

Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing  
**NEWSLETTER II FY2026**



**Usherla DeBerry, Director**

# **REPORT**

## **Appointments**

MDOT and Hearing Loss Seat. We have 2 vacancies. We will need nominations from the advisory council group. Please review the criteria and share submissions before the end of the month. Perhaps Cydne Smith could share advice on what happens when we share the nominations and how long the process will take?

## **EHDI Committee**

Recently for EHDI, during legislative session 2026, submitted a letter for SB502 - Language Acquisition Tracking Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children – Establishment. This bill did not make it through. Our office have reached out to the sponsors.

## **BHAC Executive Committee Meeting Summary**

The BHAC Executive Committee meeting began with a discussion regarding accessibility accommodations. Due to the absence of scheduled interpreting services, the meeting transitioned to Zoom to ensure communication access for Deaf participants. Leadership acknowledged the oversight and reaffirmed the importance of accessibility and language access.

The committee's primary discussion focused on Maryland's federal Mental Health and Substance Use Block Grant planning process. BHA staff reviewed BHAC's role in providing input on the block grant application, supporting the planning process, and ultimately submitting a letter of support as required by SAMHSA. Members also discussed timelines, public comment opportunities, and the review process for the final plan and budget.

Usherla DeBerry, Director

## REPORT Cont'd...

The Cultural and Linguistic Inclusiveness Committee (CLiC), formerly known as CLCC, reported that it has launched a needs assessment survey to gather feedback from BHAC members, BHA, local behavioral health authorities, providers, and consumers. The survey is intended to help determine which CLiC functions and priorities will best support stakeholders moving forward. Results are currently pending and will be used to guide the committee's future work and recommendations.

The committee also reviewed the agenda for the upcoming full BHAC meeting, discussed technical amendments to the BHAC bylaws, and received updates on the Rural Health Transformation Program. Additional discussion included federal behavioral health data reporting requirements and a newly established legislative workgroup focused on improving health, social, and economic outcomes related to substance use.

Overall, the meeting highlighted the importance of accessibility, stakeholder engagement, federal grant planning, governance updates, and ongoing efforts to improve behavioral health services across Maryland.

### **SBSLI and Workgroup for DDBHH**

Followed up with the Appointment Office regarding the vacancies also followed up with Chair Leffler and Chair Yates regarding their reports.

**Usherla DeBerry, Director**

# **REPORT Cont'd...**

**Workgroup for DDBHH- Dr. Leo Yates -**



**Usherla DeBerry, Director**

# **REPORT**

## **Mentor Interpreters**

There are two interpreters I am mentoring while I am studying for the deaf interpreter certification. As a result, interpreters are more likely to remain in the field and continue developing their expertise.

For government agencies and organizations serving the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing community, mentoring interpreters is also an investment in the quality of communication access. Skilled interpreters help ensure that Deaf individuals can fully participate in public life, access services, and engage in leadership and decision-making processes on an equal basis with others.

## **Educational Interpreters and Alternative Pathways Task Force**

Providing additional services and support for SBSLI Chair Leffler and Susan Beaver for Educational Interpreters and Board Member Skjeveland for the Alternative Pathways Taskforce. Each group have a folder of materials. Recently sent Clearinghouse letters to RID, NAIE and Boys Town awaiting a response for data.

## **Tri-State and DC Collaboration**

The Tri-State Collaborative (Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia) seeks to strengthen communication access, cultural competency, and inclusion for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing individuals through regional partnerships, shared resources, and coordinated educational initiatives. By addressing common challenges together, the collaborative aims to promote consistent, accessible, and culturally responsive services across the region.

**Usherla DeBerry, Director**

# **REPORT Cont'd...**

## **Potential Program Topics**

- Effective Communication Tips for Serving DDBHH Individuals
- Deaf Culture and Cultural Humility
- DeafBlind Awareness and Accessibility
- Communication Access in Government Services
- Healthcare Accessibility for Deaf Patients
- Emergency Preparedness and Public Safety
- Working Effectively with Interpreters
- Inclusive Public Meetings and Events
- Employment and Workforce Accessibility
- Best Practices for State Agencies Serving DDBHH Communities

Such a collaboration positions the region as a leader in accessibility and demonstrates a shared commitment to ensuring that Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing individuals have equitable access to services, information, and opportunities regardless of where they live or travel within the region.

## **GODHH Virtual Town Hall**

Hosted Tuesday, May 19, 2026. Topics will include Board of Elections - Preparing for Election, Just What Do You Need to Know About Your Rights by Braden Stinar and Learn More How to Study for NIC by Tanéa Brown. Check out the evaluations from Diamon Halliburton.

