Maryland Deaf Cultural Digital Library

Fact Sheet
February 2016

The Maryland State Department of Education/Division of Library Development and Services and Montgomery County Public Libraries would like to share information on the progress of the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library.

The Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library, the result of a bill that was passed into law, is the “first stop” information center that will provide Maryland residents, local public library staff, college and university librarians and other libraries in the state of Maryland with access to online resources on deaf culture, a comprehensive electronic collection of deaf resources, deaf cultural programs, and training programs for library staff.

Current Status

- The groundwork to formalize the foundation of the Maryland Deaf Cultural Digital Library is in progress. A letter of agreement between the Maryland State Department of Education/Division of Library Development and Services and Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) is in progress.
- The job descriptions are currently being written and refined.
- The Division of Library Development and Services (DLDS) is working with MCPL to establish procedures to formalize the DCDL Advisory Board. DLDS will begin taking applications for membership in February 2016. The majority of board members are required to be deaf or hard of hearing and will be selected from the following entities:
  1. County library systems
  2. The Division of Library Development and Services
  3. The Governor’s Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
  4. Statewide deaf and hard of hearing organizations; and,
  5. Other organizations as agreed upon by the Governor’s Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Division of Library Development and Services

- Board members will then recruit members for the Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library “Friends of the Library.” These individuals are expected to be strongly committed, well-positioned and able to promote community involvement, advocacy, and funding for the DCDL.
- Additional details will be announced as they become available during the months ahead.
- For more information about the Deaf Culture Digital Library, contact Susan Cohen at 301-637-2964 (videophone) or Irene Padilla, 410-767-0434.
Background

• In the 2012 Regular Session, the Maryland General Assembly passed a bill establishing a Task Force to Study the Establishment of a Deaf Culture Digital Library. http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2012rs/bills/sb/sb0571e.pdf

• In September 2013 the eleven member task force, established to study the feasibility of the DCDL proposal, submitted a report with recommendations to the Governor. The final report to the Governor on the Deaf Culture Digital Library may be seen at: http://tinyurl.com/o3dcb7o.

• On May 15, 2014, the Maryland General Assembly passed the bill to create the Deaf Culture Digital Library http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?id=hb0653&stab=01&pid= billpage&tab=subject3&ys=2014rs. The credit for the concept of the library goes to numerous advocates including Alice Hagemeyer, Silver Spring Library resident and longtime advocate for the deaf community to have equal access to library services. Ms. Hagemeyer is the president and founder of the Friends of the Library for Deaf Action.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Who selected MCPL as the site of the Deaf Cultural Digital Library?

• The Division of Library Development and Services of the Maryland State Department of Education selected Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) to manage the Deaf Cultural Digital Library (DCDL) for the state of Maryland.

Why was MCPL selected as the site of the DCDL?

• MCPL was selected as the site of the DCDL due to its long history of providing library services to people who are deaf and hard of hearing including communication access, deaf resources, collections of materials for, by, and about people who are deaf and hard of hearing, and programs featuring deaf authors and speakers on topics related to deaf culture, and coping with hearing level changes due to aging. These services are renowned throughout the State of Maryland and across the nation.

Who will take the lead on this project?

• Susan Cohen, Librarian II, at Montgomery County Public Libraries, will serve as the DCDL Project Coordinator. Ms. Cohen, who is deaf, has expertise in delivering library services to the deaf and hard of hearing community, deaf resources, and a long history of connections with the deaf and hard of hearing community.
How will this library be funded and how many staff will be hired?

- State funding for the DCDL includes personnel and other resources. Two full-time library staff members will be hired to help coordinate, organize and monitor the program. The librarian is required to be a deaf or hard of hearing individual, eligible for Professional Public Librarian Certification issued by the State Superintendent of Schools, fluent in American Sign Language, and knowledgeable about library, literacy and accessibility related issues of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

How will the two staff positions support the DCDL?

- Staff members in these positions will help plan and develop deaf cultural programs, give presentations about DCDL to Maryland residents and library staff, showcase library services at deaf conferences, develop and maintain the DCDL website, coordinate training sessions for library staff statewide, and support and facilitate vital statewide partnerships.

Where will the DCDL be located?

- The DCDL, an online resource, will be available virtually to Maryland residents and library staff throughout the state of Maryland. DCDL staff will be based at the Germantown Library.

References to Legislation and Statute

Task Force Bill (SB 571)
http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2012rs/bills/sb/sb0571e.pdf

DCDL Established (HB 653)
http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?id=hb0653&stab=01&pid=billpage&tab=subject3&ys=2014rs

Chapter 606

Statute 23-108