

Annual Report

2018



For Fiscal Year July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018

**West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
405 Capitol Street, Suite 800
Charleston, West Virginia 25301**

Email: dhhrwvcdhh@wv.gov Phone: 304-558-1675 VP: 304-400-6959 Fax: 304-558-0937

WVCDHH is an office within the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources.



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES
Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Bill J. Crouch
Cabinet Secretary

405 Capitol St., Suite 800
Charleston, West Virginia 25301
Telephone: 304-558-1675 Fax: 304-558-0937

Earnest J. Covington
Executive Director

December 10, 2018

The Honorable Jim Justice
Governor, State of West Virginia
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Dear Governor Justice:

RE: 2018 Annual Report

The 2018 Annual Report for the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WVCDHH) details the performance of the WVCDHH between June 30, 2017 and June 31, 2018. WVCDHH focused on issues of significance for deaf and hard of hearing West Virginians, with WVCDHH staff and board members working diligently to attain goals set by the strategic plan. Additionally, the staff strives to provide outreach, information, assistance, and training to anyone in West Virginia who is affected by concerns related to varying degrees of deafness.

I hope that you will find this report informative. Please contact me if you would like additional materials or information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Earnest Covington III".

Earnest Covington III, MPA
Executive Director

ECIII
Enclosure
CC: Mac Warner
WVCDHH Board and Ex-Officio Members

Overview

The mission of the West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WVCDHH) is to advocate for, develop, and coordinate public policies, regulations, and programs to assure full and equal opportunity for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing in West Virginia.

Background

WVCDHH was established in 1989 and is committed to carrying out the mission, working statewide to provide opportunities through which the deaf and hard of hearing can participate fully as active, responsible, productive, and independent citizens.

Obligations

Information: Collect and maintain information regarding education, communication, independent living, recreation, employment, health and mental services, substance abuse and other services necessary to support the ability of deaf and hard of hearing individuals to function in society.

Interpreters: Provide services related to interpreters, mainly by establishing and maintaining a registry of qualified interpreters throughout the state of West Virginia.

Outreach: Familiarize the public with the rights, needs and services of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

Investigate: Investigate the condition of deaf and hard of hearing West Virginians to access currently offered programs and to recognize the need for the establishment of new programs.

Training: The Commission is *able* but *not required* to establish workshops for teaching interpretive skills, in-service training and counseling for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Staff

Executive Director – Earnest Covington, III

Project Director – Sarah Lowther

Office Assistant III/Interpreter Coordinator – Vacant

Board Members

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community Representatives:

Paul See – Chairperson – term expires June 30, 2020

Barbara Calhoun – term expires June 30, 2019

John Burdette – WV Association of the Deaf (WVAD) Recommended – term expires June 30, 2020

Gloria Hollen – WVAD Recommended – term expires June 30, 2020
Roy Forman – WVAD Recommended – term expires June 30, 2020

Parent of a Deaf/Hard of Hearing Child:
Gwen Bryant – term expires June 30, 2019

Professionals Working Within the Community:
Dr. Karen McNealy – Audiologist – term expires June 30, 2019
Dr. David Blaine – Otolaryngologist – term expires June 30, 2020
Tammy Phillips – Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing – term expired June 30, 2018

Ex-Officio Members:
Angela Wilson – West Virginia Division of Labor
Designee for Mitchell E. Woodrum, Acting Commissioner
Annette Carey – West Virginia Department of Education
Designee for Steven L. Paine, Ed.D State Superintendent of Schools
Nancy Sullivan – West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources
Designee for Bill J. Crouch, Cabinet Secretary
Rachel Gill – West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services
Designee for Marijane K. Waldron, Director
Christina Mullins – West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health
Designee for Dr. Rahul Gupta, Commissioner
Pam Roush – West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, WV Birth to Three Program
Mark Gandolfi – West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind
Susan White – West Virginia Advisory Council for the Education of Exceptional Children

Meeting Schedule

Date	Location	Members Present	Ex-Officio Present
August 3, 2017	Daniels	5	8
November 3, 2017	Charleston	7	6
February 23, 2018	Clarksburg	5	7
May 11, 2018	Martinsburg	5	5

Strategies, Activities and Programs

West Virginia Code §5-14-9 states that the WVCDHH shall make an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature which shall include its recommendations and programs. Currently, the WVCDHH has the following areas of responsibility:

Information

Goal: Maintain accessible information relevant to the deaf and hard of hearing communities.

