- Good morning, everyone. This is Shaylin, and thank you for joining us today. We're just giving it a moment as some folks are still rolling in the room and getting seated and settled we'll get started in just one moment, thank you. Hello everyone. Good morning and thank you for joining us and welcome to The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies, Legal Obligations Of Emergency Management Planning Professionals Before During, and After Disaster webinar series.

My name is Shaylin Sluzalis and alongside Germán Parodi I'm one of the Co-Executive Directors of The Partnership. I use she her pronouns and I am a younger white woman with non apparent disabilities. Today I'm wearing a navy blue top with my long brown curly hair pulled back. On screen you will have a title slide text that reads Legal Obligations of Emergency Management Planning Professionals Before, During and After Disasters. And below that is our website www.disasterstrategies.org. Above the text is The Partnerships header logo which is a sun with four images within it. Those four images are a hurricane, a thunderstorm cloud, a home with a split down the middle and a tornado. The words The Partnership For Inclusive Disaster Strategies sit to the right of the logo. I am first going to start with a few accessibility and technical support reminders and then we will get started and I will pass it off to Melissa to get us started today. First and foremost, this training is being recorded and an accessible archive of today's conversation will be available in the coming weeks. It will include American Sign Language interpretation on screen and closed captions. Today we have American Sign Language interpretation and communication access realtime translation also known as CART available. Our ASL interpreters are Kenya McPheeters and Brenda Wharton. They are spotlighted so everyone can see them on screen. If you can't see them at all, please let us know in the chat or via email at directors@disasterstrategies.org and we'll get that email in the chat for folks as well. CART is embedded in Zoom and you can access it via the CC button on the navigation bar at the bottom of your Zoom screen. You can click once and then click show subtitles on Zoom. And you can edit the text via the edit settings button next to the CC button. You can also open the CART transcript in a separate window if that's more accessible to you and to do so please follow the link that has been put in the chat. A huge thank you to our access team an entire access team for making this event possible and accessible and inclusive today. Thank you all so much.

To ask or respond to questions and to participate today please use the raise your hand button on the bottom of your Zoom screen or type in chat. You can raise your hand or type in chat for technical assistance or to alert us to an issue as well. And if the chat is not accessible to you please submit your questions or comments to us via email at directors@disasterstrategies.org. Some friendly reminders regarding accessibility during this event and access for the post production is to please identify yourself before speaking. Please try not to talk over others and keep yourself on mute when not talking, this helps folks following and using CART follow the conversation. Please keep your camera off unless you are talking. This helps us create an accessible post production. And if you are having any trouble with your mute button or video we will be sure to help you with those mute and camera options. And as also, as we have mentioned in the past please try to avoid using acronyms for everyone's understanding. And with that, I'm gonna pass it back over to you, Melissa, to get us started today.

- Good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining us. We appreciate your coming back. If you're here before we wanna welcome you, if you haven't participated before. So we have some new people joining us. So we wanna thank everyone and welcome everyone. So we're gonna go over a few of the details that we went through last week just so that everyone knows us and is on the same page. So thank you.

Next, Shaylin.

So we are The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies and The Partnership is the only US-led disability US-based disability led organization with a focused mission on equity for people with disabilities and people with access and functional needs throughout planning, programs, services and procedures before, during, after disasters and emergencies. I'm Melissa Marshall, as Shaylin said, I am the director of operations for The Partnership and I am an older white woman with long silver used to call it covid gray but silver hair. I'm wearing wire rim glasses that are clear and I have a print blouse on today. And The Partnership is the boots and wheels on the ground and response. We work on community resilience and capacity building and we're disability rights before, during and after, disability rights experts before, during and after disasters. and Shaylin already introduced herself. We are also joined by by our co-executive director, Germán Parodi. And Jean Grover from The Partnership staff is also on today. Next please. Acknowledgements again. Thank you, thank you, thank you to our sponsor, the Connecticut State Independent Living Council. And Molly Cole, who's the Director of the State Independent Living Council. And we also wanna acknowledge the planning committee, which is huge and they played a huge role in this and put a lot of time into this.

Next please.

So special thanks to Gretchen Knauff, Office of Disability Services in New Haven, Molly Cole, State Independent Living Council, Rick Famiglietti, Center for Disability Rights, Richard Luby, Independence Northwest, Eileen Healy, also from Independence Northwest, Heather Qualik from Yukon USET. Next slide please. Susan Shaw from the American Red Cross, Christina Thompson from Independence Unlimited, Melissa Thompson, also from Independence Unlimited, Julie Ferucci from Access Unlimited, Walter Glomb from the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities, Carmen Carrera-Rios from the Center for Disability Rights and Brynn Hickey from the Disability Network of Eastern Connecticut. I wanna thank you all. I'm a Connecticut, I've lived in Connecticut for 30 years. So although I'm not a Connecticut native, I've been here for a long time doing disability rights work. So this literally feels like coming home, given that I'm sitting in my office in West Hartford. So thank you. We have a special guest with us, Kate McCarthy, if you'd like to introduce yourself, please.

- Sure, hi, good morning. I'm Kate McCarthy Barnett. I'm with FEMA Region One. I'm the Disability Integration Advisor. So thank you for having me today. I'm looking forward to the talks.

- Thank you very much, Kate. We really, really appreciate having you with us. Next please. So ground rules, as always please maintain confidentiality. Don't give any specifics. Ask questions and have fun. For those of you that weren't here last week you might have heard, you might not have heard, there are fabulous prizes that go with this training. Now they're virtual. And even when I'm in person they're think toys you get at kid's birthday party. So when I give a car it's like a matchbox card, but you could get a new car today, just saying. Have fun even though this is a very, very serious matter. Have fun. I mean all your things.

- [Man] Excuse me.

- [Melissa] Yes.

- [Man] Hello, yeah. I'm trying to get on the internet and the meeting won't hook up. Does anybody else having that problem? I had to use the dial in.

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin. I have not heard of those issues but let me look on the backend just in case there's a button I need to click. Can you email us at directors@disasterstrategies.org?

- [Man] Yeah, what do you want me to direct email you?

- [Shaylin] Just a test email so I can make sure I can get the link to you directly.

- [Man] Okay, I'll do that in a second.

- [Shaylin] Thank you.

- Thank you so much.

- Thank you.

- [Melissa] And again, please let us know if you have any connectivity issues or anything like that because stuff happens sometimes. And if there's any ground rules, you'd like to suggest we invite you to please put them in the chat. We're doing today a little bit differently than last week because we have a ton of material to get through. So what we're gonna ask you to do is we're gonna ask you to put your questions in the chat, put them in the chat ahead of time. We're gonna read them when we get to a stopping point. So we're gonna read them at a certain point when it's time for questions and answers. If we do not get to all of your questions we will send you a sheet afterwards to everyone answering questions that we weren't able to get to because we're trying to move really quickly today through a lot of materials. So if you could be a little, I want your questions, please, please, please, please.

And you might wanna be a little bit judicious about your comments, or maybe not just think about that. So that's something because the part you wanna hear about a emergency management and partnering and doing all of that work is towards the end of our training. So we're gonna get through the legal stuff and then we're going to get to the collaborative we talk more about partnership stuff. Okay, so our disclaimer is material presented does not constitute legal or clinical advice and is for informational purposes only. If you're seeking legal or clinical advice please contact a qualified attorney or clinician. Next. Again, especially for today this partnership is an overview of legal obligations and many specifics haven't been included here. We kind of weigh what we put in, what do we not put in. And we're putting in what we thought were the most important things, okay.

Next, please

Hold on one second. So let's go over today's objectives. And I'm just getting there on my screen. So today's objectives we hope that at the end of today you'll have a better understanding of how to meet legal obligations to people with disabilities during disaster planning and throughout disasters, specific obligations including providing equally effective communication and physical access and otherwise meeting non-discrimination obligations and strategies for emergency management. Now, I don't want anyone to get scared about legal obligations because guess what the good news is if you haven't met your legal obligations fully, which is just about everybody probably, you can start today. You can start tomorrow. So don't be overwhelmed by all these legal obligations you might not know about. You can start today. You can start now. That's the good news. You get a clean slate. You're just gonna start now.

Okay, next please.

And again, we're gonna go through the audience today. We have on the call just so you know, we have a bunch of different disciplines. We have emergency management directors, disability community stakeholders, lots of staff from independent living centers, nursing facilities management, service providers, municipal officers, preparedness coordinators, emergency medical technicians, health directors, community engagement response team members, CERT team members, fire departments and others. So just welcome to all of you because you're why we're here. Next please. So I said before here are some laws that protect disabled people during disasters. Next, Shaylin. First thing we want you to know that I want you to know, that Partnership wants you to know that State Independent Living Council wants everyone to know is civil disability rights or civil rights. And in order to be able to plan to meet legal obligations to people with disabilities, you need to understand some of those basic civil rights obligations. We're not gonna get too far into the weeds and the stuff you need to know isn't too far in the weeds, and we're gonna give you some resources if you want to get further into the weeds.

Next please.

First law you might have heard of the Americans With Disabilities Act the ADA and that's cited as 42 US code section 12102 at sec. I'm reading everything on the screen for access, just so you know then I add things. And the ADA protects the rights of people with disabilities, including during disasters. The ADA still applies including during disasters.

Next please.

Now, for a fabulous prize, can anyone tell me and put it in the chat now and we'll read it later, what the anniversary of the signing of the Olmstead decision? What date was the Olmstead signed way back in 1999? Cases Olmstead versus LC that stands for Lois Curtis 527 US 581. And it's a Supreme Court decision that states that people with disabilities must receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate that meets their needs. And I'll add to that, that applies during disasters. And someone said 6/22/99 and you get a fabulous prize. And that is to Elise and you get a red matchbox Corvette. Today is the anniversary of the signing of the Olmstead decision. And the scary thing is I was involved in this and a crew member when I was when I was reading with colors.

