



KENTUCKY COMMISSION ON THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR


MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 1, 2010

TO: Robert S. Sherman, Director
Legislative Research Commission

CC: Joseph U. Meyer, Acting Secretary
Education and Workforce Development Cabinet

Jeff 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 2009 - 2010

Enclosed is the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) Annual Report for the fiscal year 2009 - 2010. 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, please feel free to contact me at Virginia.moore@ky.gov or at 502-573-2604 (V/T).

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 provided equipment to 16,500 applicants. From time to time the program receives letters of thanks from grateful recipients. Below are some of the experts from 2009-2010.

"I am writing to thank you for the Uniphone you provided me free through your wonderful program. Thanks to the battery back up in this phone I was able to communicate with my family during recent disasters in Kentucky (ice storm, flooding, and wind storms). Without this device they would not have known if I was safe and I would not have been able to communicate with others near me who helped me survive without electricity. Thank you!"

(Deaf consumer – Danville)

"I want to thank you for the Captioned telephone you gave me. It has made such a difference in my ability to talk with friends, family and doctors that I need to make appointments with. And with the loud ringer now I know when someone is calling me! Your service is such a blessing to us in Kentucky."

(Hard of Hearing Consumer – Paducah)

"I want to thank you for the program your organization provides to those who have a hearing loss. My grandmother could not communicate with her family any more until you gave her the amplified phone. Now we can check on her without causing frustration on her part and she can still live alone and feel independent. Continue the good work."

(Severely Hard of Hearing Consumer – Salyersville)

"I am 94 and thanks to the phone you gave me I can talk with my many church friends and still take care of my business. My old phone did not allow me to hear even with hearing aids. I just wanted to thank you again, and again for truly helping me."

(Late Deafened Consumer – Louisville)

"I think it is so cool that you will give me a pager so I can keep in touch with my parents and friends. I know I will feel more safe with it."

(Young Deaf Consumer – Burgin)

**Telecommunications Access Program
Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2009 - 2010**

**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 1st of each year, beginning July 1, 1995, and, at a minimum, provide:

The number of persons served and the number of TDDs 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 1,627 applications during FY 10. The status of those applications for Specialized Telecommunication Equipment (STE) is as follows as of 6/29/2010.

Status	Total
Approved	524
Complete	905
Incomplete	170
Denied	26
Not Active	2
Total **	1,627

*** Total status count does not match the number of new applications received during the FY due to receipt of some applications in the previous FY and processing in the current FY, or pending incomplete into the next FY.*

DEFINITIONS:

Approved - Applications approved and on the waiting list. Equipment has been ordered but is pending delivery or equipment has not yet been ordered at the end of the FY. Customers ready to receive equipment once funds are available.

Completed - Applications were approved and the STE was ordered, delivered to the consumer and paid for during the FY.

Incomplete - Applications are pending receipt of missing verification. Applications lacking information required to determine eligibility (approval/denial) are returned to the applicant with a request for additional information. Applications are kept pending for one year to allow adequate time to provide necessary verification.

Denied – Applications denied because the applicants did not meet the eligibility criteria in order to receive the STE. Notification is sent to each applicant outlining the reason for ineligibility and an explanation of why they are ineligible.

Not Active – These applications have been pending verification for more than twelve (12) months. During the twelfth month the applicant is notified and given an additional 30 days to submit the missing verification. If no response is received the application is changed to NA in the database and archived. If the applicant reapplies he/she must complete a new application with all required verification.

905 consumers received 1,277 pieces of equipment during FY 09-10. A breakdown of these applicants by degree of hearing loss is listed below:

Degree of Hearing Loss	Total
Deaf	20
Deaf w/ Limited Vision	1
Deaf-Blind	0
Hard-of-Hearing	660
Late-Deafened	13
Severely Hard-of-Hearing	206
Speech-Impaired	5
Total	905

During FY 09–10, the numbers of applications decreased by less than 1% due to the fact that 488 consumers are awaiting receipt of wireless devices. The numbers of deaf consumers served by other devices decreased slightly to 2.25% compared to 2.5% last year as these individuals continue to require alternate technology for their communication needs. We anticipate serving 59% more consumers overall during FY 11, once wireless distribution begins. As of June 29, 2010 there are 524 approved applications waiting for distribution of equipment.

