

# QUARTERLY REPORT

JANUARY 1 - MARCH 31



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## OUR MISSION

***Provide effective and efficient leadership, education, advocacy and programs to eliminate barriers and to meet the social, economic, educational, cultural, intellectual and health and human services needs of deaf and hard of hearing Kentuckians.***



## OUR 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.
- 5) The commission shall establish procedures for the application and distribution of specialized telecommunications equipment by the promulgation of administrative regulations in accordance with provisions of KRS Chapter 13A.



## 2024-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

**Goal 1: Transition of Agency** – To create a healthy and effective work culture that promotes staff empowerment and operational efficiency.

**Goal 2: Equal Access to Education and Employment** – To advocate for and drive systematic changes to ensure equal rights, accessibility, and opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing individuals to receive a quality education and secure gainful employment.

**Goal 3: Accessible Health Care** – To ensure that individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing have equal access to healthcare services, communication, and information, thus promoting their overall health and well-being.

**Goal 4: Safe Communities** – To ensure the safety, well-being, and equitable treatment of deaf and hard of hearing individuals in all aspects of community life, including emergency preparedness and the criminal justice system.

**Goal 5: Hearing Loss Awareness** – To increase the general public's awareness and understanding of hearing loss, its prevalence, and impact on individuals and society.



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# **Commission Meeting Minutes**

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**Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
184<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Commission Meeting  
January 24th, 2025  
via videoconference**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tommy Evans, Melissa Kelly, Michelle Niehaus, Jason Smith, Jeannie Taylor, John Perry, Gerry Gordon-Brown, Nancy Perry, Barbie Harris, Sarah Roof, Mona McCubbin, Marva Johnson, Anita Dowd, Amy Hatzel (Emeritus), ELC Secretary Jamie Link

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Alexander Ansley

**STAFF PRESENT:** Rachel Morgan, Blake Campbell, Emily Kimbell

**COMMUNICATION FACILITATORS:** Laura Kogut, Linda Bozeman, Shannon Grider

**VISITORS:** Ashley Ha

**MR. EVANS CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 12:41 PM.**

Mr. Evans asked Ms. Niehaus to begin the meeting by introducing Ashley Ha, a public health student who is interning with Ms. Niehaus and Anthony Adkins at the Department of Behavioral Health.

**MS. TAYLOR MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS COMMISSION MEETING WITHOUT REVISION. MS. PERRY SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED WITHOUT DISCUSSION.**

**MS. HARRIS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING. MS. GORDON-BROWN SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED WITHOUT DISCUSSION.**

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**REPORTS**

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**Chair's Report**

Mr. Evans began by reporting on the progress of the Board Composition Review Subcommittee. Thanking the Commissioners for their previous feedback, he reported that the Subcommittee's recommendations largely reflected the thinking of the Commissioners. The Subcommittee intends to release its report together with a survey to the full Commission in the next week so that feedback can be gathered in advance of the next quarterly meeting. The proposal will then be voted upon or revisited by the Subcommittee as needed, based on feedback.

**THE CHAIR'S REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.**

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## Agency Report

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Ms. Dowd began by reporting that KCDHH is making progress toward bringing in new personnel. Rachel Morgan has accepted the role of Executive Staff Advisor, which was delayed by difficulties in the hiring process but is now final. The next targets for hiring are the Interpreter II, the Administrative Secretary, and the Information Officer positions, all of which Ms. Dowd hopes to hire in the next quarter. She is also working with HR to address the issue of wage compression among existing staff.

Ms. Dowd then noted that the Commission currently has two vacancies (One KAD and one A.G. Bell) and will soon have an additional four vacancies when current KAD, HLAA, KSHA and Service Provider Commissioners' terms expire. Mr. Evans interjected to note that he and Ms. Dowd would like to increase the number of applicants for the open positions and will be encouraging the various stakeholder groups to make their members aware of the opportunity to serve.

At Ms. Dowd's prompting, Mr. Evans noted that elections to the Commission's Executive Board and for emeritus positions would take place at the April Commission meeting.

