

Strategic Plan
(2012-2014 Version 1)

Department for the Deaf and Hard-Of-Hearing (751)
Agency Plan

Mission Statement

The Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) works to reduce the communication barriers between persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and those who are hearing, including family members, service providers, and the general public.

Vision Statement

We see the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) as a national model for state level services and a widely known resource in Virginia for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families. This model includes a variety of programs, including Technology Assistance, Virginia Relay, Interpreter Services, Virginia Quality Assurance Screening, and Outreach, which are designed to ensure widespread communications access for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. To achieve this, VDDHH ensures that every customer who comes into contact with the agency is provided with services, resources, or information to address their needs. VDDHH models communication access by operating in an environment where the customer's communication needs are addressed immediately and consistently. VDDHH is the first source for Virginians seeking information related to hearing loss, whether as a consumer, a family member, a professional in a related field or a business person. Consumers know that VDDHH will have information on and access to the most current and effective assistive technology to meet their needs and that the agency will provide information and assistance for those who need it to access that technology. Virginia Relay continues to be a national leader in telecommunications relay services, monitoring consumer needs and technological advances and initiating or responding to industry developments in a timely manner. VDDHH maintains a wide variety of partnerships with public and private entities to build awareness of and responsiveness to the communication access needs of persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. VDDHH provides opportunities for every state and local agency, business, law enforcement agency, emergency services agency, health care provider, and interested citizen to receive training or have access to information on communications access for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. With leadership from VDDHH, Virginia is home to an adequate supply of qualified sign language interpreters and transliterators. These interpreters participate in Virginia Quality Assurance Screening, demonstrating progressive skill development as they move toward the Virginia Department of Education standard of Level III or national certification.

Values

Respect:Respecting the needs and choices of all of our customers.

Problem Resolution:Committing to real and meaningful problem resolution.

Individual and Family Impact:Recognizing the impact that hearing loss/deafness can have on individuals and their families and working to mitigate that impact.

Strong Partnerships:Building relationships with other agencies in the Commonwealth with contractors (including Outreach, technology vendors, interpreters, and relay providers) and recognizing these relationships as beneficial for the agency, the partner, and the customer.

Information Technology

Current Operational IT Investments

The Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) provides (Information Technology (IT) Services to the following agencies:

- Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
- Department for the Deaf and Hard-Of-Hearing
- Virginia Board for People with Disabilities
- Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired
- Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center

DARS IT Services include IT Strategic Planning, Planning; therefore the agencies listed above are exempted from individual IT Strategic Planning. These agencies will note that they use DRS for IT Strategic Planning in the appropriate sections of The Performance Budgeting System.

Factors Impacting the Current Agency IT

The Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) provides (Information Technology (IT) Services to the following agencies:

- Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
- Department for the Deaf and Hard-Of-Hearing
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Proposed IT Solutions

The Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) provides (Information Technology (IT) Services to the following agencies:

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- Department for the Deaf and Hard-Of-Hearing
- Virginia Board for People with Disabilities
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DARS IT Services include IT Strategic Planning, Planning; therefore the agencies listed above are exempted from individual IT Strategic Planning. These agencies will note that they use DRS for IT Strategic Planning in the appropriate sections of The Performance Budgeting System.

Financial Overview

Funding for the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) is primarily composed of General and Special Revenue Funds. General Funds support the outreach, interpreter, and administrative programs of the agency. The remaining 92% of total appropriations are Special Funds for the provision and oversight of the federally-mandated telecommunications relay service as well as the related equipment distribution program. The Virginia Quality Assurance Screening program receives

an annual \$100,000 in financial support from a federal special education grant and also receives a small annual Special Fund appropriation for the receipt and expenditure of candidate registration fees.

Budget Component	2013 GF	2013 NGF	2014 GF	2014 NGF
Base	840,901	14,823,149	840,901	14,823,149
Changes to Base	4,084	-4,262,025	4,093	-3,884,975
Total	844,985	10,561,124	844,994	10,938,174

Agency Goals

- Enhance the quality of communications access for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing in Virginia by increasing the availability and effectiveness of and consumer access to assistive technology and technology services.

Goal Summary and Alignment

Technology presents the greatest opportunity for communications access for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. With widespread access to and awareness of effective technology, Virginians who are deaf or hard of hearing will be able to improve their economic standing, achieve higher levels of educational attainment, and maintain a higher sense of safety, security, and independence.

Long Term Goal

Be a national leader in the preservation and enhancement of our economy.

Societal Indicator: Personal Income

- Strengthen the culture of preparedness, as related to our customers needs, of state agencies and local governments across the Commonwealth.

Goal Summary and Alignment

This goal ensures compliance with federal and state regulations, policies and procedures for Commonwealth preparedness. In collaboration with all of the Agencies in the Secretariat for Health and Human Resources and the Virginia Department for Emergency Management, The agency will provide information, training, and guidance for inclusiveness in all phases of emergency preparedness for Virginians who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Long Term Goal

Protect the public's safety and security, ensuring a fair and effective system of justice and providing a prepared response to emergencies and disasters of all kinds.

Societal Indicator: Emergency Preparedness

Objectives for this Agency Goal

Objective

Preparedness to act in the interest of the citizens of the Commonwealth and its infrastructure during

Description

Objective Strategies

No Strategies for this Objective

- Increase the availability, quality and utilization of communication facilitators (interpreters and Communication Access Real Time Translation or CART providers)

Goal Summary and Alignment

With adequate training opportunities and enhanced Quality Assurance Screening access, sign language interpreters in Virginia should be able to meet the demand for services in a changing marketplace (including video relay, remote interpreting and traditional interpreting situations). In addition, with increased community and agency awareness of the levels of participation which can be achieved with appropriate utilization of interpreters and Communication Access Real Time Translation (CART) providers, consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing should be able to access employment, community activities, health care, education, and a wide array of other public and private activities.

