

PACIFIC ADA CENTER

WEBINAR: FEMA PROMISING PRACTICE:

COMMUNICATION OUTREACH AND TOOLKITS

Thursday, January 14, 2016

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>> *Lewis Kraus*: Welcome to the Emergency Management and Preparedness Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities Webinar Series. I'm Lewis Kraus from the Pacific ADA Center, your moderator for this series. This series of webinars is brought to you by the Pacific ADA Center as a collaborative effort between the ADA National Network and FEMA's Office of Disability Integration and Coordination or ODIC. FEMA's ODIC covers 10 regions with regional disability integration specialists. More information about FEMA can be found at [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov), then type ODIC in the FEMA website search. And I have put that in the chatroom window.

The ADA National Network is made up of 10 regional centers in the same regions that are federally funded to provide training, technical assistance, and other information as needed, on the

Americans with Disabilities Act. You can reach your regional ADA center by dialing, 1-800-949-4232. And that number is also in the chat window.

This is the third year of this webinar series which shares issues and promising practices in emergency management inclusive of people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. The webinars provide an opportunity for emergency managers, people with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs, first responders, planners, community organizations, and other community partners to exchange knowledge and information on promising practices in inclusive emergency preparedness and management for the whole community. The series topics cover emergency preparedness and disaster response, recovery and mitigation, as well as accessibility and reasonable accommodation issues under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the ADA, and other relevant laws. The series alternates monthly between ADA National Network Learning Sessions and FEMA Promising Practices. We encourage you to review the series website and familiarize yourself with the full array of sessions available in this year's series at [www.adapresentations.org/schedule.php](http://www.adapresentations.org/schedule.php). And that is in your chat window.

These monthly webinars occur on the second Thursday of the month at 2:30 Eastern, 1:30 Central, 12:30 Mountain, and 11:30 Pacific time. By being here you are on the list to receive notices for future webinars in this series. The notices go out two to three weeks before the next webinar and open that webinar to registration.

For those of you who are new to this webinar series and its software, we will now review some of the features of the webinar platform before we begin the session today. In this session only the speakers will have audio. The audio today is being broadcast through your computer. Make sure your speakers are turned on or your headphones are plugged in. You can adjust the sound by sliding the sound bar left or right in the Audio & Video panel on your screen.

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Do note that this webinar is being recorded and will be able to be accessed by the ADA presentations website at [www.adapresentations.org/archives.php](http://www.adapresentations.org/archives.php) next week.

You can follow along this webinar platform with the slides. If you are not using the webinar platform, you can download a copy of today's PowerPoint presentation at [www.adapresentations.org/schedule.php](http://www.adapresentations.org/schedule.php).

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You can resize or reposition the chat, presentation, captioning panel business detaching and using your mouse to reposition or stretch/shrink. Each panel may be detached using the icon with the several lines and the small arrow pointing downward in the upper right-hand corner of each panel.

At the conclusion of today's presentation there will be an opportunity for everyone to ask questions. You may submit your questions using the chat area within the webinar platform. The speakers and I will address them at the end of the session. So feel free to submit them as they come to your mind during the presentation. You can type and submit the questions in the chat area, text box, or press control m and enter text in that chat area. If you're listening by phone and are not logged into the webinar, you may ask questions by e-mailing them to [adatech@adapacific.org](mailto:adatech@adapacific.org).

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can use F6 and arrow up or down to locate Pacific ADA Center and select to send the message. You can also e-mail to [adatech@adapacific.org](mailto:adatech@adapacific.org) or you can call 1-510-285-5600.

Today's FEMA Promising Practices is titled Communication Outreach and Toolkits. This webinar will have two presentations that address responding to communications and outreach needs of the whole community. In the first presentation we will hear from members of the Community Outreach and Effective Communications Subcommittee of the Texas Disability Task Force about how they work to ensure access through outreach to the community. One of the products created and distributed by the Texas Disability Task Force is the Effective Communications Toolkit. The Effective Communications Toolkit applies to emergency management and public information professionals who work with or for local jurisdictions to communicate warnings, notifications, and other messages to news media and to the public. It also contains face-to-face operational communication tools for shelter managers and responders.

Our first speakers today who will speak about this is Russell Cook, who is the chair of the Disability Task Force on Emergency Management. Russell has served as the Business Continuity Coordinator and the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services since December of 2011. In this role, Mr. Cook works daily to ensure the resiliency of the agency. During his 20 years in Texas state government he has also served as a fiscal manager and property manager for the Texas Department of Human Services and the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services.

Joining Russell will be Ron Lucey. Ron was recently hired as the Executive Director of the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities. Previously, he was the Accessibility and Web Support Manager for the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services. Mr. Lucey was the first chair of the Texas Disability Task Force on Emergency Management, representing the local Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities. He served as the City of Austin's Commissioner and Chairman of the Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities for more than 15 years. His

perspective as a person with a visual disability has helped him effectively advocate for accessibility and the rights of Texans with disabilities.

Russell and Ron, I'm going to turn it over to you.

Russell?

>> *Russell Cook*: Good morning, and good afternoon to some, I understand. I hope everyone is doing well today.

Like Lewis said, not only do I work daily to ensure the resiliency of the agency, I also work to improve the state of emergency management for the age population for persons with disabilities and for persons with access and functional needs. I advocate for long-term care providers and the individuals in the entire emergency management life cycle from mitigation to recovery. I work with external partners like FEMA, American Red Cross, and various organizations that have the same mission we do. Because it's too big of a mission for one person or one organization to accomplish.

[No Audio]

>> *Russell Cook*: I'm not going to go through all but two major lessons we learned, we had a need to build strong relationships with reputable organizations that work with persons with disabilities or access and functional needs prior to the disaster. We see a lot of incidents where after the fact individuals get.

Another major lesson we learned, we need to become familiar with tools that have already been developed by these reputable organizations. So to facilitate that and put our words into action, we decided the task force needed to be convened for preparedness and planning for people with disabilities and those with access and functional needs.

The Texas Disability Task Force was formed under the leadership of the Texas Division of Emergency Management and the Governor's Committee of People with Disabilities in 2011. The task force functions as an advisory group. We are charged with developing and providing guidance and information related to preparedness and response that is inclusive of people with disabilities to state and local emergency managers. The task force is made of emergency management professionals, disability stakeholder organizations, and rehabilitation and independent professionals. We have

developed guidance documents, training curriculum, state and emergency management initiatives and outreach initiatives.

As Lewis said, I was a former chair of the outreach subcommittee and now I'm the Chair of the task force. The task force is made of three subcommittees: Outreach and Effective Communication, Training, and Planning. I'm going to go through these briefly.

