



# February 2026 Newsletter Issues 9 & 10

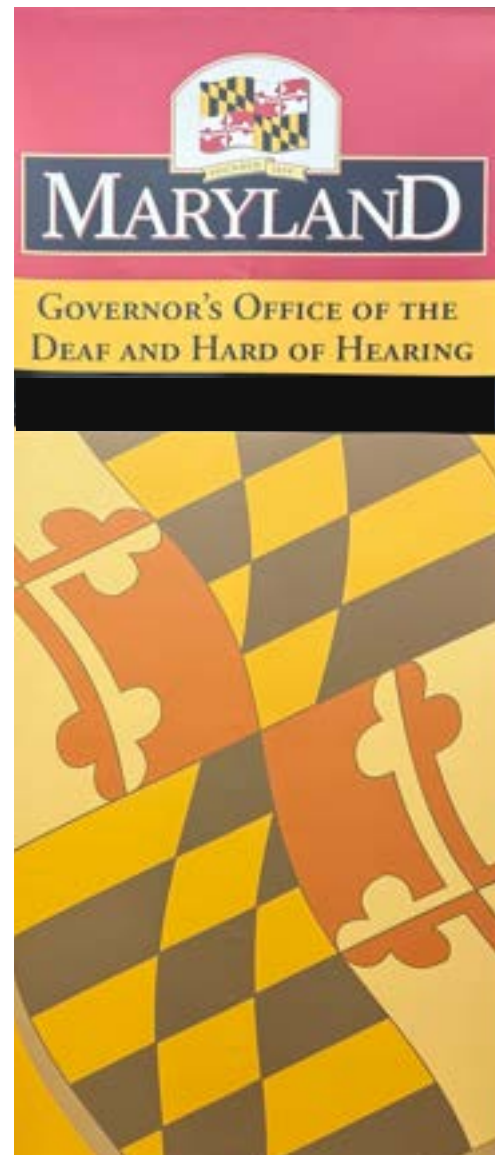
*Usherla DeBerry* | Director

**Issued February 11 and February 28, 2026**



You can find our brief ASL Updates on  
YouTube or our Social Media  
@MDGOVODHH.

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# GOVERNOR MOORE February RECAP



## Economic Development

### Downtown Frederick Hotel Groundbreaking

- Governor Wes Moore joined local leaders to break ground on the Marriott Downtown Frederick at Carroll Creek. Backed by \$23 million in state investment, the project will create approximately 200 jobs, generate over \$4 million annually in tax revenue, and drive long-term economic growth in Frederick's tourism sector.

## Fiscal Accountability

### Strengthening Audit Oversight

- The Governor directed cabinet agencies to enhance audit resolution procedures to improve fiscal accountability. The proposed FY2027 budget includes \$24 million in targeted investments to modernize financial systems, address repeat audit findings, and strengthen fiscal leadership.

## Intergovernmental Affairs

### NGA Winter Meeting

- Serving as Vice Chair of the National Governor's Association, Governor Moore met with bipartisan leaders to advance workforce development, infrastructure security, economic growth, and public safety priorities.
- The Governor also issued a public statement regarding his un-invitation from the NGA bipartisan dinner, reaffirming his commitment to collaboration and partnership.

## New Appointments

### 2026 Green Bag Appointments Delivered

- The Moore-Miller Administration submitted its 2026 Green Bag appointments to the Maryland Senate, reinforcing its commitment to diverse leadership across state boards and commissions.

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# GODHH February Events

## NIC/BEI Study Table

On Saturday, February 14, 2026, at the Laurel Library, Outreach Interpreter Manager Tanéa Brown facilitated a Study Table to create a structured and focused learning environment for interpreters. This initiative supports the goals of HB 260 and advances the Moore–Miller Administration’s priorities of Connecting Marylanders to Jobs and ensuring Maryland is a State that Serves.

Upcoming sessions will be offered virtually on Tuesday, March 10, 2026, and in person on Saturday, March 14, 2026, in Laurel. For additional information or to express interest, please contact [gov.odhh@maryland.gov](mailto:gov.odhh@maryland.gov).



ID: Three smiling people pose closely together at the Laurel Branch Library.

## 2026 Legislative Session

Stay tuned for key hearings, priority bills, and ways to engage during the 90-day session! Our website will have bills we are monitoring, find them here:

Updates:

- The State Board of Sign Language Interpreter Bill (SB645) has been introduced to the General Assembly.
- Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Maryland Advisory Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing - Renaming (SB665/HB439)

GODHH extends appreciation to MACDHH, SBSLI, and the Workgroup for the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing for all their support this legislative session!