Next please.

Happy Olmstead Day. The other one is the Rehabilitation Act 29 USC section 501, 701, excuse me at sec. And that's best known as one of the sections, the section 504 there's other parts of the Rehab Act that apply during disasters. But the part you're gonna be most familiar with that you're gonna use the most is 504. And 504 creates obligation not to discriminate against people with disabilities who are recipients and sub-recipients of federal funds. So if you get federal funds or you get federal funds from someone who got federal funds and gave you those federal funds, it creates an obligation for you.

Next please.

And now we have a poll. So I wanna know how familiar you think you are with the ADA in section 504, The Rehab Act. And this is optional. And the response is here and there's no right or wrong and we're not gonna know. So it's okay to say whatever you feel like. And if the poll is not accessible to you, please send your response to directors@disasterstrategies, one word .org. That's, directors@disasterstrategies.org. And we're gonna leave the poll open for five minutes and then Shaylin will report the responses later. So there is the poll for you. So how familiar are you with the Americans With Disabilities Act in section 504 at the Rehab Act? You get a single choice. Not at all familiar. That is fine. Somewhat familiar. That is fine. Very familiar. That is fine. Notice those responses all have one thing in common, whatever your response is is fine. So you wanna hit one of those three and then click on submit. And we'll return to that. It's always nice to know where people are coming from.

Okay, next please.

And I'm getting that off of my screen. Hold on a second. So I just submitted my poll response, okay. Some laws to protect people with disabilities during disasters, and you don't need to know a ton about these things, just that they exist. The 21st century Communications and Video Accessibility Act known as CVAA Public Law 111-260. And what it does is updates federal communication law to increase access to persons with disabilities to modern communications. So they're talking about radical things like computers and technology and all of those things.

Next please.

Next is the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act. That's 20 USC section 1400 in 2004. And it requires a free and appropriate public education for children between three and 21. You're saying, wait, Melissa, why are we talking about education law? I signed up for the emergency management course. Where was she going off here? Kids with disabilities have a right to return to school under the Rehab Act and under the ADA. And one of the things we noticed during disasters a lot of times is that kids with disabilities are the last ones to come back to school because their school district is not in air quotes, ready for them. Or maybe they're not ready to come back. But the parents are ready to go back to work and need to have their kids back in school and the kids are ready to begin learning. So that just has been an issue that I've seen many times. So that's why I bring that up. And that's really important to know and keep in mind.

Next please. Next, you may have heard of some, some of you may have heard of some, some of you may not have heard of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief Act and Relief and Emergency Assistance Act or the Stafford Act. That's 42 USC 5121 at sec. And what the Stafford Act does is it created a system whereby presidential disaster declaration or an emergency declaration triggers financial and physical assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency or FEMA where Kate McCarthy Barnett works in Region One. And once that's triggered you can have a declaration and you can look up that if you wanna see that, but that's what starts this whole thing going.

So when you say, do you have a dec, do you have a declaration? Is have you triggered the Stafford Act? And the declaration has to come from the president. Next please. Now we have the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006. We call it PKEMRA affectionately. And what it did it amends a staff redact to direct FEMA to appoint a disability coordinator to ensure that the needs of individuals with disabilities are being addressed in emergency preparedness and disaster relief. And that's a really important position. The first person who held it, I don't recall their name, but the second person I'm gonna name because you many people in Connecticut know that name was one Marcie Roth who is from Connecticut and hasn't been in Connecticut in a very long time, but lots of us know and love Marcie. And I work with Marcie on a day to day basis. So just know that she was in that position.

Next please.

And then this Integrated Public Alerts And Warning System that was an executive order it's called IPAWS and it's FEMAs national system for locating and alerting that provides authenticated emergency and life saving information to the public. Next. Next is the Fair Housing Amendments Act. Now the Fair Housing Amendments Act doesn't have a specific section in it about disasters, but just know when people are looking for affordable accessible housing the Fair Housing Amendments Act applies. So you can't discriminate against people with disabilities there has to be certain percentages of accessible housing. And it protects people with disabilities from discrimination in certain types of housing. Next please. And what your poll response is, so Shaylin.

- [Shaylin] All right, this is Shaylin. I am going to also share the poll responses with folks but I will read them out on screen. Just as a reminder the question was, how familiar are you with the Americans With Disabilities Act, the ADA and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. And 34% of our participants or 17 out of 50 people said not at all familiar, 54% or 27 out of 50 said somewhat familiar and 12% or six out of 50 said very familiar.

- Thank you so much Shaylin, and thank you for answering that. And it really helps me and I'm most, I love everyone being on this call and I probably know the people the best that are very familiar, but the people I'm really excited are on are the people that are not familiar at all. So you're gonna starting to learn this. So congratulations to you and congratulations for saying this. And if you're kind of in the middle, that's great too. You all get the fabulous prize of your choice.

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin. And Melissa, before we move on, just wanna address a question in the chat from Donald who asks if they will be able to download the slides for use in a future presentation locally. And yes, we will be sending the slides following today's meeting and as well as the transcript also in the coming weeks we will be sharing the recording and all of the materials provided as well. So more to come, but great questions and please keep putting them in the chat.

- Yes, thank you for that question. Next please. This is probably the most important slide here in the presentation as titles civil rights obligations, civil rights obligations of people with disabilities are never suspended including during disasters. People will say a lot of the time, oh, we understand you have that right under 504, The Rehabilitation Act. We understand you have that right under ADA. But you gotta understand it's a disaster so we can't do that for you. No, it's kind of the opposite. Your civil rights are more important during disasters and people will say this. And last year, a physician in the great state of Connecticut in my state wrote an article that was otherwise great. It talked about kids with disabilities and how they were being left behind during disasters and in COVID. And it was a really good, which is a disaster by the way. And it was this really great article. And then she went on to say, it is unfortunate that civil rights are suspended during disasters. And that was on a Sunday afternoon. And like an hour later, I had a response in and they published it really quickly saying no kinda short and to the point, that is not true. That is never true. Please do not think that's true. And that was op-ed piece that she was being paid for. She's a good person and she has some misinformation just they're never suspended, period.

Next please.

So now we're gonna look at equal access to emergency and disaster related programs and services. Next. So we're gonna look at who has obligations. Don't be scared of the word obligations such as stuff you gotta do. You're supposed to do under the law. You're not gonna go to jail. Who's obligations but they're serious. And what are they? So we wanna know who has the legal obligations in emergency management? And what are those obligations? Because you can't meet them if you don't know what they are. Make sense? Next please. You have obligation, ADA obligations to disabled people in disasters. So whose obligations? We're gonna look at that in just a second. The entities covered under the ADA have obligations. So we're not gonna talk about employment today title one, even though it's my favorite title, we're not gonna talk about my favorite kid today. Title II is state and local government entities, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding many of you guys. Title III, ding, ding, ding, ding, many of you other guys, other folks I should say. And Title IV telecommunications which established the Relay Act. It established the national relay system. And Title V miscellaneous. We're gonna focus on Title II and Title III today. So any entities that are covered under Title II and Title III are covered.

Next please.

Okay, we have a check in poll too. Do you think your agency or organization has obligations under the ADA? Please check yes, if you think yes. No, if you think no. Or I don't know if you don't know. And after you've done that, please submit. Please hit submit. We're gonna give that a few minutes. And then we will go on. Okay, next slide please. So wanna talk a little bit before we get to the definition, I just wanna mention under Title II, we're gonna say this again in a minute state and local government entities have obligations that could be county government. We don't do tons of county in Connecticut I realize, state government, municipalities, water districts, anything public schools, anything that's run by the state have obligations. Title III entities are places you go. It could be the movies, the restaurant, the club, the bar. Or it could be non private, non-profit organizations, social service organizations, doctors' offices, lawyers' offices are the kinds of places that have obligations under Title III. And I just wanted to say that now. So let's get the definition of disability. And we talked about this a little bit last week, but I wanna get a little deeper into it. Under the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act people with disabilities are individuals with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. One or more major life activities is bolded. A record of having such an impairment regarded as having such an impairment.

And like I said, last week you'd think they'd be pretty simple but there are literally thousands of court cases about this. And when I say thousands I'm not exaggerating at all. And we started having an eroding because people with disabilities had to prove our disability first. And we weren't even getting as far as proving there's discrimination. we couldn't even have prove we had a disability. So we did the ADA Amendments Act which clarified who was covered. It didn't it change any words of the law it changed interpretations of the regulation. Next please. So under the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 major life activities include but are not limited to caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communications, working and major bodily functions. Let's go to major bodily functions.

Next slide please.

And under the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 major bodily functions include but are not limited to, legalese there, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth and digestive bowel, bladder, neurological brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine and reproductive functions, making it really clear if you had something like cancer, you're covered under the ADA. If you have HIV/AIDS you're covered under the ADA. And they also said kind of shifted the burden a little bit of proving that you have the disability to the entity saying you don't have the disability, to the government entity to the employer, whatever. Okay, next please. Poll response question two, Shaylin.

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin. And for our second poll a reminder of the question, the question was, do you think that your agency or organization has obligations under the Americans With Disabilities Act, the ADA? And 47 out of 49 folks or 96% of the audience said yes. Zero people said no. And two people or 4% said, I don't know.

