



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

# Monthly Bulletin

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## Follow ODHH on Twitter

ODHH continues to strive to deliver relevant, timely information to our constituents and stakeholders. In order to meet growing requests for timely news updates regarding the Office, ODHH is

turning to internet social media outlets.

The first of these social media venues to be launched

is our Twitter account. You can visit our Twitter profile at <http://twitter.com/ODHH>.

We will be posting news, updates, announcements, and more. We will also highlight information available on the ODHH website, providing links for more information. In order to start following ODHH on Twitter, you will need to have your own Twitter account. You can sign up for your own account at

<http://twitter.com>. Registering is free.

ODHH will use its Twitter account to broadcast timely information, called "tweets," in a simple and direct manner to a broad audience. Through



our Twitter page, we will be able to post text based messages that can be sent to mobile devices,

in addition to being accessible on the internet. Please be aware that if you sign up to receive text messages, there will be charges from your cell phone service provider consistent with receiving any text message. Check with them for details if you do not already have a text messaging plan.

As always, if you have questions, please contact us at [odhh@gov.state.md.us](mailto:odhh@gov.state.md.us). We look forward to having you follow us on Twitter!

## Monthly Bulletin Makeover

As you have probably noticed, the ODHH *Monthly Bulletin* has undergone a significant facelift. As mentioned in last month's Bulletin, the Office has been working for several months on the redesign of the ODHH website and brochure, both of which were debuted last month.

The revamped *Bulletin* mirrors the style of the new website and brochure while remaining visually appealing and reader-friendly.

Finally, look for a permanent, monthly article with information and updates from the O'Malley/Brown Administration. These articles will highlight the hard work of the Governor and Lt. Governor to expand opportunity in this State to more people, rather than fewer, even in these tough economic times.

As always, if you have suggestions regarding the content, format, or design of the ODHH *Monthly Bulletin*, please contact Julie Anne Schafer at [jschafer@gov.state.md.us](mailto:jschafer@gov.state.md.us).

# ODHH Updates and Director's Corner



**ODHH Director  
Lisa H. Kornberg**

We have all heard about the tough economic decisions that Governor O'Malley made this week. These difficult financial times impact all of us – and that is when it is most important to have access to information and knowledge about your community. This is why ODHH is putting so much of its energy into assuring that you get the information you need.

Posting on Twitter (page 1), a new design of our *Bulletin*, and our outreach to the community are all ways we share information with you.

It is important as a community to come together in difficult times. One way ODHH is contributing to this is by recognizing National Emergency

Preparedness Month and providing information about resources (page 3). We also want to recognize the strong community that helped to establish our Office, and encourage you to commemorate Deaf Awareness Week at the end of the month (FYI—Page 4).

In FY 2009 there were over 1,000 contacts to our Office for information. Office staff, in conjunction with Advisory Council members, continues to be here to answer your questions and provide you support. Our goal is to link you with your State government in a way that is supportive and productive. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve you. *Lisa*

*“Your vote is your voice... There's no better time to register than now!”*

## Municipal Elections Set for November 3

On Tuesday, November 3, several cities in Maryland will hold elections for mayor, county commissioners, and/or county councils. Among the cities having elections are Annapolis, Frederick, and Rockville. You can view a full list at <http://www.mdmunicipal.org/cities/munielections.cfm>.

Most of the cities have Primary Elections scheduled in September. Check your City government's website for more information.

The deadline to register to vote in municipal elections varies by city, but is often October 5.

Register today to ensure that you can vote on November 3. For more information visit: [http://elections.state.md.us/voter\\_registration/application.html](http://elections.state.md.us/voter_registration/application.html) –or– <http://www.odhh.maryland.gov/vote.html>.

Voting is the most fundamental way to become involved in the political process. Your vote is your voice. It is a way to affect change in the communities and state in which we live and is also a way to promote citizenship. If you are not registered to vote, there's no better time to register than now!

## Meet the Advisory Council: Alexis Allenback



**Alexis  
Allenback**

Alexis Allenback represents the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR) on the Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. She is in her second, three-year term and previously served as Vice Chair of the Council.

DLLR is a State agency that focuses on keeping Marylanders working and safe. It has several divisions, including Labor

& Industry, Workforce Development, and Unemployment Insurance. On the Advisory Council, DLLR advocates for public access to County “One-stop” Workforce Services, including training, labor market information, and labor exchange services.

DLLR can help you with employment issues and career exploration. For more information on DLLR, visit <http://www.dllr.maryland.gov/>.

# September is National Preparedness Month

National Preparedness Month (NPM) is sponsored by the *Ready* Campaign and Citizen Corps. NPM is held each September and is designed to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and communities.

September 2009 is the sixth annual NPM. This year will focus on changing perceptions about emergency preparedness and helping Americans understand what it truly means to be *Ready*.

National Preparedness Month Coalition membership is open to all public and private sector organizations. Groups can register to become a National Preparedness Month Coalition Member by visiting [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) and clicking on the National Preparedness Month banner.

In 2008, the *Ready* Campaign partnered with more than 3,200 organizations to highlight the importance of public emergency preparedness throughout September.

