

# Fire Safety Solutions for Oklahomans with Disabilities

NANCY TRENCH

MILISSA GOFOURTH



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MN5C8taVqqI>

## Facts

---

- More people die in home fires than in tornadoes in Oklahoma
- More people die in home fires across the United States than in all other disasters combined
- Physical disabilities are a factor in 14% of fire deaths in U.S.
- Death rate is 15 per million population for people with disabilities
- Death rate is 9 per million population

## The Oklahoma Program

---

- FEMA Funded (Assistance to Firefighter Grants)
- Statewide
- No income requirement
- No cost to the consumer
- \$400 worth of equipment per household
- Pay trained installers
- Program does not install in licensed facilities
- Program Contact Information should the equipment malfunction

## Serving People with Disabilities with Smoke Alarm Installations

---

- Engage people with disabilities – what do you want to know about home fires and HOW?
- It takes time to develop a true partnership in trustworthiness
  - Once ASL Interpreters began to recommend the program
- All materials in alternate formats, Braille, Audio, Large Print, ASL DVD, HTML, etc.
- If requested always provided paid ASL interpreters

## Partnerships

---

- Home Fire Safety Technical Partner(s)
  - Always inform the local fire department, the level of engagement varies community to community
  - State Fire Marshall
  - State Fire Training Services
- Disability Advocates/Organization
  - Assistive Technology Act program in your state
  - Rehabilitation agency
  - Center for Independent Living
  - Community-based organizations

## Building a Partnership for Success

---

- Research Funding Sources – know the requirements
  - Federal and State Agency
  - Local Programs
  - Foundations and Insurance Providers
  - Red Cross
- Create a Compelling Story – Why do People with Disabilities need appropriate equipment
- Plan the Doable

## Involve People with Disabilities

---

- Nothing about Us Without Us – the Disability Partner formed Focus Groups
  - Deaf/Hearing Loss
  - Blind/Low Vision
  - Mobility
  - Cognitive
- Lessons Learned
  - Modify common home fire safety messages - not all messages work for all
  - Created a DVD in ASL

## Marketing

---

- News Release
- Television/Radio Interview
- Websites
- Social Media
- Events
  - Silent Dinners
  - Health Fairs
  - Conference Presentations/Booths
- Satisfied Consumers

## Program Components

---

- Traditional canvassing door-to-door smoke alarm installation does not work to serve people with disabilities
- Application based program
  - It provides programmatic information as to who is served
  - Eligibility determines proof of disability
  - Arrange for home installation appointment
- Formal Agreements with paid trained installers

## Trained Installers

---

- Serving people with disabilities (4 hours)
  - Social Etiquette
  - People First Language
  - Working with ASL Interpreters & service animals
- Smoke Alarm & Alert Equipment Installation (3 hours)
  - The right alarm in the right place makes a difference
  - Bedside alert device set-up and sync
  - Home Safety Messages

## Program Evaluation

---

- Critical to collect both qualitative and quantitative data
  - Change in behavior
  - Satisfaction level
  - Respond to feedback – especially if an alarm malfunctions
- Regular Partner meetings
  - Evaluate timeliness and effectiveness
  - Outreach
  - Installations
  - Changes and improvements

## Quality Assurance

---

- Install Alarms – Giving Away is NOT effective
- One is Not Enough – NFPA Standards
- Install 2 Types of Alarms
  - Photoelectric – smoldering or dense smoke fires
  - Ionization – fast flaming fires
- Prevent Nuisance Alarms – location, location, location
- Replace Old Alarms - Smoke alarms are only functional for 10 years

## Fire Deaths Occur at Night

---

- Smoke alarms save lives because they alert people to a fire
- Smoke alarms are on duty detecting smoke 24/7
- Deadly home fires occur while people are sleeping, so the primary emphasis is: Smoke alarms need to intercept smoke from a fire before the smoke reaches sleeping people
- The smoke alarm must wake people. The standard smoke alarm sound does not wake some people. They need to be alerted with a low frequency sound and a bed shaker (tactile alert)

## Install Bedside Alert Devices

---

- People who are deaf and people who are hard of hearing need an alert device to awake them
- Alert devices are NOT smoke alarms, they listen for the smoke alarm alert sound to activate
- The alert device makes a low frequency sound and a shakes the bed
- Check for the UL or ETL listing

## Lifetone & SafeAwake

---





## Smoke Alarm for People Who are Deaf

---



## In the Home

---

- Installers need to take the time to train the resident(s) on how to operate and test the alarm and alert device
- Discuss and plan to practice the family fire escape
- Provide additional Fire Safety information – How to Prevent a Home Fire

## Replicate the Oklahoma Program

---

- Application
- Home Fire Safety Materials
- 2 Training Program Curriculums
- Follow-up Survey
- 2 DVDs
  - Home Fire Safety for YOU – Presented in American Sign Language
  - Meet Natalea – Retrofit Home Fire Sprinkler System

[https://www.ok.gov/abletech/Fire\\_Safety/index.html](https://www.ok.gov/abletech/Fire_Safety/index.html)

## Contact

---

Nancy Trench

[ntrench@osufpp.org](mailto:ntrench@osufpp.org)

Milissa Gofourth

[milissa.gofourth@okstate.edu](mailto:milissa.gofourth@okstate.edu)