>> 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 on behalf of the ADA National Network. The ADA National Network is made up of 10 regional centers 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.

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I also want to remind everyone the webinar is being recorded and can be accessed on the ADA presentations.org website under the archive section in Emergency

Management next week.

This is the fifth 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 series covers topics of 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. Upcoming sessions are available at the www.adapresentations.org under the schedule tab in the emergency management section.

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

You can follow along within the webinar platform with the slides. If you are not using the webinar platform, you can download a copy of today's PowerPoint presentation at the www.adapresentations.org web page in the schedule section.

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. To submit your questions, type and submit them in the chat area text box or press control m and enter text in the chat area. If you are listening by phone and not logged into the webinar, you may ask your questions by e-mailing them to adatech@adapacific.org.

If you experience any technical difficulties during the webinar, you can send us a private message on the chat by clicking Pacific ADA Center -- double clicking Pacific ADA Center in the participant list and a tab title the Pacific ADA Center will appear in the chat panel. Type your comment in the text box and enter. If you are using keyboard, press the F6 and arrow up or down to locate Pacific ADA Center and select to send your message. You can also e-mail us at adatech@adapacific.org or you can also call us at 1-510-285-5600.

Today's National Network Learning Session is titled *The Recommendations from DHS Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) after the Disasters of 2017*. Following the major hurricanes and wildfires of 2017, the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and FEMA conducted listening sessions in a number of areas of the country that were heavily impacted by these disasters. The purpose of the listening sessions was to hear about concerns and experiences related to the impact of the disasters on individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. After better understanding these experiences, CRCL issued a set of recommendations to state, local, territorial, and tribal emergency managers to improve the delivery of disaster assistance to disaster survivors with disabilities. Addressing these recommendations and other sound practices in advance of disasters may help communities across the country to improve their preparedness for the whole community before, during, and after disasters.

Today's speakers are Rebekah Tosado, the Chief of the Antidiscrimination Group in the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, CRCL. The Antidiscrimination Group engages in policy work to ensure fair and equitable treatment of individuals and guard against discrimination based on race, color, national origin, including language proficiency, disability, sex, and age in the Department of Homeland Security programs and activities.

Through guidance, planning, and coordination, Rebekah oversees efforts to ensure that civil rights and civil liberties are upheld in emergency-related federal policies, procedures, and programs.

Brian Parsons is the Senior Policy Advisor in the Antidiscrimination Group and is a Subject Matter Expert on disability policy and inclusive disaster management. His experience includes drafting civil rights language for incorporation into national disaster doctrine, developing guidance for disaster response partners on a variety of disability-related topics, and serving as a Disability Integration Advisor with FEMA on deployment during hurricanes Ike and Sandy.

Margaret Schaefer is also Senior Policy Advisor in the Antidiscrimination Group of CRCL and she works on issues related to emergency preparedness, response, and recovery related to individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. Ms. Schaefer contributes to the development of policy and guidance, conducts outreach to Non-Governmental Organizations that support individuals with disabilities, and supports the work of the DHS Blue Campaign to address human trafficking issues related to individuals with disabilities who have been displaced by disasters.

Brian, Becky, and Maggie, I will now turn it over to you.

>> Hello, everyone. This is Rebekah Tosado. I want to thank the Pacific ADA Center and Lewis for providing us this opportunity to conduct a webinar. It has been a year since we conducted our first webinar. We really appreciate the opportunity.

Before I start our presentation, I would like to say that we are now monitoring the situation in the gulf and want to thank our colleagues in the disabilities stakeholder community for really alerting us. This seemed to have come out of the blue. We welcome and are open to hear about any issues or concerns that you may be seeing or hearing in which we may be able to play a role.

Let me then proceed now with what we intend to cover in our presentation. First I'll provide a recap of our authorities. And in this case since we talked about our authorities at length the last time, I'll mention our key authority, which is Section 504, the Rehabilitation Act. I'll also talk about our functions here within the Department of Homeland Security.

Next, we will provide an overview of the listening sessions as well as the who and the what, what was our desired outcome.

Next, folks will hear from Brian and Maggie about some of the individual recommendations that we made in the various areas after we conducted the listening sessions. We will talk about our recommendations in preparedness, evacuations, effective communications, sheltering, and long-term recovery.

Lastly, I would like to talk about not really the web page itself but we do have a civil rights and emergencies web page. I'd like to talk about information that's on the page, what the resources are, the information and how to contact us for a request for technical assistance on meeting obligations under Section 504, as well as how to contact us to file a complaint alleging that there has been a violation of 504 or other authorities.

