Emergency Communications Approaches During and After an Emergency
Donna Platt
Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing, March 9, 2017

State of North Carolina
DR 4285- Hurricane Matthew
How N.C. responds to a disaster

Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing (DSDHH)
DSDHH Mission Statement

The Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing works to ensure that all Deaf, Hard of Hearing, or Deaf-Blind North Carolinians have the ability to communicate their needs, and to receive information easily and effectively in all aspects of their lives, especially their health and well-being.

Examples of Announcements

[Image of a news announcement with a man and news anchors in a studio background.]
Examples of Announcements (continued)

• DSDHH Regional Center E-blasts
• Word of mouth or “signs”
• Local Emergency Notification Services
Examples of Announcements (continued)

Partnering with FEMA

• FEMA Disability Integration Advisors

• Teleconferencing and e-blast with agencies serving disabilities
**Local Community Meetings**

- Hosted by local (city/county) government or emergency management for residents. FEMA was invited to give overview of their services.
- Announcement to public in a short notice
- Communication accommodations (interpreters and real time captioning) provided by FEMA. Sometimes not available.
- Transportation to event may be limited
- Limited opportunity for Q&A

**Examples of Community Announcements**

An email sent from FEMA:

Hi, Donna. We will have interpreters at the Robeson County Commissioner’s meeting tonight (6 p.m. at 710 N Elm in Lumberton, NC). This is not a FEMA hosted meeting, FEMA staff were just asked to attend to provide an overview of the FEMA process. Because it is not our meeting, I do not have an invitation or anything like that. However, because we have FEMA staff speaking, we will have our interpreters and CART reporters available.
Example of DSDHH Regional Center’s E-blast

FYI to Robeson Co.:

Subject: Community Meeting Information

We will have interpreters at the Robeson County Commissioner’s meeting tonight (6 p.m. at 710 N Elm in Lumberton, NC). This is not a FEMA hosted meeting, FEMA staff were just asked to attend to provide an overview of the FEMA process. However, because we have FEMA staff speaking, we will have our interpreters and CART reporters available.

Hope you can plan to attend and provide input as deem appropriate. Feel free to contact us at the Wilmington RC if you have questions.

FEMA Request for Assistance

Hi Donna,

We are trying to identify if there is a greater need for ASL in any of the following communities to better coordinate our interpreters. Thanks so much

Generation Church – 6 p.m.
Goldsboro, NC 27534

West Pender Middle School – 5:30 p.m.
Burgaw, NC

Tarboro High School – 7 p.m.
Tarboro, NC 27886

Benson Elementary School
Benson, NC 27504
Setting up Events for Individuals with Hearing Loss

• Set up date, time and length of event – preferably where Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing individuals meet on a regular basis

• Separate event from local community meetings provides personal interaction & attention – more opportunity for Q&A

• Reserve a meeting room

• Develop rough agenda for that event

Setting up Events for Individuals with Hearing Loss (continued)

• Invite FEMA and collaborate on meeting expectations

• Work with FEMA Disability Integration Advisor from the Joint Field Office in preparation

• Compromise on communication accommodations (interpreters, real time captioning and assistive listening equipment) with FEMA
Example of Communication Accommodations

Setting up Events for Individuals with Hearing Loss (continued)

• Attraction from public to an event that includes refreshment
• Develop announcement (flyer, vlog, Facebook) for public
• Ask the contact person in charge of meeting place for internet access (FEMA registration and/or remote captioning)
• Find out which wireless carrier has strong signal at the event location
Event Announcements

- Event provided in southern N.C. during Regional Center’s regular gathering
- Joint event with another Regional Center
- FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance workers
- Information on how emergency agencies responded to the disaster, as well as resources for receiving were included

Event Announcements (continued)

- Event provided in northern N.C.
- Types of assistance FEMA and N.C. provided at the event
- Real-time captioning was provided
- Longer hours
Vlogs in American Sign Language

DSDHH/FEMA Event Announcements

• Wilson RC/FEMA Event Rescheduled to 1-21-17  
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AXu5BnqjRQ

• Wilson RC/FEMA 1-7-17 Event Cancellation  
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DC1U7M7E0PU

• Wilson RC/ FEMA Event 1-7-17  
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLFtPXNUXIU

• Wilmington RC/FEMA Event 11-19-16  
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3nk6iNEpEY&list=PLT2CoXvAw8Lky-L2U2nsBaXY1CUZkrxWW&index=2

FEMA-Related Information

• FEMA Deadline Extended  
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjO7L6viaGk

• Options for Registering with FEMA  
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lp8UrwDYoOg

• Information to Provide When Registering With FEMA  
  https://youtu.be/bU-pppE1ENw

• Denial Letter from FEMA? - What To Do Next  
  https://youtu.be/8WIADQtenb8
FEMA Representatives

- Disaster Survivor Assistance (Fill out form to receive assistance)
- Individual Assistance (IA)
- Small Business Administration (SBA) (not just for business but for individual receiving loan)
- Mitigation
- National Flood Insurance Program
- Exit Interview (N.C. Emergency Management Recovery)

Questions?
Contact Information

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