Long Term Goal

Be a national leader in the preservation and enhancement of our economy.

Societal Indicator: Personal Income

Elevate the levels of educational preparedness and attainment of our citizens.

Societal Indicator: Personal Income

Protect the public's safety and security, ensuring a fair and effective system of justice and providing a prepared response to emergencies and disasters of all kinds.

Societal Indicator: Personal Income

Inspire and support Virginians toward healthy lives and strong and resilient families.

Societal Indicator: Personal Income

Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.

Societal Indicator: Personal Income

Protect, conserve and wisely develop our natural, historical and cultural resources.

Societal Indicator: Personal Income

Ensure that Virginia has a transportation system that is safe, enables easy movement of people and goods, enhances the economy and improves our quality of life.

Societal Indicator: Personal Income

- Strive for recognition of communications access for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing as a core component of all services provided by agencies of the Commonwealth.

Goal Summary and Alignment

The Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) is authorized, in the Code of Virginia, to provide a framework of consultation and cooperation among agencies and institutions serving people who are deaf or hard of hearing and to monitor and evaluate the provision of services to this population. While the agency has done this through participation in interagency workgroups and policy reviews upon request, there is an increasing call from consumers for assistance in achieving acceptable levels of access in a broad range of government services and VDDHH must actively inform and assist all state agencies and their local counterparts in understanding and meeting the service needs of these consumers.

Long Term Goal

Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.

Societal Indicator: Government Operations

- Serve as a recognized and reliable source of current information from state/national resources provided to all customers through a variety of means.

Goal Summary and Alignment

With a wide and diverse customer base seeking current and critical information, the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing must be prepared to serve as an up-to-date and reliable resource providing information in a variety of formats and through a range of channels, including training programs, the Internet, with attention to social media, and others.

Long Term Goal

Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.

Societal Indicator: Government Operations

Programs and Service Areas for Agency

- 45004: Technology Services for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing
- 45005: Consumer, Interpreter, and Community Support Services
- 45006: Administrative Services

Customers

Pre-Defined Customer Group	User Specified Customer Group	Customers Served Annually	Potential Annual Customers	Projected Trend in # of Customers
State Agency(s),	Virginia Courts	164	374	Stable
State Agency(s),	State Agencies (Participating in Interpreter Services Contract)	60	133	Stable
Consumer	Interpreters Seeking Credentials (VQAS) (in 2011)	235	2,263	Stable
Consumer	Technology Assistance Program (TAP) Recipients	1,098	800,000	Increase

Key Risk Factors

VDDHH faces a number of challenges which may limit our ability to satisfy expectations and achieve our mission.

One growing concern is the number of VDDHH staff who are at or near retirement eligibility. The agency is fortunate to have an experienced staff with excellent credentials but attention must be given to developing staff resources to replace those who will be eligible to retire in the next five years.

Consumer expectations of the agency remain high. As advances in technology enhance the opportunities for communications access, both our traditional customer base (including culturally Deaf Virginians) and emerging customer groups (aging Baby Boomers who are technologically savvy and returning veterans who experience service-related hearing loss) will look to VDDHH to provide access to those technologies.

In the Interpreter Services Program, as more freelance and private sector opportunities open up (the result of video relay and remote interpreting services) paying competitive salaries with benefits, VDDHH is faced with fewer interpreters who choose to contract with the agency. This limits our ability to fill requests from courts or state agencies that have joined on to our contract. In addition, the agency must be prepared to embrace and promote the provision of services through remote interpreting as an optional delivery modality.

Finally, and significantly, there continues to be a lack of general awareness about the unique service needs, particularly communications access for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Communities look to VDDHH to be both a model of access and a promoter of the same. This lack of general awareness is not limited to the private sector. State agencies are often unprepared to serve members of the public who are deaf or hard of hearing, both because of a lack of communications access and a deeper lack of understanding of the unique service needs of these consumers. The risk here is increased by reduced funding for the Outreach program. As Outreach contractors are forced to seek funding from additional resources, it can be expected that their focus on the specific issues identified by VDDHH will be limited.

Products and Services

VDDHH fulfills its mission and meets the needs of consumers and state agencies through the provision of the following programs and services:

Interpreter Programs, including the Interpreter Service Program (ISP), coordinating sign language interpreters and real-time captioning (CART) for state agencies and Virginia courts; The Directory of Qualified Interpreters, providing direct access to qualified interpreters across the state; and; The Virginia Quality Assurance Screening (VQAS), offering diagnostic skills assessments to sign language interpreters.

The Technology Assistance Program (TAP), providing telecommunications-related equipment to qualified applicants who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired.

Outreach Services, available statewide through staff and contracted providers offering training, information and referral, technical assistance and individual problem resolution as well as direct access to TAP.

Virginia Relay oversight, ensuring effective and efficient operation of Telecommunications Relay Services in the Commonwealth. Virginia Relay is a federally-mandated telecommunications relay service for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, Deafblind, or speech disabled. It allows these individuals to use specialized telecommunication devices or features to communicate with standard telephone users. There is no cost associated with the service with the exception of long-distance charges.

Trends

Rankings & Customer Trends

VDDHH is aware of several trends which impact both the make-up of our customer base and our ability to provide coverage for each customer group. The agency expects to continue to see growth in the number of older Virginians who experience hearing loss seeking services. This customer base is increasingly "tech savvy," and the agency will need to continually update the technology in our programs to meet the needs of this group. This trend also increases the percentage of customers we serve who are hard of hearing, which continues the shift the agency has experienced over the past ten years towards a broader customer base than the Deaf Community. In addition, this customer group actively seeks assistance from the agency in identifying financial aid resources for the purchase of hearing aids.

