Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Annual Report

FY 2012

July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

• COMMUNICATIONS • OPPORTUNITIES • EQUALITY •

September 30, 2012

The Honorable Lincoln D. Chafee
Office of the Governor
State House, Room 222
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Governor Chafee:

It is my pleasure to forward the FY 2012 Annual Report of the Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RICDHH) in accordance with R.I.G.L. § 23-1.8. This report highlights the result-based performances undertaken by the RICDHH in fulfilling its legislated mandates to empower Deaf and Hard of Hearing toward full communication equivalency and contributing citizens in all aspect of their lives.

As prescribed by statute, the FY 2012 Annual Report set forth the Overall Performance Measurements and Summary of Actions and Results prepared by the RICDHH from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012.

These reports will be posted electronically on the General Assembly and the Secretary of State's websites as prescribed in RIGL § 23-1.8-2.

If you have any comments about the report, please feel free to contact me at 401-354-7651.

Sincerely,

Steven A. Florio
Executive Director

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Executive Summary

The RI Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing had a successful year in FY 2012 despite the economic and fiscal climate that affected the state of Rhode Island. From the objectives and performance measures, RICDHH was able to maintain satisfactory level of services delivered by the Information and Referral Service and the Interpreter/CART Referral Service which are the two core services of the agency. However, the demands and needs of those who are Deaf and Hard of hearing remain an all time high. The statistics from the National Institute of Health has shown that hearing loss is on the increase with the first wave of baby boomers entering the retirement age and the impact of noise induced hearing loss affecting all ages. It is not a surprise that the statistics now indicate there are more people in the age range of 19-44 with hearing loss than those who are 65 plus. The statistics are alarming as it is now a public health concern as hearing loss impact individuals in all areas of living and working. RICDHH must strive even more to meet the needs of these Rhode Islanders through education, awareness, and collaboration.

The staff of RICDHH and the Board of Commissioners are now looking at ways to meet the needs and are now developing partnerships with agencies and the private sector to promote hearing loss awareness, importance of communication access and technical assistance. The RICDHH is fortunate that they have just engaged with Six Sigma Experts from Raytheon as part of their corporate community relations program. The Raytheon volunteers helped them with a strategic planning process in reviewing their strengths and opportunities and to develop a measurable action plan. This is ongoing at this time.

In the FY 2012 Annual Report, you would find four objectives that the RICDHH used to measure its annual performance.

Objective #1 (Interpreter and CART Referral Service) is to meet or exceed 92% of 'more than 72 hours' requests that are filled.

FY 2012— 2,608 requests were received and 91% of requests were successfully filled.

Objective #2 (Emergency Interpreter Referral Service) is to meet or exceed 75% of "on-call" interpreters responding to emergency calls.

FY 2012—87% were achieved in responding to emergency calls.

Objective #3 (Information and Referral Service) is to meet 100% of all requests for information received a time response within a week.

FY2012—93% of requests were responded within a week.

Objective #4 (Legislation) is to meet or exceed 75% of legislation affecting Deaf and Hard of Hearing will be favorably disposed.

FY 2012—2 of 7 legislative bills (29%) was passed that would benefit people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

While the performance outcomes measures indicate a satisfactory level, it remains an important need for RICDHH to have a full time staff interpreter for the 51% of the current staff (two FTEs out of three FTEs

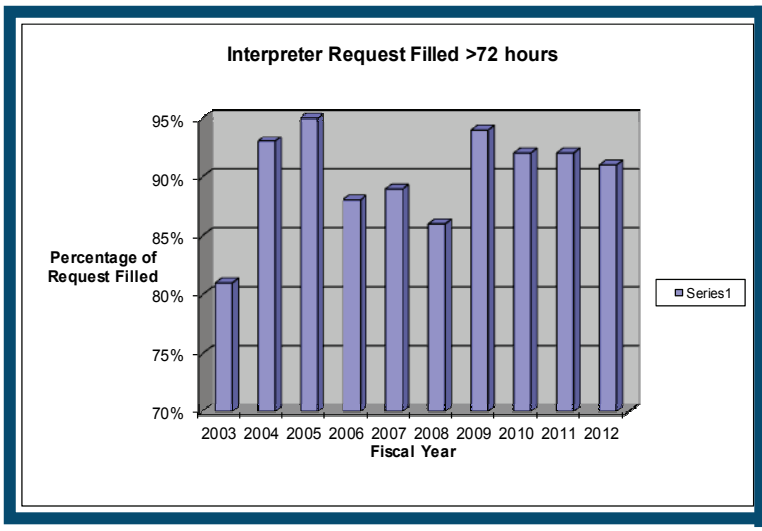
are Deaf) to meet the needs of the consumers and professionals that utilize the services of this agency. If appropriate resource of a FTE staff interpreter were to be provided, it will raise the efficiency level of this agency in meeting the ever growing needs and demands of the public.

