

# MARYLAND ADVISORY COUNCIL DEAF & HARD OF HEARING (MACDHH)

UPDATES FROM THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE DEAF AND  
HARD OF HEARING TEAM FROM JANUARY 2026 TO FEBRUARY  
2026



**Maryland**  
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF THE  
DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

March 2026 Issue #1 for  
MACDHH 3.6.2026 Meeting



## Director's Legislative & Community Engagement Report

As we move through the 2026 Legislative Session, I am pleased to share updates highlighting our advocacy, community engagement, and internal leadership efforts on behalf of Maryland's Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing (DDBHH) communities.

## Leadership & Operations

During this legislative season, our office has shifted to weekly team meetings to ensure timely responsiveness to emerging bills and stakeholder needs. Once session concludes, we will return to biweekly team meetings and monthly 1:1 supervisory meetings.

- Key leadership initiatives include:
- Providing mentorship to marginalized interpreters to support equity and professional advancement.
- Meeting with Salisbury University to explore future interpreter education and certification pathways.
- Collaborating with current and former Allies in Democracy regarding DDBHH federal employees.



01/09

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# 2026 Legislative Engagement

Our office has actively engaged in legislation impacting accessibility, interpreter standards, disability equity, and public safety.

Submitted Testimony & Letters of Support



## Leadership & Operations

- Coordinating press conference interpreter coverage with a 100% fulfillment rate in partnership with the Governor's communications team.
- Budget hearing inquired finalize hiring of Deputy Director, Compliance Officer, Policy Manager and Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Advocate by June 30, 2026.
- Regulations for State Board of Sign Language Interpreters required to be published by December 31, 2026; licenses to be issued by our office starting July 1, 2027.

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## **Submitted Testimony & Letters of Support**

- SB0645 – State Board of Sign Language Interpreters (Membership & Licensing)
- SB0339 – Maryland School for the Deaf Board of Trustees Membership
- SB0259 – Open Movie Captioning (reintroduced following prior session efforts)
- SB0268 – Restrictive Housing Protections for Individuals with IDD
- HB0866 – ODHH Case Management Expansion / DeafBlind Services (amended to extend DDBHH Workgroup)
- HB0439 – Renaming of the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Advisory Council
- HB216 - Criminal law protections related to benefits exploitation
- SB0001 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Face Covering Provisions

## **Monitoring & Interagency Coordination**

We are closely monitoring several additional bills related to:

- HB 536 - Employment discrimination and reasonable accommodations
- HB 879 - Language acquisition tracking for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children
- SB0038 - Ignition Interlock accessibility (in coordination with MVA)
- HB 442 - Professional Liability Insurance Coverage
- SB 73 - Voting accessibility for elderly voters with disabilities
- HB1462 - Department of Social and Economic Mobility – Individuals With Disabilities

## **Letters of Information**

- 0733 - Maryland Transit Administration - Fixed-Route Transit Services - Announcements

## **Public Communication & Media Outreach**

- To increase accessibility and public awareness, we released:
- Weekly ASL videos for the Moore-Miller Administration.
- Legislative informational videos clarifying the role and responsibilities of our office.
- Press conference summaries (including flu season updates).
- A public education video regarding the MVA butterfly accessibility identifier.
- A video message featuring Wes Moore and the State of the State Deaf Interpreter.
- A collaborative video addressing misconceptions regarding DeafBlind employment and the proposed office renaming.

## **Professional Development & Partnerships**

- Ongoing professional growth remains a priority. Highlights include:
- Completion of AI training with the University of South Florida.
- Continued collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education.
- Participation in NASADHH RE: CSD & NASADHH: Direct Video Calling Part II workshop session and behavioral health advisory presentations.
- Attendance at the Maryland School for the Deaf Board Meeting.

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**03/09**

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### Advisory, Community & Committee Work

- Continued leadership in the Cultural Linguistics and Inclusiveness Committee (formerly Cultural Linguistics Competency Committee), including presentations on DeafBlind mental health resources.
- Active engagement in Early Hearing Detection & Intervention (EHDI).
- Reapplied to serve on the Hearing Accessibility Advisory Board (HAAB).
- Supported appointments to the Maryland Advisory Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing and will update the website accordingly.
- Recommended community spotlights for Black History Month.
- Attended a Celebration of Life and provided tribute remarks honoring a DeafBlind constituent family member, recognizing their contributions and impact within the community.
- Attended Black History Month for Center of Black Deaf Studies event as a VIP guest at Gallaudet.
- Met with MDAD RE: Legislative related items such as LEADK, Renaming and SBSLI Licensing and Membership. As well as strategic goals for DDBHH seniors.
- Met with MDSC RE: Strategic goals for DDBHH seniors.
- Met with Deaf constituent senior prep for programs related to DDBH seniors.

This session reflects a comprehensive approach: policy advocacy, accessibility implementation, workforce development, and proactive communication. Our work remains centered on ensuring equitable access, strengthening systems, and elevating the voices of Maryland's Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing communities.

I look forward to continuing this work alongside the Advisory Council.

04/09



## Outreach Interpreter Manager Updates – Tanéa Brown

January – February 2026

### Outreach Efforts

During January and February 2026, outreach efforts focused on strengthening community engagement, supporting interpreter development, and expanding participation in certification pathways. Efforts included recruitment for interpreter programs, committee participation, and collaboration with partner organizations.

### GODHH ASL Club Update

We successfully hosted our **first GODHH ASL Club** on: **Thursday, January 15, 2026 | 12:00–1:00 PM**

Three MACDHH Council members expressed interest in participating, and two participants attended the inaugural session. The ASL Club provides an opportunity for community members and partners to engage in language development and connection.

