

ADA Celebration Webinar - Building Inclusive and Accessible Emergency Management Systems

Identifying Gaps and Proposing Solutions for People with Disabilities

The panel

"Let us explain what inclusive emergency management looks like."



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Access



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Today we'll explore:

- Communication & accessible alerts
- Transportation & evacuation
- Sheltering & recovery
- Partnerships & lived experience
- Practical solutions for inclusive preparedness

"If it's not accessible, it's not acceptable"

Progress

- ✓ ADA and disability rights legislation
- ✓ Whole Community emergency planning
- ✓ More accessible alerts and communications
- ✓ Increased partnerships with disability organizations
- ✓ Recognition of lived experience as expertise

Yet many barriers remain...

- Accessible transportation
- Inclusive shelters
- Backup power
- Reliable communication
- Recovery supports
- Cross-system coordination

Disability Must Be Central to Emergency Management

- 1 in 4 adults in the U.S. has a disability
 - ◆ over 70 million Americans live with a disability.
- If one in four people experience disability, why isn't disability central to emergency management?
- Inclusive emergency management isn't about creating special plans for disabled people.
- It's about building emergency systems that work for everyone from the beginning.

Then...

- ★ Disability rarely included
- ★ Focus on medical model
- ★ Planning *for* people
- ★ Compliance

...and Now

- ★ More disability partners at the table
- ★ Focus on access and inclusion
- ★ Planning *with* people
- ★ Equity and belonging

Gaps

- Emergency information is often too complex or English-only
- Alerts may rely on only one format, such as audio or written text
- ASL, CART, and accessible public messaging are often added too late
- Agencies may not have pre-established access procedures or providers

Solutions

- ★ Use plain language and clear, actionable instructions
- ★ Provide alerts in multiple formats at the same time
- ★ Build ASL, CART, captions, and accessible streaming into plans and budgets
- ★ Pre-arrange qualified providers, backup options, and accessible communication procedures

- Access is of paramount importance
 - ASL is not English
 - English is a 2nd language for most Deaf
- Emergency Preparedness Project
- Accessible Communications in Emergencies (ACE) & Deaf Activities of Southern Oregon (DASO)
- Organizations partnered with in OEM

Oregon Department of Human Services -
Office of Resilience and Emergency Management (OREM)

Mass Care

- Food, water, and emergency supplies
- Support for accessible shelter operations
- Regional staff working directly with counties during disasters
- Continuity of ODHS program

Accessibility

- Real-time mapping of at-risk populations
- Coordination with Area Agency on Aging and Community Developmental Disability Program
- Support for accessible evacuation and sheltering
- Data to help counties plan for disability and aging needs

Evacuation



Sheltering



Recovery

Evacuation

- Mapping updated every 30 minutes to identify who needs help
- Staff trained to understand individual needs
- Support for transportation access planning

Sheltering

- Access and Functional Need data shared with counties for safe and accessible shelters
- On-site support for medical needs and caregiving
- Durable medical equipment and medication access
- ADA-accessible showers & essential shelter supplies
- Pet and service-animal friendly shelter coordination

Recovery

- Assessment of social-service needs after a disaster
- Barrier reduction, including language and communication access
- Coordination with state, tribal, county, & nonprofit partners
- Disaster Case Management
- Temporary housing

- ★ Hiring People With Disabilities In Emergency Management
- ★ Cross-Disability Advisory Committees
- ★ Simulated Emergencies
- ★ Advocacy and Workforce Growth

- ★ Lived experience
 - Recent experience in past wildfires
- ★ Previous work in CA
 - Applications for Oregon
- ★ Policy changes involved with
 - Changes to FEMA

Feel free to contact any of us for more information:

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Q & A

Thank You!