

Transit Evacuation Plans for People with Disabilities: Key Integration Details

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This checklist is adapted and updated from [Checklist for Integrating People with Disabilities and Others with Access and Functional Needs into Emergency Planning, Response & Recovery, Edition 3.0, 2020](#). The content is the product of many years of collaboration with colleagues. I acknowledge and appreciate my colleagues' feedback to improve its content.

This document is frequently updated. Please check for the current version at <http://www.jik.com/mrp.html>.

This checklist is a work in progress designed to evolve based on new learning and continuous feedback. Users are encouraged to refine its content and provide the author (at jik@jik.com) with corrections, suggestions, and comments; what works, doesn't work, and needs work?

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In Memory of...

In 2005, several people got a call from a New Orleans woman. Benny, a wheelchair user, had been unsuccessful in trying to evacuate before Hurricane Katrina made landfall. She planned to get to the Superdome and needed help. Benny had scheduled trips to evacuate for several days, and each time paratransit never showed up. Finally, the night before Katrina made landfall, Benny called 911 and told them she had chest pains. Still, no one came.



Image Description: Benny smiling at the camera while seated in her wheelchair. She has long black hair and is wearing a white dress with black polka dots.

The people Benny called made many calls trying to get to the “right” people who would help! But, after many calls to the “right” people, it was clear Benny would NOT be evacuated.

Benny relied on the same paratransit system that people with disabilities often cannot rely upon, even in good weather. Benny was on the phone with disability advocate, and said in a panicked voice, “the water is rushing in,” and then the phone went dead.

Five days later, Benny was found in her apartment, dead and floating next to her wheelchair. Benny, along with many others, did not have to drown.

More about Benny’s story can be found in the documentary from Rooted in Rights: [The Right to Be Rescued](#). In August 2021, as Hurricane Ida made landfall, reports to The Partnership’s [Disability and Disaster Hotline](#) from people with disabilities in Louisiana who still have no options or resources to evacuate, forcing them to shelter-in-place and brace for impact.



Image Description: A memorial image for Benilda (Benny) Caixeta, 1951-2005. A lit candle sits in the background.

Purpose of this Guidance

This guidance focuses on the known evacuation transportation planning, response, and recovery barriers for people with disabilities. The author's findings in reviewing many evacuation transit plans are that these specifics are the weakest link in plans. These details are commonly missing in basic plans, annexes, processes, procedures, protocols, policies, and training.

This guidance provides many known elements needed to plan safe and accessible evacuations from a disaster zone geographic area by walking, rolling, or vehicle transport. Evacuation from an area is a vast and challenging task that provides many opportunities for identifying and addressing planning gaps, sustaining the desired levels of preparedness and response capabilities, and improving performance.

This document offers a basic framework and a list of decisive critical tasks to develop new or strengthen existing transportation evacuation plans. This content is not an exhaustive list of needed elements, and the author is unaware of any definitive work on transit evacuation planning for people with disabilities. This content is also not meant to be a comprehensive planning process and template as there are existing resources for that, such as the Six-Step Planning Process in FEMA's [Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operation Plans, Comprehensive Preparedness Guide \(CPG\) 101 \(September 2021\)](#).

No plan is ideal, no plan will help everyone, and no plan or resources can meet all needs. No, short and long warning events necessitate different elements of transit evacuation planning. Not everybody who needs help will get it, but more people can get help when plans contain the needed details. More people get help when the specifics of who, what, where, when, why, and how are embedded in the tactical plans, standard operating procedures of departments and agencies, job aids, field operation guides, and training. And when these plans are well communicated to communities and stakeholders.

These planning tasks can seem overwhelming, so incrementally addressing a few planning elements at a time, rather than addressing no tasks at all, helps to strengthen plans. Use this tool to evaluate your plan's current strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities and to help set priorities.

This document does not cover sheltering, effective communication, or the need for compatible interoperable communication systems. In addition, this tool does not cover a needed companion piece for evacuating structures. (Resource for structure evacuations: [Emergency Evacuation Planning for People with Disability \(2022\)](#)).

Audience

This guidance is for people and teams responsible for developing, responding, maintaining, testing, and revising emergency transit evacuation services and their associated plans, annexes, processes, procedures, protocols, policies, job aids, field operation guides, and training.