Today we're going to focus on outreach and effective communication but just to give you an idea of how this collaboration plays out. The Outreach and Effective Communication Subcommittee, their primary goal is to provide guidance, technical assistance, and resources on effective outreach communication for emergency managers, [Indiscernible] with disabilities, and those with access and functional needs in disasters. That committee is now chaired by Keri Cain.

Our subcommittee, the Development of Disability --

[No Audio]

>> *Lewis Kraus*: One second. Russell, we've lost your audio.

[No Audible Response]

Russell, if you can hear me, we lost your audio.

[No Audible Response]

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Ok. Let's take a moment here. All right. I don't know. We've lost Russell.

Ron, do you think that you can pick up maybe with your slides and we can come back to what Russell is going over when he can reconnect?

[No Audible Response]

Ron? Can you hear me?

Now we can hear you.

>> *Ron Lucey*: Why don't we pick up where he left off and I can speak to his contents since I served on those task forces with him and we'll just go on. And if he rejoins us, we can pick up where he left off.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Perfect.

>> *Ron Lucey*: Do you mind advancing when I say next slide?

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Sure. Happy to.

>> *Ron Lucey*: Ok. So Russell was talking about our subcommittees. We have a Planning Subcommittee and Effective Communications and Outreach Subcommittee and Training Subcommittee. We've had other committees in the past and they've achieved their function and essentially closed up shop. We would add more depending on the goals of the committee.

Currently -- looking at our past accomplishments, we've got links to those. We have our toolkits that we're really proud of. We have an FNFS toolkit, Functional Need and Functional Support Services toolkit. We have the Effective Communication Toolkit that I'm going to be talking about. And we've also developed and disseminated resources -- I'm getting a prompt that I'm being disconnected here. This session has been terminated.

Am I still connected? Lewis?

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Yes, Ron. Don't touch anything. Go ahead.

>> *Ron Lucey*: Ok. All right. Sorry. Next slide, please.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Ok. We're on the "Accomplishments" slide. You want to be on accomplishments?

>> *Ron Lucey*: Yeah. That's fine. One of the accomplishments, we have in the State of Texas, we have the Department of State Health Services that operates the State Medical Operations Center alongside our State Operations Center. And we were able to include in a CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, information on the relative preparedness of Texans with disabilities and got some good data from that. We've also been able to use our task force and the contacts we have to conduct exercises on emergency notification. This was really interesting because it kind of challenged us on how to use alert systems through --

>> [Multi-voice overlap]

>> *Lewis Kraus*: I'm hearing Russell. Russell? Russell? This is Lewis. Are you there?

>> *Russell Cook*: And lastly --

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Ok. He's going.

>> *Russell Cook*: That we are extremely proud of, our Effective Communication Toolkit.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Russell? Russell?

>> *Russell Cook*: I'm going to turn it back over to Lewis.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Russell, this is Lewis. We lost a significant -- Russell --

>> *Russell Cook*: Please feel free to contact me.

Thank you.

Lewis?

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Yes. Thanks, Russell. Sorry, we lost a whole bunch of what you had to say. So I don't know -- maybe we can go back to answer some questions about that a little later. But we'll go back to Ron and let Ron pick it up from the toolkit itself.

Go ahead, Ron.

>> *Ron Lucey*: First of all, this slide shows where you can download the Effective Communications Toolkit. The best place for people to find the toolkit is at our website, [preparingtexas.org](http://preparingtexas.org). If you look on the preparedness tab of that website, you'll see down on the left linked toolkits. There's the Functional Needs and Support Services Toolkit I mentioned as one of our key accomplishments and also the Effective Communications Toolkit. Currently it's available in a Microsoft Word format. We have another link to a printable version in pdf that's just links right now to the Word version. We're working on getting those links straightened out. To give you an idea of the size of the document, it's over 100 pages. It's well organized. It also --

>> [Multi-voice overlap]

>> *Ron Lucey*: It has a table of contents. It's certainly not something that emergency management staff would read from cover to cover but think of it as an effective reference tool where you can look up a topic that you need to know more information on. You can go right into that section and read what you need to know. [Inaudible due to audio echoing.] It is a living document. We're continuing to update it and keep it current.

Next slide, please.



>> *Ron Lucey*: I'm going to talk [Inaudible due to audio echoing.] I'm going to talk to you about the objective of the presentation not the toolkit. We want to offer this toolkit as a promising practice for other states or other jurisdictions to replicate. I've always said the taxpayers shouldn't have to pay for the same good idea more than once. Certainly we like to borrow from the good ideas of other states around the country. So take a look at this and see if there's information in there you could use. I'd say about 5% of it is Texas-specific but the other 95% of the guidance is just really good information that would be true in any state in the U.S. [Inaudible due to audio echoing.]

We also share strategies for emergency communications. Primarily, we're not going to be providing you with the skills to effectively communicate, just providing you with examples of what's in the toolkit to peak your interest and hopefully get your state to consider providing a similar resource.

Next slide, please.

Ok. So the toolkit purpose. As we were talking about, it's to ensure emergency communications and services and equipment address the functional access needs of individuals with disabilities. We want to also provide guidance for creating emergency materials in accessible formats and the skills that it takes to do that has changed over time. When you think about when the ADA first passed and we were talking about effective communications, it would have been dealing with things like large print, Braille, and even audio cassette tape. Now here in the 21st Century where it's important to have skills to make sure that your digital information, your digital media is successful, including skills to ensure that you have web accessibility. [Inaudible due to audio echoing.] We just added to the types of information that we have including social media and web accessibility.

Finally, we want the customers to understand how to plan for and deliver auxiliary aids and services during the disaster to ensure effective communications. And then we wanted our Texas customers to be able to identify the disability stakeholders and leaders in the community so the state developed their emergency plans. They'll be able to ensure to include people with disabilities.

Next slide, please.

So who is this toolkit for? All the audience emergency management staff. And then the second audience is public information personnel or professionals. For example, here in Texas, our governor's communication -- when we activate our Operations Center and the governor has to go down to conduct a news conference, we want to make sure that our communication staff and the staff at the Division of Emergency Management know how to ensure that communications are effective and include the needs of everybody, including planning for American Sign Language interpreters at those news conferences, so media professionals and emergency management professionals.

Next slide.

So who else benefits?

[No Audio]

There's a lot of really good information in this toolkit for shelter managers and first responders, anybody that might have a face-to-face communication opportunity with a person with a disability. There is communication sheets that talk about using communication. There's information for how to do video remote interpreting just good tips on how to provide sighted guide assistance.

Next slide.

