

Creating an Inclusive Emergency Planning Summit in Your State

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Speaker Disclosures

Amy is the (co) Strand Advisor and as such receives a compensation package from ATIA.

Carolyn is a strand Advisor and as such receives a compensation package from ATIA.

Liz has no financial or nonfinancial disclosures.

Learning Objectives

Learning Objective 1: Describe at least one purpose of inclusive emergency planning and the role and importance of AT programs and providers in the process

Learning Objective 2: Describe how an inclusive emergency planning summit aligns with at least one state AT program activity.

Learning Objective 3: List at least one step involved in creating an inclusive emergency "summit" and estimated associated costs

What is Emergency Management?

Emergency Management is the art of preparing for unknown events in order to provide safety for an unknown number of people in need of unknown resources under unknown circumstances for an unknown length of time.

-- Chip Wilson

Florida's Statewide Disability Coordinator
for Emergency Management, 2012

Emergencies and Disasters



Disasters Strike Everywhere

Which may occur in your area?

- Hurricanes
- Flooding
- Mudslides
- Wildfires
- Tornadoes
- Earthquakes
- Winter ice storms, blizzards (e.g. resulting in prolonged power outages)
- Manmade: Industrial and transportation disasters - factory explosion, roadway collapse, terrorist attack

Groups especially at risk in emergency/disaster

- Concentrations of people with disabilities/AT users or people with healthcare needs: retirement communities, rehab facilities, nursing homes
- People with disabilities that might interfere with receiving/understanding emergency messaging: deaf, hard of hearing, blind, low vision, non-readers
- Non-English speaking individuals
- Residents of rural and remote areas with limited access to “local” information
- Urban populations with limited transportation options
- Residents of areas prone to disasters
- People with low income
- People who are homeless

Why Inclusive Emergency Planning?

- People with access and functional needs (AFN) are disproportionately at risk and need to be included in all phases of emergency planning.
- Nothing about us without us.
- *AT Act Programs and partners are well-positioned to make significant contributions to inclusive planning.*



Emergency Management Cycle

- A cycle, not a line:
no finite beginning
and no end
- Plan, learn from
problems and
failures; revise
- Involve people with
disabilities in all
phases



Preparation: Issues

- Communicate with vulnerable populations about personal preparation for disasters
- Address issues of evacuation, sheltering and access to AT for people with disabilities
- Create a plan to make appropriate use of reusable AT from state resources and other programs around the country

Response: Issues

- Absence of pre-planned coordination for immediate access to replacement AT or delivery system
- Challenges of communication after disaster (cell phone tower access, loss of battery power)
- People evacuate without AT or peripherals
- Loss of power impacts ability to operate or re-charge AT/DME devices

Response: Issues (continued)

- Avoiding sending AT to disaster sites that is not ready for use
- Difficulty finding places to store and stage AT for distribution (and, if planned, those too may be affected by the disaster)
- Problems maintaining access to benefits and services (computer access, phones, displacement of service providers, etc.)

Recovery: Issues

- Evacuation to distant locations away from existing support system
- No prior identification of people with disabilities, assessment of needs
- Non-compliance with laws protecting people with disabilities; all apply
- Absence of priorities: first come, first served
- Plans/resources do not accommodate long-term recovery (e.g. YEARS, in the case of Puerto Rico)

Mitigation (and Prevention): Issues

- Inadequate building codes
- Lack of individual emergency preparedness
- AT not available when needed for emergency
- Multiplicity of charging devices and connectors for powered communication and AT devices
- Inaccessibility of print forms (e.g. to apply for benefits)
- Evacuees without medical records (including documentation about AT/DME)

Preparing for Functional Needs in Advance of a Disaster

What are Functional Needs Support Services?

