

ADA Coordinators: Emergency Management for People With Disabilities

PACIFIC ADA CENTER
WEBINAR
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PUBLIC HEALTH

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Acknowledgements

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Overview of Today's Webinar

- **Background Information**
 - ADA-Coordinators (ADA-C) role and responsibilities in disaster preparedness and response
 - Review why it is important to know if ADA-C are prepared to meet their responsibilities under ADA
- **2019-20 Survey of ADA-C: FEMA Region 9**
- **Applying these Findings**

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Learning Objectives

1. To determine the **roles and responsibilities** of ADA Coordinators with respect to Emergency Management under the ADA
2. To identify **barriers** to their ability to influence other entities charged with ensuring ADA access with respect to Emergency Management
3. Discuss **strategies** for improvement

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Responsibilities under Title II of the ADA

- State and local governments **must comply** with Title II of the ADA in the emergency and disaster-related programs, services, and activities they provide.
- Therefore, under Title II of the ADA, emergency programs, services, activities, and facilities **must be accessible** to people with disabilities.
- This requirement **applies** to programs, services, and activities provided directly by state and local governments as well as those provided through **third parties**, such as the American Red Cross, private nonprofit organizations, and religious entities.

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ADA Coordinators

- Under Title II of the ADA, state and local governments with 50 or more employees must appoint an ADA Coordinator.
- The ADA Coordinator implements and coordinates all ADA compliance activities.
- Conducts self-evaluations and develops plans.
- Monitors implementation of plans.
- Handles requests for aides and services.

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ADA Coordinators, continued

- Provides information about accessible programs and services.
- Serves as an ADA resource.
- Receives and works to resolve complaints.
- Works with officials and administrators to ensure new facilities or alterations are accessible.

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Office of Emergency Management

- Agency at the local or state level responsible for **planning, responding, recovering** from disaster events
- They vary in size from very small one person operations to over 200 professionals with diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise, including individuals assigned from other City agencies

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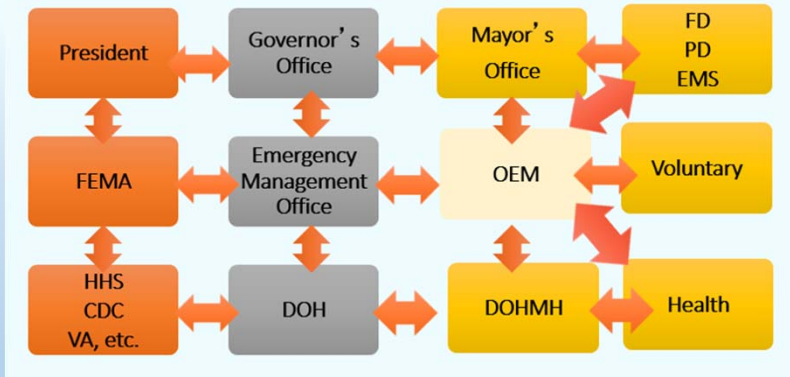
Emergency Managers are responsible for:

- **Managing resources** before, during, and after a major disaster or emergency
- **Conducting activities** related to key components of emergency management
- **Coordinating** with all partners in the emergency management process

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Federal, State, and Local Coordination in Disasters



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Includes the Authorities of all key entities including OEM

https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1582825590194-2f000855d442fc3c9f18547d1468990d/NRF_FINALApproved_508_2011028v1040.pdf



National Response Framework

Fourth Edition
October 28, 2019

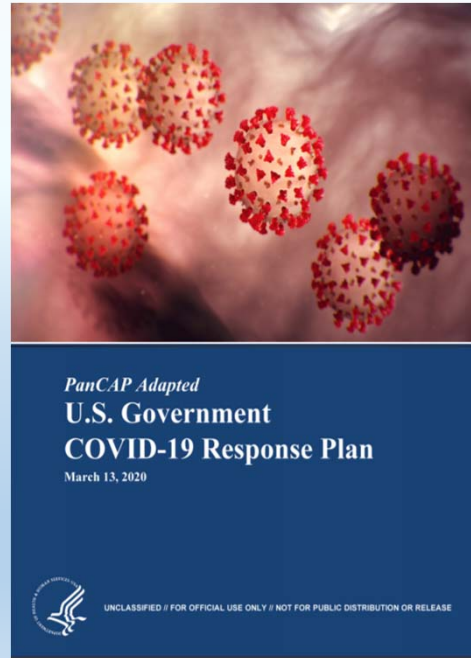


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This latest Plan includes the Authorities of all key entities for COVID-19

