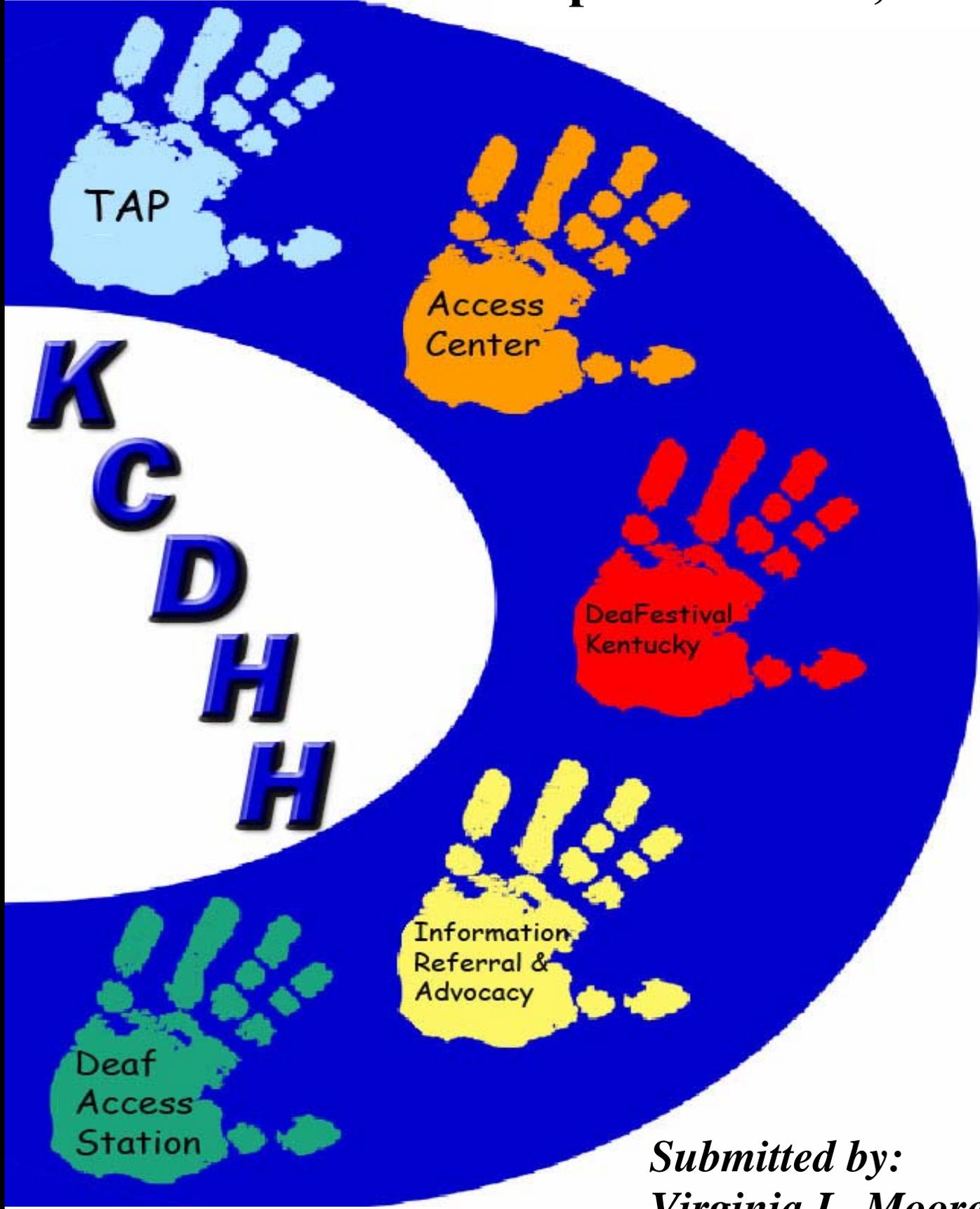


Agency Report

July 1st through
September 30th, 2020



TAP

Access
Center

DeafFestival
Kentucky

Information
Referral &
Advocacy

Deaf
Access
Station

Submitted by:
Virginia L. Moore



KENTUCKY COMMISSION ON THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

QUARTERLY ACTIVITIES

July 1, 2020 – September 30, 2020

GOVERNING MANDATES

KRS 163.510

- 1) The commission shall advise the Governor and the General Assembly concerning policy and programs to enhance the quality and coordination of services for the deaf and hard of hearing.
- 2) The commission shall cooperate with and assist local, state and federal governments and public and private agencies in the development of programs for the deaf and hard of hearing.
- 3) The commission shall review legislative programs relating to services to deaf and hard of hearing persons and shall conduct studies of conditions affecting the health and welfare of the deaf and hard of hearing.
- 4) The commission shall oversee the provision of interpreter services to the deaf and hard of hearing and may provide services if necessary.

