



Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Steven L. Beshear
Governor

Thomas O. Zawacki
Secretary, Education and Workforce Development Cabinet

Virginia L. Moore
Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 1, 2015

TO: Marcia Seiler, Acting Director
Legislative Research Commission

CC: Thomas O. Zawacki, Secretary
Education and Workforce Development Cabinet

Jeff R. DeRouen, Executive Director
Public Service Commission

FROM: Virginia L. Moore, Executive Director
Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and
Hard of Hearing 

RE: Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) Annual Report for Fiscal
Year 2014 - 2015

Enclosed is the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) Annual Report for the fiscal year 2014 - 2015. As per KRS 163.527, this report is to be submitted annually to the Kentucky General Assembly through the Legislative Research Commission.

If you have any questions, contact me at Virginia.moore@ky.gov or at 502-573-2604.

The Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Since its inception in 1995, the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP), administered by the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH), has strived to serve the 694,301 deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired and deaf/blind consumers (16% of population) in Kentucky that apply through the TAP for specialized telecommunications equipment. From time to time, we receive letters of thanks from grateful recipients. Below are some of the excerpts from FY 14-15.

“Thank you for your tireless assistance in getting my mother’s phone (CapTel) and helping her with the application and subsequent questions about its use. Your staff is exemplary and our family is so grateful for this program. You have given her communication again.”

(Deaf Consumer – Louisville)

“I love the iPad I received from TAP. It allows me to be independent and safe when I travel as I can use Mobil CapTel apps to communicate with anyone. This program and the Commission are such a blessing to Kentuckians. I never would have known about the program without the wonderful presentations done for us at the Hearing Loss Association Kentucky Home Chapter meetings. This service is so needed as many hard of hearing people feel isolated and don’t know where to turn for help!”

(Severely Hard of Hearing Consumer - Springfield)

“Thanks so much for this program and the staff that make it possible for individuals with visual, hearing and speech problems to receive equipment that brings them into the mainstream of technology. Although there was a drastic increase in the workload because of the overwhelming response from the speech impaired community, your staff continued to assist and advise consumers. The apps provided on the iPads are so amazing for speech impaired individuals and give them a new freedom that some never thought possible again. This program is truly life changing for those individuals and I am so thankful for the opportunity to work with your staff.”

(Speech Language Pathologist working with Speech Impaired Consumers - Paducah)

“I love my iPhone and it allows me to communicate in many places. It’s a lifesaver for those emergency situations when I didn’t know what was happening around me before I had this phone. Now I feel like I am safe and can fully participate in society. Thank you so much!”

(Deaf Consumer – Topmost)

“I received my CapTel phone and it has opened a new vista for me since I have had trouble hearing people on the phone, especially those who talk fast or have high frequency voices. Now I can fully participate in the conversations and don’t miss important calls. Thank you so much for this program; it has alleviated my frustrations and feelings of isolation.”

(Severely Hard of Hearing Consumer - Owensboro)

**Telecommunications Access Program
Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2014 - 2015**

**Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Virginia L. Moore, Executive Director**

In compliance with KRS 163.527, this annual report is submitted to the Kentucky General Assembly through the Legislative Research Commission.

“The Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing shall provide to the General Assembly an annual report on the operation of the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP). The report shall be due on July 1 of each year, beginning July 1, 1995, and, at a minimum, provide:

The number of persons served and the number of TDDs (*equipment*) distributed;

The revenues and expenditures of the program;

Discussion of any major policy or operational issues;

Any changes the Commission plans to make in the program that does not require legislative action; and

Any proposals for legislative changes in the program.”

The number of persons served and the number of STE's distributed:

The Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) processed **1,806** applications during FY 15. The status of those applications for Specialized Telecommunication Equipment (STE) is as follows as of 6/30/2015, and definitions of the statuses are below:

Status	Total
Approved	27
Complete	1248
Incomplete	180
Denied	342
Ready for Review	9
Total	1806

DEFINITIONS:

Approved - Applications are considered approved once the last piece of documentation required is received. As of that date, they placed on a waiting list and are ordered on a first come first served basis depending on availability of funds. Or equipment has been ordered but is pending delivery, or has yet to be paid for during the FY.