<https://int.nyt.com/data/documenthelper/6819-covid-19-response-plan/d367f758bec47cad361f/optimized/full.pdf#page=1>



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In Emergency Management, people with disabilities are considered to have *access and functional needs*

▶ Here are the **inclusion criteria** for access and functional needs:

- Physical, developmental or intellectual disabilities (including visual impairments, deaf or hard of hearing, mental health conditions, physical disabilities, cognitive disabilities)
- Chronic conditions or injuries
- Limited English proficiency
- Older adults
- Children
- Low income, homeless and/or transportation disadvantaged
- Pregnant women

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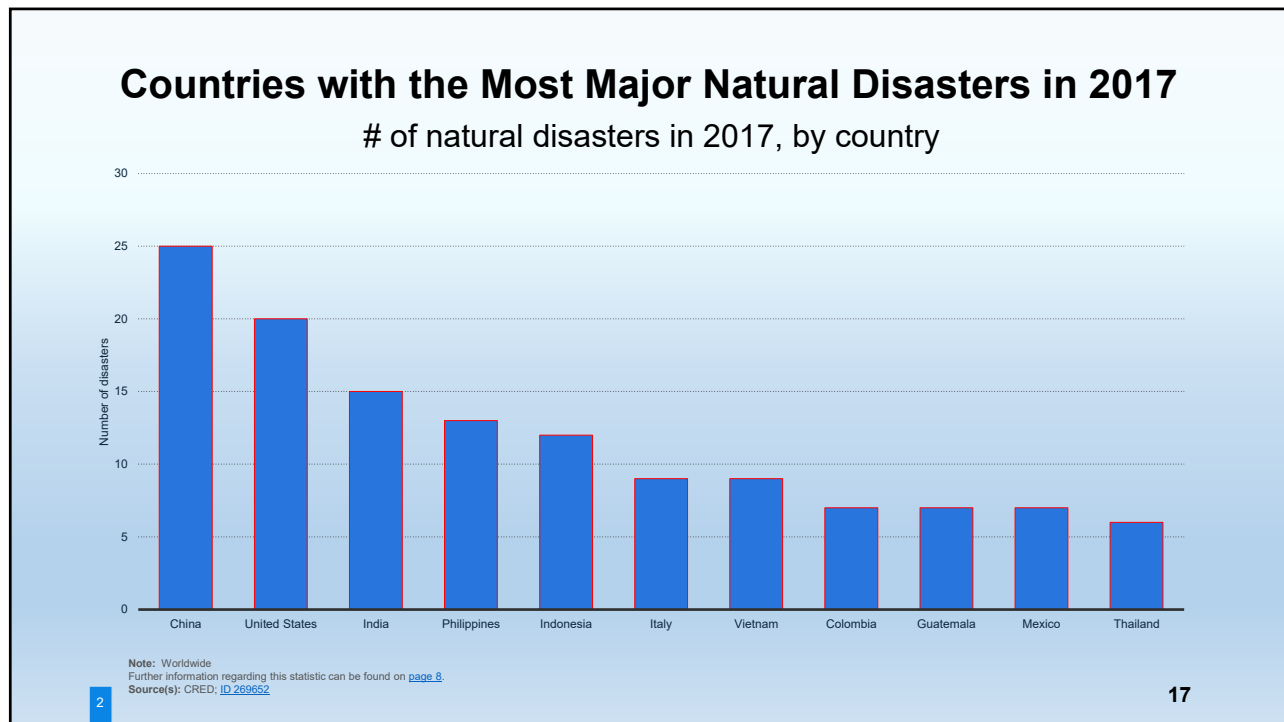
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**Why is it Important to Know how well
ADA-C are Doing in Terms of Meeting the
Needs of People with Disabilities with
Respect to Emergency Management?**

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**Major and Converging Trends are
Increasing Risk of Disasters**

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Increasing Concern: Climatological and Bioevent Disasters

Risk factors

- Human population growth
- Climate change
- Increased globalization
- Increased urbanization and coastal development
- Land-use and population practices that facilitates zoonotic transmission
- Increased vector-borne diseases
- Substandard public health and health care systems
- Declining vaccination rates
- Overuse of antibiotics
- Mass migration/displacement of refugees, many in squalid refugee camps

