

SLIDE 1:

Telecommunications Access of Maryland: Keeping Marylanders Connected by Phone

SLIDE 2:

What is TAM?

- State agency located within the Maryland Department of Disabilities
- Provides assistive services and equipment for Marylanders who have difficulty using a telephone through:
 - Maryland Relay
 - Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program

SLIDE 3:

The Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) Program

Provides assistive telecommunications devices to qualified Marylanders.

SLIDE 4:

What Telecommunications Equipment is Available?

- Amplified phones
- Wireless devices
- Large button phones
- Picture phones
- Captioned Telephones
- Emergency dialers
- Specialized switches
- ... and more...

SLIDE 5:

Who Benefits From the MAT Program?

- Deaf/Late-Deafened (severe to profound hearing loss)
- Hard of Hearing (unable to hear speech on phone without amplification)
- Deaf-Blind (severe to profound hearing loss AND loss of sight)
- Difficulty Speaking (unable to speak intelligibly/loudly on phone)
- Low Vision/Blind (blind/significant loss of field/acuity; legally blind)
- Limited Mobility (little/no ability to grip, lift, hold or dial phone; difficulty walking)
- Cognitive Difficulty (difficulty dialing series of numbers)

SLIDE 6:

MAT Program Eligibility – Who Qualifies?

- Residents of Maryland
- Persons at least 3 years and older
- Persons on a limited income
- Veterans receiving benefits
- Persons who are certified as having difficulty using a standard telephone
- Persons who have phone service (if the equipment requires it)

SLIDE 7:

Application Details

- Available online at MDRelay.org – equipment tab
- Call 800-552-7724 or 410-767-6960 (Voice/TTY) or 443-453-5970 (Video Phone) to request by mail
- Email us at MAT.Program1@Maryland.gov and request an electronic application

SLIDE 8:

Required Documents

Copies of:

- Internet, phone or utility bill
- One proof of income (Acceptable forms listed on application)
- Copy of Photo ID

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Who Can Sign on Part 5

- Any licensed health care provider that can attest to the applicant's disability
- Social Worker
- VR Counselor
- PT, OT, audiologist
- SLP, physician, nurse...

SLIDE 10:

mat.program1@maryland.gov

Fax – 410-767-4276

USPS

SLIDE 11:

What happens next???

- Email or letter of approval is sent
- Evaluator contact information shared
- Assessment is scheduled remotely or in person
- Equipment decision is made
- Equipment received and follow-up services provided as needed

SLIDE 12:

About our Equipment....

- We are a loan program
- Equipment covered for 3 years
- What if my needs change

SLIDE 13:

The Communication Facilitator (CF) Service

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The Communication Facilitator (CF) service enables individuals who are DeafBlind (DB) to stay connected via a video communication platform and assistance from a Communication Facilitator. The CF service is overseen and monitored by the Maryland Accessible Telecommunications (MAT) program—bringing accessible communication methods and DB awareness to more Marylanders.

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How the CF Service Works

The Communication Facilitator (CF) service enables individuals who are DeafBlind (DB) to stay connected via video calls while using a Communication Facilitator. The Communication Facilitator, who is a skilled signer, provides the DB individual with visual information they see on the screen. The CF copies sign language from the caller on the screen and communicates it to the DB individual through close vision, tracking, protactile, or tactile sign language. Calls are supported through any kind of video communication platform, including:

- Videophone (VP)
- Video Relay Services (VRS)

- Facetime (FT)
- Zoom
- Skype
- Google Hangout
- Google Meet
- And more!

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How the CF Service Works continued...

- Close-Vision: CFs can assist DB individuals with residual vision by being in close contact and within their visual field; CFs slow their signing and reduce their signing space.
- Tracking: DB individuals with residual vision can put one or both of their hands on the CF's forearm(s) or wrist(s) to interpret sign language within their visual field.
- Protactile: Everything that is communicated during the conversation is shared with the DB individual by the CF through touch and is practiced on the body.
- Tactile: A DB individuals places their hands over the CF's hands to follow what's being communicated during the conversation through touch and movement.

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What is a Communication Facilitator?

- A Communication Facilitator copies sign language from a caller as shown on a videophone screen and provides visual information to a person who is DB—usually through close vision or tactile sign language—during calls.
- The CF service also benefits individuals who are DB by allowing them to freely express themselves in their own language and to communicate directly with others.

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Application Details

- To be eligible to obtain future CF services, you must complete the Communication Facilitator Service DeafBlind Consumer Application and be approved by the MAT program. Once approved, you may complete and submit the Communication Facilitator Service Request Form. Both applications will be available online soon for users to access and complete. Interested individuals can request an application in writing, by phone, by email, or after this presentation.
- Individuals who are DB may also apply for telecommunications equipment through the MAT program and iCanConnect (ICC).

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Application Details continued...

Writing:

Telecommunications Access of Maryland
301 West Preston Street, Suite 1008A
Baltimore, MD 21201

Phone: 410-246-4418 (office) | 443-852-6717 (text only)

Email: Kevin.Steffy@Maryland.gov or MoreInfo@MDRelay.org

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Application Details continued...

Print: Application will need to be printed and completed. Send your completed application in the mail to:

Maryland Accessible Telecommunications of Maryland
301 W Preston St. Suite 1008A
Baltimore, MD 21296-7989

The postage and return address are provided for you.

Fax: Fax your completed application to: 410-767-4276

Email: Submit your completed application by scanning and emailing it to: CF-Scheduler@Maryland.gov

SLIDE 21:

Interested in Becoming a CF?

Email us with a Letter of Recommendation to be considered for a role as a Communication Facilitator. We accept letters from:

- A person who is DeafBlind
- An educator at Towson University - Deaf Studies or CCBC - Interpreting Training Program(ITP)
- MAT Manager, Kevin Steffy
- Metro Washington Association of the DeafBlind (MWADB) President
- Division of Rehabilitation Services(DORS) DeafBlind Specialist
- Gallaudet University (DOIT) by Steven D. Collins
- A member of the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH)

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Contact Us

Kevin Steffy

MAT Program Manager

410-246-4418 (VRS)

443-852-6717 (Text)

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Jane Hager

MAT Program Specialist

410-767-7253 (Voice/TTY)

301-974-1946 (Cell)

Jane.Hager@maryland.gov

MDRelay.org

Facebook: MarylandRelay711

Twitter: MDRelay711

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State of Maryland

Wes Moore, Governor

Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor

Carol Beatty, Secretary

Lisa Belcastro, Deputy Secretary