So again, we're going to talk about Section 504, the Rehabilitation Act, which many of you know prohibits discrimination based on disability, that's prohibition apply to what we ourselves do as an agency as well as what recipients of federal financial assistance do in carrying out their programs and activities.

DHS itself does not enforce the ADA; however, the ADA is modeled after Section 504. And the provisions of the ADA and 504 are generally interpreted the same.

So, to reiterate, Section 504 does apply to our own programs and activities in the department, all of the components of the Department of Homeland Security including FEMA, and to recipients of the department -- recipients of federal financial assistance.

What do we mean by a recipient of federal financial assistance? I think our largest recipient, I would say, are those entity that receive a grant from the Department of Homeland Security. So, it could be a disaster grant or a non-disaster grant.

Other types of recipients include those who receive donations, those who receive any form of training from the federal government. There are those that receive detailed personnel. So, a recipient of financial assistance is really any entity that is receiving some sort of financial assistance from the agency, from a federal agency.

Ok. Some of the functions of our office -- and this is abbreviated from what we delivered the last time but we want to be sure we get to the heart of the recommendations.

One of our key responsibilities is to advise the leadership of the department, the operational programs including the leadership and managers, public affairs officials regarding the application of civil rights and civil liberties in preparedness, response, and recovery. This is consistent with our responsibilities really across the board in the department. So here we're walking about preparedness, response and recovery but we have this function as well in any program and activity that involves the Department of Homeland Security.

Another key function is to investigate complaints about compliance with civil rights.

We also engage with stakeholders to understand the impact of disasters, to address issues as they arise, and provide civil rights-related information and resources.

Other function that we have coordinating with other federal agencies; in particular with the Office of Equal Rights at FEMA, the Office of Disability Integration and Coordination at FEMA. We also coordinate with our colleagues at the U.S. Department of Justice, disability rights section, and compliance section. As well as the Department of Health and Human Services. There are a multitude of agencies in addition to those, but those are really the core agencies that we are interacting with on a periodic basic -- basis during steady state but during an active disaster we can be engaging often. And in the past we've had a standing meeting where we've met every week.

In addition, part of our responsibilities include developing resources, delivering training, providing technical assistance. And all of this is to meet the goals of educating emergency managers, other recipients, about the obligations to ensure equal access under Section 504.

And then I think here I'll move on to providing, again, sort of an overview of what the listening sessions were. You already heard from Lewis a little bit about the listening sessions, so I will just say a few things.

We did partner with our colleagues at FEMA to hold the listening sessions in the states and territories that were heavily impacted by the disasters both in 2017 and 2018, so the hurricanes and wildfires. We were in Texas and Houston. We were in four locations in Florida. We were in three locations in California. We were in San Juan, and we were in St. Croix and Saint Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Why we did this? We wanted to hear directly from members of the community and organizations who work on behalf and with individuals with disabilities about the impact of these disasters on individuals who have disabilities and others with access and functional needs, including those populations that need language assistance.

We also wanted to document the concerns about potential non-compliance of Section 504 as well as the types of things that the emergency managers, the community organizations, and others were putting in place in response to the disasters. Lots of times -- there might not have been a plan beforehand, but we did learn effective practices with Emergency Management Agencies and the community organizations work together to address those issues.

So, let me tell you a little bit about some of our desired outcomes with the listening sessions. Of course, we wanted to be able to get a set of recommendations out that would inform emergency managers about the types of things that they need to do in order to assist them in meeting their obligations under Section 504. We wanted to provide really our presence, and this includes the Director of our office who was at every single one of the listening sessions. We wanted her presence and our participation to highlight the importance of compliance of Section 504 and to provide a greater awareness to these recipients and recipients of financial assistance of their responsibilities in disasters.

We did send a letter to most of the states and territories provider to holding a listening session that essentially laid out who we are, provided a reminder of what their responsibilities are in a disaster. And in some of those letters we talked about some of the concerns that we had been hearing about. We also invited them to participate in the listening sessions.

We also, through these listening sessions, were able to enhance, really shed light or a spotlight, on some of the coordination between emergency managers and disability organizations and the benefits of doing that. I think we were able to do that.

For most of the listening sessions we had active participation from the Centers for Independent Living, other organizations with disability rights organizations, and many, many others.

Ultimately what we wanted to get out of the listening sessions is more compliance with Section 504, more efforts to include the principles of nondiscrimination and inclusion in planning and preparedness and in response and recovery.