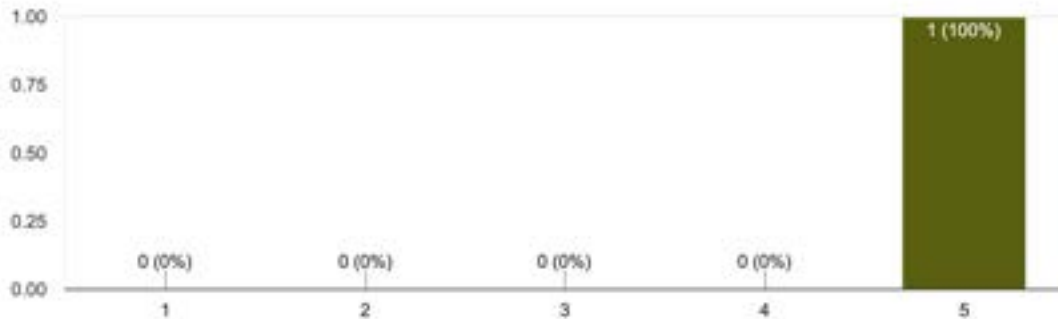
Usherla DeBerry, Director

# REPORT

## GODDBHH Virtual Town Hall 5/19/2026

How satisfied were you with the event?

1 response



Responses: 2

### Summary:

One of two individuals was completely satisfied with the event. One person opted to give feedback over an informal Zoom call. In addition to presenter feedback, they also suggested a few things:

- Workshop on how Deaf people can work with their interpreters to get the best possible experience
- Spotlight more Interpreter exam mentorship programs
- Workshops on how CDI's and HI's can best work together

The form is still open and we are still collecting feedback.

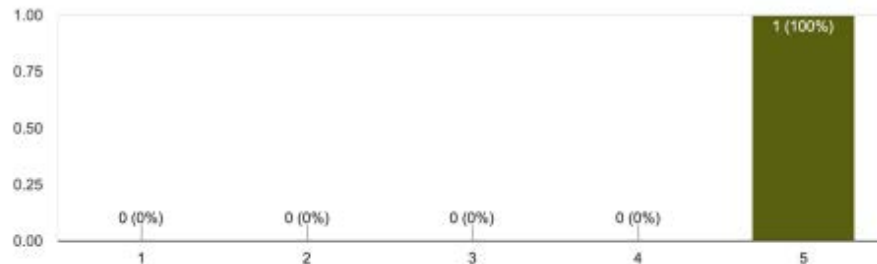
Usherla DeBerry, Director

# REPORT

## Disabilities in Democracy: Fascism vs Democracy 5/22/2026

How satisfied were you with the event?

1 response



**Responses:** 1

### Summary:

One response was given, and they were satisfied with this event. Their key takeaway was that democracy should be fought for. Their feedback on the agenda is that it was good and there was clear communication.

More feedback regarding logistics was given after the meeting but was not recorded on the form.

**Usherla DeBerry, Director**

# **REPORT**

## **GODHH and MACDHH 25 Year Anniversary**

As the Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing (ODDBHH) approaches its 25th Anniversary, we are beginning to plan a meaningful celebration recognizing the office's history, accomplishments, and impact on Maryland's Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, and DeafDisabled communities.

To support this effort, we are seeking volunteers from the Maryland Advisory Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MACDHH) to serve on the 25th Anniversary Planning Committee. Committee members will assist with developing ideas, planning activities, identifying community partners, and helping ensure the celebration reflects the diverse experiences and contributions of our communities over the past 25 years.

This milestone presents an opportunity to honor our shared history, celebrate progress, and help shape the vision for the future. We welcome members who are interested in contributing their time, ideas, and expertise to this special initiative.

If you are interested in serving on the committee, please contact us for additional information.

## **DDBHH Incarcerated Individuals Relocated**

As of 5.10.2026, the DDBHH have relocated from Jessup to Hagerstown. We will resume quarterly meetings soon. The meetings are in person and will be hosted at Hagerstown.

**Usherla DeBerry, Director**

# REPORT

## **Special thanks...**

On behalf of the Governor's Office of the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing, we extend our sincere gratitude to our legislative sponsors, partners, advocates, stakeholders, and community members for your dedication and support throughout the legislative session especially to Senator King, Delegate Bagnall, Delegate Bhandari, and Delegate Kaufman and their teams. We also extend thanks to MACDHH, SBSLI, Workgroup for DDBHH, MDAD, MDCC, PGCAD, BCAD, DCDL, HCAD, MDSC, GUAA-Free State, WSJD, MSDAA, TAM, DORS, MWADB, NASADHH, the interpreter community, GOFA, 2nd floor - Governor's Office staff, the Appointment Office, the Lt. Governor, and the Governor.

Your commitment to advancing accessibility, inclusion, and opportunities for Maryland's Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, and DeafDisabled communities has been invaluable. Through your leadership, collaboration, testimony, advocacy, and engagement, important conversations were elevated and meaningful progress was made.

Legislative success is built through partnerships, and we deeply appreciate the time, expertise, and passion that each of you contributed during this session. Whether through sponsoring legislation, providing feedback, sharing lived experiences, or supporting community outreach efforts, your involvement helped ensure that the voices of Maryland's DDBHH communities were heard.