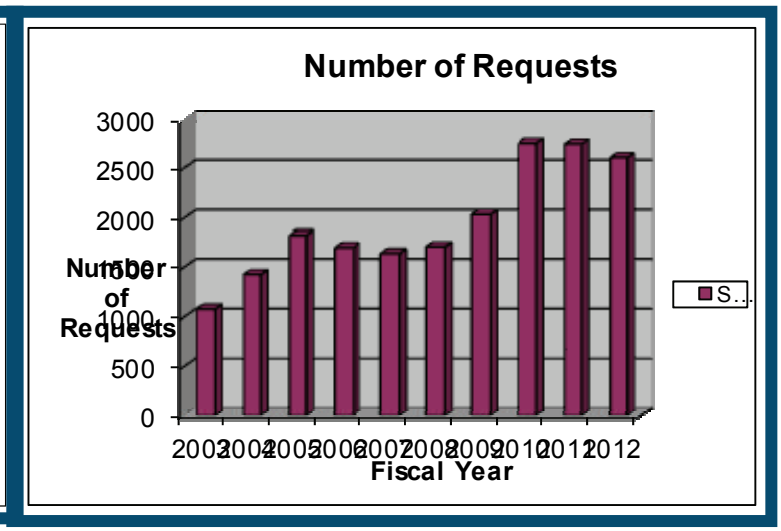
For the operating side, the RICDHH monitored and controlled the expenditures successfully on its operations per request from the Governor, the Department of Administration, and the Budget office. Overall, the RICDHH delivered as best to their ability to meet the statutes' requirements and as a result, the RICDHH realized some dollar savings at the end of the FY 2012.

GENERAL OVERALL PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS

Objective #1: Interpreter/CART Referral

The RICDHH Interpreter and CART Referral Service is the official name for the service provided by the RICDHH. The RICDHH added Computer Access Real-time Translation to the Interpreter Referral Service in FY2009 and it became permanent in FY2010. This would reduce the number of phone calls for the paying parties that need both communication access accommodations for the same meeting or assignment. And also, the Statewide Coordinator of the Interpreter/CART Referral Service is able to handle requests for CART services. It was an instant hit. As you can see the bar graph below, the RICDHH received more than 2,608 requests for interpreters in FY2012. (This was 3rd more than 2,000 requests in a row.) The Statewide





Coordinator of the Interpreter/CART Referral Service was under heavy pressure to ensure that at least 91% of requests were filled. The RICDHH anticipates that the number will either to grow or steady in stability as long as the referral service remains efficiency in FY2013 and FY2014.

The percentage of requests filled was remained at the same level as FY2011, 91%. Of concern as well are the many requests that go unfilled (9%) even with sufficient advance notice. This is attributed to various situations. Most interpreters worked as independent contractors who bill on an hourly fee-for-service basis. Because there are few salaried interpreter positions with benefits, many interpreters are forced to take full-time non-interpreting jobs and accept interpreter assignments on the side. Full-time freelance interpreters often take predictable, ongoing assignments working in educational institutions. As a result, interpreter availability in Rhode Island is low during regular business hours when most requests are made, especially during the school year. This frequently results in a serious situation in which the consumers may not be able to appreciate their civil rights to have communication access service.

Often times, many of the vendors who request an interpreter for one assignment secure the interpreter for follow-on assignments outside of the service that are not included our number of requests for FY2012. It is important to note that the number of requests is not necessarily a valid indicator of the overall need for interpreters. Many requests are filled outside of the referral service. The demand for

awareness among state agencies, schools, and private businesses to provide communication access services in order for them to comply with the American with Disabilities Act and other federal and state laws. The RICDHH continued to hold a positive reputation of successfully securing interpreters/CART providers, and of better communication on all requests. RICDHH anticipates this number will either continue to grow or steady in stability, especially when the referral service functions more efficiently.

Objective #2: Emergency Interpreter Referral

The RI CDHH is able to set the objective for the Emergency Interpreter Referral Service after implementing the service on November 10, 2005. The performance measurements can be set this way to determine the quality of the Emergency Interpreter Referral Service.

Goal: 100% of "on-call" interpreters responding to emergency calls for the services.