So again, the target audience is recipients and subrecipients of federal financial assistance. This could include the Emergency Management Agencies themselves, first responders, and other governmental agencies or non-governmental agencies that receive any form of financial assistance from the department.

I think now I'm going to turn it over to Brian Parsons, who is going to talk about our recommendations in the area of preparedness.
>> Brian Parsons: Ok. Thank you, Becky. And greetings to everyone, either good afternoon or good morning. I will be covering the first three sets of the recommendations.

This first set that you will see here beginning on slide 9 relates to the topic area of preparedness. Topping that list among the recommendation that we developed was the need to involve and engage the disability community throughout the process. So, something that I'm sure you've heard echoed many times and many forms on these presentations, but we wanted to go on record sort of saying that right up front to emergency managers. inclusive in the preparedness stage of conducting exercises as well and the importance of having people with disabilities involved there.

Also, the need to plan for loss of power was something that occurred -- something that we saw in numerous places resulting from the hurricanes and the wildfires and sort of tops the list, again, of recommendations. As we know, as individuals with disabilities are

successfully living in the community with relying on technological mechanisms and devices and various tools and aids that will help in independent living, that's something that presents a great and probably increasing importance on power during and after an emergency. So, the best duration of power being just a huge need. And the need to plan for that at the local level.

Slide 10 will pick up, again with some more preparedness recommendations. So, the need to plan for a provision of key life-saving medications and plays. Again, sort of that advanced planning, really understanding the community, the kinds of recurring needs that come up from an emergency manager perspective. You know, kind of what are the common things that are going to come up in the community? And then the ability to address unique needs as they emerge.

Dealing with interruptions in power and in supply chains, I'd say this is increasingly huge in the community life today.

Developing alternative solutions as a result of the planning efforts -- you know, kind of building that in a very granular level within the plans.

For slide 11, preparedness recommendations again. So, what we've highlighted here is a resource that I'll preempt Lewis in saying this, but the ADA National Network has a resource available on this topic of relying on power and emergencies and planning accordingly. So, we have the link there for you.

Slide 12, within the topic area of evacuation, what we heard from the listening sessions sort of tops the list in this area was the need to work with first responders. There's not a one-size sort of fits all solution here with respect to evacuation of people based on their needs. And building the capacity of first responders through training is critical to understand the variety of needs that are out there. I think it's not as simple as just, you know, physically moving somebody out of harms' way; although obviously that's the goal. But the way in which we do that, the treatment of the individual in doing that, and the success and the effectiveness of various strategies in doing that that's what we're getting at with this recommendation.

Redundant and accessible forms of communication in evacuation is something that you're going to see echoed within our effective communication recommendations but here in the context of evacuation, we're talking about making sure that emergency alerts and warnings follow various streams and modalities of communication format and that those are accessible to people with disabilities.

And, engaging disability organizations and transportation providers to develop creative strategies; we did hear of situations which, unfortunately, are recurring from previous disasters where there were unused vehicles in the community that could have been deployed in a strategic way for evacuation purposes.

Ok. Moving to slide 13. An evacuation comment here respect to emergency registries. Our recommendation is basically a caution or a caveat to state and local emergency managers saying that to the degree to which you are going to use registries, be aware of the inherent pitfalls of doing so. We mention a few of them here with respect to, you know, at any given point in time you're not going to know where an individual with a disability is. We can't make that assumption. And there's a variety of reasons why many people with disabilities may or may not be on a registry.

So, at best, one tool in the toolbox, at worst, full reliance is I think setting everyone up for problems in terms of a registry being a one size fits all solution.

Slide 14. So, within, again, the evacuation area, what is the solution? If we can't just rely on a registry to do that kind of thing? A multi-prong solution is our recommendation. That is engaging with disability organizations, local service providers who will know their customer base, their consumer base, and send information. Those three pieces alone sort of move us towards reality particularly in engaging the consumer organizations who have a reach into the disability community.

Moving to slide 15. Here we've provided a resource for you from FEMA. In this case it's their evacuation in and shelter in place guidance. It's in draft form. We're going to keep an eye on that to see how it evolves. We wanted to point your attention to that of.

Slide 16 recommendations related to effective communication. The use of social media, as we know, is increasingly useful and effective for the general population in terms of emergency management. So, to bear in mind with respect to people with disabilities is the accessibility of that social media. Not all elements of all social media are fully accessible to people with disabilities, nor are all people with disabilities, you know, fully tapped into the use of social media. So, there's some caveats around the use of social media that we wanted to go on record and is one of the things we heard a lot about at the listening sessions.

