

D11A0401
Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Executive Summary

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) advocates for and promotes the general welfare of deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the State.

Operating Budget Data

(\$ in Thousands)

	<u>FY 18</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 19</u> <u>Working</u>	<u>FY 20</u> <u>Allowance</u>	<u>FY 19-20</u> <u>Change</u>	<u>% Change</u> <u>Prior Year</u>
General Fund	\$374	\$401	\$404	\$3	0.8%
Adjustments	0	2	9	7	
Adjusted General Fund	\$374	\$403	\$413	\$10	2.4%
 Adjusted Grand Total	 \$374	 \$403	 \$413	 \$10	 2.4%

Note: The fiscal 2019 appropriation includes deficiencies, a one-time \$500 bonus, and general salary increases. The fiscal 2020 allowance includes general salary increases.

- The adjusted fiscal 2020 allowance increases by \$9,756, primarily due to increases in expenses for contractual personnel and sign language interpreting services partially offset by a decrease in regular personnel expenses.

Note: Numbers may not sum to total due to rounding.

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Personnel Data

	<u>FY 18</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 19</u> <u>Working</u>	<u>FY 20</u> <u>Allowance</u>	<u>FY 19-20</u> <u>Change</u>
Regular Positions	3.00	3.00	3.00	0.00
Contractual FTEs	<u>0.30</u>	<u>0.80</u>	<u>0.90</u>	<u>0.10</u>
Total Personnel	3.30	3.80	3.90	0.10

Vacancy Data: Regular Positions

Turnover and Necessary Vacancies, Excluding New Positions	0.00	0.00%
Positions and Percentage Vacant as of 12/31/18	1.00	33.33%

- On December 31, 2018, ODDH had a vacancy rate of 33.33%, or 1 position. The office indicates that the vacant position has since been filled.

Key Observations

- ***Minimum Licensure Requirements for Sign Language Interpreting Services:*** Although ODDH now reports that certified deaf interpreters are used in all State emergency broadcasts, there are still no licensure requirements in place for sign language interpreting contracts.

Operating Budget Recommended Actions

1. Concur with Governor's allowance.

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Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Operating Budget Analysis

Program Description

Chapter 537 of 2001 established the Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) to promote the general welfare of deaf and hard of hearing individuals. The specific responsibilities of ODHH include:

- providing, advocating, and coordinating the adoption of public policies, regulations, and programs that will benefit deaf and hard of hearing individuals;
- improving access to communication services and to existing services and programs;
- developing a referral service;
- serving as an information clearinghouse on the needs and issues affecting deaf and hard of hearing individuals;
- working with State and local agencies to ensure access for deaf and hard of hearing individuals to safety and emergency services; and
- promoting economic development opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

ODHH has two key goals. The first is that all deaf and hard of hearing citizens will have equal and full access to state programs, resources, and services to fully participate in community life. The second goal is that citizens of Maryland will be aware of the needs and issues affecting deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