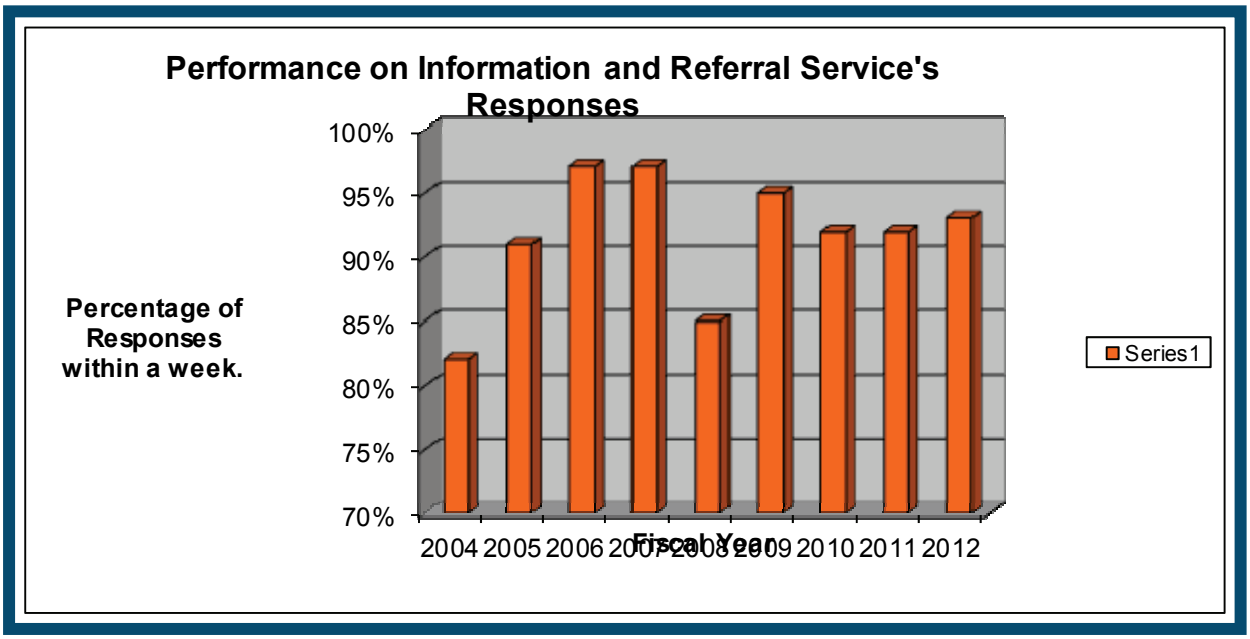
Results:

FY2006: 80% (46 emergency calls and 37 "on-call" interpreters were available to respond.)
FY2007: 90% (93 emergency calls and 84 "on-call" interpreters were available to respond.)
FY2008: 76% (89 emergency calls and 68 "on-call" interpreters were available to respond.)
FY2009: 77% (26 emergency calls and 20 "on-call" interpreters were available to respond.)
FY2010: 92%* (8 emergency calls and 7 "on-call" interpreters were available to respond.)
FY2011: 81% (26 emergency calls. 21 "on-call" interpreters were available to respond.)
FY2012: 87% (45 emergency calls. 39 "on-call" interpreters were available to respond.)

- The contractor in providing the 24-hour Answering Service could not produce 3 monthly reports due to computerized errors in FY2010.

This is without a doubt that this is very valuable service for the deaf and hard of hearing people who communicate in ASL during the emergency calls.

Objective #3: Information and Referral



The objective is 100% of all requests for information received a time response within a week. In FY2012, 93% of requests were responded to within a week. That was an 1% increase from FY2011. The Information and Referral service is generally in a good shape as long as all 3 FTEs are filled. Please review the past performance on RICDHH's performance in the Information and Referral program: 82% in FY2004, 91% in FY2005, 97% in FY2006, 97% in FY2007, 85% in FY2008, 95% in FY2009, 92% in FY2010, and 92% in FY2011. The goal is to meet at least 95% because the cost effective and efficient computerized database for information and referral service.

Objective #4: Legislation

In FY2012, RICDHH proposed and monitored 7 bills potentially and positively impacted deaf and hard of hearing people. The RICDHH successfully got two bills passed. The challenge is to schedule to meet with legislators and key policymakers because of frequent lack of interpreters. The RICDHH is unable to arrange communication access services in a short notice. Therefore, the RICDHH remains inaccessible to the State House since they do not have a full-time staff interpreter that would create more opportunities to educate legislators and their staff as to what intentions are for the bills that were proposed by the RICDHH.

Summary of Actions and Results

The Performance Management Measurements and Outcomes

The RICDHH staff has met with the Performance Management Team that is consisted of the representatives from the Governor's office, Budget office, and Department of Administration a number of times. This was a new performance management process for the RICDHH as well as the rest of the state departments. The objectives and tools for the measurements and outcomes were developed, and implemented, and then have been utilized by the RICDHH to assess performance outcomes.