The capacity of the 911 call centers, increasingly the ability to move towards direct receipt of text messaging from individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing to 911 is going to be critical. And then over time, building that capacity so that we have various relay options and various video capability directly for communication between the disability community and the 911 centers.

Positioning sign language interpreters within the video screen and making sure that captioning does not interfere with the video or is dropped off inadvertently because of other things preempting that space on the screen. These are issues that, boy, I feel like we've been beating this drum for many years, still goes on. We still hear about these issues in local broadcasting. So, again, they came up in the listening session. We developed them in the framework of a recommendation. And we're on record to local broadcasters and emergency managers reminding them of that, the critical importance of that.

It appears that slide 17 is a duplication of our previous slide. Apologies.

Slide 18. Here we have recommendations related to emerging technologies for reaching people with disabilities in emergencies and disasters. Increasingly we are seeing the development of alerting devices that can be used by people with disabilities and applications for Smartphones, etc., that can reach people really where they are at any given point in time, which is very important. And, again, it sort of addresses that previous point I made about the assumptions that are built into registries where everybody is in a fixed location all the time. In this situation, following the emerging technologies, we can follow the people to where they are actually at.

At the same time, we have to be mindful that in some cases, for a variety of reasons, people with disabilities may not have access to technology to receive emergency information. And so, employing non-technological means to reach people with disabilities is critical. And one of the major ways of doing that is to engage with and work through local disability organizations who know where people with disabilities are in the community. So we're circling back up to the top of my comments about engaging what the disability community, you know, from the beginning.

And that wraps up those sets of recommendations I will now pass the Baton to my

colleague, Margaret Schaefer. Thank you.

>> Margaret Schaefer: Thanks, Brian. Good afternoon, everyone. I believe everybody is in the afternoon frame of mind right now. Thank you for having us, again.

I'm going to talk to you about the recommendations that were developed specifically aimed at sheltering and long-term recovery. During our listening sessions, obviously most of the discussions that occurred were really focused in on response and recovery because it was so soon after the disasters, but always we're thinking of long-term recovery as we emerge from a disaster. So, that's why we also have recommendation in that category.

You'll see on this slide we've got several important recommendations. One is arranging for the rapid deployment of replacement durable medical supplies to general population shelters. I stress general population shelters because the rapid deployment of these supplies enables people who rely on them to maintain their independence in a general population shelter if there's a lag in time or if these devices or supplies may be unavailable or responders and shelter volunteers are not sure who to contact to get these supplies, that is going to impact the independence of the person who relies on them which could certainly affect where they end up in terms of being able to shelter with the rest of their population and their family members.

The second bullet focuses on planning ahead with organizations. Ire going to hear several repetitive themes that you've already heard from Brian in terms of there are many underlying principles that have their bedrock underneath all of these different topics. Again, the involvement of community organizations that have expertise serving populations with disabilities, a wide array of disabilities, such as dementia, children with developmental delays, or autism, and individuals who need health supports. You should be planning with those organizations ahead of time and not waiting until a disaster happens.

Additionally, it was recommended that you embed staff that have this expertise actually within the shelter. So, among your volunteers you should be having people there that have expertise on perhaps working with kids who have autism, working with elderly who may have medical needs going on. That way you don't have to scramble and try to reach outside the shelter when that sort of expertise is needed.

On the next slide we've got a couple of bullets in a that are also just as important. This goes hand in hand with what I said about planning ahead with organizations strengthening the disability-related capacity and training of the volunteers in the shelters. That's a real thing that's needed, again so that you don't have to reach outside when time is of the essence and you need to support the population that you're serving.

A good recommendation would go hand in hand with this is you can probably find some of these volunteers in the organizations that we're asking you to partner with. I'm sure there would be a wide array of people with expertise to help you meet the needs of the folks in general population shelters.

And lastly, in terms of sheltering, physical accessibility. We really noticed that physical accessibility was a real issue in many of the areas that had to set up shelters quickly, had to get a large amount of people shelters than anticipated. The planning here for physical accessibility is really important. You don't want to end up having your shelter residence end up on the second floor of an old hospital as we heard about during one of the disasters. It's just not going to work for people. You're obligated to have things accessible.

Additionally, we ask that you supply power to the general population shelters. Many

individuals with disabilities have device that require power for their medical equipment and such. And if they don't have that, they're very much at risk of ending up in a medically oriented shelter which, again, will reduce their level of independence.

And lastly, we ask that for the general population shelters that individuals with disabilities are able to bring their family members and caregivers with them. Again, this goes back to giving them supports they need to maintain their independence. And it's very important that that's part of the sheltering process.