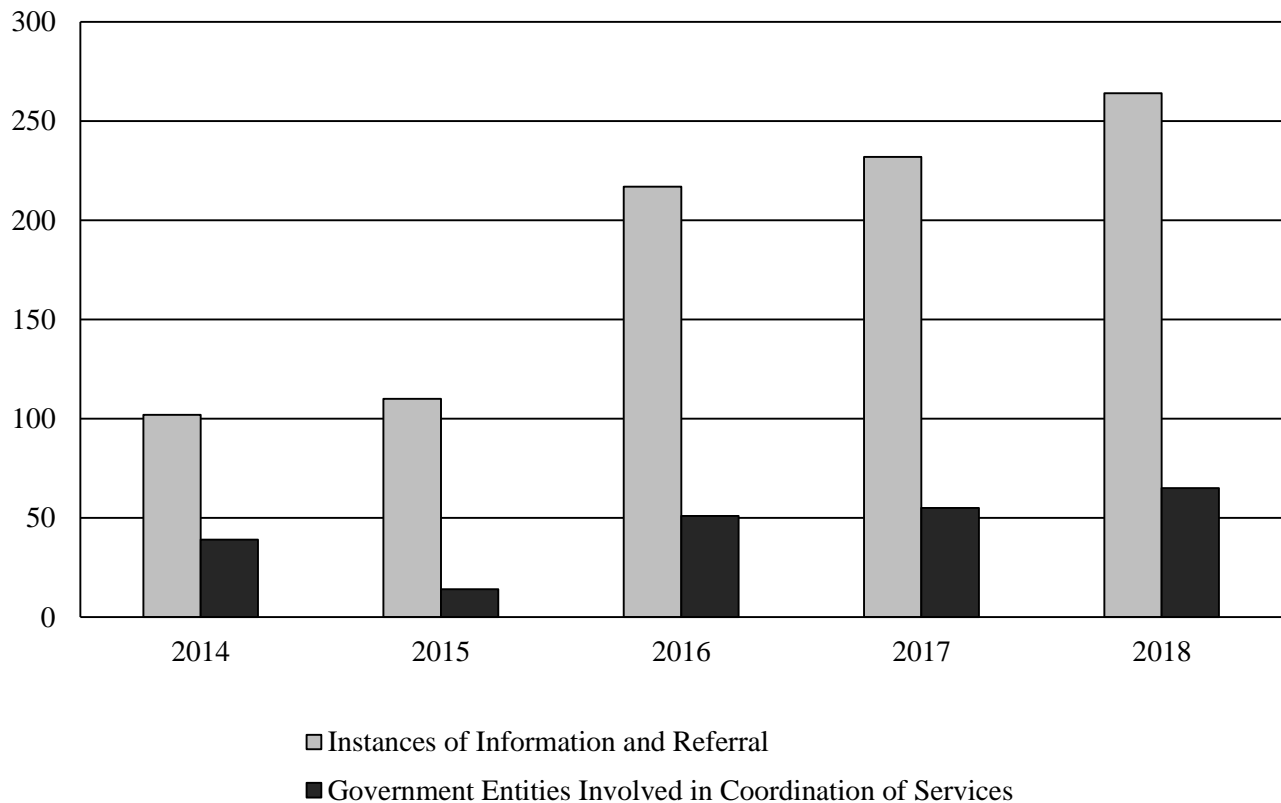
Performance Analysis: Managing for Results

1. Assistance Provided to the Community

In its role as an information clearinghouse on the delivery of services from State agencies to the State's deaf and hard of hearing population, ODHH has received increasing numbers of information and referral requests in recent years. The office describes receiving contact from the public regarding a lack of interpreters, frequency of fraudulent interpreters, refusals by public facilities to comply with existing civil rights law, financial assistance for hearing aids, support for small business ownership,

and the hiring/promotion of deaf and hard of hearing employees. Compared to fiscal 2017, ODHH recorded 32 more instances of information and referrals in fiscal 2018, as shown in **Exhibit 1**. ODHH reports that the office’s greater visibility to community stakeholders led to more interest in ODHH’s information and referral services.

Exhibit 1
Information Assistance and Interagency Coordination of Services
Fiscal 2014-2018