- So everyone is correct. The 96% of you that said yes are correct. And the 4% of you that didn't know, thank you for being brave and honest and you are correct. And no one said no and that's a good sign. So we're gonna learn about what those obligations are now. Next slide please. Oh, hold on a second. What do you think the obligations might be? And to whom do you think you might have obligations? Anyone wanna put something in the chat real quickly? If not we'll keep going. We'll give you some time to write into the chat and then I'm gonna keep going. That makes sense, Shaylin?

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin. I'll circle back if we get anyone in the chat. Oh, actually as I say that someone says, so Lemane says making services or resources accessible.

- Yay. And you get a little plastic word game where you can make little words. It's not Wordle but you can make little plastic words out of it. So yay. Next please. If your entity by entity, I mean, you're a nonprofit, your government agency. We call it an entity receives any in all caps federal funding is obligations that are nearly identical to Title II of the ADA and the ADA is the same definition under both laws. So if you're getting it, doesn't matter. If you're getting a dollar or $10 million, you have obligations under 504 to make your program accessible, next please. So equal access to disaster related programs and services, disaster related programs and services must not discriminate against people disabilities. And we're gonna spend on, we're gonna spend some time talking about that, what it means not to discriminate. 'Cause they don't discriminate, that's fine. What does it mean in terms of architecture? What does it mean in terms of providing material in alternative format? What does it mean in terms of sign language interpreters? What does it mean? 'Cause our disability because the nature of people with disabilities, we can't just say thou shalt not discriminate. We have to in a lot of detail, explain what discrimination is and we're gonna be spending a lot of time looking what discrimination is, Next please.

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin. As we move to the next slide. I see Rebecca responding to one of our questions following this last poll, which was around what other obligation, what obligations do folks think they may have and to whom they may have obligations to excuse me and Rebecca shares being on an LVAD, which I looked up that acronym is left ventricle assist device, a machine in a wheelchair, et cetera, would make you entitled to services under the ADA. And also got a note from Rodney saying access to public facilities, access to alternative means of information and services available to the public.

- Okay, and you get a green and orange, very small balloon. And Rodney gets, Rodney gets a little tiny easel, little tiny child's easel, like the two inches wide that you can draw on, like post-it notes basically. So one of the things, let's go to the questions and comments section, the next slide show. And so questions and comments. So please put in your questions and comments now. Now what you said and I lost your name and I'm so sorry. Whose name was that, Shaylin?

- [Shaylin] Rodney and Rebecca.

- Yeah, I remember Rodney and Rebecca didn't stick, Rebecca, you don't have a disability not covered because you use a vent. You're covered because you have whatever condition that makes you use the vent. But yeah, you're covered, because that substantially limits, you have a physical disability that physical or mental impairment, you have physical impairment that substantially limits your ability to breathe, which is a major life activity. Other questions and comments that you see, Shaylin?

- This is Shaylin. Maybe folks are still typing. Feel, take your time. Also wanna remind folks, if you would like to voice your comment or question, feel free to use the raise hand button and we'll call on you to speak. Otherwise we'll circle back to any questions or comments we see in the chat come up.

- And please don't be shy. Okay. Next please. Oh, I see Rebecca has her hand up.

- [Shaylin] Yeah, go ahead Rebecca.

- [Rebecca] My question is when you say that they have a disability regarding these different daily life activities and whatnot. So if somebody has difficulty walking, has a handicap sticker, has back issues and things like that. But at the same time, they do go out and work in the yard or things like that. So which kind of says, oh, well, you're able to do it. Are they covered or not?

- It goes back. It doesn't turn on whether they have a parking sticker or not. Some people parking stickers for reasons you might not understand. Sometimes they go to yard work, some days and not others. A parking sticker doesn't mean a permit doesn't mean you're covered under ADA. You still have to prove you substantially limited in one or more major life activities.

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin, although you may have limitations to major life activities and as people with disabilities, we adapt to everyday life and society that is inaccessible to us. So a lot of times folks with disabilities, although they may have major life impairments towards one activity or another, certainly we are still very active members of our society and contributing members and are very capable of doing many things. Sometimes just need to adapt and change how we go about doing things.

- Right. And I use a scooter all the time when I go out in public now, but I use used to walk and I'd walk around the house and I still walk a fair amount. But the days when I'd get the looks were the days when I needed the parking the most, because I might be in a lot of pain or I might have a lot of fatigue. And the days when I was in my scooter and nobody looked at me a second, gave me a second glance and it's people you can't always see. And I saw something else in the chat, Shaylin.

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin, Rebecca, did we answer the question?

- Sorry, Rebecca.

- [Rebecca] I'm not sure.

- [Shaylin] We can also follow up with additional resources as well around this question. Good questions though.

- Thank you, Rebecca. Sorry about that.

- [Shaylin] No worries. And I see Silamane asks just out of curiosity, you mentioned thousands of cases that involve disabilities. What scenario or sector do you see most of the cases in, example, housing, employment, et cetera.

- Probably employment, probably employment where most of the cases are because that's where we have most of the lawyers doing the litigation and we don't have as much around Title II, but we have some, that's done more by the Department of Justice and stuff, but I'm gonna ask us if we have nothing else in the chat to move on. Is that okay, Shirley?

- [Shaylin] Yes. And if folks have other questions, please feel free to add them in the chat. We will come back to them or we will follow up following.

- We're in no way saying don't ask questions. We're saying we're just gonna move. Next please. So structural and program access requirements. Next please. For emergency planners, structural and program access means that programs and services must be accessible. Let's take a look at what that means. Next slide, please. Programs and services include exercises. We're participating, the partnership is participating in an exercise in Washington State today that they're doing this large, large exercise and that there's a disaster, planning meetings for an exercise or anything else. Disaster recovery centers, DRCs, points of distributions, PRDs, shelters, transportation, next please.

And those are some areas and we could do, we could list every program, but every program needs to be accessible. And structurally accessible includes ADA compliant path of travel to get from where you start getting in restrooms, really important, registrations, all spaces and showers, and constant shelters, showers and constant shelters I should say, next please. And an ADA compliant path of travel just includes non-slip surfaces. It can't be something slippery, no steps or high thresholds. And by high threshold, we mean a half an inch. If it's beveled, meaning there's that little edge that kind of softens it. And a quarter inch, if it's not three quarters of an inch, if it's not, excuse me and compliant ramps where necessary. Visual fire alarms and tactile signage. So even though it's structural access, we're still talking about tactile signage for people with visual disabilities and visual fire alarms for people, with hearing disabilities, people that are deaf and hard of hearing. Next please, now to determine if a facility's ADA compliant, consult with someone who's familiar with ADA and Connecticut's building cold requirements, never assume a facility is accessible, even if it's new, because unfortunately, sometimes they build facilities with non-compliant elements in them. And please don't assume that because someone has a mobility disability, they understand access code. Some people who use wheelchairs understand access code. That's the minority of us. Some choose not to do that. That's the majority of people with disabilities. I've trained a lot of people with disabilities to do access surveys. And let's say, it's accessible. I can get in there, I'll say I don't care. I care is it code compliant, doesn't meet the code or they'll say, I can't get in there. It's not accessible. Maybe they have a different shaped wheelchair. It's like, I don't care. I just wanna hear does meet the code. So it's a level of professionalism. It's hard. It's tedious. It takes a lot of training. It takes a lot of skills to do access surveys. So just don't assume if you're somebody without a disability or that someone who uses a wheelchair or mobility device knows how to do surveys.

Similarly, don't assume that someone who doesn't have a mobility disability can't do surveys. I've done a lot of access surveying in Connecticut. And one of my major partners is somebody without a physical disability. And she's just really good at it. And she's learned how to do it. So the two don't correlate, but don't assume your facility is accessible. Well, it must be accessible 'cause all facilities. No, just check it out, next please. So under Title II of the ADA existing construction, that's pre 1991, all programs must be accessible. All programs must be accessible, not every building or every part of every building. If it's pre-91 must be accessible. That means you move something downstairs. That means you move a vaccine clinic to another accessible location within a similar geographic, same geographic proximity, open the same hours, but everything doesn't have to be accessible, program access understand is an architectural standard. This is the part people get tripped up. It's about how accessible is your architecture.

Okay, next please. So programs can be moved to an accessible part of a building or another part of the building within reasonable geographic proximity. Not gonna be able to do that in shelters as much but there might be some kind of program you can do with it. And again, new is post 1991 and that construction must be accessible. Next please.

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin excuse me. As we go to the next section, we have two questions in the chat. One is from Rodney. He asks, how are persons with disabilities proving they have one as an example with the handicapped parking pass, an officer asks for proof that they are indeed handicapped. Does the individual have a handicapped designation on their ID? How is it proven?

- No, you just have a permit, and we'll have a section. We're gonna add that to the materials we send you about accessible parking. You don't have to prove it. You just have to show the permit. And next question, Shaylin.

- [Shaylin] And this is Shaylin just to add to that, depending on the situation or scenario, you should not need to have to prove your disability.

- Right, right, right. That's right. That's the other part I wanted to say, yes.

- [Shaylin] Absolutely. And certainly more to come on that. Carolyn asks, how do you suggest informing others? That just because an emergency shelter location is a public school, that it meets ADA requirements. In my experience, they typically do not meet ADA requirements.