While there is always more work ahead, we are grateful for the relationships we have built and strengthened throughout this process. We look forward to continuing our collaboration as we work together to create a more accessible, equitable, and inclusive Maryland for all.

Thank you again for your partnership, advocacy, and unwavering support.

With appreciation,

Usherla DeBerry and Team

Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager

# REPORT

## Programs for Sign Language Interpreters

### NIC/BEI Study Table

The NIC/BEI Study Table continued to provide interpreters with opportunities to prepare for certification exams through both virtual and in-person sessions. Virtual study sessions were held on Tuesday, March 10, 2026; Tuesday, April 7, 2026; and Tuesday, May 5, 2026, allowing participants from across the state to connect, collaborate, and strengthen their interpreting skills in an accessible online environment.

In-person study sessions were hosted at the Laurel Branch Library on Saturday, March 14, 2026; Saturday, April 11, 2026; and Saturday, May 9, 2026. These sessions created a supportive space for interpreters to engage in hands-on practice, discuss testing strategies, and build peer connections while preparing for the NIC and BEI certification exams.



Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager

# REPORT

## Programs for Sign Language Interpreters

### Inside the Dental Office: Interpreting and Communication in Oral Health Care

Inside the Dental Office: Interpreting and Communication in Oral Health Care was presented by Luciana de Mello Marinho on Wednesday, April 29, 2026, from 12:00–1:30 PM via Zoom. Luciana de Mello Marinho, DDS, RDH, is a Brazilian-trained dentist and U.S. registered dental hygienist who is Deaf/HoH.

Drawing from her experiences as a patient, dental professional, and collaborator with ASL interpreters, she founded the Deaf Smile Project, an initiative focused on improving communication access in dental settings. The presentation highlighted the importance of effective communication and accessibility in oral health care for Deaf and hard of hearing patients.



The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. On the left, a presentation slide titled "Dental Terminology" is displayed. The slide includes the following text:

**Dental Terminology**

**Understanding Tooth Numbering and Surfaces:**

- Adult teeth are represented by numbers from 1 to 32
- Child teeth are represented by letters from A to T
- Tooth has surfaces, represented by letters (M, D, B/F, L, O/I)
- The tooth surface has a name, depending on the tooth shape
- Periodontitis/Bone Level

The slide also features three diagrams: a cartoon of a child with a tooth diagram, a cross-section of a tooth showing internal structures, and a dental arch diagram with numbered teeth.

On the right side of the screenshot, a grid of five video thumbnails shows participants in the Zoom meeting. The thumbnails are arranged in a 2x3 grid, with the bottom-right position empty.

Check this out: <https://youtu.be/jX7gAivOD48>

Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager

# REPORT

## Programs for Sign Language Interpreters

### Virtual Interpreter Lunch

Virtual Interpreter Lunch was held on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, from 12:00–1:00 PM in celebration of National Interpreter Appreciation Day. The event recognized and acknowledged interpreters for their dedication and hard work within the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing communities, while expressing gratitude to valued ASL interpreters for their continued commitment to communication access and inclusion.