### Upcoming 2026 ASL Club Dates:

- Thursday, April 16, 2026 | 12:00–1:00 PM
- Thursday, July 16, 2026 | 12:00–1:00 PM
- Thursday, October 15, 2026 | 12:00–1:00 PM

### Video Production & Accessibility Efforts ASL-Related Videos Created (Self-Produced):

A total of 6 ASL-focused videos were created covering topics such as:

- Legislative terminology
- Interpreter-related information
- Monthly ASL sign spotlight
- Community and program updates

### Captioning Support for Director DeBerry:

Provided captioning for 4 ASL Weekly Updates from Moore–Miller to ensure accessibility and broader community engagement.

05/09

## **Support for SBSLI**

- Continued administrative and communications support for the State Board of Sign Language Interpreters (SBSLI), including:
- Preparing and maintaining Board meeting minutes
- Website updates
- Posting agendas, YouTube links, and minutes
- Updating “Stay Connected” and previous flyer sections
- Maintaining the SBSLI webpage to ensure accurate and timely information

## **Support for MACDHH**

Ongoing support provided to the Maryland Advisory Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MACDHH), including:

- Coordinating interpreter requests (DI/Hi interpreters)
- Updating GODHH website with MACDHH flyers and agendas
- Sending communications to the MACDHH Chair
- Sending friendly reminder emails to members
- Preparing seating layout and providing logistical support for council meetings
- Supporting the GODHH team during MACDHH meetings

## **Upcoming Outreach Focus (Next Two Months)**

- Expand recruitment for the NIC/BEI Study Table Program to support individuals seeking certification and licensure
- Strengthen partnerships with colleges and advisory committees
- Continue engagement through ASL Club and digital outreach

## **Committee & Advisory Meetings**

### **Attended**

Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC)

- Upcoming spring meeting (date to be confirmed)

### **Governor’s Advisory Board of Telecommunications Relay (GABTR)**

- January 26, 2026
- Awaiting confirmation of next meeting date

### **Frederick Community College ASL/Interpreting PAC**

- Next meeting: April 16, 2026

### **Language Advisory Group**

- April 29, 2026

### **Language Access Implementation Meetings:**

- January 21, 2026
- February 5, 2026
- March 4, 2026
- March 19, 2026
- April 2, 2026
- April 16, 2026
- April 30, 2026
- May 14, 2026
- May 28, 2026
- June 11, 2026

### **Upcoming ASL Video Plans (Next Two Months)**

- Continued ASL Weekly Updates from Moore–Miller
- Legislative terminology series
- Interpreter-focused ASL informational videos
- Monthly ASL sign feature.

**06/09**

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# ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT UPDATES

-BY DIAMON HALLIBURTON



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## Digital Newsletter Dates:

January 14	July 8
January 31	July 31
February 11	August 12
February 28	August 31
March 11	September 9
March 31	September 30
April 8	October 14
April 30	October 31
May 13	November 11
May 31	November 30
June 10	December 9
June 30	December 31

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AR 2024 and AR 2025 were both submitted on January 20, 2026.

Dates submitted weekly legislative liaison reports:

- January 16, 2026
  - January 23, 2026
  - January 30, 2026
  - February 6, 2026
  - February 13, 2026
  - February 20, 2026
  - February 27, 2026
  - March 6, 2026
- 11 testimonies or letters of information have been submitted for Director DeBerry.
  - Fiscal estimates have been requested by the Governor's Office of Financial Administration (GOFA) for HB0866, SB0645, and HB0439.
  - Starbridge File Lens inquired about a public report on February 27, 2026. The report is still forthcoming.

ASL Videos have been released on the following dates:

- January 7, 2026
- January 22, 2026
- January 23, 2026
- January 29, 2026
- February 11, 2026
- February 13, 2026
- February 18, 2026
- February 20, 2026

As of January 1, 2026, GODHH has received 25 calls, 1 walk-ins, 48 email inquiries, and 1 social media inquiry. The general reasons for inquiring are related to the Sign Language Interpreter License (Refunds, questions, and concerns), housing, and mental health. A total of 77 customer interactions with a 97% response/resolution rate.

Director DeBerry has done three tributes to those who have passed this year, Ann C. Black, Sylvia Winifred Hackley, and Caroline Perry. One committee attended: The Board of Social Work Workgroup. The Workgroup concluded on June 25, 2025, and the recommendations can be found [here](#).

- GODHH wrote a letter of support for SB0645- State Board of Sign Language Interpreters - Membership and Licensing.
- GODHH wrote a letter of support with amendments and testified orally for HB0866- Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing - Case Management Services.
- GODHH wrote a letter of support with amendments and testified orally for HB439- Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Maryland Advisory Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing - Renaming.

Number of Public Information Requests as of January 1, 2026: 1 Request.

List of organizations contacted RE: Departmental Submissions and their deadlines:

Deadline January 23, 2026:

- Administrative Office Of The Courts
- Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)

Deadline February 23, 2026:

- Metro-Washington Association of the Deaf Blind (MWADB)
- Maryland Association of the Deaf (MDAD)
- Maryland Deaf Community Center (MDCC)
- Maryland Deaf Senior Citizens (MDSC)
- Prince George's County Association of the Deaf (PGCAD)
- Deaf Independent Living Association (DILA)
- Friends of Libraries for Deaf Action (FOLDA)
- Baltimore County Association of the Deaf (BCAD)
- DeafNet
- Keystone Interpreting Solutions (KIS)
- Frederick Interpreting Agency (FIA)

Deadline March 13, 2026:

- Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults

**08/09**

Thanks to sponsors, stakeholders and community members for supporting our office. Please note that this report is for January 9 - March 6, 2026 and you will see future dates related to meetings for your awareness.

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**09/09**

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