



CHANGING
Maryland
for the Better

Governor's Office of the
Deaf & Hard of Hearing

ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2018

July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018



Larry Hogan
Governor



Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor



Kelby Brick
Director

FY2018 Annual Report

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A Message from the Governor



Larry Hogan
Governor

Maryland State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-974-3901

Dear Fellow Marylanders,

I am pleased to share with you the 2018 Annual Report prepared by the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has worked diligently on a daily basis to improve the quality of life for all Marylanders, including Maryland's more than 1.2 million Deaf and hard of hearing citizens.

In 2018, I was proud to witness booming entrepreneurship and growth of small business ownership among Deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders, including Hyattsville's Streetcar 82 Brewery Co., the first Deaf-owned brewery east of the Mississippi River. Our administration is committed to creating jobs in our communities and making meaningful progress in growing our economy. I am grateful for Director Kelby Brick and his team's exemplary leadership.

I look forward to the office continuing to expand opportunities and enhance the general welfare of Deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders, from expanding text-to-911 in the state to addressing interpreting quality in Maryland, and making it easier for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals to succeed and thrive in life.

Together, we will change Maryland for the better.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Hogan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Larry Hogan
Governor

A Message from the Director



Kelby Brick, Esq., CDI
Director

Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
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Crownsville, Maryland 21032
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Dear Friends,

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is pleased to present our Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2018.

This year was another significant year for our office. From bringing tremendous growth in jobs and small businesses to expanding access through text-to-911 and increased hearing aid coverage through Maryland Medicaid, our office remains committed to making Maryland a better place to live, work, raise a family, and retire.

Maryland is one of the foremost states for early hearing screening and identification of Deaf and hard of hearing children. This past year, our State has once again made significant strides towards connecting families to early intervention services so that every Deaf and hard of hearing child receives access to language immediately just like every other child.

The Deaf Ecosystem in Maryland is at its strongest point in history while being a model for the rest of the country. Despite our successes, we still have a lot of work ahead!

As the office welcomes 2019, we continue to position our state as a top leader in the nation for education and jobs, and changing the state of Maryland for the better.

Warmly,

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

Kelby Brick, Esq., CDI
Director



Responsibilities of the Office

The office was established in October 2001 through legislation (Chapter 537 of the Acts of the 2001 General Assembly). In accordance with the 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 in Maryland by addressing policy gaps, providing expertise related to Deaf and hard of hearing issues, and facilitating the ability to access resources and services in the state of Maryland.

The office believes that all Maryland citizens 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 of the Office

The office is a policy coordination office of the Governor that is focused on advocating and coordinating the adoption of public policies, regulations, and programs.

The current policy priorities of the Office include the following:

- 1. Deaf Ecosystem** – Expanding the Deaf Ecosystem to support current and aspiring Deaf and hard of hearing business owners in Maryland to reduce underemployment and unemployment.
- 2. Interpreting Quality** – Developing a policy framework to address fraudulent and unqualified interpreters in the state of Maryland.
- 3. Improvement of State Services** – Collaborating with state services, agencies, and programs to improve efficiency and quality of services delivered to Deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders.

Staff

In early FY18, the office bid farewell to the office's Communications & Policy Manager **Allysa Dittmar** and Policy Manager **Deborah Nathanson**.

At the end of FY18, the office was staffed by Director **Kelby Brick**, Policy Manager **Jacob Salem**, Programs & Communications Manager **Katherine Millios**, and Administrative Assistant **LaToya Plummer**. During the year, **Elke Pieters** assisted the office on a temporary basis as an Administrative Assistant.



Governor's Coordinating Offices

In Maryland, the seven Governor's Coordinating Offices directly serve as agents of the Governor. Each office holds specific knowledge and expertise in different fields, allowing for close collaboration, coordination, and information sharing with agencies and other entities across the state. In turn, the Governor has access to real-time knowledge of Marylanders' needs.

Staffed by politically-appointed individuals, the tasks and priorities of the Governor's Coordinating Offices are aligned with the Governor's agenda. Similar to the Governor's Cabinet, the Coordinating Offices have a strong influence with numerous state entities, departments, and agencies, allowing for extensive collaboration and consulting.

Governor's Office for Children

Governor's Office of Community Initiatives

Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention

Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Governor's Office of Performance Improvement

Governor's Office of Service and Volunteerism

Governor's Office of Small, Minority, and Women Business Affairs

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



To learn more about the work and duties of the Governor's Coordinating Offices, please visit the webpage: governor.maryland.gov/governors-coordinating-office.