Hearing Loss Awareness Month (May 2012)

RICDHH in collaboration with the Hearing Loss Association of RI and RI Hamilton Relay promote and recognize the Better Hearing and Speech Month. Overall, more than 1,000 people were exposed by 9 statewide activities during the month were as follows:

1. The RICDHH participated the RI Speech-Language-Hearing Association's Better Hearing and Speech day at the State House.
2. The RICDHH provided free hearing screening test for state employees for the first time. The RICDHH received overwhelming number of responses. 2 private audiologists conducted the test on a pro bono basis and 2 audiologists were provided by the RI School for the Deaf to conduct the tests. In total, 67 state employees had been screened and the rest of 160 were on the waiting list but they were given the list of audiologists in RI for hearing screening test on their own.
3. Trinity Repertory Theater provided open captioning for its play, "Boeing-Boeing". The deaf and hard of hearing patrons enjoyed and followed the story with this service.
4. Hearing Loss Association of RI hosted the educational seminar, "Understanding Your Hearing Loss and Its Impact on Communication".
5. RICDHH hosted the Hearing Loss Awareness Expo where 26 service providers were presented and approximately 150 people attended.
6. RICDHH hosted its monthly Commissioner meeting to give the public insights as to how the commissioners lead the commission.
7. ATEL's Technology Demonstration.
8. Providence's Children Museum hosted the Hearing Loss Awareness Day with 5 different organizations presented to dissemble information.
9. RI Hearing Assessment Program's Annual Seminar, "Creating Positive Environments for Children with Hearing Loss".

Summary of Actions and Results (Continued)

Deaf Awareness Week

RICDHH partnered with 5 different organizations in hosting 8 different activities during the Deaf Awareness Week from September 23rd to October 1st. Overall, more than 800 people experienced or participated.

1. The kick-off event was held at the RI School for the Deaf, the American Sign Language folklores were told in style through video streaming, and story telling was delivered by the RISD students about their deaf identity as positive experience.
2. Corliss Center hosted annual 5K walk and fundraising pasta dinner.
3. Brown University American Sign Language Program hosted Deaf Deaf World to give its students and the community experience as an ASL user.
4. The Friends of RI School for the Deaf hosted 37th Annual Golf event.
5. RI Association of the Deaf hosted its 17th Biennial Convention and showed ASL Film, "Versa Effect".

Smooth Transition of personnel of the Interpreter and CART Referral Service

With the departing of Paul Barnaby, a high-esteemed employee of 4 years, RICDHH was fortunate to hire Holly St. Pierre to run the Interpreter and CART Referral Service. The transitioning process was very sensitive and unique since this position works with a hundred of requesters and freelance interpreters in a high demand environment. The transition was successfully smooth after the two-month process.

RICDHH Strategic Initiatives and Plans

The 4 initiatives were created based on input and experience from the Commissioners and staff members in the previous fiscal year. The process was led by the Six Sigma Experts from Raytheon. The RICDHH Commissioners and Staff members convened to develop goals and outlined the list of areas for improvement in order to better serve constituents. The champion of each initiative was identified and they are ready to lead the initiatives into the FY 2013.

The 10th Annual Coffee Hour

Governor Lincoln Chafee was able to join the RICDHH's 10th Annual Coffee Hour event at the State Reception in State House in November 2011. The awards were given away by Governor Chafee to Ed Rawlings who served on the Commission for more than 10 years, Hospital Association of Rhode Island for the RICDHH highest distinguished award, called, "the 2011 RICDHH Recognition Award", and Debra Raiche and Community Provider Network of Rhode Island for the Certificate of Merit. The Commissioners and staff shared their accomplishments in the past and their plan for the next few months.

Summary of Actions and Results (Continued)

The RICDHH remained actively engaging with the Emergency Preparedness projects

The RICDHH continues working with the legislators to pass a legislative bill that would establish the Emergency and Public Communication Access Program. This program would create many opportunities to enhance quality of emergency responding service for the deaf and hard of hearing and to create resource available for communication access on spot at any state walk-in services. The RICDHH continues serving on the RI Emergency Management Advisory Council and Special Needs Committee to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing constituents are accessible to emergency responses and services.

Request to turn CC on TV in the public places must be recognized and respected

The RICDHH worked with the legislators to introduce House Bill 7445 and Senate Bill 2321 in the General Assembly. The bill is to recognize and honor request from deaf and hard of hearing persons to turn on the captioning on TV so they gain access to information such as TV news, entertainments, etc. at the restaurants, fitness centers, doctors' offices, and many other public places. Both legislative chambers supported it and send it to the Governor's Office. Governor Chafee supported it by signing on May 22, 2012.