Ms. Dowd reported that she has been in dialogue with the Department of Aging and Independent Living and the Department of Dementia to determine how they can collaborate to better serve Kentucky's aging population. These contacts are important due to the correlation between aging and hearing loss. Ms. Dowd and Blake Campbell will also attend the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce's Foundation Disability Hiring Academy to educate employers regarding hiring individuals with hearing loss.

Ms. Dowd announced that a complaint for inadequate communication access against the hospital in Frankfort had been successfully resolved in the complainant's favor. She expressed hope that this outcome would encourage other medical facilities to take communication needs seriously. Mr. Smith and Ms. Perry agreed, noting their own difficulties with medical facilities.

Finally, Ms. Dowd noted that Kentucky has instituted a requirement for anyone renewing their driver's license to pass a vision screening. KCDHH is working with the Department of Transportation to ensure that the vision screening is fully accessible to the deaf and hard of hearing.

## THE AGENCY REPORT WAS ACCEPTED AS READ.

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## Old Business

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Mr. Evans began by reporting that the shared drive for all Commissioners has been set up and is ready for use. Any Commissioners that are unfamiliar with Google suite should contact Rachel Morgan for individual training. The shared drive will contain important information such as the Commissioners' handbook, minutes from past meetings, and other information as necessary for individual roles.

Mr. Evans noted that emeritus board members would be voted on at the next Commission meeting since they must first be approved by the Executive Board.

In response to a question from Ms. Perry about a news story, Ms. Dowd noted that she had contacted the CEO of Yellow Dot to discuss a training partnership for helping the deaf communicate more effectively with law enforcement during interactions.

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### **New Business/Open Forum**

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Mr. Evans began by drawing the Commissioners' attention to the recent passage of Madeline's Law in the Ohio Legislature. This law would compel insurance companies to fully cover hearing aids for the children of policyholders. Ms. Roof noted that a Kentucky Hands & Voices board member had been in contact with Senator Karen Berg and that she intended to introduce a similar measure in the 2025 Kentucky General Assembly. (NB: Senator Berg's bill is currently pending before the General Assembly as Senate Bill 93 and is now co-sponsored by Senator Stephen Meredith).

Ms. Niehaus called Commissioners' attention to the newest book by Deaf author Clare Lezotte, entitled *Deer Run Home*. It was recently published and is targeted toward elementary to middle school-age children.

Ms. Gordon-Brown reported that she had been presented with the Virginia Mason Advocacy Award from the Hearing Loss Association of America's Kentucky chapter, and thanked Ms. Taylor for her nomination.

Ms. Johnson announced that KBI has finalized its spring conference dates. It will take place in Frankfort on May 16th and 17th and is being held in partnership with the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Ms. Johnson also noted that she was available for any Commissioners who have questions about the pending regulatory changes for interpreters. She also noted that House Bill 39 was introduced to address the issue of educational interpreters, but that it had not yet advanced from its initial committee assignment.

Ms. Roof announced that the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Advisory Board would be holding a statewide summit on June 13th. Ms. Dowd and Ms. McCubbin expressed their strong support for EHDI's mission.

Finally, Ms. Johnson suggested that the Commission explore forming a study group at the next regular meeting. Mr. Evans agreed that it would be an appropriate agenda item.

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### Announcements

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Mr. Evans announced that the next Executive Board meeting will be held on March 14, 2025, via Zoom. The next full Commission meeting will be on April 25, 2025, in person at the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet in Frankfort, from 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm.

**MS. GORDON-BROWN MOVED TO ADJOURN. MS. PERRY SECONDED.** The meeting was adjourned at 3:18 pm.





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# **Executive Board Meeting Minutes**

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**Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
185th Executive Board Meeting  
March 14, 2025 via videoconference**

**Executive Board Members Present:** Tommy Evans, Melissa Kelly, Jeannie Taylor, Michelle Niehaus, Anita Dowd, Barbie Harris

**Executive Board Members Absent:**

**Staff Present:** Anita Dowd, Justin Stanley

**Communication Facilitators:** Tracy Lundergan, Zach Hodge, Kayla Mullins

Mr. Evans (the Chair) called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. and requested members review the minutes from the previous Commission Meeting.