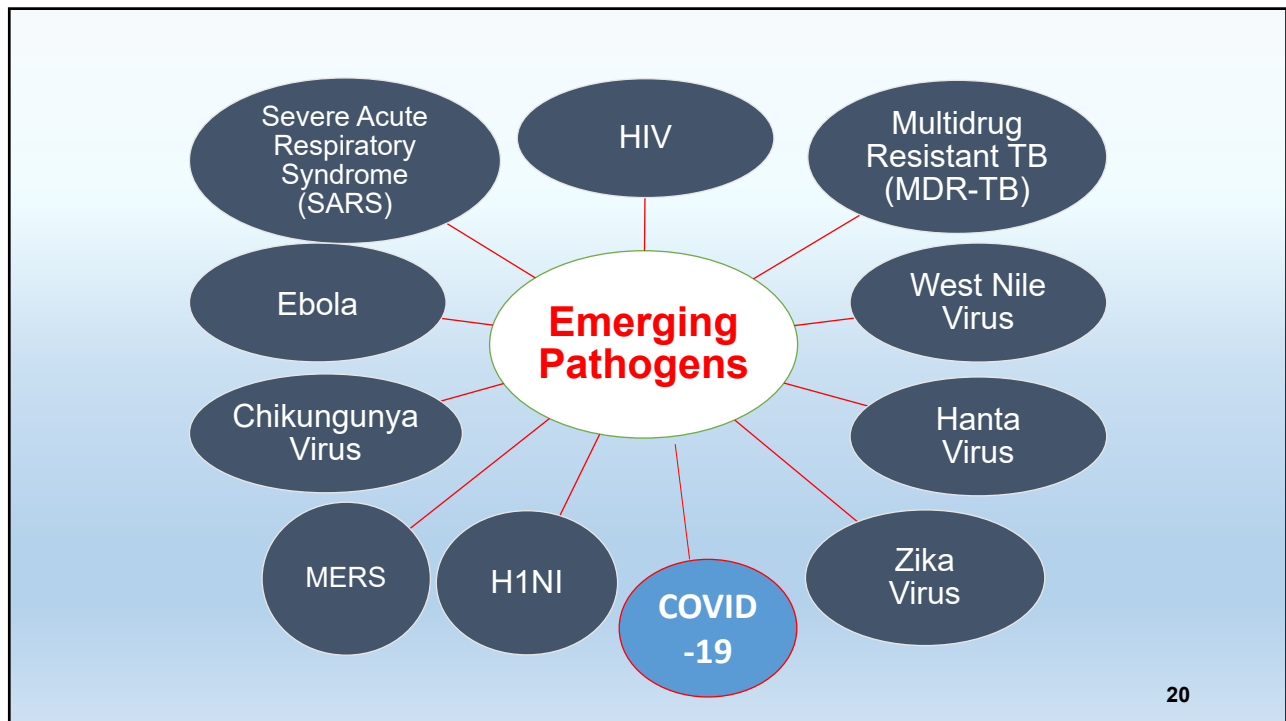
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And.. especially now... Readily and Rapidly spread novel pathogens

Readily spread novel pathogens

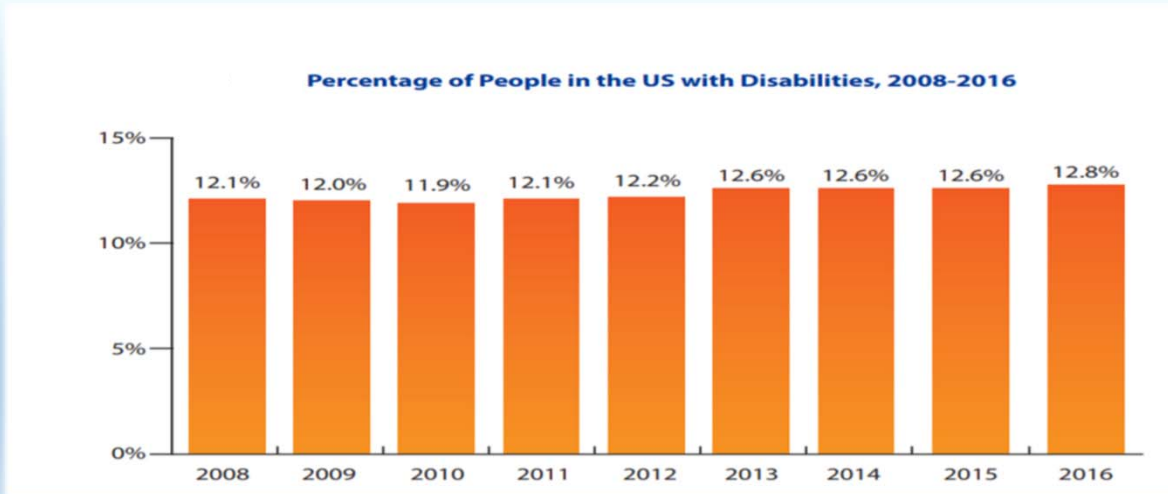
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Population of People Living with a Disability is large... and growing