The audience for this guidance is broad and includes but is not limited to:

- Accrediting organizations, standard-setting bodies, and quality assurance organizations
- Disability-led, disability-focused, and community-based organizations
- Educators and researchers
- Emergency managers and planners
- Emergency management consultants
- Federal, state, and local elected representatives
- Federal, state, and local health agencies
- Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services
- Grantmakers
- Healthcare Coalitions
- Law Enforcement for Traffic Management
- Long-Term Care Facilities, group homes, and other congregate settings
- Mass Care coordinators
- Power companies
- Private Health Transport Companies
- Public Information Officers (PIOs)
- Transit agencies and providers
- Universities and other organizations with dormitories, and/or transportation resources
- School District
- **Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs)** and Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COADs)

How to Use This Guidance

Use this guidance to:

- Identify areas and resource gaps needing attention,
- Set priorities,
- Assign responsibilities,
- Track progress (See Tracking Progress document),
- Periodically (recommend every six months) evaluate progress by identifying newly implemented elements and areas still needing attention.

Suggested Process

- All team members should first individually complete the Transit Guidance document, using the accompanying Tracking Progress document.
 - See Tracking Progress document for ratings.
- Review findings as a team and discuss differences in ratings, areas needing examination, and unanswered questions.
- Reconcile differences in ratings, as diverse perspectives are critical to achieving a realistic and honest assessment.
 - When team members talk to each other often, it is striking the guesses and assumptions that get exposed and corrected, as opposed to planning in a vacuum!
- Collectively identify opportunities for improvement and set priorities.
- Identify individuals with the responsibility, authority, and resources to lead the effort on specific elements.
- Reconvene at designated times to discuss progress and problem-solve.
- Track progress.

Authority, Resources, and Responsibility

1. Identify individuals with the authority, resources, and responsibility to make decisions, triage, identify resources, set priorities, make allocations, and authorize payments. This needs to be examined through the lens of formal as well as informal resources and availability, especially in the context of frontier and rural capacity.
2. Identify staff serving in subject matter expert positions who understand and oversee:
 - Compliance with disability rights laws
 - Disability-focused transit evacuations
 - Integration of disability content into processes, procedures, protocols, policies, and training
 - Providing technical support

Identify Staff

1. Leadership and their backups with the disability expertise, authority, responsibility, and resources who lead in:
 - Coordination of planning efforts and ensuring people with disabilities are incorporated into all processes, procedures, protocols, policies and training plans
 - Ordering an evacuation
 - Coordination of an evacuation
 - Including the specifics to ensure the availability of sufficient and timely wheelchair-accessible transportation to evacuate individuals with disabilities who do not have transportation resources
 - Identifying the roles and responsibilities for advanced or early evacuation requires accommodating some individuals with disabilities and assessing whether this is a realistic expectation
 - Tracking, recording, and monitoring evacuation transportation requests from individuals with disabilities
 - Coordinating re-entry

2. Procedures are in place (flexibilities, exceptions, and waivers) to manage policy and procedure modifications, i.e., crossing jurisdictional lines and speeding up time constraints when a response needs to be in hours, not days.

Procedures are in place for:

- ☐ Pre-warning plans so wheelchair accessible and other vehicles and trained drivers are pre-positioned and immediately available
 - ☐ Methods are in place to reach people unable to get to assembly areas/pick-up points
3. Existing, updated, and contemporary disability inclusion content is consistent and integrated with all planning and responding government agencies and departments (associated plans, annexes, processes, procedures, protocols, policies, job aids, field operation guides, and training):
- ☐ Government Executive
 - ☐ Emergency services
 - ☐ Sheriff
 - ☐ 2-1-1
 - ☐ 3-1-1
 - ☐ 9-1-1
 - ☐ 9-8-8
 - ☐ Airport
 - ☐ Animal care and regulation
 - ☐ Environment quality agency
 - ☐ Fire
 - ☐ Health and human services
 - ☐ Nuclear power plant(s)
 - ☐ Police
 - ☐ Public housing and housing authority
 - ☐ Public works
 - ☐ Schools (preschool, K-12, charter, residential, and colleges and universities transit)