- Yes. Yes. I second that a million times and public schools do not meet ADA requirements, public schools are not required necessarily, if they're older to meet ADA requirements, 'cause it could be a program access standard. So you could have an old public school next to a hypothetical new public school and they don't have to be accessible. I didn't write the law. They asked me and they didn't care what I thought, and so a school is not necessarily accessible. And I was once serving a school. And I said, when I first started doing this five years ago, I said, wait, is this school used for shelters? And they said, yes, we're a disaster shelter. And I said, well, have you measured to see if it's accessible? I was doing a policy analysis. I wasn't doing structural analysis. And they said, oh, the Red Cross handles all of that. No, no. Red Cross doesn't handle all of that. The school needs to be accessible, but because it needs to doesn't mean it is. And schools are acquired as are all state and local government entities to do something called a self-evaluation where they look at their employment obligations, their general non-discrimination obligations, their equally effective communication obligations and their ability to provide program access and assess that, they're required to do that is do I wanna say by 1992, and they're also required to have done a transition plan, which looks at what barriers are gonna remove, what date they'll remove them by and what individuals responsible for ensuring that happens.

And you can say to school, can we see your self evaluation or your transition plan to see how accessible you are? So that's something we can also let you know about, next please. If that answers everyone's questions. Now we're going to effective communication, next please. Communication with individuals with disabilities must be as effective as communication to people without disabilities, without communication disabilities, communication disabilities are visual disabilities, speech disabilities and hearing disabilities. That is what the law and the regulation of ADA say in 504, next please. In order to provide equally effective communication, sometimes we call them auxiliary aids and services. And that's both hard to say and complicated, but auxiliary aids and services, sometimes called accommodations, but they're really auxiliary aids and services might be required. What does that mean? And what do you gotta do, next please. Sorry about that. I just jumped down one second in my slide here because I am on a different screen.

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin, as you navigate that, Melissa, I see Rebecca sharing a follow up around the handicap placard saying I have found that the police will sometimes ask you for identification to prove that the handicap permit is yours and that you are not using someone else's, excuse me, and I would just like to add to the context of our training today being for emergency management and in the context of disasters and emergencies, it very well may be likely some folks may have lost their handicap placard in the disaster or other things to that nature. And certainly as we've said, we don't need to prove that it is yours, that you have it is what's important, but just want to also remind and and think about those thoughts around if folks do not have it because of the disaster and how we would navigate and what would some alternative practices be in your policies?

- And in sometimes they will check. Like I notice when you talk to the legislative office building they will check on whether they have the right to do that. And they're doing that with a good heart because they're trying to rid of fraud. Like they were checking my permit as you know, they're checking my permit to make sure it's valid as I get in my car using my scooter. So that does happen too, but let's move on and we will again, send you information about that. Let's move on to equally effective communication. So for emergency planners equally effective communication requirements mean that your planning meetings, your activities and your exercises must provide equally effective communication for all of your events, including outreach and follow up. Planners wanna model compliance with law. You are the leaders because you're doing the first steps. So as you're doing the planning, you wanna model compliance with law, that's really important.

Next please.

And some examples of auxiliary aids and services for people with hearing disabilities, American Sign Language interpreters, like we're using today, tactile interpreters for someone who's deaf blind, oral interpreters, for someone who has a hearing impairment. Remote interpreting VRI, communication access, realtime transcription or CART, which we're also using today, assistive listening systems and someone who's gonna something simple, like using a microphone, doesn't have to be a high tech thing. It can be using a microphone. If that's what gets a job done, next please.

Examples of auxiliary aids services for people's speech disabilities include allowing extra time, allowing the person to use a communication board, speech synthesizer. If they've lost those things in disaster, maybe you make a communication board with letters of the alphabet or commonly used phrases in it. Paper and pen if that person can write using a screen like a phone or a computer if someone can navigate that. So those are examples of some auxiliary aids and services for people with speech disabilities next please. And let's look at some examples of auxiliary aids and services for people with visual disabilities, large print. We can all do that in our computers easily. 18 point 18 font is good. Readers. If you have a short piece of material, it's okay to have a reader, screen reader compliant electronic material, all your websites need to be accessible. The suggested standard is called WCAG and there's a new version of that out and braille. A lot of people don't use braille right now, but some people do and find it really important. Questions and comments about any of this or equally effective communication. Do we see anything in the chat?

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin, not at the moment, but certainly don't hesitate folks.

- And guess what our next slide is. We are taking a five minute break. It is 9:49. So let's be back here at 9:54. See you in five. I'm back when people are ready, Shaylin. Can you hear me?

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin. I can hear you and see you. And I think we are ready to roll.

- Yay. Yay. This is exciting. So let's go to the next slide or our first slide in general non-discrimination obligations. So remember how I talked about how what's discrimination, discrimination can be not be providing an accessible facility. Discrimination cannot be not providing equally effective communications, or it can be not meeting your general non-discrimination obligations. And right now we're gonna look at some of those, what they call general non-discrimination obligations. Next please. So let's look what they mean. The general non-discrimination requirements, surcharges prohibited. We talked about this before. Can't charge someone for their interpreter. Service animals must be allowed in shelters and disaster recovery centers and every place else, except for like an operating rooms, service animals have to be allowed there. Just remember that, that happens a lot in disasters.

Service animals are prohibited from being in and get separated from their owners and that can ruin a service animal. And that service animal will be forced to be retired. And that's just devastating. You can't have discriminatory eligibility criteria and you've gotta provide people with disability equal opportunity to participate and benefit. And we're gonna be looking at all of those things, next please, programs and services must be provided in the most integrated setting to the needs of the person that's from the Olmstead decision, which you're celebrating the 23rd anniversary of today, it's the 23rd anniversary of today, and reasonable modifications to policies and procedures, practice and procedures must be made. And we're gonna talk about what that is as well. And we've talked about that a little bit before. Next. So for emergency planners, these requirements mean the planners must understand the legal requirements and incorporating them into plans and exercises and in practices, when actually disaster actually happens and they may need to assist in a disaster should access needs not be met. So you guys might be the ones saying, okay, I know there's a disaster going on folks, but we've got to keep our emergency accessibility practices in place. Okay, next please.

- This is Shaylin. We have a couple questions regarding service animals, and I perhaps this is something we also follow up with as a resource, but I will ask the two questions. One from Glen, he asks, is there a definition or specific animals that are considered service animals? And Donald asks, what is used to show proof the animal is a service animal.

- Service animals are dogs or miniature horses. Those are the only two service animals that are service animals and they're animals that perform a task for somebody with a disability, that task might be leading them. That task might be retrieving objects. That task might be notifying them if their lithium levels, their medication levels are off. Or if they're about to have a seizure, they don't need to prove that a service animal, you don't need to prove that a service animal is a service animal. They need to be under the control. As we said last week, under the control and supervision of the owner, they must be housebroken and behaved, well behaved.

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin. And I see Susan asking, is there service animal in Connecticut? I'm wondering Susan, if maybe you wanna elaborate a little bit on that question. And Rick asks, what if I train my own service animal?

- Hi, Rick, you can train your own service animal. You need to go through proper procedures to do that. But as long as the result is the same, you can train your own service animal.

- [Shaylin] And Rick, I see your hand up. Go ahead.

- Go ahead, Rick.

- [Shaylin] You can take yourself off mute, but you are on mute right now.

- Is that better?

- There you are.

- Hey Rick.

- Hello everybody. So what do you mean by do the proper procedures? Like I have a dog, I train him. I use him to for leverage, pushing my chair. He doesn't necessarily pull me and I lean on him for leverage. And other than companion, he also provides protection. So what do you mean by procedures?

- I wanna get back to you more on that, Rick and send you more about that, okay.

- Thank you.

- I wanna get you more information, 'cause I wanna keep this specific to emergency management. Thanks to the question, and I wanna add that in. About training your own service animals and what that looks like.

- Because I imagine that procedure, would've something to do with getting them into the shelter, 'cause otherwise you are gonna take my word for it. I wouldn't have any documentation for it.

- You don't have to have documentation. Think about it, your home is destroyed in a hurricane. You're not gonna have your documentation handy. And there's a couple other questions that I see. I see three other questions, Shaylin.

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin, yes. And then we'll we'll call on Joe. So Andy says, so emotional support animals are not a valid concern for emergency shelters.

- Correct. You can let them in, but you don't have to.

- [Shaylin] Correct, service animals are always allowed. And Jose says are service animals allowed to accompany patients in an ambulance during transport to emergency rooms disasters?

- I don't know the answer to that. I will get back to you on that. I know they're not allowed in OR so I'm not sure of the answer to that. And again, that's something I can get back to you on, but that's a great question. Thank you.

- [Shaylin] Great questions coming in the chat. I also see Carolyn ask or mention also service animals are not required to wear a vest or any identification though it is helpful if you don't want excited people to try to distract your service animal. Good point, Carolyn. Good point and correct, Carolyn. On all counts.

- And Harley says a clarifying question. If self trained must be a dog or small horse only and yes, as Melissa mentioned, service animals under the ADA are dogs or miniature horses. And Jose clarifies around his question on transport to emergency rooms with your service animal, he says primarily due to restricted spaces in ambulances. And I see many thank yous for the responses as well. And then I see-

- Many thank yous to you, Joe.

- [Joe] Yes. Good morning. I just wanted to comment on the self training. I do have , a facility, but I have identification for her passing a public access test. So all dogs, no matter whether you, whether you train them or you have them professionally trained, they have to pass a public access test in order to be able to go into anti public settings.

- And that's a Connecticut thing. We'll get back to that, 'cause that's a Connecticut thing.

- Okay.

- Okay. Thank you guys.

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin, great questions. Thank you all. Please keep putting them in the chat and we will either address them or follow up with them. And certainly this area around service animals will be one area we follow up on.