Culturally Deaf Virginians (those who are native signers of American Sign Language, from Deaf Families or with strong ties to the Deaf Community) comprise a key customer group as well. This customer group looks to VDDHH to be a highly-visible agency on issues affecting communications access, particularly in state agencies and the highest levels of Virginia Government.

Another segment of the population that will likely seek our services is the growing number of veterans. As hearing loss is the most prevalent disability of returning armed forces personnel, VDDHH is very likely to see an increase in service requests from these returning soldiers and has initiated efforts to meet the needs.

VDDHH also recognizes sign language interpreters as a key customer group as these individuals seek both credentials and networking opportunities from the agency.

State agencies and Virginia courts are yet another critical customer group, seeking both direct services (specifically interpreter services) and consultative services (staff training and technical assistance in meeting the needs of Virginians who are deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired.)

Trend Name	Trend Area
Number of customers	Increase
Traditional Relay Calls	Decrease
Available Technology	Increase

Performance Highlights: Service Performance & Productivity Initiatives

VDDHH has one key performance measure which relates to the critical communication access issue of the provision of sign language interpreters for state agencies and Virginia courts. The bar is set high for this measure. The agency consistently fills more than 98% of all requests, though, in some cases, requests are rescheduled to ensure coverage. To ensure that such a high fill-rate is achieved, the agency actively recruits qualified interpreters to join the contract and maintains contact with non-contracted interpreters as well. In 2013, a new contract for interpreter services will be issued which will include a rate differential for services provided in localities in Northern Virginia. This should result in an increased number of contracted interpreters in that area who will accept assignments from VDDHH.

Another notable highlight includes the continued success in the timely provision of results for Virginia Quality Assurance Screening (VQAS) Performance Assessments. As established in regulations, results should be provided within 90 working days of the test date. For the past several years, the average time from assessment date to results has been under 75 working days. To ensure this level of performance, the agency monitors the performance of the contracted raters who complete the scoring on the assessments and provides re-standardization training as indicated.

In the Technology Service Area, two measures are indicative of the Virginia Relay continues to meet or exceed Federal standards for answer rate, with 99.99% of calls answered in less than 10 seconds. In addition, consumers who receive equipment through the agency's Technology Assistance Program (TAP) routinely report a high level of satisfaction with the services received.

Management Discussion & Analysis

Future Direction, Expectations, and Priorities

The focus for VDDHH programs and services must remain on communications access. The following initiatives over the next biennium will be critical to the agency's success:

Succession planning must continue in earnest.

As part of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010, the Federal Communications Commission recently established a two-year national equipment distribution program to be administered by states to serve citizens who are deaf-blind. Partnering with the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired and the Helen Keller National Center's Richmond office, VDDHH will receive up to \$225,000 in reimbursable funding for the administration of the new program, now known as iCanConnect.

In October 2012, VDDHH changed our Technology Assistance Program (TAP) guidelines to increase services to military veterans living with a hearing or speech loss. Together with the Department of Veterans Services' Wounded Warrior Program, we will work to reduce the communication barriers for Virginia veterans by allowing them to stay connected with their family, friends and employers. Initial response to the change has been extremely positive and will be coordinated with local veteran organizations.

In response to the ongoing concerns of consumers who are unable to attain communications access in health care settings, VDDHH has initiated efforts to engage the Department of Health, the Department of Health Professions and interpreters in a multi-faceted approach to increase the provision of qualified interpreters in health care in Virginia.

To further ensure the availability of qualified interpreters in a wide range of environments, VDDHH must ensure that VQAS maintains its position as a valid and reliable assessment. To do this, the agency must proceed with the development of new materials on a regular basis.

Outreach Services must continue to seek ways to maximize access to technology and training with limited resources.

45004: Technology Services for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing

Description

This service area provides access to telecommunication services and assistive technology for Virginia citizens who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind or speech disabled. The service area comprises two agency programs, Virginia Relay and the Technology Assistance Program (TAP). Direct services include:

- Oversight of federally-mandated Telecommunication Relay Services;
- Administration of the Commonwealth's \$10,000,000 Telecommunications Relay Services Fund;
- Financial assistance for purchase of telecommunication-related assistive devices for qualified applicants; and
- Technical assistance for and demonstration of devices for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired.

Mission Alignment and Authority

This service area directly aligns with the agency's mission of reducing communication barriers through the use of technology services and assistive devices.

Customers for this Service Area

Anticipated Changes to Customers Base

While the number of relay calls handled by Virginia Relay in Norton continues to decrease, alternatives to traditional relay services (including Captioned Telephone Service, Internet Protocol Relay and Video Relay Services) proliferate. The actual number of relay users should continue to increase as this newer technology allows individuals to use services that more fully satisfy their communication needs. For example, native signers of American Sign Language (ASL) may be expected to more actively use internet-based Video Relay rather than the text-based, primarily English language-based traditional relay.

The population base in the Technology Assistance Program (TAP) continues to shift as more persons who are hard of hearing, many of whom are older Virginians, learn about and participate in the program. This trend is expected to continue.

Current TAP Regulations are being promulgated to incorporate the TAP Loan-to-Own (L2O) process and update definitions of assistive technology. The revised Regulations will remove provision of discounted equipment to persons not financially qualifying for no-cost devices. The revised Regulations will also provide priority and a simplified approval process for veterans.

