

# Including People with Disabilities and Others with Access and Functional Needs in Planning



## Individuals with Access and Functional Needs

- Those “who need assistance due to any condition (temporary or permanent) that limits their ability to take action. To have access and functional needs does not require that the individual have any kind of diagnosis or specific evaluation.”



(FEMA IS-368)



“Individuals with access and functional needs may include, but are not limited to, individuals with disabilities; older adults; individuals who are blind, deaf, hard of hearing, have speech and language disabilities, mental health conditions, learning, intellectual, and developmental disabilities, and chemical sensitivities; unaccompanied minors; individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP); limited access to transportation; and/or limited access to financial resources to prepare for, respond to, and recover from an emergency” (FEMA, 2019, p. 19).

## Lessons Learned

- Several recent disasters revealed gaps in plans for people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs including:
  - Notification
  - Evacuation
  - Emergency transportation
  - Sheltering
  - Access to medications, refrigeration, and back-up power
  - Access to mobility and other assistive devices or service animals while in transit or at shelters, or temporary housing
  - Access to information



(FEMA IS-368)



As a result of these gaps, new laws and amendments to existing laws, were made to address people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. Despite significant improvement since the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (2006), gaps still remain in how people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs are addressed.

## Laws Pertaining to Disability Inclusion and Integration

- Fair Housing Act
- Architectural Barriers Act
- Stafford Act
- Rehabilitation Act
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Telecommunications Act
- Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act
- 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act Civil Rights Act



(FEMA IS-368)



The laws above have been enacted to prevent discrimination and protect the rights of people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. These laws should be considered when planning for disasters.

## Whole Community Approach

- A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management means “we implement solutions that serve the entire community and leverage the resources that the entire community brings to the table” (FEMA).



(FEMA IS-368)



An example of the Whole Community Approach is people who need accessible transportation using resources such as accessible vans or buses with a wheelchair lift. Another example is people who are deaf or hard of hearing can identify local resources such as American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and Computer Assisted Real-Time Transcription (CART) services.

## Whole Community Planning

- Plans should be specific to your community and represent the population and its needs.
- When planning, all stakeholders in the community should be included.



“Planning teams must reflect the diversity of the community by including representatives from the jurisdiction’s departments and agencies, civic leaders, businesses and organizations (e.g., civic, social, faith-based, humanitarian, educational, advocacy, trade and professional). Planning teams should also include organizations that provide medical services that include pediatric experts” (FEMA, 2021, p. 6). Organizations that represent people with disabilities and individuals with access and functional needs should be included in the planning process as well, because they are going to have a better understanding of the needs of those people.

## Emphasizing Care in Plans

- Within our Whole Community plans, we should emphasize how we are going to care for people with disabilities and individuals with access and functional needs.



For example, in Lebanon County, there is a large population of people with Limited English Proficiency. As Emergency Managers, we need to think about how we are going to communicate with those with Limited English Proficiency in an emergency.

## Emphasizing Care in Plans

- Other considerations when planning for people with access and functional needs
  - Transportation Needs
  - Mass Care and Sheltering Operations
  - Feeding Resources
  - Reunification Services



When choosing a location to host the COVID-19 Community Vaccination Center, we had to ensure the facility was accessible for those with access and functional needs. We chose a location that was wheelchair accessible, had a bus stop for those without transportation, and for elderly residents without transportation, we helped coordinate rides to and from the facility for both vaccinations.



## National Preparedness Goal

- Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8) links the system of preparedness across the five mission areas:
  - Prevention
  - Protection
  - Mitigation
  - Response
  - Recovery
- PPD-8 emphasizes the Whole Community approach to preparedness, meaning the Whole Community is to be engaged across the mission areas.



The concepts in PPD-8 very much support the ideas discussed throughout this PowerPoint regarding people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. “Because people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs are part of the Whole Community, their engagement in all aspects of the five mission areas is encouraged and supported. Participation of the Whole Community requires equal access to preparedness activities and programs without discrimination, meeting the access and functional needs of all individuals, and consistent and active engagement and involvement in all aspects of planning” (FEMA).

## Reference

- FEMA. (2021). *Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans*. Retrieved December 30, 2022, from [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_cpg-101-v3-developing-maintaining-eops.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_cpg-101-v3-developing-maintaining-eops.pdf)
- FEMA. IS-0368: *Including People with Disabilities and Others with Access and Functional Needs in Disaster Operations*. Retrieved December 30, 2022, from [https://emilms.fema.gov/is\\_0368/curriculum/1.html](https://emilms.fema.gov/is_0368/curriculum/1.html)
- FEMA. (2019). *Planning Considerations: Evacuation and Shelter-in-Place*. Retrieved December 30, 2022, from <https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/planning-considerations-evacuation-and-shelter-in-place.pdf>