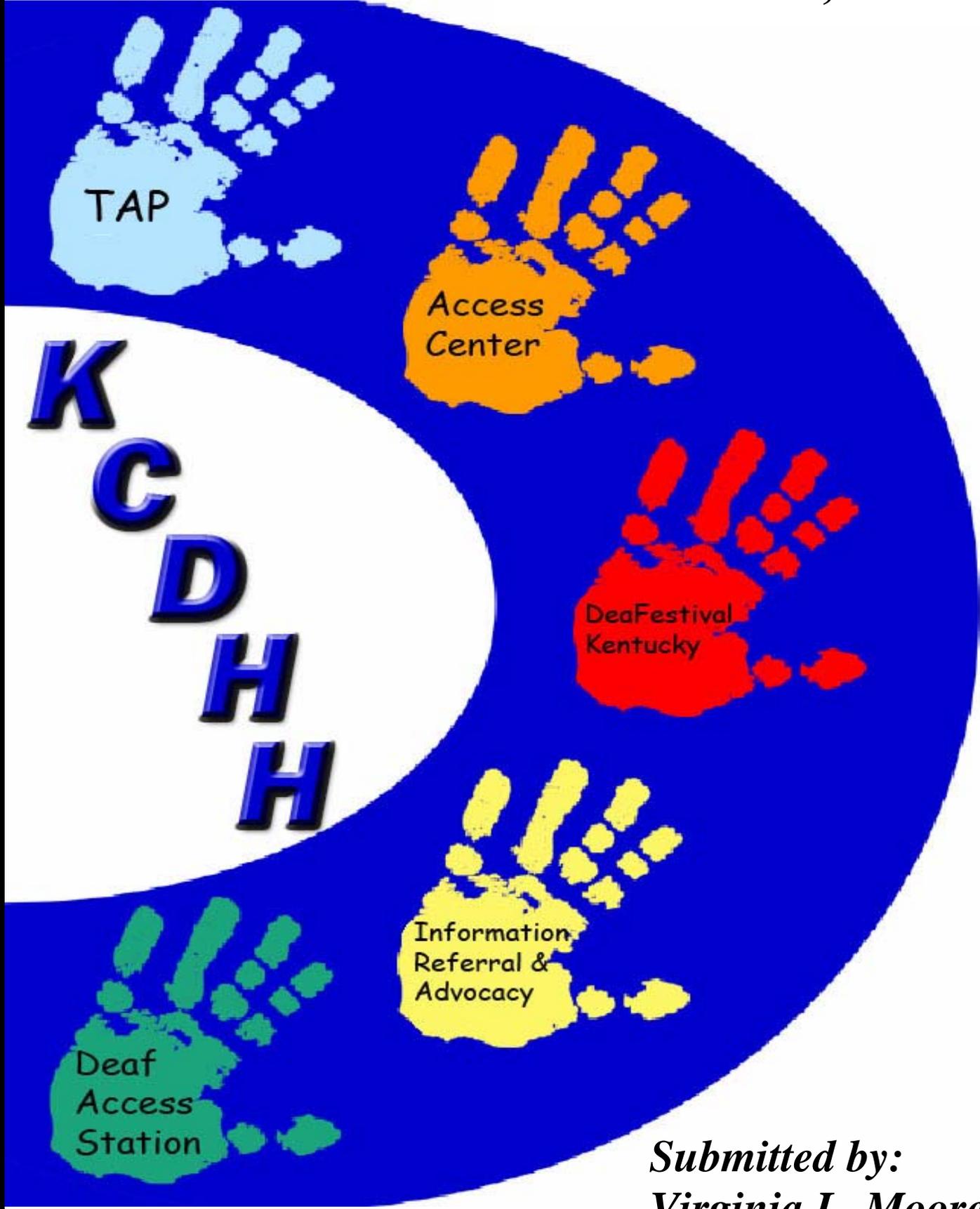


Agency Report

January 1st through
March 31st, 2021



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Access
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DeafFestival
Kentucky

Information
Referral &
Advocacy

Deaf
Access
Station

Submitted by:
Virginia L. Moore



KENTUCKY COMMISSION ON THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

QUARTERLY ACTIVITIES

January 1, 2021 – March 31, 2021

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.

2020-2022 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

During this quarter, the Executive Director and staff followed legislation introduced in the 2021 session of the General Assembly to determine any impact on the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) community. Legislation addressing the state budget, telehealth, unemployment insurance, COVID-19 restrictions, newborn hearing screenings, broadband, audiology and speech-language pathology, substance use disorder (SUD), early literacy, driver's licensing, and vaccinations, among others, have all been watched closely throughout the legislative session.