On the next slide are some resources. Again, the first comes from the ADA network which is very valuable. And the second comes from DHS FEMA, guidance on planning for the integration of functional need support services or FMFS, you might have heard the phrase, in general population shelters. So, there are links to those resources there.

Moving on to long-term recovery. As I said, this wasn't a huge focus during the listening sessions, but we did get into discussions, particularly in California where there were certain neighborhoods which were simply completely wiped out. I mean the picture -- the canvas was empty. People had to think about what was lying ahead of them.

So again, fully integrating disability stakeholders into long-term recovery activities is extremely important. We don't want to have communities rebuilding neighborhoods where individuals with disabilities won't be able to access affordable and accessible housing. So, you've got to involve the whole array of stakeholders until the impacted community.

We have to ensure that plans related to meeting housing needs are taken into consideration and accessibility needs. So, that includes things like not only ensuring that a person needs a ramp and widened doors or handrails within their home but they're able to get that. But I think it's important to think about their neighborhood as well to make that accessible when you're rebuilding, ensuring that they can get around their neighborhood.

And the third bullet here I think is extremely important. I'm a little biased towards mental health needs because of my educational background, but it's extremely important that mental health services are available to the impacted population. And that the communication regarding how to access these services is getting out to the whole community, including people with disabilities and language access needs.

When you think about it, just about everyone who has been impacted by a horrific disaster, everyone can use these services so, although we do stress they need to be accessible to people with disabilities and language needs, I think it's important for the entire community. I mean, if there's anyone listening in that's ever had their home destroyed by fire or floods or a hurricane or even just had to endure sheltering for a while, being away from home, that's a pretty traumatic experience. So, it's really important to provide these services.

On the next page you'll find some links to resources for long-term recovery. Effective coordination of recovery resources for state tribal, territorial and local incidents. And there's also a resource listed there on HHS, which has to do with mental Health Services, disaster technical assistance center. They have some pretty good resources and really do focus in on the mental health needs of people following disasters.

And I think right now I'm handing it back to Becky.
>> Rebekah Tosado: Yes. Maggie, thank you so much. And thank you, Brian.

So, people have asked us what's next. You held the listening sessions. You issued a set of recommendations. So, what's next?

I'll start by saying, again, that the target of the recommendations or the state and

local Emergency Management Agencies and other recipients, we sent recommendations in a letter to each of the states and territories where we held the listening session, again, with information about their obligations under Section 504 as well as a number of the other authorities that we are responsible for enforcing. We sent them information on how to find the information about what we've learned at each one of the listening sessions. And that's all on our website. And we laid out each of the recommendations that you heard and that are part of our presentations.

In addition to writing directly to the state Emergency Management Agencies to those states and territories, we issued the recommendations more broadly to emergency managers. So, if we were not in your state, that does not necessarily mean that the recommendations do not apply or would not be helpful in your preparedness and response and recovery efforts.

So the recommendations really go beyond what our letters and our communications with the states were prior to the listening sessions where we said you state, you territory, by virtue of receiving the federal financial assistance, you're obligated to meet the requirements in Section 504. What the recommendations do is they provide information on ways to do that, on ways to implement those recommendations. And there are other recommendations we could have made. There are other ways to ensure that people who have disabilities and access and functional needs have equal access. So, the recommendations themselves are really areas, tips, information, how to get from point A to point B. But, we also need more how-tos, more checklists, more individual assistance, more partnering of organizations and emergency managers to actually walk through the steps of implementing the recommendations or implementing other steps to ensure that the Emergency Management Agency and others are meeting their obligations.

So, this is why I'm turning to some of you all on the phone with the slide here about what the role of national and community organizations might be in order to share the recommendations themselves, share some of the other resources that we have online, disseminating the recommendations within your communities so that people understand that we as a federal agency have a role in addressing some of the concerns that were heard.

So, I think if people want to write in a few ideas about what roles their organizations might have in really raising awareness of the recommendations, we'd love to hear from you. I encourage you write your ideas here. We can talk some more about it when we conclude our presentations.

So, before we get too much further, I do want to talk about our web page that has a host of information and resources. I know it's another web page with a lot of links, but for those of you who are really interested in taking steps either as emergency managers integrate this in your programs or those of you who are working with Emergency Management Agencies, I really encourage you to take the time to look at some of the resource that we have on our page. There are also resources on HHS's, DOJ.

Let me just walk you through some of what is on our web page. For one, there is a recap of all of the listening sessions on the page. There's a recap of each one. The recap for our listening session in Puerto Rico is in English and Spanish. Of course, the recommendations themselves are on the page and those are in English and Spanish as well if there is a need and interest in making these available in other languages, we are happy to do that as well.