1. Deaf Ecosystem

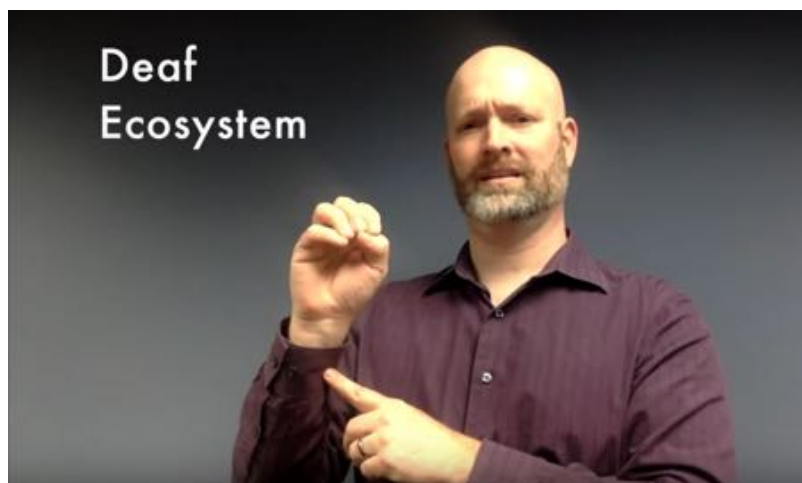
Expanding the Deaf Ecosystem to support current and aspiring Deaf and hard of hearing business owners in Maryland to reduce underemployment and unemployment.

Due to systematic barriers in society ranging from inaccessibility to limited educational training opportunities, the ability to secure long-term, well-paying employment has been difficult for Deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders. More than 80 percent 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.

The Deaf Ecosystem, a term coined by Director Kelby Brick, is a critical tool in combating the pervasive underemployment and unemployment that many Deaf and hard of hearing individuals experience. As commonly witnessed with 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 enable empowerment, purchasing power, and economic mobility of Deaf and hard of hearing individuals, the Deaf Ecosystem's fundamental approach is to retain and harness the collective socio-economic power within the community's individuals, organizations, and businesses through community collaboration and support. Examples include fostering an inclusive entrepreneurial environment where Deaf and hard of hearing individuals can realize their potential without any barriers, supporting and patronizing local Deaf and hard of hearing businesses, and hiring Deaf and hard of hearing professionals and employees. By working together and supporting one another, the Deaf and hard of hearing community is able to accomplish more than they can alone.

Ultimately, a strong Deaf Ecosystem will lead to increased social and economic clout from the retention and expansion of jobs, resources, and wealth within the Deaf and hard of hearing community. 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 citizens. Social, political, and economic barriers no longer stand in the way and discrimination is diminished.



Director Kelby Brick explains the concept and approach of the Deaf Ecosystem in this vlog: bit.ly/2y3ILTb.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Business Owners

In FY17, the office hosted the nation's first Deaf Business Summit in May for established Deaf and hard of hearing business owners in Maryland. At the Deaf Business Summit, Lt. Governor Boyd K. Rutherford emphasized that more than half of Americans either own or work for a small business, and that those small businesses create two out of every three new jobs in the country every year.

This past year, the office has witnessed a booming growth in Deaf and hard of hearing owned businesses in Maryland, including Streetcar 82 Brewing Co., Seawolf Brewery LLC, BadAct Apparel, Mid-Atlantic Interpreting Group, Inc. (MAIG), and ClearMask LLC. Businesses like these have actively hired and recruited Deaf and hard of hearing employees, contributing to a robust Deaf Ecosystem in Maryland.

To further support Maryland's Deaf and hard of hearing entrepreneurs and small business owners, the office visited several incubators in Maryland including the Frederick Innovative Technology Center, Inc. and the Emerging Technology Centers in Baltimore to support the growth of deaf business ownership: Maryland is open for business!

On a daily basis, the office connects state resources with Deaf and hard of hearing business owners. To help connect business owners with the Deaf and hard of hearing community and Maryland at large, the office maintains a directory composed of Deaf and hard of hearing business owners in Maryland: odhh.maryland.gov/directory/#dhhbizs.



Clockwise from left: Streetcar 82 Brewing Co.'s grand opening with Mayor Candace B. Hollingsworth, Prince George County Executive Rushern Baker, Lt. Governor Boyd K. Rutherford, and Kevin Atticks, Executive Director of the Brewers Association of Maryland; the office with the Frederick Innovative Technology Center, Inc.'s President and CEO Kathie Callahan Brady; the office with the Emerging Technology Centers' President and Executive Director Deb Tillett along with the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Information Technology Michael Leahy presenting a Governor's Citation to ClearMask, LLC, a medical supply company; the office with BadAct Apparel, a Maryland-based shirt manufacturing and design business.



“ Our small business owners and entrepreneurs play a critical role in empowering this community. We need a Deaf Ecosystem to grow in order to address the under and unemployed among Maryland’s Deaf and hard of hearing.”

- Lt. Governor Boyd K. Rutherford
Deaf Business Summit, May 2017

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Employees and Job-Seekers

To ensure that all Deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders have an equal footing in employment, the office regularly connects Deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders with key state employment resources such as the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), the Department of Commerce, the Department of Assessments and Taxation, the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR), and Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD).

The office has consistently encouraged the use of Deaf and hard of hearing contractors to work with Deaf and hard of hearing job-seekers, which has seen results in helping reduce unemployment rates in Maryland. For example, after the Division of Rehabilitation Services started using Deaf and hard of hearing contractors, the number of Deaf and hard of hearing individuals who achieved a successful employment outcome more than doubled (282 in FY18, compared to 119 in FY17). Such statistics prove that the Deaf Ecosystem is working, and may be the best approach that positively impacts the employment rates of Deaf and hard of hearing individuals anywhere in the country.