KRS 163.525 (5)

- 5) The Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing shall establish procedures for application and distribution of specialized telecommunications equipment by the promulgation of administrative regulations in accordance with provisions of KRS Chapter 13A.

2020-2021 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

- Goal 1:** Develop, propose and lobby for legislation to improve services for the deaf and hard of hearing.
- Goal 2:** Work with government, public, and private agencies to develop programs and provide services for the deaf and hard of hearing.
- Goal 3(a):** Review statewide programs, established through legislation, which relate to services for the deaf and hard of hearing.
- Goal 3(b):** Research conditions affecting the quality of life of the deaf and hard of hearing.
- Goal 4:** Oversee the provision of qualified interpreters and captioning services.
- Goal 5:** Provide information and referrals to consumers regarding equipment provided by other entities.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

Legislation

In addition to monitoring legislative activity for potential impact on the deaf and hard of hearing community, KCDHH is revisiting the hearing screening bill for possible submission during the 2021 Legislative Session. Legislation related to education, specifically the impacts of COVID-19, such as Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI) and Virtual Learning, will be an ongoing concern.

The Executive Director was also contacted by the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet (EWDC) General Counsel. She gave a brief overview of the Commission's mission, vision and programs and provided information regarding current regulations and potential legislation.

(1.1 Develop, propose and lobby for legislation to ensure equal access to appropriate education for deaf and hard of hearing students, from birth to post-secondary.)

(1.2 Lobby for and support legislation developed by other entities that directly impacts the lives of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)

Budget

The State Budget Director recently issued a request for all agencies to submit a preliminary budget reduction plan in the amount of 8%. Although this is a significant cut, with vacancy savings, the elimination of travel expenditures and reductions in outreach, it is manageable. If there is relief available from the federal government, the percentage could potentially be lower; however, a budget cut of some kind is inevitable.

Personnel

The Program Coordinator position has been filled; however, the agency now has vacancies in the Administrative Specialist II and Executive Secretary II positions. Due to budget cuts, the Executive Secretary II position was kept vacant until October, and the Administrative Specialist II position will remain vacant until the first of December. The search for a new Executive Secretary II is now underway.

Communication Access during COVID-19

As the Governor continued his daily briefings from July through September announcing updates, restrictions and recommendations to curb the spread of COVID-19, requests for interviews, speaking opportunities, appearances and meetings with the Executive Director also continued.



On July 23, the Executive Director and Information Office Coordinator presented to the Human Services team with the Lexington Division of Emergency Management. During the Zoom presentation participants were provided with information and tips regarding the best ways to assist deaf and hard of hearing individuals when working to de-escalate a situation.



On July 28, the Executive Director completed a welcome video for the Kentucky Academy of Audiology, which will air during their virtual AuDacity 2020 Conference on October 16-17. This conference will demonstrate why and how audiologists can integrate design thinking with evidence-based practices to enhance patient outcomes.

On July 30, the Executive Director and Information Office Supervisor met with Humana’s Senior User Interface Design Engineer & Digital Accessibility Lead. She asked the Executive Director to meet with her resource group to discuss the number of people impacted by hearing loss in



Kentucky and in the United States, primary causes of hearing loss and deafness, and populations impacted the most by hearing loss. Other topics the Executive Director was requested to address included information about American Sign Language (ASL), information about hearing aids covered by insurance, communicating with hearing people (when masks block mouths making lip reading impossible), using technology, and what tools are most effective. The group also discussed telehealth and virtual medical appointments, how to get support when a deaf or hard of hearing person has a problem with a Humana-related product/site/app, working with deaf and hard of hearing employees (especially now, with remote meetings), and things Humana can do to improve collaboration with associates and provide support for members who may have hearing loss. The meeting ended with the Executive Director teaching participants an expression in ASL. The Executive Director met with her again on September 28 to work out the technological details for the presentation on October 6.



On August 18, the Executive Director and Information Office Supervisor participated in the Kentucky Association of Government Communicators (KAGC) monthly lunch meeting via Zoom. As the presenter, the Executive Director explained the role of the Commission, providing a detailed description of the agency including size, role, duties and capabilities as well as staffing. She also talked about interpreter availability across the state, her role interpreting for the Governor, opportunities for state government to expand its outreach by remembering the deaf and hard of hearing community, and the steps KAGC members can take to become more involved.