Complete - Applications are considered complete once they are approved, the STE has been ordered, delivered to the consumer and paid for during the FY.

Incomplete - Applications are incomplete if they are pending receipt of missing verification required to determine eligibility. Applicants have been notified to provide the missing information to complete their application within the 12 month timeframe.

Denied – Applications are considered denied because they did not meet eligibility requirements to receive the STE. Notification has been sent to the applicant explaining why they are ineligible, and when they might be eligible to reapply if applicable.

Ready for Review – These applications have already been reviewed at two levels and are pending the last supervisory review to ensure that all eligibility criteria is met per regulations. After a final review, they are moved to approved applications.

1,248 consumers received **1,484** pieces of equipment during FY 14-15. Consumers that received equipment are broken down by degree of hearing loss as listed below:

Degree of Hearing Loss	Total
Deaf	687
Deaf w/ Limited Vision Deaf Blind	297
Hard-of-Hearing	77
Late-Deafened	11
Oral Deaf	3
Severely Hard-of-Hearing	2
Speech-Impaired	171
Total	1248

During FY14-15 the TAP added the iPad, a device which better meets the broadening communication needs of deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired and deaf-blind applicants. With the preloaded specialized apps, these devices provide better communication access to all individuals served. The iPad *pilot* project ended June 30, 2014 and we learned how to streamline the project to better serve the needs of all consumers, while allowing the iPad to be distributed ongoing. The application rate increased this past FY, especially for speech impaired consumers, and the waiting list for all equipment grew. Many professionals that work with the deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired became aware of the TAP and applications from speech, language pathologists (SLP) increased exponentially. In order to ensure that the equipment would be utilized for telecommunications purposes, as is our fiduciary responsibility; staff contacted each SLP individually to ensure the appropriateness of the device for each applicant.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) collects funds for TAP and the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) through a small surcharge on all telecommunication access lines. By March 2015 it was obvious that additional funds were needed to meet the demand for STE's during FY 15. Because more funds were being collected by PSC than KCDHH had been authorized to use, an appropriation increase was requested through Finance. The request was approved during the last quarter of FY 15 and most of the consumers on the waiting list have been served as of June 30. A budgetary increase may be requested for FY 17-19.

Public Relations:

Television advertisements by our state's Relay service provider (Sprint) regarding Captioned telephones increased the number of applications for that device. AT&T placed an ad in their billing insert which increased the number of applications for other landline devices. Partnership events and routine outreaches, including the state fair, have increased the number of TAP requests overall. The grid below analysis the effectiveness of the means utilized to advertise the TAP. Adjustments are made accordingly each FY.

<p style="text-align: center;">TAP Counts <i>Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Count</i> <i>A Statistical Analysis to Help Determine Best Methods of Advertising</i></p>												
How did they hear about the TAP Program?												
	Applied before	TV Ad	Billboard	Radio	Outreach	A friend	Web site	Newsletter	Facebook	Referral	Other	TOTAL
FYC*	237	25	1	0	310	378	111	21	8	668	199	1958
*FYC: "Fiscal Year Count" - These counts are for the fiscal year, July 01, 2014 to June 30, 2015												

**Revenues and Expenditures of the Telecommunications Access Program
For fiscal year 2014 - 2015**

REVENUE	Budgeted Expenditures	Actual Expenditures
FY 2014 – 15 Allotment	1,108,200	1,108,200
Appropriation Increase	400,000	400,000
Total Allotment		
Total Revenue collected	1,109,200	1,109,200
PERSONNEL EXPENSES		
State Employee Salary	195,100	189,953
State Employee Benefits/Fringe	128,100	119,902
Other Personnel Services	85,800	86,574
Other	1,200	1,000
Total Personnel Services	410,100	397,428
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Utilities	5,200	5,517
Other Rentals	54,000	53,105
Maintenance and Repairs	500	575
Postage and Related Services	8,400	7,916
Miscellaneous Services	25,000	24,995
Telecommunications	15,000	14,394
Computer Services	25,000	26,029
Supplies	15,000	14,848
TAP Equipment Purchases	900,000	914,657
Travel Expense/ Allowances	25,000	24,299
Miscellaneous Commodities	25,000	25,037
Total Operating Expenses	1,098,100	1,110,772
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,508,200	1,508,200
13-33-340-TBOO BALANCE		0.00
AS OF 6/30/15		

