

April 8, 2025



Empowering Independence

CENTER FOR LIVING & WORKING, INC.

WHAT'S UP?



Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Services

## 2025 Tax Nights

Our 2025 Tax Nights went very well this year. For a third year in a row, we collaborated with AARP TaxAide to host 3 Tax Nights in March, providing tax assistance to over 35 consumers and Deaf community members. As usual, our appointments booked quickly. Luckily, we had no snow cancellations this year! We're so grateful to our team of (4) very dedicated AARP TaxAide volunteers for all of their hard work before, during and after our tax appointments to ensure high quality tax assistance for our consumers. Thank you AARP TaxAide team, DHILS Staff, interpreters and consumers/Deaf community members for making this another successful tax season!

AARP Foundation

# TAX-AIDE

Free tax assistance for those who need it most



## State Independent Living [IL] Education Day at the State House

On Wednesday, April 2nd, the DHILS team and other CLW staff traveled to the State House for IL Education Day. CLW is 1 of 10 Independent Living Centers [ILCs] in Massachusetts. It's a day to catch up on the latest news of interest to ILCs, and visit Senators and Representatives [Legislators] to share information and advocate for bills and continued funding for on behalf of our consumers. Many legislators, as well as consumers and ILC staff, gave inspirational and informative presentations. It was a wonderful day!



Senator Kennedy



Watching the speakers.



[L-R]: Rosemary Moreira, Deanna EMBERLY-Handricken, Joan Philip, Ellen Perkins, Kim White and Sam Cuddy.



# Are you Ready for Real ID?

## What is a REAL ID?

A *REAL ID* is a greater version of a driver's license or Mass ID that meets the Federal Security Standard for IDs. [NOTE: for more information go to: [www.mass.gov/info-details/real-id-in-massachusetts#what-is-a-real-id?](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/real-id-in-massachusetts#what-is-a-real-id?)]

## When does it start?

Starting **May 7, 2025**, anyone age 18 and older will need a *REAL ID* driver's license or ID card to fly on an airplane [domestic flights/within the U. S.] **or** to enter certain federal building [**buildings constructed by, or used by, a Federal agency.**] NOTE: for a list of other ID's accepted by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) go to [www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification](http://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification).

## What does it look like?

- A Massachusetts REAL ID has a **star in the top right corner**.
- A standard driver's license or Mass ID has **no star**.



## How do I get one?

Get your 4 required identity documents:

- **1** for proof you are in the U.S. legally. Ex: a passport or birth certificate.
- **1** to verify your full social security number. Ex: social security card or W-2.
- **2** for proof you live in Massachusetts. Ex: lease, mortgage or utility bills.

Apply online: <https://atlas-myrmv.massdot.state.ma.us/myrmv/>

Schedule and in-person appointment at an RMV center or AAA Branch [for AAA Members only]: <https://atlas-myrmv.massdot.state.ma.us/myrmv/>

## How much will it cost?

\$50

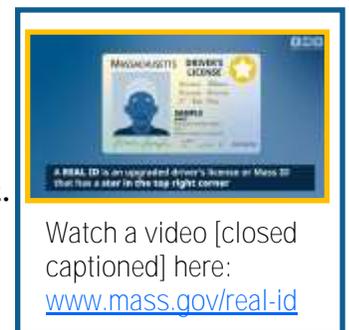
REAL ID passenger or motorcycle driver's license.

\$75

REAL ID commercial driver's license [CDL].

\$25

REAL ID Mass ID.



## Welcome CLW DHILS Intern, Abby McNeil!

Abby McNeil [Northern Essex Community College Student]

Hi! My name is Abby McNeil. I graduated from UMass Amherst with a double major in BDIC (Bachelor's Degree with Individual Concentration) Deaf Studies and Psychology. I grew up in Attleboro, MA and was introduced to ASL through Special Olympics around 2015, and the rest is history. I'm pursuing my ASL interpreting degree through Northern Essex Community College (NECC) and fun fact about me: I am huge into performing arts!



### IRS TIP: *Track Refund with* **'Where's My Refund?'**

If you file taxes **electronically**, you can use the "Where's My Refund?" tool at [www.irs.gov/wheres-my-refund](http://www.irs.gov/wheres-my-refund) to confirm your refund was received and find out your refund's status.



The tool is available 24/7, and is a fast, easy way for taxpayers to get information about a refund without needing to call the IRS. *The tool also allows taxpayers to access information about returns from tax years 2024, 2023 and 2022.*

You can also use the mobile-friendly tool through the [IRS2Go mobile app](#).

### Information needed to use 'Where's My Refund?'

The IRS updates the "Where's My Refund?" tool once daily – *usually overnight* – so you don't need to check refund status several times a day. To check refund status, taxpayers will need their:

- Social Security Number or Individual Taxpayer ID Number (ITIN)
- Filing status
- Exact refund amount

The deadline for most taxpayers to file a return, pay taxes due or request an extension is April 15.

