Engaging Emergency Management Leadership
To be champions of disability integration and inclusive planning

Dawn Brantley, ADAC
- Sheltering Coordinator, VDEM
- Certified ADA Coordinator
- Former Disability Integration Advisor, FEMA (Reservist)
- Former Regional Inclusive Emergency Planner, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission
- Former Emergency Programs Manager, Municipality of Anchorage, AK Office of Emergency Management
Start with

WHY?

- Why is this important?
- Why get leadership involved?
- Why lead from the top?

Background

Federal guidance was minimally helpful
Staff proponents In-Season Hurricane Review
Leading from the top down

Senior leadership → Agency → Staff → VDEM → Localities
What leadership did we engage?

- Governor's Office
- Secretary's Office
- Agency head
- Senior leadership
- Planning
- Response - including Public Affairs/External Affairs
What matters to leadership?

**Morally correct**
- "This is what every government agency should do." - Donna Pletcher, Strategic Planning Branch Chief
- "Accessibility and individuals with disability are important everywhere else, but not in emergency management. Why not?" - Susan Mongold, Deputy Director of Mission Support
- "In emergency management, we don't need to focus on those who can get out on their own; those we simply enable to get out. We need to focus on those who can not get out on their own." - Brett Burdick, Chief Deputy Director

Improves our own planning and response
- Cannot accurately plan and prepare without individuals who live with disabilities as partners. - Susan Mongold
- Ensure provision of the same level of service. - Donna Pletcher
- Our role is to assist localities who are providing direct response to individuals. We need to set the example, create models, and lead by doing. - Brett Burdick

Challenges we encountered
- Decision-makers
- FUNDING
- KNOWLEDGE
- STAFF
- complexity
- understanding
- resources
- LITIGIOUS
- toe-stripping
- adversarial
Advice from VDEM leadership
- Educate, educate, educate
- As always - relationships and partnerships in advance
- Make it visible
- Cooperative problem solving vs adversarial
- Avoid assuming you cannot be successful
- Don’t choose not to make changes because the solution is not perfect
- Use where you are to champion future progress
- Find a champion
- Budget, timing and pertinence
- Leadership has to be willing to listen to staff
Access & Functional Needs Advisory Committee (AFNAC)

- Mission
- Membership
- Plan review and revision
- Participation in Virginia Mass Care Task Force
- Included in all Disability Partner Calls
- Sharing information with their staff, clients
- We listen to our SMEs

CHALLENGES:
- Expanding to include community and local representation
- Disaster response & recovery activities interfere with meetings
- In-person meetings pose travel challenge
- ECOs versus SMEs

- Board for People with Disabilities
- Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
- Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired
- Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
- Department of Education
- Department of Emergency Management
- Department of Health
- Department of Housing and Community Development
- Department of Medical Assistance Services
- Department of Rail and Public Transportation
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Veterans Services
- Office of the Attorney General
- Leadership
- 4 Local Emergency Managers
Disability Partner Calls
Functional & Access Needs Network
Grant applications
Whole community rating on applications

Virginia Mass Care Task Force
Membership includes:
- ADA Coordinators
- Centers for Independent Living
- Disability service agencies
- Local disability service organizations

New strategy = universal accessibility, disability integration as a TOP priority
Functional & Access Needs Support Teams

- Purpose
- Partnership with MRC
- Training
- Exercise

Functions:

Disaster Response:

- Evacuation Support
- Shelter Support

Funding

Prezi
Evacuation Support

- Paratransit drivers
- Assistance with personal items
- Loading, boarding, unloading & disembarking
- Logging and tracking personal items, pets

Shelter Support

- Registration and functional needs assessments
- NON-MEDICAL assistance with activities of daily living
- Ongoing identification of equipment and service needs
- Identification of barriers and accessibility issues
Funding
- Grants
- As part of other voluntary organizations
- Anchorage cost = Staff time + $0.00

Functional & Access Needs Support Teams
- Purpose
- Partnership with MRC
- Training
- Exercise
And...

- Sheltering Coordinator
- ADA Coordinator Certification
- Disability Partner Calls
- ADAC reviewing COVEOP
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