Breakdown of Expenditures and the Cost Analysis during FY 14-15

STE (Telephone equipment) ALL TYPES and replacement of disconnected models	Units
AMPI 600ER	6
CAPTEL 840	51
CAPTEL 840i	55
CAPTEL 880i	12

CS-CSC1000	93
Geemarc AMPLIPOWER 60	65
SUPERPRINT 4425	2
TELITALK	2
XLC 3.4 -White Cordless	172
IPHONE 4S	8
IPHONE 5C - WHITE	102
IPHONE 5S	6
JITTERBUG - Red	1
JITTERBUG 5 - Blue	1
IPAD_DEAF_WIFI ONLY_AIR ORIGINAL	192
IPAD_DEAF_WIFI+3G_AIR ORIGINAL	5
IPAD_HOH_WIFI ONLY_AIR ORIGINAL	107
IPAD_HOH_WIFI+3G_AIR ORIGINAL	4
IPAD_LOW VISION_WIFI ONLY_AIR ORIGINAL	30
IPAD_SPEECH IMPAIRED_WIFI ONLY_AIR ORGINIAL	31
IPAD_HOH_WIFI ONLY_IPAD AIR ORIGINAL	11
IPAD_DEAF_WIFI ONLY_AIR ORIGINAL	113
IPAD_DEAF_WIFI+3G_AIR ORIGINAL	48
IPAD_HOH_WIFI+3G_AIR ORIGINAL	10
IPAD_LOW VISION_WIFI ONLY_AIR ORIGINAL	2
IPAD_LOW VISION_WIFI+3G_AIR ORIGINAL	1
IPAD_SPEECH IMPAIRED_WIFI ONLY_AIR ORGINIAL	4
IPAD_SPEECH IMPAIRED_WIFI+3G_AIR ORIGINAL	5
MINI IPAD_HOH_WIFI+3G_AIR ORIGINAL	2
MINI IPAD_DEAF_WIFI ONLY_AIR ORIGINAL	17
MINI IPAD_DEAF_WIFI+3G_AIR ORIGINAL	6
MINI IPAD_HOH_WIFI ONLY_AIR ORIGINAL	2
MINI IPAD_HOH_WIFI+3G_AIR ORIGINAL	1
MINI IPAD_LOW VISION_WIFI+3G_AIR ORIGINAL	1
MINI IPAD_SPEECH IMPAIRED_WIFI ONLY_AIR ORGINIAL	3
MINI IPAD_DEAF_WIFI ONLY_AIR ORIGINAL	17
MINI IPAD_DEAF_WIFI+3G_AIR ORIGINAL	1
MINI IPAD_HOH_WIFI ONLY_AIR ORIGINAL	4
MINI IPAD_SPEECH IMPAIRED_WIFI ONLY_AIR ORGINIAL	9
BELLMAN PACKAGE (smoke alarm)	179
KROWN TA005 COMBO SIGNALER	57
*Total telecommunications devices	1248

Signaling Devices	
Bellman Signaler Package	179
Krown TA005 Visual Combo Signaler	87
*Total Signaling Devices	236
*Total Equipment	1484

Discussion of any major policy or operational issues:

As KCDHH is the only centralized, non-biased source of information regarding issues related to hearing loss, our ability to provide information, referrals and advocacy, as well as specialized telecommunications equipment for the citizens of the Commonwealth is an essential service to the general public. With the addition new equipment during FY 15 additional funds were requested to meet the needs of consumers on the waiting list.

