

Martin O'Malley
Governor



Lisa H. Kornberg
Director

Anthony G. Brown
Lt. Governor

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

Julie Anne Schafer
Assistant Director

FY 2011-2015 Strategic Update
Year One: FY 2011

Introduction

Last year, ODHH released a Five-Year Strategic Plan, which outlines goals and strategies to advance the Office's mission, which is to promote equal access for all Marylanders by providing expertise that enhances the welfare of Maryland's deaf, hard of hearing and deafblind residents. In order to execute programs already in place while maintaining the flexibility necessary to engage in new projects, ODHH established five broad focus areas: training, program and policy development, information and referral, outreach, and information collection. Under these five focus areas, ODHH provides support to federal, State, and local government agencies, as well as to community stakeholders and constituents. This is the progress report for the short term goals the Office set for the first year of the Plan.

Highlights

- ODHH assisted the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) in applying for a grant to create, produce, and distribute a "point to picture" communications aid for first responders. Through the collaborative efforts of MCPA, ODHH, the Frederick Police Department, and the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission, the communications aid was developed, tested in focus groups, and sent to press at the close of FY 2011. It will be distributed along with training materials during FY 2012.
- The Office began working with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) to develop a training program for all levels of DPSCS staff so that they can effectively communicate with deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind inmates.
- ODHH staff reviewed the disability policy for Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) Police.
- The Office, in conjunction with the Maryland State Department of Education, worked with stakeholders from the Maryland School for the Deaf, representative from public schools, parents, and advocates to strategize for the development of a State Plan for the Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students.
- ODHH was invited to join the Urban Area Securities Initiative for the Baltimore Region to ensure that the needs of deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind Marylanders are addressed as the region moves forward to develop and emergency response plan for individuals with disabilities.

Agency-Specific Goals

In 2006, Governor Martin O'Malley ran for office with a commitment to make government work again for the people of our State. Since then, Governor O'Malley instituted StateStat – a system of performance-based management – to make our State government more accountable and efficient. Governor O'Malley created the Delivery Unit as an extension of StateStat to work with State agencies to align State and Federal resources around 15 strategic and visionary goals to improve the quality of life in Maryland. The goals are broadly categorized into four key areas – skills, security, sustainability, and health – reflecting the

challenges and opportunities we face as a state in the 21st Century. The ODHH Five-Year Strategic Plan was designed with these four key areas in mind. In the Plan, ODHH states that it will be involved in the coordination of program and policy development with several agencies to accomplish the goals related to a range of issues faced by Marylanders with hearing loss. During the first year of the Plan, ODHH made progress on the following goals:

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH)

Goals

- Promote access to behavioral health services for Marylanders with hearing loss.
- Provide advice, consultation and expertise to facilitate the establishment of a model for the treatment of co-occurring disorders (mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance abuse) for Marylanders with hearing loss.
 - *Update:* ODHH coordinated with the Office of Health Care Quality to address issues of accommodation needs of Maryland’s deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind residents in accessing inpatient and outpatient behavioral health services. The Office also worked with the MACDHH’s Behavioral Health Subcommittee to develop an updated letter to Renata Henry, Deputy Secretary for Behavioral Health that outlines minimum standards of care in providing behavioral health services to Maryland’s deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind consumers.

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)

Goals

- Provide consultation in the development of a State Plan for the Education of Children with hearing loss.
 - *Update:* The Office, in conjunction with the Maryland State Department of Education, worked with stakeholders from the Maryland School for the Deaf, representative from public schools, parents, and advocates to strategize for the development of a State Plan for the Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students.
- Coordinate with the Department of Rehabilitation Services to decrease unemployment and underemployment of Marylanders with hearing loss.
 - *Update:* The Office Coordinated with the Department of Special Education within the MSDE to identify strategies for development of a State Plan for the Education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children including the development of sub-committees to identify goals, strategies and outcomes. Ongoing collaboration with Hank Passi, Statewide Coordinator of the Deaf for the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), to ensure that programs and services offered through DORS are accessible to deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind consumers.

Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)

Goals

- Research the viability of developing a full hearing waiver for intrastate Commercial Driver’s Licenses (CDL) for Marylanders with hearing loss.
 - *Update:* ODHH is monitoring the actions of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMSCA), which is currently contemplating changes to the physical qualification standards that establish hearing requirements to obtain a CDL. No further action on an intrastate waiver has been taken.

- Work toward increased access to videophones in Maryland airports.
 - *Update:* ODHH participated in an “accessibility tour” of BWI Airport to evaluate features in place to provide communication access for passengers with hearing loss. BWI staff is reviewing options and requirements necessary to provide access to videophones at the airport.
- Coordinate with MDOT for the provision of text versions of announcements on all public transportation for Marylanders with hearing loss.
 - *Update:* ODHH continues to receive reports from MDOT via the Advisory Council on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MACDHH) on the status of accessible messaging systems. For example, MTA is currently under contract to replace the public information system equipment on both the Metro Subway and MARC system. The new systems will be ADA compliant and have variable message LED signs along with new speakers to provide information to the public.