SB 91 ("Bella's Bill"), sponsored by Senator Girdler on behalf of Hands & Voices, is an act that would add congenital cytomegalovirus (CMV) to the list of heritable and congenital disorders included in the newborn screening program. Unfortunately, it did not make it out of committee due to the fiscal impact reported in the financial analysis done by Senator Girdler's office. However, working in partnership with KCDHH, Hands & Voices' hard work garnered the attention of several key legislators as well as the Deputy Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Public Health, and as a result, some of the education pieces in that bill are already underway. While the bill did not move forward during this legislative session, it will be reviewed for further discussion and revision during the Interim session. Plans are also underway to develop and promote a CMV webinar to be held June 4.

Other bills of note include the following:

- HB 1 – Creates a framework for businesses, local governments, schools and nonprofits to operate during COVID-19 restrictions. The bill was enacted over the governor's veto.
- SB 1 – States that executive orders that place restrictions on the function of schools, businesses or nonprofits expire after 30 days unless extended by the General Assembly. The same would apply to executive orders that place restrictions on political, religious and social gatherings or impose mandatory quarantine or isolation requirements. This bill was also enacted over the governor's veto.
- SB 2 – Requires some administrative regulations to be in effect no longer than 30 days, if they place restrictions on schools, businesses, places of worship, or on religious, social or political gatherings. The same would apply to mandatory quarantine or isolation requirements. This bill was also enacted over the governor's veto.
- SB 7 – Allows the state to waive unemployment insurance overpayment debts that occurred between January 27 and December 31 of last year, if the overpayment is not the fault of the recipient and if requiring the repayment would be "contrary to equity and good conscience". This bill was signed by the governor.
- SB 8 – Creates exemptions from any mandatory immunizations for those who object based on religious beliefs. It also prohibits orders during an epidemic from requiring the

immunization of people who object based on conscientiously held beliefs or the written opinion of the person's physician that immunization would be injurious to the person's health. This bill became law without the governor's signature.

- SB 47 – Creates a framework for Kentucky's participation in the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact, which will allow licensed audiologists and speech-language pathologists in participating states to practice across state boundaries and through telehealth without having to become licensed in each state. This bill was signed by the governor.
- SJR 59 – The original joint resolution, reviewed and supported by KCDHH, directed the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) to establish a work group to create written recommendations for distribution throughout Kentucky for individuals who suffer from SUD in order to reduce the barriers the individuals experience when attempting to access opioid disorder treatment programs. The final version of this resolution retains almost none of the original language and instead creates an advisory committee to establish a pilot program to investigate funding mechanisms for a diversion program for treatment and recovery housing services for individuals with SUD who have been arrested for SUD-related offenses. This joint resolution was signed by the governor.
- HB 320 – Expands broadband internet service to underserved areas with \$250 million for the broadband deployment fund. The bill will also reduce barriers for electric cooperatives to offer the service. This bill was enacted over the governor's veto.
- HB 439 – Requires a vision test to renew a driver's license starting in 2024. This bill was signed by the governor.

For the first time in Kentucky history, the governor requested that interpreting services be provided as he took time to provide an explanation on Facebook of the bills he signed and those he vetoed. Communication access was provided by KCDHH, and those videos can be accessed through the KCDHH Facebook page.

(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.)

(3.1(a) Monitor and support legislation promoting equal access to appropriate education for deaf and hard of hearing students, from birth to post-secondary education.)

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

(3.3(a) Monitor legislative issues that affect deaf and hard of hearing Kentuckians.)

Budget

The legislature has tentatively approved the budget for fiscal year 2021-22 with an appropriation increase in restricted funds. Barring unforeseen circumstances, the regular two-year budget cycle will begin again with the 2022 legislative session in January.

Personnel

The Administrative Specialist II and Executive Administrative Secretary positions remain vacant; however, the search for a new secretary is underway, and the Administrative Specialist II position is anticipated to be posted in the first week of April.

Communication Access during COVID-19

This quarter, KCDHH has continued to provide communication access for Governor Beshear's regular press briefings as he provided COVID-19 updates, including information regarding restrictions and vaccine distribution. The Executive Director (ED), Executive Staff Interpreter and Interpreter Referral Specialist have also provided interpreting services for the governor's joint briefings with "Kentucky's vaccine decisionmakers" for the Americana World Community Center, Global Lex Center and the Office of the Mayor, and the Center for Health Equity, among others.

As the Governor's Office is concerned with vaccine hesitancy, the governor visited multiple vaccination sites throughout the Commonwealth and worked together with various leaders in the community, such as faith leaders and leaders within minority areas, to encourage Kentuckians to get vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus. In addition to providing communication access for these visits, on January 25, the ED was one of several of the governor's team members to join in this effort and publicly take the vaccine to encourage others, including the deaf and hard of hearing community, to trust in the safety of the vaccine.



On Saturday, March 6th, KCDHH provided communication access for a memorial service on the Kentucky Capitol grounds, hosted by Governor Beshear and Lt. Governor/Secretary Coleman, commemorating the one-year anniversary of Kentucky's first COVID-19 case and honoring the victims of the pandemic. The governor also took time to express his appreciation that Kentucky now has access to three vaccines just one year after the first case was diagnosed.