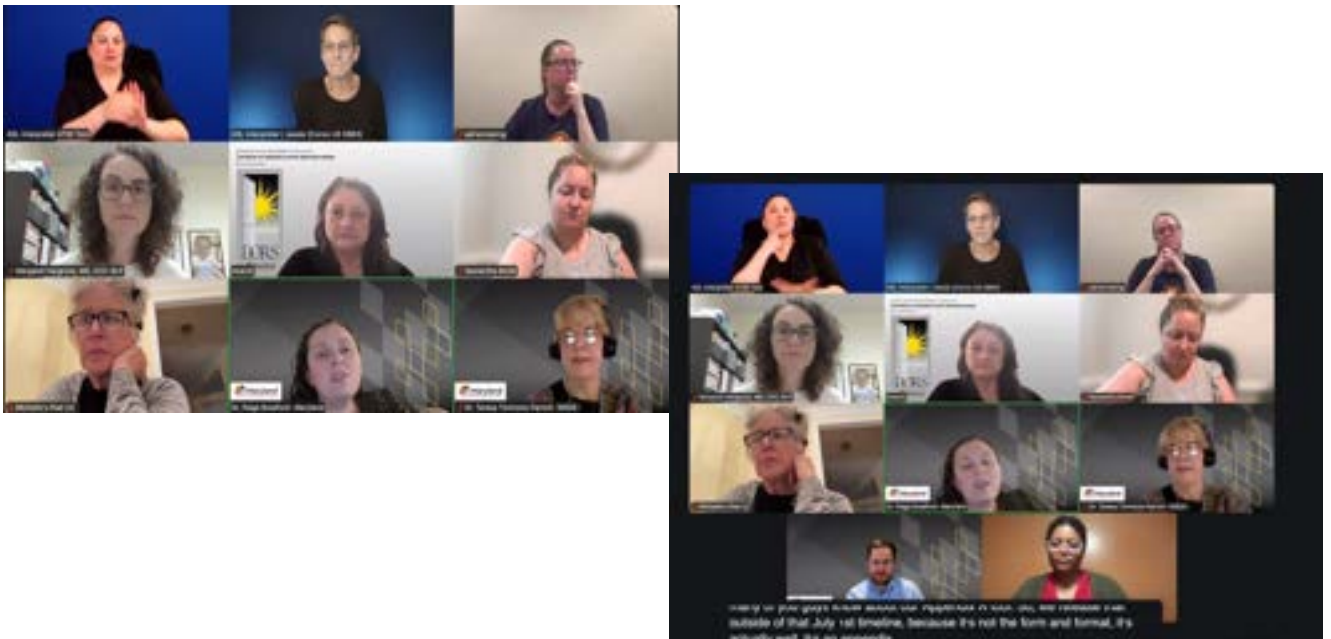


Check this out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Xd31SmguMw>

Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager

# REPORT

## Communication Plan

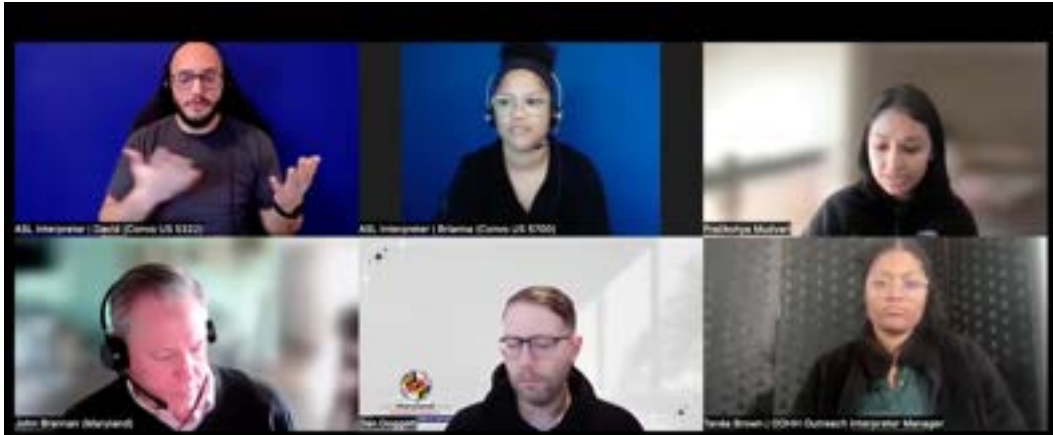


Dr. Michelle "Mickey" Morales and other team members working on the K–12 Communication Plan for the State of Maryland continue to collaborate on communication access initiatives. On May 13, 2026, the team met with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to discuss the development and implementation of the statewide K–12 communication plan. The meeting focused on aligning accessibility goals, strengthening communication access for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing students and their families, and identifying opportunities for ongoing collaboration and support across Maryland's educational system.

Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager

# REPORT

## Language Access Implementation



The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (GODHH) continues to actively participate in the Maryland Language Advisory Board (MLAB) to support the implementation of House Bill 1473, Maryland's expanded language access law. Co-led by the Governor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and the Maryland Department of Disabilities, MLAB works to ensure that individuals with limited English proficiency and individuals with disabilities have meaningful access to state government programs, services, and information. GODHH serves as a key partner in advancing communication access for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Marylanders through effective communication practices, accessibility resources, and statewide policy guidance.

As a member of MLAB, GODHH provides expertise on communication access, including American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting services, captioning, DeafBlind accommodations, and other accessible communication methods. During the reporting period, MLAB held implementation meetings on **March 27, April 10, April 29, May 8, and May 22, 2026**, to discuss language access planning, best practices, agency accessibility policies, and compliance with statewide language access requirements. Through ongoing collaboration, these efforts help strengthen equitable access to public services and ensure that all Maryland residents can effectively access government programs and information.

Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager

# REPORT

## Meetings

- **PCRID Board Meetings**
  - Wednesday, March 22, 2026
  - Wednesday, May 13, 2026
- **Deaf Awareness: Committee Meeting**
  - Monday, March 9, 2026
- **Quill Model Enterprises**
  - May 11, 2026

## Conference/Workshop/Training

- **MDAD Symposium**
  - Saturday May, 2026
  - **Sharp Eyes, Clear Hands: ASL Interpreting in Law Enforcement**
  - Saturday, April 25, 2026
- **ADA Training for Hearing Impaired**
  - Thursday, April 30, 2026

Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager

# REPORT

## GDDBDHH Social Media Video Production

Developed, edited, and published videos for GDDBDHH social media platforms to support outreach and public awareness efforts. All videos included closed captions (CC) to promote accessibility and effective communication for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing audiences.