Current Customer Base

Pre-Defined Customer Group	User Specified Customer Group	Customers Served Annually	Potential Annual Customers	Projected Trend in # of Customers
Consumer	Callers requesting Technical Assistance with Technology (not unduplicated count)	2,160	800,000	Increase
Consumer	Technology Assistance Program (TAP) recipients	1,174	800,000	Increase
Consumer	Virginia Relay Users	41,851	800,000	Stable

Partners for this Service Area

Partner	Description
Contracted Virginia Relay Providers	Provide telecommunications relay service under contract with the state
Outreach Contractors	Offer training of use of relay services and provide intake and delivery, installation and training for TAP devices
Technology Vendors	Provide new assistive technology and state-of the art devices for testing, evaluation, and possible acceptance as TAP L2O equipment offerings.

Products and Services

Factors Impacting the Products and/or Services

Technology Assistance Program (TAP)

The 2010 General Assembly changed the funding source for TAP from General Funds to Special Funds due to its relationship with relay services. All expenditures for TAP are now reimbursed through the Commonwealth Communication Tax.

Many of the devices provided through TAP are designed to operate on traditional, analog phone services. More and more locations are upgrading their phone service to bundled, internet or server-based high-speed lines. This is particularly true in assistive-living or skilled nursing facilities. Consumers are often confused by this issue and complicate the appropriate selection of equipment from the TAP program.

Virginia Relay Oversight

An Appropriations Act Amendment to clarify existing budget language regarding the Norton-based Virginia Relay center was introduced in the Governor's Budget and approved by the 2011 General Assembly. The Amendment enabled the Commonwealth to avoid up to \$1.8 million dollars in additional contract costs.

As a result of the 2011 Amendment, the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) was able to establish a cost effective three-year contract with AT&T Relay for traditional relay services. The new contract includes options for four, one-year extensions, and prevented any layoffs of existing relay operators. Also including in the contract are provisions for the Commonwealth to receive monthly credits when the employment level at the Norton center is reduced through attrition. A contract for captioning telephone relay services (CapTel) was also established with Hamilton Relay. CapTel relay is targeted to seniors with mild to moderate hearing loss, and VDDHH promoted the service through Virginia's Area Agencies on Aging network in fiscal year 2012.

Additional promotion of captioning telephones and other assistive technology are planned for fiscal years 2013 and 2014. These campaigns include targeting audiologists, hearing aid dealers, and veterans with hearing loss.

The current Norton-based workforce is highly qualified, experiences minimal employee turnover, and consistently provides excellent customer service to relay users. The center also provides a positive economic impact on the area.

Anticipated Changes to the Products and/or Services

Technology Assistance Program (TAP)

Due to the continued migration by the deaf population from traditional telecommunication devices for the deaf (TTYs) to wireless devices with internet relay, instant messaging, and texting capabilities, many state equipment distribution programs similar to TAP are adding wireless communication devices to their offerings as a replacement for a TTY. These programs typically provide financial assistance only for the purchase of the wireless device; the associated responsibility for monthly service charges for a (reduced cost) data-only plan is under contract between the individual and the wireless company. While such wireless devices clearly offer features and services beyond the scope of TAP, they are much less expensive to purchase and distribute than a TTY, and can offer a net cost savings to the state program. The Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) began limited distribution of a basic cell phone designed for seniors with hearing loss in FY12. A cell phone with mobile captioning capability for late-deafened adults and a smart phone for use of video relay services may be added during fiscal years 2012 and 2013.

As part of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 (CVAA), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) established federal Regulations for a two-year national distribution program for persons who are deaf-blind (NDBEDP). The NDBEDP also provides up to \$10,000,000 in funding for states to establish or expand existing equipment distribution programs such as TAP for low-income individuals. During fiscal year 2012, VDDHH increased collaboration with the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) and the Helen Keller National Center local office at Virginia Commonwealth University to begin distribution of telecommunication devices and related communications equipment to qualifying persons who are deaf-blind. The Commonwealth's portion of the available funding has been projected at \$450,000 over a two-year period. VDDHH was certified by the FCC as the Commonwealth's administrator for the fund in the Summer of 2012.

Virginia Relay Oversight

Since 2004, the total number of all types of relay calls initiated in Virginia has steadily increased. During this same period, the number of traditional TTY-based relay calls processed at the Norton center has decreased by over 58%. This trend is consistent across the nation and reflects the relay consumer's preference for faster, more efficient internet-based or wireless relay services.

Virginia Relay customers continue to benefit from the collaborative relationship between AT&T and VDDHH as we work to bring the latest in traditional relay features and services to the Commonwealth. Currently, any new feature or service AT&T develops for other states is first tested at the Norton center for a trial period. If successful, the new product is added to the Virginia platform at no additional cost to the Commonwealth.

VDDHH completed a successful trial of Speech-to-Speech (STS) relay with video assist in FY2012. The enhanced form of STS enables the communications assistant to use visual cues and facial expressions to increase understanding and overall success of the call. This new feature has increased the number speech-disabled users accessing Virginia Relay.

Listing of Products and / or Services

Technology Assistance Program (TAP) – The VDDHH equipment distribution program (TAP) provides assistive devices, primarily for telecommunications purposes, to qualified applicants who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired either at no or a discounted cost. Eligibility is based on verification of disability, income, and residency. There are no age restrictions. After pre-screening, qualified applicants are loaned equipment for a period of 30 days to evaluate its ability to restore communications access; if successful, the equipment is assigned to the applicant. Devices available include text telephones (TTYs), large print TTYs, telephone amplifiers, Voice Carry Over and Captioned Phones, Hearing Carry Over phones, and visual, tactile, and audible signalers. In addition, special order equipment is available on a case-by-case basis.

