

New Preparedness Coordinators Training and Mentoring Program: Functional and Access Needs Population Start-Up Guide



BACKGROUND:

The mission of public health is to promote and protect the health of the whole community (a goal that can become more difficult during an emergency response). The population of people with functional/access needs can be best described as a population that may need additional support with maintaining independence, communication, transportation, supervision and medical care during an emergency. As part of emergency preparedness planning, health departments should account for the needs of people with existing functional/access needs, as well as, those who develop an impairment as a result of the emergency or disaster. This guide outlines five key recommendations for new emergency planners and provides resources about planning for people with functional/access needs.

BUILDING COMPETENCY:

Key Recommendations:

- 1. Familiarize yourself with existing resources and partnerships that are already available for you in your jurisdiction.**

LEARN: Read available resources, documents and emergency plans.

COLLABORATE: Attend regular meetings with partner organizations (e.g., fire, police, emergency managers, hospitals) within your jurisdiction.

NETWORK: Get your name out there as the public health emergency preparedness “go-to” contact person in your jurisdiction.

VOLUNTEER: Volunteer for preparedness exercises hosted by partner organizations and encourage partner organizations to participate in your exercises.

- 2. Make an effort to truly understand who makes up your community.**

Reach out to community-based organizations and community members with functional/access needs and involve them in planning meetings and exercises. Inclusive planning ensures that the needs of those with disabilities are accounted for in your planning.

- 3. Start writing and updating your response plans and your list of available emergency resources.**

Take the knowledge and information that you gain from your partners and community members to help inform your response plans.

- 4. Revise your response plans and resources at least once annually.**

This ensures that the most up-to-date information is available.

- 5. Ask for help.**

Recognize that planning for people with functional/access needs is not simple. Don't be afraid to ask for help from organizations such as NACCHO!

THE LAW:

Compliance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\), Title II Regulations: Part 35 Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in State and Local Government Services, §35.130](#) requires planners to meet three obligations:

- Physical access, also referred to as architectural access, which encompasses access to buildings, structures, and the environment;
- Programmatic access, or program access, addresses access to goods, services, activities, or any offering of federal, state, and local government or business (public accommodations must be readily accessible by people with disabilities); and
- Effective communication specifies that a public entity must take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with others (e.g., Braille, American Sign Language, large print, audio, and electronic formats).

FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Functional/Access Needs Populations
Kendall Leser, MS
202-507-4196
kleser@naccho.org

New Preparedness Coordinators
Training and Mentoring Program:
Raymond Puerini, MPH
202-507-4257
rpuerini@naccho.org

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RESOURCES

PLANNING

Whole Community Inclusion

This website provides an extensive background and resources on the topic of whole community inclusion.

www.wcphep.org

A Guide for Including People with Disabilities in Disaster Preparedness Planning

Although specific to Connecticut, this guide provides helpful resources that planners can use and apply to their own communities.

http://www.ct.gov/ctcdd/lib/ctcdd/Guide_final.pdf

LEGAL

Emergency Planning for People with Disabilities: A Legal Perspective

This fact sheet details two recent legal cases about emergency response for people with disabilities.

<http://tinyurl.com/disabilitylegalplanning>

INCLUSION

Strategies for Successfully Including People with Disabilities in Health Department Programs, Plans and Services

This guide presents information about strategies for including people with disabilities in health department programs and plans. <http://eweb.naccho.org/prd/?na598pdf>

NACCHO Health and Disability Toolkit

This is a database of over 130 tools that local health departments can use to better include people with disabilities in programming and planning efforts.

<http://www.naccho.org/toolbox/>

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Directory of Community-Based Organizations Serving People with Disabilities

This directory provides a list and contact information of community-based organizations likely serving your community.

<http://eweb.naccho.org/prd/?na597pdf>

NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to be a leader, partner, catalyst, and voice for local health departments.

1100 17th St, NW, 7th Floor Washington, DC
20036 P 202-783-5550 F 202-783-1583

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