

**Telecommunication Access Program (TAP) Advisory Board Meeting
October 22, 2020
Zoom Meeting**

Members Present: Ms. Gerry Gordon-Brown, Ms. Christa Cervantes, Mr. Lewis Fowler, Ms. Mindy McGirt, Mr. Tyler Campbell, Ms. Jeannie Taylor and Mr. Jim Stevens

Members Absent: Mr. Jim Timon, Mr. Jeremiah Ziehr, Mr. Johnny Lawson and Ms. Marilyn Fenwick

Staff Present: Ms. Jessica Endler Smith, Ms. Elise Kitchen, Ms. Toni Jo Stinson

Guests: None

Communication

Facilitators: Ms. Shannon Grider, Ms. Rita Zirnheld-Anderson, and Ms. Tracy Lundergan

The Chair, Ms. Gordon-Brown, called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m., and confirmed that there were not enough members present for a quorum. Ms. Stinson called the roll. Ms. Gordon-Brown confirmed that the minutes could not be approved without a quorum. Ms. Smith reviewed the rules for conducting a Zoom meeting and introduced Ms. Elise Kitchen as the new Policy Specialist for KCDHH.

Reports:

Ms. Smith provided members with a statistical report of the TAP's activities since the last meeting in October, 2019, and outlined changes that have been made due to COVID-19 restrictions that were put in place beginning in March. She stated that in January, 2020, TAP processed orders for September through December of 2019 and began implementing a prioritization protocol, meaning first-time applicants will be given priority, and re-applicants will be placed on a waiting list to receive equipment when funds are available. Ms. Smith also shared that the TAP upgraded to the iPhone XR beginning with that January, 2020 order. She said the TAP now has a waiting list from July, 2020 to present due to a delay in contract renewals at the state level. She added that there has been a decrease in the number of applications due to the domino effect of the March shutdowns.

Ms. Smith also explained the current procedure for processing applications, since most staff members are telecommuting. She said that one staff member is consistently in the office during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, while Ms. Stinson drives to the office twice a week to pick up and exchange mail and files with her. She indicated that they have also established procedures for the new database. They are hoping to go live with the database soon so that people can apply online without requesting a paper application.

Ms. Gordon-Brown asked if there were any other TAP issues associated with COVID-19, and Ms. Smith responded that there are several ongoing concerns. She stated that TAP Demonstration Cabinets remain closed due to safety restrictions mandated by Governor Beshear, and no visitors are permitted in the KCDHH office. She indicated that, for safety reasons, she was not able to go install phones or troubleshoot equipment when problems were reported. Ms. Smith reported that she has transitioned to emails or phone calls to walk consumers through installation procedures and equipment issues. She added that she was grateful that the regulations had previously been amended to allow applications to be accepted electronically through email or fax as that has been particularly helpful during the pandemic.

Ms. Cervantes provided a presentation regarding Hamilton Relay's implementation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) safety recommendations. She indicated that they activated their COVID-19 plan, which includes such elements as observation, preparedness, and response planning as well as educating the staff. Ms. Cervantes said that Hamilton Relay is also working with their employees to ensure they have what they need to be able to telecommute for their safety while still providing uninterrupted service for consumers. She added that due to the pandemic, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has issued a waiver for the phone answering requirement. Ms. Cervantes stated that Hamilton Relay has also suspended in-person activities and is focusing on webinars and doing more online outreach. She also announced that Peggy Ward is the new Kentucky Outreach Coordinator and that she is fluent in American Sign Language (ASL).

New Business:

Ms. Smith reported that the Requests for Bids (RFB) were due in July, 2020, but due to COVID-19-related issues, the state has still not approved vendor contracts. KCDHH has been trying to push for the contracts to be renewed and finalized; however equipment cannot be ordered until that happens.

Announcements:

- The next TAP Advisory Board meeting will be held on April 22nd, 2021, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. – Location TBD

Ms. GORDON-BROWN adjourned the meeting at 3:12 p.m.