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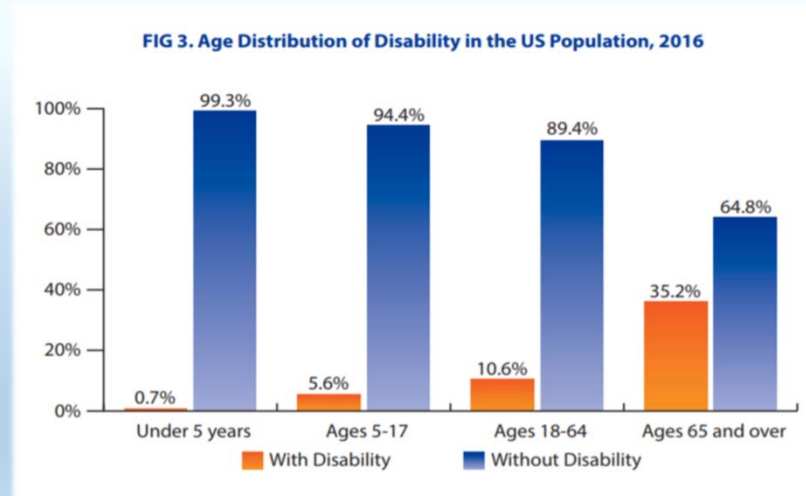
Population of People Living with a Disability is large... and growing



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Increasingly.... The US Population is Aging



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People with Disabilities are not Generally Well-Prepared for Disasters

- 2011 Gershon/Kraus Study
- Convenience sample of 252 disabled people receiving personal assistance
- **7-item preparedness measure:**
 - **mean score was 2.3 (range, 0-7)**
 - 32% had emergency supplies available at home
 - 29% could communicate with PA in emergency
 - 26% had back-up PA plans

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2014 Study- Preparedness Plan Results

- 47% had emergency plan
 - 2/3 of them had included PA in plan creation
 - But 4% involved only some, 10% with none

“My PA will be busy tending to the needs of their own family members”

“The PA is just not that dependable”

“I might not be with my PA when an emergency occurs.”

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2014 Study on Disaster Preparedness of Elderly Home Care Recipients in San Francisco, N=50

Mean score of 4.74 on a 13- item preparedness checklist

- 56% had extra meds on hand
- 44% had back-up power for powered equipment they use
- 38% had made back-up plans for their caregiver(s)
- 26% had plans for transportation to shelters
- 19% had someone in building that could help them evacuate if elevator not working
- 70% had extra supplies on hand for their pets

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Barriers To Personal Preparedness

- **Lack of self-efficacy** (Lack of resources, No family or friends nearby)
“ I can’t do those preparedness things; the government should help me.”
- **Risk awareness** was high, but relevance of risk to them was low:
“ I’ve lived a full life, actually, I’m ready to go...”
- **Sense of community was low**
“ They don’t really care. I’ve been sick right in here, and no one came and knocked on the door...that’s just the way it is.”
- **Lack of Trust in Authorities**
“ There’s going to be a big mess-up between the police and firemen”
“ You can’t depend on the police, fire, the army, or national guard. You can’t depend on the city or county.”

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2018 FEMA Report “Preparedness in America”

- **21%** of the US sample (N=2,000) **WERE NOT** planning to do **any** disaster preparation.
- **46%** - Preparedness was **not at all** on **“their radar.”**
- Cost and not knowing how to prepare were barriers.
- However, people who thought they were at risk, thought they could do something to prepare, thought preparing would help them, and felt confident in their ability to prepare **WERE MORE LIKELY** to be prepared.
- Only **small differences** were noted for participants with and without a disability.

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To Recap-Why is it important to know if ADA Coordinators are ready to help ensure needs of PWD are met with respect to ADA

- Disasters are increasing in frequency and severity
- Vulnerable Population is large and growing
- Individual-level preparedness is low

And.....