And then, of course, we have a host of information about tips we've issued in the past, guidance that we've issued in the past which are relevant. Tips and tools for ensuring effective communication for the whole community. That doesn't go out of style. So really encourage you to use some of those resources there. We know that the FCC and others are constantly looking at some of these issues, so there can be new information about how to meet the obligations but, some of the basic information is really here on the web page.

In addition to some of the resources themselves, there's information on how an Emergency Management Agency or other agency that receives federal financial assistance, or a community organization, can reach out to us to ask more about what the obligations are, what the consequences are of not complying with the law, and tips and tools for helping achieve compliance of Section 504. So that information is also on the page.

There's also information on the page honorable how to -- on thousand file a complaint with our office. At every one of the listening sessions by provided very specific information about how to file complaints with CRCL. If you go to the link on that page, you will find the very detailed information. And I'll mention that we do have a form that people can use to file a complaint. I understand it's not necessary to use the complaint itself. That form is available in about 10 languages, and we can take complaints in any language.

In addition, we have a place on our web page where we are beginning to populate some of the training materials and other information that we've used. For example, maybe here, Lewis, we could do a link to our webinar here and the other ones that you have on your site. So, I just wanted to point all of that out.

And now I'll just go to our very last slide -- I'm sorry. I missed this last one. I'm sorry. I'm moving my own slides and I forgot to move that one. There you see the information on how to request technical assistance from our office, how to file a complaint.

And then the last page, I just want to make sure that everybody who is interested has our contact information. We are available and interested in hearing from you with any questions, ideas, or concerns.

So with that, I think we might have ended a little earlier than we anticipated, at least for this part, but I would like to get back to what I asked before about what role some of the national and community organizations might have in helping to raise awareness about the recommendations that they exist and really raise awareness about the obligations under Section 504 using the recommendations so, I ask for input on that as well as, Lewis, if you're fine with it, just opening it up for other questions participants might have.
>> Lewis Kraus: Yes. Thank you so much, Becky, Brian, and Maggie. This is the time when all of you can submit your questions in the chatroom and we'll take those up.

I did want to do one thing here, Becky, and go back to this page here which was all of the information about how you can request technical assistance from CRCL or file a complaint and get that into the closed captioning. So, I'm going to read it off so you can send your requests to crcl@hg.dhs.gov or you can call 202-401-1474. Or their toll-free number is 1-866-644-8360. So, I wanted to make sure we got that into the captioning.

There's a couple of questions already in. And if you have more questions, please submit them now.

One of the questions was: Were the results of your sessions part of the GAO meetings with state agencies?
>> Rebekah Tosado: So, Lewis, it's Becky. I'm not aware that the GAO met with state

agencies. I will tell you that we did meet with the GAO and they did have our recommendations. And I think for those who are on the phone and may not be familiar with that particular GAO audit, I'm just going to get the title of it right now. If you want to go ahead and ask other questions while I'm doing that, that's fine, Lewis.

>> Lewis Kraus: Ok. Yeah. The next one is: Do you have planning resources for agencies who would like to address the needs of individuals depending on electricity for their medical needs? The ADA resource was focused on individual preparedness.

And I will answer that for you guys. I'm sorry.

>> Rebekah Tosado: Yes. Lewis, thank you, I appreciate that question. And yes, I know that that one is focused on individual preparedness and so this goes to my question about what other resources are there. But also, we included it anyway because it is the type of information that emergency managers could use to see what kinds of things people need who are power dependent and such. So, we know it doesn't help Emergency Management Agencies, per se, as it is designed, but it is the type of information that we think would be helpful.

>> Lewis Kraus: Right. And we would add that at an individual organization level as opposed to maybe an Emergency Management Agency that serves in a broad county area or what not, the best recommendation is to work with individuals with disabilities themselves to determine their own needs so that you as an individual organization, you can work with them to plan for whatever needs make the most sense.

One thing, Becky, to add to this and maybe we can just sort of spin off on this. An issue that's happened in California that you may all be aware of and those of us on the phone will certainly be aware of it -- and California leads country in many kinds of things and this will be one of them -- electric agencies have decided to turn off the power under conditions where they are likely to spark fires in regions where the weather is such that that could happen, low humidity, high wind. And so, there has been a lot of discussion around communities in California with the power companies about addressing the needs of individuals depending on electricity for medical needs. I don't know if you have anything to weigh in on that or the obligations of power companies from your point of view.