On September 9, the Executive Director and Information Office Supervisor were interviewed by Louisville television station WAVE 3 regarding text-to-911 in Meade County. The Executive



Director interpreted for the Information Office Coordinator, who told the reporter that most deaf individuals who use sign language to communicate use Video Relay Services (VRS) to call 911 if possible, but that isn’t an option for those who don’t use sign language. She explained that in emergency situations that happen outside the home where specialized equipment is not available, text-to-911 is a crucial, life-saving tool for the deaf and hard of hearing community.

(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)

(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)

NASADHH Meeting



The Executive Director attended several National Association of State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NASADHH) meetings and has continued to work with the group on national level. Members shared info on how each state is providing access during the COVID-19 pandemic, including their research on various clear masks. Members also discussed how different states are getting information out to their constituents, such as through the Governor's Office, vlogs, Facebook and agency websites. In addition, members shared information regarding ongoing protest rallies and demonstrations associated with the Black Lives Matter campaign, how that situation is affecting each state's deaf and hard of hearing community and emphasizing the continued importance of working with police officers on how to approach deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)

(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)

Ongoing Protests and Demonstrations: Role of KCDHH

KCDHH continued to ensure full access was provided as the Governor addressed the Commonwealth regarding the protests and related issues. The agency is also continuing to work with the Louisville mayor's office to make sure that access is consistently provided as demonstrations continue and press conferences are held with some regularity.

On August 10, the KCDHH Executive Director met with Secretary of the Governor's Executive Cabinet to inquire as to whether or not any committees are being developed to look at new officer training as a result of the Black Lives Matter movement. He put her in contact with the Kentucky Law Enforcement Council (KLEC) Executive Director, who met with her via teleconference on August 17. They discussed the need for additional training modules focusing specifically on interacting with deaf and hard of hearing individuals. The KCDHH Executive Director explained that training is already being developed that the Commission would like them to consider, and she is working to connect the KLEC Executive Director with the developer of the officer training to ensure that all parties are working together to move this project forward. They also discussed the importance of Senate Bill 189, which provides the opportunity for deaf and hard of hearing persons to voluntarily indicate their hearing status in the Kentucky vehicle registration system. This allows law enforcement officers to see that information during traffic stops. The KLEC Executive Director suggested that KCDHH provide training to the 911 operators who are the first line of contact for all officers in the field, and he indicated that he intends to see if there is an opportunity for KCDHH to provide a short training at the next conference.

(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)

(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)

(2.5 Educate state agencies, government branches, organizations and the public on federal and state laws regarding hearing loss.)

Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs

The Executive Director was contacted by the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA) to request help with information and resources, given that hearing loss is the number one disability among veterans. The Executive Director presented to the Deputy Commissioner, the Public Information Officer and the Development Officer regarding how KCDHH can partner with them to provide information and resources to veterans. She also shared the Resources for Veterans with Hearing Loss brochure and discussed their Trust W.A.L.K. for Vets, which is a 22 minutes a day, 22+ miles, 22 day virtual fundraising event for the Kentucky Veterans Program Trust Fund to help veterans who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Plans to maintain and further develop the partnership between KCDHH and KDVA were discussed and additional meetings will follow.

(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)

(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)

Mask Up Kentucky!



On July 20, the Information Office Supervisor completed a \$10,000 Kentucky Colonels Foundation grant request, "Clear Masks for Kentucky Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students, Parents, Educators," under the direction of the KCDHH Executive Director in partnership with the

Knowledge Center on Deafness (KCD). Upon notification of receiving the full grant amount, the Executive Director ordered 4,920 ClearMasks. Hamilton Relay also partnered with KCDHH and KCD in purchasing the fog-free, clear masks.



(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)

Mask Distribution Project Underway

As a result of the Mask Up Kentucky campaign and our partnership with Kentucky Colonels, Hamilton Relay and Knowledge Center on Deafness, KCDHH was able to make a bulk purchase of ClearMasks for distribution to parents, licensed interpreters, K-12 educators/administrators and other direct service providers. In addition to providing effective communication during the COVID-19 pandemic, this mask distribution project is designed to raise awareness regarding hearing loss and to educate the public about communicating clearly and effectively with deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

On August 12, the Executive Director, Interpreter Referral Specialist and Policy Specialist met with representatives from Kentucky Hands & Voices, Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) Outreach Services, the Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (KDBHDID) Program Administrator for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services and the President of the Kentucky Association of the Deaf (KAD) via Zoom to discuss mask distribution.