KCDHH and the ED have continued to receive a high level of recognition as a result of the agency's response to communication access needs during COVID-19. Though it is hard to find silver linings during the worst pandemic in a hundred years, one of those has been the spotlight shined on the need for communication for the nearly 700,000 deaf and hard of hearing individuals in Kentucky. The publicity from the governor's appearances and press briefings has led to additional media attention, interpreting requests, and appearances for special events, as well as awards for providing specialized communication and bridging the gap for individuals with a hearing loss. KCDHH has also seen a surge in information, referral, and advocacy requests, some of which have come as a result of the media's need to understand who we are and what we can provide. Our hope is that through this recognition, more and more deaf and hard of hearing individuals receive the help they need.

- February 12 – Spectrum News1 interviewed the ED regarding the increase in interpreting as a result of being part of the governor's communication team.

- February 22 – First Lady Brittainy Beshear announced that the ED was the recipient of an award named in her honor, the “Virginia Moore Access Award”, presented by the Kentucky Educators for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Organization.
- February 23 – The National Bobblehead Hall of Fame unveiled its second “Virginia Moore Bobblehead” featuring the state of Kentucky engraved with *You Can't Be Doin' That*.
- March 4 – The ED interpreted for a statewide virtual presentation by the Louisville Youth Choir entitled *My Love for You*.
- March 8 – In honor of International Women’s Day, the National Bobblehead Hall of Fame shared a few of their favorite bobbleheads celebrating women, including the ED, on their Facebook page.
- March 12 – The ED interpreted a video segment advertising the New Pioneers 16-year celebration fundraising event in Washington County.
- March 16 – The ED received the 2021 “Communicator of the Year” award, presented by the governor, as well as the “Alumna of the Year” award, presented by the Greater Clark County School Foundation
- March 19 – Southern Indiana News & Tribune interviewed the ED about being named the Jeffersonville High School, Greater Clark County Public School System, Indiana, “Alumna of the Year.”
- March 31 – The ED was interviewed by Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) Public Radio.

(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.)

HLAA Kentuckiana COVID-19 Update



On January 12, the Executive Director gave a COVID-19 update to the Kentuckiana Chapter of Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) via Zoom. During this meeting there were several questions and concerns:

- How to find and register for vaccines. Because some individuals do not have the ability to sign up online, members requested information regarding registering by phone.
- The safety of the vaccine and the difference between the three vaccines currently available in Kentucky (Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson and Johnson)
- The future of HLAA, Kentucky Chapters, and the need to recruit younger participants
- Partnering with KCDHH to continue distributing the hospital packets.

(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.)

Health and Medical Preparedness Advisory Committee Meeting



The Policy Specialist attended the Health and Medical Preparedness Advisory Committee (HMPAC) meeting on January 26. During this meeting, leaders of various organizations involved in implementing Kentucky’s COVID-19 Vaccination Plan provided updates regarding their organization’s stage of execution, logistics, and planning. Organizations represented

included Public Health Preparedness (PHP) Branch, the Kentucky Board of Emergency Management, the Kentucky Health Department Association, and the Kentucky Hospital Association. Other participants included the State Trauma Coordinator, Director of Kentucky Long-Term Care, Functional and Access Needs Coordinator, and the Deputy Commissioner for Clinical Affairs in the Department of Public Health, as well as a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Epidemiologist. The Commonwealth continues to work diligently to distribute and administer COVID-19 vaccinations as quickly and smoothly as possible while maintaining enough flexibility to adjust to changes in the number of vaccinations the state can expect to receive in each shipment.

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

“Mask Up for Communication” Project

The ClearMask™ company contacted KCDHH on January 13 to share a new project called “Make An Impact: The ClearMasks Project.” They donated 14 cases of clear masks ear-marked for distribution to the community to ensure deaf and hard of hearing individuals have communication access. In mid-March KCDHH established a “Mask Up for Communication” project to handle the distribution of those masks. Deaf and hard of hearing individuals (top left photo) can request masks to use at their discretion, such as with family members or members of the community with whom they interact. Family and friends can also request masks on behalf of loved ones in nursing homes (bottom left photo). This project is still ongoing.



(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.)

Driver’s Licensing Services Transition

The Executive Director and Information Coordinator met with the Executive Director of the Office of Public Affairs and the Commissioner of the Department of Vehicle Regulation on March 26 to discuss the possibility of producing an ASL video explaining the transitioning of Driver Licensing Services across the state over the next several months. This video will allow deaf and hard of hearing Kentuckians to be aware of the changes, learn where new and renewal driver’s licenses will be processed, and find out how to get a driver’s license using the new system. A meeting will be set to record the video in early April when all the details are confirmed.

(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.)