In October 2017, the office co-hosted three events with the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation and the Division of Rehabilitation Services in recognition of Governor Larry Hogan’s executive order declaring October as the National Disability Employment Awareness Month in Maryland. The events provided informational workshops on the steps involved in getting assistance with the job search process as well as establishing and maintaining a small business. Tours of different facility resources available for Deaf and hard of hearing job seekers and small business owners were also provided at the events. To learn more about the events that were held, please see: odhh.maryland.gov/ndeam-2017/. To read the press release, please visit: odhh.maryland.gov/press-releases/governor-larry-hogan-lt-governor-boyd-rutherford-highlight-disability-employment/.



L: Lt. Governor Boyd K. Rutherford congratulates Gina D’Amore, President of Mid-Atlantic Interpreting Group, Inc. As part of Governor Larry Hogan’s declaration of October as Disability Employment Awareness Month, Lt. Governor Boyd K. Rutherford presented citations to several employers who have a history of hiring an inclusive workforce, including people with disabilities. One of the businesses that received a citation was Mid-Atlantic Interpreting Group, Inc., a Deaf-owned and operated business.



2. Interpreting Quality

Developing a policy framework to address fraudulent and unqualified interpreters.

In the past three years, the office has received numerous 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 and effectively isolating Deaf and hard of hearing constituents from their community at large.

To ensure equitable communication and language accessibility for all Deaf and hard of hearing constituents in Maryland, the office monitors information on fraudulent practices involving unqualified sign language interpreters and refers constituents to the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights for follow-up when such situations arise.

Sign Language Interpreter Licensure

In FY17, the office worked extensively with stakeholders to develop a policy framework to address fraudulent and unqualified sign language interpreters in Maryland. Numerous meetings were held with business owners, interpreters, sign language agencies, constituents, and government officials.

In FY18, the office hosted multiple public forums to gather information and feedback on how to solve the issue of fraudulent and unqualified sign language interpreters and the prospect of interpreter licensure in Maryland. Over one hundred individuals attended the forum at the Community College of Baltimore County-Catonsville and over seventy-five individuals attended the forum at Gaithersburg Library. The office continues to work with stakeholders towards a viable solution.

Centralized Interpreter Fund

In accordance with Governor Hogan's agenda to improve state efficiency, the office assessed data on state spending for sign language interpreting services to better identify where cost savings can be achieved (such as through a centralized interpreting fund). The office worked with the Department of Budget and Management to create a new comptroller code – 0834 Sign Language Interpreter Services – for all state agencies to use to record their expenditure activity on sign language interpreting services in FY18.

In FY18, preliminary data indicates that Maryland's state agencies spent, at a minimum, \$1.3 million on sign language interpreting services. In FY19, models will be re-run again to determine whether centralization of funds would be feasible and more efficient than the current system. The office continues to provide guidance to state agencies on how to procure qualified interpreters and use the new comptroller code classification to ensure standardization among all state agencies: odh.maryland.gov/resource-guide-state-procurement-of-sign-language-interpreting-services.

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 office always advises entities to use interpreters who are certified from the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID). RID sets the minimum standards for interpreting since certification is not required in the state of Maryland. Whenever using an interpreter from an interpreting agency (who may hire both uncertified and certified interpreters) or a freelance interpreter, we suggest that the employer always ask if interpreters are certified from RID, and use those who are certified.

Certification of sign language interpreters is extremely important to prevent entities from liability and miscommunication between both parties. Entities have the right to seek different bids from different agencies for the interpreting job. To view a listing of agencies in Maryland, please see: odhh.maryland.gov/directory/#interpreting-communication-access.

The office has especially promoted the growth and use of the Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) profession, ensuring that CDIs are used in state emergency broadcasts in Maryland, the Governor's State of the State address, public official meetings, and meetings that involve DeafBlind constituents. Having fluency in various American Sign Language (ASL) dialects is critical and necessary for different interpreting situations. CDIs are the most able to provide high-quality services because American Sign Language is their primary and native language.

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, and if provided, the interpreters would often be cut off screen. In FY16, the office developed and distributed a memorandum to media outlets in Maryland regarding the on-screen framing of the speaker and interpreter. Several recommendations were made, such as ensuring that the interpreter is fully on-screen rather than being cropped off-screen: odhh.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2016/01/Broadcasting_Memo_ODHH.pdf.



3. Improvement of State Services

Collaborating with state services, agencies, and programs to improve efficiency and quality of services delivered to Deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders.

To improve the efficiency and quality of services provided to Deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders, the office collaborates with state programs and agencies on a daily basis. The office actively serves on, and provides expertise to, numerous 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 either without language or delayed in language, impacting them for the rest of their lives. This is because those children have not had access to language bilingually, with American Sign Language as a visual language, and English.

Not providing children early access to language has been an ongoing and recognized issue at the national level, the local level, and in Maryland's own Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Advisory Council, which is comprised of parents, professionals and Deaf individuals.

Given that 90 - 95 percent of Deaf and hard of hearing infants are born to hearing parents who often have very little to no knowledge or command of American Sign Language (ASL), it is critical that we develop better support systems for these families.