On August 13, the Executive Director met with the President-Elect of the Kentucky Council of Administrators for Special Education via phone regarding the possibility of notifying Special Education Directors across the state about the availability of the free masks and the most effective way to disseminate them. The President-Elect, who is also the Special Education Director for Shelby County Schools, indicated that there is a list of directors available, which could aid in the dissemination process. The Executive Director told the President-Elect she would send her some of the masks and requested her feedback.

On August 6, in partnership with Kentucky Hands & Voices, KCDHH worked with the Governor's office to develop talking points for a video to launch the project. The video was recorded in late August and aired on August 27. Kentucky Hands & Voices and KCDHH developed request forms that were posted on each organization's website along with links for visitors to access both forms. Those links were also posted on the Governor's website for additional exposure and ease of access.

Education-related requests for masks are being routed through KSD Outreach for distribution, while mental health requests are being funneled through the Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (KDBHDID) Program Administrator for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, but the bulk of those requests and the remaining requests from medical providers (i.e. audiologists, etc.), Kentucky licensed interpreters, businesses, daycares, and family members are being distributed by KCDHH.

The Executive Director also worked with the Governor's office to obtain additional funds through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to purchase a second bulk order of ClearMasks for distribution to hospitals and nursing homes. KCDHH is partnering with the Kentucky Hospital Association (KHA), the Kentucky Office of the Ombudsman and the Department of Transportation (DOT) to get those masks distributed accordingly.

(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)

(2.4 Create and promote awareness about programs and services to benefit the deaf and hard of hearing community.)

(2.5 Educate state agencies, government branches, organizations and the public on federal and state laws regarding hearing loss.)

KCDHH Executive Director Honored



On September 9, KCDHH was notified that the Governor's Communication team, including the KCDHH Executive Director, would be honored with the Amici Linguarum Award from the Kentucky Languages Association, which is given for recognizing an individual or organization not directly involved in the teaching of world languages that has made a significant contribution to the profession, and which has made a significant contribution to our society at large through their efforts to support world language teaching programs, as well as increasing or promulgating a love and appreciation for world languages and cultures, through their day-to-day operations. The team was recognized in a virtual Awards Program on September 19.

(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)



On September 14, KCDHH was notified that the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Bluegrass Chapter would be honoring KCDHH Executive Director as Communicator of the Year, for demonstrating communications expertise and having a substantially positive influence on the community. She will be recognized in a Zoom Awards Program on October 15.



for

The Executive Director was invited to speak at the University of Kentucky's (UK) Lewis Honors College CommuniTEAS on September 22. CommuniTEAS is a series of talks that provide an intimate setting for guests across UK and the Lexington area to share their research and passion with the Lewis Honors College. It highlights individuals who are change-makers in their fields whose work showcases concepts that are powerful and intersectional. It is a conversation-style gathering that encourages students, faculty and staff to join in the discussion and further explore ideas that generate thought-provoking conversations and help connect students with important people across the community. At their request, the Executive Director shared her personal and professional journey advocating for Kentucky's deaf and hard of hearing community

(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)



ACCESS CENTER ACTIVITIES

Workshops

The Interpreter Referral Specialist attended a seven hour workshop, “Trauma Informed Interpreting with Children,” July 27 to 29. The workshop provided information that applies to the current work with the Department of Community Based Services (DCBS) collaboration group and focusing on the unique needs of children involved with DCBS and in foster care. The presenters provided in-depth information and examples of linguistic and cultural implications as well as hearing differences when providing trauma-informed care. One of the presenters is a foster mom, as well as a nationally certified interpreter. The other presenter is a clinical psychologist and a foster/adoptive parent of a deaf child.

The Interpreter Referral Specialist also attended a six-hour workshop, August 24 to August 28, “CPS and the CPC: Understanding the CPS Process: From Allegation to Case Closed.” The workshop explained the Child Protective System (CPS) process from intake to completion. The workshop was based on the Texas standards governing CPS operations but is very similar to other states’ CPS operations.

(4.1 Use a comprehensive approach to coordinate communication access services.)

(4.3 Educate interpreters and promote current interpreting standards.)