**Ms. Harris moved to accept the minutes as written. Ms. Taylor seconded. The motion was carried unanimously without further discussion.**

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**COMMISSION CHAIR'S REPORT**

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Mr. Evans opened the Chair's Report by noting that the feedback received regarding the Board composition review. He noted that the feedback was largely supportive of the proposal.

The board discussed comments from the survey, specifically one regarding combining the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) under the Department of Aging and Independent Living.

Ms. Taylor expressed concern that the comment might indicate a lack of understanding of HLAA's importance and scope. Ms. Niehaus suggested the comment might reflect concerns about shrinking candidate pools for board positions due to organizational affiliations, and Mr. Evans and Ms. Dowd agreed that the comment was likely not a personal reflection on Ms. Taylor or HLAA.

Ms. Dowd stated her position that if representation from one organization is removed, then all should be removed to maintain fairness. The board also discussed a comment regarding deaf-blind service providers and the need for deaf-blind representation.

Ms. Dowd suggested focusing on service providers and those who can facilitate change rather than solely on consumer representation.

Mr. Evans indicated that the survey results would be shared at the upcoming quarterly Commission meeting. Ms. Taylor inquired about the next steps in the review process. In response, Ms. Dowd reported that former Deputy Secretary Brinly recommended submitting the proposal to their legislative liaison for advice on the next steps. Mr. Evans noted that the full Board would need to vote on the proposal before it is submitted. In response to Ms. Taylor's question as to whether a vote would be called at the April meeting, Mr. Evans stated that he wanted to discuss it with the full Commission board first.

Ms. Dowd added that they need to talk with Aging & Independent Living and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) to ensure their representation and agreement. Ms. Niehaus suggested that providing more information at the meeting and outlining the subsequent steps would help expedite the process.

Mr. Evans proposed that Ms. Dowd contact OVR and the Department of Aging & Independent Living to confirm their participation. The board agreed to this plan.

Ms. Taylor suggested that Justin Stanley compose the motion for the Board to take action, ensuring it includes all necessary components. Mr. Evans agreed, emphasizing the need for a formal and professional approach, especially given the upcoming transitions within the board. He expressed a desire to have the proposal voted on and approved before the new fiscal year.

Finally, Mr. Evans reminded the board that the Executive Director evaluation would need to be completed. He indicated that the evaluation is done every other year, and that the information for the evaluation would be sent to the commissioners.

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### **AGENCY REPORT**

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Ms. Dowd began by announcing that the Governor's office has filled the last two vacant positions.

Applications have been received for the four upcoming vacant seats:

- KAD: One application received.
- HLAA: One application received.
- KSHA: One application received.
- Service Provider: Three applications received (Mr. Evans initially reported two, but Ms. Dowd confirmed three).

Mr. Evans clarified that a third person had expressed interest but had not confirmed their availability.

In response to a question from Ms. Dowd, Ms. Taylor clarified that only the Service Provider applications need to be reviewed by the Board, as the other positions are Governor-appointed. Mr. Evans confirmed that the Board would need to vote on the Service Provider position at the next meeting, as the selected individual would start at the beginning of the next fiscal year (July 1st).

The agency has been actively reviewing and monitoring bills in the General Assembly.

The agency participated in the Disability Hiring Academy hosted by the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, which resulted in valuable connections and requests for additional training. The agency will participate in an upcoming emergency preparedness conference, providing an opportunity to connect with a new group of emergency responders.

Ms. Dowd reported that she attended the National Early Hearing Detection and Intervention conference.

At the conference, concerns were raised regarding new requirements for state EHDI programs, specifically the responsibility for language acquisition, and the potential challenges this poses for states with weak collaboration between early hearing detection and early intervention programs.

Funding changes at the national level were discussed, with funding for National Center for Hearing Assessment Management (NCHAM) not being renewed and the funds going to Gallaudet University, Hands & Voices HQ and the American Academy of Pediatrics. These three organizations will work together to advance EHDI systems of services so that deaf and hard-of-hearing newborns, infants and young children up to age 3 receive appropriate supports and timely services to improve language acquisition outcomes.