- ☐ Social services
 - ☐ Transit agency including paratransit
 - ☐ Utilities
 - ☐ Water resources agency
4. Non-government organizations with transit evacuation responsibilities and coordination are defined (See “Agreements, Contracts, MOUs”)
- ☐ Community-based organizations
 - ☐ Faith-based organizations
 - ☐ **Long-term care facilities** (See Section: Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCFs))
 - ☐ Retirement communities
 - ☐ Medical and healthcare facilities
 - ☐ Schools (preschool, K-12, charter, residential, and colleges and universities transit)
 - ☐ Taxi, shuttle, private bus
 - ☐ **Private transit providers** [e.g., Transportation Network Services (TNS), Uber, Lyft], online car-sharing platforms (e.g., Avail, Turo, Getaround), car rental, and airport shuttles, hotel shuttles, taxi services, vehicles owned by community-based organizations, scooter and bike companies.
 - ☐ Utilities (private)
 - ☐ **Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)**

Plan with Disability Community Partners

Involving disability partners helps to:

- Recognize and reduce implicit disability biases and inaccurate assumptions,
- Comply with civil rights laws,
- Integrate physical, equipment, programmatic, and communication access,
- Include diverse perspectives.

It takes more than one meeting. Developing, refining, and sustaining specific solutions takes time and is an ongoing and iterative process. Planning partners must include and represent diversity in perspectives to create equitable policies and conduct planning, programs, and response capacity that includes and benefits all rather than harms the

most disproportionately impacted groups and communities. Planning should perspectives which recognize that not everyone has a working vehicle, stable internet connection, money to buy emergency supplies, and can walk, run, see, hear, speak, remember, and understand.

Examples: An effective partnership model first employed and documented during the 2007 California wildfires continues to be employed in a growing number of states and jurisdictions. This partnership model includes convening and participating in disability emergency coordinating meetings.

The focus includes collaboration, communication, coordination, status briefings, and problem-solving to address unmet needs.

Examples of some of these planning, response, and recovery partnerships and meetings include:

- [2007 California Wildfires](#)
- 2018 in [North Carolina](#) during Hurricane Florence
- [The Partnership's](#) Daily COVID-19 Disability Rights & Disasters Call
- Since March 2019, the [Florida Statewide Independent Living Council](#) has gathered the Centers for Independent Living (CILs) for monthly and long-term planning meetings and conducts daily meetings during major disasters such as Ian 2022 and Idalia 2023.

1. Individual preparedness content is developed with people with disabilities and **community partners**

☐ Yes ☐ No

(See: Definitions for **community partners** and **representative disability partners**)

2. Engage the disability community partners in:

- ☐ Content development
- ☐ Testing/exercises
- ☐ Hot washes
- ☐ After Action Reports (AARs)
- ☐ Updating and a continual improvement process

3. Engage community partners as contractors and vendors (See “Agreements, Contracts, Memorandums of Understanding”) to provide needed resources:
 - ☐ Accessible transportation
 - ☐ Sign language interpreters
 - ☐ Life-safety or wellness checks (also known as welfare or safe and well checks) consist of a phone call, text, email, or in-person visit to make sure an individual(s) is safe, including determining the need for evacuation.

Projecting Needs and Numbers

The challenge of projecting needs by understanding the size of transportation-disadvantaged populations remains tough and imprecise. The process must acknowledge that, although there are clusters of large population needs, people needing evacuation transportation are everywhere.

Acknowledge that these projections will be an undercount rather than a complete number of people needing evacuation support. The Census and other datasets will only capture part of the overall need.

Registries as Part of Projecting Needs: Why They Don’t Work

[Emergency registries as a dataset](#) do not work. These registries are sponsored primarily by the government as a disaster planning and response tool. The information typically collected includes at a minimum the individual’s name, location, contact information, and other details of people who voluntarily register and may need help in a disaster.

Emergency Registries as a dataset do not work because:

- Using a registry to define the size of the population that will need assistance during a disaster is a convenience sample that results in inadequate baseline numbers. This approach is dangerous and can violate the civil rights protections of people with disabilities who are not in the registry.
- People may not be at the location included in their registry information, e.g., they may be at work or school and not at home.
- Registries lists are typically not maintained and out-of-date.
- Registries are always [incomplete](#), as they include only a tiny percentage of people who may need assistance (Planners may assume that registries are good [planning tools](#) because of the expectation that “when you register, responders will know how many will need help, and they can plan accordingly.”
- Disability-focused registries may not include other people with access and

functional needs, e.g., people who do not have access to a personal vehicle

- People with disabilities may not register because they:
 - do not believe registries work,
 - are aware of stories where they have not been used or worked in disasters,
 - have privacy reasons,
 - are fearful of being tagged as vulnerable,
 - have concerns regarding legal status for themselves or their family members,
 - are afraid of losing their independence, and
 - do not identify as having a disability.