- Functional Needs Support Services are defined as services that enable individuals to maintain their independence in a general population shelter. FNSS includes:
 - Reasonable modification to policies, practices, and procedures
 - Durable medical equipment (DME)
 - Consumable medical supplies (CMS)
 - Personal assistance services (PAS)
 - Other goods and services as needed

Major Planning: Providing for Functional Needs

- A very large concern for Emergency Managers and Shelter Managers is provision of Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS)
- This concern is exacerbated by:
 - Limited budgets
 - Smaller staffs
 - Determining who will need what and when

Safe – without DME

- Need for DME in shelters
 - For people who arrive without their DME
 - Lost or damaged during the event
 - Not able to get to their DME due to event circumstances
 - Lost, damaged, or forgotten power source
 - Battery, charger, or power cord
 - For people who have acquired a need as a result of the event

Building Capacity with an EM Summit

- Why
- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- How

Why

- To create a common understanding of the needs and opportunities for serving all citizens in event of emergency or disaster
- To identify strategies for improving disaster response and meet respective organizational and agency goals
- To develop networks for supporting long-term recovery efforts for people with disabilities affected by emergency or disaster

Who

The “usual suspects” include:

- Emergency Management leaders
- Key government officials in agencies providing services to people with disabilities, including those responsible for emergency support functions (e.g. mass sheltering)
- Advocates for people with disabilities
- Leaders in the field of assistive technology including but not limited to AT reutilization (AT Act program and partners)

We're talking 'inclusive summit': Who else should be at the table?

Disasters bring unanticipated scenarios that require unusual response, so focus on the people with resources and those who pitch in:

- People who control transportation resources that can be deployed in adverse conditions: trucking companies, water recovery and delivery vehicles
- Law enforcement representatives who may be needed to provide security for people, property and emergency supplies
- Leaders of food banks and clothing pantries who will be immediate “touch points” after the disaster
- Local faith leaders with congregations that serve the community through sheltering, food, clothing and sometimes device donations
- Veterans' groups
- Leaders of civic groups: Rotary, Kiwanis, Lion's, Elks, Women's Clubs, Garden Clubs
- Leaders of state associations of medical and allied health professionals
- Community leaders from “active retirement” communities

What

- What strategies can a summit address?
 - Increasing public awareness
 - Improving individual preparedness
 - How to access resources and skills across agencies and organizations
 - How to partner effectively when disaster strikes

Summit Goals

1. To define the role and importance of assistive technology (including, but not limited to, durable medical equipment) for people with access and functional needs.
2. To identify the infrastructure needed to develop and implement a rapid response system for delivering assistive technology devices (including reused AT) and services (including matching) to meet the needs of people with functional needs affected by disaster.
3. To develop a sustainable network for addressing the AT needs of people in disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation.
4. To develop achievable action steps for participants and other key entities to meet these goals.

When

- Avoid conflict with statewide EM meetings/conferences
- Avoid conflict with statewide disability meetings/conferences
- Weigh the advantage of having the summit during Emergency Preparedness Month (September) as part of the “celebration” OR schedule at a time when natural disasters are less likely to happen
- Decide on 1 or 2 days, start and end times; consult with EM partners as to best scheduling to include EM personnel

Tips: Create an Environment for a Successful Summit with Thoughtful Planning

- Allow plenty of up-front planning time
- Choose an accessible summit venue and housing (e.g. if multi-day event)
- Budget for and provide all necessary accommodations, modelling appropriate practices
- Identify resources for “travel scholarships” to assist key players who may need such funds
- Plan focused, achievable content
- Allow sufficient formal (small breakout groups) and informal opportunities for networking and relationship-building; these relationships will pay off when disaster strikes
- Make it a working summit with “homework” and follow-up

How: Financing the Summit

- AT Act federal dollars
- AT Act lead or implementing agency contribution
- Developmental Disabilities Council
- State EMA
- State agencies responsible for ESF (e.g. Department of Human Services responsible for mass shelter)
- ADA Information Center
- Private foundations