Ok. So the toolkit development, this was definitely a labor of love for the State of Texas. It involved bringing together a pretty diverse group of Subject Matter Experts. We included -- besides the emergency management staff that are on our task force, we included Texas state agencies that serve people with disabilities, including the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, the Department of Aging and Disability Services, the Department of State Health Services, and then we included representatives from disability stakeholder groups in the community, groups like the National Federation of the Blind of Texas, Disability Rights organizations, local Independent Living Centers, and other organizations.

Next slide.

The key partners in the development of this toolkit, we really lean heavily on our partners at DARS and Vocational Rehabilitation, including deaf and hard of hearing specialists that contributed

significantly to the sections on using interpreters at news conferences, using auxiliary devices including video remote interpreting and CART services, similar to the realtime captioning we're using on today's presentation. Also, we used a team of accessibility specialists to develop the content related to web accessibility and information on Section 508 of the Rehab Act.

And finally, we made sure that we had public information and communication professionals that could look at what we were preparing and validate that it would, indeed, be useful to people that work in the media or work in the communications field.

Then, of course, the saying "Nothing about us without us" we included people with disabilities on the team.

Next slide, please.

So what are some examples of content in the toolkit? We have high-tech, low-tech and no-tech communication solutions. Obviously we all depend heavily on our computers and smartphones and other technology to help manage communications during a disaster but often in those very same disasters, cell phone towers can be taken out and we can lose computer connectivity.

Also, having information on low-tech and no-tech communication techniques is very important. We include a lot of information on web accessibility. I think that's an area of strength here in Texas. We include plain language communications. I used to manage a team of technical writers. Every profession has its own way of communicating. We don't want the jargon of emergency management to interfere with the public's ability to understand what we're communicating about regardless of whether they have a disability or not. We talk about relay services. We talk about video remote interpreting, including types of hardware and software specifications you need to do that. And then we go into depth on planning the news conferences and using ASL.

Next slide, please.

What other kinds of resources? Links to practical tools for communicating respectfully using People First Language. Here in Texas, a couple of sessions ago we passed a respectful language statute which eradicated a lot of out of date terminology from state programs and also handbooks and

things like that. We've adopted the People First respectful language information and built it into this toolkit; also, strategies for conducting willing community meetings, using interpreters, realtime captioning, and how to describe information to people who are blind during a disaster using audio description.

Next slide, please.

So media broadcasts. This is just an example of the kind of information you would find in that section. You see a picture of our governor, Governor Greg Abbott, there with an American Sign Language interpreter in the frame. A lot of times you can go to lengths to include interpreters and include it in planning. We've found that even after doing that --

>> Line unmuted.

>> *Ron Lucey*: The media may fail to get the interpreter, the American Sign Language interpreter, in the camera frames. So we're continuing to work on educating the media here in Texas to make sure that they include the ASL interpreter in the camera shot.

Next slide, please.

Multi-modal communications. This is just a slide that gives you kind of a montage of the other things that are included in here. We know that no single channel of communication is fully effective during a disaster. And it takes multi-modal communications to reach the whole community, including people with disabilities. So social media like Twitter and Facebook, weather radio, even simple door-to-door banging on doors to alert people that a flood is coming or another disaster. So we include tips on all of these strategies for multi-modal [No Audio] communication.

Next slide, please.

Finally, here's my contact information. In the event we can't make it to all of your questions, I want to give you an opportunity to reach out to me from whatever state you're in. So there's my e-mail address, [ron.lucey@gov.texas.gov](mailto:ron.lucey@gov.texas.gov). If there's anything I can't answer, I have the entire Disability Task Force team standing by to answer your questions.

Lewis, thank you very much.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Thanks so much, Ron. And thank you for continuing to go through this while we've had some audio problems.

And to all of you, I apologize about any of the audio problems, especially on the phone side. I put a message up but if you are having difficulties on the phone with audio, you can follow along -- while we're working on the phone audio issues, you can follow along with the closed captioning by clicking the CC button in the audio and video window.

Ok. Our second presentation today, we will hear from a disability representative of the Regional Catastrophic Planning Team from FEMA Region X with the field manual designed for use primarily by any facility planning for or pressed into service as an emergency shelter --

>> You are now a host.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: -- written by disability Subject Matter Experts. It provides information, tools, and resources to address communication barriers which can be present in an emergency shelter situation. The manual also has value for any emergency management professional in communication with people with disabilities.

Our speaker is Deborah Witmer. Deborah is a resident of Seattle, Washington, and a formerly disability advocate working to improve community resilience. And she has recently become the Vulnerable Populations Coordinator in the City of Seattle's Human Services Department and part of the Emergency Management team. Also, as a commissioner on the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities and Co-Chair of their Public Safety Committee, she serves as the liaison with the Seattle Department of Emergency Management, responding, when activated, with the ESF-6 Branch. She also serves as the Co-Chair of the Disability Advisory Group, supporting on-going partnerships between nonprofits and individuals in the disability community and emergency management professionals. Deborah also serves as the Disability Representative on the Regional Catastrophic Planning Team, a FEMA-established eight-county catastrophic planning group in Washington State.

Deborah, I'm going to turn it over to you.

>> *Deborah Witmer*. Thank you, Lewis.

So, greetings from Seattle. It's a beautiful day here today. It's still -- oh, just afternoon, so I'm joining everyone in the afternoon.

Lewis, I'm having trouble advancing my slides so I'm going to let you do that. There we go.

I'm here today to introduce to you the Emergency Shelter Communications Toolkit. This is a field guide for accessible communications that was developed here. I first want to do a huge shout-out to our project staff, Lloyd Major. He did a yeoman's job in pulling all of this together. We had four Subject Matter Experts, Kevin Frankenburger, Christine Seymore, Andrea Kovic, and Dana Eastling [ph] who came together to bring their expertise to this project. And we really appreciated all of the work that they did.

Next slide, please.

So the idea for the toolkit arose out of a sheltering exercise that we did here in the City of Seattle, testing setup and registration for both humans and animals, service animals and pets. And observing that registration activity during the exercise, it was really clear that people with disabilities, especially those who were deaf or DeafBlind, were not being properly communicated with and staff were unable to successfully register several of our clients. So in following up on our learning objective, it was clear that information, resources, and training was lacking for facilities, staff, volunteers, and others who may stand up an emergency shelter.

The disability community has a saying, "nothing about us without us." It's a great chant. Experts from the community stepped up to help build this toolkit. The first section, I want to talk about what the sections bring. First is an introduction. It talks about the toolkit that was funded through a grant from the Regional Catastrophic Planning Team. It was, again, put together by Subject Matter Experts in disability. The majority of them were people with disabilities themselves. And they served as the core of the advisory group. Each Subject Matter Expert did research in the best practices, reviewed other emergency preparedness materials, and contributed a huge amount of information presented in this toolkit. And the toolkit represents view points from and is written to be used in both urban and rural communities.