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People with Disabilities are Disproportionately Affected by Disaster Events

- Latest US data suggest a **30-50% increased risk** of disaster-related fatality among people with disabilities.
 - 1/3 of Hurricane Maria fatalities are believed to have resulted from “interrupted care”
- **Covid-19 is exposing potential vulnerabilities regarding accessibility to limited resources such as ventilators and ability to navigate social/physical distancing policies**

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Study Methods

- Study conducted in late winter 2019-2020
- Input from key stakeholders (Ali Everett, Laney Davidson, Kristen Darmody).
- Confidential web-based survey of ADA Coordinators from FEMA Region 9, (California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii, and the Pacific Islands). Multi-modal recruitment
- Questions on role, responsibilities, influence, training, knowledge
- Final survey had 36 items and took about 15-20mins to complete
- Respondents (N=131)

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Study Results

- ▶ Most respondents came from **California**, followed by Arizona
- ▶ **27% had an estimated jurisdiction of > 1M residents**; 20% had 100-500K and 50K-100K
- ▶ About **40%** reported at least one major disaster event in **last 5 years**.
- **18% know approx. # of PWD in their jurisdiction**



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Demographics

- **56% female**
- **35% have a disability**
- **More than half are 50yrs and older**
- **86% have college degree or higher**
- **30% earn less than \$50K a year; 20% each > 90K per year**

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Employment Info

- **44% work full-time as ADA Coordinator**
- **More than half have worked as ADA Coordinator for *less than 3yrs***
 - **20% *less than a year***
- **Most are based out of either ADA Coordinators Office or Public Works**
- **Reporting to: City Manager or their Asst; Director of Planning; Emergency Mgt.**

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Employment Info

- **32% held an ADA related job prior to this job**
- **28% previously held an emergency planning type job**
- **A majority- 69% hold other job titles/have other job duties**
- **More than half (56%) work alone in their role**
- **Less than half (43%) have back up to their emergency management duties if they are not at work**
- **70% spend less than 10% of their job on ensuring ADA compliance in Emergency Management**

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Participants Response to Question: What Qualifications/Special Training are Needed for this Job?

- **26% NONE**
- **19% Complete an ADA Basics course**
- **11% Complete 40 training credits for Certification program**
- **7% I Don't know**

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Emergency Management Role how do they ensure access

- **56%** are currently **responsible** for ensuring ADA access with respect to Emergency Management
 - **39%** provide technical assistance
 - **34%** do it themselves directly
 - **28%** make sure it is in Plan
 - **24%** provide technical assistance
 - **24%** serve on EOC
 - **13%** I do not ensure ADA access

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Emergency Management Responsibilities Who is Responsible for Assuring Access?

- **56% Stated: “I am Responsible for ensuring access”**
- **Later on in survey we repeated this question; here is what they then stated:**
 - **45% OEM**
 - **11% First Responders**
 - **9% ADA Coordinator**
 - **8% No One**

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Capabilities with respect to ADA Requirements for Emergency Management

- **22% feel knowledgeable**
- **16% feel influential**
- **36% feel that they have had adequate training**
- **These are highly correlated:**
ADA-C who feel they have had adequate knowledge are significantly more likely to feel influential and had adequate training (P<.01)

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What are they Specifically Responsible For?

- **Reading the EO Plan to ensure ADA Compliance**
 - **ADA Coordinator (27%); Not sure who is (26%)**
- **Writing and updating Emergency operations Plan**
 - **ADA Coordinator (12%); Not sure who is (12%)**
- **Providing oversight to ensure ADA**
 - **ADA Coordinator (16%); Not sure who is (15%)**
- **Involving people w disabilities to identify needs**
 - **ADA Coordinator (23%); Not sure who is (18%)**

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Specific Responsibilities

- **Ensuring All Communicationa are accessible**
 - ADA Coordinator (11%); Not sure who is (11%)
- **Ensuring accessible transportation**
 - ADA Coordinator (9%); Not sure who is (14%)
- **Ensuring shelters are accessible**
 - ADA Coordinator (13%); Not sure who is (16%)
- **Involving people w disabilities in all drills and exercises**
 - ADA Coordinator (15%); Not sure who is (18%)

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Shelter Operations



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Specific Responsibilities – at Shelters

