# Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

### Annual Report Fiscal Year 2014





#### Mission

ODHH represents the Governor and his goal of promoting equal access for all Marylanders by providing expertise that enhances the general welfare of Maryland's deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind residents.

#### Vision

All Maryland citizens who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind will have equal and full access to resources, services, and opportunities for participation in all aspects of community life. STATE OF MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



MARTIN O'MALLEY GOVERNOR STATE HOUSE 100 STATE CIRCLE

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ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1925



#### A MESSAGE FROM GOVERNOR MARTIN O'MALLEY

Dear Friends:

Welcome to the 2014 Annual Report prepared by the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH).

In our State, there is no such thing as a spare Marylander. ODHH remains a steadfast contributor to our Administration's vision of *Moving Maryland Forward* by working to create progress. In the last year, ODHH continued to reach out to federal, state, and local agencies to provide training about the communication access needs of people who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind. At the same time, they responded to 557 requests for information and referral services. With ODHH as a valuable resource, Marylanders can have more access to communication, employment, public safety tools, and more.

To name just a few accomplishments of Fiscal Year 2014, ODHH, with the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, co-hosted the second annual National Disability Employment Awareness Month workshops for deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind job-seekers. ODHH also hosted its fifth annual Legislative Awareness Day in Annapolis with higher attendance numbers than ever. Our State, through the joint efforts of ODHH and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), launched its statewide Visual Communication Services (VCS) contract to provide communication access to its staff and constituents. As you will see in this Report, ODHH also launched its hospital kit program and deaf/hard of hearing driver card program as well. Maryland is proud to have made these contributions to the quality of life of its deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind citizens.

With these tools, we can work together to ensure that the deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind community has opportunities to grow and thrive. Thank you for your commitment to promoting equal access for all Marylanders.

Sincerely,

Governor





Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

STATE OF MARYLAND GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING



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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

August 2014

Dear Citizens of Maryland,

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) is pleased to present our Fiscal Year 2014 (FY 2014) Annual Report, which covers the activities and accomplishments of ODHH and the Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MACDHH) from July 1, 2013 until June 30, 2014.

FY 2014 was an exciting year for ODHH. In January, we moved to a new office! Once we settled in, ODHH held an Open House to exhibit our new office space to state agencies, non-profit organizations, and the deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind community. We welcome you to come visit our new office when you can! ODHH is also proud to announce that we have gone "green" by digitizing all our data collection forms.

In addition, we welcomed Jennifer Mari Gunderson as our new Outreach and Communication Coordinator, while bidding farewell to Lisa Jordan and Sam P. Lenox. We thank Lisa and Sam for their contributions during their time here and wish them the best of luck. We also welcomed Estie Kruglak as our new Special Assistant. In addition, we would like to thank our state and community partners for their support that kept our Office going during this transitional time. The accomplishments of FY 2014 are as much theirs as they are ours.

Just to name a few of these accomplishments, the State of Maryland, through the joint efforts of ODHH and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), launched its statewide Visual Communication Services (VCS) contract to provide communication access to its staff and constituents. ODHH also launched its hospital kit program and deaf/ hard of hearing driver card program as well. You can learn more about these ventures and other accomplishments in this Annual Report.

We are grateful for the leadership and vision of the O'Malley-Brown Administration and for their continued support to ODHH, MACDHH, and the communities we serve.

Respectfully,

Alse N. Kenber

Lisa H. Kornberg Executive Director, ODHH



#### **ODHH STAFF**



#### From L to R : Outreach & Communication Coordinator Jennifer Mari Gunderson, Deputy Director Zainab Alkebsi, Executive Director Lisa H. Kornberg and Special Assistant Estie Kruglak

#### **Our Goals:**

ODHH has three broad goals:

- Serve as a resource for federal, state, and local government agencies;
- Provide information and support to people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind; and
- Assist in the development of policies and programs that improve the lives of Marylanders who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind.



#### **Our Responsibilities:**

ODHH was created to:

- Serve as a coordinating agency that reports directly to the Governor's Office;
- Promote the general welfare of deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind individuals in Maryland;
- Support the development of policies, regulations, and programs that will benefit the communities we serve;
- Improve communication access to existing services and programs;
- Advise state government and the General Assembly on the needs of deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind individuals; and
- Coordinate with other units of federal, state, and local governments about the services provided to deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind Marylanders.