>> Rebekah Tosado: Maggie and Brian and I have been in discussions about this issue. We know it is an issue and a concern. Maggie and Brian, if you have other --

>> Margaret Schaefer: Yes. This is Maggie. I've been in discussions with Interagency partners, among them HHS, trying to bring this issue more to the forefront. Not so much in terms of our discussing the obligations of a utility company, but it seemed to me the anecdotal information coming up to some of the other agency partners had to do more with the unpredictability of the rolling power outages and the fact that messaging about when those would be happening was apparently viewed as insufficient not only for individuals with disabilities who may be power dependent but also for just people in the general community area.

I think there's a process maybe that needs to be worked out to ensure that there's sufficient lead time. I know that's probably difficult because the weather can change so quickly, but I think that utilities probably would be wise to work with disability organizations to develop some type of standardized process by which they can be assured that the information gets out to the whole community, actually.

>> Brian Parsons: Right. And this is Brian just adding on to that. So, the means of that communication will be critical. Ensuring the accessibility of that information and that it is

channeled through multiple venues to reach people.

>> Margaret Schaefer: Right. And one other tidbit to add on to that which I did not know -- and again, hearing this from another agency, not within DHS. But, there was someone who indicated to me that post disaster when people are in temporary housing, so FEMA is the lease holder or whoever may be the lease holder, whatever organization may be supporting displaced individuals, that's who would receive notification of a power outage not necessarily the individuals or families that are residing in the buildings of those people who are holding the lease or holding the contract to support those people. So, I have to learn more about that so I have a better understanding of it but that sounds like it could end up providing a glitch in ensuring the message gets to the correct people.

>> Lewis Kraus: Right. That's another complication, yes.

>> Margaret Schaefer: Yes.

>> Lewis Kraus: I'm somewhat aware -- I don't want to promise this, but I am aware that the California Office of Emergency Services and at least PG&E and maybe some of the other power companies are discussing this, are working with some disability organizations to try to figure out what can be done beyond just the communication aspects. So, I don't know if something will come up that, but we'll see.

>> Margaret Schaefer: Right. Right.

>> Lewis Kraus: Go ahead. More?

    [No Audible Response]

    No. Ok.

>> Margaret Schaefer: No, I didn't have anything else, Lewis. Thank you.

>> Lewis Kraus: Ok. Next question. How can disability service providers and advocacy organizations engage in the planning process of local officials? Any recommendations on how to go about this?

>> Rebekah Tosado: Well, Lewis, I think you'll probably have a number since you do this on a regular basis. We are saying that it's very important for Emergency Management Agencies to work with the local disability organizations, what steps you would take to go about it might depend upon your jurisdiction, your relationships, your relationship that you have already. There isn't a standard formal way to do it. In some cases you might want to reach out for those states that have disability access and functional needs coordinators at the state level. That might be your first point of entry. You might want to be talking to those folks who are responsible for coordination. You might want to be talking to Maria Townes of the world who, I think, up until the next couple of weeks will be still the Director of the Houston Mayor's Office of people with Disabilities, Sherry Badger. So those are some ideas that I have.

>> Lewis Kraus: And I would add that if you are interested in this topic there have been several presentations on these webinar series. You should go back and look in the archive of disability agency that have discussed how they have gone about connecting with their local officials and doing the leg work. Becky had some good ideas. It is legwork. It is going to be -- if the Emergency Management Agencies have not made contact with you as a disability organization and it's less likely that that's going to happen, then the reverse where you as the disability organization takes the lead and connects with them and says we want to be part of your process; we would like to get a seat in the emergency operations office or sort of the center; or some way to be part of the planning process, that is where you can make the impact. And there are lots of resource that we have on our site. Not to help you

make that argument if they are not understanding this issue.

And for those of you who joined us a couple of months ago, the research out of our center has shown that at least in Region IX, and I'm sure it's true across the country, Offices of Emergency Management are not aware of their ADA responsibilities or have the capability, the resource that they believe that they are ready to do anything about it.

So, the assistance of community organizations will go a long way toward helping them to understand and to take action to be able to do the planning that's necessary.

>> Rebekah Tosado: Lewis, I would just add that I know a little bit about the results of the survey that you have conducted lately, recently. I would say it's not acceptable for Emergency Management Agencies not to know about their obligations to be inclusive of people who have disabilities for a number of reasons. One, there's a series of documents and guidance that FEMA and federal government have issued that speaks specifically to this, so, the national response framework, the National Recovery Framework, preparedness guides, existing evacuation guides. So, all of those documents speak to that.