Strategy: Provide educational information to the deaf and hard of hearing, their families and the public. Develop an information clearinghouse.

- WVCDHH has informative texts and videos housed at the Library Commission. These resources are relevant to families, professionals working within the field, and the deaf and hard of hearing community. A list of all resources is published and shared.
- WVCDHH staff distributes informational brochures to interpreters, hiring entities of interpreters and deaf and hard of hearing individuals regarding standard practice in the state of West Virginia, as well as the rights of individuals with hearing loss.
- WVCDHH provides information on social media and at events and exhibits to inform the public on Commission activities and programs.

Recommendations: The WVCDHH recommends purchasing new and current resources with the focus on improving interpreter skill and communication access for families with deaf or hard of hearing children to be added to the resources housed at the Library Commission.

Interpreters

Goals: Develop and maintain programs that support the interpreting needs of the deaf and hard of hearing in West Virginia.

Strategy: Maintain an interpreter registry with appropriate fees; continue interpreter taskforce meetings to solicit input and understand needs.

- WVCDHH maintains the West Virginia Registry of Interpreters (WVRI). The Commission ensures that working interpreters within West Virginia meet a minimum qualification in order to provide the most appropriate and effective services for deaf and hard of hearing individuals who use American Sign Language.
- WVCDHH staff continues to revise and publish an interpreter directory containing all publicly listed qualified interpreters throughout the state. The directory includes information for hiring entities on standard practices for

utilizing an interpreter when working with individuals with hearing loss. The directory is updated as needed to reflect the addition of newly qualified interpreters, as well as removal of expired credentials. The information in the directory is also updated to provide current and relevant information.

- WVCDHH is a Local Test Administrator for the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA). These tests are administered by the Commission at no cost to the interpreter, except for fees paid to Boys Town National Research Hospital for the assessment.
- WVCDHH regularly fields inquiries regarding the process of hiring qualified interpreters for deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

A list of qualifications held by professional interpreters in West Virginia may be found below. Please note that some interpreters have multiple qualifications and are counted in multiple categories.

Certification	FY 2018
Total Interpreters Listed	97
EIPA total	36
NAD certified, RID certified, and VQAS screened total	79
Interpreter Agencies	6
<i>NAD Level</i>	
Level V	2
Level IV	4
Level III	3
<i>RID Level</i>	
NIC Advanced	7
NIC Master	1
NIC	20
CI	0
CT	0
CI/CT	10
CDI	1
SC:L	3
<i>VQAS Level (transliterating)</i>	
Level IV	0
Level III	17
Level II	12
Level I	0
<i>VQAS Level (Interpreting)</i>	
Level IV	0
Level III	12
Level II	15
Level I	2

Recommendations: The WVCDHH recommends the ability to outline repercussions for entities that hire an unqualified interpreter, as well as for interpreters continuing to work without meeting qualifications outlined in West Virginia Code §5-14A-1 et seq. WVCDHH recommends the development of a training to be offered to state agencies to ensure an understanding and familiarity utilizing the directory, along with hiring and working with interpreters and individuals with hearing loss. WVCDHH also recommends funding opportunities to assist West Virginia interpreters in becoming qualified and able to register.

Outreach

Goal: Attain high levels of citizen and stakeholder engagement and community problem solving for the deaf and hard of hearing to familiarize the public with their rights, needs and services.

Strategy: Utilize social marketing to promote the rights, needs and services of the deaf and hard of hearing through a Facebook page and other social media as needed; implement and maintain projects/activities that support the rights, needs and services of the deaf and hard of hearing communities; assure availability of Accessible Smoke Alarms; maintain relationships with emergency responders to improve services to the deaf and hard of hearing; and identify, monitor and make recommendations regarding relevant governmental policies affecting the deaf and hard of hearing.

