and work with constituents to ensure accessibility and safety.

## **HEARING ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY BOARD**

In 2019, Maryland passed legislation requiring facilities and buildings that receive state funds to install a hearing loop system during renovation or construction. A hearing loop is a loop of wire that transmits sound via a magnetic field, which sends sound directly to the telecoil receiver in a user's hearing device. The system eliminates most background noise and greatly improves understanding of speech and music. The sound received is customized by each user's unique hearing instrument. The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Policy Manager Kate Breen currently serves on the Hearing Accessibility Advisory Board, which is developing regulations for Maryland facilities that receive state funds to install a hearing loop system during renovation or construction.



# PARTNERSHIPS

To improve the efficiency and quality of services provided to Deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders, the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing collaborates with organizations on a daily basis and provides expertise to various advisory groups, boards, focus groups, and policy meetings, including:

- Arundel Lodge, Inc.
- Baltimore City Association of the Deaf
- Behavioral Health Advisory Council
- Community College of Baltimore County: Catonsville ASL and Interpreter Program Advisory Council
- Community Support Services for the Deaf
- Cultural and Linguistic Competency Committee
- Deaf Culture Digital Library
- Deaf DAWN
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network
- Deaf Independent Living Association
- Deaf Shalom Zone
- Disability Rights Maryland
- District of Columbia Area Black Deaf Advocates
- Early Hearing Detection and Intervention
- Frederick Community College ASL Program
- Hearing Loss Association of America
- Howard County Association of the Deaf
- Howard County Commission on Disabilities
- Kennedy Krieger Institute
- Latino Deaf and Hard of Hearing Association of the Metropolitan DC Area
- Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Maryland Alliance of Disability Commissions and Committees
- Maryland Association of the Deaf
- Maryland Deaf Community Center
- Maryland Deaf Senior Citizens
- Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council
- Maryland State Department of Education
- Metro South Asian Deaf Association
- Metro Washington Association of the DeafBlind
- National Association of State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Montgomery College ASL Program
- National Association of the Deaf
- Olney Theater
- Prince George's County Association of the Deaf
- Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
- Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

# LEGISLATIVE AWARENESS DAY

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing's Legislative Awareness Day is an annual event aimed at improving the Deaf and hard of hearing community's awareness of legislative issues, as well as promoting conversations about issues affecting Deaf and hard of hearing individuals. In addition to educating our community, we honor notable leaders in the community by presenting them with awards that highlight their contributions and achievements.

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing held the 2021 Legislative Awareness Day at the Governor's Coordinating Offices in Crownsville. Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Chair Michele Westfall, and the Governor's Office on the Deaf of Hard of Hearing Director Kelby Brick ran the meeting, which also featured two special guest presenters: DC Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner Robb Dooling, and Linda Stoltz, Maryland Deaf Community Center Chair Linda Stoltz.

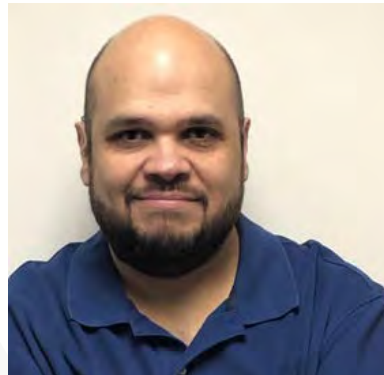
Congratulations to Dr. Steve Weiner for being honored with the Annual Governor's Kelby Brick Community Leadership Award (below).



# LAD 2021 HONOREES



**Dr. Steve Weiner**  
Annual Governor's  
Kelby Brick Community  
Leadership Award



**Dr. Larry Gray**  
Director's Award



**Corey Burton**  
Community Advocacy  
Award



**Jacob Leffler**  
Civic Engagement  
Award



**Marie Alford**  
Outstanding Ally Award



**Linda Stoltz**  
Spirit of the Office  
Award



**Maryland Deaf Community Center**  
Spirit of the Deaf Ecosystem Award



**Crepe Crazy**  
Outstanding Business Award

# COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

In August 2022, the National Association of the Deaf placed Maryland in the top three out of all states providing information on COVID-19 using Certified Deaf Interpreters, ASL interpreters, and captioning.