TAP equipment vendor contracts expired at the end of FY 15. Therefore new requests for bids for the specialized telecommunications equipment were drafted and submitted through Finance during late May and early June. New vendor contracts are to be awarded in early July. Equipment changes were made to reflect research and emerging technology changes. Some model replacements were also required. As a result of the new equipment offerings the program brochures and webpages will be updated with new devices.

In order to increase awareness of the TAP and ensure that consumers select the most appropriate equipment, eight demonstration sites are now available throughout the state. Partnerships with private, public and state agencies are utilized to minimize cost of housing the equipment and local staff are kept trained on how the equipment works to allow consumers to test the device that suits their needs best.

Vlogs in American Sign Language with captions continue to be posted to explain the use of equipment and the delays in receiving equipment that the waiting list has caused. Some clean up to the regulations are required and the TAP application will be revamped to make it easier to read for older applicants, and then incorporated by reference in regulation changes.

Kentucky’s Relay provider (Sprint) continues to provide assistance in training consumers’ one-on-one, resolving equipment connection problems, and collaborates in various outreach efforts. TAP staff utilizes v-logs, videoconferencing, video relay interpreting, FaceTime, instant messaging, text messaging, interpreters and email, as well as traditional voice lines and face-to-face contacts to promote the program and explain its requirements to consumers and professionals as well. TAP staff team with the agencies PR staff to do outreaches that cover all the agency’s programs and services offered to our constituents. Most outreach is accomplished through partnerships with other agencies, attendance at conferences and health fairs, word of mouth, and in-house advertising, which is primarily electronic based.

The agency once again took advantage of the opportunity to meet people face-to-face at the 2014 Kentucky State Fair. In partnership with Heuser Hearing Institute and Sprint Relay, a fully interactive booth was provided during the 10-day event and educated fairgoers on

living with a hearing loss and resources available to those affected by it, including assistive technology. Hundreds of referrals, including applications for equipment and general requests to the agency, are generated from this outreach. TAP is scheduled to participate in the State Fair in 2015.

The TAP Advisory Board, which consists of consumers, agency oversight representatives and TAP staff, meets at least once annually face-to-face. During the October 2014 meeting, members discussed possible equipment changes and recommendations and elected new board members to replace those who had completed their terms. At the April 2015 meeting equipment recommendations were confirmed and explanation was given regarding the potential funding increase needed to alleviate the waiting list for equipment. Elected members may serve three consecutive four-year terms while law mandates other member positions. Meetings are scheduled for October 2015 and April 2016 if necessary.

Last Name	First Name	Membership Status	Term Ends
Crawford	Rebecca	*KCDHH Commissioner/Hard of Hearing Consumer/Advisory Board Chair	2016
Ziehr	Jeremiah	*Deaf Consumer	2017
Fowler	Lewis	*Deaf Consumer	2019
Lawson	Johnny	*Speech-impaired Consumer	2017
Fenwick	Marilyn	*Hard of Hearing Consumer	2019
McGirt	Melinda	*Hard of Hearing Consumer	2019
Timon	James	*Hard of Hearing Consumer	2017
Stevens	Jim	**Public Service Commission Representative	Law
Hatzel	Amy	**KCDHH Commission Chair	Law
Skaggs	Forrest	*KY Telephone Association Representative	Law
Moore	Virginia	**KCDHH Executive Director	Law
Zulauf	Cole	***Program Coordinator	Staff
Endler	Jessica	***Document Processing Specialist II	Staff
Crowe	Tashina	***Administrative Secretary II	Staff
Holloway	Rowena	***Internal Policy Analyst III	Staff

*voting members

**non-voting members, serve by law or ex-officio

***TAP staff

The Internal Policy Analyst (IPA) III serves on the AT&T Advisory Board, the Telephone Relay Service (TRS) Advisory Board and the Kentucky Outreach and Information Network (KOIN). The IPA III was appointed by the Governor in 2014 to again serve on the Kentucky Assistive Technology Service (KATS) Network Advisory Board effective until February 2017, and was appointed to the Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation (KATLC) Board effective until February 2019. Written reports from these meetings are compiled and included in the agency's quarterly reports and archived as required.