DCBS Collaboration Group Meeting

The Interpreter Referral Specialist met with the Program Administrator of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Services in the Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (KDBHDID), the Department of Community Based Services Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DCBS DHH) liaison, and the DCBS Out of Home Care (OHC) Branch Manager on July 30 and September 2. The purpose of the meeting was to provide updates on individual cases involving deaf and hard of hearing children or family members to ensure accessibility to programs and apply those scenarios to improve the DCBS systems overall when serving deaf-membered families. For the past year, the DCBS liaison has been working diligently to set up better processes to improve the identification and tracking of deaf- or deaf-blind-membered families within “The Worker Information SysTem” (TWIST), so she can provide support and resources to those as well as ensure accurate data collection. The DCBS liaison has successfully added a component where a field worker can add additional information, such as hearing loss, language and interpreting needs, in a text box field, but the individuals will still be tracked in TWIST. The group’s focus this quarter has been on increasing recruitment and retention of foster parents, respite care providers, Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and volunteers who can communicate with deaf, hard of hearing and deaf-blind children and youth that have been placed in OHC. The Diligent Recruitment Specialist arranged for the DCBS collaboration group to attend the Jefferson Region’s recruitment team meeting to discuss

recruitment ideas and tasks for their recruitment and retention plans targeting deaf-membered families.

On August 7, the Jefferson Region's recruitment team of foster and adoptive parents held a staff meeting and invited the DCBS collaboration group to attend and begin to develop a plan to inform and recruit foster parents who are able to communicate with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. An informational meeting, open to the public, has been set for October 7 to provide information on how to become a foster parent or get involved in other areas such as respite care, CASA or volunteering.

(4.1 Use a comprehensive approach to coordinate communication access services.)

(4.4 Partner with public, private and state entities to improve policies regarding communication access.)

Kentucky Board of Interpreters Meeting

The Interpreter Referral Specialist attended the Kentucky Board of Interpreters (KBI) quarterly meeting on September 3. During this meeting, discussions focused on the abundance of applications from Video Relay Interpreters (VRI) across the United States, which shows that most of the VRI companies are complying with each state's interpreter laws and licensing requirements.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to many facilities being closed to the public, including Center for the Assessment of Sign Language Interpretation (CASLI) testing sites. The sites, including KCDHH, are slowly reopening but have had to limit the number of testing slots because of safety policies and guidelines, which is causing a backlog of individuals waiting to take their exam. The Board had several applicants facing this issue and had to address those individuals whose temporary license would be expiring soon or already expired as a result of not being able to take their exam.

The Board also discussed regulations, since the former legal council did not submit the amended regulations that were approved for filing in December 2019. The current legal council will go back and review the approved amended regulations that were supposed to have been submitted. In addition, the Board introduced two new members who are replacing members whose terms have expired.

(4.3 Educate interpreters and promote current interpreting standards.)

Center for the Assessment of Sign Language Interpretation (CASLI) Testing Site



This quarter, two National Interpreter Certification (NIC) Interview and Performance Exams were administered on August 6 and September 4. The Executive Director, Interpreter Referral Specialist and Interpreter I met to discuss offering more testing slots, as there are only a small number of testing sites open due to COVID-19 safety concerns. Additional test slots have been approved and will be filled based on staff availability. Staff and NIC Exam candidates will continue to adhere to the safety procedures developed last quarter.

(4.2 Partner with national, state and local organizations to provide national certification opportunities.)



TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Hamilton Relay Administrators Meeting

The Program Coordinator and the Executive Director attended Hamilton Relay's Virtual Relay Administrators Meeting via Microsoft Teams on September 9. Hamilton explained that their call centers have been closed due to COVID-19, and all their operators are working from home. Their homes were outfitted with the appropriate equipment, and privacy rules are being followed. This appears to be very successful, and depending on what the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) says, this may be used as a model for future disasters of this magnitude. The Hamilton Relay team discussed changing their approach this year and begin hosting webinars as they have noticed a spike in captioned calls with more minutes used as a result of constituents being home more and depending more on technology.

(3.8b Compile information regarding programs, services and barriers that impact the deaf and hard of hearing community.)

(5.2 Maintain Partnerships with national organizations and the current Telecommunications Relay Provider to supply the most current and technologically advanced equipment and apps.)

TEDPA Virtual Conference

The Program Coordinator attended the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA) business meeting via Zoom on September 10. This meeting was held to elect new officers for the year and vote on bylaws. The TEDPA Board provided updates for this past year and discussed the possibility of holding the conference next year in Indianapolis, Indiana, since this year's Indianapolis conference was cancelled due to COVID-19. Broadband connectivity and the need for access for people in rural areas was also a topic of concern. The FCC is supposed to have a new bond to receive funds for installing broadband service for people in these rural areas. Broadband connectivity can be used for IP CPTS, internet protocol relay, video relay, video chats, education practices and emails. Some individuals in rural areas do not have access to broadband, which creates a greater digital divide. Access to cellular service may be limited as well.

(5.2 Maintain Partnerships with national organizations and the current Telecommunications Relay Provider to supply the most current and technologically advanced equipment and apps.)

