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**GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF THE
DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**THE GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
AND THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT ANNOUNCE
LAUNCH OF STATEWIDE VISUAL COMMUNICATION SERVICES CONTRACT**

BALTIMORE, MD (December 17, 2013)—On January 1, 2014, the State of Maryland will launch its statewide Visual Communication Services (VCS) contract to provide sign language interpreters and computer-assisted real time transcription (CART) to its staff and constituents. Last year, the Maryland Department of Budget and Management (DBM) issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to providers of sign language interpreters and CART services. The RFP process is now complete and the list of regional/statewide awardees has been posted on the DBM website. The awarded contracts will be for three years with options for two one-year renewals. The VCS contract includes four services: on-site sign language interpreters, remote sign language interpreters, on-site CART, and remote CART.

“It is significant that the State recognizes the importance of meeting the communication needs of all its residents, including those who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind,” ODHH Executive Director Lisa Kornberg said. “Creating a statewide contract provides a vehicle to ensure State agencies can address these critically needed services.”

Aside from being available for use by all State of Maryland agencies, the VCS contract may also be used by Maryland local governments, many not-for-profit organizations, and some governments outside of Maryland. While the contract is not mandatory, the use of services through the VCS contract will offer both cost savings and improved quality. All of the vendors are required to use interpreters and transcribers who are licensed and/or certified either locally or nationally. It is the hope of the Department that this new contract will make it easier for State personnel and others to request and provide the appropriate accommodation. Those looking to obtain services through the VCS contract may do so starting now for assignments occurring after January 1, 2014 at:

<http://www.dbm.maryland.gov/contractors/swcontracts/Pages/VCSContractHome.aspx>