Language Acquisition Project

COVID-19 has made it hard to move the Language Acquisition project forward. At one time funding was promised; however, due to the Pandemic and the impact on Kentucky’s budget,

those funds were reallocated. The Cabinet's Budget Director recommended we work with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to determine if funds were available.

On January 13, the Executive Director met with the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Director of OVR to discuss funding for the Language Acquisition Advisory Board. The KCDHH Executive Director explained the impact of these delays in language acquisition on OVR's deaf and hard of hearing consumers who are struggling to obtain and retain jobs as a result, pointing out that Kentucky ranks 51st in the nation (including Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico) in high school completion rates as well as employment rates for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. She also explained the direct correlation between language acquisition for children ages 0-3 and OVR's difficulty in helping deaf and hard of hearing individuals find employment. Unfortunately, due to strict guidelines regarding federal funding, OVR is prohibited from funding a project for children of that age.

On February 22, the Executive Director and Executive Staff Advisor met with the Common Ground group to refocus efforts with the Language Access and Acquisition study group. Additional information regarding that meeting and subsequent meetings related to early intervention is included below.

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

(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.)

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

Early Intervention Meetings

On February 10, the Executive Director, Executive Staff Advisor as the liaison for the KCDHH Early Childhood Language Access and Acquisition study group, the study group Chair, and the Executive Director for Kentucky Hands & Voices met with the Secretary and the Chief of Staff of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) to bring their attention to the quality of and gaps in the provision of early intervention services to deaf and hard of hearing children in Kentucky. The Secretary and Chief of Staff agreed to have a follow up meeting to allow us to present data and facts related to the current state of the early intervention system in relation to children with hearing loss and their families.

On February 22, the Executive Director and Executive Staff Advisor met with the Common Ground/study group members to discuss what information and data would need to be gathered to be presented to Secretary Friedlander in an effort to make positive changes in the Early Intervention system in Kentucky. After the group decided to focus on the Joint Commission on Infant Hearing (JCIH) Best Practice recommendations, members chose which information/data they would be responsible for gathering, and a follow up meeting was scheduled for March 2. During this meeting, renaming the group "the Early Intervention Task Force" was discussed.

On March 2, a follow up meeting was held to discuss what information/data had been collected to date and what was still needed. The decision was made to work with the Kentucky Hands & Voices Assistant Director to create a document with graphics showing data and other important information.

On March 10, a final meeting was held, and the determination was made that a PowerPoint presentation would best allow the group to display and discuss the information virtually. Final edits were made, and the study group Chair and two Hands & Voices staff were chosen to present the information.

The Executive Director, Executive Staff Advisor, study group Chair, and the Kentucky Hands & Voices Executive Director and Assistant Director met with CHFS Chief of Staff on March 12 to present data and information that had been collected and compiled in a PowerPoint presentation. The Chief of Staff also invited staff from the Part C, First Steps program as well as various staff from the Kentucky Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program. The information was well received, and the Chief of Staff assured the group that she would continue to meet with all agencies involved to work toward a better Early Intervention system for deaf and hard of hearing children and their families.

(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.)

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

The Commonwealth Education Continuum

The Commonwealth Education Continuum (CEC) will be co-chaired by Lt. Governor/Secretary Coleman, the Council on Postsecondary Education President, and the Commissioner of Education. Thirty representatives have been named, including experts from every stage of the education and workforce pipeline. It is our understanding sub groups will be formed in an effort to target underserved populations. KCDHH has made multiple requests to be part of the group who will specialize in the education of deaf and hard of hearing children.

(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.)

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

Mental Health Advisory Committee Meeting

On February 17, the Executive Director attended a virtual Mental Health Advisory Committee meeting. Because we have all had such a difficult time during the past year dealing with the ripple effects of COVID-19, including the isolation, Miriam Silman, Project AWARE Kentucky (Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education)/Trauma Informed Care Program Administrator was brought in to present to the group. The presentation focused on resilience – what it is, why we need it and how to build it – as well as the importance of taking care of the body and mind. Members also discussed the Biennial Report, membership, the Eyes on Hope Taskforce on Substance Use, the partnership with the Louisville Recovery Community Center, and the update to the Hospital Kit.

(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.)

Deaf-Blind Accessibility

The Kentucky Deaf-Blind Community study group has continued to meet quarterly to complete fact sheets, work on developing a Deaf-Blind Resource Guide, and identify library resources that

may be added to the KCDHH Resource Library. In addition to the regular quarterly meeting with the full study group on March 9, focused planning and development work sessions involving select staff and study group members were held on February 16, March 11, and March 25 via Zoom. Staff members have worked together with the study group to provide agency support for multiple facets of the study group's work. The Policy Specialist, who is the staff liaison for the study group, is collaborating with one of the Information Coordinators for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to track down library resources, and the Information Office Supervisor is providing design and editing support for the fact sheets and resource guide. The study group is also working with the Network Analyst II on two projects: 1) Identifying gaps in accessibility on the KCDHH website using a specialized widget purchased from Userway; 2) developing and resourcing a landing page on the KCDHH website where information on deaf-blindness, resources for families, state resources, and resources for service providers/professionals can be easily accessed. Ongoing and future study group goals include printing and distributing the fact sheets, publishing/posting the resource guide, developing and posting informational vlogs, purchasing books related to deaf-blindness for the KCDHH Resource Library, and projects related to education, outreach and advocacy.