An education meeting is scheduled for the 24th to discuss Kentucky Early Intervention. Ms. Dowd will provide an update at the Board meeting.

Mr. Evans asked Ms. Dowd who she planned to meet with regarding Kentucky EHDI. Ms. Niehaus suggested Kenyetta Pinkston, Director of the Office for Population Health, as a potential contact, given her background in deaf services.

Ms. Niehaus explained the purpose of her upcoming meeting with Kenyetta Pinkston, focusing on communication access for people with hearing loss.

Mr. Evans raised concerns about filling the upcoming Executive Board vacancies, noting that he had not yet received any interest or nominations for the Executive Board positions. He asked the board if it felt more emails or requests should be sent to commissioners to gauge interest. Ms. Taylor agreed that a reminder was needed.

Ms. Niehaus suggested a more intentional approach, including personal outreach (calling, texting, videophone) to specific individuals who would be a good fit for the Executive Board. Agreeing, Mr. Evans agreed to send out an email reminder on Monday morning and to personally contact potential candidates.

Ms. Taylor emphasized the importance of ensuring candidates understand the responsibilities of the Executive Board positions and suggested referencing the descriptions in the handbooks, noting that the handbooks should be updated.

In response to a question from Ms. Niehaus, Ms. Dowd reported that the Interpreter II position has been filled. The Information Coordinator and Executive Secretary positions are still vacant and need to be filled. Ms. Dowd will notify the board when these positions are posted. Ms. Dowd emphasized the importance of finding a qualified Information Coordinator with knowledge of the deaf and hard of hearing community.

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## OLD BUSINESS

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Moving to Old Business, Mr. Evans provided an update on the shared drive. The shared drive is ready, but implementation is being delayed until the new Executive Board and commissioners are in place in July. The shared drive will provide access to information such as minutes in a digital format.

Mr. Evans announced that two applications for Board Emeritus positions have been received, from Jeannie Taylor and Amy Hatzel. If approved by the Executive Board, the applications will be presented to the full Board at the April meeting for a vote.

Mr. Evans confirmed that the Emeritus Board is a non-voting position with a one-year term. He then asked for a motion to vote on Jeannie Taylor's application. Ms. Niehaus suggested Ms. Kelly make the motion.

**Ms. Kelly moved to accept Jeannie Taylor's nomination as Board Emeritus. Ms. Harris seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously without further discussion.**

**Ms. Taylor moved to accept Amy Hatzel's nomination as Board Emeritus. Ms. Kelly seconded the motion.**

Ms. Niehaus asked if there was anything written about the number of consecutive terms allowed since Amy Hatzel just completed a term as Board Emeritus. Mr. Evans said there was nothing written about consecutive terms.

Ms. Niehaus expressed concern that without clarification in the bylaws, someone could serve as Board Emeritus for a very long time. Ms. Taylor clarified that even though Amy Hatzel served a term, she must still submit a letter, get a nomination, and be voted on by the full Commission.

**The motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Evans stated that the two nominees will be submitted to the full Board for a vote at the next Commission meeting.

Mr. Evans then stated that the June E-Board meeting needs to be rescheduled due to a scheduling conflict—the meeting is currently scheduled for June 13th at 1:00 PM.

After some discussion, the Board determined that its meeting will be on June 6th via Zoom from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM Eastern Standard Time.

Mr. Evans announced that Laura Kogut is retiring and asked for suggestions on how to celebrate her retirement at the April meeting. After extensive discussion, Mr. Evans suggested that Tracy share ideas with the Board via email or after the meeting. The Commission will celebrate Laura Kogut at the next commissioner meeting with a cake, certificate, and possibly a proclamation or Coffee Chat.

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## **OPEN FORUM/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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Mr. Evans introduced the Open Forum, noting Ms. Harris's request to bring certain legislation to the Board's attention.

Ms. Harris provided updates on the following:

- **Senate Bill 214 and House Bill 532:** These bills relate to a proposal for the rounding bill. The second reading for the register review is underway, and KSD's governance management task committee is reviewing it.
- There have been issues on campus due to the lack of a superintendent for 9-10 years. The bills aim to alleviate the responsibilities of the principal and oversee operations at KSD.