This county data example from Marion County, Florida is typical.

- About 370,000 total population
- About 61,000 non-institutionalized people with disabilities (American Community Survey data)
- About 5,000 power-dependent people (emPOWER uses data from over 3.9 million at-risk Medicare beneficiaries that live independently and have a claim for certain electricity dependent durable medical equipment and health care services that may make them vulnerable in the event of an emergency.)
- About 1,100 people with developmental disabilities (state agency data)
- 675-700 people in the county special needs registry, about 1% of the 61,000 people with disabilities

(See [congressional testimony from the Emergency Management Director in Marion County in July 2022](#) and [Beyond Registries: Better Solutions for People with Disabilities \(September 20, 2023\)](#) for more info.)

Dataset Options for Projecting Needs

Choose from these datasets as a minimum for projecting needs:

Permanent and temporary transit-dependent people

- Ridership:
 - Paratransit
 - Public transit
 - Vehicle ownership
 - Number of accessible parking placards and disabled people license plates issued

- By departments of motor vehicles
- Clusters of need:
 - Residential schools
 - Long-term care facilities
 - Childcare facilities
 - Hospitals
 - People attending major events (music, sports, parades, etc.)
 - Unhoused
 - Annual visitor, tourist, and temporary worker projections
 - Vehicle rentals
- Non-driving populations
 - People who choose not to drive
 - People who are legally prohibited from driving
 - People who don't drive because of a disability
 - People who won't have access to vehicles even if they have one (i.e. people who have access to vehicles that are unusable because of the disaster, cannot pay for gas at the time of evacuation)
 - Owners of older vehicles that can be unreliable or unsafe

Additional datasets to reference:

- Program administrative data such as human service agencies
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Census Data (for people without cars, children, low-income individuals, a segment of older people, seniors, elderly people, etc.)
 - US Census Bureau's [OnTheMap](#)
- [Social Vulnerability Index \(SVI\)](#)
- FEMA's [Resilience Analysis and Planning Tool](#)
- Network simulation models used by metropolitan planning organization (MPOs) in some urban areas to model evacuation times and capacities.
 - [The Role of Transit in Emergency Evacuation, Transportation Research Board](#). (2008) (p.43)
- CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) [QuickStats: Percentage of Adults Aged ≥18 Years Who Lacked Reliable Transportation for Daily Living in the Past 12 Months, by Disability Status and Age Group](#)

Assets

Passenger Capacity

“Under emergency conditions, public infrastructure can be stressed. For example, ‘...a typical bus can typically carry about 50 passengers, but in an emergency, with evacuees carrying baggage, some in wheelchairs, and communication systems overwhelmed, 30-40 passengers is a more realistic load. It will therefore be important to provide a generous amount of overcapacity and redundancy.’” ([Lessons From Katrina and Rita: What Major Disasters Can Teach Transportation Planners](#))

1. Transportation asset inventory is complete.

☐ Yes

☐ No

Updated every _____ months

2. Includes providers with the capacity to evacuate people with disabilities from individual homes, and facilities (i.e., schools, health facilities, public housing, group homes, and LTCFs), including transit and non-traditional fleets, such as

☐ Airport planes, car rentals, shuttle buses, and vans

☐ Amusement Parks

☐ Colleges/Universities transportation systems

☐ Community-based organizations

☐ Fixed-route buses

☐ County fairgrounds

☐ Dial-a-Rides

☐ Disability and senior transportation service providers

☐ Healthcare facilities

☐ Healthcare transportation vendors

☐ Hotel shuttles

☐ Non-medical emergency vans/ambulances

☐ Paratransit systems (ADA-mandated)



Image Description: A mobility scooter user exiting a city bus.