The New Retirement Plan workshop-Communication Access for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

RI Office of General Treasurer and TIAA-CREF agreed with the RICDHH that they provided communication access services including sign language interpreters and CART service for state employees who wish to attend one of their workshops about new retirement plan with TIAA-CREF company.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Sensitivity Training for State Court Employees

The RICDHH with the assistance of State Court Human Resource office provided deaf and hard of hearing sensitivity training to 60 court state employees. The participants gained the understanding of deaf and hard of hearing population's needs, to familiarize various resources available to ensure communication access, and to recognize their obligations to ensure that information is accessible to deaf and hard of hearing people.

Trainings Provided for the RICDHH Board of Commissioners on Various Topics

The RICDHH Board of Commissioners were convened regularly to ensure that they understand their accountability and obligations to serve constituents by gaining understanding of and respectfully adhering Open Meeting Act (OMA), Access to Public Records, Overview of the RICDHH, new Performance Management Process, Review the Agency Budget, and Strategic Planning.

RICDHH on the Map

Community Participation—Awareness, Outreach, and Engagement

American with Disabilities Act Public Form (Summer 2011)
Rhode Island Deaf Awareness Week (Fall 2011)
ATAP Assistive Technology Conference in Warwick, RI (Fall 2011)
Project Endeavor—Telecommunication Technology– Informational Session, Warwick, RI (Winter 2012)
Eastern School for the Deaf Athetic Association Basketball at RISD, Providence, RI (Winter 2012)
RI Speech-Language-Hearing Conference, Warwick, RI (Spring 2012)
Better Speech and Hearing Awareness Event at the State House (Spring 2012)
Hearing Loss Awareness Expo in Providence, RI (Spring 2012)
Rhode Island Hearing Assessment Program Annual Seminars in Warwick, RI (Spring 2012)
Hearing Loss Association of America Conference, Providence, RI (Summer 2012)

Trainings Provided —Education

"Self-Advocacy" Training provided by Northeastern University Interpreter Education, Providence, RI (Fall 2011)
"Improving Communication Access for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing within Hospital" presentation at Providence College (Fall 2011)
"Preparation for Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment" Workshop provided by RI Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and RICDHH (Spring 2012)
"Deaf and Hard of Hearing Sensitivity Training" presentation at RI Department of Motor Vehicle, Cranston, RI (Winter 2012)
"Deaf and Hard of Hearing Sensitivity Training" presentation at Providence's Children's Museum (Winter 2012)
Vehicle, Providence, RI (Early Winter 2011)
"Deaf and Hard of Hearing Sensitivity Training" presentation at RI Traffic Tribunal, Cranston RI (Fall 2011)
"Deaf and Hard of Hearing Sensitivity Training" presentation at Casey Family Service, Providence RI (Spring 2012)
"Improving Communication Access for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing within Hospital" presentation at Bradley Hospital (Winter 2011)

RICDHH - Speaking Engagements

21st Anniversary of ADA at the Dept of Administration building, Providence, RI (Summer 2011)
Brown Univ. American Sign Language Program—Panel Discussion, Providence, RI (Fall 2011)
Annual Coffee Hour at the State House (Fall 2011)
Rhode Island Association of the Deaf Convention, Warwick, RI (Fall 2011)
Hearing Loss Association of RI's Employment Outlook for Hard of Hearing people, Providence, RI (Early Winter 2011)
Brown University Medical School—Disability Awareness Event-new cohort, Providence, RI (Spring 2012)

About the RICDHH

Mission Statement

To provide innovative leadership in public policy, advocacy, service delivery and accessibility throughout the Ocean State, RI CDHH ensures opportunities for every deaf and hard of hearing person to become an empowered and contributing citizen.

Vision Statement

To ensure that all deaf and hard of hearing persons appreciate the communication equivalency, opportunities, and human rights in all walks of their lives in Rhode Island

POPULATION IN RHODE ISLAND

Over 90,000* people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, late deafened, and have other types of hearing loss currently live in Rhode Island.

What is RICDHH?

The Rhode Island Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RI CDHH) is an advocating, coordinating, and service providing entity committed to promoting an environment in which the deaf and hard of hearing in Rhode Island are afforded equal opportunity in all aspects of their lives. The RI CDHH develops policy; initiates and lobbies for favorable legislation; fosters cooperation and awareness among state agencies and community organizations; and educates and advises consumers, state agencies, and employers about Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) rights to equal access. The RI CDHH also provides direct services in its operation of a Sign Language Interpreter Referral Service, a lending library of books and videotapes, and as a clearinghouse of information and referral on all topics related to hearing loss.