- Yes. And so looking at for reasonable modifications to policies, practice, and procedures. What that includes, now that might sound like a big, scary thing. I have to modify my policy. Tactically, allowing a service animal is a modification of a policy completing a form who can't do it because of the disability. Plus something you're probably gonna do is kinda like a common courtesy thing or just an efficiency thing. Allowing someone to have a support person with them is really important. Reasonable modifications are not required when they fundamentally alter the nature of a program. So an example I give around vaccines or a disaster. If you say to someone I want a vaccine and I want is when we're doing mass vaccines. And I want the mass vaccine site, which is a convention center to be emptied because I can't be in a space with lots of people. Well, that's a fundamental alteration of the program, but they then don't get to say, no, you can't have a vaccine. You figure out a way they can have a vaccine. Maybe they do it outside. Maybe they do in a quiet space within that larger venue or maybe they get their vaccine at home,

Next please.

Other reasonable modification to policy practices, procedure include allowing someone with a disability to standing in line, to advance in the line. And again, reasonable modifications are not required when they fundamentally alter the nature of the program. So something simple, having a policy saying if someone's having a hard time of standing. If they're having a hard time emotionally, if they're being over stimulated, allowing someone to advance in a line to register for FEMA or do any of those things, that you do at a disaster recovery center or do at a shelter, next please. We look at some your types of obligations that you have during disasters, next please. Wanna look at equal access to disaster related programs and services like notification is major in a disaster. We all know that, right? We all know also it doesn't happen as well as it should. This is the law. Not my opinion. Notifications should be ASL interpreted and must be captured. I think they should be, I think they must be, it's legally required that they be captioned. They should be ASL interpreted, in Connecticut they did a pretty good job. We got them to do a pretty good job around COVID to have interpreters there, hopefully that sticks for other disasters, alternatives to door knocks must be used like a strobe light or something like that. Just knocking on someone's door. Doesn't help someone who's deaf or hard of hearing, maps must be accessible, meaning they're on a screen, that's screen reader compliant or they're tactile and, or they're tactile. Those are some examples.

Next please.

Now, when you're doing exercises, you wanna look at things like you want exercise for building evacuation. You also wanna think for geographic area evacuation, geographic area evacuation makes building evacuation look straightforward. Most times when you should evacuate a building or not can be a little bit questionable during an earthquake, but you gotta figure out how to get people outta that building, not just like a fire drill, but how to get people out, how to get people out when somebody has a heart attack in the middle, how to get people out when something unforeseen happens, when there's a chemical leak in the building and because of an earthquake or another disaster all those scenarios, you gotta look at. Geographic area evacuation is something where people with disabilities often get left out and left behind because there's no accessible transportation. People don't know where people with disabilities are and we get left behind, next please.

Shelters must be structurally accessible, provide equally effective communication and meet general non-discrimination obligations. If a shelter isn't structurally accessible and there's one next door that does the same things. That's okay. If it's exactly the same and within a reasonable geographic proximity, the functionally shelters need to be accessible, next please. And again, like we said before, structurally accessible shelters include ADA compliant passive travel, toilets and showers, hots registration in all spaces. And again, don't assume because it's a school or public building it is accessible. So emergency managers need to be looking at that and need to be checking for that, as you're planning, okay, people are gonna go to X school. People are gonna go to X community center. Is it really accessible?

Check that without making assumptions and maybe you wanna partner with the school or the community center to do an access audit, next please. Equally effective communication includes relay or sign language interpreters, print material multiple formats, tactile sign language and announcements. So as you're doing a meeting, you might wanna have relay or on site interpreters, print material, multiple formats, tactile sign language, and announcements. That one, say you have those things, and two are accessible themselves. And good effective communication includes ASL and CART. Now, why would you have a sign language interpreter and captioning? I get asked that question a lot, because American Sign Language is a language in and of itself with its own grammar and its own syntax. So if I became deaf today, I would like CART because I'm fluent in English. If I was born deaf and my native language was sign language, my first language, excuse me, was sign language. I might not be fluent in English, so I need it to be in ASL and that's just something know. Okay, Next please.

And equal access disaster related programs and services, shelters must meet general non-discrimination obligations, including making reasonable modifications to policies and practices and allowing service animals. Next please. Just gimme one second because I'm catching up with you. So for sheltering, you're required to have quiet areas. Service animals must be loud. Again, we get tons of calls on our hotline saying they're not letting in my service animal, personal assistance must be allowed. Personal assistance must be provided. Dietary accommodations must be provided and they can be no segregation or separation of families. They can't say we're having the disabled people. And in Connecticut, fortunately, we can't do this in Connecticut, in other states, they're required to do this under their law, but they can't say we're having disabled people in this shelter. And non-disabled people in the other shelter. And we just have to split up families, but you shouldn't be splitting up within shelters either. But segregation is separation happens a lot in other states and is legal in those states, but that's a whole other story. Yay, Connecticut. Next please. And disaster related programs and services must be provide in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the person with disability, sound familiar? That's under Olmstead. Questions and comments on this section? Shaylin, do you see questions?

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin, I see Gretchen has her hand up. Go ahead Gretchen.

- Hey Gretchen.

- How are you?

- Great, how are you?

- All right. I just wanted to go back to the public access test for service animals. I would think that a public access test would be an extra requirement that is not under the ADA and so doing a public access test. And I couldn't find anything online while we were all talking, would be discriminatory. So I think you only can ask the two questions when somebody comes in, you can't ask them to show up, have public access test.

- No, you cannot ask them to show up at a public access test when someone comes into a shelter, I'll say that definitively, I wanna check on the legality of public access tests afterwards. 'Cause I can't really do that while I'm doing this. And I'm saying that's why it might be a connect.

- [Gretchen] I just think that that would violate the ADA.

- I agree with you, Gretchen, that's right.

- [Gretchen] I just don't want people going away thinking that all the dogs that may come or miniature horses come into their shelter might have to have this public access test.

- No, you cannot. Thank you.

- [Gretchen] They're all over the place by companies wanting to make money, but there's nothing in there in the law that says that.

- And to clarify, service dogs, if I say it's a service dog or it's a service miniature horse, it must be allowed into shelters and other spaces. The only time when it wouldn't be allowed is if it wasn't under my control of the dog was barking or biting or doing those kinds of things. Service animals must be allowed. So thank you for emphasizing that, Gretchen, and you're absolutely right.

- Thank you.

- Thank you. Okay, we're gonna go, next please. We're gonna quickly to the national planning framework and there is a method to why I'm doing this, next please. Saying why is she talking to us about this? What's it got to do with us? The national planning frameworks describe how the whole community works together to achieve the national preparedness goal. You might be wondering what is the national preparedness goal? It is to have a secure and resilient nation with the capabilities required across the whole community to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond, to and recover from threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk. It's a great goal. We get left out and left behind as people with disabilities all the time, but it's a great goal. Next please. And the national planning, planning frameworks, describe how the whole community works together to achieve the national preparedness goal.

That goal that I just said is a cornerstone for implementation of the national preparedness system. Otherwise known as NIMS. Next please. Excuse me, NIMS is a national incident management system. I knew what I meant. It guides all levels of government non-governmental organizations and NGOs, nonprofits, and the private sector to work together, to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to and recover from incidents. It provides stakeholders across the whole community with a shared vocabulary. That's why we're all doing this so we can share the vocabulary and systems and processes to successfully deliver capabilities described in the national preparedness system. So that's the national incident management system or NIMS, next please. Now here's what we're getting to.

Emergency support functions come from the national framework and they're called emergency support functions. We abbreviate that sometimes to ESFs and ESFs provides structure for coordinating federal inter-agency support for a federal response to an incident, describes the federal coordinating functions that group resources and capabilities into functional areas most frequently needed in a national response. That's from the national response framework, next please. Now the first ESF, there's 15 national ESFs, and the first one, is 15 national ones and Connecticut has, I wanna say 20 and they're parallel, but they're different.

There's a link to Connecticut's emergency support functions in this presentation that you'll get, but there's 15 national ones, next please. And we're going to come to one of my favorite ESFs, the first one is emergency management, emergency support function, number six, and it coordinates, the delivery fiddle, mass care, emergency assistance, housing and human services. When local, tribal and state response and recovery needs exceed their capacity. ESF6 goes to mass care, emergency assistance, housing and human services. So it's about mass care, emergency assistance, housing and human services kind of in the community directly is what ESF6 is about. And you can't discriminate as you provide your ESF6 functions, right, next please. Now we're gonna go to ESF8. And if you don't get the distinction between these right away, that's fine. Takes a while. ESF8 is planning and coordination of federal public health, healthcare delivery, and emergency response systems to minimize and or prevent emergencies from occurring and to detect and characterize health incidents. So ESF6 is the human services mass care, ESF8 is the healthcare delivery, next please.

And EFS8 provides medical care and human services to those effective, reduces public health and human service effects on the community and enhances community resilience to respond to a disaster, Next please. So who's responsibility is sheltering? Always county or local government. Sometimes the state has responsibilities depending on the situation, local governments can contract with other entities like the American Red Cross, which is established by charters, a nonprofit organization, but as a special charter with the United States Government or the Salvation Army, sometimes the county manages shelters or other entities like Red Cross Supplement Service. And sometimes it's popup shelters, but the responsibility always falls back on the government, not the entity operating it may share responsibility, but the larger obligation goes to deep pockets, and that's the state and local government entities.

Next please.

As I just said, the American Red Cross has a relationship with government. They have authority given by the federal government. They're not a government entity, but they have a charter and they have a shared responsibility for mass care with FEMA, next please. Now our civil rights obligations are often delegated to charities, federal and state government, as I said, still retain their obligations. They can't contract those obligations away. They can't say well, we've contracted a Salvation Army, Red Cross. And the problem is that charity organizations often follow a medical approach to disability and that influences institutional bias, let's get to that. So let's look at some charity and disasters and there's nothing wrong with any of these organizations, VALS or voluntary agency liaison support specialists, they are great. BOADS are voluntary organizations active in disasters. They are great. Co-eds are community organizations active in disasters and durable medical equipment, consumable medical supplies, and other disaster resources are referred for donations and charitable solutions, but there are civil rights, and we're letting charities protect them. So that's just something to be aware of for everybody.

