



Elements of Disaster Readiness for Organizations Providing Services To Persons with Disabilities or other Special Needs

The list below identifies the nine main areas identified by thousands of respondents when asked to consider the needs in disasters of persons with disabilities or other special needs and organizations that provide residential or other services to them. Respondents included persons with disabilities, their family members, caregivers, management and staff of organizations that advocate for or provide services to persons with disabilities, emergency responders and managers, volunteers, officials with state and federal agencies, and others. A strong pattern of these nine elements emerged and persisted throughout all responses from rural, urban, and suburban sources, and from providers serving diverse populations in different states, indicating the importance of a systemic approach to disaster readiness.

Practical action based on these elements must be adapted to fit the particular needs of a given organization and those it serves, in their circumstances. An initial action by a provider organization or a local emergency management agency to improve a single element such as communication should be planned in the context of the other elements of readiness. An effective approach to such planning is mapped out in the *Disaster Readiness Template for Service Provider Organizations* developed by the Inclusive Preparedness Center.

Elements of Disaster Readiness

1. Communications

- a. Internal
 - i. Communicating with consumers
 - ii. Communicating with staff
- b. External
 - i. Communicating with family members
 - ii. Communicating with the media
 - iii. Communicating with EOC & local officials
- c. Communication equipment & alternate forms
- d. Establishing channels of communication
- e. Communication strategies for EMS

2. Staffing

- a. Issues that will arise
- b. Surveying your staff
- c. Establishing emergency policies
- d. Other resources potentially available (volunteers)
- e. Preparing family members of staff

3. Transportation

- a. Internal
 - i. Immediate capacity
 - ii. Potential need
- b. External
 - i. Planning
 - ii. Establishing protocols
- c. Evacuation
 - i. Choosing local sites
 - ii. Choosing distant sites
 - iii. Establishing agreements with peer organizations
 - iv. Identifying needs at destination
 - v. Planning routes and means to get there
 - vi. Identifying likely local shelters
 - vii. Building capacity to reach local and distant destinations

4. Sheltering In Place

- a. Supplies Needed
 - i. Food
 - ii. Water
 - iii. Blankets, flashlights, etc.
 - iv. Identifying ones specific to organization
- b. Addressing storage issues
- c. Securing the facility
- d. Shelter in place staffing issues

5. Medical Needs

- a. Tracking, securing and dispensing medical needs
- b. Potential strategies to build up reserves
- c. Ways to get medications in an emergency
- d. Other needed durable medical supplies

6. Practice and Training

- a. Evaluating current training program
- b. Potential emergency related trainings for follow-up
- c. Importance and types of exercises
- d. Sample exercise to become familiar with tabletop format
- e. Developing an exercise schedule
- f. Developing your own exercises
- g. Participating in local exercises

7. External Partners

- a. Introduction to ICS, NIMS, NRP
- b. Partnering with peer organizations
- c. Coordinating with religious and volunteer groups
- d. Coordinating with EMA
 - i. Self identifying
 - ii. Inclusive planning
 - iii. Participating in exercises
- e. Training for responders
- f. Working with schools

- g. Coordinating with other national organizations such as Red Cross
- h. Potential outside funding opportunities
- i. Legal advocacy and meeting regulations

8. Readiness Management

- a. Establishing command and control structure
- b. Drafting plans
- c. Allocating internal resources
- d. Redraft any policies if necessary
- e. Building organization-wide awareness
- f. Developing culture of responsibility
- g. Documenting readiness activities
 - i. Internal formats
 - ii. Local/State/Federal mandated formats

9. Continuity of Operations

- a. Business Functioning
 - i. Emergency incident record keeping
 - ii. Securing location
 - iii. Identifying how standard practices and standard of care might change in an emergency
 - iv. Suggestions for maintaining operations through emergency
 - v. Identifying important records
 - vi. Developing strategies if anything were to happen to physical structure
 - vii. Backing up data
 - viii. Billing
- b. Consumer Support
 - i. Family reconnection
 - ii. Mental Health issues
 - iii. Emergency medical needs
 - iv. Staffing
 - v. Ensuring records remain with individual
 - vi. Go Kits
- c. Data management
 - i. Consumer health information
 - ii. Staff health information
 - iii. Staff and consumer contact information
 - iv. Facility insurance
 - v. Transportation licensing
 - vi. Payroll
 - vii. Storing data

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