A part of that process is ensuring that parents be given accurate and critical information. A common misconception that often occurs 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 and that the best way to prevent language deprivation for most Deaf and hard of hearing children is to provide them with access to both languages within months of birth. There is no scientific basis for limiting Deaf and hard of hearing children's access to multiple languages.

In FY16, the office worked with the Department of Health and the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program to modify the letter sent to parents of infants identified as Deaf or hard of hearing. The updated letter explains that delays in exposure to language acquisition can lead to language deprivation and that, while there are many communication options for families to consider later in life, it is critical to receive exposure to language immediately. In FY17, the letter was adopted and is now available in [American Sign Language](#), [English](#), and [Spanish](#).

The office also worked with the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Special Education and Early Intervention Services' Infants and Toddlers program to ensure that Deaf and hard of hearing children receive appropriate early intervention services, especially pertaining to early language acquisition.

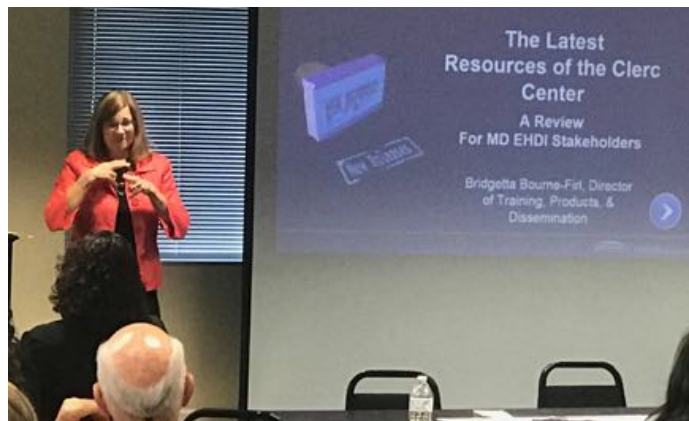
In FY18, the office and the Maryland State Department of Education along with other agencies and stakeholders developed a Technical Assistance Bulletin (TAB) with the goal of providing Early Intervention providers and families information on how to support language acquisition of newly identified Deaf or hard of hearing children. The TAB provides detailed information on language development and promotion, as well as the importance of bilingual language development and how to support families with multi-lingual households. To view the TAB, please see:

<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Special-Education/TAB/MarylandTABEISforDeafandHardofHearing.pdf>.



L: Director Kelby Brick discusses the Technical Assistance Bulletin developed by the office and the Maryland State Department of Education to provide support, resources, and options to promote language acquisition among Deaf and hard of hearing children: youtu.be/gwS_w4ICyKU.

In March 2018, Director Brick attended the national Early Hearing Detection and Intervention conference in Denver, Colorado and gave a presentation on Maryland's cutting edge policies and intervention processes. In May 2018, the office hosted the annual statewide Maryland Early Hearing Detection and Intervention conference, a day filled with learning and collaboration between parents and professionals of Deaf and hard of hearing children.



Clockwise from L: a participant at the Maryland Early Hearing Detection and Intervention conference; Bridgetta Bourne-Firl discusses K-12 ASL content standards from the Clerc Center; Director Brick at the national Early Hearing Detection and Intervention conference with a significant contingent of representatives and professionals from Maryland.

Senior Citizens

Since a large proportion of senior citizens experience declining hearing, the office helps connect older individuals on a daily basis with resources related to assistive technology, hearing aids, and telecommunications.

Over the years, the office has received numerous calls asking for financial assistance to help cover the cost of hearing aids due to the high out-of-pocket costs and lack of coverage by insurance carriers. The office worked with the Maryland Department of Health to expand Maryland Medicaid coverage for medically-necessary hearing aids and cochlear implants for adults. Previously, Maryland Medicaid only covered hearing aids and cochlear implants for children and young adults under 21 years old.

The new regulations were accepted October 2018, and also allow bilateral coverage and repairs under certain conditions. For more information, please see: odhh.maryland.gov/press-releases/maryland-governors-office-of-the-deaf-and-hard-of-hearing-department-of-health-expand-hearing-aid-coverage-through-maryland-medicaid/.



L: Policy Manager Jacob Salem shares the news of the recent expansion in hearing aid/cochlear implant coverage through Maryland Medicaid, a rare initiative by the State of Maryland not adopted by many states in ensuring equitable healthcare access: youtu.be/pLjMTVyX_wQ.

The office also often refers individuals to the office's resource guide on insurance and financial assistance related to hearing aids and other audiology services. To view the resource guide, please visit: odhh.maryland.gov/resource-guide-insurance-and-financial-assistance-on-hearing-aids-cochlear-implants-and-audiology-services/.

Domestic Violence

The office continues to advocate for the expansion of services for Deaf and hard of hearing survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. In October 2016, Governor Hogan announced more than \$2 million in federal Violence Against Women Act grants to fund efforts to help protect women and families from domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking crimes (governor.maryland.gov/2016/10/27/governor-larry-hogan-announces-funding-to-fight-domestic-violence-sexual-assault-and-stalking-crimes/).