KATS Network Advisor Council Meeting

The Program Coordinator attended the Kentucky Assistive Technology Services (KATS) Network Advisory Council meeting on September 11 via Zoom. Updates included Assistive Technology (AT) Center activities, and the Statewide Hearing Aid Assistance and Reuse Program (SHARP) as well as Coordinating Center activities including the Coordinating and Assisting the Reuse of Assistive Technology (CARAT) project. Brief updates were also provided by Protection & Advocacy, Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation (KATLC), Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), and KCDHH. The primary topic of interest was COVID-19

safety precautions including curbside pickups, ramp projects, the reopening of offices, offices remaining closed to public in-person access, and managing staff in multiple locations, since many are still telecommuting. In addition, activities and trainings have transitioned to virtual meetings and webinars. The next meeting is scheduled for December 21 via Zoom.

(5.2 Maintain Partnerships with national organizations and the current Telecommunications Relay Provider to supply the most current and technologically advanced equipment and apps.)



INFORMATION, REFERRAL & ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

Great Lakes ADA Webinars



The Information Coordinator participated in a Great Lakes Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Center webinar, “The ADA Interactive Process – The Key to Compliance,” on July 7. The Interactive Process encourages the employer and employee to work together to develop a plan of accommodations. The process includes seven steps to help the employer ensure accommodations are being met. This webinar counts toward elective hours for the ADA Coordinator Training Certification Program.

The Executive Staff Advisor and the Information Coordinators also participated in a webinar focusing on Accessible Virtual Meeting Platforms on July 21, also hosted by the Great Lakes ADA Center. This was an opportunity to learn the benefits of communication accessibility provided by various virtual platforms. This webinar also counts toward elective hours for the ADA Coordinator Training Certificate Program.

(3.7(b) Research and expand opportunities to address information deprivation and isolation among deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)

(3.8(b) Compile information regarding programs, services and barriers that impact the deaf and hard of hearing community.)

Introduction to OCLC Interlibrary Loan

 As KCDHH is a part of the OCLC, the Information Coordinators attended a webinar on August 4, “Introduction to Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) Interlibrary Loan”, hosted by OCLC. KCDHH recently joined the OCLC and arranged for the coordinators to receive training to enhance their understanding of the new system before the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Resource Library reopens to the public. The webinar provided an overview of the system and explained how to access it administratively.

(2.2 Maintain and promote a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Resource Library and a public Video Phone Station.)

KDLS Partnership: WorldShare ILL – Lending

 The Information Coordinator participated in a webinar on August 20 hosted by OCLC to continue training on WorldShare ILL–Lending. Participants learned how to set up and maintain their lending library, which is critical to KCDHH’s work with other OCLC members to expand and enhance the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Resource Library. A training was previously scheduled on August 12, but there was no captioner available, so the Information Coordinator was unable to participate.

(2.2 Maintain and promote a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Resource Library and a public Video Phone Station.)

National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM) Webinar



On August 5, the Executive Staff Advisor attended a Zoom webinar provided by the National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM). The webinar, entitled “The Evolution of Early Hearing Detection and Intervention programs for Infants and Young Children: Past, Present and Future,” discussed the advances made in early hearing screening in the last fifty years and showcased several of the individuals who were instrumental in making those advances possible. The presenter also noted several areas in which improvements still need to be made, such as follow up, educating physicians regarding the need for additional screening before children who have passed the newborn hearing screening start school in order to catch progressive or later onset hearing loss, the need to improve the use of teleintervention, and increased identification and treatment of children who have congenital Cytomegalovirus (CMV).

(3.4(a) Partner with and advise local, state and national organizations to improve early identification of hearing loss.)

Statewide Advisory Council for Exceptional Children (SACEC)



The Executive Staff Advisor attended the Statewide Advisory Council for Exceptional Children (SACEC) meeting on August 20. The incoming Commissioner of Education introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Interim Director of Communications from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) gave an overview of some of the things that have been taking place at KDE related to COVID-19. Local school board members from across the state had a virtual town hall to review the Health at School guidance. KDE has a COVID-19 website with multiple tabs and links to information. The Student Advisory Team is creating videos related to Mask Up Kentucky. The KDE Associate Commissioner, Office of Special Education and Early Learning asked for feedback from the council regarding any noticeable gaps in the guidance and support they have been providing. They are working to ease the anxiety of teachers and are looking into establishing learning pods. The KDE Office of Special Education and Early Learning Division Director gave an update on the last several due process hearings to resolve Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) disputes between parents and school districts.

(2.6 Advocate for equal access to education for deaf and hard of hearing individuals, cradle to grave.)

(3.2(a) Advise state agencies and private committees, boards and taskforces in matters related to deaf and hard of hearing issues.)