The number of hard of hearing individuals in the Commonwealth, which includes those self identified as hard of hearing, severely hard of hearing and late deafened, continues to increase as the population ages. The highest demand for specialized equipment still comes from this population and increased to 97% compared to 95% last FY. Now that wireless devices are available these percentages should shift to a more equitable representation of the community as a whole. Hard of hearing consumers utilize amplified phones, speech strengthening telephones, voice carry over telephones and the CapTel devices in particular, but are also becoming savvier with wireless devices. The TAP served .5% deaf-blind and .25% speech impaired individuals during FY 10, a bit of a decrease from FY 09. We anticipate these percentages will rise as well as all consumers are utilizing wireless technology on a greater scale.

Per the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), approximately 17 percent (36 million) of American adults report some degree of hearing loss. More than 28 million Americans suffer from some degree of hearing loss with that number expected to double by 2030. Kentucky’s population age 80+ is projected to reach 220,000 per the 2008 Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center report, *Visioning Kentucky’s Future Measures and Milestones*. Kentucky has the 2nd highest disability rate among adults age 21-64 (20%) and ranks 3rd per capita nationally in people identified as deaf or hard of hearing, which equates to a greater need for the specialized equipment provided by TAP.

**The revenues and expenditures of the Telecommunications Access Program
For fiscal year 2009-2010**

REVENUE	Budgeted Expenditures	Actual Expenditures
FY 2010 Allotment	456,000	806,000
Appropriation Increase	350,000	
Total Allotment	806,000	
Total Revenue collected		749,787
PERSONNEL EXPENSES	218,000	
State Employee Salary	105,800	106,025
State Employee Benefits/Fringe	36,650	36,736
Other Personnel Services	300	38,494
Other	75,250	36,745
Total Personnel Services	218,000	218,000
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Utilities	4,100	4,155
Other Rentals	32,050	32,502
Maintenance and Repairs	50	45
Postage and Related Services	3,000	3,022
Miscellaneous Services	15,400	15,317
Telecommunications	5,200	5,723
Computer Services	16,000	16,294
Supplies	14,200	14,782
TAP Equipment purchases	400,000	398,291
Travel Expense/ Allowances	14,250	14,241
Miscellaneous Commodities	27,500	27,415
Total Operating Expenses	588,000	531,787
TOTAL EXPENSES	806,000	749,787
13-33-340-TBOO BALANCE	AS OF 6/29/10	FY 09 -10 \$ 0

Breakdown of expenditures and the cost analysis during FY 09-10:

STE (Telephone equipment)	Units	Unit Price	Cost per FY
Ultratec 1140 Uniphone	7	\$183.00	\$1,281.00
Superprint 4425 w/ASCII	4	\$338.00	\$1,352.00
Pro 80 Gold	3	\$423.00	\$1,269.00
WCSC 600	178	\$90.00	\$16,020.00
HD-40P	15	\$58.00	\$870.00
Ameriphone CL-4205 Cordless	131	\$137.95	\$18,071.45
Dialogue JV-35 Amp Speakerphone	8	\$81.84	\$654.72
Ultratec CapTel	114	\$420.50	\$47,937.00

Ultratec CapTel with USB port	4	\$485.50	\$1,942.00
Starplus 45	17	\$79.98	\$1,359.66
CSC 600	98	\$90.00	\$8,820.00
Dialogue XL-50	5	\$93.04	\$465.20
ER SOS alert	24	\$95.00	\$2,280.00
Uniden 4248 Cordless	9	\$114.06	\$1,026.54
Ameriphone VCO	1	\$125.00	\$125.00
RC 200 Speakerphone	3	\$375.00	\$1,125.00
CapTell 800 I (w/VoIP)	13	\$477.50	\$6,207.50
Cordless 4220	250	\$114.06	\$28,515.00
TeliTalk Speech Aid phone	3	\$925.00	\$2,775.00
Serene Innovations HD – 60	8	\$98.00	\$784.00
Ampli-500 Amplified Phone	10	\$78.85	\$788.50
Total telephone equipment	905		\$387,987.84
Wireless Device (pending delivery)	488	\$500.65	\$244,319.27
Signaling Devices			
Krown Ringer through Krown Mfg	55	\$33.00	\$1,815.00
Ultratec Clarity Tone Ringer	89	\$19.59	\$1,743.51
Sonic Alert TR 75 VAS	97	\$25.95	\$2,517.15
ClearSounds HT-CL1 Combo Signaler	22	\$33.00	\$726.00
Krown Ringer through WCI	149	\$23.50	\$3,501.50
Vibracell Ring – Tactile Signaler	0	\$90.00	\$0.00
Total Signaling Devices	372		\$10,303.16
Total Equipment pieces / cost	1,277		\$398,291.00