Coalition Members during NPM share preparedness information with their members, customers, employees and communities.

Throughout the year, the *Ready* Campaign promotes individual emergency preparedness. *Ready* is a national public service advertising campaign, produced in partnership with The Advertising Council, which is designed to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks.

The Campaign's Web sites ([www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) and [listo.gov](http://listo.gov)) and toll-free numbers (1-800-BE-READY and 1-888-SE-LISTO) provide Americans with free emergency preparedness information.

In recognition of NPM, ODHH will be posting new materials related to emergency preparedness on the ODHH website, including resource sheets and videos in ASL. Visit <http://odhh.md.gov/ep.html> for updates.

*"This year will focus on changing perceptions about emergency preparedness and helping Americans understand what it truly means to be Ready."*

## IRS Produces ARRA Videos in ASL

The Internal Revenue Service has announced the availability of video and audio products to help taxpayers take full advantage of the 2009 tax provisions in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The IRS has launched a YouTube video site and an iTunes podcast site to better serve taxpayers.

People can visit the video site at [www.youtube.com/irsvideos](http://www.youtube.com/irsvideos) to view information about the Recovery, tax tips and how-to videos.

These videos will be in English, Spanish, American Sign Language and other languages.

The YouTube focus will be on the provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Videos will highlight the \$8,000 first-time homebuyer's credit for those who purchase a house this year, the

sales or excise tax deduction on new car purchases and the expanded credits for education and energy conservation.

The IRS YouTube channel will debut with seven Recovery videos in English and ASL and eight in Spanish. Also, included will be a video on using the IRS Withholding Calculator. Many workers received the Making Work Pay tax credit in April through their tax withholding at work. However, people who have more than one job or working spouses should especially check their withholding to ensure neither too much nor too little is being withheld. People can use the calculator to help determine if they should make adjustments.



IRS Videos in ASL



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Lieutenant Governor

**Lisa H. Kornberg**  
Director

**Julie Anne Schafer**  
Editor

# ODHH on the Move

## September 2009

*Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Quarterly Meeting*  
Tuesday, September 1, 2-5 PM  
MDOT Headquarters  
Hanover, MD

*Deaf Awareness Day at the National Aquarium—Baltimore*  
Saturday, September 12, 9-3:30 PM  
National Aquarium in Baltimore  
Baltimore, MD

*Dorchester County Veteran Muster*  
Saturday, September 19, 10 AM-3 PM  
Sailwinds Park  
Cambridge, MD



\*\* Please note that ODHH will be closed on 9/4 for furloughs and 9/7 in observance of Labor Day\*\*

## October 2009

*Brown Bag Lunch for Professionals in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community*  
Friday, October 16, 12 AM—2 PM  
Workforce & Technology Center  
Baltimore, MD

*Federal Executive Board's 22nd Annual Disability Employment and Awareness Training Conference*  
Thursday, October 19  
Martin's West  
Baltimore, MD



\*\* Please note that ODHH will be closed on 10/12 in observance of Columbus Day\*\*

## Governor Outlines \$454 Million in Budget Cuts

Last week, Governor O'Malley presented more than \$450 million in budget reductions to Maryland's Board of Public Works. These actions are the second step in addressing a projected budget shortfall of more than \$700 million for Fiscal Year 2010, and bring the total amount of reduced spending and budget cuts under the O'Malley-Brown Administration to over \$4.3 billion.

"These are not easy decisions. Just as families, businesses, and individuals across Maryland struggle to find ways to tighten their belts, our state government must do more with less," said Governor O'Malley. "Our citizens expect and deserve a government that works, and in spite of the most severe recession in a generation we've been working to reform our State government to make it more efficient and effective."

The budget actions focus on over \$210 million in reductions to local aid, a furlough and salary reduction plan for state employees, and reductions to state agencies, protecting entirely investments made in Maryland public schools. General fund support for public education has increased nearly \$700 million since

FY07, while spending for the remainder of the Operating Budget has decreased more than \$1 billion.

Budget reductions presented to the Board of Public Works included \$17 million in savings from the elimination of over 360 state positions, including 205 filled positions. The furlough and salary reduction plan, estimated to save approximately \$75 million, prevents the layoff of about 1,500 additional state employees.

In July, over \$280 million in budget actions were unanimously approved by the Board of Public Works. These cuts represent the first incidence in at least thirty years that state spending will be less than it was three years ago.

Despite historically challenging economic times, Maryland remains poised to come through this national recession more quickly than other states. Maryland is home to one of America's most highly skilled workforces, holds an unemployment rate consistently 20 percent below the national average, and is one of only seven states to defend a highly coveted Triple A bond rating.



Deaf Awareness Week is the last full week (Sunday through Saturday) of September, in commemoration of the first World Congress of the Deaf held that week in 1951.

The National Association of the Deaf (NAD, USA) participates in the International Week of the Deaf (also called Deaf Awareness Week), initiated by the World Federation of the Deaf, to celebrate the culture, heritage, and language unique to deaf people of the world.

For more information, visit <http://www.nad.org/issues/american-sign-language/deaf-awareness-week>.