Virginia Relay Oversight - Virginia Code § 51.5-115 establishes the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) as the oversight agency for the operation of telecommunications relay services in the Commonwealth. Originally drafted in 1990 and revised in 1994, much of this codified language focuses on the operations of a TTY-accessible telecommunications center located in the state. Corresponding Appropriations Act language designates a Norton location. Currently, services at the center are limited to basic relay services including those for persons with a speech disability. Since the original Code language was written, relay-based technology has mushroomed and many new relay services are now available. These services, including but not limited to internet relay, video relay, Spanish relay, and remote text messaging relay, are now readily available to deaf and hard of hearing citizens nationwide. These new services are currently provided from national relay centers and are largely supported by a federal universal services fund. While VDDHH retains Code authority for the oversight of basic relay services such as TTY-based and Voice Carry Over relay services, consumers consider the agency as a primary resource for information, referral, equipment and training on all types of relay services, including those provided on a national basis.

Virginia Relay Advisory Council (VRAC) - The Council assists VDDHH with the oversight of the current relay contracts and serves as a consumer-based focus group for development and testing of new relay features and services. Expenses for VRAC meetings are supported by Special Funds. The success of the VRAC has been due in large part to the diversity of its membership and their representation of a cross-section of relay users. Council members include representatives from the Virginia Association of the Deaf (VAD), a Virginia Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), the Association of Late Deafened Adults (ALDA), the Virginia Association of Deaf Blind (VADB), a Center for Independent Living (CIL), and the Speech and Hearing Association of Virginia (SHAV). Council members also include a captioned telephone relay user, a user of Speech to Speech relay, a Video Relay user, an internet-relay user, and two hearing individuals that regularly use Virginia Relay. In addition to these members, representatives from VDDHH and the current relay contractors also participate in the Council meetings as non-voting members. VRAC members and the groups they represent serve as the principal source of consumer feedback on relay service quality, development of new features, and technical assistance activities.

Financial Overview

Budget Component	2013 GF	2013 NGF	2014 GF	2014 NGF
Base	0	14,805,149	0	14,805,149
Changes to Base	0	-4,362,973	0	-3,985,923
Total	0	10,442,176	0	10,819,226

Objectives for this Service Area

Objective

Provide the citizens of the Commonwealth with access to appropriate and effective telecommunications relay services and specialized assistive technology.

Description

The Technology Programs Service Area is composed of two programs providing access to telecommunication services and related assistive technology for Virginia citizens. The first program, Virginia Relay, is a federally mandated telecommunications relay service for persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or speech disabled. As the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) certified relay oversight agency for the Commonwealth, the agency submits separate monthly, semi-annual, and annual reports on usage and performance data. The current FCC relay service standard requirement is 85% of all incoming calls be answered in 10 seconds. The second of these programs is the Technology Assistance Program (TAP) that provides technical and financial assistance for adaptive communications devices to persons with a hearing loss or speech disability. In 2009, the processes for application, and receipt of equipment were revised to a loan-to-own (L2O) basis, where an approved applicant receives equipment on a 30-day trial basis. L2O has proven an effective and efficient process and includes a survey instrument to measure the recipient's level of satisfaction with the program.

Objective Strategies

- Monitor relay contractor performance on a daily basis for both the traditional relay and captioned telephone VITA contracts to ensure compliance with federal requirements and state service agreement levels.
- Report relay contractor performance and relay user complaints to the FCC on a semi-annual basis to maintain VDDHH's FCC certification as the Commonwealth's relay oversight agency.
- Conduct quality assurance testing on contractor performance on an annual basis to monitor vendor compliance

Alignment to Agency Goals

- Enhance the quality of communications access for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing in Virginia by increasing the availability and effectiveness of and consumer access to assistive technology and technology services.

Measures

- Percentage of incoming calls answered by Virginia Relay Contractors in ten seconds or less.

Measure Class Measure Type Preferred Trend Frequency

Data Source and Calculation

This measure is calculated based on the percentage of incoming calls, including abandoned calls, answered by traditional relay and captioned telephone contractors within the federally-mandated ten-second connection period. Contracts require relay providers to report this information on a monthly basis.

- Percentage of Customers Indicating an Increased Level of Independence and Self-Reliance After Receipt of Equipment through the Technology Assistance Program (TAP).

Measure Class Measure Type Preferred Trend Frequency

Data Source and Calculation

All customers receiving equipment through the Technology Assistance Program (TAP) program in a given month receive a Customer Satisfaction Survey. Approximately 30% of TAP customers surveyed respond. The Survey includes 5 questions related to satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of the equipment received, the effectiveness of the training received from VDDHH Outreach staff or contractors, level of independence before and after receipt of equipment, and their overall satisfaction rating of the TAP experience. Question 1 asks the customer to rate their level of independence and self-reliance before receipt of TAP equipment. Question 2 asks the customer to rate their level of independence and self-reliance after receipt of TAP equipment. On a scale 1 to 5, where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent, all customers indicating an increased level of one or more points between Questions 1 and 2 will be considered in calculating the overall percentage of customers directly benefitting from the program.

45005: Consumer, Interpreter, and Community Support Services

Description

This service area provides communication access and community support services for Virginia citizens who are deaf, hard of hearing, their families and the professionals who serve them. The service area is composed of four agency programs: Interpreter Referral; Virginia Quality Assurance Screening (VQAS); Outreach; and, Information and Referral (I&R). Direct services include:

- Scheduling of qualified sign language interpreters for courts and state agencies,
- Provision of interpreters for situations not covered by the federal Americans with Disabilities Act,
- On-line maintenance and distribution of the Virginia Directory of Qualified Interpreters,
- An assessment and diagnostics program for the evaluation of the skill level of sign language interpreters,
- Regional technical assistance and local training on assistive devices, adapting to and prevention of hearing loss, use of interpreters, orientation to deafness, and communications access in emergency situations, and
- Information and referral materials including specialized library services on all aspects of communication access for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Mission Alignment and Authority

This service area directly aligns with the agency's mission of reducing communication barriers through community awareness and the identification and referral of sign language interpreters.