Planning the Agenda

- ✓ Consider convening a stakeholder summit planning group.
- ✓ Identify a facilitator to keep to agenda, assist with topic transitions, flow, etc.
- ✓ Identify a note-taker (e.g. flip chart; CART)
- ✓ Consider inviting local, state, national subject matter experts (SMEs) to attend in person or via teleconference
- ✓ Specify outcomes and deliverables (develop a state plan and MOAs with appropriate agencies)

Sample Summit Agenda Topics

- Overview of disability and AT (“Disability 101”)
- Overview of emergency management (“EM 101”)
- Review of likely disaster types and scenarios for the state
- Identification of vulnerable populations and locations
- How FEMA and state EMA address the functional needs requirements
- Reflect on and address past barriers to response
- Overview of AT Act Program resources (reuse, lending, and training resources)
- Discussion of opportunities for MOAs
- Identification of next steps

Focus on AT Reuse



Karen Langley, Executive Director of REquipment, Inc. and Lotte Diomede, President of SMIL Emass at the DME donation drive organized by Diomede for the Harvey relief effort.



Role of AT Reuse in Emergency Planning

- Collaborate with stakeholders to create an AT reuse network with emergency cache(s) and/or pre-positioning AT in shelters
- Develop policies for EMs that explain use of AT/reused AT in disasters
- Assist in the development of policies and procedures for caches, e.g. warehousing, maintaining devices
- Clarify right of recipients to keep AT issued during emergency until it is no longer needed
- Devise protocols for return of unneeded AT to the emergency cache(s)

Explore Ongoing Issues for Disaster Response

- Exchange of information would expedite getting resources to people affected by disaster, but this is difficult due to confidentiality provisions
- Policies and procedures need to be developed and shared
- Still need to address storage; pre-positioning AT
- Supply chain remains an issue
- Shipping and transportation remains challenging: Line up some resources ahead of time.
- Individual preparedness still needs work!
- Plan for “real”, not for “easy”

Inclusive Emergency Planning Aligns with State Level Program Activities

- Device Lending: Promote device loans for short-term response; professional development (e.g. for first responders; shelter personnel; drills)
- Device Reutilization: Provision of DME including but not limited to open-ended loans to replace lost devices or to address the need for new ones
- State Financing: Referrals to AFPs and other SFA to replace DME or address the need for new AT

Inclusive Emergency Planning Aligns with State Leadership Program Activities

- Public awareness: Explain the importance of AT to PWD and how AT can enhance safety and maximize independence during emergency/disaster
- Training: Teach individuals with disabilities and allies about preparing their AT in the event of emergency/disaster; include this topic as a focus of transition planning
- Training: Teach first responders, shelter personnel and others about the importance of AT and considerations in evacuation, sheltering, recovery, etc.
- Training ICT: Educate emergency managers regarding accessible messaging including websites

Inclusive Emergency Planning Can Be a “State Improvement Initiative”

- AT Act requires reporting on “the outcomes of any improvement initiatives carried out by the state as a result of activities funded under this section, including a description of any written policies, practices, and procedures that the State has developed and implemented regarding access to, provision of, and funding for, assistive technology devices, and assistive technology services, in the contexts of education, health care, employment, community living, information technology and telecommunications, including e-government” (Section 4(f)(2)(B)(ix)).
- Defined as activities that have produced improved policies, practices, procedures or funding of AT at the state or local level
- <https://www.at3center.net/repository/StateImprovementInitiatives>

AT Summits Result in Success

- For AT Act programs: Increased credibility and potential for additional grants in the area of preparedness
- For AT Act programs: A “seat at the [emergency planning] table”
- For emergency managers: Additional resources for people affected by disasters
- For state EMA: resources to meet the state’s contribution in a federal declaration
- For people with disabilities: Access to AT to replace lost or damaged devices related to disaster

Serious about a Summit?

- Check out samples of planning materials posted at atia.org!
- Reach out to any of today's presenters!

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Any questions?



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