

Statement

The process of developing regulations for the Maryland Sign Language Interpreters Act has been paused. During this time, a working group comprised of stakeholders across communities, industries, and sectors will convene to develop a legislative proposal that will address statutory concerns that could not be sufficiently addressed through the notice and comment rulemaking process.

FAQ

1. Why are the regulations being paused?
 - a. A range of communities and stakeholders have expressed concern and confusion about the requirements of forthcoming sign language interpreter regulations. In order to ensure that the Maryland Sign Language Interpreters Act achieves the intended purpose of providing high quality interpreters to members of the Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard of Hearing communities, the development of regulations will be paused until after the 2026 Maryland General Assembly session so that all parties can meet and develop a collaborative solution.
2. What will happen to the regulations that the Board voted on in September 2025?
 - a. The September 2025 draft regulations and the comments that were used to develop them will be considered by the working group. The September 2025 draft regulations will not be posted for public comment at this time.
3. What are the next steps?
 - a. In coordination with the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) and the State Board of Sign Language Interpreters (SBSLI), the Governor's Office will convene a working group of stakeholders and advocates to review proposals for statutory changes and develop consensus around recommendations. We have been in communication with stakeholders about participation in the working group, including the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), Maryland Hospital Association (MHA), Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD), Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM), and Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE). For more information about the working group, please contact hannah.dier@maryland.gov.
4. Which regulations or statutes will be changed, removed, or deleted?
 - a. The workgroup, including SBSLI and ODHH representation, will convene to decide what changes will be made.
5. What is the timeline for the working group to develop recommendations and for the Board to adopt regulations?
 - a. The working group will begin meeting in November and intends to develop consensus around recommendations ahead of the MGA session, which begins on January 14th. The Board will resume its work developing regulations in the spring of 2026, after the MGA session ends.
6. Will the effective date for Sign Language Interpreter Licenses remain January 1, 2026, or will it be changed? If so, what will the new date be?
 - a. The Maryland Sign Language Interpreters Act required licensing to begin by January 1, 2025. The Board administratively voted to postpone the deadline by one year. The working group will propose additional extension of the licensing deadline in order to allow time for legislation to be considered during the 2026 MGA session.
7. Will there be another 30-day public comment period before the regulations are adopted?

- a. The Board will resume its work developing regulations in the spring of 2026, after the MGA session ends. The Board will publish the regulations for public comment.
- 8. Should we apply for our licenses through the portal now, or should we wait?
 - a. We ask that applicants who have not yet applied for licensure wait to apply until after the 2026 MGA session. Please continue to check the SBSLI webpage for additional updates.
- 9. What should I do if I have already applied and paid? Can I receive a refund?
 - a. Applicants who have already completed the application and paid the application fee through the portal have the option of either continuing to keep their application in “pending” status, or canceling their application and requesting a refund. If an applicant requests a refund, the applicant will need to reapply for licensure in 2026 (exact dates dependent on forthcoming legislation). In order to cancel your application and request a refund, please contact ODHH.