



THE PARTNERSHIP

FOR INCLUSIVE DISASTER STRATEGIES

Community Resilience Initiative - The Hard Truths You Need To Know Participant / Consumer Fact Sheet

People with disabilities are 2 - 4 times more likely than people without disabilities to die or be injured in a disaster¹

During disasters:

- People without previous disabilities may acquire disabilities
- People with pre-existing disabilities may acquire new disabilities and pre-existing disabilities may become more significant
- It is unknown what disabilities are likely to occur months and years after COVID-19

Why are disabled people more likely to die or be injured due to COVID-19?:

- Left behind — not included in policy and planning
- Lack of equal access to disaster services
- Institutional bias

Institutional bias: the idea that people with disabilities are better cared for in facilities rather than in their own homes in the community with services and supports.

- Being institutionalized already (in nursing facilities, group homes, assisted living, psychiatric facilities, etc.)
- Becoming institutionalized
- Society facilitating institutionalization

56 percent of all COVID-19 deaths in Washington were tied to a long-term care facility²

Personal Preparedness has Limitations:

- Personal preparedness must be accompanied by systemic planning by local, county, state, tribal, and federal government
- Government planning should assume people with disabilities have not done personal planning.
- It's not individuals' obligation to prepare - it's the government's responsibility to plan with, and for, to keep community members safe and respond to disasters

¹ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/issues/whs.html>

² <https://komonews.com/news/coronavirus/new-state-report-says-over-half-of-washingtons-covid-19-deaths-tied-to-nursing-homes>
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Systemic Barriers to Personal Preparedness:

- Economic / Financial
- Privilege
- Access to health care
- Access to health maintenance
- Transportation

Access to Disaster-related Services/Civil Rights Protection:

- Federal/state government still retain their legal obligations

Lack of Planning Leads to Lack of Equal Access During Disasters:

- Current disaster planning efforts are *not* inclusive
- Notifications
 - May not be accessible for people that are Deaf / Hard of Hearing / Deafblind
 - May not provide real-time caption and/or sign language on screen during notification and press conferences
- Shelters
 - Shelter may not be physically accessible (i.e. entrance, bathroom, showers, dining area)
 - Shelter may not have a plan to provide equally effective communication to Deaf / Hard of Hearing / Deafblind / Blind people
 - May not have quiet areas or denies service animals
- Distribution points
 - People with disabilities not having access to transportation

The Hard Truth: What Not to Expect/Assume

- Don't expect to be rescued!
- Although the federal government says they prioritize rescuing people with disabilities during disasters - it is often not what happens in the middle of a crisis
 - Example - [Rooted in Rights- Right To Be Rescued](#) video -
 - Although the federal government provides Individual Assistance in disasters, it's limited.
- Don't expect full reimbursement from the government.

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