



Communication Access During Disasters and Emergencies

Older Adults with Disabilities and Others with Access and Functional Needs

Older Americans: Stay Safe, Stay Healthy, Stay Connected

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Gay Jones, Disability Integration Communications Specialist

FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination



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What FEMA is doing:

The Office of Disability Integration and Coordination encourages emergency management practices throughout every step of the disaster cycle to include people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. ODIC provides guidance, tools, and strategies that integrate and coordinate emergency management practices with emergency managers, planners, disability community leaders and the whole community. By planning for diverse populations, our nation can be better prepared for emergency situations.



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Providing Disability Expertise Disaster Response and Recovery

- ▶ Providing expertise to FEMA and disaster-impacted states about strategies to meet life-saving and life-sustaining needs including, early warning, communication access, evacuation, health maintenance and transportation needs.
- ▶ Assessing sites for FEMA buildings and disaster recovery centers, which are one-stop centers in communities where disaster survivors can obtain information about recovery resources, to ensure that they meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements for physical, programmatic, and effective communication access.
 - ▶ Providing expertise regarding temporary emergency housing and long-term recovery for equal access to emergency management programs and services.
- ▶ Regional Disability Integration Specialists working with disability groups and state emergency managers to include the whole community and aging into local emergency planning.



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What FEMA is doing for Older Adults:

Many older adults do not identify themselves as having a disability or access and functional need. Examples may include:

- **49% of adults have a chronic illness or health condition and may need medication or use durable medical equipment, consumable medical supplies, home health services or assistive technology.**
- **Many older adults have a hearing or vision loss or a combination of both. Arthritis is the most prevalent disability and one may need assistance to help maintenance, safety and independence.**

For many older adults accessing services at shelters, Disaster Recovery Centers and local community meetings will require physical access, program access and communication access. These are required by law and are necessary for disaster survivors to obtain information and benefit from emergency programs . All FEMA DRC's are physically accessible and have communication access equipment available for disaster survivors to utilize. such as assistive listening devices, magnifiers, caption and amplified phones, magnifiers and materials in print and braille and sign language and foreign language interpreters. .



FEMA



Gay Jones, Disability Integration Communications Specialist

Gay.Jones@fema.dhs.gov

Everett Sedgewick, Disability Integration Specialist

Everett.Sedgewick@fema.dhs.gov



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