Customers for this Service Area

Anticipated Changes to Customers Base

As the agency moves towards improved methods of capturing individuals served, we expect that the reported numbers served will increase. At this time, most programs and services in the agency report on activity level and many of the reported activities include multiple customers.

Current Customer Base

Pre-Defined Customer Group	User Specified Customer Group	Customers Served Annually	Potential Annual Customers	Projected Trend in # of Customers
State Agency(s),	State Agencies	60	133	Increase
Communication	Interpreters Seeking Credentials (Participated in 2011/Registered in Program History)	235	2,263	Stable
Consumer	Consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing (assumes 1 consumer in each completed interpreter request)	2,474	800,000	Stable
State Agency(s),	Virginia Courts	164	374	Stable

Partners for this Service Area

Partner	Description
Contracted and Court Qualified Interpreters	VDDHH contracts with qualified interpreters to provide interpreting services for state agencies who are also on the contract. In addition, the agency works with court-qualified interpreters who are not required to contract.
Contracted Outreach Providers	VDDHH contracts with local agencies to provide training, technical assistance, information and referral and other services on a local or regional basis.
Contracted Raters and Diagnosticians	VDDHH contracts with qualified individuals to provide rating services (reviewing and scoring VQAS candidate performance assessments) and detailed diagnostic analysis.

Products and Services

Factors Impacting the Products and/or Services

Among the most critical assignments coordinated in the Interpreter Services Program are requests from Virginia Courts. The availability of highly qualified court interpreters varies significantly across the state and, in some areas, interpreters with the most appropriate certification for critical court cases must travel two hours or more each way in order to provide services.

The Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) is unable to meet the full demand for interpreters for twelve-step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous. Currently, the agency is able to pay for one interpreted meeting per consumer per week. Generally speaking, particularly during the early stages of recovery, an addict should attend daily meetings. In addition to the funding limitations in this area, the number of interpreters who are able and willing to interpret for 12-step meetings is limited.

The agency's ability to fill interpreter requests in the Northern Virginia (NOVA) area is particularly impacted by our lack of competitive compensation for qualified interpreters. Current contract rates fall between \$10 and \$15 short of the going rate in NOVA.

The agency's Virginia Quality Assurance Screening (VQAS) program is most significantly impacted by the Department of Education's (DOE) Special Education regulations, which establish VQAS Level III as the minimum professional standard for educational interpreters. Educational interpreters comprise as much as 90% of the candidate pool in VQAS and many of these individuals do not have the skill level necessary to meet the standard. In addition, VDDHH has become a test administrator for the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment, a national assessment for educational interpreters also recognized by DOE.

Recognizing that nearly 90% of VQAS candidates have been educational interpreters, the Department of Education provides grant funding to support the VQAS program.

VDDHH Outreach Services are impacted by large areas of the Commonwealth being served by part-time Outreach Specialists. This is especially true in the West and

Southwest areas of the state, where a large part of the population is rural. Identifying and delivering equipment to a consumer may involve several home visits that can result in many hours and miles of travel – a burden for a part-time person serving a large geographical area. In Central Virginia, a part-time (3-4 days a week) Outreach Specialist is required to serve four planning districts encompassing 22 counties and the city of Richmond. There is an on-going challenge to reach all of our consumers in an appropriate and timely manner. While social media seems very effective at reaching the younger Virginians who are deaf or hard of hearing, many of our increasingly aging consumer base does not utilize social media or any internet-based information services. This population still relies on printed information and the current budget does not allow us to print and mail routine announcements or information.

VDDHH does not have enforcement authority and the success of efforts to educate private providers (including legal and medical professionals and media outlets) about critical communications access issues is limited by outside factors. In addition, we are limited in our ability to contact private medical providers to assist in meeting the communication needs of deaf patients because of health privacy laws. Further, many state agencies are reluctant to commit funds to the provision of effective communication services and, when faced with a request for interpreter services or Communications Access Real Time Translation (CART), balk at the costs, particularly for all-day or multi-day events.

Anticipated Changes to the Products and/or Services

Ongoing efforts to enhance the administration of the Virginia Quality Assurance Screening (VQAS) program will include the development of new assessment materials and expansion of the sites available to administer the online Written Assessment. In addition, the Department of Education is reducing the funding provided by that agency to the VQAS program. This will result in a reduced number of VQAS test slots.

The agency expects to provide more interpreting services via remote access, either through the use of broadband or, for courts, ISDN video connections.

As a new contract for Interpreter Services is developed for calendar year 2013, a market survey will be conducted to determine whether a Northern Virginia Differential should be included to ensure cost effective provision of services in that area.

The agency anticipates continued focus on emergency preparedness issues for consumers in response to consumer feedback provided.

Listing of Products and / or Services

Virginia Quality Assurance Screening – The Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) provides a program of Quality Assurance Screening for sign language interpreters and cued speech transliterators. This program consists of the Written Assessment which must be passed before a candidate may participate in the Performance Assessment. Performance Assessments are reviewed by trained "raters" who score the performance based on strict criteria and further reviewed by a qualified diagnostician who provides detailed diagnostic feedback on areas of strength and weakness, along with suggestions for improvement.