I'm not saying in any way, Lewis, that I don't believe you, but it really should not be the case.

>> Lewis Kraus: Right. That was the shocking result is that they still claim they don't really know it or certainly that they don't have any -- that they don't have the resources to do it and then connected to that is the fact that they didn't believe that first responders know anything about ADA or the needs of people with disabilities in emergencies. And that's also concerning, I guess.

Ok. Please send more questions in you have them now.

I don't know, Becky, Brian, Maggie, if you have any other particular comments that you wanted to make or if anybody wanted to reply to Becky's request here of the role of organizations. This would be a good time to add that into the conversation.

>> Brian Parsons: I just wanted to sort of I guess draw out a point that you sort of mentioned which is this idea of providing disability organizations providing assistance to emergency managers. I think flipping around the concept or the construct that disability organizations are a resource to the emergency managers is really part of the selling, part of the importance. Of course, there's the whole legal aspect that we just talked about that, yeah, they need to do it legally.

But also, I think a compelling argument in emergency management sort of parlance would be that through our organizations, you, Emergency Management Agency, can reach the community to make this an effective plan and to make preparedness effective and that we're here to help you do that; you know, sort of changing around the viewpoint that people with disabilities are something to be planned for rather than as a tremendous tool in actually planning for the whole community with the assistance of the community.

>> Lewis Kraus: Right. Very good, Brian. Well said.

All right. Well, I am not seeing any questions so I am going to say that if you didn't have a chance to ask your questions but want to, especially to Brian, Maggie, or Becky, their contact information, I've put that back up on the screen. You have a chance to get that if you would like to ask them some questions.

And if you have a general ADA question about any of this, you can contact your regional ADA Center at 1-800-949-4232.

All right. Ahh, somebody just posted the name of the GAO report is on Disaster Assistance: FEMA Action Needed to Better Support Individuals Who Are Older or Have

Disabilities. And the link. And I'm going to put that on the main room here. Let's see if I can do that here. There we go. Ok. So, everybody can use that.

>> Rebekah Tosado: And Lewis, while you're doing that, I'll mention -- I'm glad the participant was able to pull it up. The recommendations that the GAO made in that report are really addressed to FEMA and DHS. They don't make recommendations to state and local emergency managers -- management agencies. They ask to look at the role of FEMA itself. But, if you read the report -- if GAO as a charge of looking at what state and emergency managers didn't do or could be doing, the report provides a lot of detail about areas opportunities for improvement by the states and local organizations.

So again, I don't want to, you know, target the state and local organizations without saying that we are here to help them reach their goals of compliance with Section 504. We are spending the time to do the listening sessions, to develop the recommendations, to facilitate the technical assistance, to enable them to help meet compliance. So, how can it be done if they don't have the resources now, they can reach out to us, to DOJ, to HHS, to other entities. And very importantly, as we have pointed out time and time again, work with the disability organizations on the how-to.

So, I just want to be sure that I say there are lots of opportunities to work with us and work with disability organizations. And ultimately they are responsible under Section 504. Non-compliance can lead to litigation and findings of non-compliance.

>> Lewis Kraus: Ok. Good.

>> Rebekah Tosado: That's all I have. Thank you, Lewis.

>> Lewis Kraus: Yeah. That's great.

Also, just to respond to some questions that have come in. Yes, the PowerPoints are posted on the website. You can get them at www.adapresentations.org in the schedule section today. By tomorrow they will be in the archive section. Feel free to get that and all of the archives, the recordings, and the transcripts will be there next week.

All right. I want to remind everybody you're going to receive an e-mail with a link to an online session evaluation. Please complete the evaluation for today's program. We really value your input and want to make sure that our funder understands the importance of this.

We want to thank Becky and Brian and Maggie for sharing their time and knowledge with us today.

And again, a reminder that this session was recorded and will be available for reviewing next week at www.adapresentations.org in the archive section of the Emergency Management section.

Our next webinar will be August 8. We will be joined by FEMA's Office of Disability Integration & Coordination for a presentation of their current policy and program initiatives that's a great opportunity. We hope you will be able to join us for that of watch for your e-mail two weeks ahead of time for the announcement of the opening of that registration.

And with that, I will bid everyone thank you for having a -- for attending today's session. Have a good rest of your afternoon.

Once again, thank you, Becky, Brian, and Maggie.

>> Rebekah Tosado: Thank you.

>> Margaret Schaefer: Thank you, everyone.

>> Brian Parsons: Thank you.

>> Lewis Kraus: Ok. Bye-bye, everyone.