



**Department of Human Services**  
 311 West Saratoga Street  
 Baltimore MD 21201

**ACTION TRANSMITTAL**

<b>Control Number: # 22-03 (Revised)</b>	<b>Effective Date: Upon Receipt</b>
	<b>Issuance Date: December 30, 2022</b>

*(Revised text appears in bold and italics)*

**TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
 DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT,  
 FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF**

**FROM: LA SHERRA AYALA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FIA** *LSA*  
**DEBBIE RUPPERT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MDH/OES** *Debbie Ruppert*

**RE: INTERPRETER SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PERSONS**

**PROGRAM AFFECTED: ALL PROGRAMS**

**ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF OPERATIONS**

**SUMMARY**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in several areas, including employment, transportation, public accommodations, communications, and access to state and local government programs, and services. As Maryland’s human services provider, the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) is required to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities who come in contact with the agency to apply for public assistance.

This Action Transmittal (AT) discusses the communication needs of individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing by providing guidance and resources to meet their needs.

**DEFINITION**

A disabled individual is a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an

impairment. It is imperative that all individuals that are deaf and hard of hearing are provided with accommodations.

According to the National Association of the Deaf, “many individuals who are Deaf, or hard of hearing prefer the terms ‘Deaf’ and ‘hard of hearing’ because they consider them to be more positive than the term ‘hearing impaired,’ which implies a deficit or that something is wrong that makes a person less than whole.”

## **COMMUNICATION RESOURCES**

There are several resources to help you with communicating with customers who are deaf and hard of hearing.

**Note:** The American Sign Language (ASL) services are no longer available under the Maryland Department of Budget and Management’s Statewide Foreign Language Interpretation/ Translation Services (FLITS) 2019/2024.

*All LDSS are required to ensure American Sign Language (ASL) services are made available for deaf and hard of hearing customers.*

### **American Sign Language**

ASL is an entirely visual language that uses signs made by moving the hands combined with facial expressions and postures of the body. With its own grammar and syntax, ASL cannot be directly translated, word for word, to English and vice versa. ASL is the primary language of many North Americans who are deaf and hard of hearing.

### **ACTION REQUIRED:**

Each LDSS is required to have a Civil Rights Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) outlining how Language Access Policy (LAP) provisions are implemented to meet customer needs, including ASL interpretation.

*Listed below are some examples of providers who offer ASL:*

### **ASLI Interpreting Solutions (formerly American Sign Language, Inc.)**

With a strong presence in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, and Washington State, ASLI Interpreting Solutions is well-versed in all aspects of interpreting services. The company specializes in providing services to individuals who are deaf, blind, or hard of hearing. The company’s contact information is:

[www.asli.com](http://www.asli.com).  
[interpreters@asli.com](mailto:interpreters@asli.com)  
1-855-634-2754

## **iYellow Group (formerly TCS Interpreting, Inc.)**

iYellow Group serves the Deaf, blind, and visually impaired individuals. Its services include ASL interpretation and video. iYellow Interpreting advances equitable access through the provision language access, both onsite and remotely. iYellow Captions advances equitable communication access through transcription of the spoken word through video captioning and communication access real-time translation (CART) services, both onsite and remotely. The company's contact information is.

www.iyellowgroup.com  
[clients@tcsinterpreting.com](mailto:clients@tcsinterpreting.com)  
240-428-1820

## **Karasch Enterprises**

Karasch Enterprises provides accessibility services including accommodations such as communication access real-time translation (CART). CART is open captioning or real-time stenography or simply real-time captioning. CART is the system that stenographers and others use to convert speech to text. In Maryland, this provider serves Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Calvert County, Carroll County, Charles County, Harford County, Howard County, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, and St. Mary's County. The provider's contact information is:

[www.karasch.com](http://www.karasch.com)  
[connect@karasch.com](mailto:connect@karasch.com)  
800-621-5689

## **Birnbaum Interpreting Services**

Birnbaum Interpreting Services provides onsite sign language interpreting services nationwide to the deaf and hard of hearing community for government agencies, healthcare providers, legal and courtroom situations, religious settings, business meetings, counseling and psychiatry, theater and entertainment, and other environments. The provider's contact information is:

[www.bisworld.com](http://www.bisworld.com)  
[bisinfo@bisworld.com](mailto:bisinfo@bisworld.com)  
301-587-8885

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

- The State of Maryland provides a wide range of additional services for the deaf and hard of hearing. For additional information, please visit the Governor's webpage: <https://odhh.maryland.gov/directory/#crisis-services>.
- AT: 17-12 Civil Rights Compliance

- AT: 12-15 Interpreter Services for Non-English Speaking Households, and Households Containing a Hearing-Impaired Individual

**INQUIRIES:**

Please direct policy questions to FIA Policy by completing the [FIA Policy Information Request Form](#) found on Knowledge Base or via email at [fia.policy@maryland.gov](mailto:fia.policy@maryland.gov) for Montgomery County only.

For systems questions, please email [fia.bsdm@maryland.gov](mailto:fia.bsdm@maryland.gov).

c: DHS Executive Staff  
Constituent Services  
DHS Help Desk  
FIA Management Staff  
MDH Executive Staff  
Office of Administrative Hearings