* Data based on Population information from United States Census Bureau 2001, Rhode Island Population = 1,048,319. Calculated by 8.6%, formula obtained from National Percentages from the National Center for Health Statistics, data from the National Health Interview Survey, Series 10, Number 188, Table 1, 1994.

Legislative Mandates

- **Provide networking among agencies and organizations.**

  CDHH promotes agency cooperation and coordination by networking with all entities that currently serve or have the potential to serve the needs of Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and other RI citizens with hearing loss.

- **Engage in advocacy to promote accessibility of services.**

  CDHH actively promotes accessibility to employment, education, health, and other services by recommending action to remove barriers to services, providing technical assistance when requested, intervening as a knowledgeable party when access is denied, and encouraging effective self-advocacy on the part of the consumer.

- **Conduct an ongoing needs assessment.**

  CDHH understands and assesses the needs of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population in order to identify service gaps and recommend improvements on an ongoing basis.

- **Promote awareness and provide information and referral.**

  CDHH provides general awareness of the unique issues of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people by promoting the positive and productive aspects of their lives, and to provide information specific to this populations, its culture and concerns.

- **Initiate and lobby for legislation.**

  CDHH initiates and lobbies for legislation benefiting Deaf and Hard of Hearing people, and monitors related legislation at local, state and national levels in order to lobby for favorable outcomes.

- **Administer a sign language interpreter referral service.**

  CDHH provides the sign language interpreter referral service for the State of Rhode Island.

- **Work to improve the quality of life addressing: education, employment, health care, parenting issues and technology.**

  CDHH takes any necessary action to improve the quality of life for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and other RI citizens with hearing loss by addressing the unique needs of these populations in areas including, but not limited to, education, employment, health care, parenting and technology.

- **Develop a Statewide Coordinating Council which will coordinate the implementation of statewide strategic plan for Deaf/Hard of Hearing children in RI.**

  CDHH establishes a statewide Coordinating Council in collaboration with the Department of Education and other agencies to implement a comprehensive strategic plan to promote the education and well-being of RI children who are Deaf or have a hearing loss.

- **Tracks the yearly service rendered by the non-licensed interpreters.**

  CDHH tracks and monitors the number of hours allowed by the non-licensed interpreters. New RI General Law that was added after the Legislative 2006 session allows interpreters to work in Rhode Island without a license for a maximum of 25 hours a year. These interpreters are still required to be certified by National RID and/or other certification entities that are recognized by the Board of the Interpreter with the Department of Health.

Information can be found at the Rhode Island General Laws, Section 23, 1.8 on
RI Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Commissioners 2011-2012