#### **Our Staff:**

In addition to the office staff, ODHH welcomes interns from area colleges to enhance available resources and help strengthen students' job skills by integrating education with related practical work experiences. Though their work often happens "behind the scenes," these interns make significant contributions to ODHH's goal of promoting equal access for all Marylanders. The ODHH staff would like to say a special thank you to the interns who worked at ODHH during FY 2014: Samantha Brooks, Asia Brown, Adriana Featherstone, LaToya Jayson, Estie Kruglak, Leah McCloskey, and Darrin Smith. We appreciate all your help.

#### **Non-Departmental Legislation**

At the conclusion of the 2014 Maryland Legislation Session, Governor Martin O'Malley signed into law several bills that affect the deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind community. During session, ODHH provided technical assistance and information on these bills.

#### Senate Bill 103 - Public Health Programs for Children - Renaming and Modernization

This bill establishes reforms for the statewide newborn screening program, now known as the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program.

#### House Bill 653 - Education - Deaf Cultural Digital Library

This bill requires the Division of Library Development and Services in the State Department of Education to establish and coordinate the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library.

#### <u>Senate Bill446 / House Bill 396 - Commission on Accessibility Concepts in Computer Science, Information</u> <u>Systems, and Information Technology Programs in Higher Education</u>

Both bills establish a commission to study web accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

#### **Program and Policy Development Highlights:**

#### **ODHH Staff**

Participated in a number of Committees, Task Forces, and Councils including:

- $\Rightarrow$  Alliance
- ⇒ Deaf Visitors and Immigrants Self-Advocacy, Inc. (Deaf VISA)
- ⇒ Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) --Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Council
- $\Rightarrow$  Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD) Board Meeting
- ⇒ Interagency Aging Council (IAC)
- ⇒ Governor's Advisory Board (GABTR) for Telecommunications Relay
- ⇒ Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)—State Coordinating Committee on Human Services Transportation
- ⇒ Maryland Commission on Disabilities
- ⇒ Mayor's Commission on Disabilities
- ⇒ Everyman Theatre's Accessibility Committee
- Coordinated with Department of Aging for integration of programs for Deaf seniors.
- Participated in accessible Emergency Preparation testing for Howard County.
- Submitted Comments to the Federal Communications Commission regarding closed-captioning.
- Developed, produced, and distributed Deaf/Hard of Hearing Driver Identification Cards.
- Launched Maryland Statewide Visual Communication Services contract on Jan 1, 2014
- Kicked-off trainings to facilitate communication access for deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind patients via hospital kits that ODHH developed.
- Provided technical assistance to DHMH concerning departmental legislation

#### Fifth Annual Legislative Awareness Day

On February 17, 2014, ODHH hosted its Fifth Annual Legislative Awareness Day. Over 80 people traveled to Annapolis for the day's events - our highest attendance ever! The day included an advocacy training from ODHH Executive Director Lisa Kornberg and a voting rights presentation by Virginia Knowlton Marcus, Executive Director at Maryland Disability Law Center (MDLC). Participants then chose between a guided tour of the Maryland State House or a Scavenger Hunt with prizes.

Lt. Governor Brown presented keynote remarks during our Award Ceremony. ODHH recognized Senator Jennie Forehand and Senator Allan Kittleman with certificates of gratitude for their support of the deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind community. Julie Anne Schafer, Esq. received the Fourth Annual Kelby Brick Community Leadership Award for her tireless efforts and contributions to the community.

Participants were also offered the opportunity to meet individually with their legislators. At the General Assembly meeting at the end of the day, ODHH was awarded a Proclamation in honor of its Fifth Annual Legislative Awareness Day.









#### INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

One of the many ways which ODHH provides information and referral services to all levels of government, private entities, community stakeholders, and constituents is through our constituent services program. ODHH staff receive and respond to individual requests for information and assistance. Constituents constantly seek information on topics including financial assistance for hearing aids, locating American Sign Language (ASL) classes, communication access, legislation and policy, and more. We provide resources on how to access government support or how to file a complaint if an individual feels that s/he has been discriminated against because s/he is deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind. We also provide technical assistance for government agencies, private entities, and advocacy organizations.