One visual alert signaler (VAS), Amplified Ringer, Tactile Signaler or Combo Signaler, in addition to the specialized telephone equipment is distributed per consumer, but not all applicants request or receive a unit with their telephone equipment and some may request a signaler only.

Discussion of any major policy or operational issues:

KCDHH staff developed a strategy to archive TAP applications digitally using an office scanner. This involves a systematic procedure to convert hardcopies of the applications into PDF documents and then uploading them to the database for easy retrieval. The procedure was discussed and approved by staff from the Department of Libraries and Archives (KDLA) Scanning of program records will begin effective July 1, 2010.

A request for bid for TAP equipment vendors was processed during 2010 and new contracts will be finalized by July 1, 2010. Several pieces of new technology are being added to the program's offerings and older, somewhat obsolete, pieces (such as a

variety of TTY's) have been removed for FY 11. The streamlined offerings will continue to meet the needs of the diverse population we serve, but should reduce the confusion some consumers and professionals face in selecting an appropriate device.

In order to increase awareness of the program and its offerings, and ensure that consumers select the most appropriate piece of equipment for their needs, several demonstration sites were established throughout the state to display available equipment. Partnerships with private, public and state agencies were utilized to minimize cost for this project. Consumers can now test equipment at a more convenient location and professionals working at the established sites are able to see and use the equipment before making recommendations.

The vast majority of outreach for the TAP is accomplished through partnerships with other agencies, word of mouth, and in-house electronic advertising (i.e., newsletter, eblitz). However, TAP took advantage of the opportunity to meet people face-to-face at the 2009 State Fair. Fairgoers took advantage of the KCDHH "Puzzled by Hearing Loss" booth sponsored by a partnership with Heuser Hearing Institute (HHI), and Hamilton 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 new technology. TAP displayed specialized equipment (amplified telephones and visual alert signalers) and allowed those interested to actually make local telephone calls to test equipment. Hamilton Relay demonstrated the ever popular CapTel captioned telephone and the new model CapTel 800i, which utilizes one telephone line for the voice portion of the call and a high-speed internet connection for data (captions). TAP is scheduled to participate again in 2010.

Kentucky's Relay Service provider, Hamilton Telecommunications, conducts outreach activities statewide and informs consumers of the availability of the TAP. AT&T continues to partner with the TAP ongoing and once again included billing inserts advertising the program, to extend our outreach capabilities. TAP program staff utilizes videoconferencing, video relay interpreting, AIM and email, as well as traditional voice lines, interpreters, and face to face contacts to promote the program and explain its requirements to professionals and consumers. KCDHH Outreach team includes information on the TAP during every presentation, demonstration, booth, visitation or other outreach method utilized.

Hamilton Telecommunications, Kentucky's current Relay Service provider, contract is effective through June 30, 2011. Another request for bid (RFB) will be submitted by the Public Service Commission in FY 11. Customer satisfaction with Hamilton Relay is well documented and KCDHH is satisfied with their performance record. The state Outreach Coordinator works with the TAP to ensure consumer training is provided.

The TAP Advisory Board, which consists of consumers and agency representatives, meets at least once annually face-to-face. During the October 2009 meeting members discussed the implementation of wireless and specific devices to include in program offerings. In April, members provided input to the RFB submitted to obtain new vendor contracts. Updates are also provided to members via electronic mail between face-to-face meetings. The term for the current Chair of the Advisory Board expires June 30,

2010, and as required in the KCDHH by-laws, the Executive Board appointed a new Chair for FY 10-11. Both are listed below.

The current voting members*, Ex-Officio members** and TAP staff*** of the TAP Advisory Board are listed below. Consumer terms expire on a rotating basis effective June 30th and are replaced as needed by the board. Elected members may serve two consecutive four-year terms while law mandates other member positions.