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

(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.)

NASADHH Meetings



On January 11, February 8 and March 8, the Executive Director attended the National Association of State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NASADHH) virtual meetings.

Discussions during the meetings included the following topics:

- Access to legislation using captioning and interpreters
- Hiring deaf and hard of hearing individuals and working with state Human Resources Personnel
- COVID-19 telehealth for deaf and hard of hearing
- Broadband access needs, particularly in rural areas
- Upcoming national conference – virtual vs. in-person
- Officer elections
- Public state policies which affect the deaf and hard of hearing individuals in each state.

(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.)



ACCESS CENTER ACTIVITIES

Database

The KCDHH Access Center (AC) Interpreter Referral Specialist, Interpreter I, and Network Analyst II met several times this quarter to discuss changes that still need to be made in the new database system. The AC has invited a small number of state agencies to register and create an account to start utilizing the online system to request interpreting and CART services. It will be open to all state agency employees within the next quarter.

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

CASLI Testing Site



This quarter, the Interpreter Referral Specialist and Interpreter I renewed their Center for the Assessment of Sign Language Interpretation (CASLI) Local Test Administrator (LTA) agreements. While the testing site has remained closed this quarter due to COVID-19, KCDHH is considering reopening now that the new cleaning crew's work has been sufficiently evaluated and large scale vaccination distribution has begun. Upon reopening, the Interpreter I will reach out to candidates currently on the waiting list to schedule their exam(s) and will maintain a strict schedule that correlates with the office's cleaning schedule to ensure everyone's safety.

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) has posted key information about the Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) certification process on their website. Currently, as a result of the 2016 shift of responsibilities regarding administration and ongoing development and maintenance of exams from RID to CASLI, candidates must contact both RID and CASLI during different times in their certification process. Key steps in the process include the following:

1. Review all pertinent CDI webpages on the CASLI website.
2. Submit proof of meeting the 40 hour training requirement to RID.
3. Submit an audiogram or letter from audiologist to CASLI.
4. Apply for the CASLI Generalist Knowledge Exam.
5. Pass the Knowledge Exam.
6. Submit proof of meeting the associate degree educational requirement to RID (This will become a bachelor's degree requirement on May 17, 2021).
7. Apply for the CASLI Generalist Performance Exam.

For additional information, visit <https://www.casli.org/>.

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

Kentucky Board of Interpreters Meeting

On January 28, a special meeting of the Kentucky Board of Interpreters for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KBI) was held virtually through Zoom. This meeting focused on amending the current

regulations, as the regulation changes that were discussed a year ago were never submitted. The Board will work with the Legislative Research Commission (LRC) regarding filing the new amended regulations. During this meeting the KCDHH Information, Referral and Advocacy Department drew the Board's attention to the fact that the process of filing an interpreter complaint is cumbersome and not fully accessible to the deaf and hard of hearing community. On March 4, the Board created a subcommittee to meet with the website administrators from the Public Protection Cabinet to review the current website and present an accessibility improvement proposal to the full Board. The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Region III representative updated the Board regarding the National Interpreter Certification (NIC) Interview and Performance Exam, stating that it will be retired, and CASLI will begin administering the CASLI Generalist Performance Exam (CGPE) for Hearing Interpreters.

(4.3 Educate interpreters and promote current interpreting standards.)

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

On March 1, the Interpreter Referral Specialist met with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Statewide Interpreter Coordinator to discuss current interpreter billing practices across the Commonwealth. Since COVID-19, most interpreter and CART requests are for meetings/appointments that take place remotely using virtual platforms, and rates for those requests have changed. They also discussed the OVR process of submitting invoices as compared to other state agencies.

(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.)

DCBS Collaboration Group Meeting

The Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) Collaboration Group consists of members from DCBS, Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities (KDBHDID) and KCDHH. The group has set goals to meet the objective of improving services with deaf and hard of hearing membered families within DCBS.

On January 11, the group discussed the next foster care recruitment session scheduled for February 11 that will focus on the Danville region. On February 4, the group canceled the recruitment session, since no one registered, and shifted the focus onto different strategies to increase registration for future sessions. The DCBS liaison received approval to require that children who enter out-of-home care be provided a Communication Skills Assessment, and recommendations from the assessment are to be considered when coordinating communication services for the child. The new procedure was added to the Standards of Practice (SOP) 1.14.1 "Access to Interpreters and Effective Communication for Those who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing."