Secretary of State/State Board of Elections

Goals

- Promote access to the electoral process through voter outreach and education for Marylanders with hearing loss.
 - *Update:* The Office continues to send out election and voter registration information via the *Monthly Bulletin*, social media accounts, and announcements. ODHH also coordinated tactile interpreters and captioning services for the Maryland Disabilities Forum Gubernatorial Candidates Forum on Disability Issues.

Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR)

Goals

- Facilitate access to employment programs and support services for Marylanders with hearing loss.
 - *Update:* ODHH consulted with DLLR and the Maryland Department of Disabilities “Employed Individuals with Disabilities” Program to ensure that all webinars and internet-based information is accessible to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)

Goals

- Provide advice, consultation and expertise for the development of policies regarding communication of emergency information to Marylanders with hearing loss.
 - *Update:* The Office participated in the FEMA Emergency Planning for Special Needs Course to increase awareness among State and County stakeholders of the need for policy specifically addressing the communication of emergency information to Marylanders with hearing loss.

Maryland Department of State Police (MDSP)

Goals

- Increase sensitivity and effective communication strategies for law enforcement personnel and first responders who encounter Marylanders with hearing loss.
 - *Update:* ODHH began collaborating with the Maryland Police and Corrections Training Commission to include Sensitivity and Awareness Trainings to candidates to the Police

Academy while developing a “Train the Trainer” Model to be provided to the State Police Training Academy

Department of Budget and Management (DBM)

Goals

- Provide advice, consultation and expertise in the development of a Statewide contract to address communication access for State employees and constituents with hearing loss.
 - *Update:* The Office continued to meet with DBM to refine a Statewide contract for visual communication services. In the interim, ODHH staff coordinated interpreters for the Department of Disabilities’ two ADA celebrations, the Governor’s Inauguration, and the Governor’s press conference about affordable housing for people with disabilities.

Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA)

Goals

- Coordinate with MDVA to improve access to services for veterans with hearing loss.
 - *Update:* Recognizing that veterans with hearing loss may not attend “live” events because of communication difficulties, ODHH utilized interns from area colleges to collect information about veteran services in Maryland to be used for the MDVA website. The information was compiled and sent to the MDVA and is now available online under the “Muster” section of the Department’s website.

Department of Aging

Goals

- Promote awareness among agency staff and service providers about resources available to senior citizens with hearing loss.
 - *Update:* ODHH continued its involvement with the Interagency Committee on Aging to report on and discuss issues related to hearing loss in older Marylanders.

Commission on Human Relations (MCHR)

Goals

- Assist MCHR in increasing communication accessibility in agency programs for constituents with hearing loss.
 - *Update:* ODHH filmed, captioned, and posted two informational videos related to MCHR. The first was an overview “About MCHR.” The second was a video explaining “How to File a Complaint with MCHR.” Both videos are posted on the ODHH website and the State of Maryland’s YouTube channel.

ODHH will continue to make progress on the goals listed above while beginning to tackle the items not addressed during the first year of the plan.

Year One: Short-term Goals

In the Plan, the Office also addresses short, mid, and long term goals for the five focus areas. Short-term goals are those that ODHH planned to accomplish within the first year of the Plan. Progress on each of the short-term goals is detailed below.

Focus Area: Training and Skill Development

Goals

- ODHH will continue to provide training to agencies with which a relationship is already established.
- Continue to provide training to local stakeholder organizations that represent deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind Marylanders

Indicators of Success

- Increase in the number of trainings and information sessions provided all levels of government each fiscal year.
- Provide training to at least one new government agency each fiscal year.
- Increase in the number of trainings and presentations provided to constituents and stakeholders.

Progress

In FY 2011, ODHH provided 15 trainings to federal, state, and local government agencies including the Frederick Police Academy, Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services, and the Carroll County Health Department. The Office surpassed the indicator of success to train at least one new government agency each fiscal year; however, the total number of trainings decreased from FY 2010. The decrease can be attributed to two main factors. First, the Office was invited to present a series of trainings at the Department of General Services, the University of Maryland Police, and the Maryland State Police Academy during FY 2010. Similar trainings were not requested in FY 2011. Second, as a result of these trainings, the Office gained better insight into the communication needs of law enforcement and first responders in emergency situations. As a result, ODHH began working with the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association to apply for a grant to develop a tool to facilitate communication. Further information about this project is detailed under “Program and Policy Development.”

ODHH provided 15 trainings to non-governmental organizations, which is two fewer trainings than in FY 2010. Nongovernmental entities trained include Value Options, Anne Arundel Medical Center, and Bnos Yisroel of Baltimore. The Office also presented self-advocacy training to Deaf Shalom Zone. In years two and three of the Plan, ODHH will increase outreach and marketing of the training program in order to meet or exceed training goals.

Focus Area: Program and Policy Development

Goals

- Continue monitoring Federal, State and local government policies and projects to ensure that the needs of deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind Marylanders are included at all levels of policy and program development.
- Continue involvement with task forces and councils where we are already members.
- Maintain levels of technical assistance provided.