TAP staff also serves on several emergency notification teams to represent KCDHH in the state's efforts to bring E911 to fruition and make wireless communication in emergencies a reality. Text messaging is the norm for most consumers with a hearing loss and 80% of the national's disabled population utilizes wireless devices as their primary source of telecommunication. PSAPs must be fully accessible and text messaging is the most logical

answer to that requirement, not only for our population but for hearing individuals that use mobile devices. KCDHH continues to work with state and federal entities to make this goal possible in the near future, including legislative work.

Staff members attended the following to promote the TAP during FY 14-15:

Hearing Loss Association of America, Kentucky chapter meetings;
National Hearing Loss Association of America conferences;
National Senior Citizens conference and workshops;
Louisville Deaf Senior Citizens meetings;
Kentucky Speech-Language Hearing Pathologists Association members/conference;
Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Administrators conference;
National Association of State Relay Service Providers conference;
Office of Veteran's Affairs;
Kentucky Department of Education (various local school districts);
Northern Kentucky Health Fair;
Bowling Green Health Fair;
Kentucky Black Deaf Advocates conference;
Kentucky Audiologist Association conference;
Kentucky Telephone Association conferences;
Kentucky Association of the Deaf conference;
Kentucky Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf conference;
Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf National conference;
Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) Family Learning Vacation/Pancake Breakfast;
Kentucky Storytelling Conference;
Paducah Barbeque Festival;
Hillbilly Days – Pikeville;
Southeast Regional Institute on Deafness Conference;
Infant & Toddler Institute on Deafness Conference;
Early Hearing and Identification Detection conference;
American Association of Retired Persons Health Fair;
Mental Health Advisory Board workshops/conference;
Main Street and Shiloh Baptist Church Activity Day presentations;
Department of Aging Conference;
Community Health Fairs statewide;
American Bar Association training and workshops;
Kentucky Police Academy trainings;
Kentucky Correctional facility trainings;
Kentucky Society of Medical Assistants;
Kentucky Emergency Preparedness presentations and workshops; and
Senior Citizen Associations statewide.

Legislative Update:

Overall

- Kentucky has an estimated 694,301 (16% of population) deaf and hard of hearing residents. (*National Health Interview Survey*)
- Hearing loss ranks as the third most common health issue in the country, behind heart disease and arthritis. (*National Institutes of Health*)

- 1 in 5 Americans (48 million) have some degree of hearing loss. *(Hearing Health Foundation)*
- Men are more likely to experience hearing loss than women. *(National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)*
- Kentucky ranks third per capita nationally in people identified as deaf or hard of hearing. *(2010 American Community Survey Data, United States Census)*
- Approximately 17 percent (36 million) of American adults report some degree of hearing loss, with that number expected to double by 2030. *(National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)*
- Roughly 25 million Americans have experienced tinnitus. *(National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)*
- Approximately 4,000 new cases of sudden deafness occur each year in the United States. Only 10 to 15 percent of patients with sudden deafness know what caused their loss. *(National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)*

Children

- About 3 out of every 1,000 children in the United States are born deaf or hard-of-hearing. 90% of children who are born deaf are born to parents who can hear. *(National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)*
- Approximately 6 percent of all deaf children and another 6 percent of hard-of-hearing children have Usher syndrome. *(National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)*
- One in five teenagers (20 percent) will incur a hearing loss at a much earlier age due to music listening devices. This represents an overall increase in hearing loss of 30 percent for that age group. *(National Institutes of Health)*
- 14.9 percent of children between the ages of 6 and 19 have a hearing loss in one or both ears. *(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)*

Adults/Senior Citizens

- There is a strong relationship between age and reported hearing loss: 18 percent of American adults 45-64 years old, 30 percent of adults 65-74 years old, and 47 percent of adults 75 years old or older have a hearing loss. *(National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)*
- 15 percent (26 million) of Americans between the ages of 20 and 69 have high frequency hearing loss due to exposure to loud sounds or noise at work or in leisure activities. *(National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)*
- Of adults ages 65 and older in the United States, 12.3 percent of men and nearly 14 percent of women are affected by tinnitus. *(National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders)*
- The number of Americans who are 65 or older (220,000) increased 15.1 percent from 2002 to 2010, and that number is expected to double by 2030. *(2010 Census Brief on Older Populations)*