## Weekly ASL Update from the Moore/Miller Administration

- Monday, March 9, 2026
- March 23, 2026
- April 13, 2026
- May 4, 2026

## Other Video Projects

- SB0645/HB1192: State Board of Sign Language Interpreters – Membership & Licensing | May 2026
- Press Conference 4/07/2026
- Step-by-Step: How to Find SB 645 Labeled "Favorable with Amendments"- March 19, 2026
- Legislative Session: SB 645 SBSLI Membership and Licensing Update
- Maryland General Assembly Legislative Lingo: Types of Bills
- As of 3.15.2026 for 3.16.2026 RE: State of Preparedness (Risk Widespread/Severe Storms)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4wf1b5PVv91b45VugqeFiA>

Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager

# REPORT

## Volunteering at Bill Signing – Bill Sign Carriers/Escorts (First Floor, 5–7)



**Tanéa Brown, Outreach Interpreter Manager**

# REPORT

## ASL Walk & Picnic



ASL/INTR Immersion Club hosted an ASL Walk & Picnic at Patapsco Valley State Park with four students from Community College of Baltimore County and University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB). Participants engaged in social interaction and language immersion activities, including playing games such as Uno and other group activities, while building connections within the Deaf and interpreting communities.

**Diamon Halliburton, Administrative Assistant/Legislative Liaison**

# REPORT

## Interactions

As of March 1, 2026, GODHH has received 54 calls, 1 walk-in(s), 46 email inquiries, and 3 miscellaneous inquiries. The general reasons for inquiring are related to the Sign Language Interpreter License (Refunds, questions, or concerns), housing, and mental health. A total of 104 customer interactions with a 100% response rate.

## Grant Letters

ODHH wrote the following grant letters:

- NorthStar Project (NSP) for Interpreters
- U.S. Department of Education's Training of Interpreters
- Interpreting Workforce Development Grant  
Congressionally Directed  
Spending Request for ASL  
Interpreter Training Program

These letters will be available in the MACDHH Folder.

## Departmental Submissions

Submissions and a list of pending responses can be found at

<https://odhh.maryland.gov/departmental-submissions/>

## List of programs hosted or collaborated

- Doswell Elementary School: Parent
- Engagement Night ASL Day with
- McDaniel College
- Jr. NAD presentation and Meeting  
Arundel
- Lodge Presentation
- DDBHH Centered: Medicaid v. Medicare
- GODHH Town Hall
- Disabilities in Democracy: Fascism Vs.  
Democracy

## Reports

- Total of 16 reports sent to Deputy  
Legislative Officer Hannah Dier  
regarding the legislative session.
- Departmental Concepts - Due June 26,  
2026
- Joint Chairmen's Report #1 - Due July  
1, 2026
- Joint Chairmen's Report #2 - Due  
August 15, 2026
- Managing for Results (MFR) - Due Fall  
2026
- Joint Chairmen's Report #3 - Due  
December 15, 2026
- Annual Report - Due December 31,  
2026

Diamon Halliburton, Administrative Assistant/Legislative Liaison

# REPORT

## Legislative Session 2026

### Submitted Testimony & Letters of Support

**PASSED** - SB0645 – State Board of Sign Language Interpreters (Membership & Licensing)

**PASSED** - SB0339 – Maryland School for the Deaf Board of Trustees Membership

**PASSED** - HB0866 – ODHH Case Management Expansion / DeafBlind Services (amended to extend DDBHH Workgroup)

**PASSED** - HB0439 – Renaming of the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Advisory Council

**PASSED** - HB216 - Criminal law protections related to benefits exploitation

**PASSED** - SB0001 – Public Safety – Law Enforcement Face Covering Provisions

### Monitored & Interagency Coordination

**PASSED** - SB0038 - Ignition Interlock accessibility (in coordination with MVA)

**PASSED** - HB 442 - Professional Liability Insurance Coverage



**Diamon Halliburton, Administrative Assistant/Legislative Liaison**

# REPORT

## Joint Chairmen's Report

The Joint Chairmen's Report (JCR) is an official document published annually in Maryland by the nonpartisan Department of Legislative Services. It summarizes and explains the final actions taken on the state's operating and capital budgets after the legislative session ends. Our office has three reports due this year.

1. D11A04.01 ODHH Restricts funds until ODHH submits two reports on the development and implementation of licensing requirements for sign language interpreters by July 1, 2026, and December 15, 2026.
2. D11A04.01 ODHH Restricts funds until ODHH submits a report on vacant positions by August 15, 2026.

Total funds to be released: \$100,000 (General Fund)

Page 43: [https://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/RecurRpt/Joint-Chairmens-Report\\_Vol-I\\_2026.pdf](https://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/RecurRpt/Joint-Chairmens-Report_Vol-I_2026.pdf)

## FY26 Processes

Our office has been in communication with GOFA and our DBM budget analyst, Skylar Knight, regarding the FY26 closeout. The agency participated in statewide fiscal management efforts and returned unspent funds to the State at the close of FY 2026.