- WVCDHH staff maintains a Facebook page to communicate with community members. This page is used to disseminate important and time sensitive information that may not have been accessible to the deaf and hard of hearing communities if not translated into American Sign Language.
- WVCDHH holds an annual Deaf WestVal and Deaf Awareness Day in the Upper Rotunda of the State Capitol during the legislative session. Deaf WestVal and Deaf Awareness Day were created to promote awareness of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. The events also allow for networking opportunities with exhibitors from various agencies, Deaf associations, and other community resources focusing on services for people who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened and Deafblind.
- WVCDHH continues to manage the Accessible Smoke Alarm Project, for which ADA compliant smoke alarms are distributed to deaf and hard of hearing home owners. Information for recipients may be found below.

Accessible Smoke Alarm Project Summary FY 2018
Recipient Information

Age

0-17 Years Old	18-54 Years Old	55 Years and Older
0	8	8

Type of Hearing Loss

Deaf	Deaf-Blind	Hard of Hearing	Speech Impaired
7	0	9	0

Cause of Hearing Loss

Unknown	Illness	Hereditary	Aging	Undeclared
0	2	0	1	13

Onset of Hearing Loss

At Birth	Pre-Lingual (before language acquisition)	Post-Lingual (after language acquisition)	Undeclared
2	0	0	14

During FY 2018, the WVCDHH provided the following smoke alarm devices to qualified West Virginia residents

Type of Device	Number Distributed
First Alert SA320	16
Gentex 7139LS	16
Lifetone HLAC150	16

- WVCDHH manages a Telephonic Communication Device Loan Program (TCDLP) in which TTY, amplified telephone, and captioned telephone equipment is distributed to qualifying applicants. The WVCDHH was contacted nearly 50 times for TCDLP information during FY 2018. Loan recipient information may be found below.

**Telephonic Communication Device Loan Program Summary
FY 2018 Loan Recipient Information**

Age

0-17 Years Old	18-54 Years Old	55 Years and Older
0	7	10

Type of Hearing Loss

Deaf	DeafBlind	Hard of Hearing	Speech Impaired
0	0	17	0

Cause of Hearing Loss

Unknown	Illness	Hereditary	Aging	Undeclared
0	3	2	5	7

Onset of Hearing Loss

At Birth	Pre-Lingual (before language)	Post-Lingual (after language)	Undeclared
0	0	7	10

Income

\$0-\$14,999	\$15,000-\$30,999	\$31,000-\$50,999	\$51,000 and up
7	10	0	0

During FY 2018, the WVCDHH provided the following telecommunication devices to qualified West Virginia residents

Type of Device	Number Distributed
TTYs	1
Amplified Phones	10
Captioned Phones	6

- The WVCDHH fields inquiries from community members as well as the public on a daily basis. A listing of the nature of those inquiries may be found below.

Type of Inquiry	FY 2018
Interpreter Requests	26
Training or Seminars (including interpreter workshops)	19
Visitors to the Commission	6

- The WVCDHH maintains a presence on the following workgroups, allowing the establishment and continuation of relationships with organizations supporting the need of deaf and hard of hearing individuals:
 - WV Hands and Voices Board
 - Newborn Hearing Screening Advisory Committee
 - Access Functional Needs – Threat Preparedness
 - Community of Practice
 - Deaf and Hard of Hearing Stakeholders Collaborative
 - Pierpont Community and Technical College America Sign Language /Interpreter Education Program Advisory Board
 - OUR Children’s Safety Program
 - Disability Rights of West Virginia (formally WV Advocates)
 - WV State Team of the National Deaf Center

Recommendations: The WVCDHH recommends revitalizing the TCDLP to distribute more current technology to provide persons with hearing loss equal communication access. WVCDHH would also like to continue the terms of the loan program to ensure loan applicants are accountable for the equipment distributed.

Investigate

Goal: Investigate the condition of the deaf and hard of hearing prioritizing the aged, homeless, needy, persons infected with rubella, victims of abuse and neglect, group homes and services for the multidisabled deaf and hard of hearing.

Strategy: Every two years, conduct a Town Hall Meeting at the WVAD conference to gather information about the condition and availability of services; work with WVAD to schedule and hold town hall meetings; conduct a needs assessment to determine the needs and gaps of the deaf and hard of hearing communities; establish a workgroup to develop the needs assessment tool; disseminate needs assessment through a variety of channels; analyze data; and write and publish a report. Attend local deaf and hard of hearing events: each member of the WVCDHH staff/board must attend at least two deaf or hard of hearing events per year.

