

Taskforce Alternative Pathways (AP) – Meeting Notes

Date: April 29, 2026

Time: 7:30 PM – 8:42 PM

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84387473224>

Meeting ID: 843 8747 3224

Attendance

- Jimmy Beldon
- Tiasha Bera
- Blaise Delahoussaye
- Marylourdes Gayles
- Thomas Horejes
- April Jackson-Woodard
- Jacob Leffler, SBSLI Chair (Taskforce Lead)
- Rebecca Minor
- James Skjeveland, SBSLI Member
- Sarah Yates
- Usherla DeBerry (GODHH Staff Support)

Absent

- Jill Owens Brick
- Joshua Finkle
- Jadalynn Orr

Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions

Jacob Leffler welcomed attendees and reviewed the purpose of the taskforce.

Member Introductions

- **Jimmy Beldon** – Certified interpreter, trainer, and agency owner in Maryland and another state. Goal is to ensure Maryland has enough interpreters.
- **Usherla DeBerry** – GODHH staff supporting taskforce operations and coordination.
- **Marylourdes Gayles** – Recently certified; has experience with alternative pathways.
- **April Jackson-Woodard** – Deaf Interpreter currently working toward certification.
- **Thomas Horejes** – Represents an interpreter agency.
- Additional introductions were provided by taskforce members.

Additional Notes

- Jill Owens Brick is a Deaf Interpreter.
- Jadalynn Orr is a hearing interpreter from Frederick.
- Joshua Finkle is an interpreter from Frederick.
- The taskforce emphasized the importance of maintaining diverse perspectives and representation.
- Isabel Martin was suggested as a potential additional member.
- All workgroup members are considered voting members for decision-making purposes.
- A scheduling poll will be distributed after the meeting.

2. Taskforce Charge & Scope

Legislative Review

The group reviewed the charge outlined in:

SB0645/HB1192 – State Board of Sign Language Interpreters – Membership and Licensing.

Reference:

[Maryland General Assembly – SB0645](#)

Direct Bill PDF (see page 8):

[SB0645 Bill Text PDF](#)

Timeline Discussed

- Goal to develop regulatory language by October 2026
- General licenses to begin January 2028
- Educational interpreter licensing anticipated July 2028

Purpose of Alternative Pathways

The taskforce discussed creating alternative pathways for interpreters who may not currently hold certification but possess skills and experience needed to work in Maryland. The intent is to establish additional pathways toward licensure for interpreters who face barriers to traditional certification processes.

3. Group Discussion – Priorities

Initial Focus Areas

- Review RID Alternative Pathways models
- Study models used in Illinois, Virginia (VQAS/VQAS-style systems), and other states
- Explore pathways that include:
 - Language skill assessments
 - Interpreter skill assessments
 - Mentorship models
 - Workshops equivalent to Interpreter Training Programs (ITPs)
 - Ethics and introductory coursework requirements

Key Discussion Points

- Some interpreters struggle with certification testing despite possessing strong interpreting skills.
- Financial barriers and access to four-year college degrees should be considered.
- RID currently requires:
 - 120 college credit hours or approved alternatives
 - Alternative pathways through CEUs, coursework, and interpreting experience
- BEI and EIPA do not require a degree.
- Consider tiered or provisional licensing models with reevaluation requirements.
- Need to identify benchmarks for:
 - Skills
 - Knowledge
 - Ethical decision-making
- ASLPI may be useful for assessing signing skills, though interpreting skills require separate evaluation.
- Mentorship was identified as critical for skill development.
- Discussion included the need to address shortages in:
 - Rural areas
 - CODA communities
 - Deaf interpreter workforce

- DeafBlind interpreting services

Accountability Considerations

- Agencies assigning interpreters should potentially follow screening criteria aligned with alternative pathway standards.
- Need to avoid limiting perspectives to a single demographic viewpoint and ensure cultural diversity and DeafBlind representation.

4. Logistics & Structure

Communication & Meetings

- Discussion regarding meeting frequency and scheduling
- Proposal to meet biweekly on Wednesdays, with occasional weekend meetings
- Next meeting anticipated in approximately three weeks

Data & Research

The taskforce emphasized:

- Researching other state models
- Collecting workforce and certification data
- Reviewing RID Alternative Pathways and ASLPI frameworks
- Research specific to Deaf interpreters and hearing interpreters

GODHH will share a data folder for collaborative work.

5. Action Items

- Jacob and James will identify additional potential taskforce members.
 - Share names of trilingual interpreters proficient in English, Spanish, and ASL.
 - Consider establishing an ad hoc committee structure.
 - Tiasha and Sarah will develop a state-by-state research spreadsheet in Google Drive.
 - Members should review terminology and labels used by other states regarding non-certified interpreters and alternative pathways.
 - James will distribute a scheduling poll for future meetings.
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References

SB0645/HB1192

Expands membership and modifies licensing requirements for the State Board of Sign Language Interpreters, including timelines for licensure implementation and specialty licensing considerations.

[Maryland General Assembly – SB0645 Overview](#)

[SB0645 Bill Text PDF](#)

EARN Grant References

[CCBC EARN Grant Departmental Submission PDF](#)

[Maryland EARN Awardees Information](#)

[Maryland EARN Program Information](#)