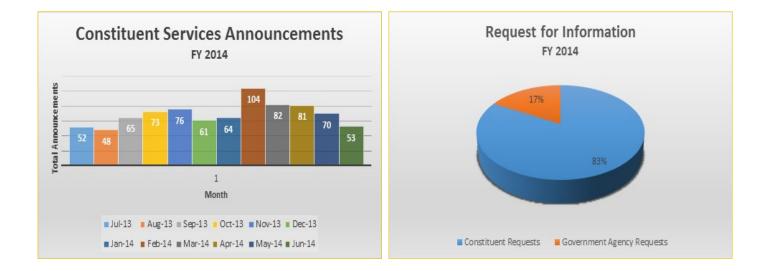
In FY 2014, requests for information from government agencies and requests from constituents and stakeholders increased to a total of 557 such requests. ODHH recognizes that the number of individual requests for information and support services it receives is an integral part of the Office's operation; we are committed to the delivery of timely information and referral. ODHH staff strive to meet or exceed timeliness standards for responding to requests. It is the Office's goal to respond within the stated guidelines to 90% of all requests received. In FY 2014, Office staff responded to 96% of email, phone, and in-person requests within the mandated two business days and 100% of written inquiries within the mandated ten days. This is a significant accomplishment, given that ODHH was only able to reach the 81% mark last year.



17 0 18 94 Gui **Did You Know?** It is National Interpreter Appreciation Day ODHH wants to sincerely than interpreters in the state of Maryland for their constant volvement in the Deaf and Har of Hearing community. Join Our Mailing List Contact Us The ODHH Team ryland Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing 2117 E. Redwood Street Suite 910 Baltimore, MD 21202 Vorce 410-767-5290 VP 443-453-5954 et al: gov odhikmanyland gov feb: www.odhh.maryland.gov

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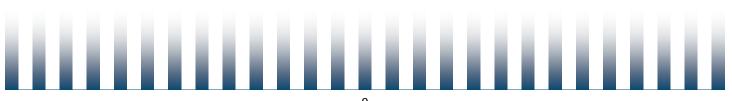
As part of the constituent services program, ODHH ensures that constituents, community stakeholders, and government agencies receive and disseminate information amongst each other. Every week, ODHH circulates pertinent announcements to an electronic distribution list as a service to the deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind community. In FY 2014, ODHH sent out 829 Community Service Announcements, as reflected in the following table. This is a huge increase from last year's 517 announcements.



#### Website and Monthly Bulletin:

ODHH continues to produce and distribute a monthly bulletin with relevant information for our stakeholders. Each edition of the bulletin is fully accessible to the deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind communities. Our website is accessible and all bulletins are captioned and available in American Sign Language (ASL).

In an effort to remain current and relevant, ODHH updates its website regularly. During FY 2014, there were a total of 24 updates to the ODHH website which represents an increase from last year's 20 website updates. In FY 2014, ODHH also began the process of a website re-design, which will be launched in FY 2015.



#### TRAINING AND EDUCATION

#### **Training Highlights:**

ODHH conducts trainings to facilitate an increased awareness about accessibility. These trainings allow ODHH to reach all levels of government, stakeholders, constituents, and nongovernmental entities. In FY 2014, ODHH provided 44 trainings; including:

- ⇒ Sensitivity and Awareness about communication accessibility rights to area hospitals in exchange for hospital kits;
- ⇒ Awareness of Title II under the Americans with Disabilities Act to State, local, and campus police, including sensitivity training on diversity in the community and strategies for effective communication;
- ⇒ Self-advocacy training to community members in Hagerstown and Annapolis;
- ⇒ Communication accessibility to employees of Hilton Hotel in preparation for Deaf Seniors of America (DSA) conference;
- ⇒ Employer responsibilities and compliance with ADA, as well as communication strategies, to employees at MontgomeryWorks in anticipation of employment workshop;
- ⇒ Departmental mandates and communication options to staff at the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions (MPCTC);
- ⇒ Sensitivity and Awareness training to Southern Maryland First Responders; Baltimore City Housing employees; ADA Coordinators; students at Towson University about Seniors, Aging, and Hearing Loss; Johns Hopkins University about Behavioral Health, and more;
- ⇒ "Loop Baltimore" by presenting at Maryland Academy of Audiologists about Technology and Looping;
- $\Rightarrow$  Hearing loss support for the aging at Charleston Retirement Community;
- ⇒ Information "About ODHH" at HLAA—Frederick, UMBC Deaf Culture Class, Parent Connection, and Independent Living Centers, and more.

