



Navigating Disaster Long-Term Recovery: The Role of Disability Partners

Presenters

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- **Ann McDaniel**, Executive Director, Statewide Independent Living Council Charleston, West Virginia
- **Larry E. Paxton**, Executive Director, Appalachian Independent Living Center Charleston, West Virginia
- **Marcie Roth**, Director, FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination
- **Gay Jones**, FEMA Communication Access Specialist



Marcie Roth

Director, FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination

- What is the Role of the Federal Government in Disaster Recovery?
- National Preparedness System
- Who are FEMA's Disability Partners in Long-term Recovery?
- What are Common Issues Addressed in Long-term Recovery?



What is the Role of the Federal Government in Disaster Recovery?

- What is disaster recovery and who does it benefit?
- Relationship between state and federal government
- Legal obligations
- Whole community engagement
- Universal accessibility
- With crisis comes opportunity



National Preparedness System

National Disaster Recovery Framework (2d Edition – June 2016)

“Care must be taken to assure that actions, both intentional and unintentional, do not exclude groups of people based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin (including limited English proficiency), religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or disability. Care must also be taken to identify and remove social and institutional barriers that hinder or preclude individuals with disabilities, and others in the community historically subjected to unequal treatment, from full and equal enjoyment of the programs, goods, services, activities, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations provided.”



Who are FEMA's Disability Partners in Long-term Recovery?

- FEMA's Memoranda of Agreements (MOA) with National Disability Partners currently include:
 - National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)
 - National Disability Rights Network (DRN)
 - Pass it On Center
 - Portlight, Inc.
 - Association of University Centers on Disability



What are Common Issues Addressed in Long-term Recovery?

- Housing
- Transportation
- Schools
- Employment
- Health and social services
- Disability services and supports
- Community resources
- Development and capacity-building
- Cultural and recreational programs
- Emergency preparedness
- Alerts and warnings
- Hazard mitigation



Yavonka Archaga

Executive Director, Resources for Independent Living, Inc.

- Communication, Collaboration & Interaction in Louisiana at the state and local level
- Disability Partners and FEMA



Communication, Collaboration & Interaction in Louisiana at the state and local level

- Working relationship is the result of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) and other national partners
- Worked collaboratively to address the needs of consumers that yield optimal outcomes
- At the onset of the disaster, consumers needed assistance with:
 - FEMA's registration information
 - procedural/processing issues
 - deadlines
 - overall what to expect and what to do next (particularly denials/appeals)

Disability Partners and FEMA in Louisiana

- Conducted meetings to discuss coordination of services for persons affected by the disaster to address requests/needs/issues identified by consumers
- Worked in the shelters to develop transitional plans with consumers daily until closing day of the shelters
- Disability partners received referrals from FEMA (disability integration team/VAL)
- Met at the FEMA's JFO in Baton Rouge to discuss viable options for consumers. This included:
 - assistance with FEMA appeals,
 - finding alternative resources for goods and services,
 - referrals to Catholic Charities, etc.
- RIL provided assistance to consumers at the DRCs (also provided loaner wheelchairs to be used in the DRC's)



Gay Jones

FEMA Communication Access Specialist

- Long-Term Recovery Groups vs. National Disaster Recovery Coordination



Long-Term Recovery Groups vs. National Disaster Recovery Coordination

- National Disaster Recovery Coordination
 - FEMA/State Directed Recovery Coordination
 - Response Support Functions (RSF) in 6 areas:
 - Housing
 - Infrastructure
 - Health and Human Services
 - Economics
 - Capacity Building



Long-Term Recovery Groups vs. National Disaster Recovery Coordination

- Long-Term Recovery Groups are initiated by the impacted community to address identified unmet needs
 - Identification of resources that can be provided by Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD), disability and other community partners
 - Grass Roots
 - Community specific



Ann McDaniel

Executive Director, Statewide Independent Living Council

Larry E. Paxton

Executive Director, Appalachian Independent Living Center

- Working with VOADs



West Virginia Appalachian Center for Independent Living

- Located in the flooded area
- All staff but 1 personally affected by flooding
- Working to assist survivors with disabilities:
 - Peer Counseling/Support
 - Equipment, devices, etc:
 - Coordinating with other Centers for Independent Living
 - Coordinating with Portlight
 - Coordinating Distribution
- Working to assist survivors with disabilities:



Working with VOADS

- Valuable partners
- Success getting CILs on Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster calls
 - Opportunity to address disability needs
 - Greater understanding of disability organizations and resources
- Challenges:
 - Lack of experience/understanding of people with disabilities and disability organizations
 - More improvements to be made in addressing needs of survivors with disabilities



Long-Term Involvement

- Meeting with FEMA staff at Joint Field Office
- Meeting with State Coordinating Office (WV Homeland Security) and FEMA representatives at Joint Field Office
- Call with Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator, Region 3, and FEMA staff
- Meetings and calls with School Accessibility Task Force



Accessible School Portable Units

- Separate work group having regular calls to address this issue
- Combined with full Partners group calls
- Connected with School Accessibility Task Force
- Seeking involvement of West Virginia ADA Coordinator



Lessons Learned

- Office of Disability Integration and Coordination budget should include resources to address immediate needs of survivors with disabilities
- Disability Integration Advisors should provide more complete information when referring unmet need to Partners
 - Verify need is related to current disaster
 - Provide details on need – type, size, etc. or equipment
 - Confirm housing design and lot can accommodate a ramp
- Disaster Recovery Centers should provide information on grants and assistance and Small Business Administration loan referral should be a last resort



Lessons Learned

- FEMA funding should be provided to Centers for Independent Living
- Resources for Independent Living and other Centers for Independent Living may benefit from attending FEMA training, such as L197 to become abreast of FEMA's processes/procedures to properly provide this information to consumers
- FEMA should explore other options for Transitional Shelter Assistance to be used at establishments other than hotels/motels, such as Bed and Breakfasts, etc.



What is left to do?

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