## MARCH SPOTLIGHTS

# March is Women's History Month



Elice Patterson is an experienced higher education professional with a longstanding commitment to student success. She began her career at the National Children's Center, where she built a strong foundation in advocacy and service to individuals from diverse backgrounds before transitioning to Gallaudet University's Registrar's Office. Over the course of 27 years at Gallaudet, Elice has remained dedicated to empowering students to thrive and has developed a deep and enduring passion for the university community. She understands that strong, efficient systems create meaningful opportunities for students to focus on their academic growth and personal achievement. Her work is driven by a genuine commitment to fostering environments where every student feels supported, valued, and equipped to reach their fullest potential. Elice firmly believes in treating others with dignity and kindness and holds that every individual deserves equal respect, compassion, and understanding. This guiding principle shapes her leadership style, which is grounded in empathy, fairness, and an unwavering dedication to uplifting others.



Dr. Judith Mounty is a Deaf licensed clinical social worker in private practice in Takoma Park, Maryland. She is actively engaged in advocacy focused on equity in professional licensure, as well as expanding mental health and healthcare access for Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing individuals. Dr. Mounty's distinguished interdisciplinary career spans education, research, administration, and clinical practice. She served 22 years at Gallaudet University in a variety of leadership, teaching, and research roles. She was an early and influential proponent of bilingual-multicultural education for deaf and hard of hearing students, helping to shape progressive educational approaches in the field. Her academic experience includes teaching at Boston University and at McDaniel College (formerly Western Maryland College). She has also worked as a teacher and program administrator in pre-college and human service settings. Dr. Mounty holds a doctorate in applied psycholinguistics from Boston University, a master's degree in deaf education from Temple University, and a master's degree in social work from Gallaudet University.

## MARCH SPOTLIGHTS

# March is Women's History Month



Jaime Recht ran her first 26.2-mile race at the Marine Corps Marathon in 2017. Inspired by the Abbott World Marathon Majors, she became determined to complete the prestigious races. Over time, she ran 16 marathons, including seven World Marathon Majors. On March 1, 2026, in Tokyo, Japan, Recht achieved her goal and received the Six Star Medal, becoming one of the first DeafBlind female runners to earn this honor after completing races in Chicago, Berlin, New York City, London, and Tokyo. During races, Recht worked with several guides, but in training she often ran alone in familiar areas. Because of limited vision and changes in terrain or lighting, she slowed down in crowded or shaded places to avoid tripping. Recht believes challenges are not major obstacles, saying she can overcome them even with limited sight. After 33 years of service, she retired from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration.



Janet S. (Rothenberg) Weinstock was born and raised in New York City in a Jewish Deaf family. She attended an oral day school and public schools in four different states. After earning her degrees from Gallaudet University (then known as Gallaudet College), she worked on the Kendall Green campus for 35 years, educating individuals from preschool age through adulthood. During her career, Janet developed and taught a variety of courses in ASL, English Language Arts, and Deaf Studies. She also conducted workshops and presentations that focused on applying theory to practice in both home and educational settings. Throughout her 35 years at Gallaudet, she was actively involved in numerous committees and projects both on and off campus. Janet previously served as secretary on the board of the Deaf Abused Women's Network (DAWN) and as a board member of the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. She has also volunteered as an ASL and acting coach for school and community theater productions, served on the editorial staff of *The Bilingual Center*, and participated on committees for various organizations. In retirement, Janet remains active with many interests, including baking, solving crossword and jigsaw puzzles, practicing yoga, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, reading and writing, traveling, and volunteering. She served as secretary and later president of Maryland Deaf Senior Citizens, Inc. for seven years. She has also been a core member of the Maryland LeadK committee and served as an advisor for Gallaudet's Deaf New York Project, among other initiatives. Janet enjoys sharing stories about her maternal family's experiences during the Holocaust. She currently assists the Maryland Deaf Community Center (MDCC) with flyers and fundraising events. Janet and her husband, Mike, have lived in Maryland for 48 years and are the parents of two adult Deaf sons.

## MARCH SPOTLIGHTS

# March is Women's History Month



For more than three decades, Dr. Jerri Lyn Dorminy has called Maryland home, a place where her personal and professional journey has evolved alongside her deep commitment to student success. A proud graduate of Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., and the University of Maryland, College Park, she has dedicated her career to ensuring that students not only access higher education, but truly thrive within it. Jerri Lyn's path into higher education is rooted in a passion for connection, equity, and opportunity. At Gallaudet University, where she serves as Student Success Director, she leads programs that support students at every stage of their journey from orientation and advising to career readiness and graduation. For Jerri Lyn, this work has always been about more than programs, it's about people. "I've always believed that student success is deeply personal," she shares. "Every student has a story, and our role is to help them navigate challenges, discover their strengths, and realize their potential." Throughout her career, Jerri Lyn has advanced how institutions approach student success by integrating data-driven strategies with compassion and student-centered practices. She has spearheaded major initiatives, including the implementation of a new student information system and the redesign of career services, while consistently centering the student experience in decision-making. A Maryland resident since 1993, Jerri Lyn's work reflects the values of the communities she calls home—resilience, inclusion, and a commitment to uplifting others. She is especially passionate about supporting students from diverse and multicultural backgrounds, ensuring that every student feels seen, supported, and empowered to succeed. As a Deaf and bilingual professional who communicates in both American Sign Language and English, she brings a powerful perspective to fostering accessibility and belonging. During Women's History Month, we celebrate Dr. Jerri Lyn Dorminy not only for her leadership and accomplishments, but for the way she shows up every day with purpose, empathy, and an unwavering belief in the power of education to transform lives.