- WVCDHH held a Town Hall meeting Martinsburg, West Virginia, in May 2018. This meeting will continue to be held to establish a relationship between WVCDHH and this often-neglected area of the community.
- WVCDHH staff attends various community events throughout the state.
- WVCDHH staff fielded complaints from community members. A detailed listing of the nature of those complaints may be found below.

Total of Complaint Forms for FY 2018

Reason for Complaint	Count
Hiring unregistered/unqualified interpreters	5
Refusal to provide interpreter services	10
Refusal to provide reasonable accommodations	5

***Recommendations:** The WVCDHH would like to establish a system to follow up with violating entities to provide guidance and education throughout the event of a complaint. WVCDHH will continue to create workshops to educate private and public organizations of necessary steps to comply with the ADA and West Virginia Code concerning the rights of deaf and hard of hearing citizens to allow prevention of future complaints.*

Training

***Goal:** Provide opportunities for continuing education and learning in the areas of interpretive skills, in-service training and counseling.*

***Strategy:** Provide at least two annual workshops or videos each year on topics identified in Town Hall meetings or needs assessment. Conduct a minimum of two workshops annually for various public groups (West Virginia State Medical Association, hospitals, state agencies, etc.); work with Disability Rights of West Virginia and others to develop a plan for training the medical community; and provide annual professional development opportunities for interpreters.*

- WVCDHH is a Certification Maintenance Program (CMP) sponsor with RID, which allows Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to be offered.
- WVCDHH sponsored CEUs for an educational interpreter workshop held in Fairmont on September 23, 2017.
- WVCDHH awarded CEUs for Academic Coursework (AC) to a student who attended a class through the University of Northern Colorado in April 2018.
- WVCDHH awarded CEUs for a Participant Initiated Non-RID Activity (PINRA) to an individual who attended two workshops in May 2018.

Recommendations: The WVCDHH recommends allocation of additional funds for the Commission budget to increase its ability to provide the training/facilitation for various private/public entities. WVCDHH is aggressively seeking grants to provide the funds for colleges interested in establishing an interpreter training program. WVCDHH will work with the Division of Rehabilitation Services to create a new employment skills training program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students in mainstreamed high schools.

WVCDHH Financial Report FY 2018

Total Appropriated for FY 2018:

General Revenue	\$215,479.00
Special Revenue	\$17,819.00
Total	\$233,298.00

Expenditures:

Personnel	\$82,546.63
Employee Benefits	\$29,686.97
Expenses	\$50,807.50
Special Revenue	\$49.34
Total Expenditures	<u>\$163,090.44</u>

Uncommitted Balance \$69,564.66*

**Due to vacancies in office staff throughout FY 2018, uncommitted balance is higher than previous years.*

Acronyms

AA/AAS	<i>Associate Degree</i>
ASL	<i>American Sign Language</i>
BA/BS	<i>Bachelor's Degree</i>
CDI	<i>Certified Deaf Interpreter</i>
CED	<i>Center for Excellence in Disabilities</i>
CEU	<i>Continuing Education Units</i>
CI	<i>Certified Interpreter</i>
CI	<i>Cochlear Implant</i>
CMP	<i>Certificate Maintenance Program</i>
CT	<i>Certified Transliterater</i>
DOP	<i>Division of Personnel</i>
DRS	<i>Division of Rehabilitation Services</i>
EIPA	<i>Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment</i>
FY	<i>Fiscal Year</i>
LTA	<i>Local Test Administrator</i>
MUGC	<i>Marshall University Graduate College</i>
NA	<i>No Answer/Not Applicable</i>
NAD	<i>National Association of the Deaf</i>
OHRD	<i>Organization and Human Resource Development</i>
PERD	<i>Performance Evaluation and Research Division</i>
Ph.D.	<i>Doctoral Degree</i>
RID	<i>Registry of Interpreter for the Deaf</i>
TDD	<i>Telecommunications Device for the Deaf</i>
TTY	<i>Teletypewriter</i>
WVAD	<i>West Virginia Association of the Deaf</i>
WVCDHH	<i>West Virginia Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing</i>
WVDE	<i>West Virginia Department of Education</i>
WVDHHR	<i>West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources</i>
WVSDB	<i>West Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind</i>