Military

- More than 59,000 military veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are on disability due to service-related hearing loss. *(United States Department of Veterans Affairs)*

- The most prevalent service-connected disability for veterans was tinnitus and hearing loss (60 percent). 1.5 million Veterans are receiving veterans' compensation for "profound unusable hearing." (*United States Department of Veterans Affairs*)

Legislative Plans for FY 16:

KCDHH is working with the Cabinet Secretary, the Kentucky Department of Education and members of the General Assembly to potentially introduce legislation that would require hearing screenings for children to be completed by a certified professional prior to entrance in school and during certain grade levels to ensure identification. Children are currently required to have dental exams and vision testing by appropriate professionals, so hearing testing should also be required to ensure accommodations are made for those students so no child will be left behind.

We are working with National organizations to support US legislation that would require insurance companies to cover, or at least partially cover, the cost of hearing aids for those identified with a hearing loss. "How can I get help paying for hearing aids" is the number one request received by our agency. We have also worked with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Hear Now to establish the Statewide Hearing Aid Assistance and Reuse Program (SHARP), which supplements the application fee through Hear Now for those applying for assistance to purchase hearing aids, or pays a small amount toward the purchase of hearing aids. This partnership with many agencies has been successful this FY and used hearing aids are being collected and processed through SHARP for credit toward another individual's purchase.

We are also working with the Commonwealth Office of Technology (COT), Broadband Division, to pursue potential legislation that would prevent internet service providers (ISP) from capping broadband usage for individuals that utilize videoconferencing or captioned telephone programs to access equitable communication. Some ISP's have threatened to raise the cost of broadband usage, making it impossible for low income or fixed income individuals to ensure they have access to telecommunications, especially during emergency situations. We have met with legislators and the head of the Broadband Division of COT to ensure this does not happen in Kentucky.

Plans for FY 16, not involving Legislative changes include:

The expansion of TAP, administered per KRS 163.525, continues to evolve and grow as demand increases and technology changes. The selected device(s) provide affordable, portable, reliable and accessible telecommunications for all eligible applicants. Regulations are in place outlining criteria for approving applications, outlining a processing system for vendor participation and specifying maintenance and repair procedures. Amendments to the regulations will be completed to incorporate changes to the current application and simplify the process for applicants.

The Internal Policy Analyst III, Program Coordinator and Executive Director plan to attend the National Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA) conference to be held in September 2015 in Wyoming. This conference highlights new and emerging technology and provides an opportunity to network with other state program

managers to improve equipment and services to our consumers as well as learn of Federal changes in regulations. Kentucky is highlighted at this conference as leader in providing the most advanced telecommunications equipment and staff serves on several panels to discuss the pros and cons of implementing the policies we utilize to provide effective communication for our consumers.

Outreach Plans for FY 15 – 16 include partnerships with the following entities:

Sprint Relay Service;
AT&T;
Kentucky Telephone Association;
Kentucky Association of the Deaf;
National Association of the Deaf
Alexander Graham Bell Association;
Hearing Loss Association of America;
American Association of Retired Persons;
Kentucky School for the Deaf;
Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation;
Kentucky Office for the Blind;
Kentucky Assistive Technology Services Network;
Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation;
Kentucky Office of Aging;
Kentucky Department of Education;
Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs;
Speech-Language and Hearing Pathologist Association:
First Steps;
Audiologists, Hearing Instrument Specialists; and
Area Developmental Districts

What TAP accomplishes as a program, providing basic telecommunication services, goes to the core of what our consumers are able to give back to society. We impact the lives of these citizens by providing services that allow them to utilize telecommunications, receive emergency notifications should a state or national emergency occur, and participate equitably in work and life activities.