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing continued to support Governor Hogan's transparent response to and emergence from the COVID-19 pandemic through sustained outreach and messaging amplification, in addition to coordinating accessibility for the governor's press conferences, including:

- Supporting provision of Certified Deaf Interpreting teams
- Supporting provision of CART captioning
- Creating ASL video recaps with major takeaways, accessible with captions, visual description, and a transcript

The office continued to promote sustained outreach through social media channels and enlisted the help of leaders from within Maryland's Deaf and hard of hearing community to amplify messaging.



# MACDHH MEETINGS

The Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was established in October 2001 to provide support to the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The council, which is appointed by the Governor, is headed by a chair and vice chair and consists of 18 members, nine who represent state agencies and nine who represent the Deaf and hard of hearing community.

In FY22, the council resumed meeting in person on the following dates:

- September 17, 2021
- December 6, 2021
- March 11, 2022
- June 6, 2022

To view upcoming advisory council meetings and prior meeting minutes, please visit [odhh.maryland.gov/meetings](https://odhh.maryland.gov/meetings).

MACDHH members:

**CHAIR** Michele Westfall  
**VICE CHAIR** Marny Helfrich  
**SECRETARY** Vikki Porter

## CITIZEN REPRESENTATIVES

- Dr. Bo A. Byun
- Dr. Larry Gray
- Norma Moran
- Vikki Porter
- Veronica Davila Steele
- Fred Hartman, DHH Services Expert
- Edwin Martinez, Jr., DeafBlind Expert
- Dawn Padon, Private Agency

## STATE REPRESENTATIVES

- Dakota Burgess, Dept. of Aging
- Marny Helfrich, Dept. of Education
- Alena Troxel, Dept. of Health
- Gordon M. Outlaw, Dept. of Housing and Community Development
- Gregory S. James, Dept. of Human Services
- Kristen M. Patterson, Dept. of Labor
- Erin Buck Skees, Maryland School f/t Deaf
- Cleveland Horton, Commission on Civil Rights
- Dr. Janet Moye Cornick, Dept. of Transportation



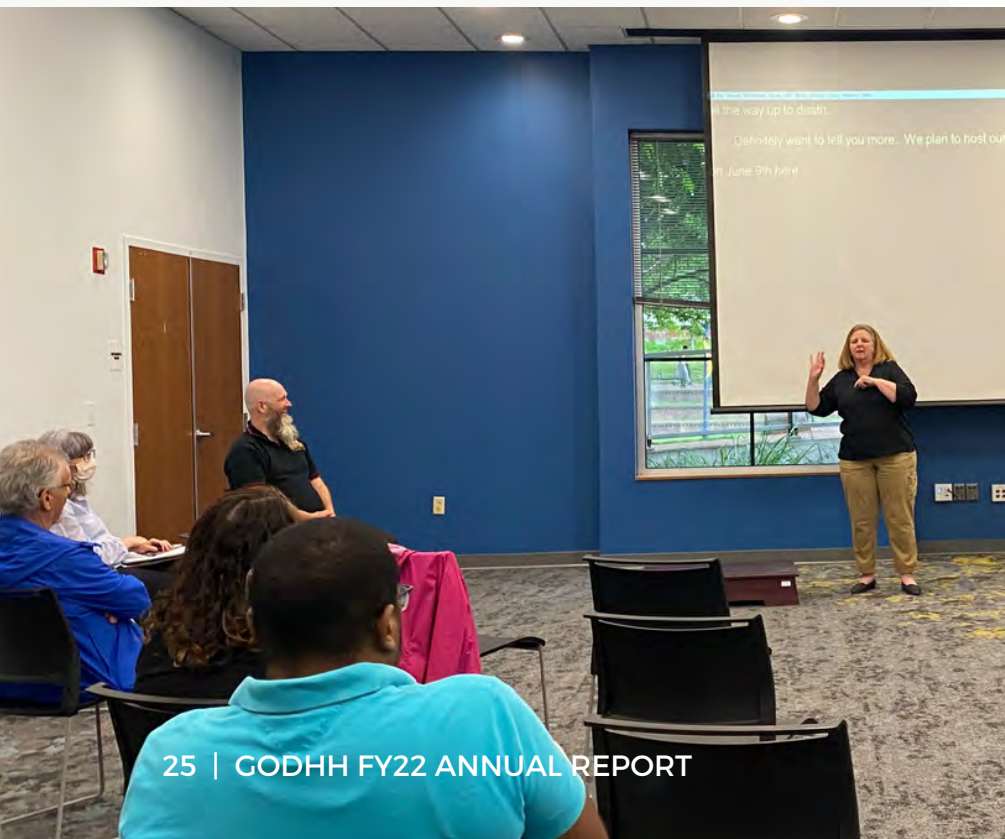
# TOWNHALL MEETINGS

As required by the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing enacting statute, the office must host at least two public town hall meetings each year to gather feedback on the quality of state services and programs, the needs of Deaf and hard of hearing individuals, and the functions and operations of the office.

