

## Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and DeafBlind Data

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The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Division of Special Education (DSE) received a data request on December 23, 2025 from the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (ODHH) requesting updated data and information on how the Agency collects and uses data regarding students who are Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and DeafBlind, as well as employee data. This collaborative brief addresses the questions sent to MSDE by ODHH. Additionally, ODHH requested data disaggregated by age, race, primary communication method, service utilization, and accessibility-related metrics. In order to fulfill this request, MSDE updated the May 1, 2025 memo to ODHH to include the most updated preliminary data (Attached to this document). Additionally, MSDE's Special Services Information System (SSIS) manual is included for ease of access to see all of the data MSDE collects for students with disabilities in Maryland. If you have additional questions, please reach out to Dr. Paige Bradford ([paige.bradford@maryland.gov](mailto:paige.bradford@maryland.gov)).

### **HOW DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION IDENTIFY AND DEFINE INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE DEAF, DEAFBLIND, OR HARD OF HEARING, INCLUDING COMMUNICATION NEEDS?**

Eligibility for students from birth through age twenty-one is determined through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) eligibility process. IEP teams meet to get consent to assess a student. The student is then assessed and the IEP team meets to review data and make a decision about the student's eligibility for special education services and under which category they will be served. This process is completed every three years to determine continued eligibility under the same category, continued eligibility under a different category, or dismissal from services.

### **WHAT DATA DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION COLLECT ON DEAF, DEAFBLIND, AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS, AND AT WHAT POINTS IN SERVICE DELIVERY IS IT COLLECTED OR UPDATED?**

When found eligible as a student with disability, one of three disability categories can be selected for a student that is deaf or hard of hearing. They are: DEAF, DEAF BLINDNESS, and HEARING IMPAIRMENT. In addition, data collected for all students with disabilities include student record elements (date of birth, gender, race/ethnicity, least restrictive environment, grade, etc.) and service record elements (service provider, nature of service, duration of service, frequency of service, etc.).

### **HOW DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION TRACK ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS, FULFILLMENT, AND UNMET NEEDS?**

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) ensures compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) through its Office of Equity Assurance and Compliance (OEAC), which serves as the agency's Equal Employment Opportunity Office and houses the ADAAA Coordinator. Upon receiving a reasonable accommodation request, MSDE engages in an interactive process and provides accommodations unless doing so would cause undue hardship, in accordance with state policy and law.

OEAC maintains a confidential ADAAA tracker that records the employee's name, job classification, requested accommodation, and status. At the close of each fiscal year, MSDE submits an anonymized ADAAA report to the Office of the Statewide EEO Coordinator, detailing whether accommodations were approved, denied, or remain pending.

MSDE also uses an Emergency Management Self-Identification Form, allowing employees to voluntarily identify accommodations they may need during a building evacuation. This information is securely tracked and accessible only to OEAC and the Emergency Management Coordinator.

Additionally, MSDE is committed to digital accessibility. The Office of Information Technology's Accessibility Branch (OIT-AB) ensures all web content and documents meet accessibility standards prior to publication or remediation. These efforts are tracked by OIT-AB.

MSDE is committed to ensuring that the services we offer to constituents are accessible using a universal design framework. This includes both physical and digital accessibility. However, MSDE staff are directed to provide notice to constituents that ADA are available and identify a contact to request such services in advance of any events, where possible. Based on the limitations stated, MSDE staff works with the requesting party and/or their representative to provide reasonable accommodations so that constituents have equal access to services.

### **WHAT OUTCOMES DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION TRACK FOR DEAF, DEAFBLIND, AND HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS, AND HOW IS THIS DATA USED TO IDENTIFY OR ADDRESS DISPARITIES?**

For pre-school aged children, MSDE's Division of Special Education collects Child Outcome Summary (COS) data for students with disabilities. These metrics focus on three key developmental areas: positive social-emotional skills, acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and use of appropriate behavior to meet needs. Students receive entry and exit Child Outcome Summary ratings on a scale of 1 to 7, measuring the child's development related to his/her same-age peers.

For school-aged children, MSDE tracks assessment data for all students. MCAP data are collected by MSDE's Division of Assessment and Accountability and a student-level file is shared with the Division of Special Education on an annual basis.

Both Child Outcome Summary and Assessment data are disaggregated and compared across subgroups and analyzed to identify disparities.

### **WHAT DATA DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION COLLECT RELATED TO DEAF, DEAFBLIND, AND HARD OF HEARING EMPLOYEES AND INTERNAL ACCESSIBILITY OR CULTURAL COMPETENCY CAPACITY?**

Employees are not required to disclose their disability status. Consequently, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) does not collect this data unless an accommodation is requested. In such cases, the data is tracked as outlined in the previous response.

With respect to internal cultural competency, the Office of Equity Assurance and Compliance (OEAC) provides anti-harassment and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) training to agency units and tracks attendance. These sessions include self-check evaluations and interactive activities to gauge participant understanding, as well as evaluations to gather feedback.

Furthermore, OEAC, in collaboration with the Office of Information Technology's Accessibility Branch, developed the *Providing Accessible Services Guide*. This resource educates staff on delivering and obtaining accessible services, including time-based and real-time captioning, large print materials, and best practices for working with service animals and notifying the public of their right to request accommodations.

### **HOW DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION SHARE OR COORDINATE DEAF, DEAFBLIND, AND HARD OF HEARING DATA WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OR OVERSIGHT ENTITIES?**

MSDE coordinates with a number of other state agencies to plan and support outcomes for students with disabilities.

**ARE THERE ANY CHALLENGES YOUR ORGANIZATION FACES IN COLLECTING OR USING DEAF, DEAFBLIND, AND HARD OF HEARING DATA, AS WELL AS SUPPORT NEEDED TO IMPROVE DATA QUALITY?**

MSDE does not experience any challenges in collecting or using data and does not require any support.