### Refund delivery

- Most refunds are issued in *less than 21 calendar days*.
- The fastest way to get a refund is by filing electronically and choosing direct deposit.

**NOTE:** *Don't have a bank account?* Find out how to open one at a [FDIC-insured bank](#) or the [National Credit Union Locator Tool](#).

### Your refund may be delayed by:

- Filing an incomplete return or a return with mistakes.
- Corrections to the [Earned Income Tax Credit](#) (EITC) or [Additional Child Tax Credit](#) (ACTC).
- Bank processing and posting times.



# Social Security [SSA] Updates

## Stronger Identity Proof Requirements

SSA has *new procedures* for confirming your identity to help protect your SSA records and benefits against fraud.

If you can't use your personal "my Social Security" account — which requires online identity proofing — you will need to make an appointment at the SSA office near you.

## Direct Deposit Changes

SSA has changed the processing time for all direct deposit change requests — both in person and online — to **1** business day. Before, those changes were held for **30** days.

If you can't use the online portal [no computer, not able to access, etc.] you can start a claim on the phone, but you must have your identity verified in person. SSA suggests calling for an appointment.

## How do I start a 'My Social Security' account?

Go to [www.ssa.gov/myaccount/create.html](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/create.html)

**Make or Change an Appointment:** [www.ssa.gov/manage-benefits/make-an-appointment](http://www.ssa.gov/manage-benefits/make-an-appointment)

**Find your local office at:** <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>



# HLAA Regional New England Conference

HLAA held a Regional New England Conference from March 28—30 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Marlborough. Saturday, March 29th was a full day of workshops: *Cybersecurity & Hearing Loss, Emergency Management for Hearing Loss, How to Choose a Hearing Aid, Aural Rehabilitation—How it Works, Hearing Loss & AI and Hearing Things with Julie and Brad.*

There were also many exhibitors, including CLW/DHILS where people could talk with and learn more about different organizations.

See pictures and read about the workshops and speakers at:

<https://hearinglossnewengland.org/>



# April Awareness

## National Deaf History Month

National Deaf History month is a celebration of Deaf culture, history, and language. April is an important month in Deaf history! The American School for the Deaf opened in April 1817 and Gallaudet University was founded in April 1864. How will you celebrate this month?



April  
1



### April Fool's Day

- April Fool's Day is a lighthearted day of practical jokes and pranks. Do you have any fun prank ideas for friends or family?

April  
12-20



### Passover

- Passover is a Jewish festival (also called Pesach) celebrated for 8 days in honor of Israelites' freedom from slavery. It also involves a special meal called the Seder.

April  
15



### Tax Day

- Taxes are due to the federal government. The first Tax Day was in 1913 after the 16th Amendment was approved.

April  
20



### Easter

- Easter is a Christian holiday celebrating Jesus Christ's rising from the dead after he died on Good Friday. Today, it is often celebrated by dyeing eggs and visits from the Easter Bunny.

April  
22



### Earth Day

- Earth Day raises awareness about environmental issues and encourages positive actions for the planet. The first Earth Day was in 1970. Can you reduce, reuse, or recycle on Earth Day this year?



## Worcester Parent Guide to Community Resources

[CLICK HERE FOR ENGLISH GUIDE](#)



## UPDATED: Therapists for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Directory

Click here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mRNQIKYYNjM4vYpRX7OECQkiW-PQlu62/view?usp=sharing>



MISSED A *WHAT'S UP* NEWSLETTER?  
Past issues of newsletters are on our website!

VISIT: [HTTPS://WWW.CENTERLW.ORG/2022/07/WHATS-UP-NEWSLETTER/](https://www.centerlw.org/2022/07/whats-up-newsletter/)

## Questions? Contact your Skills Trainer

Joan Philip	DHILS Director	508-762-1165 (VP)
Priscilla Langone	DHILS Administrative Assistant	508-556-1600 (VP)
Ellen Perkins	DHILS Asst. Manager/Hard of Hearing Skills Trainer	508-502-7576 (Voice); 508-762-1354 (VP)
Deanna Emberley-Handricken	Deaf Skills Trainer (Part-time)	508-762-1021 (VP)
Rosemary Moreira	Deaf Skills Trainer (Full-time)	508-762-1166 (VP)
Vacant	Deaf Skills Trainer (Full-time)	508-762-1350 (VP)
Kim White	Staff Interpreter	508-755-1042 (Voice); 508-283-1036 (VP)

## Contact Us!

Center for Living & Working, Inc.

*Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Services Department*

Videophone: 508-762-1164

TTY: 508-755-1003

[www.CenterLW.org](http://www.CenterLW.org)



Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Services



CLW: <https://www.facebook.com/CenterForLivingAndWorking>

DHILS Group: [www.facebook.com/groups/clw.dhils](http://www.facebook.com/groups/clw.dhils)