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# GODHH February Spotlights

## February is Black History Month!



**Ethel Gregory** was born in Alabama in 1934, where she spent her early years surrounded by a close-knit family and community. She attended the Alabama School for the Deaf. After graduating, Ethel worked in various fields, such as a cotton picker and farmer. She later moved to Detroit and New York in search of better job opportunities.

Ethel was a woman of faith, resilience, and deep devotion to those she loved. She later married Ulysses B. Gregory and moved to Maryland, where together they raised four children who remained the center of her world.

Gifted with skill as a seamstress, Ethel worked for a bridal company in Bladensburg, Maryland. She retired at age 55, after which she embraced a life filled with travel and caring for her family. At age 90, she took her first cruise—and she hasn't slowed down since.

**ID:** The words "Black History Month Spotlight" in red, yellow, and green stacked text at the top, with "February 2026" underneath in green. Ethel Gregory is pictured wearing a hat, glasses, a striped blazer, and a pearl necklace. She is holding a red folder open, displaying a Senatorial Citation from the Senate of Maryland.

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# GODHH February Spotlights

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**Fred Michael Beam** is a Deaf actor, dancer, director, visual artist, educator, and advocate whose career has significantly advanced Deaf performing arts and cultural inclusion.

He is one of the founding members of The Wild Zappers, an internationally recognized all-Deaf male dance company that blends rhythm, movement, and American Sign Language (ASL) to express music visually.

As a dancer, Beam has toured across the United States and internationally, captivating audiences and demonstrating that dance transcends sound.

As an actor, he has performed with prestigious organizations including the National Theatre of the Deaf (Connecticut), the Kennedy Center (Washington, D.C.), Arden Theatre Company (Philadelphia), Gallaudet University's Theatre Arts Department, and the National Technical Institute of the Deaf (Rochester, New York), among many others. He is widely recognized for his expressive storytelling and his powerful ability to communicate emotion through sign and movement.

Beyond the stage, Beam is also an accomplished visual artist whose work is inspired by Deaf culture and the beauty of signed communication.

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# GODHH February Spotlights

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**April Jackson-Woodard** (name sign: "A" with a repeated movement on the chin) is a Missouri native born and raised in a multi-generational Deaf family. Immersed in Deaf culture from birth, she brings lifelong cultural and linguistic fluency to her work. In 2018, she formally became a professional Deaf Interpreter. Currently a Marylander!

April specializes in a wide range of interpreting settings, with particular expertise in Black American Sign Language (BASL). Her work reflects a deep commitment to cultural authenticity, linguistic accuracy, and community empowerment. In addition to interpreting, she teaches ASL and interpreting courses and provides professional development workshops for agencies and organizations nationwide.

A sought-after presenter, April has shared her cultural insight and linguistic expertise at numerous conferences, contributing to meaningful conversations about Deaf culture, BASL, and interpreting practices.

Outside of her professional endeavors, April enjoys exercising, traveling, socializing, and spending quality time with her two beautiful Deaf children.

Website: [www.AprJacksASL.com](http://www.AprJacksASL.com)

# GODHH February Spotlights



**Dr. Akilah English** (she/her) is a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist for the District of Columbia Public Schools with over 15 years of experience in deaf education. She has taught elementary and middle school students across Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Massachusetts. Dr. English holds a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Gallaudet University, a Master of Science in Deaf Education from McDaniel College, and a PhD in Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership with a specialization in Minority and Urban Education from the University of Maryland–College Park. Her work centers on critical theories and pedagogies, anti-racist practice, and advancing equity for Black Deaf communities.

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**Shakira Reynoso** is a senior at Eleanor Roosevelt High School, where she takes Advanced Placement classes and proudly serves as president of the ASL Club.

She has been accepted to the Rochester Institute of Technology and is excited to pursue a future in computer technology.

**ID:** The words "Black History Month Spotlight" in red, yellow, and green stacked text at the top, with "February 2026" underneath in green. Shakira Reynoso is pictured gray coat and black glasses, standing in front of a mural that has the words "grow through what you go through."



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# MARCH 2026 NEWSLETTER ISSUES 11 AND 12 TO BE RELEASED MARCH 31, 2026.



**UNLOAD - CONNECT  
UNDERSTAND - EACH OTHER  
UNITY - TOGETHER**

*Coining the slogan, "nothing about us  
without us,"*



Working at the pleasure of the Moore/Miller Administration as they say, 'leave no one behind.'



**Governor Wes Moore**



**Lieutenant Governor  
Aruna Miller**

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