



## Community Resilience Initiative: The Hard Truths You Need To Know Consumer Fact Sheet

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**People with disabilities are 2 - 4 times more likely than people without disabilities to die or be injured in a disaster.<sup>1</sup>**

### **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/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 facility<sup>2</sup>**

### **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

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

<sup>2</sup> <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
  - Provide real-time captioning and/or sign language on-screen during notification and press conferences
- Shelters may not:
  - Be physically accessible (i.e. entrance, bathroom, showers, dining area)
  - Have a plan to provide equally effective communication for Deaf / Hard of Hearing / Deafblind / people with visual disabilities
  - Admit service animals
  - Have quiet areas
- 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.