Instead of only hosting two town hall meetings annually, the office expanded the number of town hall meetings to a minimum of four each year.

In FY22, the office returned to in-person town hall meetings with the option of viewing via Zoom. Town halls occurred during the following dates:

- September 17, 2021
- September 30, 2021
- December 6, 2021
- April 11, 2022
- May 18, 2022
- June 6, 2022



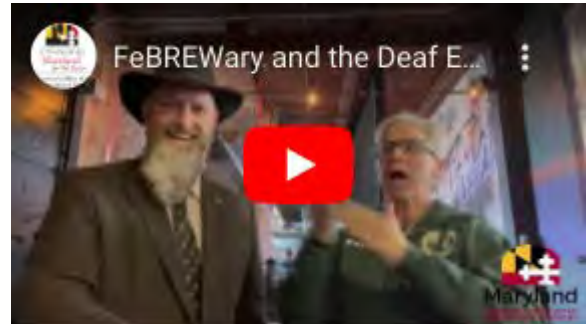
# TOP VIDEOS

## Governor Grants MDCC \$2.5 Million



[bit.ly/GovernorHogangrantsMDCC](https://bit.ly/GovernorHogangrantsMDCC)

## FeBREWary & the Deaf Ecosystem



[bit.ly/feBREWary](https://bit.ly/feBREWary)

## Increased Funding for Organizations



[bit.ly/FundingForOrganizations](https://bit.ly/FundingForOrganizations)

## COVID-19 Vaccine & Testing Site



[bit.ly/StateCenterVaxSite](https://bit.ly/StateCenterVaxSite)

## National Deaf History Month



[bit.ly/NationalDeafHistoryMonth2022](https://bit.ly/NationalDeafHistoryMonth2022)

## ADA 31st Celebration



[bit.ly/ADA31Years](https://bit.ly/ADA31Years)

# TOP VIDEOS

## National Suicide Prevention Week



[bit.ly/MD-Suicide-Prevention](https://bit.ly/MD-Suicide-Prevention)

## Employment Announcement



[bit.ly/EmploymentAnnouncement](https://bit.ly/EmploymentAnnouncement)

## Welcome Noe A. Turcios



[bit.ly/WelcomeNoe](https://bit.ly/WelcomeNoe)

## Citizens Redistricting Committee



[bit.ly/MDRedistricting](https://bit.ly/MDRedistricting)

## Homeowner Assistance Fund



[bit.ly/MDHomeowners](https://bit.ly/MDHomeowners)

## MDAD 65th Anniversary Recognition



[bit.ly/MDAD65Anniversary](https://bit.ly/MDAD65Anniversary)

# MANAGING FOR RESULTS

Managing for Results is a strategic planning, performance measurement, and budgeting process that emphasizes use of resources to achieve measurable results, accountability, efficiency, and continuous improvement in state government programs.

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing compiles data that measures different elements affecting Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals throughout the state including data from the Maryland School for the Deaf, the Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Department of Disabilities, Maryland Department of Human Services, Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Deaf Cultural Digital Library, and the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights.

Annual MFRs reports from the office and other departments and agencies can be found at [dbm.maryland.gov/pages/managingresultsmaryland](https://dbm.maryland.gov/pages/managingresultsmaryland).



# STAFF

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**DIRECTOR KELBY BRICK**

2015 - Present

**POLICY MANAGER KATE BREEN**

June 2021 - Present

**PROGRAM & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER SONYA SMITH**

March - Nov. 2021

**COMMUNICATIONS & POLICY MANAGER PAYAL SHARMACHARYA**

March 2022 - Present

**EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT KARINA BAKER**

March 2021 - June 2022

# CHANGING MARYLAND FOR THE BETTER

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## CONTACT

gov.odhh@maryland.gov  
443-453-5761

## LEARN MORE

[www.odhh.maryland.gov](http://www.odhh.maryland.gov)

## VISIT

100 Community Place, Crownsville Maryland 21032

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