And now I wanna talk about the emergency support functions again, if we can go to the next slide, Shaylin, sorry. There's a gap in what people with disabilities need that none of the ESFs cover, people often say there's a gap between ESF6 and ESF8. There's an ESF called logistics, but it's not specifically for the kind of logistics it could be, but they need to be adapted because there's a gap for people with disabilities that none of the ESFs cover, emergency management isn't inherently inclusive of the rights and needs of people with disabilities and the gap between that and ESF8 providing healthcare can lead to institutionalization of disabled people. That's why we're telling you all about the ESF stuff. We wanna keep us outta institutions, next please. I'm gonna quickly go through mutual aid agreements. They established the legal basis for two more entities to share resources. They may authorize mutual aid between two more neighboring communities among all jurisdictions within a state, between estates, between federal agencies and or internationally. And since most jurisdictions don't maintain sufficient resource levels to handle extreme such events independently mutual aid agreements provide means for jurisdictions to augment their resources when needed for high demand incidents, next please.

Mutual aid agreements can support all mission areas, be established before, during or after incidents, ideally before. And they can be between governments, non-governmental organizations, maybe Centers for Independent Living and the private sector, next please. And we'll talk a little bit more about institutionalization during and after disasters. We talked a little bit about it. So this is a little bit of review, but we'll go into a little bit more depth, next please. And again, institutional bias is the unconscious or conscious or individual belief and systemic practice that people with disabilities belong and are better off in institutions such as nursing homes. Ageism can be, but isn't always a factor, next please. And a big example of institutional bias are waivers, in recent disasters, like all modern disasters, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid CMF have issued what we call blanket 1135 waivers. And they say you can waive the three day hospitalization before a person is transferred into long term care facility. They also waive pre-admission screening in institutions, such as nursing homes, next please. So under these waivers, people can be-

- [Shaylin] Melissa, real quick. Before we go to the next slide, we did have a question in the chat from Harley who says, do all local municipalities need to provide a shelter or can they refer to a regional shelter? And I'd like to respond first, If you don't mind, Melissa.

- Please.

- [Shaylin] Sharing, to say it would depend on the magnitude of the event or the disaster emergency. And also depends on the plans that you already have in place. One thing is that can be difficult to do is to create the plan as you are responding to a disaster. So looking at what the plans are, understanding them and modifying them before disasters or events happen so that everyone is on the same page and understanding what those plans for sheltering looks like.

- And if you have a town in Eastern Connecticut, like Columbia, that I think is like 300 people, you might wanna partner with other people too. We have very, very, we have 169 towns in this teeny state of Connecticut. So, yes. So if we could get to slide 93, yes, we are on slide 93. Thank you, Shaylin. So people can be placed in nursing facilities, say they're homes. If they're in their homes and they'd have a personal care assistant or attendant and they call 911, under 1135 where you conceivably end up in a nursing home without going to hospital, you can end up in a nursing home from an emergency department or from your hospital room. If you're being transferred out, would benefit another patient. Having nothing to do with your own needs. Just saying, next please.

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin to show an example. We saw a lot of this during the, and continuing during the COVID-19 pandemic through the public health emergency declaration and the COVID disaster presidential declaration, which allows for the 1135 waiver. And certainly when states were implementing and sometimes continue to implement their crisis standards of care. We saw a lot of impacts on people with disabilities being institutionalized through that as well.

- Yes, thank you so much, next please. And again, the consequence of institutionalization were always dire. They're much more dire now that COVID is with us, but people get lost. People get sick, people lose their jobs, homes and independence and people die. And that is real, next please. There is a paper that's published and written by the National Council on Disabilities called preserving our freedom and the institutionalization of people with disabilities during disasters and how NCD the National Council on Disability works is they contract out their report writing to entities. And so Marcy Roth and I were functionally were listed as the, I think I'm the director of research and she's the principal investigator, but we did writing on that. So that's something just FYI and to know, and please take a look at that. If you have any doubt, and this was all written before COVID and we did things like we foyer CMS to see if they track people with disabilities and they send us a blank piece of paper saying, nope. When people with disabilities go to nursing homes, did you track that? Nope. Next please. Do you have any questions or have we gotten to them all, Shaylin, or can people put them in?

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin. If folks have any questions, feel free to let us know in the chat or feel free to raise your hand, see if anyone has any questions or comments. Otherwise we do have other opportunities for it and we'll come back if I see anything in the chat.

- Next please, Shaylin. Now we're looking at inclusive planning strategies, next please. So how do you do as emergency planners? How do you implement inclusive disaster planning strategies? First one, comply with the law without being asked that should kind of be a given, but having interpreters there, if it's a public event and you don't know the specific people that are coming, having it in an accessible space, having your invitations say you're gonna have interpreters or how to request interpreters, having your invitations be screen reader compliant and accessible, modeling that compliance is a huge welcome sign for people with disabilities. And the next I'd invite you to go beyond compliance to do inclusive disaster planning. And we're gonna talk about that in the next slide, please. Next slide please. What do I mean beyond compliance? Well, first you're gonna meet your legal obligations and then work with people with disabilities to prioritize disabled people's experience throughout disaster planning, mitigation, response, recovery, and reconstruction. Next please. So it's not just the one disaster, and then you wanna include beyond compliance. You wanna include using a disability specific trauma informed approach using respectful non ableist language like we've talked about, creating plain language materials and maintaining an intersectional framework. We're always cognizant of the fact that people can be part of more than one marginalized group. So I can be someone with a disability and still be a person of color, and I can be a person of color with a disability and still be from the LGBTQ community and all of those multiple margin. And I can still experience homelessness or houselessness, all of those kinds of things, and just continue to look at things intersectionally. And that's really important too, next please.

- [Shaylin] Shaylin, before we move to the next slide, just wanted to add to the concept of compliance and inclusive practices and planning. When we are talking and looking through our plans, like we were discussing on shelters that are available and what our plans say around that. Another piece of that is including what shelters are accessible. What type of accessible features are there and not just for your internal emergency management purposes, but that is published to the public so that people with disabilities know where they can go that is accessible and that they can reach closest to them. It's a big gap that we see time and time again, after each and every disaster and is certainly a practice that we really encourage folks to really highlight what your accessibility features are at shelters and that they are welcoming to people with disabilities.

- That's huge. Thank you, Shaylin, next slide please. So you want to connect with the disability community. You wanna contact Centers for Independent Living. Guess what? You're in touch with people from Centers for Independent Living today, the State Independent Living Council, the SILC, and you're in touch with the SILC today and other disability led and disability focus groups, next please. Now let's look at Centers for Independent Living, Centers for Independent Living are disability led, cross disability, locally administered. And they're nonprofit organizations, they provide advocacy and support to assist people with disabilities of all ages, to live independently and fully integrated lives in the community. Nobody lives at a center for independent living, and that might be counterintuitive for some of you, and SILCs are response for the unique needs of each community and other services that SILCS offer can vary from center to center, but they can include assistance with housing, education, employment, benefits, assistive technology, medical needs, personal assistance services among other things, Next please. Core services for centers for independent living include information referral, peer counseling, individual and systems advocacy, independent living skills training and transition services for both youth transition and nursing facility transition, and SILCs can and have been great resources in disasters. So that's for disasters and public health emergencies. Like COVID, like other disasters. And I wanna say one SILC has gotten reimbursement from FEMA. Is that something Shaylin, you can?

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin, FEMA public assistance, which is one of the programs FEMA provides in a presidential declared disaster for infrastructure support to localities. They do have a reimbursement process for private nonprofits that are eligible, and we've experienced with a center for independent living here in Pennsylvania, in North Central Pennsylvania during the COVID-19 presidential declared disaster to access that reimbursement mechanism for their services of transitioning people out of nursing facilities for a temporary time period in a hotel, motel or dormitory for a non-congregate sheltering while they transitioned long term to long term community supports and living in the community. We've also seen this as an example in Louisiana, in response to hurricanes and centers for independent livings that provide personal assistance services, being contracted by their localities and receiving that FEMA public assistance reimbursement. It's a good and promising practice. A lot of advocacy is still needed around it and the policy, but certainly something that we at the partnership can help folks navigate if folks are interested when the time comes.

- Next slide, Shaylin, please. So more inclusive disaster planning strategies. So you know what the centers are, how can they help you emergency managers in a disaster? They might be able to identify locations of some disabled people where they are. They might be points of distribution. The good news is we know they're accessible. They might be able to identify accommodations or auxiliary aids or services, and they might be able to collaborate as Shaylin was just alluding to in response and recovery, next please. So when you're doing inclusive disaster planning, you wanna invite people with disabilities to your table, to your planning meetings, to your exercises, to your conferences, just invite the disability community, say you're gonna have interpreters there. Say it's gonna be an accessible place, have your invitations be accessible as well. So do those things that speaks volumes that speaks volumes that you've thought about that. And that's really meaningful and that's really welcoming to the disability community. And it means you're compliant with law also by the way. So that's one thing you can do, next please.

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin. Before we go to the next slide, I'd like to read a question from Gretchen, Gretchen asks, can you talk a little more about compliance? What are some of the issues with compliance that you have seen in past disasters? And if you don't mind, Melissa, I'll chime in first.

- Please, you should.