- ☐ Ships, boats
- ☐ Private shuttle services
- ☐ School district transportation systems
- ☐ Taxi systems
- ☐ Tour Bus Companies (Charter commercial companies)
- ☐ Transit districts
- ☐ Private transit providers, [e.g., Transportation Network Services (TNS), Uber, Lyft], online car-sharing platforms (e.g., Avail, Turo, Getaround), car rental, and airport shuttles, taxi services, vehicles owned by community-based organizations
- ☐ United Parcel Service (UPS), United States Postal Service (USPS), Federal Express (FedEx), Amazon, DHL vehicles
- ☐ Truck and car rental companies, including accessible van rental companies (Mobility Works, Wheelchair Getaways)
- ☐ Trucking companies

3. Procedures are in place to:

- ☐ Establish agreements to use private vehicles purchased with Federal Transit Administration §5310 funds, particularly those owned by community-based organizations, especially the lift-equipped vehicles, should be used as available assets. ([A Review of FTA Section 5310 Program's State Management Plans: A Legacy Program in Transition](#))
- ☐ Others



Image Description: Three first responders waded through deep waters in an amphibious vehicle.

4. Assets are typed by:

- ☐ Wheelchair and mobility scooter capacity (number of accessible spaces with securement devices)
- ☐ Fuel type

- ☐ Fuel range
- ☐ Vehicle turning radius
- ☐ Amphibious (for navigating high flood waters)
- ☐ Trained drivers able to lift some mobility devices into a vehicle as a last resort option

5. Procedures are in place for vehicles to accommodate:

- ☐ Wheelchair and mobility scooter vehicles include working and tested (daily) ramps or lifts, and securement devices.
- ☐ Mobility and durable medical devices
- ☐ Service animals
- ☐ Emotional support animals and pets

6. Procedures are in place to:

- ☐ Use screener questions to quickly determine what vehicles to deploy (i.e., size of mobility device, ability to step or transfer into a vehicle, can mobility device be taken apart and loaded into a trunk or other empty vehicle space, what equipment rider will be taking with them?)

Define the acceptable level of driver risk below:

Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCFs)

Planning should not assume LTCFs and other institutions, such as day care facilities and correctional facilities, have adequate emergency plans because state licensing regulations require them. State audits and plan reviews can be cursory and superficial.

1. Emergency management helps with the review of facilities' emergency plans

- ☐ Review and update specifics of emergency plans, including interface with and assumed reliance on jurisdiction's resources (i.e., evacuation, transportation, sheltering)

2. Contractors providing emergency transportation are commonly unable to provide facilities with the number of evacuation vehicles needed during a major disaster because local demand for transportation exceeds supply.)
 - ☐ Identify dangerous contractor overlaps and unrealistic expectations (e.g., accessible vehicles being over-obligated because of competing contractual agreements during an incident)
3. Procedures are in place to:
 - ☐ Discuss with and confirm specific and realistic evacuation plans and procedures that do not rely on jurisdictional resources
4. Checks for criteria to evacuate and identify:
 - ☐ Advance warning plans and early evacuation triggers
 - ☐ Realistic numbers of staff who will remain and/or return to work after a disaster are identified
5. Adequate numbers of:
 - ☐ Staff to assist with evacuation
 - ☐ Evacuation vehicles
 - ☐ Evacuation transit contracts
6. Procedures are in place to:
 - ☐ Identify shelters that can accommodate residents, patients, and students in an evacuation
 - ☐ Set up pre-identification agreements of “like facilities” within variable distances for relocation shelters. These locations can contain unconventional spaces like common areas and dining rooms

Public Messages/Communication

1. Method is in place to:

- ☐ Communicate among service providers, evacuees, and first responders

2. Methods are place to:

- ☐ Clearly identify recognized signage for accessible vehicles to access evacuation zones (Access Control Points) when roads are closed to non-emergency vehicles
- ☐ Escort accessible vehicles through hazard areas and access control points

3. Procedures are in place to:

- ☐ Communicate the suggestion for early evacuation when possible.

When possible, early evacuation triggers and thresholds are clearly defined for people who are disproportionately impacted if they are not given a chance (accessible notice) to evacuate early

4. Procedures are in place to:

- ☐ Reach people unable to get to assembly areas/pick-up points

5. Procedures are in place to:

- ☐ Strengthen and disseminate tips for people with disabilities developing or updating their emergency plans.

6. Managing expectations.

- ☐ Be clear and consistently reinforce that more people will need transportation than will be available, and making evacuation backup plans is critical with friends, family, and colleagues, even when such plans will not be the ideal transportation plan.