In March 2018, the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention announced a grant of nearly \$40,000 to the Deaf Abused Women Network (DAWN) for the Deaf Survivors project, a project dedicated towards developing and implementing strategies to provide accessible assistance to deaf survivors of abuse from domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, and/or

bullying to help them heal and progress with their lives. Programs such as these are made possible through inter-departmental cooperation between the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention and the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. To read the full press release, please see: <http://goccp.maryland.gov/governors-office-of-crime-control-prevention-announces-nearly-40000-in-state-grants-for-deaf-crime-victims/>.

“ Our administration is committed to ensuring the safety of all of our citizens, and this includes supporting crime victims who are members of the deaf community in Maryland,”

- Governor Larry Hogan



L: Director Kelby Brick and Executive Director V. Glenn Fueston, Jr. from the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention discuss the recent funding to DAWN, Deaf Abused Women Network and how the funds will be used: <youtu.be/mvFGF6oOWqo>.

Telecommunications Access

Ensuring the safety of Maryland's Deaf and hard of hearing citizens is a top priority for the office. In the past year, the state has worked on updating 1960s-era emergency systems by setting up text-to-911 infrastructure to roll out to the counties' public safety answering point (PSAP) locations. Emergency calls are received and handled at the counties' PSAPs. As the location for the Maryland School for the Deaf, Frederick County was the first county in Maryland to adopt the text-to-911 technology in 2015.

With the majority of the country's population now using cell phones instead of landline phones and that 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 to 911 for emergencies. To read the press release announcing text-to-911 in Maryland, please see: odhh.maryland.gov/press-releases/governor-larry-hogan-announces-new-text-to-9-1-1-system-for-maryland/.



“ We are thrilled to welcome this public safety tool for Maryland’s 1.2 million deaf and hard of hearing residents, those with a speech impairment, and anyone in an emergency situation where a voice call would be dangerous or impossible.”

- Kelby Brick, Director

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 FY18, Governor Hogan announced a public-private partnership with Microsoft Corp. and Declaration Networks Group, Inc (DNG) to expand rural broadband access in Garrett County, Maryland.

Access to affordable and reliable internet service is critical for Maryland’s Deaf and hard of hearing businesses, families, and students to thrive in the Deaf Ecosystem and fully participate in the digital economy. To read the full press release, please see:

governor.maryland.gov/2018/04/24/governor-hogan-announces-maryland-selected-for-national-rural-broadband-public-private-partnership/.

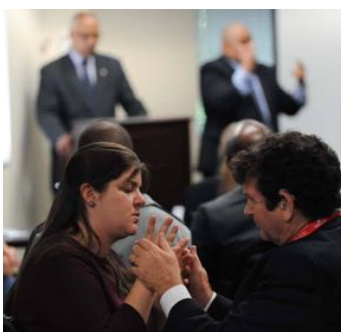


L: Policy Manager Jacob Salem explains the public-private partnership to expand rural broadband access in Garrett County and its positive impact on Deaf and hard of hearing residents: youtu.be/fLfPOGAUyLw.

DeafBlind Services

The office continues to advocate for improved access to services for DeafBlind Marylanders. The office sits on several work groups in different state agencies, including Maryland Relay, the Division of Rehabilitation Services, and the Department of Disabilities.

Maryland Relay's work group focuses on strengthening telecommunications access for DeafBlind constituents while the Division of Rehabilitation Services' work group works towards finding 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.



L to R: a DeafBlind business owner at the 2017 Deaf Business Summit; Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing member Jason Corning at the office's 2018 Legislative Awareness Day event.

Collaborating with State Agencies

To improve the efficiency and quality of services provided to Deaf and hard of hearing Marylanders, a critical aspect in achieving such services is providing technical assistance and collaborating with state agencies in serving Maryland's citizens. Here are a few more highlights from this past year:

Maryland Insurance Administration The office routinely refers constituents to the Maryland Insurance Administration for issues with health insurance, and collaborated with the agency in better understanding insurance coverage requirements in Maryland for hearing aids. In FY18, the office worked with the Maryland Department of Health to expand Maryland Medicaid coverage for medically-necessary hearing aids for adults. For more information, see page 14.

Behavioral Health Administration The office serves on the statewide Behavioral Health Administration Advisory Council, and chairs the Cultural and Linguistic Competence Committee. The committee works on promoting and advocating for a culturally competent and comprehensive approach in Maryland's system. Through the committee and other departments, the office works on ensuring that Deaf/hard of hearing individuals are able to access quality behavioral health services.



L: In June 2018, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention awarded three State Awards to public officials for their leadership in making suicide prevention and mental health a public policy priority. Former staff Allysa Dittmar was one of the state recipients for her policy work on mental health and suicide prevention through the office and the Maryland Behavioral Health Advisory Council. Allysa had been instrumental to the expansion of mental health access for the Deaf/hard of hearing population and other under-served populations in Maryland where her work resulted in the expansion of telemental health services to help ensure access to 17 mental health services to those who benefit from having support provided in their native language.

Maryland Relay The office and Maryland Relay co-hosted a meet and greet event with community leaders on the *Pride of Baltimore II* during the 2017 National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA) National Conference in Baltimore, Maryland.



