Prepare for the Unexpected: Emergency Preparedness/ Evacuation for People with Disabilities

Carl T. Cameron, PhD
President

In a very dramatic fashion, recent events have reminded us that a major segment of our population have disabilities, and we still have a great deal to do to make sure these needs are addressed to the maximum extent possible...
...and that many of the horrific events could have been mitigated by specific planning of planners, responders, service providers, advocates, and individuals with disabilities.
• Identification difficult / loss of records
• Medicaid access
• Medications
• Loss of durable medical equipment
• Agencies loss of consumers & staff
• Rejection from shelters
• Separation from care providers
• Supports provided by the disability community at large
Definition of Vulnerable Populations

People who, because of their special needs, cannot shelter in place, evacuate, maintain or recover during and following a disaster without additional and often specialized assistance from others.

Definition of Special Needs from the National Response Framework (2008)

Individuals who before, during and after an incident may have additional needs in one or more of the following functional areas:

- maintaining independence,
- communication,
- transportation,
- supervision, and
- medical care

including those:

- who have disabilities
- who live in institutionalized settings
- who are elderly
- who are from diverse cultures
- who have limited English proficiency or who are non-English speaking
- who are children
- who are transportation disadvantaged
What are the issues for people with disabilities and other special needs?

- Communication
- Comprehension
- Emergency warning
- Assistance
  - Shelter in place
  - Evacuation
  - Support in Mass Care Shelters
  - Special Medical Shelters
  - Recovery
- Participation

Issues for shelter in place

- Many individuals will not be able to readily secure location (i.e. closing windows, taping, food and water storage)
- Some may have set living patterns and will not know where to go if it is different from routine
- Many have respiratory problems
Issues for Evacuation

- Identify and transport critical care articles to be included with evacuee (equipment, medications, special diet materials, TTY, etc.)
- Find appropriate transportation
- Communicate what is going to happen and where you are going

Planning for a Disaster by Service Provider and Advocacy Organizations
Readiness vs. Preparedness

- COMMUNITY READINESS
  - Organizations
  - Routines
  - Action then Writing

- EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
  - Emergency Professionals
  - Emergencies
  - Written Plan then Action

Leaders
Initiate Readiness Cycle

Select Readiness Coordinator

Establish Working Group and Assess
Current State of Readiness
Recruit members and organize
Complete readiness assessment
Set priorities for action
Document activities

Evaluation, Documentation, and Establishing Routines
Combine documentation of activities into written plan for improving readiness
Evaluate readiness routines
Continue readiness cycle
Submit completed disaster readiness plan to authorities as required

Initiate Readiness Improvement Actions
Mitigate immediate dangers
Expand existing drills, practices
Communicate with local responders
Coordinate with partner organizations
Inform members of your organization
Document activities

Training & Education
Include readiness training activities in existing training program
Develop new trainings for readiness linked with readiness routines
Develop and conduct internal exercises
Participate in local and regional exercises
Document activities

Identifying and Meeting the Needs of Persons Served and Staff of your organization
Survey all individual members
Collect SIP/Evac supplies and equipment
Conduct exercises to identify readiness strengths and weaknesses
Conduct drills and practices
Change organizational structures as needed
Obtain funding and other resources as needed
Document Activities

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Establish Working Group and Assess Current State of Readiness

• Recruit working group members and organize
• Complete readiness assessment
• Set priorities for action
• Document activities

Initiate Readiness Improvement Action

• Mitigate immediate dangers
• Expand existing drills, practice
• Communicate with local responders
• Coordinate with partner organizations
• Inform members of your own organization
• Document activities
**Identifying and Meeting the Needs of Persons Served and Support Staff**

- Survey all individual members
- Collect SIP/evacuation supplies & equipment
- Conduct exercises to identify readiness strengths & weaknesses
- Conduct drills and practices
- Change organizational structures as needed
- Obtain funding and other resources as needed
- Document activities

**Training & Education**

- Include readiness training activities in existing training program
- Develop new trainings for readiness linked with readiness routines
- Develop and conduct internal exercises
- Participate in local and regional exercises
- Document activities
Evaluation, Documentation, and Establishing Routines

• Combine documentation of activities into written plan for improving readiness
• Evaluate readiness routines
• Continue readiness cycle
• Submit completed disaster readiness plan to authorities as required

NEXT STEPS

Develop a inclusive planning team...
Develop the planning using a planning template...
Communicate the plan to the communities...
Develop training and information sharing opportunities...
Develop inclusive exercises and drills...
Look for opportunities to cooperate with other jurisdictions...
What does IPC do?

• Training and Information
• Research
• Technical Assistance to States, localities
• and organizations
• Planning Templates

Inclusive Preparedness Center
1010 Wisconsin Avenue NW
Suite 340
Washington, DC 20007
Phone: 202-338-7158
Fax: 202-338-7216

www.inclusionresearch.org
Email: info@inclusionresearch.org