## APRIL SPOTLIGHTS

# April is Deaf History Month



Bailey Spells is currently a senior at Eleanor Roosevelt High School. During her sophomore year, she enrolled in ASL 1 to fulfill a graduation requirement, but she quickly developed a passion for the language. Over the past three years, she has continued taking ASL courses, which has given her the opportunity to work closely with Mrs. Yamada, a deaf teacher in the DHOH department. Through these experiences, she has built meaningful connections and friendships with members of the Deaf community at her school, further strengthening her interest in ASL. Bailey is also a member of her school's Honor Society, where she is required to complete volunteer service hours, demonstrating her commitment to both academic excellence and community involvement. After graduating this June (2026), she plans to attend the University of North Florida, where she will major in American Sign Language Interpreting with the goal of becoming a professional ASL interpreter.

## APRIL SPOTLIGHTS

# April is Deaf History Month



Lisa Uscanga is a nationally certified (NIC) Sign Language Interpreter with 18 years of experience serving Deaf and hard-of-hearing students in Montgomery County Public Schools. She has supported students through the entire birth-to-graduation pathway, giving her a deep understanding of language development, academic access, and the evolving communication needs of students of all ages. Fluent in American Sign Language (ASL), Lisa brings extensive knowledge of Deaf culture and frequently serves as a cultural mediator to support meaningful, respectful communication between students, peers, and educators. She is known for her conceptually accurate interpretation and her commitment to fostering inclusive, language-rich learning environments. In addition to her interpreting work, Lisa has experience mentoring interpreting students and new interpreters, helping to strengthen the next generation of professionals. She consistently upholds the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Code of Professional Conduct. She collaborates closely with teachers, specialists, and staff to ensure equitable access and full participation for every student she serves.

## APRIL SPOTLIGHTS

# April is Deaf History Month



Clint Squires and Anibelka Henriquez Squires met on September 1, 1997, while traveling to Ocean City, Maryland, a day forever marked in history as the day of Princess Diana's tragic passing. At the time, Anibelka was a senior undergraduate at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., and both she and Clint were the only drivers transporting their college friends for Labor Day weekend. What began as a simple trip turned into something far more meaningful. The weekend was filled with sun-soaked beach days, long conversations, easy laughter, and a growing connection that blossomed into friendship and ultimately, a lifelong partnership grounded in love, respect, and commitment. They made Maryland their home in 2003, building a life together over the years. After a long journey through infertility, their story came full circle in 2023 with the joyful arrival of their rainbow son, completing their family. Their journey stands as a testament to enduring love, resilience, and the blessing of finding forever in one another.

## APRIL SPOTLIGHTS

# April is Deaf History Month



"We settled in Frederick, Maryland, 15 years ago, drawn by its strong Deaf community and its proximity to MSD. After putting down deep roots in Connecticut and building meaningful connections within the Deaf community there, the move was a significant step but one that quickly felt like home. We are both proud CODAs, and all four of our parents graduated from the American School for the Deaf. We were incredibly grateful to be welcomed so warmly into the Maryland Deaf community. Paula continued her interpreting career with ZVRS, while I interpreted part-time alongside my work at Gallaudet University. Our strongest connections developed through MSD, particularly within the Athletic Department. As former athletes and coaches at ASD, we were able to reconnect with old friends while building new relationships, making our involvement there especially meaningful. We raised our two daughters in Frederick, watching them grow from young girls into accomplished, compassionate women with strong ties to the local Deaf community. Both are college graduates and married, one remaining in Maryland, the other now living in Morgantown, West Virginia. We are especially proud that they value their second language and are passing it on to our grandson, Adley. At just a year and a half old, he already has an impressive ASL vocabulary. Today, we both remain active in the interpreting field and continue to value our involvement with the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing community. Being CODAs is a lifelong gift, one that has profoundly shaped who we are. Although we have lost three of our four parents, we carry their legacy forward through the beauty of ASL and the deep connections within this community. We recognize how unique our CODA marriage is. It is the foundation of our laughter, our love, and our life together." - Paula and Ted Baran

MAY SPOTLIGHTS

# May is Teacher Appreciation and Mother's Day

## Teacher Appreciation Spotlight



### JULIE PIERPONT

Learn more about Julie on our newsletter!  
Scan the QR code to subscribe.



May 6, 2026



Julie Pierpont is an exceptional Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing who builds trust, supports language development, and navigates complex student needs with skill. A Deaf educator, she leads with resilience, creativity, and strong advocacy. Her impact on students and her school community is profound.