7. Procedures are in place to:

- ☐ Develop specific and plain language messages (See: [The Warn Room](#) gives evidence-based guidance on improving emergency alerts and warnings for all hazards.)

8. Procedures are in place to:

- ☐ Publicize consistent contact options that do not change (phone number, text, email) that people who need help evacuating can use. If the end-user does not know how to request assistance, the plan fails.

9. Procedures are in place for:

- ☐ Two-way communication capacity for people needing evacuation help, so updates and timing can be shared.

10. To inform the community regarding how to ask for accessible transportation resources by using multiple accessible communication methods, including:

- ☐ Social media post
- ☐ Websites
- ☐ Emergency alerts, warnings, and notifications
- ☐ Press conferences
- ☐ Town halls
- ☐ Digital billboards/message signs

11. Methods are place for:

- ☐ Individuals that are requesting a ride to be advised to first make alternative plans for leaving in case assistance cannot reach them. They will be informed about the timing of their ride's arrival or if a ride is not available.

Agreements, Contracts, Memorandums of Understanding

Contract language should always detail the contractor's responsibilities for complying with obligations under the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Fair Housing Act. The government retains its responsibility for oversight and compliance.

Government contracts should incorporate ADA and other civil rights law requirements into their contract assurance sections. However, this is never enough, as most contractors sign these assurances without understanding what these assurances mean. Boilerplate, non-specific contract language, carries a substantial risk of failure and a substantial risk of discriminatory response.

1. Including specific details alerts contractors to the expected capabilities and capacities. Transportation contracts should include the specifics regarding disability-related items listed below.

☐ Agreements exist for multiple providers to protect against failure to deliver.

2. Agreements are in place for:

☐ Mutual aid, including clarifying roles and cross-county counterparts/partners' and those with access and functional needs responsibilities.

3. Agreements are updated:

☐ All agreements are updated every _____ months/years (Insert number)

Contract details include:

4. Emergency contact information:

☐ For at least three reachable people 24/7 by...

☐ Cell ☐ Text ☐ Email ☐ Landline

☐ Addresses ☐ Other

5. Assurances that:

☐ Contractors are not over-obligated by competing contractual agreements during an incident.

6. Detailed information on:

☐ Meeting ADA obligations.

7. Vehicle information on:

☐ Number of and types of vehicles with drivers to deploy and driver backup plans.

8. Identifying:

☐ Emergency roles and obligations in drivers' contracts, job descriptions, and driver training.

9. Details on the location of:

- ☐ Emergency checklists (job aids, field operation guides) which are in a specific place on all vehicles that will potentially be used for evacuations.

10. Procedures on:

- ☐ How individuals transported will be tracked until a safe re-entry (drop-off points), etc.

11. Procedures on:

- ☐ Response time during and after non-operational hours (determine who is activated, when, and by whom).

12. Information on:

- ☐ Redundancy that includes geographic diversity (local, regional, and national) to continue service if the vendor's one location cannot or can only partially supply the needed resources.

13. Procedures for:

- ☐ Scheduling emergency trips, including fare waivers.

14. Information on:

- ☐ How liability coverage works. For example, when using vehicles from nongovernmental organizations.

15. Information on:

- ☐ Cost-sharing specifics.

Training and Exercises

Just-in-time training should always be a companion piece for all disability-related training products. This is because the people trained yesterday are often not there tomorrow! Almost all people experience "CRS," an acronym for "can't remember stuff," on a good day and this is even more pronounced in high-stress, chaotic emergencies.

Training must translate how specific tasks comply with the intent (who, what, where, when, why, and how) with federal laws that mandate integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities, such as:

1. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
2. Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
3. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
4. Telecommunications Act
5. Stafford Act
6. Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act (PKEMRA)
7. Disaster Recovery Reform Act
8. Fair Housing Act
9. Architectural Barriers Act (ABA)
10. 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act

Deployed emergency personnel need help remembering information from plans, processes, procedures, protocols, policies, and training notes to get to the critical information. Provide actionable, practical, tactical steps via checklists, field operation guides, and job aides that sustain and reinforce competencies. This content should be easy to access via the internet and/or on “always with you” mobile devices for quick review when individuals deploy.