Interpreter Services Coordination – VDDHH coordinates requests for interpreter services and Communication Access Real Time Translation (CART) from state agencies and courts. The agency has established a contract for interpreter services, which other state agencies may join. The agency also coordinates interpreters for 12-step programs and other activities (such as funerals) on a very limited basis. In statewide and local emergency situations, the Department provides Emergency Management officials with information about interpreters available to assist in shelters and other critical areas.

Outreach – The Outreach Program is an integral part of all other VDDHH programs. Outreach staff and contractors are the "face" of VDDHH to most customers, and are often the first point of contact for deaf and hard of hearing customers . • Training – Training is a component of every Service Area at VDDHH. Provided primarily through Outreach staff and contractors, topics include use of assistive technology, how to use and acquire a qualified sign language interpreter, availability of services from other state and local agencies, and appropriate procedures in an emergency or law enforcement situation. Other topics include adapting to hearing loss, understanding educational options and services, learning sign language, as well as conducting specialized trainings to hospital staff, courts, and Public Safety Answering Points (9-1-1 dispatchers). Additionally, Outreach provides technology demonstrations and resource information at a wide variety of community activities, including Health Fairs, Transition (post high school to higher education or employment), community-sponsored events, and civic group and school presentations. Training in Emergency Preparedness will continue, centered on the "Ready Virginia" theme of 'Get a Kit, Make a Plan, Stay Informed'; through live presentations, the VDDHH Website, and the VDDHH Facebook page. • Information and Referral – The agency provides information and referral to connect citizens, agencies and private entities with resources on topics related to deafness and hearing loss, through Outreach Services, our website (www.vddhh.org), the Technology Assistance Program (TAP), and Interpreter Services. • Individualized Problem Resolution – Outreach Contractors provide Individualized Problem Resolution services for consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing and who are having difficulty resolving issues as a direct result of their hearing loss, usually due to a lack of communications access. Problems addressed through this service might include hearing aid funding information, housing, employment, utilities, billing issues and other challenges of daily living.

Directory of Qualified Interpreters – The agency publishes (hard copy and electronic) a Directory of Qualified Interpreters which provides contact information on interpreters who meet or exceed the Code definition of "qualified interpreter." This directory is available to assist private entities in locating qualified interpreters for events involving consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Financial Overview

Budget Component	2013 GF	2013 NGF	2014 GF	2014 NGF
Base	513,895	18,000	513,895	18,000
Changes to Base	2,748	100,948	2,748	100,948
Total	516,643	118,948	516,643	118,948

Objectives for this Service Area

Objectives for this Service Area

Objective

Ensure the full inclusion of deaf and hard of hearing (and all disabilities) in all areas of emergency management.

Description

Virginians who are deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired, deafblind, and with other disabilities must be fully included in planning for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies and disasters. It is important that the needs of all Virginians during all phases of emergency management are appropriately and fully addressed. With awareness of, and access to, current information and appropriate accommodations, Virginians with special or specific needs will be able to overcome communication and other barriers to maintain a higher sense of safety, independence, and self-worth.

Objective Strategies

- Develop and deliver, or provide access to, programs that will inform Virginians about emergency preparedness. Outreach Contractors will be provided informational materials, including a PowerPoint Presentation, that addresses the needs of the deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, and speech-impaired Virginians before, during, and following an emergency. Using live training activities, formal presentations, and videos and print media on the VDDHH website and Facebook, and Contractor Websites, V

Alignment to Agency Goals

- Strengthen the culture of preparedness, as related to our customers needs, of state agencies and local governments across the Commonwealth.

Objective

Increase the pool of qualified interpreters available to fill assignments coordinated by VDDHH.

Description

The number of certified and qualified interpreters who contract with the agency, while rising, is still lower than hoped for. This objective seeks to identify opportunities to increase the number of interpreters who will contract with the agency and the number who will accept court assignments.

Objective Strategies

- Partner with organizations/agencies (such as the Virginia Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf) to publicize training to interpreters. • Provide observation/shadowing opportunities for interpreters in legal/medical/12-step situations. Include information on the agency's website on all the training opportunities available to interpreters in Virginia. • Annually, contact all certified interpreters in Virginia who have email addresses listed on the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) websi

Alignment to Agency Goals

- Increase the availability, quality and utilization of communication facilitators (interpreters and Communication Access Real Time Translation or CART providers)

Measures

- Percentage of Interpreter Requests Filled

Measure Class Measure Type Preferred Trend Frequency

Data Source and Calculation

Data sources are: The Interpreter Service Program (ISP) database reports of assignments (General and court) coordinated and ISP calendar entries for all assignments marked as "No Interpreter Available." (NIA). NOTE: Requests received with fewer than 3 working days notice will be marked as "NIA-Last minute" and will not be included in the calculation. The total number of NIA entries for the quarter will be subtracted from the total number of requests coordinated for that period to identify the total number of requests filled. That total will then be divided by the total number of requests received to determine the percentage of requests filled. Ongoing and multirate assignments that are not added to the database as separate assignments will be noted on the calendar and added to the database total.

- Cost efficiency in providing Interpreter Services to Virginia courts, state agencies and 12-Step programs.

Measure Class Preferred Trend Frequency

Data Source and Calculation

Total cost of providing interpreter services, including all administrative costs by the agency(numerator) divided by total number of interpreter requests coordinated (denominator). This will give the total average cost per request coordinated. Total includes costs for VDDHH-paid interpreter assignments, including 12-step meetings, funerals and agency functions.

- Percentage of returning Virginia Quality Assurance Screening Candidates whose survey responses indicate they used feedback from their Diagnostic Feedback Report to prepare for the assessment and whose Performance Assessment scores show an improvement.