Ms. Harris encouraged the Board to email and call Daniel Elliott and Senator Amanda Mays Bledsoe to encourage support for the bills to improve the Kentucky School for the Deaf and support deaf and hard-of-hearing students at KSD.

Ms. Dowd provided updates on two bills the Cabinet has asked them to monitor:

- **House Bill 39:** This bill relates to the EIPA (Educational Interpreters Performance Assessment) being accepted as a pathway for K-12 interpreters. This bill is similar to recent proposed changes in the Kentucky Board of Interpreters (KBI) regulations. The agency supported the bill due to the interpreter shortage. EIPA is accepted in 42 states for K-12 interpreting. The concern with the KBI regs was that people with EIPA licensure were working in the community, despite the EIPA only assessing educational interpreting. The bill is explicitly for K-12 only. The bill is on the agenda to be read today.
- **Senate Bill 93:** This bill relates to insurance coverage for hearing aids. The previous bill had loopholes for insurance companies. This bill increases coverage amounts and requires KCDHH to work with insurance companies to monitor funding levels. The bill passed the Senate unanimously.

Ms. Dowd also discussed another bill: House Bill 279, which created a database at the county clerk's office for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals to notify the clerk when registering their vehicle. In 2022, the bill was amended to add "communication disorder." The current amendment, proposed by Rep. Nima Kulkarni, aims to add more disabilities (food allergies, blindness) and include passengers, not just drivers. Ms. Dowd expressed concern that the database needs to be updated to reflect these changes. Ms. Dowd informed individuals that were involved of the history of the bill and suggested they contact Transportation. The bill is currently stalled in a House committee.

Ms. Dowd stated that KCDHH reviewed the two bills related to KSD. She also mentioned the ongoing challenges in keeping up with changes in the bills and communication with the Cabinet. Ms. Dowd expressed her hopes that the bills related to KSD, hearing aids, and EIPA will pass.

Mr. Evans then opened the floor for any other open forum comments. Ms. Dowd shared an update regarding the emergency weather notification equipment. She noted that there have been issues with the equipment and the process. Letters have been sent out to notify recipients, but there have been problems with contact information. Ms. Dowd requested that if anyone hears concerns, they should direct them to the agency.



Ms. Harris shared news about Frank Turk, a well-known leader in the deaf community, who recently suffered a personal tragedy. Mr. Evans thanked Ms. Harris for sharing the information.

Mr. Evans then provided the following announcements:

- The next E-Board meeting, originally scheduled for June 13th, has been changed to June 6th, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM Eastern Time via Zoom. An updated calendar request and Zoom link will be sent to members.
- The full Commission meeting will be held on April 25th from 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM at the Transportation Cabinet in Frankfort. This will be a business meeting with votes on positions, including emeritus positions for Jeannie and Amy, and filling E-Board vacancies.

Attendees were reminded to reach out to potential candidates for the E-Board positions. An email reminder will be sent on Monday.

**Ms. Taylor moved to adjourn, and Ms. Niehaus seconded.**

Adjournment: 3:02 p.m.



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# **Agency Report**

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## ICON KEY



**Community Support**



**Conference**



**Meeting**



**Outreach**



**Personnel**



**Presentation**



**Social Media**



**Training**

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## REQUESTS AND CONTACTS

### **REQUEST:**

When a person or organization asks KCDHH for assistance.

### **CONTACT:**

Interaction between KCDHH staff and the person/organization asking for assistance (and sometimes others) in order to gather additional information, provide appropriate information, services, and resources.

i.e. emails, phone calls, letters, meetings, text messages and other forms of communication.

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# Administrative Activities

## LEGISLATION

The Policy Specialist and Information Coordinator monitored legislative activity daily during the 2024-25 General Assembly. The Executive Director, Policy Specialist and Information Coordinator worked together to produce legislative summaries for the Education and Labor Cabinet's review process.