(3.5(b) Partner with KDE to identify the number of deaf and hard of hearing children in the school system.)

Educational Webinar on Deaf-Blindness



On August 25, the Policy Specialist, who is the staff liaison for the Kentucky Deaf-Blind Community study group, attended a webinar hosted by the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) entitled “A Family Story: Emma Riley and Her Mother.” The webinar featured a Kentucky member of the Deaf-Blind community, Emma Riley, and her mother, offering an up close and personal look at their struggles and triumphs. They offered a powerful personal testimony regarding tools and supports that proved valuable to them and shared the inherent as

well as the imposed struggles with parenting a deaf-blind child or growing up deaf-blind in Emma's case. Key takeaways included the following:

- Support groups can be very beneficial for both parents of deaf-blind children and the children themselves, and mental health support is vital.
- Involving OVR Blind Services Division as early as possible can and should be life-changing.
- It is extremely important for family members, guardians, teachers, etc. to encourage independence.

(3.8(b) Compile information regarding programs, services and barriers that impact the deaf and hard of hearing community.)

Governors Early Childhood Advisory Council

On August 31, the Executive Staff Advisor attended an Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) meeting at which the Kentucky Lt. Governor Jacqueline Coleman met virtually with



ECAC and other organizations from across the state to discuss and emphasize the importance of improving Kindergarten Readiness rates in Kentucky. The regular quarterly meeting for this quarter has been

postponed.

(2.6 Advocate for equal access to education for deaf and hard of hearing individuals, cradle to grave.)

NDC Live: Remote Services

On September 15, the Executive Staff Advisor participated in a Zoom meeting hosted by the National Deaf Center (NDC) that focused on remote services for deaf and hard of hearing college students. This presentation looked at some of the different options for remote services such as captioning and interpreters. It also compared Speech-to-Text Services (STTS) such as Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART), C-Print, and TypeWell to Automation Speech Recognition (ASR) Technology. Due to ASR having only 60%-70% accuracy, communication cannot be assumed to be equivalent to the information received by others and therefore makes ASR not acceptable as an accommodation under ADA.

(2.6 Advocate for equal access to education for deaf and hard of hearing individuals, cradle to grave.)

Anti-Harassment and Diversity Training



The Executive Director and Information Office Supervisor attended the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet's annual Anti-Harassment and Diversity training on September 17 and September 24

via Microsoft Teams. The training included information on Kentucky's zero tolerance policy regarding harassment of any kind as well as the implementation of policies, procedures and programs to promote and monitor progressive statewide workforce management in the areas of equal employment opportunity, affirmative action, retention, inclusion and diversity.

(3.8(b) Compile information regarding programs, services and barriers that impact the deaf and hard of hearing community.)

Criminal Justice and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)



On September 16, the Executive Staff Advisor took part in the “Criminal Justice and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)” training presented by the Great Lakes ADA Center. This training is part of the webinar trainings hosted by the Great Lakes ADA Center required to complete the ADA Coordinator Training Certification Program. The focus was the liability of the criminal justice system regarding inmates with disabilities and provision of accommodations for them. It is interesting to note that the percentage of individuals with disabilities in prisons is almost three times higher than outside of prison. Factoring in jails, the percentage is even higher.

(3.7(b) Research and expand opportunities to address information deprivation and isolation among deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)

(3.8(b) Compile information regarding programs, services and barriers that impact the deaf and hard of hearing community.)

Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation Meeting



The Information Coordinator attended the quarterly KATLC meeting on September 17 via Zoom. OVR employees joined the meeting as guests. The Board approved all accepted and denied applications in this quarter. The representative from Fifth Third Bank indicated that the interest rate for the loans has decreased to 4.5%. Due to the pandemic, any future events have been canceled or rescheduled. OVR indicated they would like to interview a Board member for their newsletter, and the Board subsequently recommended and approved interviewing the Chair. The next meeting will be December 9 via Zoom unless travel restrictions are lifted.

(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)

(3.2(a) Advise state agencies and private committees, boards and taskforces in matters related to deaf and hard of hearing issues.)

Public Relations Output

The Office of Information Services focuses on Public Relations (PR) efforts and outreach activities to increase awareness of services offered by KCDHH. This quarter, **646,385** informational and public relations items were distributed.

PR Dissemination	
<i>Method of Dissemination</i>	<i>Number Disseminated</i>
Hard Copy	218
Blitz	0
Social Media	646,167
TOTAL	905,311

(2.1 Work in partnership with media, state and local entities/agencies, and public/private organizations to create awareness about hearing loss and the needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.)