Clockwise from L: The *Pride of Baltimore II* at the Inner Harbor's dock; Director Brick and Maryland Relay's Director Brenda Kelly-Frey with a NBDA attendee; Maryland goodies to show what Maryland is all about!; Directors Brick and Kelly-Frey with the newly elected board of NBDA's Baltimore chapter: Antines Davis (Vice President), Darrin Smith (President), Leroy Dixon (Chapter Liaison), and Andre Burke (Treasurer); staff from both the office and Maryland Relay with Baltimore NBDA's board representatives; state of Maryland staff on the boat!



Legislative Awareness Day 2017

Historically, the office has hosted its annual Legislative Awareness Day in February during the 90-day legislative session in Maryland. This year, the office decided to re-structure the annual event and host Legislative Awareness Day in the fall instead. Time and again, Legislative Awareness Day would often be postponed due to inclement weather and snow. Additionally, hosting the event in the Fall gives the community additional time to meet with their legislators and formulate plans for legislative proposals. During the legislative session from January to April, it is often too late to introduce a bill since the session is already underway.

The 2017 annual Legislative Awareness Day event was held on Monday, October 9, 2017. First Lady Yumi Hogan and Secretary Carol Beatty from the Maryland Department of Disabilities joined the event.

The First Lady shared remarks on Governor Larry Hogan's commitment to bilingualism and announced the state's first art competition for Deaf and hard of hearing children. She also presented the Governor's 7th annual Kelby Brick Community Leadership Award among several awards to individuals and businesses for their active involvement in the community and Maryland.



Clockwise from L: Secretary Carol Beatty from the Department of Disabilities shares a few remarks; First Lady Yumi Hogan announces the state's first art competition for Deaf and hard of hearing children; former Deputy Director Zainab Alkebsi and current Policy Counsel at the National Association of the Deaf explains the legislative process in Maryland; Policy Manager Deborah Nathanson leads a panel of local community leaders in Maryland.



Governor’s Annual Kelby Brick Community Leadership Award
Sean Markel

Outstanding Deaf Business Award Surdus Remodeling

Spirit of the Deaf Ecosystem Award
Mid-Atlantic Interpreting Group, Inc.

Spirit of the Office Award Antines “Nu Nu” Davis

Civic Engagement Award Dr. Lisalee D. Egbert

Outstanding Ally Award Dr. Jennifer Reesman





Statewide Deaf and Hard of Hearing K-12 Art Contest “The Deaf Experience”

At the 2018 Legislative Awareness Day event, the office along with First Lady Yumi Hogan proudly announced the state’s first art competition for Deaf and hard of hearing K-12 students living in Maryland. The competition presented an opportunity for Deaf and hard of hearing students to reflect on, explore, and integrate personal experiences as Deaf individuals through artistic expression.

The art competition focused on the use of De’VIA elements. De’VIA is an art movement that examines and expresses the Deaf experience from a cultural, linguistic, and intersectional perspective. De’VIA has specific characteristics within the art, including contrasting colors and a centralized focus on facial and/or body parts such as the eyes, ears, mouths, arms, and hands, along with motifs, metaphors and insights representative of the Deaf perspective.

The movement is also the celebration of Deaf culture and sign language through artistic expression. De’VIA provides artists with the freedom and opportunity to explore dimensions of one’s hearing status and its relationship with the world.

The [De’VIA Manifesto](#), issued in 1989 by several leading Deaf artists, emphasized the Deaf experience “by using formal art elements with the intention of expressing innate cultural and physical Deaf experience.”

The art competition hosted by the State of Maryland sought to integrate the development of art along with young artists’ awareness of their hearing status. The contest also helped bring public awareness of what it means to be Deaf while recognizing the language, communication, culture and history of Deaf people.



L: Deaf children and their parents share their experiences in participating with the De’VIA art competition:
youtu.be/cvPFVysIXu8.



Clockwise from top: De'VIA competition winners; Director Brick with Kareem, 2nd place winner of the 6th – 8th grade age group, who drew about his home country Trinidad and Tobago; stunning artwork of 1st place winner Ryder from the K – 2nd grade age group; judges observing and ranking entrants' artwork. 22



Maryland's Advocates

Advocacy and community is at the forefront of civic engagement in Maryland. In FY18, during several regional cabinet meetings, the office and Governor Larry recognized local community leaders and visited nearby institutions and schools.

Baltimore City

In Baltimore City, Governor Larry Hogan and the office toured local businesses, facilities, and met with constituents. At the cabinet meeting, Governor Hogan and the office presented a Governor's Citation to Maryland Relay's director, Brenda Kelly-Frey for her tireless efforts in advocating for the Deaf/hard of hearing community and being at the forefront of providing telecommunications services to the community.

The office also visited Kennedy Krieger Institute's Deafness-Related Evaluations and More (DREAM) Clinic, in which the office presented the clinic with a Governor's Citation on their work in offering a wide range of comprehensive neuropsychological services to Deaf and hard of hearing children. These children often miss developmental milestones, struggle in school, or have behavioral issues. The Citation also commended the clinic for providing a safe, bilingual environment and supporting the complete mental, social, and physical health and wellbeing of Deaf/hard of hearing children and young adults.

