

Disability and Emergency Preparedness

Resources and Research for Inclusive
Emergency Preparedness Planning



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Introduction

People with disabilities and older adults often experience a greater impact from emergencies and disasters for a number of reasons, especially because they rely on services and supports that may become interrupted. Mobility, hearing, learning, or seeing disabilities can create specific needs that must be addressed to effectively prepare for and respond to an emergency or a disaster (Red Cross, n.d.). The preparation and response should involve people with disabilities and their caregivers, emergency managers at the state and local level, first responders, and any community-based organization providing relevant services.

It's been shown that people with disabilities were disproportionately impacted during the California wildfire areas. Of those affected or displaced, 7.2% had a hearing disability, 11.4% had a cognitive disability, 11.8% had ambulatory disability, and 10.2% had independent living challenges (Schwartz, 2019). During Hurricane Katrina, it was found that older adults and people with disabilities were more impacted than people without disabilities because they had greater difficulty evacuating (Schwartz, 2019). Older adults and people with disabilities have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, including being at higher risk for serious illness and death (Administration for Community Living, 2021). Individuals in nursing homes and long-term care facilities accounted for a disproportionate share of COVID-19 deaths (Musumeci & Chidambaram, 2021).

Given the nature of emergency and disaster response, there are lessons learned that showcase the need to include community-based organizations with programs for older adults and people with disabilities into emergency planning. Because emergencies and disasters can happen at any time, being prepared and having a plan for this population is crucial to successfully navigating these situations.

About the ICDR

The Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR) was authorized by the amended 1973 Rehabilitation Act to promote coordination and collaboration among federal departments and agencies conducting disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research programs, including programs relating to assistive technology research and research that incorporates principles of universal design.

The ICDR adopted a vision to be widely recognized for facilitating and coordinating federal interagency efforts and for promoting collaborative relationships that maximize the best use of federal resources for disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research. The ICDR has a long history of promoting collaboration and coordination across the government to meet the needs of the disability community and leverage limited resources. In its 2018–2021 Strategic Plan, the ICDR developed the following three goals:

Goal #1: Improve interagency coordination and collaboration in four thematic research areas: transition, economics of disability, accessibility, and disparities.

Goal #2: Develop a government-wide inventory of disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research.

Goal #3: Promote ongoing stakeholder input on gaps and priorities for disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research.

Purpose of This Toolkit

The resources in this toolkit present the current landscape of emergency preparedness planning and response related to disability. These resources can help people with disabilities and their caregivers, emergency managers, first responders, and community-based organizations prepare for emergencies and disasters. They can also help to facilitate further research by federal agencies and promote interagency collaboration related to disability and emergency preparedness.

This toolkit offers a wide range of current resources developed through research from federal agencies and examples of best practices from across the public and private sectors. Because many of the emergency preparedness planning oversight happens at the state level, this toolkit emphasizes resources and best practices developed across different states.

Background

A major goal of emergency preparedness in the community is to reach every person in the community. This means that understanding the needs of everyone in the community is critical when planning and preparing for emergencies and disasters.

Legislation around disability and emergency preparedness planning has changed and evolved over time. After 2001, as more employers were putting together emergency plans in the wake of the September 11 attacks, there were questions about how the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act affected their ability to develop or re-evaluate emergency procedures. Subsequently, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission provided guidance on **obtaining and using employee medical information as part of emergency evacuation procedures**. In 2006, the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act amended the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to strengthen the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) ability to prevent, prepare for, protect against, respond to, and recover from disaster.

In 2008, the ADA Amendments Act broadened the definition of disability, making it easier for people to seek protection under law. It also mandated that individuals with access and functional needs be included in all disaster plans developed for a community. Additionally, the ADA requires that a local government's emergency preparedness and response programs be accessible to people with disabilities. With the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 there has been a shift in focus toward pandemic response. For information on the impact of COVID-19 on disability research, visit the ICDR's toolkit, *The Impact of COVID-19 on Disability Research: New Challenges and Widening Disparities*.

Because disasters and emergencies can happen at any time, there is a critical need for everyone in a community to be prepared. It is important to educate, train, and include people with disabilities, older adults, their caregivers, emergency managers, as well as first responders and community members. All of these individuals will play an important role in ensuring the inclusion of people with disabilities in emergency response plans (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2020). By better understanding the vulnerabilities and needs in the communities, emergency managers, individuals with disabilities, first responders, and community members can be better prepared before, during, and after disasters.

Policy Initiatives and Relevant Legislation on Disability and Emergency Preparedness

The following provides a brief overview of relevant policy initiatives and legislation that have impacted disability and emergency preparedness planning and response.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The **ADA** is a broad civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. The ADA provides protection in its requirement that people with disabilities have equal access to all government programs. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) originally published its ADA Title II and Title III regulations on July 26, 1991, including the 1991 ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). Title II requires all state and local governments to ensure their communications for people with disabilities are effective. Communication must be as clear and understandable to people who have disabilities as it is for people who do not.