- [Shaylin] And Gretchen, great question. As I mentioned prior, the concept around accessible shelters and what accessible shelters are available, as we say, all shelters should be including compliance and accessibility throughout, but we often know that that is not the case. So at least knowing where and what shelters are accessible is really, really important and how to get there and information that is equally effective communication in different alternative formats, plain language, and actionable language for people, but also around effective communication. When we're talking about alerts and warnings and notifications, having them be in accessible formats when we are having public broadcasts and having the interpreter in screen and in frame that is easy to see and having those captions available on screen, these are all things that go into the planning process. And if they're in the plans, we need to make sure that they are ready to go when an event occurs or is it going to occur?

And so these pieces around equally effective communication, structural access, but also when we are providing any service to the public, such as transportation, if transportation to evacuate out of a locality is being provided to the public, we also need to be providing accessible transportation options. So that may mean contacting your local service that has accessible vehicles available and working with them to have those vehicles available to transport people, or perhaps contracting your local paratransit company so that their vehicles are available to transport people to shelters. The important thing is that we are transporting people to the other public locations, that other people are going to the public, the general public, and not special needs shelters or hospitals or nursing facility type settings. So also making sure we're being mindful of our social model of disability and not the medical model, but Melissa, do you have anything else you'd like to add to?

- Sure, and you summarized that really, really well, Shaylin, and this is only two hour training. I could give you a list for probably two hours, Gretchen. And I think one of the things is shelters need to understand that they need to accept people of personal assistance and they need to provide personal assistance. Because what happens is you might say, oh, you belong in a hospital, go to the hospital. It's easier. I don't know what to do with you. I'm overwhelmed. I'm confused. It's not that shelter, people are bad people, I'm overwhelmed, I'm confused. I don't know that I have to accept you. I don't know how to meet your needs, 'cause I haven't been trained. And that's where the planning comes in during the training, you just go to the hospital. The hospital's like there's a whole lot of people more sick than you that have more needs, just go to a nursing home, just go to a nursing home. And that's how we get institutionalized and that's how we die.

- [Shaylin] And this is Shaylin, and that is why a good practice is to have those contracts in place with personal assistant service agencies so that they are ready to go and are available at shelters. Because oftentimes we know people with disabilities are not always with their personal assistant workers and may not be with them in the disaster or may be themselves impacted during the disaster. And it's really important that we continue to maintain our independence and safety throughout.

- And that personal assistant also has a family and a life and all of those things too. So I'm gonna pull us back to slide 106, which is the next, Shaylin. And next thing I wanna invite you to do as emergency managers is go to disability community tables, congratulations. You all get a fabulous prize of your choice. You're already doing that. You're doing it right now. Continue to build relationships from today. Talk to the people you're meeting on the calls today. See if you can share lists, if Molly can share mailing list. Just talk to that, get on disability community mailing list, get in touch with your local center for independent living. And we're gonna give you links to do that and the resources, next please. So here is my question for you and this is for emergency management people mainly, but other people can certainly feel free to answer how we will change or expand disaster planning based on what we've discussed today and what organizations individuals might you add to your planning group or team, and what remaining questions do you have? We've got scenarios and plenty of things to do after this. So we're not at the end, but think about that. Think about how you would change it from how you thought you were gonna do it in the beginning. Would you do things differently than you've been doing them? And what might you add to your planning group or team based on what the requirements are?

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin, friendly reminder. Anyone would like to raise their hand to voice their comments, you're more than welcome to.

- Sometimes as we're waiting, we've been known to play the theme from "Jeopardy", but how much yourselves, Gretchen?

- [Gretchen] I figured out, I mean, I'm not the disaster planner. I'm hoping that the ones from New Haven are on, but I think that for everyone who's on this, it might be good to just pull out your plan, first of all, and see, from today's training where you've addressed the issues for people with disabilities and where maybe that's not happening. Like have you made a plan for personal assistance? Do you have your transportation all set up? How are you ensuring that you're gonna have an interpreter at your press conferences or any kind of events like that? How are you gonna ensure that those interpreters are actually on the screen? That's still problematic with a lot of TV stations, reminding them that that's an integral part of what you're supposed to be doing. So just even grabbing your disaster plan and taking a look at it, how have you addressed the needs of people with disabilities and look at it with the goal of keeping people out of institutional settings, because from all the things I've heard from you before more people end up staying and dying there because they went to an institution rather than being in a general shelter with family or others who is sort of in that same boat and with the shelter goal of being everybody to get home.

So I would think if anything, that's the first step that you would wanna do. And I know that we have some resources maybe checking with your independent living center in your area to talk to them about them your plan. What kind of things do they think might be missing and how can they help you sit down with a group of people with disabilities in your area and talk about the things that might have been problematic for them. And I'll be quiet now, but you know, those are the things that I think are sort of you're at the starting line for a review, 'cause I know that disaster that people with disabilities are part of disaster planning. And you know, I've talked to the people in region two. And I know that people in New Haven are planning, but maybe there are some things that aren't in that plan that should be, or haven't been thought about or just need updating.

- This is Melissa, before we go to the next question, I just wanna add, I wanna stress plans are really important and even more important than having the plan or equally important to having the plan is exercising that plan. And like I said, I'm participating and Shaylin and Herman are participating and Jean are participating in a five hour long exercise, tabletop exercise today with Washington State. We're gonna talk about Washington State in a minute. Eileen Healy has a question.

- [Eileen] I actually have a comment, Melissa. Just to let other folks know that Connecticut has five independent living centers and those five centers do cover the entire state. So you may not find one in your local town, but you will find one that will cover your town.

- And this is, thank you Eileen. I really appreciate it. And there's a link to that and the resources as well. So thank you, Eileen. Okay, next please. Next slide. Gonna give you folks a scenario, a coworker tells you that while they appreciate thinking about access. There's no need to worry about that because the Red Cross handles all of that. Your response? I would respond by being silent as well. And I'd kind of given away the answer to this, but no, the Red Cross doesn't handle all of that and you still have to do planning and it comes down to you. It comes down to state local government entities first, and that's really, really important to understand the Red Cross's obligations, but they're not to do all of the planning. And I see Shaylin saying thank you to Donald.

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin, Donald mentioned just as we were finishing up the last slide, he says, our town plan includes the suggestions you have presented, however, we will review it with a closer look on how we have included your points of view. This will take some time and I was just saying great and thank you.

- Thank you so much, Donald. Let's go to the next slide, Shaylin.

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin. Just wanna add to that point that Melissa had added early is plans are great and always important. And also as important is to exercise those plans with the disability community, with people with disabilities real life experience.

- And again, you never pretend that someone has a disability when they don't. You never pretend someone has a disability that they don't have because that doesn't work either for the same reasons that not planning, acting like you have a disability when you don't, that kind of simulation never works, next please. Oh, scenario two, you are on the next slide, Shaylin, you're ahead of me. So you're an emergency management planning coordinator. What steps do you take to ensure that your meetings are compliant with ADA Rehab Act requirements, in person, and when they're virtual? Gonna let you take some time to either, please feel free to raise your hands too. Oh, and Gretchen gets a plastic T-Rex, and Eileen gets an elephant shaved water squirter by the way for a fabulous prize. So what steps do you take? Well, if it's in person, what's the first thing you gotta do? If it's in person, if virtual what's the first thing you gotta do, you gotta invite people, right? You need to invite people, that invitation needs to be accessible. You need to say you're gonna have sign language interpreters. You need to say, you're going to have that it's going to be an accessible facility, which means you need to find an accessible facility. You need to find interpreters. You need to find captioning if it's needed. And if it's a small meeting and a small group, you can ask if interpreters are needed and you can ask if captioning is needed.

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin. And I see Silamane auxiliary aids for speech, hearing and visual disabilities.

- To provide equally effective communication. You get a matchbox Lamborghini in the color of your choice. Oh, thank you so much. Yes?

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin, if I could just add to that, to this slide, the concept of in person or virtual, when we're talking at least around accessibility of equally effective communication, like American Sign Language interpreters, and CART captions or captioning. I know we've all been in the virtual world for quite a while now, we're pretty used to it. But before we were so involved in virtual spaces, we also really need to remember that we have both ASL interpreters and captioning in person and in virtual events, I think this might be something we may just need a refresher on as we start to get back in person with folks, but it's a good reminder to have.

- Right, the only different thing you need to do, I'll think of something extra. I say the only thing different need to do is you have to be concerned about the accessibility of the space and just 'cause you've had meetings there before doesn't mean it's accessible. And just because people who use wheelchairs doesn't doesn't mean it's ADA compliant. So just know that, next please.

- [Shaylin] This is Shaylin, also Carolyn mentions also CART is not perfect, and having slides available after is a huge help. Good point.

- Absolutely positively, absolutely positively. And a summary of the meeting and all of those things. Yes. And I see something else, Shaylin.

- [Shaylin] And I also see comment saying disaster preparedness plans are incomplete if they do not include a plan for disabled people.

- Yes. So let me give you some promising practices here. Promising practices. You wanna have regular meetings with stakeholders from across sectors and across the disability community to identify barriers and create collaborative solutions. It's not a dominoes and we're going to come up with this thing. It's a collaboration and working together and stakeholders should include emergency management agencies, public health, decision and policy makers and disability-led and disability-related organizations. So don't figure like Counsel on Developmental Disabilities, your protection and advocacy system like Disability Rights Connecticut, you said all of those organizations as well. Next please. So the next promising practices is the coalition on inclusive emergency management planning or CIEP, as in Washington State. And we've had the fortune, the good fortune of working with CIEP a lot. And in Washington State, they join our calls. We have calls each and every day and they join us quite frequently. And CIEP is a statewide cross disability advisory group that works with state and local emergency management stakeholders to build disability, accessibility and inclusion into all aspects of emergency management. Next please. And, sorry about that. And the CIP-

- [Shaylin] One moment please, Melissa. Sorry, had a technical difficulty. Just recalibrate. Okay. We're good to go.