(3.2(a) Advise state agencies and private committees, boards and taskforces in matters related to deaf and hard of hearing issues.)

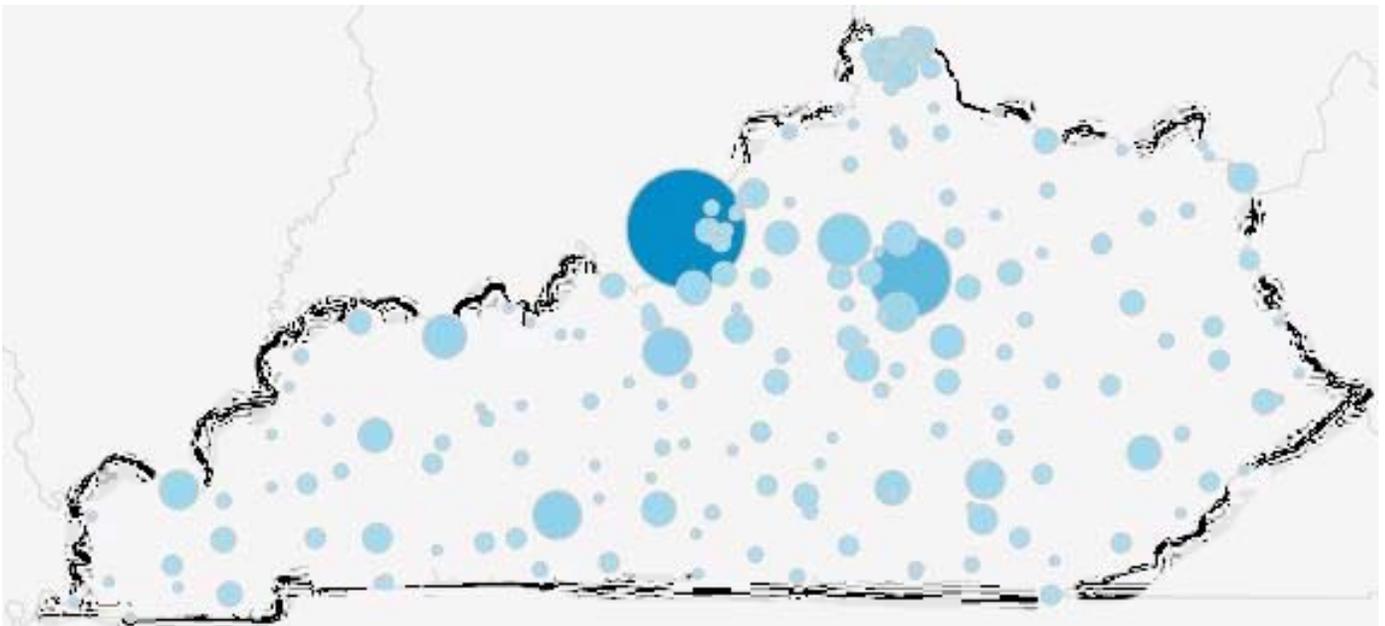
Database Updates

Over this last quarter, the KCDHH staff and database developers have been working out the final kinks and bugs in the new database. Though it is now live and in production mode for the staff, the database has not yet been open for public use. For the time being, requesters are being asked to call in their requests, which staff members then enter and process in the new system. The Access Center (AC) has been working with a handful of interpreters and state agencies to test the new database system, so that if there are issues or glitches they can be dealt with before it is made available for use by AC interpreters and state agencies. Once the new database is determined to be ready, an announcement will be made and the database will be open for use by the public. Staff anticipates a positive response from the public as the new system streamlines the process of making requests and offers them the ability to track the progress of their requests.

*(3.8(b) Compile information regarding programs, services and barriers that impact the deaf and hard of hearing community.)
(5.5 Develop innovative outreach regarding TAP.)*

KCDHH Web Counter Hits: July 1 – September 30, 2020

The image below depicts the various cities and towns throughout Kentucky from which consumers visited our Web site. The bigger the circle, the more visits that circle represents.



We have had 4,896 visitors from Kentucky this quarter, which represents a 71% decrease of visitors over the previous quarter (17,380). This significant decrease is likely due to our visitors' shift to Facebook for the Coronavirus update videos, the cancellation of DeaFestival this year due to the pandemic, and the fact that we have disabled our old online request forms as we transition to a new system. These numbers were somewhat boosted by a significant interest in our clear mask distribution program, which is designed to promote education and awareness regarding effective communication through the distribution of ClearMasks to requesters across the state who provide in-person services to deaf and hard of hearing individuals as well as family members and caregivers.