1. Methods are in place for:
 - ☐ First responders, contractors, and drivers to have the know how via training and immediate access to refresher information.
2. Procedures are in place on the:
 - ☐ Use of clear, easily and broadly understood pictures and symbols with text (pictograms), pen and paper, and loudspeakers when making door-to-door emergency evacuation announcements to increase the ability to communicate with people with limited English, hearing loss, and limited speech, as well as young children, people under severe stress, and people with cognitive or intellectual disabilities.
3. Procedures are in place on the:
 - ☐ Use of blinking lights that are not seizure-inducing and noisemaking percussion sounds (felt through vibrations) when going door-to-door can increase the effectiveness of getting the attention of deaf and hard-of-hearing residents who may not respond to door knocks, doorbells or loudspeakers.

4. Methods are in place to:

- ☐ Require emergency managers, planners, and first responders to work toward achieving core disability-related competencies in integrating disability into planning, response, and recovery, which include:
 - a. Procedures on:
 - ☐ Use training contractors who have lived disability experience. (See Definition: **Representative disability planning partners**)
 - b. Procedures on:
 - ☐ Integrating accessibility and nondiscrimination processes into procedures, protocols, and policies that detail emergency services' who, what, where, when, why, and how.
 - c. Procedures on:
 - ☐ Integrating disability-related content into new and updated relevant training, with primary emphasis on just-in-time training so the subject is not treated as "special." (See [Training: Maximizing Your ROI!](#) (2017))
 - d. Procedures on:
 - ☐ Establishing fellow/intern programs to build disaster expertise among qualified disabled people interested in emergency services careers.

Tabletops, Exercises, and Drills

Actively recruit people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs to plan and participate. (See [Guidance for Integrating People with Disabilities in Emergency Drills and Exercises.](#))

1. Procedures are in place to:
 - ☐ Prevent people *without* disabilities from acting in the role of people *with* disabilities.
2. Integrate physical, service, and communication access injects and scenarios into exercises:
 - ☐ Drills

- ☐ Tabletop
- ☐ Functional
- ☐ Full-scale

3. Procedures are place to:

- ☐ Integrate lessons based on what worked and needs work from hot washes and After-Action Reports of tabletops, exercises, and drills into new or revised processes, procedures, protocols, policies, and training.

Glossary and Helpful Terms

Community partners: A broad group of potential nongovernmental and private sector resources, [including](#) Businesses and Business Emergency Operations Councils (BEOCs). The BEOCs are present in some communities and comprise businesses that participate in continuity planning and establish partnerships with other businesses to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and reduce emergency risks.

Vendors: A person or company offering something for sale (e.g., Consumable Medical Supplies, oxygen, Durable Medical Equipment, pharmacy services, including mail-order plan and systems)

Private transit providers: Entities other than the government that provide transportation to the public (e.g., Transportation Network Services (TNS), Uber, Lyft]; online car-sharing platforms (e.g., Avail, Turo, Getaround); car rental; airport shuttles; taxi services; or vehicles owned by community-based organizations)

Lodging / Housing: A place one stays for a short period of time (e.g., Airbnb, hotels, motels, building managers, college/university dormitories, military bases, etc.)

Utilities: An organization supplying the community with electricity, gas, water, sewage, or phone/internet. This includes Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs), power cooperatives, and community owned utilities

Community-based organizations (CBOs): Nonprofit organizations – particularly service organizations – that work at the local level to provide services to communities and specific target audiences that improve a community’s health and well-being ([Institute of State and Regional Affairs, Penn State Harrisburg. \(2022\).](#))

CBOs include:

- Aging
- Disability
- Unhoused
- Faith-based
- Family services
- Meals on Wheels

Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD): Consists of member organizations that provide local emergency response and recovery services. A VOAD is an association of organizations (which can include national, state, and local volunteer organizations) that mitigate and reduce the impact of disasters.

Long-Term Care Facilities include licensed care facilities, congregate facilities, residential facilities, nursing homes, psychiatric facilities, group homes, assisted living facilities, intermediate care facilities, correctional incarceration facilities and other congregate settings.