## Mother's Day Spotlight

### Linda Stolz



5.31.2026



"I am a proud mother of two wonderful children - Jason, a teacher, and Lydia, an interpreter. I am also blessed with a daughter-in-law, Tamijo, who is a teacher as well. In addition, I am the proud grandmother of four lovely grandchildren: Maliyah, Knox, Brooklyn, and Giavanna, who attend Maryland School for the Deaf. I enjoy family gatherings, attending my grandchildren's school activities and sporting events, and volunteering with Maryland Deaf Community Center. Family values, community involvement, and supporting the Deaf community have always been an important part of my life. I truly appreciate the love and support I have received from my family throughout the years." - Linda Stolz

## Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Tributes



**Ann Black**

To the family, friends, and community of Ann C. Black, It is with profound respect and heartfelt remembrance that the Office of the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing honors the life and legacy of Ann C. Black, a proud DeafBlind leader whose presence, advocacy, and unwavering spirit left a lasting impact on our state and beyond. Ann C. Black exemplified resilience, leadership, and service. As a co-founder of the Metro-Washington Association of DeafBlind (MWADB), she played a pivotal role in building community, advancing advocacy, and creating lasting networks of support for DeafBlind individuals. As a DeafBlind individual, she transformed barriers into bridges by advancing accessibility, promoting equal opportunity, and ensuring that the voices of Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind individuals were heard, valued, and respected.

Her advocacy strengthened community connections and fostered a deeper understanding of the diverse communication needs within our state. Ann's legacy lives on in the systems she helped improve, the leaders she mentored, and the community she helped unify. Her work has paved the way for continued progress, reminding us that inclusion is not merely an aspiration but a responsibility. On behalf of the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, we extend our deepest condolences to her loved ones and to all who were touched by her remarkable life. We honor her memory by reaffirming our commitment to the values she embodied: access, dignity, equity, and community. May we carry forward her vision with the same strength and determination she demonstrated throughout her life.

With respect and gratitude,

Usherla DeBerry  
Director  
Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf  
and Hard of Hearing  
February 26, 2026

# Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Tributes



## Carolyn Stockwell Perry

Dear Family, Friends, and Community of Carolyn Stockwell Perry, We gather to recognize and honor the extraordinary service of Carolyn Stockwell Perry, whose decades of dedication to Deaf education profoundly shaped generations of students and strengthened the Deaf community. Carolyn's career was marked by high standards, deep care for her students, and an unwavering belief that Deaf and hard of hearing learners deserved rigorous, accessible, and empowering educational experiences. For 32 years, Carolyn served at the Model Secondary School for the Deaf, part of the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center at Gallaudet University. As a mathematics teacher and later in supervisory and student support roles, she built a reputation for excellence in instruction and leadership. She possessed a rare ability to make complex mathematical concepts clear and approachable, ensuring her students developed not only academic competence, but confidence in their own intellectual abilities.

Among the many students whose lives she influenced was Usherla DeBerry, now Director of the Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Director DeBerry's journey from student to statewide leader stands as a powerful testament to Carolyn's impact as an educator and mentor. Carolyn's classroom was more than a place of instruction, it was a foundation for leadership, service, and lifelong achievement. This recognition is also deeply personal as Carolyn was Director DeBerry's pre-calculus teacher, and her instruction and belief in her students helped shape a path toward leadership and service. Carolyn's legacy is one of steadfast service, educational excellence, and quiet but transformative leadership. Through her decades of work, she advanced opportunities for Deaf students and helped cultivate leaders who continue to serve the community today. Her contributions endure in the lives she shaped, the standards she upheld, and the enduring strength of the institution and community she helped build. May her example remind us that quiet leadership and steadfast commitment can leave a lasting and transformative impact. With respect and gratitude,

Usherla DeBerry  
Director  
Maryland Governor's Office of the Deaf and  
Hard of Hearing  
February 26, 2026

## Maryland Advisory Council on the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Tributes



### **Sylvia Winifred Hackley**

On behalf of the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, we extend our deepest condolences to the family and loved ones of Sylvia Winifred Hackley. To parent a DeafBlind individual is to commit oneself to a journey that requires unwavering strength, advocacy, creativity, and love. Sylvia embraced this journey fully. In addition to being a mother, she served as a guide, advocate, protector, and a constant in her son, Teddy Hackley's life. Through her steadfast support, she ensured her child had access to communication, services, opportunity, and community.

Her commitment reflects the very values that guide our work. Equity, accessibility, inclusion, and dignity for Marylanders who are Deaf, DeafBlind, or Hard of Hearing. Caregivers like Sylvia are foundational to the strength of our community. They navigate complex systems, overcome barriers, and persist through challenges so that their loved ones may thrive. Her legacy is one of resilience and devotion. The impact of her advocacy and care will continue to be felt in the life of her child and in the broader DeafBlind community. We honor her contributions, her strength, and the love that defined her life's work. May her memory bring comfort to those who knew and loved her, and may her family find peace in knowing that her dedication made a lasting and meaningful difference. With deepest sympathy and respect,

Usherla DeBerry  
Director  
Maryland Governor's Office of the  
Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
February 26, 2026

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