The group met again on March 3 to discuss DCBS leadership changes, reprioritizing the group goals, and putting more focus on mentoring. The group also discussed ideas to provide events to support mentoring, such as virtual learning café's for foster parents, support groups within social media, and "hero" workshops.

(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.)



TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

KATS Network Advisory Council Meeting



The Program Coordinator attended the Kentucky Assistive Technology Services (KATS) Network Advisory Council meeting on March 11 via Zoom. Updates included KATS Website updates, Facebook updates, committee appointments, Assistive Technology (AT) Center and Statewide Hearing Aid Assistance and Reuse Program (SHARP) activities, as well as Coordinating Center activities and 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 topics of interest were the changes in both the KATS website and their approach to virtual trainings. They are focusing on accessibility for all disabilities, especially regarding the internet, and hope to do more virtual trainings.

(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

Self-Advocacy for Kenwood Elementary First Graders



The Information Coordinators for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing gave an education and awareness presentation about self advocacy to first graders at Kenwood Elementary in Jefferson County Public Schools in the visual and performing arts class on February 3, 4, 8 and 9. The presentation was part of a Project Based Learning (PBL) instructional approach, which is designed to give students the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills through engaging projects that will enable them to handle challenges and problems they may face outside the classroom. In this PBL class, students used the visual and performing arts to learn about advocating for the needs of others. They also learned about the deaf and hard of hearing community, how to advocate for and accommodate those in need, and ways students can be advocates in their own community. There were about 20 students per class.

(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.)

KATLC Special and Quarterly Meetings



The Information Coordinator attended a Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation (KATLC) special meeting on February 15. The group discussed the financial partner criteria, as the agency is seeking a new lender to provide financial loans for eligible Kentuckians with disabilities seeking assistive technology.

The Information Coordinator also attended the KATLC quarterly on March 10. As the Board is waiting to secure a new lender, no new loans were processed during this time. However, loans from the previous quarter that were approved, denied, incomplete, or those which applicants opted not to accept, were approved by the board. The Board is still maintaining current loans that are on the books. The Board also took the opportunity to read through the by-laws for any changes that were needed. A new Chair and Vice Chair were elected during this meeting as well.

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

Governor's Office of Early Childhood Executive Director Meeting



On January 28, the Executive Staff Advisor met with the new Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood (GOEC). The Executive Director held virtual one-on-one meetings with each Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) member to introduce herself and get to know

the council members better. The conversation focused on the new goals for the council and the background of each council member. The Executive Staff Advisor explained the role and mission of KCDHH and also mentioned concerns regarding education of deaf and hard of hearing children in Kentucky. The Executive Director admitted that she knew very little about deafness and stated that she would have an assistant follow up with the Executive Staff Advisor to gather more information and data.

The follow-up meeting was held on March 2, and the dialogue with the Executive Staff Advisor and the GOEC assistant is ongoing.

(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.)

Governor's Office of Early Childhood Webinar

On February 26, the Executive Staff Advisor participated in a webinar hosted by the GOEC regarding the Community Early Childhood Council (CECC) Requests for Application (RFA) for the upcoming fiscal year. The purpose of the RFA grants is for the regional CECCs to build innovative partnerships within their region that will promote school readiness for children and families. Individuals at this meeting were asked for feedback on recent changes to the RFA requirements and ways to strengthen the RFA process.

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

Governors Early Childhood Advisory Council Meeting

On March 18, the Executive Staff Advisor attended the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) meeting. Much of the meeting was focused on reviewing and acquiring feedback from the council regarding the CECC RFA. Brief updates were provided by the Division of Child Care and the Head Start Collaboration, and the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) announced that Commissioner Jason E. Glass will hold nine sessions of a listening tour around the state in April and May in order to gather input on for Kentucky's educational system. The sessions will focus on each cooperative region, as well as Louisville, and will be virtual. More details will be released by KDE soon.

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

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Conference



The Executive Staff Advisor attended the annual Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) conference virtually March 1-5. There were multiple sessions focusing on promoting knowledge and awareness of successful strategies for implementing comprehensive state-based EHDI programs, including screening, audiologic diagnostic evaluation, early intervention, medical home, reporting, tracking, surveillance, loss to follow-up issues, data integration, and other related surveillance components. There were also many sessions discussing the importance of enhancing and creating new and ongoing working relationships among federal agencies, non-profit organizations, state health departments and educational agencies, advocacy groups, families, and professionals.

On March 11, the Kentucky EHDI Advisory Board met for a conference follow up discussion. This year, early intervention staff was allowed to attend the EHDI conference free of charge, and several Kentucky First Steps staff took advantage of that opportunity. In this follow up meeting, First Steps staff stated that they appreciated to opportunity to attend and that it was a true learning experience for them. This discussion led to multiple comments about how Kentucky's EHDI programs need to find ways in which they can work together for the benefit of deaf and hard of hearing children and their families. This will be an ongoing discussion.

