<Beginning of transcription>ALTSA and Community ODHH April Update

 “Every one of us is different in some way, but for those of us who are more different, we have to put more effort into convincing the less different that we can do the same things they can, just differently,” says Marlee Matlin, Deaf Actress and Advocate. This April, ODHH celebrates and applies Diversity, Equity, Access, and Inclusion into our everyday work.  Deafness is a spectrum - and people living with hearing loss have different degrees of hearing loss and the communication needs of the Deaf and Hearing Loss community vary. Please enjoy this short video [What Does Deaf Mean? (youtube.com)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBoIOr0HZUY). The Hard of Hearing Consultation and Resources Program provides training focused on supporting the hearing loss community, and the overall impacts of hearing loss. Trainings can also be developed based on request.  To request training for your team, please contact Maggie Campbell via email at Mary.Campbell1@dshs.wa.gov. ODHH continues to expand and grow services statewide. We are thrilled to be hosting our second annual ODHH Expo. This event, designed to raise awareness about public programs and services, is targeted to people that are d/Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, Hard of Hearing, and Late Deafened. Please join us at the Clark College Gaiser Student Center on May 17, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at 1933 Fort Vancouver Way, Vancouver, Washington. For more information on available trainings and events please visit [ODHH Events Calendar](https://fortress.wa.gov/dshs/odhhapps/eventofcalendar/EventofCalendar.aspx)  Sign Language Interpreter Contracts and Resources – Program Update ODHH sign language interpreter contracts and resources program manage online interpreter requests and interpreter registrations, verifies interpreter certification, conducts DSHS background checks, and hosts outreach to increase the number of interpreters accepting statewide contract assignments. ODHH’s interpreter registry has been slowly growing and diversifying. We encourage BIPOC interpreters to register as we are dedicated to supporting Washington’s goals regarding Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility. We continue to promote language access and equality, which means requiring Deaf Interpreters for specific appointments. We encourage Deaf people who are interested in becoming Certified Interpreters to register as Qualified Deaf Interpreters as part of the pathway to certification. ODHH is experiencing sharp increases in language service requests. In January 2021, we received 52 requests for interpreter services. In January 2022, we received 846 requests, and in January 2023, we received 1,115 requests for services. Currently, we are developing a public data-sharing system to report requests, fills, and cancellations.

It is important to note, however, that even with the volume of requests continuing to grow, the pool of registered sign language interpreters able to provide services has not grown to meet the demand.  ODHH is preparing for Sign Language Interpreter Registration and Renewal, starting June 1, 2024, for the 2025 Fiscal Year (July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025). This annual process maintains service integrity in the statewide master interpreter contract through registration and renewal. The statewide contract covers virtual and in-person requests.  Certified sign language interpreters can easily register and become available to work through the statewide contract. After registration, interpreters need to onboard with at least one of the agencies who are contracted with the State (as agencies schedule interpreters to appointments, not ODHH). ODHH is grateful for the support from the community and TERPSWA (the community coalition for Washington state interpreters) for taking the lead with [HB 2221 (Establishing an American sign language and protactile sign language interpreter work group)](https://apps.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=2221&Initiative=false&Year=2023#billhistorytitle) during the legislative session, which has since become a signed proviso in the budget. We are starting the process to implement the ASL Interpreter shortage workgroup. More information will be coming soon. We encourage you to keep an eye out for updates. We look forward to a new and productive Fiscal Year. For information about Registration and Renewal, click here. For more information about Qualified Deaf Interpreter credentials, click here.  Welcome multiple ODHH new staff, who all shared a little about themselves. Amanda Penny shared, “I was born and raised in Ohio and am a loyal Ohio State fan! I graduated with a bachelor's degree from Gallaudet University in 2015. I've contributed 5+ years in the Video Relay Services field. Connecting with people and developing relationships has been a passion of mine. I enjoy spending time in nature, traveling out of the country, hanging out with my two cats, Maple and Willow, and cooking savory dishes”.  Jess Raschke shared, “Originally from Colorado, I am now proud to call Washington home after living in several states throughout the Mountain West and Alaska. I am delighted to join the team at ODHH with extensive professional experience in the human services field including time spent working at the Idaho Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and nonprofit Centers for Independent Living. I currently also hold national ADA Coordinator certification. I am thrilled to be serving the community here in the Evergreen State and look forward to continuing to be an advocate for accessibility and inclusion. When not at work, I enjoy adventuring to new places, trying out recipes at home, or exploring the outdoors (usually camping, biking, hiking, and paddling) with my husband and two adorable rescue pups”.  Kim McClurkan shared, “I am Deaf, a new case manager in Vancouver. I obtained Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling at Gallaudet University, Washington D.C.  My passion is helping adults of every age navigate through life's inevitable transitions. I will help them uncover the underlying issues keeping them from moving forward”.  Last, but not least Valerie (Val) Davis shared “I’m a case manager for the Spokane area as well as nine additional counties in Eastern Washington.  I worked for Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) as a vocational rehabilitation counselor and Rehab Counselor for the Deaf (RCD) for twelve years before moving to ODHH.  I have over 25 years of experience in case management.  I graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in health from Western Oregon University in 1992 and received my Master of Science in social work from Eastern Washington University in 2010.  I started my case management journey when I was an intern for the Connection Program in Salem, OR where they provided independent living services to Deaf clients back in 1991.  I’m excited about working with the ODHH team!” <End of transcription>