- Ensuring refrigerators for meds available
 - ADA Coordinator (6%); Not sure who is (20%)
- Ensuring personal assistants access to shelters
 - ADA Coordinator (5%); Not sure who is (15%)
- Ensuring access to Oxygen at shelters
 - ADA Coordinator (4%); Not sure who is (16%)
- Ensuring back-up power
 - ADA Coordinator (5%); Not sure who is (13%)
- Ensuring access to service animals
 - ADA Coordinator (9%); Not sure who is (15%)
- Ensuring accessible communications at shelters
 - ADA Coordinator (9%); Not sure who is (12%)

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Specific Responsibilities

- Ensuring accessible transportation
 - ADA Coordinator (9%); Not sure who is (14%)
- Ensuring shelters are accessible
 - ADA Coordinator (13%); Not sure who is (16%)
- Involving people w disabilities in all drills and exercises
 - ADA Coordinator (15%); Not sure who is (18%)

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Specific Responsibilities

- **Ensuring PWD are not sent to Medical shelters, unless indicated**
 - ADA Coordinator (18%); Not sure who is (16%)
- **Ensuring PWD not turned away from shelters if Personal Asst not with them**
 - ADA Coordinator (8%); Not sure who is (15%)

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Specific Responsibilities - Recovery

- **Providing input to After-Action reports**
 - ADA Coordinator (28%); Not sure who is (13%)
- **Involving PWD in After-Action Reports**
 - ADA Coordinator (24%); Not sure who is (15%)
- **Helping to change policies based on results of After-Action Reports**
 - ADA Coordinator (31%); Not sure who is (14%)

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What Limits Their Effectiveness??

- **LACK of time!**
- **Lack of awareness**
- **Lack of resources**
- **Lack of staff (and competent staff)**
- **Lack of knowledge and training**
- **Lack of authority in my role as ADA Coordinator**
- **Changes in administration makes it hard to develop relationships**

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What Would Increase their Effectiveness??

- **More TRAINING!!**
- **More support from other entities**
- **More involvement of OEM More collaboration (Red Cross, OEM)**
- **More coordination w disability orgs.**
- **Stronger work relationships**
- **Supportive work environments**

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What Specialized Training is Needed to do these Jobs?

ADA Coordinator

- None: 26%
- “ADA Basics” Course: 19%
- 40 hr ADA Certification Program: 11%

OEM

- None: 17%
- AEM Certificate: 11%
- CEM Certificate: 23%
- State Certificate: 34%



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Conclusion

- Underutilization of specialized skills ADA-C can bring to emergency management was evident
- There was interest in improvement and having a greater role - especially want more info on ADA compliance with respect to emergency management
- Disability expertise and knowledge of ADA is needed at ALL levels of disaster response

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Preliminary Recommendations

- Professionalizing their role in emergency management
- Clarifying their role as part of the team in emergency management
- Providing both standardized tools and resources...

... as well as just in time tools they can apply- right now- to ANY Disaster Event

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Thank you!!

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Resources

Pacific ADA Center

- ▶ www.adapacific.org/emergency
- ▶ Webinars - ADA National Network/FEMA Webinar Series: Emergency Management and Preparedness-Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (www.adapresentations.org)



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Resources

Pacific ADA Center

- ▶ www.adapacific.org/emergency
- ▶ Checklists and toolkits (Personal)
 - Bedside Emergency Supplies Checklist
 - Car Emergency Supplies Kit Checklist
 - Carry On You Emergency Supplies Kit Checklist
 - Emergency Contact List
 - Emergency Food and Water
 - Emergency Power Planning
 - Emergency Supplies Kits
 - Keep Your Important Documents Safe from a Disaster

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Resources

Pacific ADA Center

- ▶ www.adapacific.org/emergency
- ▶ Checklists and toolkits (Personal)
 - Evacuation Transportation Planning Tips
 - Grab and Go Emergency Supplies Kit Checklist
 - Grab and Go Emergency Supplies Kit with Daily Use Items Checklist
 - Home Emergency Supplies Kit Checklist
- ▶ Checklists and toolkits (Agencies)
 - Maintaining Site Accessibility Checklist
 - Press Conference Checklist

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Pacific ADA Center Resource Page on COVID -19

www.adapacific.org/COVID19

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- ▶ Annual Disability Statistics Compendium
<https://disabilitycompendium.org/>
- ▶ “Emergency Preparedness in a Sample of Persons with Disabilities” by Gershon et al.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23716372>

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