### 

#### Launch of Visual Communications Services Contract

On January 1, 2014, through the joint efforts of ODHH and the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), the State of Maryland launched its statewide Visual Communication Services (VCS) contract to provide communication access to its staff and constituents. The awarded contracts are 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. 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 offers 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. Those looking to obtain services through the VCS contract may do so at:

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

#### **Technical Assistance Highlights:**

ODHH provides technical assistance for communication accessibility. Technical Assistance includes efforts made by ODHH to support the economic, social and political development of Maryland's deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind community. We accomplish this through the review, assessment and evaluation of policies, procedures and practices with relation to the provision of effective services to our constituent community. In addition, we remain involved in the ongoing review of and involvement with federal, state and local legislative initiatives. Finally, ODHH will provide communication accessibility assessments for both the public and private sector. In FY 2014, ODHH engaged in 21 instances of technical assistance, including:

- Collaboration with the Department of Budget and Management on the Visual Communications Services Contract (see sidebar);
- Discussions with the Department of Public Safety and Corrections related to accessibility issues in
- prisons;
- Provision of support to the Mayor's Commission on Disabilities, Visit Baltimore, Hilton, and the Deaf Seniors America (DSA) organization for the DSA Conference in Baltimore City;
- Assistance to Deaf Visitors and Immigrants Self-Advocacy (Deaf VISA) in navigating accessibility issues in filing 501(c)(3) paperwork with the State;
- Meetings with Howard County advocates to discuss employment discrimination issues;
- Education and informational support to the National Aquarium for their Deaf Awareness Day;
- Captioning of the Governor's weather emergency livestream feeds;
- Offering feedback to the Federal Communications Commission on accessibility;
- Meeting with community partners to explore increasing support and services to members of the
- DeafBlind community;
- Providing support to medical providers in navigating accessibility issues with patients;
- Collaborating with Everyman Theatre to develop strategies for accessibility for their May/June
- production;
- Offering Maryland state agencies information to promote awareness and training of YouTube

• captioning procedures; and

• Ongoing discussions with Department of Aging (DoA) on needs of older Americans.

#### ODHH and DLLR Partner for Second Annual NDEAM Workshop

Continuing its exciting partnership with the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, ODHH co-hosted two successful workshops in October for jobseekers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind during National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). Held each October, NDEAM is a national campaign that raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. The theme for October 2013 was "Because We Are EQUAL to the Task." Once again, over 40 Marylanders were able to participate in the workshops and gain valuable job-seeking knowledge and strategies. ODHH and DLLR have already made arrangements to host the third annual NDEAM event in FY 2015.



#### **Town Hall Meetings:**

ODHH is required to hold at least two public Town Hall Meetings each year to solicit public comments on the quality of state services and programs affecting deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind individuals, ODHH-related functions and operations, and any other issues that affect the deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind community. ODHH exceeded this by hosting four Town Hall Meetings in FY 2014. These meetings were held at:

- $\Rightarrow$  Hearing and Speech Agency, Baltimore City, September 27, 2013
- ⇒ Silver Spring Public Library, Silver Spring, March 22, 2014
- ⇒ DeafNet Deaf Awareness Day, Hagerstown, May 9, 2014
- ⇒ Eastern Shore Community Event, Parsonsburg, June 21, 2014

Some of the issues raised by attendees included the workforce shortage of qualified interpreters; lack of employment opportunities for deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind citizens; and self-advocacy. At FY 2013's Town Hall Meetings, issues raised included medical interpreting, law enforcement, and self-advocacy. ODHH addressed these concerns in FY 2014 by developing hospital kits and training hospital staff (see sidebar), increasing the number of Sensitivity and Awareness training sessions for law enforcement, and conducting self-advocacy trainings around the State. ODHH also partnered with the Maryland Disability Law Center to conduct a self-advocacy training at our Fifth Annual Legislative Awareness Day (see page 7) as well as at our Advisory Council meeting.



Helping to Facilitate Communication Access in the Medical Setting

In order to facilitate more effective communication between deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind patients and medical personnel, ODHH developed hospital communication kits. Each kit contains supplemental tools for communication and are not in any way to be used to replace qualified interpreters. Instead, these are to be used to enhance patient and medical personnel communication. To receive these hospital kits, each hospital must participate in ODHH's Sensitivity and Awareness training sessions. In FY 2014, ODHH kicked off the hospital kit training program and will continue this project into FY 2015.

#### **Testimonial:**

I would like to extend our appreciation for the outstanding presentation to our leadership team and staff members on avenues healthcare providers can take to improve communication and services for the Deaf and hard of hearing population. I have received numerous emails from leaders who were very appreciative of your education and they extended many compliments for the manner in which you conveyed the information. Your creativity, energy and "real-life" experiences allowed staff to become engaged and truly understand the deficits faced by the deaf population. Our Director of Education will be contacting you in the fall to establish another educational session due to the positive feedback that was received. We look forward to meeting with you at that time! Thank you.