Measure Class Measure Type Preferred Trend Frequency

Data Source and Calculation

This measure will be calculated by adding a data item to information provided by returning candidates to determine if they have used Diagnostic Feedback from a previous assessment to prepare for a subsequent one. The Rater Summary sheet, which shows previous scores in 6 segments plus current scores in 6 segments, for each candidate will be include a check box to indicate if the candidate had noted use of Diagnostics to prepare. Scores between the current and previous assessment will be compared and noted as increased/decreased or stable. The percentage of candidates who used the feedback and whose scores improved since the previous assessment will be calculated.

Objective

Ensure and improve the validity, reliability and efficiency of the Virginia Quality Assurance Screening (VQAS) Process.

Description

The Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) provides the Virginia Quality Assurance Screening (VQAS) program for sign language interpreters and cued speech transliterators. This program consists of the Written Assessment which must be passed at a 90% rate before a candidate may participate in the Performance Assessment. Performance Assessments are reviewed by trained "raters" who score the performance based on strict criteria and further reviewed by a qualified diagnostician who provides detailed diagnostic feedback on areas of strength and weakness, along with suggestions for improvement. This objective seeks to continue review and improvement of the VQAS System and ensure the ongoing validity and reliability of the VQAS.

Objective Strategies

- Increase the pool of questions available for the Written assessment to ensure test variation; Increase the number of Performance Assessment materials available; recruit and train more raters and diagnosticians.

Alignment to Agency Goals

- Increase the availability, quality and utilization of communication facilitators (interpreters and Communication Access Real Time Translation or CART providers)

Measures

- Average Number of Working Days from the date a Virginia Quality Assurance Screening Candidate participates in the Performance Assessment until the date that candidate's Results are mailed

Measure Class Measure Type Preferred Trend Frequency

Data Source and Calculation

This measure will be calculated by counting the number of working days (excluding weekends, holidays and emergency closings) between candidate assessment date and the results completed date. Data source is the rater summary sheet showing candidate test date and date of results letter. The average number of days for all candidates who received results in the Fiscal Year will be calculated.

45006: Administrative Services

Description

This service area provides oversight, policy and procedural guidance, and administrative and operational support to all of the agency's programs and services as well as support for the Advisory Board.

Mission Alignment and Authority

Administrative Services supports the agency's mission by providing overall policy guidance to ensure that the agency's other service areas function efficiently and in an environment focused on superior customer service and accountability.

Customers for this Service Area

Anticipated Changes to Customers Base

Current Customer Base

Pre-Defined Customer Group	User Specified Customer Group	Customers Served Annually	Potential Annual Customers	Projected Trend in # of Customers
Taxpayer	Advisory Board Members	9	9	Stable
General Assembly	Legislators	140	140	Stable
State Agency(s),	State Agencies	60	133	Increase

Partners for this Service Area

Partner	Description
<i>No partners currently entered in plan</i>	

Products and Services

Factors Impacting the Products and/or Services

VDDHH operates with limited staff, each of whom has multiple responsibilities. This reality significantly impacts our ability to effectively respond to emerging issues while maintaining a high level of customer service satisfaction. Inconsistent information technology support further impacts this area. Staff time spent addressing issues in IT far exceeds the value of service received, resulting in significant "down-time" where productivity is impacted.

Anticipated Changes to the Products and/or Services

Agency regulations are scheduled for amendment during FY13 but this process should be complete before the end of FY14. None of the proposed changes are expected to be controversial.

Listing of Products and / or Services

Advisory Board Support - The agency provides staff support to the gubernatorially appointed advisory board. Support includes research, training, policy guidance, logistics and administrative support.

Legislative Updates - The agency tracks legislative activity and provides timely updates on legislation affecting persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Legislative Liaison Services - VDDHH provides legislative analysis and expert testimony on bills related to persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Regulatory Coordination - The agency maintains regulations for public participation, TAP and Interpreter Programs.

Interagency Program and Policy Guidance - In order to ensure that programs and services of the Commonwealth address communications access issues and other concerns of persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, VDDHH staff often serve on work groups, task forces, and planning groups for state agencies.

Agency Program Support - Administrative Services provides general guidance and administrative support to all agency programs. This include policy development, publications, and website coordination.

Financial Overview

Budget Component	2013 GF	2013 NGF	2014 GF	2014 NGF
Base	327,006	0	327,006	0
Changes to Base	1,336	0	1,336	0
Total	328,342	0	328,342	0

Objectives for this Service Area

Objective

To ensure that the agency effectively and efficiently meets service demands in all program areas.

Description

The agency must control costs in the provision of all services.

Objective Strategies

- Succession Planning, bus books, manage ISP costs

Alignment to Agency Goals

- Enhance the quality of communications access for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing in Virginia by increasing the availability and effectiveness of and consumer access to assistive technology and technology services.
- Strengthen the culture of preparedness, as related to our customers needs, of state agencies and local governments across the Commonwealth.
- Increase the availability, quality and utilization of communication facilitators (interpreters and Communication Access Real Time Translation or CART providers)
- Strive for recognition of communications access for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing as a core component of all services provided by agencies of the Commonwealth.
- Serve as a recognized and reliable source of current information from state/national resources provided to all customers through a variety of means.

Measures

- Business Process Book Testing

Measure Class Measure Type Preferred Trend Frequency

Data Source and Calculation

On April 15 or the first business day after April 15 each year, each agency program manager will use the Business Process Book established for one of the agency's programs (not the one for which that manager is responsible) and will operate that program for one day. At the end of the day, Management Team will review and record all program activities from the day and identify errors. Calculation will be based on the number of program errors identified agency wide as a result of the switch.