The bills most relevant to KCDHH were:

- **Senate Bill 93:** Expanding insurance coverage for hearing aids to all insurance policy holders' children.
- **House Bill 39:** Establishing a legal framework to allow EIPA-qualified interpreters to work in Kentucky schools.
- **Senate Concurrent Resolution 76/House Concurrent Resolution 28:** Companion resolutions establishing a task force to study options for a new leadership framework for the Kentucky School for the Deaf.
- **Senate Bill 214:** Establishing timelines for KSD leadership searches and other changes relating to who is eligible for KSD leadership.

None of the bills or resolutions relevant to KCDHH achieved passage.

## PERSONNEL



The Executive Director and Executive Staff Advisor had several meetings with the Education and Labor Cabinet Human Resources staff in January and February to discuss current recruitment and retention issues due to wage compression at KCDHH. A few solutions were recommended which we are currently working to implement. **(GOAL 1)**

The Interpreter II position was officially filled on March 1. The Information Officer position is expected to post very soon.

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The Executive Director, Executive Staff Advisor and Information Coordinator have met with staff from the Transportation Cabinet several times this quarter to determine the best approach to creating ASL instructions for the new vision screening that is required when renewing driver's license. KCDHH will create an ASL instruction video for regional offices to use when necessary. **(GOAL 4)**



On January 21, the Executive Director began serving as a council member on the **St. Joseph Patient and Family as Partners Council (PFAP)**. The PFAP council members serve as the voice of the patients and their families and work with employees to improve patient/family experience. Virtual meetings will occur monthly. **(GOAL 3)**



The Executive Director and Information Coordinator participated in the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce's inaugural **Disability Hiring Academy (DHA)** for Kentucky employers on January 28-29 and February 5. The DHA provided various sessions and learning activities related to the best practices in hiring people with disabilities. The Executive Director wrapped up the last day of the DHA by providing a Resource Snapshot presentation on KCDHH and the "Hiring DHH Employees" guidebook. **(GOAL 2)**



On January 31, the Executive Director and Information Coordinator met virtually with staff from the Kentucky Department for Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Branch. KCDHH has been asked to present at the annual **Medical Reserve Corp** Volunteer Summit in April and this meeting was to discuss presentation logistics. **(GOAL 4)**



On February 2, the Executive Director participated in the virtual **Optimizing Outcomes for Students who are DHH/Educational Services Guidelines** webinar. The webinar discussed the recommended deaf education practices as created by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) **(GOAL 2)**



On February 12, the Executive Director and Information Coordinators attended the virtual webinar **"Disability Community Briefing: What You Can Do to Stop the Attack on Section 504"** and on February 27, the **"#NoOneLeftBehind Disability Community Come Together"** to learn more about Texas v. Becerra lawsuit and other threats to Section 504 which could have a negative impact to get rid of Section 504 and its regulations. **(GOAL 4)**



On February 14, the Executive Director met with the Program Manager at the **Office of Dementia Services (ODS)** within the Department of Aging and Independent Living to discuss ways KCDHH could collaborate with ODS to bring attention to hearing loss and its connection to dementia. The Executive Director was asked to present at the BOLD (Building our Largest Dementia Infrastructure) training in July. **(GOAL 3)**



On February 19, the Executive Director attended the Advisory Committee on the Need for Services for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. A representative from **Mental Health America of Kentucky**, who spoke about the organization and their advocacy work, and the 2025 Biennial Report were the focus of this meeting. **(GOAL 3)**



On February 28, the Executive Director and Information Coordinator met virtually with the Training Program Coordinator from the **Division of Public Health Protection and Safety (PHPS)** within the KY Department of Public Health to discuss implementation of a DHH awareness training project for their field staff who deal with multiple public safety issues such as natural disasters, environmental management, food safety and public health preparedness. **(GOAL 4)**



The Executive Director attended the annual **Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) conference** March 9-11 in Pittsburgh, PA. As always there were multiple sessions related to service deaf and hard of hearing children 0-3 and their families. Language acquisition and data sharing between EHDI and Early Intervention programs were the main focus this year. **(GOAL 2)**