Indicators of Success

- Increase in the number of governmental entities involved in coordination of services to deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind individuals through contact and/or involvement with ODHH.
- Increase in the number of council and taskforce meetings attended.
- Increase in instances of technical assistance provided to all who request it.
- Increase in instances of technical assistance provided through ODHH initiation.

Progress

FY 2011 was an exciting year in terms of program and policy development at ODHH. In July, ODHH assisted the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) in applying for a grant to create, produce, and distribute a “point to picture” communications aid for first responders. Through the collaborative efforts of MCPA, ODHH, the Frederick Police Department, and the Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commission, the communications aid was developed, tested in focus groups, and was sent to press at the close of FY 2011. It will be distributed along with training materials during FY 2012.

The Office also began working with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) to develop a training program for all levels of DPSCS staff so that they can effectively communicate with deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind inmates.

During the 2010 Legislative Session, the Office also testified on a number of bills and hosted a successful legislative awareness day, which drew over 80 attendees.

Through the projects listed above, ODHH was able to increase the number of governmental entities involved in coordination of services to deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind individuals. The Office also continued its involvement with task forces and councils of which we were already members while joining the Accessibility of Health Care Facilities Work Group (Baltimore County). Instances of Technical Assistance, however, decreased during FY 2011. In fiscal years when ODHH proposed departmental legislation, instances of technical assistance increased. In FY 2010, the Office proposed two pieces of legislation; however, in FY 2011 the Office proposed none. The decrease in requests for technical assistance can be attributed to the lack of departmental legislation during the 2011 session.

Focus Area: Information and Referral

Goal

- Maintain outreach efforts through exhibits, town hall meetings and community announcements that promote ODHH as a resource for information and referral, while increasing opportunities for outreach via the internet.

Indicators of Success

- Increase in total number of requests for information.
- Increase in number of public announcements disseminated.
- Increase in number of hits to ODHH website and various social media pages.

Progress

In FY 2011, requests for information from government agencies remained the same while requests from constituents and stakeholders decreased. There are several factors that may have caused a decrease in constituent and stakeholder contacts. First, more information than ever is available on the ODHH website, which means that fewer people have to make direct contact to the Office to get the information they need. Second, the Office is actively using social media to reach out to constituents and the number of followers on the Office’s Facebook and Twitter pages has steadily increased. The number of announcements disseminated by the Office increased by 115, which also may have contributed to the decrease in contacts from constituents and stakeholders. ODHH recently gained access to the State’s Google Analytics account for tracking site usage. Through this data, we will be able to effectively track hits to the ODHH website for future fiscal years.

Goal

Maintain timeliness standards by answering 90% of email/phone inquiries within two business days and 90% of written inquiries within ten business days.

Indicators of Success

- Percentage of email/phone inquiries receiving timely response.
- Percentage of written inquiries receiving timely response.

Progress

Office staff responded to 98% of email/phone requests within two business days and 100% of written inquiries within ten business days.

Focus Area: Outreach

Goal

- Maintain current levels of outreach to constituents, stakeholders, government agencies, and other organizations

Indicators of Success

- Increased number of exhibits invited to and/or staffed.
- Increased attendance at community groups.
- Increased participation in stakeholder events.
- Expanded distribution of monthly bulletin and community announcements.
- Increased number of town hall meetings.

Progress

The number of subscribers to the ODHH mailing list and newsletter distribution list continues to steadily increase. ODHH continued its involvement at community and stakeholder events and added the Baltimore County Association of Senior Citizens Organizations, Inc., the Deaf V.I.S.A. project, and the Prison and Aftercare Programs for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Inmates to the list of community organization in which we participate. However, outreach numbers, including the number of town hall meetings and the number of exhibits staffed, were down in FY 2011. The decrease is due, in part, to limiting Office expenditures in tough fiscal times. As a result, ODHH limits the number of exhibit opportunities that have fees associated with them. Further, each town hall meeting hosted involves expenditures for travel and accommodations (interpreters, captioning, etc.). Even still, ODHH exceeded the statutory requirement to hold a minimum of two town hall meetings per fiscal year.

Focus Area: Information Collection

Goal

- Maintain timely and accurate collection of data from the Telecommunication Access of Maryland, Springfield Hospital Center, the Division of Rehabilitation Services, and the Maryland Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program.

Indicators of Success

- Increased understanding of the Marylanders being served by State government.
- Facilitated coordination of services for Marylanders with hearing loss.

Progress

Numbers for the above mentioned programs are traditionally collected in August and September. The Office will update this report when those numbers are available.

Conclusion

It is through the implementation of the Strategic Plan that ODHH will increase relevance to all levels of government and to the constituent populations we serve. ODHH intends to make progress in each focus area in the next two years through the accomplishment mid-term objectives outlined in the plan. ODHH will continue implement the plan by utilizing the Maryland Managing for Results (MFR), which is a strategic planning, performance measurement and budgeting process that emphasizes use of resources to achieve measurable results, accountability, efficiency, and continuous improvement in State government programs.