Next slide.

So how to use this toolkit is in Section 2. This is a graphic that is in the toolkit. Basically the toolkit is split into 13 sections, and sections three and four are focused on preparing your shelter to be as accessible as possible for individuals with functional needs. And this could be any kind of a facility from a government community center to a church to a nonprofit organization in the community. And this would give them information that they could use then to prepare that facility and staff. sections five through 12 give information to help you understand the needs of and provide services to those same individuals. And then Section 5 provides general information. Section 6 through 12, each discuss the communication and accessibility needs of individuals with various functional needs. And there's more detail in each of those areas. And Section 13 discusses and provides suggested signage and materials.

So ideally, potential shelter directors, staff, and volunteers would review this toolkit before the need to open a shelter. Section 3.0 goes over advanced preparation. And that should be the first section. It describes the steps that can be taken to prepare the shelter ahead of time. And we'll go through that a little bit later.

If the toolkit is being used in an emergency just-in-time situation, and time is limited, focus your attentions on Section 5 which goes immediately to the shelter intake. And it has questions that can be used during registration, information on service animals, and important general information.

Next slide.

We provide these in digital format but we recommend using the files to create a hard copy manual. We include all of the files and instructions to do that. It's designed to be used in the field, made of sturdy materials. We recommend a three-ring binder that's waterproof. The pages are printed out on hard copies, on stock -- card stock so it's really thick. And they can be taken out of the binder and given to staff for use and then perhaps even put back in the binder for using again. And it includes several useful checklist that can be used right away in a situation.

And the next slide, please.

Again, we do recommend that they print this on thick card stock. Use section dividers to divide the sections to make finding them easier. And we really liked using dividers with pockets because it's great for storing other documents within the toolkit that you might need in this situation. And this can be customized for your particular situation. It also includes a section of shelter signage that can be copied. There are digital files that can be sent directly to a commercial printer, printed on sturdy materials in larger format or they can be just taken out and put up and used just as they are. Again, you can customize this for your particular situation and use whatever pieces work the best for you.

Next slide, please.

Section 3 talks about advanced preparations. This contains recommendations on things you can do to prepare a possible shelter site and staff before an emergency occurs. Preparing to be accessible for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, preparing to be accessible for people with a mobility disability and also with a visual disability are some of the larger sections. And they include a checklist for use in assessing the readiness of a possible emergency site.

And let's take a look at that in the next slide.

This is an example of the checklist that's included. These are things that you would look to see if they are available as resources in the possible emergency shelter site. You can use the checklist to assess the possible shelter site -- I can't talk -- shelter site, for accessible communication resources, pre-identifying gaps can lead to purchasing or identifying additional resources or just being creative in how you're going to fill that gap before an emergency strikes.

And note that this checklist includes both high and no-tech resources. So we go from pens and paper all the way down to having a general audio system that you say perhaps have loop technology installed and whether or not there's an MOU with interpreter services. It can be great to actually have that MOU put in the book with access with them, contact information for that.

Next slide, please.



This is the rest of that particular checklist. Note that there is space to itemize additional accommodation resources available. It's recommended to also store copies of those MOUs, contact information for service providers, and information on other resources that you might have available that can be put right into this toolkit.

Next slide.

So then we move on to shelter activation. And this is really the nuts and bolts of the toolkit itself. When a site is being stooped as an emergency shelter, this is the section that will provide information and resources to assist accessible communications. And it includes information on physical access, signage, and message bulletin board prep, reminder to provide refrigeration for medicine, and the accessible communications checklist to do a just-in-time assessment for situational and resource awareness. So not only do we recommend you do that assessment before an activation needs to happen but once one has happened, doing a just-in-time assessment so you know exactly what you have on hand right now.

Go ahead and go to the next slide, please.

There are also training files included in the toolkit. And part of the training files include a five- to 10-minute just-in-time training for emergency shelter staff so that you can give them the training and give them the resource information available before they start registration and client activities. It should be -- the assessment checklist should be completed prior to the just-in-time training so that the results of what actually is available to you in that shelter site are shared with the staff and the volunteers so that they are aware of the resources available and any plans that you have for dealing with the gaps or any unmet needs. The training also recommends assigning a staff person to act as accessibility point person for each duty shift. And then staff should provide shift briefings to include any issues, needs, accommodations arranged, etc.

One of the challenges in keeping an emergency shelter accessible is meeting the needs of people as situations change. And that can happen between shifts. It can be happening between days.

And so this is a good reminder to make sure that that information is passed along so that accessibility is always top mind.

On to the next one.

So then the Section 5 talks about the shelter intake. It contains general intake questions to ask when assessing communication and accommodation needs. It has a frequently asked questions section that is pretty long. It talks about access for service dogs and other service animals, based on the Americans with Disabilities Act. And also review your locality service animal policy if it offers additional protections. For example, here in Seattle, the City of Seattle's service animal policy is a bit broader than what we find either on our county, state, or even federal level. So our shelters here in Seattle always have access to and review our Seattle's animal policy. There's also lots of general information in this Section. It's a great one to read through and perhaps look at some of these things that could be used as part of your training.

Next slide, please.

So Section 6 through 12 then go on to each address specific disability and language issues. This can be really helpful when a specific situation arises and you need guidance to deal with that situation with your staff or volunteers. It's broken down into these sections around mobility, deaf and hard of hearing, low vision and blindness, DeafBlindness, developmental language barriers, and mental health.

And note, we recognize that language barriers are not specifically a disability but they obviously can be a challenge to communications. And we wanted to address them within this context.

Next section, please.

So I'm going to go through the sections here. These are the ones on specifics. So Section 6 is around mobility. They all follow a similar format where they talk about interacting with a person who has a mobility disability. We also talk about prioritizing electrical power usage and charging particularly for power wheelchairs and living in the shelter around accommodations. And this will talk about all

kinds of things from spacing around cots, around walkways, having space for wheelchairs, walkers, durable medical equipment and those kinds of things.

And next section, please.

So Section 7 goes into deaf and hard of hearing. Obviously this is a communications issue for them and can have a lot of complications and a lot of things that come into play. So we broke this into 11 different sections: communications, just kind of in general; dispelling common deaf and hard of hearing myths; defining categories of deafness; identifying people who are deaf or hard of hearing, especially if they are not self-identifying; talking about the Americans with Disabilities Act and effective communications -- we talk about the barriers to communications; communication and accommodations and what the specifics around communicating accommodation information; communication strategies, using interpreters which can also be a challenge in a shelter situation; using communications assistance realtime or CART Captioning, and telecommunications devices.

