

# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

## 2026 Annual Report

### VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

#### 2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

##### Goal 1: Access and Success

**Objective 1** – Hire diverse deaf or hearing staff proficient in American Sign Language

VDDHH had mixed results. 2025, we recruited for 2 classified positions and 3 wage positions. We successfully hired a classified applicant with ASL proficiency and hired a wage applicant with no ASL proficiency. 1 classified position and 2 wage positions were not filled.

##### Goal 2: Welcoming and Respectful Culture

**Objective 1** – Involve affected diverse stakeholders to address issues in the interpreting profession

Obtained clarification on establishing & planning a stakeholder workgroup. A steering committee to be launched during 2026 inclusive of 6 key stakeholders with the intent to expand representation within a larger workgroup.

##### Goal 3: State Agency DEI Infrastructure & Training

**Objective 1** – Update professional development plans for each individual staff.

VDDHH transitioned to DHRM portal, Page Up, and completed annual performance reviews including updating development plans. As part of the development plan, staff have been attending conferences and established goals for professional growth.

## 2026 GOALS

### Goal 1: Access and Success

**Objective 1** – Recruit and hire a diverse deaf or hearing workforce proficient in American Sign Language

**Objective 2** – Implement intentional outreach and recruitment strategies to increase applicants and hires from historically underrepresented populations

### Goal 2: Welcoming and Respectful Culture

**Objective 1** – Involve diverse stakeholder to address issues in the interpreting profession and aging services.

**Objective 2** – Translate agency publications into 6 foreign languages to accommodate stakeholders with limited English proficiency (LEP)

**Objective 3** – Staff to take plain English training to accommodate stakeholders with limited English proficiency (LEP)

**Objective 4** – Upgrade conference room audio/visual media technology inclusive of reasonable accommodations and social media livestreaming to improve accessibility and statewide access to virtual public meetings.

**Objective 5** - Increase awareness of VDDHH services among diverse and historically underserved communities by sponsoring and participating in events hosted by marginalized deaf and hard of hearing populations throughout the Commonwealth.

**Objective 6** - Implement a dedicated tablet to support accessible communication by providing immediate access to real-time captioning and/or spoken language translation for visitors arriving for appointments or walk-in seeking assistance.

### Goal 3: State Agency DEI Infrastructure & Training

**Objective 1** – Draft a template for professional development plans delineating COV training requirements, position training requirements and staff expressed goals.

**Objective 2** – Require annual completion of a diversity training course

**Objective 3** – Staff to pursue specialized certification

**Objective 4** – Implement updated Code of Ethics and Social Media policies