Last Name	First Name	Membership Status	Term Ends
Stuckey	Bob	KCDHH Commissioner / severely Hard of Hearing Consumer / FY 09-10 Advisory Board Chair (outgoing)	2010
Timon	Betty	*KCDHH Commissioner / Severely Hard of Hearing Consumer / FY 10-11 Advisory Board Chair (NEW)	2011
Ziehr	Jeremiah	*Deaf Consumer	2013
Fowler	Lewis	*Deaf Consumer	2011
Lawson	Johnny	*Speech-impaired Consumer	2013
Vacant		*Speech-impaired Consumer	
McGirt	Melinda	*Hard of Hearing Consumer	2011
Caldwell	Shannon	*Deaf-Blind Consumer	2011
Skaggs	Forest	*KY Telephone Association Representative	Law
Stevens	Jim	**Public Service Commission Representative	Law
Coyer	Nina	**KCDHH Commission Chair	Law
Moore	Virginia	**KCDHH Executive Director	Law
Zulauf	Cole	***Document Processing Specialist III	Staff
Wright	Wilma	***Administrative Specialist II	Staff
Holloway	Rowena	***Internal Policy Analyst III	Staff

The Internal Policy Analyst III served during FY 09-10 as Secretary for the Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program Administrators (TEDPA) national organization and also serves on the AT&T Advisory Board, the Telephone Relay Service (TRS) providers Advisory Board, the Vocational Rehabilitation Interagency Coordinators Council (ICC) and the Kentucky Outreach and Information Network (KOIN). The IPA III was appointed by the Governor in 2009 to serve on the Kentucky Assistive Technology Service (KATS) Network Advisory Board and the Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation (KATLC) Board. Written reports from these meetings are compiled and included in the agency's quarterly reports and archived as part of the agency's records retention.

The Internal Policy Analyst III attended the national Wireless Emergency Communications State of Technology Conference September 21-24 in Atlanta, Georgia. This conference is held every four years to allow states to share and acquire beneficial information regarding the use of wireless technology during emergencies. In the U.S. more than 54 million people have been identified as having a disability, constituting 20 percent of the total population. Within the disabled population, according to the Wireless Association reports, 80% utilize wireless devices as their primary source of communication. Providing alerts on wireless devices must be considered during any emergency communication scenario planning to truly meet accessibility demands.

Staff members attended the following to promote the TAP during FY 09 -10:

National Association of the Deaf 50th conference and workshops;

National Association of the Deaf Youth Leadership Conference;
National Senior Citizens conference and workshops;
Kentucky Speech-Language Hearing Association conference;
Eastern Kentucky University Summer Transition Enhancement Program;
Attorney General End Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Conference;
Northern Kentucky Health Fair;
Kentucky Black Deaf Advocates Conference and workshops;
Kentucky Association of the Deaf 42nd Biennial Conference;
Kentucky Telephone Association conference;
Western KY Alumni Association Picnic;
Northern KY Senior Citizens Expo;
Northern KY Services for the Deaf training;
Kentucky School for the Deaf (KSD) Family Learning Vacation;
Kentucky Storytelling Conference and workshops;
Kentucky Court Reporters Conference;
American Association of Retired Persons Health Fair;
University of Louisville Deaf Awareness Day presentation;
University of Cincinnati Interpreter Training Program presentation;
University of Kentucky Audiologist Department presentations;
Hearing Loss Association of Kentucky (Louisville and Bardstown Chapters);
Mental Health Advisory Board;
Housing Policy Advisory Special Needs Committee presentation;
Transportation Cabinet Health Day;
Department of Aging Conference;
Heuser Hearing Institute Symposium;
Community Health Fairs statewide;
Senior Citizen / Retirement Associations statewide; and
Kentucky School for the Deaf Pancake Bazaar.

Legislative Update:

With the passage of House Bill 2, passed during the 2010 special session, language in KRS 278.5499 was codified, making the two cent per telecommunications access line collected by the Public Service Commission and allocated to the TAP permanent. The stabilization of funding will allow KCDHH to expand distribution of wireless pagers.

A provider for wireless equipment was finalized and distribution of devices begins in July 2010. The inclusion of wireless devices not only allows technologically current access to telephone communication but also allows equitable access to notification during emergencies. Kentucky became a state model for the national association and other state programs with implementation of our wireless distribution plan and other states are requesting to duplicate the programs policy and procedures. Kentucky again has become a leader in providing access to state of the art telecommunications for deaf, hard of hearing and speech impaired consumers.