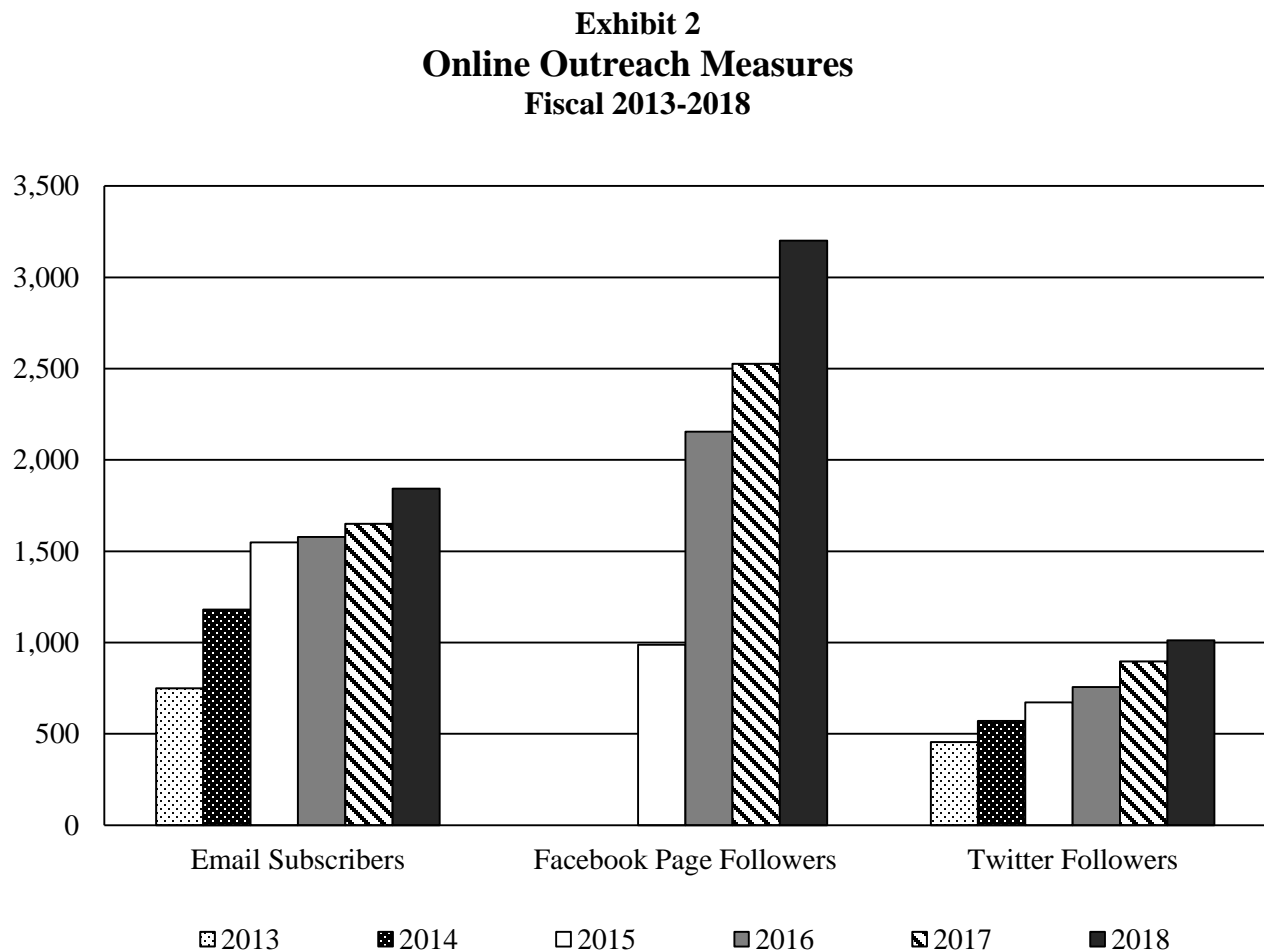


Source: Governor’s Fiscal 2020 Budget Books

In addition to ODHH, other State agencies, such as the Maryland Department of Health, the Department of Rehabilitation Services under the Maryland State Department of Education, and the Maryland Department of Disabilities, provide services to deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Since fiscal 2015, the number of government entities involved in the coordination of services to the deaf and hard of hearing through involvement with ODHH has increased by 51. The office attributes this to improved staff expertise and greater focus on public policies, regulations, and programs that benefit deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

2. Outreach Efforts

Exhibit 2 displays measures related to ODHH’s online outreach strategies, including its email subscriptions, Facebook page, and Twitter account. The office also maintains a website, and in fiscal 2018, the website had 17,902 views. Facebook has proven to be the fastest growing tool for engaging the public as the number of “followers” increased by 2,213, or 224%, since fiscal 2015. Still, the office’s email subscription service and twitter account have also shown consistent increases in the number of individuals signing up to receive updates on ODHH activities.



Source: Governor’s Fiscal 2020 Budget Books

ODHH is also tasked with holding at least two public town hall meetings each year to receive public comments on the quality of State services and programs, functions and operations of the office, and any other issues that affect deaf and hard of hearing individuals. In fiscal 2018, ODHH held eight town hall meetings or public forums, two more than in fiscal 2017.