(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.)

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

EHDI Advisory Board Meeting

The Executive Staff Advisor attended the EHDI Advisory Board meeting on March 15. Because the EHDI conference had just taken place, a lot of the discussion was related to information that was shared at the conference. There were several sessions that focused on tele-intervention and how to improve those services. Since First Steps has reported that families do not like tele-intervention, several Board members offered to assist First Steps in helping to make tele-intervention more attractive to families. Hands & Voices staff offered to make a video *from* parents *to* parents about the importance of timely early intervention services when it comes to their deaf and hard of hearing children acquiring language. The Part C coordinator stated that there are many hurdles to overcome, and it often takes over a year to even get things approved in order to share with their families. The Executive Staff Advisor asked who was responsible for that and offered to address that with the appropriate entity. She emphasized that it should not take that long and that delay does a huge disservice to families that desperately need timely services. The Part C coordinator said it was a multitude of people. Other board members said they would try to find out what is going on with this as well. Other discussion focused on the fact that EHDI and First Steps need to figure out a way to work together to prevent families and children from falling through the cracks. It was announced that the current Part C representative on this Board will be replaced and we are hopeful that this will lead to more collaboration between the two entities.

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

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

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

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, **780,425** informational and public relations items were distributed.

PR Dissemination	
<i>Method of Dissemination</i>	<i>Number Disseminated</i>
Hard Copy	90
Blitz	3,259
Social Media	777,076
TOTAL	780,425

(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.)

Vlogs

In the last quarter, KCDHH has released the following informative vlogs in ASL with captioning:

- Broadband Initiative
- Mask Up for Communication Project
- Lexington Walgreens vaccinations: open slots
- New Vaccine Locations including Cardinal Stadium – largest in Kentucky
- Vaccine Awareness

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

Database

On February 26, The Network Analyst and several staff members met with the database developers to discuss a list of residual issues in the database after the developers had deemed the database complete. Each staff member laid out the issues that often impeded their workflow in the database. After getting all the details, the developers said they would evaluate the man hours needed to rectify the issues and then discuss it with their superiors. Their superiors would then would come up with a cost estimate for the changes needed, and they would send it to the Executive Director for approval before beginning the work needed.

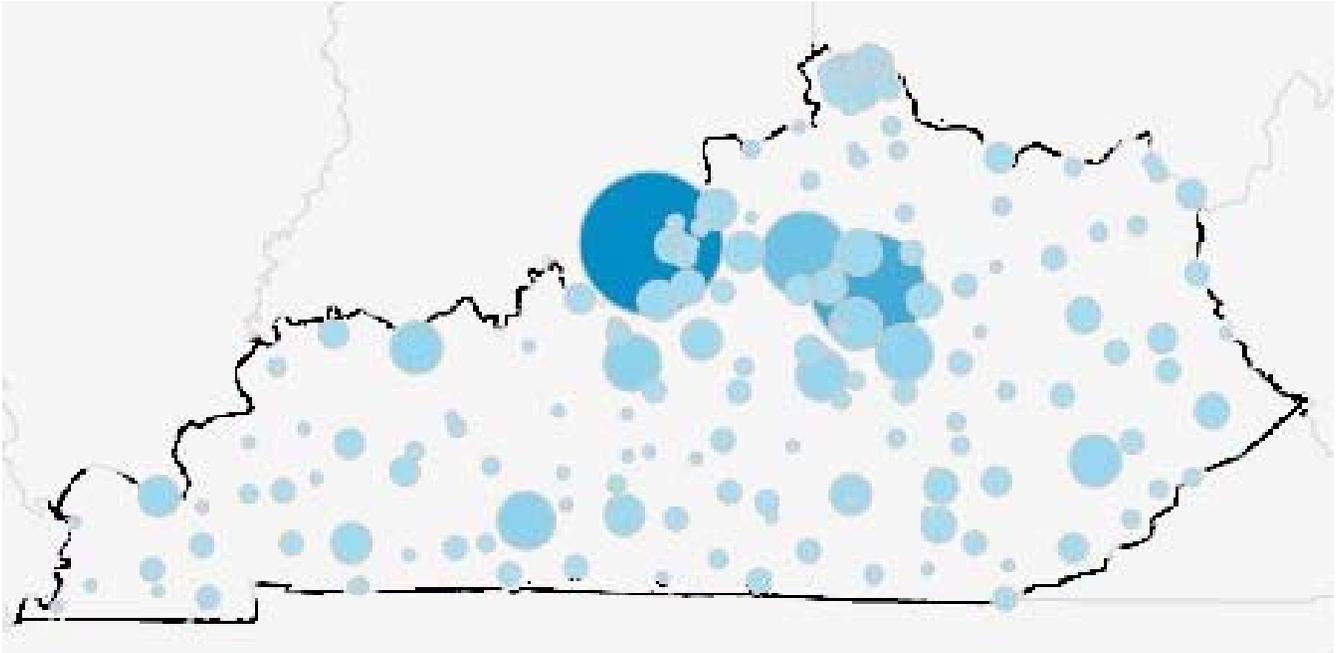
(4.1 Use a comprehensive approach to coordinate communication access services.)