Charles Gizara, MS, BSN, RN, CCM Director Clinical Operations

### **Outreach Highlights:**

- Provided support to area events, such as Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) Walk4Hearing, Deaf VISA, Telecommunications for the Deaf (TDI) Open House, TDI – ALDA Joint Conference, Community College of Baltimore County Interpreting Program 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, and Mid-Atlantic Deaf Festival.
- Participated in "Brown Bag Lunches" so that professionals can share information and resources with each other.
- Provided logistical support during Maryland State of Emergency weather-related situations.



Exhibits:

#### **Deaf/Hard of Hearing Driver Identification Cards** ⇒ Hearing and Speech Agency—Deaf Awareness Week **DRIVER** is DEAF ⇒ Baltimore Aquarium – Deaf Awareness Week $\Rightarrow$ Baltimore Senior Expo $\Rightarrow$ Maryland Association of the Deaf Conference ⇒ Deaf Expo – Maryland School for the Deaf In FY 2015, ODHH developed and produced driver $\Rightarrow$ Deaf Seniors of America identification cards for Marylanders who are deaf and hard of hearing. In addition to identifying the driver as deaf or hard $\Rightarrow$ Americans with Disabilities Act Celebration of hearing, the cards include communication tips for police $\Rightarrow$ Literacy Workshop officers. ODHH began distributing the cards at outreach ⇒ Baltimore County Association of Senior Citizen events and also mailing them upon request. **Organizations** These cards are very popular; our office continues ⇒ Maryland State Steering to get requests for driver identification cards! Committee Conference 13

#### MARYLAND ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

The Council meets four times annually to advise the Office on issues facing individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind. During FY 2014, the Council met on the following dates:

- $\Rightarrow$  September 11, 2013
- $\Rightarrow$  December 11, 2013
- $\Rightarrow$  March 12, 2014
- $\Rightarrow$  June 18, 2014

Since its inception, the Council has had three subcommittees that continue to meet separately during the year to focus on special issues. In June 2014, the Council added a fourth subcommittee to focus on Maryland's DeafBlind community. The Council's subcommittees accomplished the following:

#### Behavioral Health Subcommittee:

The Behavioral Health Subcommittee continued its work with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in preparation and implementation of the collaborative merger between the Mental Hygiene Administration and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration to the Behavioral Health Administration. The committee met with the Deputy Secretary of Behavioral Health, Dr. Gayle Jordan-Randolph to develop strategies for ensuring that all deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind constituents, including children and youth, adults and seniors, have access to the full range of services provided by the Department.

#### **Education Subcommittee:**

The Education Subcommittee hosted an exciting event at the Frederick Keys in Frederick. The Deaf Awareness event was held on Tuesday, May 13, 2014. The threat of severe storms didn't keep families and students from all around the State from participating in the event. The Education Subcommittee continues to work on planning other social events for families and is currently planning a Leadership Training for transitioning students in High School to be held in FY15.

#### **Communication Access Subcommittee:**

In the past year, the Communication Access Subcommittee has provided advice, feedback and support to state and local agencies on a number of access issues, including the need for accessible services for seniors, the importance of employment opportunities for deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind Marylanders, and advising local agencies on how to improve communication access for drop-in services. The subcommittee has also been working on connecting resources and educating the public regarding smoke detector installation programs. In FY 15, the subcommittee will be hosting a forum during Fire Safety week for current participating counties to educate the public about their programs.

#### **Deafblind Subcommittee:**

The Deafblind Subcommittee held its inaugural meeting on June 25, 2014. The purpose of this subcommittee is to become familiar with current programs and policies and create opportunities for increased deafblind participation in all aspects of community life. Its goal is to be effective in taking the first step in trying to educate state agencies, non-profits, schools, and partners about the unique needs of the deafblind population and to increase awareness, understanding, support and opportunities for the deafblind community.



#### MARYLAND ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

#### Agency Representatives:

Maryland State Department of Education **Kathleen Heck** Maryland Department of Human Resources Carl Bailey (vacant as of June 2014) Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene **Keneithia Taylor** Maryland Commission on Civil Rights **Cleveland Horton II** Maryland Department of Transportation **Robin Underwood** Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Sue McLean (appointed June 2014) Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation Donni Turner (appointed June 2014) Maryland School for the Deaf Stacey Bundy Maryland Department of Aging **Dakota Burgess** 



Underwood



Ворр



McLean



Dowling



Bundy



Black



Turner



Bailey



Jenkins



Morales





Taylor



Burgess



No.

Heck





#### **Community Members:**

Citizen/Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Casey Harris Charm Smith Nancy Jenkins Mickey Morales

Vacancy

DeafBlind Representative Ann Black

<u>Citizen with Special Knowledge</u> Lance Fischer (appointed June 2014)

> Private Agency Amy Bopp

Parent Cheri Dowling



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