Christine "Tina" Thompson (Hard of Hearing)
Chairperson
Northborough, MA

Jordan Sack (Deaf does not use ASL)
Vice-Chairperson
East Greenwich, RI

Karen Davis (Hearing)
Treasurer
Cranston, RI

Steven A. Florio (Staff)
Acting Secretary
Providence, RI

Betsy Beach (Hard of Hearing)
Providence, RI

Jesus M. Colon (Deaf)
West Warwick, RI

Paul Hughett (Hard of Hearing)
Swansea, MA

Paul Molloy (Deaf)
Warren, RI

Heather Niedbala (Deaf)
North Kingstown, RI

Jim C. Simon (Hearing)
Providence, RI

Travis R. Zellner (Deaf)
Uxbridge, MA

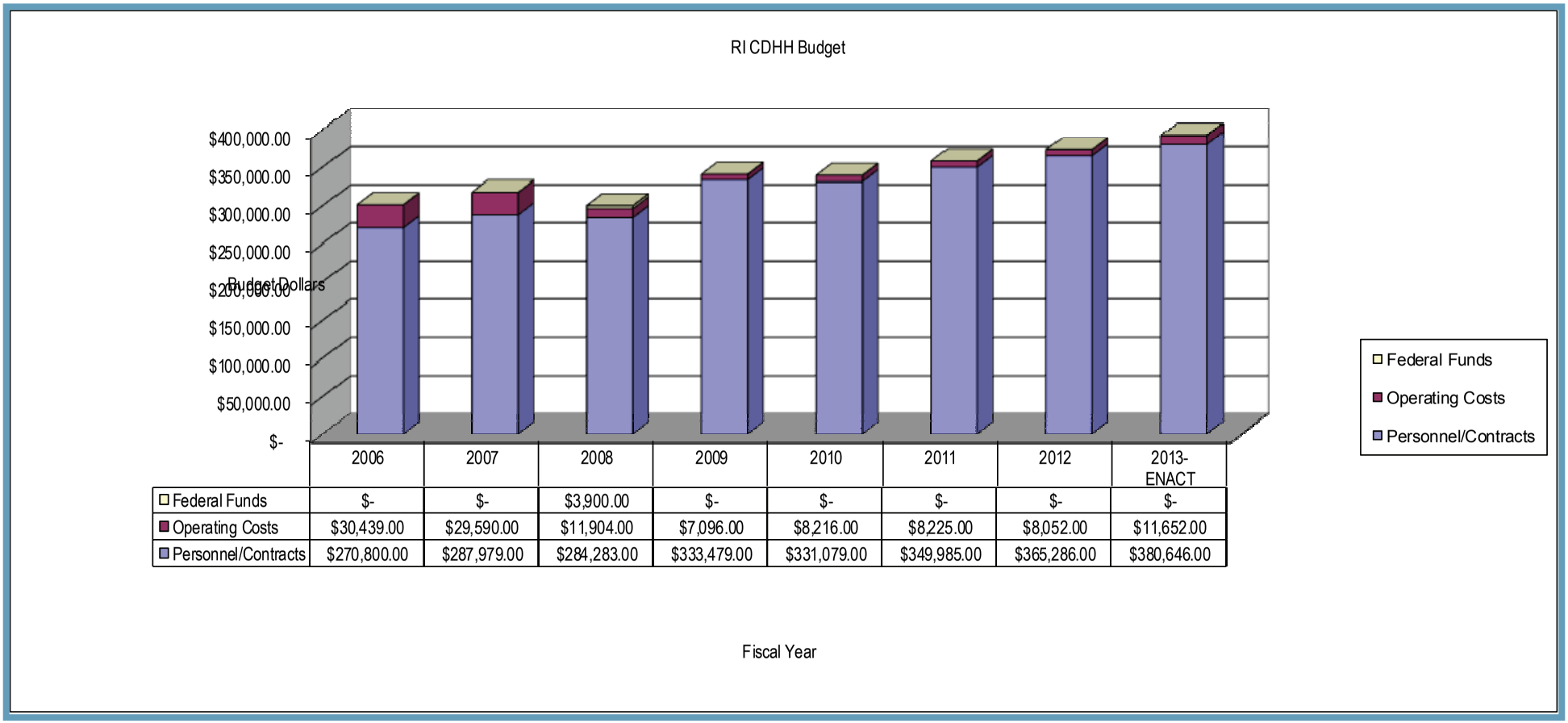
RICDHH Office Staff

Steven A. Florio
Executive Director

Pamela Zellner
Program Manager

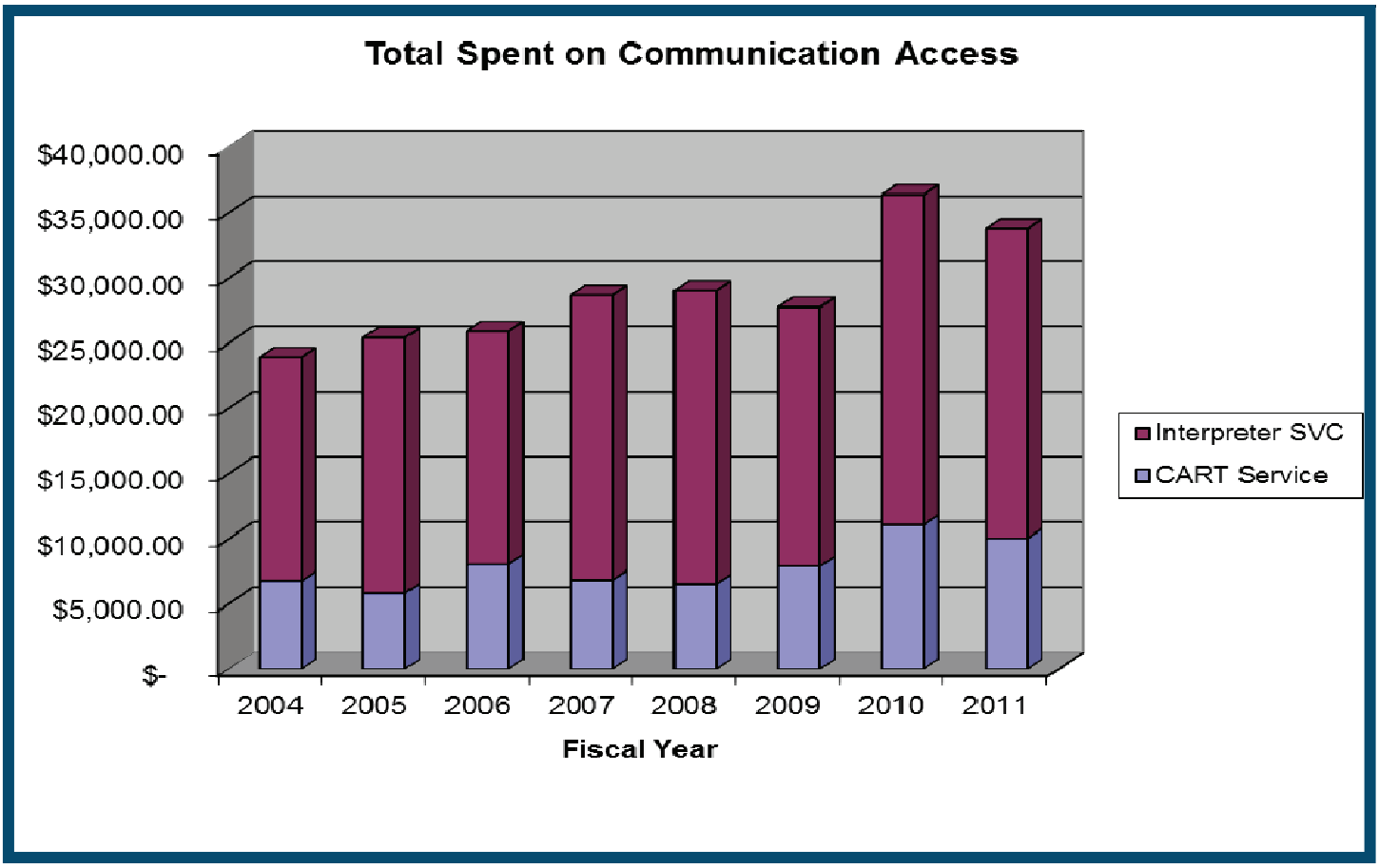
Paul Barnaby (7/2011-4/2012)
Interpreter/CART Referral Specialist