Fiscal 2019 Actions

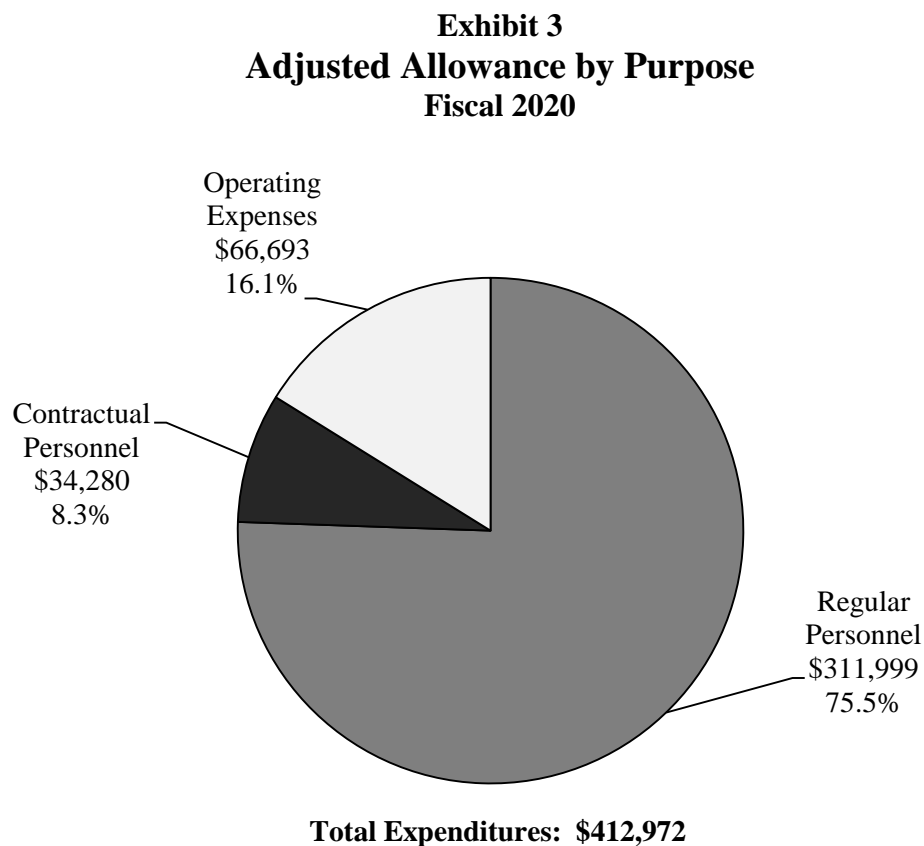
Proposed Deficiency

Personnel costs in ODHH increase by \$323 for a 0.5% general salary increase and \$1,611 for a one-time bonus.

Fiscal 2020 Allowance

Overview of Agency Spending

Exhibit 3 shows that the fiscal 2020 adjusted allowance for ODHH totals \$412,972, including statewide general salary increases. A majority, 83.8%, of total spending is for personnel expenses, specifically for 3 regular positions and a 0.9 full-time-equivalent contractual position.



Source: Governor's Fiscal 2020 Budget Books

Proposed Budget Change

As shown in **Exhibit 4**, the adjusted fiscal 2020 allowance increases by \$9,756. This is primarily due to increases in expenses for contractual personnel and sign language interpreting services partially offset by a decrease in regular personnel expenses.

Exhibit 4
Proposed Budget
Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing
(\$ in Thousands)

How Much It Grows:	General Fund	Total
Fiscal 2018 Actual	\$374	\$374
Fiscal 2019 Working Appropriation	403	403
Fiscal 2020 Allowance	<u>413</u>	<u>413</u>
Fiscal 2019-2020 Amount Change	\$10	\$10
Fiscal 2019-2020 Percent Change	2.4%	2.4%

Where It Goes:

Personnel Expenses

Fiscal 2020 3% general salary increase and annualization of April 2019 0.5% general salary increase	\$8
Other fringe benefit adjustments	-1
Employee and retiree health insurance.....	-2
Retirement contributions	-2
One-time fiscal 2019 \$500 bonus.....	-2
Regular earnings with the annualization of the fiscal 2019 2% general salary increase more than offset by reclassifying vacant positions at base	-19

Other Changes

Contractual personnel expenses, including 0.1 full-time equivalent increase.....	17
Sign language interpreting contracts	12
Promotional items and other office supplies	3
Cell phone expenditures	1
Office equipment.....	1
Support for the Americans with Disabilities Act event hosted by the Maryland Department of Disabilities	1
Office assistance.....	-7

Total	\$10
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Note: Numbers may not sum to total due to rounding.

Issues

1. Sign Language Interpreting Quality in the State

In its fiscal 2017 annual report, ODHH included interpreting quality as a policy priority and aimed to develop a policy framework to address fraudulent and unqualified interpreters in the State. The office monitors complaints from individuals and businesses regarding fraudulent and unqualified interpreters and makes referrals to the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights. Fraudulent interpreters have a harmful effect on the deaf and hard of hearing population by failing to convey information accurately and effectively.

