Texas Disability Task Force on Emergency Management

Disability Task Force on Emergency Management

- Convened in late 2011
- Purpose: To provide input to Texas emergency management community that would assist in enhancing state and local emergency management planning, plans, and response.
- Representatives include:
  - Disability related Organizations
  - State Agencies
  - Local Governments
Task Force Organization

- Texas Independent Living Centers
- Mayors Committees on People with Disabilities
- Texas Association of the Deaf
- Texas Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Texas Council of Community Centers
- Texas Council on Autism & Pervasive Developmental Disorders
- Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
- National Federation of the Blind of Texas
- Texas Paralyzed Veterans of America
- Texas Deaf Blind Multi-Handicapped Association
- Texas Chapter for the American Foundation for the Blind
- Texas Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America
- Texas Department of Aging & Disability Services (DADS)
- American Red Cross

Task Force Organization

- Texas Department of Assistive & Rehabilitative Services (DARS)
- Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)
- FEMA Disability Integration Coordinator Region VI
- Dr. Lex Frieden, Texas Health Science Center at Houston
- Texas Association of Regional Councils
- Texas Governor’s Committee on People with Disabilities
- University of Texas, Center for Disability Studies
- Texas Department of Public Safety Division of Emergency Management
- City of Corpus Christi Office of Emergency Management
- City of San Antonio Office of Emergency Management
- Texas A & M University, Center on Disability Development
- City of Austin Health Department
Disability Task Force on Emergency Management

• Chair
  Russell Cook, Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services

• Vice-Chair
  Danielle Hesse, Texas Department of State Health Services

• Facilitator
  Dede Powell, Texas Division of Emergency Management

Disability Task Force on Emergency Management

• Currently includes three Sub-Committees
  – Disability Outreach and Effective Communication
  – Training
  – Planning
Disability Outreach and Effective Communications Sub-Committee

Purpose
Provide guidance, technical assistance and resources on effective outreach and communication for emergency managers, citizens with disabilities and those with access and functional needs in disasters.

Chair: Keri Cain, Texas Department of State Health Services

Accomplishments

- Worked with the Texas Department of State Health Services website staff to improve the accessibility of the TexasPrepares.org website
- Developed and disseminated the Neighborhood Hero’s Community Press Kit Templates that could be personalized to the local entity regarding the disaster topics: Wildfires, Tornados, Hurricanes, Flu, Floods, and Extreme Heat
Accomplishments

- Centers for Disease Control's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)
- Conducted three exercises of Emergency Notification Systems’ ability to provide warning via TTY and Relay Services
- Developed and published the Texas Effective Communication Toolkit (www.preparingtexas.org/preparedness)

Current / Future Goals

- Development of a Disability Virtual Operations Support Team
- Development of Feeling Safe/Being Safe program for Texas
- Development of a Formal Outreach Network to quickly reach organizations that serve persons with disabilities
- Continued enhancement of State of Texas video library for persons with disabilities
Effective Communications Toolkit

Download the Toolkit:

https://www.preparingtexastxas.org/preparedness.aspx?page=df9e78fc-3f14-4c6c-aad8-7a2b90c425ef

Objectives

- Offer a promising practices model for replication in other jurisdictions.
- Identify resources that contribute to effective communications.
- Identify strategies for ensuring that emergency communications meet the needs of the whole community, including those with access and functional needs.
**Toolkit Purpose**

- To ensure emergency communications services and equipment address functional and access needs.
- Provide guidance for creating emergency management materials in accessible formats.
- Understand how to plan for the delivery of auxiliary aids and services.
- Identify disability leaders in the local community.

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**Who is this toolkit for?**

Emergency management and public information professionals who provide warnings and notifications, to media and the public.
Who else benefits?

Shelter managers and first responders will benefit from face-to-face operational communication tools.

Toolkit Development

Toolkit development required input from Texas state agencies, local jurisdictions and representatives from the disability community.
Key Partners

- State vocational rehabilitation
- Deaf and hard of hearing specialists
- Accessibility specialists
- Public information / communications SMES
- Disability stakeholders

Examples of Toolkit Guidance

- High tech, low tech and no tech solutions
- Web accessibility resources
- Plain language communication techniques
- Relay Service descriptions
- Video Remote Interpreting providers and hardware/software specifications
- News conference ASL interpreter guidance
Other Resources

- Links to practical tools for communicating using “People First” or “Respectful Language” techniques
- Strategies for Community Meetings
  - **Interpreters (sign and/or oral)**
  - **CART** (Communication Access Real-time Transcription)

Media Broadcasts

- Live Broadcast Briefings by Emergency Managers to the Public with real-time captioning
- Sign language interpreter within the camera frame
- Describe visual information for listeners who are blind or have low vision
Multi-Modal Warnings and Notification

Questions?

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