(3.6(b) Foster partnerships to obtain and maintain valid deaf and hard of hearing demographic information for the state of Kentucky.)

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

KCDHH Web Counter Hits: January 1 – March 31, 2021

The following image 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 5,495 visitors from Kentucky this quarter, which represents a 69% decrease in visitors over the previous quarter (17,766). This significant drop is largely due to the fact that there were no new coronavirus vlogs published this quarter. Interest in the request forms, which are currently down due to the current working transition to the new online request system, as well as the Telecommunications Access Program and the DeaFestival web pages remain about the same as previous quarters.

Staff members attended an Education and Workforce Development Cabinet (EWDC) recommended webinar training, "Working Effectively from Home," on January 4. The training discussed the advantages and disadvantages of working from home, staying in contact with staff members, setting up a dedicated home workspace, utilizing collaborative resources (Google Drive, SharePoint, Instant Messaging, etc.), remote work etiquette, and maintaining work-life balance.

Required Training and Continuing Education

 On January 21, the Information Office Supervisor and Policy Specialist attended the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet's (EWDC) Kentucky Legislative Information and Reporting (KLIR) training session hosted by the EWDC Legislative Director. The training included an overview of how KLIR is used to assign bills for review, reviewing an assigned bill electronically, submission of bills reviewed, and generation of reports. The training also provided more detailed information on levels of access, bill review components and assignments, use of various tools and menu options, and completed reviews.



The Executive Staff Advisor and Information Coordinators attended an Educational Rights Series hosted by Second Street School Parent, Teacher & Student Association for three consecutive Wednesdays starting January 27. The purpose of this training was to focus on different aspect of special education such as IEPs, IDEA, 504 Plans. This series were presented that it could be applied to all students with disabilities in the public school system.

 The Information Office Supervisor attended the Kentucky Employees' Health Plan (KEHP) "Living Well" webinar on March 9. This webinar was Anthem's Health Guide to help KEHP members navigate the health care system. The webinar answered questions, advocated for health, closed gaps in care, and explained the following:

- Kentucky Employee's Health Plan Vendors
- LivingWell Program Overview
- Eligibility
- LivingWell Promise
- LivingWell Engagement Activities & Rewards
- WebMD One Portal Registration
- WebMD One Portal Overview/Demonstration
- Questions and Answers



Both Information Coordinators and the Executive Staff Advisor attended the virtual Hands & Voices Educational Advocacy training on March 19 and 20. This training provided an introduction to special education in order for attendees to gain a basic understanding of pertinent laws, regulations, organizational agendas, and the vast array of acronyms. Topics covered included:

- The 6 main components of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's (IDEA): Special factors to be considered for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) students.
- The IDEA Part B and Part C and the difference between an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and a 504 plan.
- Procedural safeguards, parent rights, mediation, complaints, and due process.
- The purpose of assessments and evaluations, types of assessments, and the importance of progress monitoring.
- IEP components and IEP meeting planning tools and strategies.



The Information Office Supervisor met via phone with the EWDC's Executive Administrative Secretary/Records Retention Officer, Office of Legal and Legislative Services, and the Deputy Executive Director, Office of the Secretary, Office of Legal and Legislative Services to discuss the Cabinet's Records Retention Project. The Project requires all Cabinet agencies to participate in mandatory training to learn how to complete an inventory list of records, types of records, etc., and create a schedule of records. Dates for the mandatory training were also discussed.

On March 25 The Information Officer Supervisor participated in the "Records Management: Policies and Procedures Review and Training" via Zoom. The training covered the following topics:

- What is a Public Record
- Permanent Paper Records
- Open Records
- Agency Responsibilities/Records Officers
- Updating an Agency Retention Schedule
- Electronic Records
- Starting/Organizing a Records Management Program
- Media/File Migration and Updates
- Disposition and Destruction
- Kentucky Department of Library and Archives (KDLA) Records and Retention Contacts



Throughout the quarter, the Executive Director has met with staff virtually on a bi-weekly basis (schedule permitting) to check in with staff, ensure communication lines remain open, and maintain accountability, as many staff members are working from home. Items on the agenda typically include department updates, progress reports on new or ongoing projects, issues or concerns related to working remotely, COVID-19/vaccination updates, and a sort of informal open forum, allowing staff members to share information related to the deaf and hard of hearing community as well as good/bad news of a more personal nature in order to maintain a sense of connection and community.