Let's go ahead to the next section. This gives you -- this is an example of information that's provided in Section 7. This is a graphic that walks through the steps of getting to successful communication.

I have to apologize for the small text inside the arrows. I was not able to edit it for this slide but I will read it out as we go along. So when the triage -- starting with when possible, use an appropriate interpreter for the best communications, that's always our first step. But if it's not available, which is what's in the arrow, it sends you to the next one which is: Do you have access to a Video Relay Service? And if the answer to that is yes, obviously that's what you would use. If the answer is no, which is in that arrow, that then pushes you to using pencil and pen and paper for accurate communications, which is usually quick and easy and almost always available to new that situation.

If that's -- if the person that you're working with and what the arrow says is cannot read or write English, so if that is not their communication language, then we recommend using a graphic communication card for basic communications, and is what's in the arrow, do not make assumptions.

Reassure and locate an appropriate interpreter as soon as possible, which is always desired way of handling communication problems.

And on to the next slide.

Section 8 goes into low vision and blindness. It gives guidance for when you meet someone who is blind and what that initial communication is like. And then meeting a guide or service dog team. And I just realized I misspelled that. That should say dog team. Some words of general advice inside and outside of a shelter about working with a service guide team.

On to the next session.

So this is some examples of some information that's provided in Section B, some general things to remember when assisting someone with low vision or blindness. Alerting them when you make changes to the layout of a room is really important. And, again, that's some of the information that can be shared in a shift briefing with staff, when things are changed or are going to be changing, when new signage or information is posted, making verbal announcements to go along with that physical posting, and then always asking if you would like assistance before jumping into help. So these are some really good tips that are important to remember when you're providing information and communication with someone with low vision or blindness.

And on to the next slide.

Then we talk about DeafBlindness. We give a definition of the word. The word DeafBlindness may seem as if a person cannot hear or see at all. The term actually describes a person who has some degree of loss in both vision and hearing. The amount of loss in either vision or hearing will vary from person to person. And some individuals may have lost all sight but can still hear with the help of hearing aids. Some may have no hearing but their limited sight enables them to communicate with others through sign language.

So all of that said, there is no single form of communication that works with every DeafBlind individual. Try some of the included methods until you find whichever one the individual is most

comfortable with or finds most helpful. You can also review information in Sections 7 and 8, which are specifics around deafness and blindness.

During our original sheltering exercise, this turned out to be our most challenging situation. Although the client had arrived with a friend, with and through whom he could communicate, that person rightly declined to be the interpreter for the client in that situation. It's a good reminder that friends and family are not appropriate as interpreters during a shelter intake. And this was a really good lesson that we learned during our exercise that led to this toolkit.

Next slide, please.

This is some example of information that's provided in Section 9. The information ranges from must move now situations to tips about using a buddy system and encouragement to ask for assistance. The toolkit manual ideally should include a Braille and a large print alphabet card as additional resources. And information on obtaining these often free resources is included in Section 13.2.

So our example here that I'm showing says in a true, must move now emergency, using a finger, draw a huge X on the back of a person with hearing and/or sight loss while explaining the need to relocate immediately. After the X, go to the right of the person, making an L with your left arm and gently but with conviction, with your right hand, reach across yourself to grasp the person's right hand and place it in the space between your elbow and forearm and then move. If the person has a guide or service dog, pause just a moment to allow the person to drop the harness handle so that they can heel the dog as you guide the team to safety. This is really good information perhaps to share with some of your first responders as well.

So then moving on to the next slide, Section 10 gives information around developmental disabilities. It goes over registration, communication with individuals with developmental disabilities, day-to-day communication, and shelter clothing. And we include that because there are some special considerations that should be taken into account while closing a shelter, making sure the needs of people with developmental disabilities are met. And they will continue to be safe in the situation.

So then on to the next slide, it talks about Section 11. It talks about language barriers. And, again, although they're not eye disability, language barriers are included as part of accessible communication because they are important. And we recommend that you be patient, speak slowly and clearly, clarify what you said has been understood, make sure that you have that back and forth. That was an example that came out of our exercise as well; that just by looking at someone and watching them smile and nod does not mean that they truly heard and/or understood what you said. So really clarifying with them that what you said was understood.

Avoiding the idioms. And that would also include acronyms. Using a graphics communication card, see Section 13.2 again. And also drawing pictures to communicate ideas. And be mindful of acronyms. I think I put that in there twice partly because they're my pet peeve. And even though I've become more involved in this work and find myself using them, it's something that is a barrier to communication out in the field and we really need to be cautious about that.

So then Section 12, the next slide, please. It talks about mental health and emergency shelters, during an emergency situation, especially one of the scale needing a community shelter, chaos, fear, uncertainty, and just the disruption of normal daily activities will stress every member of the community to some degree. The mental health issues possibly present in an emergency shelter situation lay on a continuum. So it's important to remember to address the behavior.

Knowing a specific diagnosis is not always helpful. Community members utilizing an emergency shelter may exhibit a range of signs and behaviors such as confusion, helplessness, sadness, anxiety, depression, fear, or even anger. Provide support and/or enforce appropriate shelter rules and boundaries as needed, primarily using de-escalation techniques.

Emergency shelters should plan for providing a confidential space for private conversations between staff and shelter residents when needed. Providing a quiet room away from the main sleeping and living areas for use by shelter residents as needed. And this space should have appropriate signage and be regularly monitored by shelter staff. And that's really important that that become a part of the monitoring that shelter staff do on a regular basis so that people using that room are not left

unmonitored for long periods of time. We also recommend establishing MOUs with local mental health providers including nonprofits and programs serving children for use as staff in shelters when needed.

And then on to the last one -- the next one. This is Section 13. Here's where we actually provide some signage and materials that you can use. There's information on hanging signage, information on additional communication resources such as Braille and graphics communication cards. We include reproducible shelter signs for various locations and services within a shelter. Digital files can be pulled out and -- I'm sorry, a hard copy files can be pulled out and used immediately or they can be photocopied and enlarged if desired. And then the digital files are also there to be used to have signage professionally printed on sign board or vinyl or whatever durable material you're choosing for your shelter.

And then the next slide shows you an example. This is we provide signs in two sets. So you'll have a set -- they're both similar. One set will have words attached to them. So, for example, this one says registration. And you can see it's someone standing at a desk or a table. It kind of looks like registration. And then the next slide we also provide the same set of slides only this one doesn't have words. That way you can either choose to use one or both in your shelter, whatever is available or appropriate for your use.

And then the next slide.