- Okay. And the Coalition for Inclusive Emergency Management Planning in Washington State is funded by a grant from the Washington Department of Public Health, Emergency Preparedness and Response. So it's Department of Health, Public Emergency Preparedness and Response, and it's funded by them. And it goes to the state independent living council, which is pretty interesting. And Molly didn't pay me to say that, she didn't even know about it. Next please. Wanted to talk about your areas of interest. You had a couple of questions outside of that, you stated your questions, many of which I've covered a couple of which I haven't. And I just wanna touch upon your areas of interest. Not 'cause they're not important, but I just in interest of time, I just wanna respond a little bit. So let's go to the next slide, Shaylin.

Somebody asked about the best practice for having good registries to identify the locations of people with disabilities. The bad news is there are no good registries. Registries are not considered a good practice because first of all, people with disabilities don't stay at home in one place. So you don't know where we are. Registries are costly, ineffective and ineffective. And I have a link in here to the registry in Houston and the registry in Houston. They spent millions and millions and millions of dollars and they either have not used in disasters or not used it at all successfully in disasters. And they have many disasters between flooding and hurricanes in Houston. They have many disasters and it just doesn't get them what they want. And this is linked to an article from the one of the major Houston papers about that, that demonstrates a little bit more. Also they create false expectations in with people disabilities. I don't have to personal plan. I don't have to think about anything. I don't have to know where my shelter is. I don't have to be notified because they will come and they will get me and they will take care of me, and people die when that happens.

- [Shaylin] And this is Shaylin. If I could just add to that also, the one minute trailer that we watched last week called The Right to be Rescued from Rooted in Rights is a really great demonstration of how registries can create a false expectation that you will get saved and how it's often not the case. So encourage folks to take a look at that and we'll also make sure that's available resource as well for folks.

- So I would like to say there are good registries 'cause people say, oh, we need to make the registry better, registries aren't good. If you wanna know where people with disabilities are, you might wanna talk to a center for independent living. You might wanna talk to your senior center. You can really might wanna talk to paratransit. They know where people disabilities are, but you don't wanna create a registry out of that for all the reasons that I talked about. I hope that makes sense to you. Next slide please.

And someone asked about evacuating hospitals and nursing homes. And even if I had the full two hours, I couldn't adequately touch on that, but there are emergency preparedness requirements for Medicare and Medicaid, participating providers and suppliers. That's a rule. And it was effective of November 16th, 2016. And what that talks about is who is required to do things, what those requirements are and how to do them. And you can get to that link. You're supposed to have that completed by 2017 and there's some additions to it in 2017, you have that link, which will bring you to a page that kinda spells out your obligations in more detail. And if we can go the next slide please. And the US Department of Health and Human Services, HHS, assistant secretary for preparedness and response, that's called ASPR, and technical resources assistant center and information exchange. And that's called TRACIE, has compiled resources at your fingertips document. And that's also in this link here, next please.

The document can help facilitate compliance with four core elements of the CMS rule that have become effective in 2017. And they're having an emergency plan, having policies and procedures, having a communication plan and training and testing. So you are required to exercise in a way that you weren't required to before. And you might wanna check that out and the exercises are intensive and complex and really, really, really important.

So next I would last like to ask everyone for their questions, comments, thoughts. And while you're typing those into the chat, I just wanna go through some of the resources that you have. I see this is a great session. Thank you. You're welcome Andy, from the tall insert. So the first resources we have the Connecticut disability resources and we have the Silk Link, which will take you to all the centers for independent living, you can find the center in your region, Advocacy Unlimited, which does advocacy for people with mental health conditions. And there it's peer led and peer run, and Disability Rights Connecticut, which is part of the protection and advocacy system.

Next, we have some literature and we have from the Connecticut Developmental Disabilities Network, a guide for including people with disabilities in disaster preparedness planning, and the partnership for inclusive disaster strategies, getting wrong and indictment with a blueprint for getting it right. And that's about the 2017 disasters and what didn't go well for people with disabilities. And again, that was Marcy Roth and Jim Kales and myself worked on that. We talked about preserving our freedom, which is from the National Council on Disability, which is about institutionalization, sorry, Shaylin. Next slide please. And we have some resources from a person named June Isaacson Kales, and June is a great friend of ours and she is on our calls at least five or six nights a week. And she's written quite a bit and she's done a checklist for integrating people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs into emergency preparedness planning, response, and recovery, and is asked to resources for people with disabilities and other others with access and functional leads, emergency managers and planners and disability focused organizations. And June has been doing this for as a disabled person for as long as anyone I know she's been doing for a very, very long time. And she's really an expert on this and she is someone with a disability and she used to be the director of a center for independent living. So are we having more questions coming up and comments, Shaylin?

- This is Shaylin yes, we are. We have from Paul a question, do you have any information on lawsuits in Connecticut related to non-compliance by towns or the state with regards to disability planning?

- Off the top of my head, I don't.

- And this is Shaylin. We might not in Connecticut specifically, although we will take a look and follow up, but we may also find some other similar related lawsuits in other states that could be a resource to look at for others. And that might also be a question to ask Disability Rights Connecticut as well for Connecticut specific material. But that's a really good question.

- This is Shaylin, actually, that reminds me in New York City, there is a lawsuit around this. We'll follow up with some materials around it for others to use as a resource.

- And for the people who asked about registries and asked about evacuating hospitals and emergency, do you have any hospitals and nursing homes? Do you have any other questions or did I touch upon that enough? And I gave you some resources there. I hope that was sufficient.

- This is Shaylin. And we also have just some comments, one from Rebecca who says, thank you. I feel that this session got down to the nitty gritty. I am from a small town and the fire department works with town officials to deal with emergencies. So it's great to learn what we can do better. And Donald shares our nursing facilities in town have plans that are reviewed each year and they run an exercise for training annually. And I would just suggest Donald, including your local center for independent living the statewide, independent living council, who can then incorporate and include and reach out to folks with disabilities in those localities to participate in those exercises.

- And I'm gonna Shaylin, I wanna go to the closing slide, and I heard someone saying something, hello?

- [Don] Yeah, I'm Don, I'm on the phone. I couldn't get on online. I had no ability to, You're talking about nursing homes and long term healthcare facilities. There is a statewide, actually it's Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island has the LTCMAP, a that's long term care mutual aid pack. And the plans are that the hospitals will be able to help each other out if they have to evacuate a long term care facility. So your emergency managers may wanna look into the LTCMAP it's ran through Russell Phillips in, I forget, I think it's down New Haven way, but it's something to check out because that is a great plan.

- That is great. 'Cause I think of a town where they had a shelter and they had their stairs to get to the main area, but they had a lift that was great, but they didn't think to test if the generator would operate the lift and it wouldn't. So a personal friend of mine who uses a power chair, an event went there and they said to her, well, we can't, our chair weighs 250 pounds. We can't get you up there, and she didn't wanna be carried and that's dangerous do that. And they said, well just go to the nursing home, just go to the local nursing home. And she went, no, and she's an attorney. And she dealt with that appropriately. Said, no thank you. But had she been anyone else she could have just gone to the nursing home where people get stuck in nursing homes and can't get out is one of the big problems. And now with COVID more and people always died in nursing homes, but now on more and more COVID isn't going away. Hasn't gone anywhere. And it's still unfortunately very alive and very well in congregate facilities, including nursing homes and other congregate facilities, psychiatric institutions, group homes, all of those places. So thank you.

- This is Shaylin. Appreciate the questions. And I see Gretchen adding that your example, Melissa, did result in a complaint.

- Yes it did. Yes, it did. I wasn't necessarily gonna go there, but yes, it absolutely did. And I don't have her permission to tell that story.

- And this is Shaylin. I just see many folks saying thank you for the presentation today. Gretchen also reminding folks, don't forget to connect with your local center for independent living centers and Donald adding that our annual exercises include the mutual aid participants for our town and would just, again, encourage you to make sure that Centers for Independent Living and their consumers are involved in those exercises as well, to make sure that people with disabilities representation across disabilities are included.

- Thank you everyone. I really, really appreciate your time and your attention and participation. Shaylin is putting a survey in the chat and I'll let you close out, Shaylin, so thank you everybody.

- This is Shaylin, and really appreciate everyone's time both today and last week for these two trainings, we will be following up with materials from today and in the coming weeks, as the recordings become available, we are working on making them accessible, following as well, so that they remain accessible for people who may not have been able to join us today, or would like to continue to use these trainings as a resource. So more to come and we will be following up. Please don't hesitate to reach out at any point in time, you have Melissa's email on screen. You also have our email, directors@disasterstrategies.org. And certainly if anything, don't hesitate at all to reach out to Molly at the Connecticut Statewide Independent Living Council and others within the Centers for Independent Livings, as they are great resources. And as we did last week, we appreciate if you have time to take a short survey on your experience in providing your feedback today, that was put in the chat a little bit ago, and I just added it again. We will also send it out via email for anyone that may need it following as well. We really appreciate knowing your feedback and how we can continue to grow and strengthen our trainings. We certainly will be in touch with more, wanna thank again, our access team for making this an inclusive event today and thank you to the planning team and all at Connecticut Statewide Independent Living Council for making these trainings happen. Thank you all so much. We'll be in touch, stay safe and take care.

- Thank you. Thanks again, everybody, have a great rest of your day.