Holly St. Pierre (6/2012)
Interpreter/CART Referral Specialist



	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013-ENACT
Federal Funds	$-	$-	$3,900.00	$-	$-	$-	$-	$-
Operating Costs	$30,439.00	$29,590.00	$11,904.00	$7,096.00	$8,216.00	$8,225.00	$8,052.00	$11,652.00
Personnel/Contracts	$270,800.00	$287,979.00	$284,283.00	$333,479.00	$331,079.00	$349,985.00	$365,286.00	$380,646.00

NOTE: Personnel-Contracts include 3 Full-Time Employees, CART Services, Interpreting Services, and Emergency Interpreter Referral Service.



NOTE:

As you can notice the difference between FY2009 and FY2010/FY2011, the RICDHH was very active on various functions that required communication access services. This represented a serious commitment made by the RICDHH to ensure all deaf and hard of hearing commissioners, clients, committee members, and many individuals to have equal participation. The expenditures for the Interpreting and CART services may be increased by $2,500 or more due to unforeseeable circumstance that may occur in FY2012 and FY2013.

The RICDHH officially added CART to its Interpreter Referral Service and it is now known as the RICDHH Interpreter and CART Referral Services. The CART and Interpreter are the most effective communication access services available for deaf and hard of hearing people in various settings.

Tri-Vision Philosophy

Since the restructuring commission in 1992, the RICDHH embraces the TRI-VISION philosophy. There is a vision that benefits all THREE groups, DEAF, HARD OFHEARING, and HEARING as to work through partnership in improving the quality of life for everyone. Implementation of Tri-Vision brings together the collective experience and skills of the deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing in a synergistic manner.

The Tri-Vision philosophy encourages deaf, hard of hearing, and persons without hearing loss to work collaboratively in addressing areas of common interest and concern.

The RICDHH believes that those who cope with deafness and hearing loss are the experts on their situation and resultant service needs. By directly engaging those who experience such difficulties on a daily basis, consumers become part of the solution and more appropriate and permanent changes are likely to occur.

The TRI-VISION approach allow for a comprehensive analysis of issues and facilitates effective problem-solving. It has been the experience of the deaf and hard of hearing consumers that participating in a large group where their primary language and communication mode are the minority, adaptations allow them to be spectators and not necessarily active participants. This philosophy ensures that the deaf and hard of hearing have a more active role in making decisions about policies that affect their lives.

To effectively address the important issues of the deaf and hard of hearing, the expertise and experiences of these three groups offer:

- *Bridge of experiences*
- *Combination of skills*
- *Understanding of solution implementations*
- *Understanding of political climates*
- *Consumer cultures*
- *Boundary spanners*
- *Understanding of challenges*

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