The toolkit is available. It's free. It's customizable. It's provided in Word, MS Word, so that you can make it whatever you need for your own system. It's replicable. It's used for more than just emergency shelters. The information contained in this toolkit is helpful for planners, PIOs, preparedness educators, staff of shelters whether they are emergency or not, staff of community centers. The information around communication is applicable to so many different uses and jurisdictions. So definitely share this with other people.

There are a number of ways you can get the toolkit. There is a digital copy of the toolkit. And if you want to go to the next slide, Lewis, it is a free resource. It includes all permission to customize,

edit, and reproduce. Here is the link for the hard copy toolkit on the Washington State Emergency Department's website. It's a part of our sheltering index, the appendix to our sheltering plan.

The toolkit files including instructions on making the hard copy includes training modules. And also the cover and spine sections of the hard copy manual, you could also request them from this shelter communications toolkit at gmail.com. You can also direct any questions or suggestions. We would love to hear any feedback or perhaps examples of how it's been used. Any of that would be really appreciated to send along to us and let us know how it went.

So the next slide. If you have any questions, again, you could direct them to that. And there is my e-mail if there's any questions that I can answer. I'm really excited to see this toolkit out. And I hope that it's useful for folks. And I'd love to hear it's been used.

Thank you so much for your time today. I'll turn this back over to Lewis for questions.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Thanks so much, Deborah. I'm going to go back one slide so everybody can look at that address again. And I am going to put it here in the window. One second. I'm just completing it. So if you want to go even link to it, you can link to it. In the window. In the chat window.

Thank you so much.

For everyone who is watching or listening along, if you have questions, this is your time for putting in questions or comments into the chat window. And we will read them off for everyone to hear and for the speakers to respond to. I'm going to start with a few of them that we've been receiving so far.

First, this is for Deborah. There's been a couple of advices coming your way. The first one was someone who said that you may want to run your checklist, which I believe was in your Section 3 or 4 by members of the Deaf community, since it seems outdated. There is no mention of video phones and there is no mention of interpreter agency referral lists so an interpreter can be called.

So that's one point of advice. A second one is in your communication section. Another communication device for deaf and hard of hearing is a UBIDUO. I don't know if that's pronounced ubiduo, something like that. But it's UBIDUO. It allows for typing on both sides.



So those are two points that people wanted to add in for you, Deborah.

>> *Deborah Witmer*: Excellent. Thank you. That's excellent. Thank you. We put this together I guess it has been not quite two years ago now and things move so fast. We're continually looking to update. I really appreciate having suggestions on things that we can add.

Thank you.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Ok. The next question is also for Deborah. It's for someone who is in Seattle. This person says she works for the Developmental Disabilities Administration in Seattle and at least one of the agencies she works with works with a lot of clients that are deaf and DeafBlind. Are there any planned shelters in the area that care providers have in mind of possible options in case something happens, depending on the incident, of course?

>> *Deborah Witmer*: Well, all of our general population shelters will be accessible to people who are DeafBlind. So they will be able to go to any general population shelter that is opened and publicized after an event.

Here in Seattle we don't predesignate shelters specifically because we're not sure what will be available after, perhaps, for example, an earthquake. So we will do our assessment, stand up shelters, and then publicize the information. And all of our general public shelters will be accessible for people who are DeafBlind. So your clients will be welcomed and accessible at all of our general population shelters.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Ok. The next slide. I'm going to go on now to Deborah's contact information.

The next question, I believe, was aimed at the Texas group but I believe either one of you could answer this. The comment was: Thank you for addressing the media that failed to get sign language interpreters in the camera frame. It's a big issue in the Deaf community. So thank you for that. And thank you for addressing the media -- that's the same thing. Thank you for that.

And so the question is: Can we use volunteers who are deaf? I don't know if either one of you would like to respond to that.

>> *Ron Lucey*: I'm not sure what the person asking the question means but we certainly use volunteers who are -- for the Deaf Task Force to guide the State of Texas in its emergency planning and preparedness. And we use volunteers who are deaf in creating this Effective Communications Toolkit. So the answer is yes.

In terms of volunteers who are deaf, I know, for example, here in Austin we have our CERT teams and we've had deaf people come through the training and become a deaf volunteer in the community. So, absolutely.

>> *Deborah Witmer*: I agree. We also work very closely with our Deaf and Hard of Hearing population here in Seattle. But specifically to interpreters, ASL interpreters that are on camera, if that was where the camera came from, we have MOUs we have contracted certified interpreters who should be on camera with our emergency and -- if our mayor goes on camera. We don't use volunteers for that official purpose. We would use a certified interpreter for that.

>> *Ron Lucey*: That's true for Texas as well. We have contracted interpreters for the ASL interpretation at the news conferences. We certainly appreciate anybody who wants to volunteer in other areas.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: All right. The next question is a couple of thank yous, really. First to Ron, this person uses the tools for document accessibility on the Texas Governor's Committee on Accessibility frequently. Thank you for that.

>> *Ron Lucey*: You're welcome.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: It also says, I love the Emergency Shelter Communications Toolkit. This was yours, Deborah. Has there been any pushback from emergency managers and/or Red Cross personnel to using this? And if so, how did you address it?

>> *Deborah Witmer*: No. We have not had any pushback. We had someone from the Red Cross who served on the Advisory Committee for this project. We've reviewed materials for the Red Cross. We didn't use them wholesale but they were part of the work that went into establishing the toolkit. So far it's been really well received. And emergency managers, I know -- I know our PIOs and pub staff are

using this in their outreach to help educate their staff around communication. So far it's been well received. We have not yet, in my jurisdiction here, had an event that has used this toolkit specifically. So we haven't walked up to that line yet. But in our preparation, in our planning and preparedness work, it has been used and it's been well received.

I would love to hear from anyone around the country who has had the opportunity or will have the opportunity to use it in a real situation to get that feedback.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Ok. The next question is from someone who is in the international Deaf community and appreciated all of your presentations. She notices that the first responders are extremely dependent to interpreters. And I believe the question is could they learn basic sign language or maybe you could speak to whether there's any basic sign language or communications that you can get to first responders or are you doing anything like that.

>> *Ron Lucey*: Go ahead, Russell.

>> *Russell Cook*: I was going to talk about our Training Subcommittee which is a little off task from the communication but talking about them developing training programs. We're actually developing a training program for first responders and to help educate them on how to deal with persons with disabilities in their response. Now, we will be showing them some basic strategies. We won't get to the point where we'll be able to teach them sign language at this point.

Go ahead, Ron.

>> *Ron Lucey*: I was saying I think it's a good idea but the first responders that work for local jurisdictions is going to vary from fire department to fire department and police department to police department. But I'd like to see an initiative in that regard. We have an agency that provides training certification credits to first responders here in Texas. I think receiving training certification credits for learning ASL is a good idea. So it's something we can look at here in Texas.