Representative disability partners

Include partners with disabilities who:

- Have experience with disability advocacy
- Can speak broadly on disability issues and understand and think through issues from disability, access, functional needs, and universal design perspectives instead of only focusing on their personal needs.
- Are knowledgeable about:
 - Cross-disability access issues (hearing, vision, mobility, speech and cognitive (learning, memory, understanding), mental health, chemical sensitivities),
 - Disability civil rights compliance implementation
- Are active in national, state, or local groups of people with disabilities, including such disability communities and organizations that are disability-led and of, by, and with (as opposed to only for and about people with disabilities).
- Are from disability-led organizations or organizations where the majority of the board and staff are disabled people. Disability-led organizations may be single-disability or cross-disability focused.
- Have communication methods in place and use to facilitate two-way feedback to and from the disability communities they represent.

Representative planning partners should include and represent diversity in perspectives to create actionable plans, policies, preparedness, responses, and recovery capacities that provide for and benefit all rather than harm the most disproportionately impacted groups and communities. Diverse partners foster planning that decreases the use of narrow lenses of privilege, ableism, ageism, ethnocentrism, racism, sexism, and heterosexism.

For example, partners that help in the context of privilege and ableism to identify implicit disability biases and inaccurate assumptions, such as everyone having stable internet connections, money to buy emergency supplies, a working vehicle, and the ability to walk, run, see, hear, speak, remember, and understand.

Resources

[Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operation Plans, Comprehensive Preparedness Guide \(CPG\) 101](#). FEMA (September 2021)

[Inclusive Evacuation and Transportation](#). CalOES (October 2024)

Four-hour online course which covers:

- developing comprehensive, inclusive emergency transportation and evacuation plans,
- including representatives with access and functional needs throughout the development of emergency evacuation and transportation plans,
- creating a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) so individuals with access and functional needs can use to secure accessible transportation services before, during, and after disasters,
- creating contracts with transportation providers within and beyond a given jurisdiction,
- ensuring accessible transportation is available 24/7, on demand, and at no cost to evacuees during emergencies,
- identifying traditional and non-traditional transportation resources for large-scale evacuations,
- using plain language for accessible communication,
- listing the barriers and challenges associated with the use of voluntary disaster registries, and
- highlighting how advanced planning closes gaps and reduces the barriers individuals with access and functional needs face to successfully evacuate impact areas when disasters strike.

[State DOT Models for Organizing and Operating Emergency Response: A Guide](#). National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2023)

[Disaster Recovery: Actions Needed to Improve the Federal Approach](#)". GAO (2022): A report that discusses the federal approach to disaster recovery and covers challenges state and local officials identified in using federal recovery assistance and provides recommendations for Congress and federal agencies to improve the federal approach to disaster recovery.

[Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations: Actions Needed to Clarify Responsibilities and Increase Preparedness for Evacuations](#). GAO (2006): A report that assesses the challenges and barriers state and local officials face, how prepared these governments

are, and steps they are taking to address challenges and barriers. It also discusses federal efforts to provide evacuation assistance.

[Defining Functional Needs - Updating CMIST](#). June Issacson Kailes (2017)

[Moving Beyond Etiquette to Actionable Practice Competencies](#). June Issacson Kailes (2023)

[Moving Beyond “Special Needs:” A Function-Based Framework for Emergency Management and Planning](#). June Issacson Kailes, Alexandra Enders (2007)

[Communication with Vulnerable Populations: A Transportation and Emergency Management Toolkit](#), TCRP (2011)

Webinar: California Disaster Coalition Meeting: Emergency Registries: A Misleading, Harmful & Non-Inclusive Fix:

- [Part 1](#) (September 8, 2022)
 - [Slides](#)
- [Part 2](#) (October 13, 2022)
 - [Slides](#)

Webinar: Disaster Registries for People With Access & Functional Needs: Pivoting the Model to Address Real Solutions. June Issacson Kailes (April 10-12, 2023)

- [Pre-Conference 1](#) (at 17.55-minute mark)
- [Day 2](#) (at 17.05-minute mark)

[Emergency Registries](#). June Issacson Kailes.

[Technical Report, A Review of FTA Section 5310 Program’s State Management Plans: A Legacy Program in Transition](#). Alexandra Enders, Tom Seekins (2009)

[Joplin & Irene Force Changes in Hospital Evac Plans](#). Theodore Tully (2011)

[The Role of Transit in Emergency Evacuation](#). Transportation Research Board (2008)

[The Warn Room](#): Gives evidence-based guidance on improving emergency alerts and warnings for all hazards.

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