On March 18, the Executive Director met with three **National Association of State Agencies of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing** (NASADHH) members virtually. These members, Executive Directors of their states DHH agency, have volunteered to collaborate on restructuring the Law Enforcement Task Force that was creating a national law enforcement curriculum related designed to train law enforcement officers how to work with deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Discussion focused on information gathering among those who were involved in the past and additional individuals who may need to be consulted. Meetings will be ongoing on a monthly basis. **(GOAL 2)**





# Access Center



REQUEST FOR  
INTERPRETER

248

REQUEST FOR  
CAPTIONER

13

CONTACTS

1123



## Telecommunications Access Program



NATURE	REQUESTS	CONTACTS
Request for Application	86	305
Application Received	199	904
Status Check	59	201
Equipment Received	42	126
General TAP Inquiry	31	118



On January 27th, Feb 27th, and March 26 the Program Coordinator attended the **Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association** (TEDPA) Board Meeting virtually for bylaws discussions, partnership opportunities with other organizations, and other items.



The Program Coordinator attended the **Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association** (TEDPA)/**National Association for State Relay Administration** (NASRA) Collaborative meeting on February 6 to discuss creating a taskforce to determine if the two organizations should merge into one organization or remain separate and only merge for the annual conference.



The Program Coordinator attended the **National Consumer Protection Week** (NCPW) webinar hosted by the Consumer Affairs and Outreach Division of the FCC on March 5. This event highlights information and resources that empower consumers to avoid scams and decrease their chances of becoming victims of fraud.



On March 12, the Program Coordinator attended the **KATS Network Advisory Council** meeting which provided updates on KATS Network activities, including program developments at the Coordinating Center and regional AT resource centers.



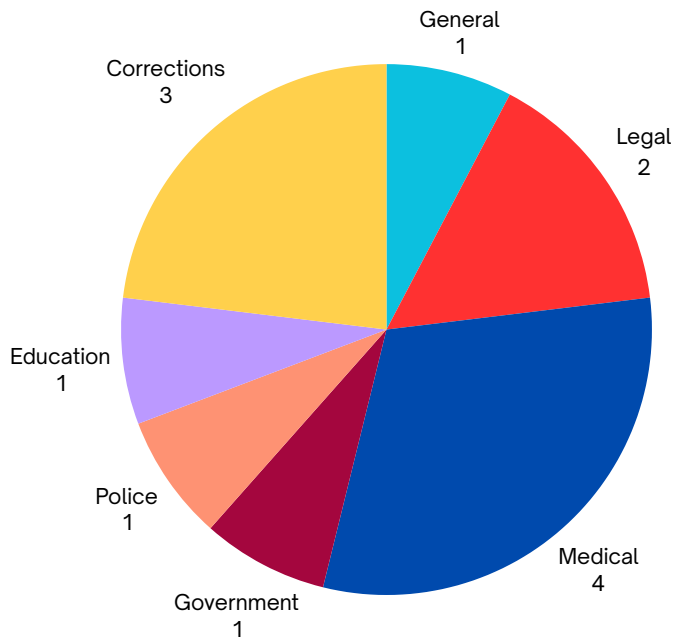
The TAP staff provided technical support to two consumers this quarter.



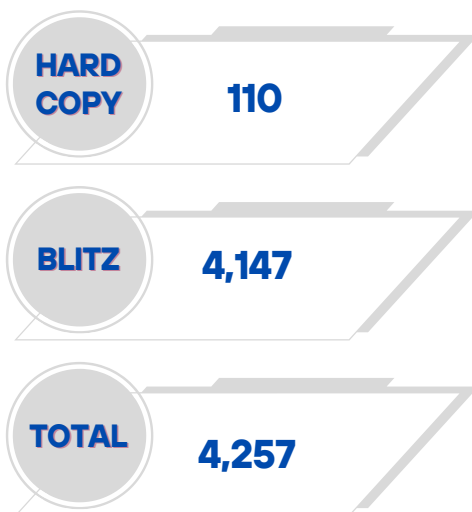
# Information, Referral & Advocacy



NATURE	REQUESTS	CONTACTS
ASL & Linguistics	1	2
Assistive Technology	16	52
DeaFestival	1	2
Deafness & Hearing Loss	10	25
Education & Employment	1	3
Families & Children	8	19
General KCDHH Inquiry	12	33
Hearing Aid Banks	14	34
Interpreting	19	46
Mailing List	1	2
Mental Health Services	1	10
Moore Safe Nights	89	164
Senior Citizens	1	2
Veterans	2	4
Visor and ICE Card	8	21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>419</b>