>> *Russell Cook*: Agreed.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Ok.

The next person makes a comment that we need to make sure that captioning is available for all communication regarding a disaster. But then also a question: Are the shelters in Texas and Washington Red Cross shelters or are they government-opened shelters?

>> *Russell Cook*: In Texas primarily our general population shelters are ran by the American Red Cross.

>> *Deborah Witmer*: Here in the City of Seattle, the City of Seattle has responsibility for opening shelters in a major disaster. We do work closely with the Red Cross. And they handle kind of our day-to-day emergencies here, like a house fire or something that's a little smaller. But in an activation situation, our Human Services Department and our Parks Department work together to plan for and identify and open shelters that are city-run initially. Now, obviously there are situations where it might become a larger issue, more mass casualty, more mass shelter needing and then we do coordinate with other partners in the county and state to talk about national sheltering. But initial response will be City-opened shelters in the City of Seattle run by City staff.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Ok.

The next question is: Can you discuss methods of effective communication for individuals who have limited English proficiency or who are non-English speaking other than pictures and speaking slowly? Critical information can be lost in shelter environments without adequate translation services.

>> *Deborah Witmer*: That's absolutely true. Obviously if we could have translation services available in every one of the shelters for all of the languages, that would be an ideal and probably not something that we could accomplish.

Here in Seattle we have about 17 different languages that we work with. We have done some pre-messaging that has been translated into native languages that can be used. But obviously in an emergency situation when things are changing and information is changing, that can be difficult to pre-plan. Some of that has been done. And I think that we do have more work to do to be able to handle effectively doing important communications other than graphic. I agree pictures are not always going to be the way. And we don't want to use family members as interpreters. That's not always appropriate.

But we are working with our communities here, our cultural communities, with different languages to find a solution to this gap because it is going to be a problem.

>> *Ron Lucey*: This is Ron. In Texas we've had some success using the AT&T language line. We have a poster that shows different languages. If we're not sure what language a person is requesting, they can point to the language that's written using their symbols or alphabet for Russian or whatever language they're needing assistance with an interpreter. And we can access the AT&T language line as one option.

The biggest languages spoken here in Texas besides English are obviously Spanish. And then we have a pretty good Vietnamese population, and also a need for American Sign Language. On our emergency materials, there's a law in Texas that requires that agency websites provide effective access to essential program information in Spanish. So we try to plan for that as well, providing that materials in both English and Spanish.

>> *Deborah Witmer*: And I should mention, too, that the City of Seattle has a language bank that we also are able to access that would be able to help in that situation, too.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Great. All right.

Next question. Any considerations for autistic people, especially children in the toolkits?

>> *Deborah Witmer*: In the Emergency Shelter Communications Toolkit there is a section that talks about things like quiet rooms and not specific to children or autism specifically. Because, again, we're really responding to behavior and to needs as opposed to a diagnosis. But we do talk about things like quiet rooms and just managing chaos.

And I know that there's probably also an opportunity to add some things in there as we're learning things around mental health disaster, tools, especially for children. I think particularly for children and also even just things like activities, keeping them busy and occupied and helping in that way. So I think there's some room that we can grow in that area. But, again, it's not specific in our toolkit to autism because we're really looking at behavior as opposed to a specific diagnosis. But there is tools and information there that will help with the behaviors that may be observed.

>> *Ron Lucey*: We do have guidance on page 75 of our Effective Communications Toolkit. There's also more guidance that would be appropriate to shelters in our FNFS toolkit. The Texas Department of Services has an autism program. We've received input from them as well as local autism providers like Easter Seals, Central Texas. So we always welcome additional input on what else we could add. So if we have Subject Matter Experts on this call today who want to review our toolkit and give us further guidance, we welcome it.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Ok. The next person notes something that maybe was in one of your -- one of the summaries of information and maybe needs to be added. The hyper alert system does not include government-issued phones as cameras to select from their dropdown. And this includes assurance and SafeLink. That's just a comment from someone.

The next question: I have learned that many emergency management did not have a mock practice. How do we know that emergency management, especially in a rural area is ready? Are they trained to deal with people who are deaf, especially in rural areas? It's a big concern in my region.

>> *Deborah Witmer*: It was a big concern here for the City of Seattle, even in a larger region. I think for me, the key was to get the community of people with disabilities involved in exercising and get them to play clients. Make sure that there are injects and other things that will address specific issues.

This toolkit came out of an exercise of setting up a shelter that was primarily focused with people with disabilities. That was the majority of the clients that we recruited to come and play with us. It was very instructive both on our side and on their side. There was a lot of learning that went on I think on both sides. So my first and best advice is just to get folks involved in planning and in the exercising part and making that case with your emergency managers. Even in a small jurisdiction that can be really helpful.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: I'm going to add to that that, in fact, most emergency management areas will do trainings, table-top exercises or actual trainings themselves. If you are in the Deaf community and you have not been involved in that, you do need to take the advice that Deborah gave and that we've been giving a lot on these webinars, which is to get connected with the emergency management in your

region and ask to be involved so that you can demonstrate for everyone what the needs might be in an emergency.

All right.

Any specific suggestions to persons with Alzheimer's?

[No Audible Response]

Anybody? Deborah?

>> *Deborah Witmer*: No, I have to admit, we didn't specifically address that condition. Again, I think that we were focusing on behavior; so looking at, you know, observing behavior, people who are forgetful, unable to perhaps comprehend instructions or just generally looking lost and confused. I think we're looking at that behavior and not specific. We didn't address that particular condition in specific.

>> *Ron Lucey*: This is Ron. We have a section in our toolkit on assisting people with either an intellectual disability or people who are experiencing confusion. It provides really good interpersonal advice for first responders on how to manage a situation like that. It doesn't specifically call out the disability of Alzheimer's disease but the interaction techniques are the same.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: And I just want to emphasize for people who are writing about specific conditions, and I think Deborah is right on this, the guidance that has come from FEMA and has changed the language to functional needs, that's kind of where the thought process is. You don't have to know what somebody's particular condition necessarily is but what is the function and then the need that's needed. And she's describing it as behaviors. That's a good way to think of it as well, what you're facing in terms of can you talk with the person, can you communicate with the person, can you whatever. A person forgetting, remembering, whatever, those are things, that are behaviors that you can deal with as opposed to knowing any particular diagnosis.

Ok. Russell?

>> *Russell Cook*: You echoed what I was going to say in how we approach it. We looked -- we have another toolkit that we'll be presenting later on another webinar but what we looked at is what Deborah

said. We looked at the needs and how we can support those needs. And that covers a wide range of individuals with disabilities.