ODHH reports that there are currently no licensure requirements for sign language interpreting contracts. The office proposed licensure requirements based on the Registry of the Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc. (RID) certification process but had to consider alternative requirements when RID put a moratorium on their certification process in October 2015. Although there are still no licensure requirements, the office encourages State agencies to use certified deaf interpreters and notes that certified deaf interpreters are now used in State emergency broadcasts, public meetings, and meetings involving deafblind constituents. **The office should provide an update on its efforts to define minimum standards or licensure requirements for sign language interpreting services in the State.**

Operating Budget Recommended Actions

1. Concur with Governor's allowance.

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Appendix 1
Current and Prior Year Budgets
Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
(\$ in Thousands)

	<u>General</u> <u>Fund</u>	<u>Special</u> <u>Fund</u>	<u>Federal</u> <u>Fund</u>	<u>Reimb.</u> <u>Fund</u>	<u>Total</u>
Fiscal 2018					
Legislative Appropriation	\$401	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$401
Deficiency/Withdrawn Appropriation	-4	0	0	0	-4
Cost Containment	0	0	0	0	0
Budget Amendments	-8	0	0	0	-8
Reversions and Cancellations	-15	0	0	0	-15
Actual Expenditures	\$374	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$374
Fiscal 2019					
Legislative Appropriation	\$398	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$398
Budget Amendments	3	0	0	0	3
Working Appropriation	\$401	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$401

Note: The fiscal 2019 appropriation does not include deficiencies, a one-time \$500 bonus, or general salary increases. Numbers may not sum to total due to rounding.

Fiscal 2018

Actual expenditures in fiscal 2018 were \$373,983, a decrease of \$26,826 from the legislative appropriation.

A withdrawn appropriation in Section 19 of the fiscal 2019 Budget Bill reduced the general fund appropriation by \$4,109 due to a surplus in the health insurance account. Budget amendments realigning health benefits disbursements and telecommunications expenditures across agencies further decreased the appropriation by \$7,531.

The Governor's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing reverted \$15,186 due to less than anticipated expenditures for interpreter services.

Fiscal 2019

To date, the fiscal 2019 budget has increased by \$2,796 in general funds for a 2% general salary increase for State employees, effective January 1, 2019, that was centrally budgeted.

Appendix 2
Object/Fund Difference Report
Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

<u>Object/Fund</u>	<u>FY 18 Actual</u>	<u>FY 19 Working Appropriation</u>	<u>FY 20 Allowance</u>	<u>FY 19 - FY 20 Amount Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Positions					
01 Regular	3.00	3.00	3.00	0.00	0%
02 Contractual	0.30	0.80	0.90	0.10	12.5%
Total Positions	3.30	3.80	3.90	0.10	2.6%
Objects					
01 Salaries and Wages	\$ 307,846	\$ 328,199	\$ 303,325	-\$ 24,874	-7.6%
02 Technical and Special Fees	7,261	17,128	34,280	17,152	100.1%
03 Communication	1,221	1,384	1,851	467	33.7%
04 Travel	2,489	4,033	4,033	0	0%
08 Contractual Services	46,162	46,460	52,627	6,167	13.3%
09 Supplies and Materials	859	500	3,304	2,804	560.8%
10 Equipment – Replacement	0	1,000	1,500	500	50.0%
11 Equipment – Additional	3,207	1,000	1,500	500	50.0%
13 Fixed Charges	4,938	1,578	1,878	300	19.0%
Total Objects	\$ 373,983	\$ 401,282	\$ 404,298	\$ 3,016	0.8%
Funds					
01 General Fund	\$ 373,983	\$ 401,282	\$ 404,298	\$ 3,016	0.8%
Total Funds	\$ 373,983	\$ 401,282	\$ 404,298	\$ 3,016	0.8%

Note: The fiscal 2019 appropriation does not include deficiencies, a one-time \$500 bonus, or general salary increases. The fiscal 2020 allowance does not include general salary increases.

Appendix 3
Fiscal Summary
Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

<u>Program/Unit</u>	<u>FY 18 Actual</u>	<u>FY 19 Wrk Approp</u>	<u>FY 20 Allowance</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>FY 19 - FY 20 % Change</u>
01 Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	\$ 373,983	\$ 401,282	\$ 404,298	\$ 3,016	0.8%
Total Expenditures	\$ 373,983	\$ 401,282	\$ 404,298	\$ 3,016	0.8%
General Fund	\$ 373,983	\$ 401,282	\$ 404,298	\$ 3,016	0.8%
Total Appropriations	\$ 373,983	\$ 401,282	\$ 404,298	\$ 3,016	0.8%

Note: The fiscal 2019 appropriation does not include deficiencies, a one-time \$500 bonus, or general salary increases. The fiscal 2020 allowance does not include general salary increases.