**ADVOCACY REQUESTS****CONTACTS: 131****WEB HITS****12,868 Visitors****Top 3 pages viewed:**

- 1** KCDHH Home
- 2** Moore Safe Nights
- 3** KCDHH Contact Us

**PR DISSEMINATION****SOCIAL MEDIA****9,175 Followers****19K Reach****294 Followers****359 Reach**



On January 24 & February 26, the Information Coordinator joined a two-part virtual training on **Digital Access Basics in Action** hosted by the Southeast ADA Center and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental & Intellectual Disabilities. The Digital Access Basics training provided information and checkpoints for state and local government agencies to use to ensure they are meeting the ADA requirements for digital web access.



The Center for Accessible Living and Appalachian Assistive Technology Loan Fund launched a monthly **Assistive Technology Convening Series** on January 30 for all Kentucky disabilities stakeholders. The Information Coordinator joined the meeting to discuss ways to enhance access to assistive technology financing loan programs. A second meeting took place in February to explain the loan process that applicants must complete.



The Information Coordinator participated in the virtual **Launching the New DisabilityStatistics.org** webinar on February 26. The webinar explained the new American Community Survey's (ACS) tool that provides custom estimates calculated by Cornell University and estimates from tables generated by the Census Bureau on various of disabilities in United States.



On February 28, the Information Coordinator joined other deaf and hard of hearing stakeholders in the Louisville region to plan a **Dinner Table Project** event for deaf and hard of hearing families. The Dinner Table Project promotes family conversation and togetherness around the dinner table. Meetings took place during this quarter to plan for the event in April.



The Information Coordinator attended the quarterly **Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation Board** meeting on March 19. The board's Administrator shared that progress for a new lending partnering is still ongoing. The Information Coordinator's term has come to an end but will continue to serve until a new representative is appointed by the Governor.



The Information Coordinator was invited to meet with the **Versailles Baptist Church Hearing Loss Support Group** on March 20. The Support Group wanted to learn more about the Commission and the resources that are available. The Information Coordinator opened the floor for questions and members expressed frustration while at church and asked multiple questions related to using assistive technology to enhance their listening experience.



The Information Coordinator attended the **KY Access and Functional Needs Collaborative** virtually on March 12 to learn about the Principles of Universal Design presented by University of Kentucky's Human Development Institute (HDI). The principles of Universal Design is about creating environments and products usable by everyone, regardless of age, ability, or disability.



The Information Coordinator attended the first of nine-month virtual **Social Security Webinar** series hosted by West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WVCDHH) and Social Security Administration (SSA) on March 27. The purpose of this series is to keep agencies updated on anything new relating to SSA benefits and services.

# STRATEGIC GOALS

## GOAL 1: TRANSITION OF AGENCY



The KCDHH office has been undergoing minor renovations which include updating the paint scheme to decrease eye fatigue, and strategic placement of furniture to create clear sightlines allowing for enhanced spatial awareness. These actions are in alignment with Gallaudet University's **DeafSpace** guidelines.

## GOAL 2: EQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT



**See Administrative Activities**

## GOAL 3: ACCESSIBLE HEALTH CARE



Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services of the Behavioral Health, Developmental & Intellectual Disabilities will host a panel webinar related to the importance of implementing a **Communication Access Plan (CAP) for Deaf and Hard of Hearing patients** in the Community Mental Health Centers across the state in late April. The Information Coordinator will be a panel member for this webinar and attended a planning meeting to discuss logistics on March 28.



The Information Coordinator attending **Strengthening Community Health Worker (CHW) Programs for Long-Term Impact Health Forum** on March 18. The forum focused on how to strengthen, support, and sustain Community Health Worker programs in Kentucky. The Information Coordinator shared the importance of providing effective communication for patients with hearing loss and how to access necessary accommodations.

## GOAL 4: SAFE COMMUNITIES

**See Administrative Activities**