And like Ron said, we also looked at individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It's not limited to physical disabilities at all.

>> *Ron Lucey*: Roughly page 75 would be where a lot of this guidance is.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Ok. All right.

A question for you that asks if there have been any thoughts or efforts towards putting a translation out that could be emergency related.

>> *Ron Lucey*: I think technology is always improving. We should be open to the possibility. A lot of the synthetic translations are fraught with inaccuracy, whether it's optical character recognition for people who are blind, that's 98% accurate, whether it's speech-to-text which may be less accurate. Just think of how Siri reacts to a voice command when you ask a simple question about the weather. So I think it holds the promise when nothing else is available but I think best practices would ensure that we have capable translations or capable American Sign Language interpreters that can do the job accurately.

>> *Deborah Witmer*: I would agree. It's funny. I think sometimes because we're sitting in the backyard of Microsoft and so many other tech companies that we expect that that's going to be able to be an answer or that we're going to be able to come up with the next best thing. And all of that is great but I think when we're really in a disaster, relying on tech is just not something that I'm all that comfortable with, personally, speaking for myself. I don't know what I'm going to have available and what the situation is going to be. So I love keeping up on that and learning about what is coming down the pike and trying to influence on some of the things we need but it really does take a range of options and not always on the tech side.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Ok. We have a clarification from the person about the hyper alerts. Let me get that out there. They are from Tampa, Florida. As of now they have a alert system called Hyper Alert with their bus transit service that alerts on detours for minor weather or flood conditions. If this is a national



program, they're seeing an issue in trying to set up an account for these alerts that the government phone carriers like SafeLink are not included in the dropdown for the cell phone providers or users to receive alerts. And only four large carriers are available to select. Is this national system used and is it used -- maybe either one of you -- it's a question of whether you guys are familiar with this. Are you using this? Are you seeing this as an issue?

>> *Ron Lucey*: I'm sorry, I'm not familiar with it but I'm glad to look into it.

>> *Russell Cook*: Neither am I.

>> *Deborah Witmer*: No, I'm not familiar with that particular system. We just instituted earlier -- well, back in 2015 here in Seattle, Alert Seattle, which is a new warning and notification system that takes advantage of a number of different communication options, text, voicemail, Facebook, Twitter, which I think is really interesting. It can be used by the city and a number of our partners for emergency notifications. But it's really specific here to the city. And I'm not familiar with that, with that system or whether it's being used in other locations.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Ok. One more question maybe. This is really not a communications question but maybe it's a general one that we can kind of deal with. Who checks your shelters for accessibility?

And before you even answer that, I do want to let you know -- I'm asking this question or reading this question off because I want everyone who is listening to know that you should go back to the ADA presentations website and look at the archive. There have been many presentations talking about all facets of accessibility and issues related to people with disabilities and emergency management in terms of all manner of these, including shelters and accessibility. So that's just a little plug for going back and looking at the history. There have been many, many, many webinars that we've had that may have covered some of these topics.

So with that, maybe you guys can tell us about how your shelters are checked for accessibility.

>> *Deborah Witmer*: Well, here in Seattle, because we do -- we are responsible for the first wave of sheltering -- and it's done through our Parks Department. Most of the primary shelters in our primary

shelter list are community centers. So they're government-owned buildings. So we have someone within the Parks Department whose primary responsibility is to do those assessments. We also have an ADA coordinator here in the city. And they're also working with them on doing building assessments as well as service assessments around ADA compliance. So all of our facilities would be assessed for ADA compliance by our City staff.

Now, if we had a major earthquake, for example, if one of the churches in our Greenwood neighborhood wanted to stand up an emergency shelter, it would be the responsibility of whoever did that to make sure that it was accessible. They may or may not be an official government person. They probably aren't. They're probably a community member.

And one of the things that we are doing here is working closely with our neighborhood and community partners to give them information like this toolkit so that they can make sure that anything that just pops up as a shelter that may not be quote/unquote official Seattle is accessible to people with disabilities. Because our intent and our commitment is to making sure that any time someone with a disability shows up for shelter in a general shelter, whether it's official or not that they are able to be accommodated. So we do that as part of our partnership with the community in developing our shelter system. But it's kind of a two-tiered process in that our official shelters, we're responsible for that as a government. And then the community, we work with them to make sure that that would happen.

>> *Ron Lucey*: I can't speak to all jurisdictions in Texas. They each have their own separate business process. Here in Austin we're an evacuation shelter destination for a lot of Texans evacuating from the Gulf Coast hurricanes. Different cities are assigned different evacuation destinations. And Austin is one of those. Our shelters tend to be either public schools or city recreation centers or even the Austin Convention Center. And all of those facilities have to be accessible. We have the Texas Accessibility Standards which are deemed equivalent to the ADA guidelines. And those are through the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations. So we have a checklist process that we go through to inspect for accessibility in each of those facilities.

>> *Russell Cook*: I would like to add a statement. Again, it goes back to collaboration. We maintain an extensive collaboration throughout the entire process. So when we develop those toolkits for those general population shelters, we have American Red Cross at the table; we have the coordinators of the entire state at the table; we bring in local jurisdictions to the table and we talk to those issues prior to even publishing the document; then we work throughout the disasters to ensure that they are able to fulfill those requirements.

>> *Lewis Kraus*: Great.

I thank you so much for all of your answers. I do want to ask on behalf of somebody who wrote in here if you have video phone contact information, can you put that in the main room, Ron, Russell, Deborah. And that way while I'm doing the closing here, people can contact you if they need to via video phone.

So, with that, we realize that many of you may still have questions for our speakers and apologize if you didn't get a chance to ask your question. You can contact your regional ADA Center. I've also given you all the information for contacting. I've put Ron's information up. I left Deborah's up from before. But you could also contact your regional ADA Center, 1-800-949-4232; ask general questions about this. They will be able to answer or contact people about.

You will receive an e-mail with a link to an online session evaluation. Please complete that evaluation for today's program. We really value your input and we want to demonstrate to our funder the input -- the value that we're bringing.

We want to thank our speakers today for sharing their time and valuable information with us and knowledge with us.

For all of you listening, don't forget that today's session was recorded and it is available along with all the information for viewing next week at the [www.adapresentations.org/archives.php](http://www.adapresentations.org/archives.php) website.

Thank you so much, everyone, for attending today's session. Thank you, Ron. Thank you, Russell. Thank you, Deborah.

For everyone listening, we look forward to seeing you all on February 11 for our next webinar, an ADA National Network Learning Session: Accessible Means of Egress and Emergency Evacuation.

Thank you so much. Have a great rest of your day.

Bye-bye.

>> *Deborah Witmer*. Thank you, everyone.