Along with the Department of Information Technology, the office also visited the Emerging Technology Centers (ETC), a non-profit venture of the Baltimore Development Corporation. The office presented a Governor's Citation to one of ETC's member companies, ClearMask LLC, a partially-Deaf owned company.



Clockwise from L: Director Brick, Lt. Governor Boyd K. Rutherford, and Governor Hogan present a Governor's Citation to Director Brenda Kelly-Frey of Maryland Relay; Director Brick with Allysa Dittmar of ClearMask LLC; Director Brick presents a Governor's Citation to Dr. Jennifer Reesman of KKI; office staff with KKI's team.

Howard County

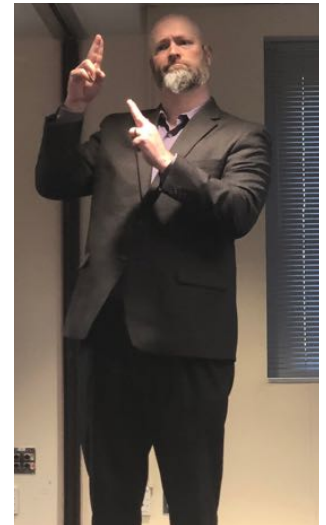
At Governor Hogan's regional cabinet meeting in Ellicott City, Fred Hartman was honored with a Governor's Citation recognizing his leadership and extensive work on behalf of the Howard County Association of the Deaf and the community at large. The office and other officials from the Governor's Office also visited the Maryland School for the Deaf's Columbia campus, and learned about their exemplar service to Deaf and hard of hearing children and their families.



Clockwise from L: Fred Hartman with his Governor's Citation from Governor Larry Hogan; Director Brick, Lt. Boyd K. Rutherford, and Policy Manager Jacob Salem; Policy Manager Jacob Salem speaks with First Lady Yumi Hogan; Governor's Office staff visits the Columbia campus of the Maryland School for the Deaf; one of the artwork made by students at the Maryland School for the Deaf; Policy Manager Jacob Salem, First Lady Yumi Hogan, Director Kelby Brick, and Director Brenda Kelly-Frey from Maryland Relay.

Director Keynotes & Appearances

- Maryland Department of Disabilities' 27th ADA Anniversary
- National Black Deaf Advocates' Baltimore Chapter meeting
- 2017 Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TDI) conference
- Maryland School for the Deaf 150th Anniversary
- Howard County Association of the Deaf 18th Annual Cookout
- 2017 Maryland Rehabilitation Conference
- 2017 Governor's Service Awards
- 2017 Deaf Entrepreneurship Network Convention and Expo
- Regional Cabinet Meeting: Calvert County
- National Early Hearing Detection and Intervention 2018 conference
- Maryland Early Hearing Detection and Intervention 2018 conference
- Regional Cabinet Meeting: Howard County
- Regional Cabinet Meeting: Baltimore City



Clockwise from L: Director Brick presents a Governor's Citation to the Maryland School for the Deaf for the school's exemplary service and dedication to Maryland's Deaf/hard of hearing students over the past 150 years; Director Brick presents the Lifetime Achievement Award to Miriam Zadek, a lifelong advocate for the Deaf/hard of hearing and longtime member of the Board at the Hearing and Speech Agency; Director Brick at the Maryland Early Hearing Detection and Intervention conference; Director Brick was the keynote speaker at the 2017 Maryland Rehabilitation Conference, in which he spoke about addressing employment and business opportunities for Deaf/hard of hearing individuals, and the office received the Organization Award in recognition of the office's "outstanding record of services to individuals with disabilities."



Communications

When the office posts on Facebook, the post is re-shared through the office's Twitter account. If constituents do not have a Facebook or Twitter account, the office website, odhh.maryland.gov, has a live newsfeed featuring social media posts.

With the office maximizing the use of Facebook and Twitter, the number of Facebook and Twitter followers increased over 25% on each platform. In FY15, the average Facebook post from the office reached 7 people. In FY16, the office's average Facebook post reached 769 people. In FY18, the average Facebook post reached 1,000 people, with several posts reaching tens of thousands.

Top Five Facebook Posts of FY18

- **Governor Larry Hogan announces the Board of Public Works' approval of new Text to 9-1-1 technology for the entire state of Maryland (bit.do/text-to-911)** – Reached **384,257** people. To read more about the news, please see page 15.
- **Maryland Department of Health announces Medicaid coverage on cochlear implants and hearing aids for adults (bit.do/mdmedicaidcoverage)** – Reached **7,980** people. To read more about the news, please see page 14.
- **Office announces 2 interpreter licensure forums to gather information and feedback on how to solve the issue of fraudulent and unqualified sign language interpreters and the prospect of interpreter licensure in Maryland (bit.do/interpreterlicensure)** – Reached **7,109** people. To read more about the issue, please see page 10.
- **Office announces new Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing member, Tayler Mayer (bit.do/taylermayer)** – Reached **6,365** people. To read more about the advisory council, please see page 27.
- **Office announces new policy manager, Jacob Salem (bit.do/jacobsalem)** – Reached **5,913** people.