House Bill 556, although primarily regarding modifications to statutes regarding the nursing profession, also included modifications to KRS 163.525 which would allow Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners (ARNP) to certify hearing loss on TAP applications. Nurse practitioners have been allowed to sign TAP applications on an

individual basis in the past, but this legislation amended the statute governing TAP to permit this as a rule. Language was added to HB 179 and passed in the final days.

Legislative Plans for FY 10-11:

Implementation of an effective emergency notification system for all citizens of the Commonwealth is vitally needed. Deaf and hard of hearing consumers often do not have access to live newscasts or radio broadcasts which give instructions for dealing with natural disasters, such as recent ice storms within Kentucky. TAP's distribution of wireless devices will enable our consumers to receive emergency notification warnings. The Department of Emergency Management (DEM), the Commercial Mobile Radio Services (CMRS), or a similar agency, must take on the responsibility for implementing emergency notification. KCDHH plans to support legislation proposed by the Office of Homeland Security, or other such agencies, to make emergency notification services available to all citizens.

Plans for FY 10-11, not involving Legislative changes include:

Wireless communication has rapidly become the most preferred and accessible technology for deaf consumers and is frequently utilized by hard of hearing consumers throughout the Commonwealth as well. In FY 95-96 when the program was first implemented the agency experienced a surge in applications for specialized equipment. Based on analysis during the past year and the introduction of wireless devices to the TAP, we anticipate a 59% increase in applications during FY 11. This significant increase in applications may require hiring additional staff to assist with daily processing and ordering tasks. Group training sessions at centralized locations throughout the state may also be necessary to ensure consumers receive the greatest benefit from the devices distributed. Consumers will be asked to sign up for emergency warning messages from the local Emergency Management Services (EMS) offices and those staff may require additional training to ensure the messages are distributed in a format that is easily understood by the deaf and hard of hearing population.

The expansion of TAP, administered per KRS 163.525, to include wireless devices is still in its infancy. The selected device(s) provide affordable, portable, consistent, reliable and secure wireless data and voice communications 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. However, updates to the current regulations are required to incorporate nuances of the program's operation (including wireless) and include ARNP's as professionals that can verify hearing loss on the TAP application.

Deaf individuals increasingly require access to videophone technology which allows them to communicate with deaf or hearing callers through their native language, American Sign Language (ASL), because many deaf consumers consider English as their second language. Connect Kentucky is a template for the world in the expansion and implementation of broadband technology throughout the Commonwealth to reduce the digital divide. Although broadband may now be more accessible it is still not affordable for many of the "have nots" throughout the state. Deaf and hard of hearing constituents often survive on a limited income and cannot afford high speed technology

in their homes. Through Connected Nation, funds should be utilized to reduce the cost of broadband services for this population as access to communication is a basic human right as well as a safety concern for many of our citizens. KCDHH is working with their staff to outline possibilities of supplementing monthly charges.

The Internal Policy Analyst III plans to attend the National Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA) conference to be held in October 2010 in North Carolina. This conference showcases new and emerging technology utilized by state programs and provides an opportunity to network with other state program managers to improve services to our consumers.

In order to make the application process more accessible, a video rendition of the application process is being developed for addition to the KCDHH website. The application process will be explained in American Sign Language (ASL), with captioning and will be converted to a DVD so that professionals can be provided with a visual explanation as well. This will allow outreach to continue without the added expense of travel involved for training.

Outreach plans for FY 10-11 include partnerships with the following entities:

Hamilton Relay Service;	Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation;
AT&T;	Kentucky Department of Education;
Kentucky Telephone Association;	Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs;
Kentucky Association of the Deaf;	Kentucky Speech-Language and Hearing Association;
Alexander Graham Bell Association;	Heuser Hearing Institute;
Hearing Loss Association of America;	Lexington Speech and Hearing Center;
American Association of Retired Persons;	Speech and Language Pathologists;
Kentucky School for the Deaf;	Audiologists, Hearing Instrument Specialists; and
Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation;	Area Developmental District
Kentucky Department for the Blind;	
Kentucky Assistive Technology Services Network;	

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 communicate on the phone, receive emergency notifications should a state or national emergency occur, and participate equitably in work and life activities.