Social Media Channels



facebook.com/MarylandGODHH



bit.ly/2yxCEdx



twitter.com/MarylandGODHH

Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was established in October 2001 to advise and give support to the Maryland 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 members representing State agencies and nine members representing the Deaf and hard of hearing community.

By the end of FY18, Dr. Larry Gray was the Chair of the advisory council, along with Marny Helfrich as the Vice Chair and Vikki Porter as Secretary.

Dr. Larry Gray *Chair*

Marny Helfrich *Vice Chair*

Vikki Porter *Secretary*



Citizen Representatives

Jason Corning (DeafBlind)
Dr. Lisalee D. Egbert
Dr. Larry Gray
Dr. Eddy F. Laird
Vikki Porter
Karunya Samuel
Stephanie R. Summers (Parent)
Mary Lynn Lally (Special Expertise)

Maryland State Department of Education

Marion Marny Helfrich

Department of Health

Tanya D. Green

Department of Human Services

Gregory S. James

Maryland Department of Transportation

Janet Moye Cornick

Maryland Commission on Civil Rights

Stacy Spencer Dove

Department of Licensing, Labor, and Regulation

Victoria Wilkins

Maryland School for the Deaf

Erin Buck-Skees

Maryland Department of Transportation

Dakota Burgess

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

Gordon Outlaw

To view upcoming advisory council meetings and prior meetings' minutes, please visit:
<http://odhh.maryland.gov/meetings/>. To contact the Chair, please e-mail: macdhhchair@gmail.com.



Town Hall Meetings

As required by the office's enacting statute, the office must host at least two public town hall meetings each year to gather public 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 decided to increase the number of town hall meetings to a minimum of four meetings each year. In FY18, the office either hosted or co-hosted eight town hall meetings.

After each advisory council meeting, the office always hosts town hall meetings to promote more engagement among council members and constituents. The model provides an important opportunity for the office and council members to gather feedback and gain a better understanding of the community's needs. In doing so, the constituents' feedback help guide the office and council members through the Governor's priorities and state issues.

In FY18, town hall meetings were held on:

- **August 15, 2017 – CCBC Catonsville**
- **August 23, 2017 – Gaithersburg**
- **September 13, 2017 – Frederick**
- **September 22, 2017 – Germantown**
- **December 8, 2017 – Crownsville**
- **February 1, 2018 – Hagerstown**
- **June 4, 2018 – Crownsville**

To view locations of the upcoming advisory council meetings, please visit: odhh.maryland.gov/meetings/.

The office also hosts other town hall meetings, which are announced via our communications channels and posted on our calendar: odhh.maryland.gov/events-calendar/



Staff Biographies

Kelby Brick *Director* – Brick led efforts in 2001 to establish the Maryland Governor’s Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. In 2011, Brick was the first recipient of the Governor’s Kelby Brick Community Leadership Award, which has been given annually ever since. Prior to becoming director of the office, Brick was the director for law and advocacy at the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), where he successfully mobilized NAD to establish precedents and landmark decisions in litigation and legislative and regulatory areas. Brick then became vice president of Purple Communications, Inc., where he led the company’s regulatory and strategic policies to break down communication barriers for Deaf and hard of hearing individuals across the country. Brick transformed the telecommunications relay services industry, which provides full telephone accessibility to individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-disabled. Brick led efforts in establishing a system that enables relay equipment to be interoperable and accessible with real local phone numbers and emergency access, which was later adopted by the Federal Communications Commission. In 2013, Brick founded Brick Advantage, a consulting firm that works with and advises corporations and non-profits. Brick has been active in numerous advocacy organizations and served as a board member of the American Association of People with Disabilities as well as various federal and local advisory groups. Brick has a Bachelor of Arts in government from Gallaudet University and a law degree from the Temple University Beasley School of Law. He is the first deaf graduate of the law school. He is also a Certified Deaf Interpreter.

Jacob Salem *Policy Manager* – Salem holds a bachelor degree in Political Science from the University of Central Florida and a Masters of Public Administration degree from Gallaudet University. Throughout his professional and academic career, he held various leadership positions and advocated for increased access to employment, communication, and education. Salem has worked to support the Deaf ecosystem and contributed his entrepreneurial skills to assist local businesses and entrepreneurs. Salem previously interned for Communication Service for the Deaf, working on projects connected with the Federal Communications Commission, Small Business Administration’s 8(a) Business Development Program, Direct Video Communication, Telemedicine, Video Relay Services, Campus Accessibility, and Public Policy Hub.

Katie Millios *Programs and Communications Manager* – Millios has lived on the East Coast all her life. She graduated from Gallaudet University with a bachelor’s degree in Communications Studies, along with minors in Art and Art History. Millios served as the Co-Editor in Chief of the University newspaper, the Buff and Blue, and led an on-campus Political Marketing Campaign. She credits these experiences as having helped her to bring significant experience in productions and communications to this new role.



CHANGING
Maryland
for the Better

Governor's Office of the
Deaf & Hard of Hearing

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