ADA AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2008

The **ADA Amendments Act of 2008** broadened the scope of the definition of disability, which made it easier for people to seek protection under law. It also mandated that individuals with access and functional needs be included in all disaster plans developed for a community.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

The **ADAAG** cover the scoping and technical requirements necessary to ensure that buildings and facilities are accessible. The guidelines were published 1 year after the ADA was signed into law. The DOJ and the U.S. Department of Transportation incorporated ADAAG into their ADA implementing regulations, thus making ADAAG the enforceable standard under Titles II and III of the ADA.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM RULES

In 2005, the Federal Communications Commission expanded the **Emergency Alert System (EAS)** rule to require that an EAS provides access to people with disabilities by providing both visual and audio alerts. The EAS is a national public warning system commonly used by state and local authorities to deliver important emergency information, such as weather and AMBER alerts, to affected communities. EAS participants — radio and television broadcasters, cable systems, satellite radio and television providers, and wireline video providers — deliver local alerts on a voluntary basis, but they are required to provide the capability for the President to address the public during a national emergency.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS EXECUTIVE ORDER

Executive Order 13347, **Individuals with Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness**, was issued in July 2004. It directs the federal government to work together with state, local, and tribal governments as well as private organizations to appropriately address the safety and security needs of people with disabilities

(U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.a). It calls for the federal government to appropriately support safety and security for individuals with disabilities in all types of emergency situations through a coordinated effort among federal agencies, that includes the following:

- Considering the unique needs of agency employees with disabilities and individuals with disabilities whom the agency serves;
- Encouraging, through the provision of technical assistance, as appropriate, consideration of the unique needs of employees and individuals with disabilities served by state, local, and tribal governments and private organizations and individuals in emergency preparedness planning; and
- Facilitating cooperation among federal, state, local, and tribal governments as well as private organizations and individuals (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.b).

PANDEMIC AND ALL-HAZARDS PREPAREDNESS ACT

The Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act in 2006 led to the creation of the **Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR)** to lead the nation in preventing, preparing for, and responding to adverse health effects of public health emergencies and disasters. ASPR focuses on preparedness planning and response; building federal emergency medical operational capabilities; countermeasures research, advance development, and procurement; and grants to strengthen the capabilities of hospitals and health care systems in public health emergencies (ASPR, 2020a). Additionally, the **Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Reauthorization Act of 2013** contains key legal authorities to sustain and strengthen our Nation's preparedness for public health emergencies involving chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear agents, as well as emerging infectious disease threats.

THE PETS EVACUATION AND TRANSPORTATION STANDARDS ACT

The **Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act** amends the Stafford Act. It requires evacuation plans to consider the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals prior to, during, and after a major disaster or emergency.

POST-KATRINA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REFORM ACT

The **Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006** amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make extensive revisions to emergency response provisions. The Act strengthens FEMA's ability to prevent, prepare for, protect against, respond to, and recover from disaster. The Act also required a new level of leadership, including the National Disability Coordinator (which is now part of FEMA's Office of Disability Integration and Coordination), and included provisions for the inclusion of people with disabilities in evacuation plans, accessible housing, and regional disability coordinators (ASPR, 2020a).

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE ACT

The **Public Health Service Act** forms the foundation of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) legal authority for responding to public health emergencies; it authorizes the HHS Secretary to lead all federal public health and medical responses to public health emergencies. Sections 2814 and 2802 describe requirements to address the needs of at-risk individuals, including older adults and people with disabilities, in the event of a disaster or public health emergency.

Disability and Emergency Preparedness Research and Resources

American Public Health Association

The American Public Health Association's [Get Ready Campaign](#) helps Americans prepare themselves, their families, and their communities for all disasters and hazards, including pandemic flu, infectious disease, natural disasters, and other emergencies. The campaign has resources dedicated to information about [preparedness for people with disabilities](#). These resources include a podcast on preparing for a disaster and a number of factsheets on a variety of topics in both English and Spanish.

American Red Cross

The American Red Cross has a page dedicated to [Disaster Safety for People with Disabilities](#). The tips provided include how to assemble a survival kit, make an emergency plan, and stay informed. The resources were put together to help people with disabilities and people in their support networks manage communications, equipment, services animals, pets, and hazards at home.

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

The Association of University Centers on Disabilities conducted telephone interviews with University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities in the U.S. territories of Guam, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands regarding emergency preparedness in the territories, the impact disasters have on

children and adults with disabilities, the individuals who serve these populations, and the role each center plays during and after a disaster. The resulting white paper, *Inclusive Emergency Management Preparedness, Response, and Recovery*, provides key learnings from recent disasters impacting specific territories and policy recommendations for University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities as well as government leaders at the federal, state, and territorial levels.

Job Accommodation Network

The Job Accommodation Network published *Accommodation and Compliance: Emergency Evacuation*, which highlights steps for including employees with disabilities in emergency evacuation planning through plan development, implementation, and maintenance.

National Center on Disability in Public Health

The **National Center on Disability in Public Health**, part of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, has a **National Technical Assistance and Training Center on Disability Inclusion in Emergency Preparedness**. The goal of the training center is to support the disability community to develop local government relationships, build awareness and trust, and gain a seat at the local emergency planning table, fostering emergency planning for all.

National Council on Disability

The **National Council on Disability**, an independent federal agency charged with advising the President, Congress, and other federal agencies regarding policies, programs, practices, and procedures that affect people with disabilities, published this report on *Saving Lives: Including People with Disabilities in Emergency Planning*. The report provides an overview of steps the federal government should take to build a solid infrastructure that will enable to government to include diverse

populations of people with disabilities in emergency preparedness, disaster relief, and homeland security programs. The infrastructure would incorporate access to technology, physical plans, programs, and communications as well as procurement and emergency programs and services.

Effective Communications for People with Disabilities: Before, During, and After Emergencies is a report from the National Council on Disability that looks at barriers, facilitators, and successful practices in providing effective emergency-related communications. It examines the current state of affairs concerning the accessibility of emergency-related communications and reviews the enforcement of disability laws and regulations as they pertain to effective communications before, during, and after emergencies. The report also shares experiences and perceptions of people with disabilities as they relate to emergency-related communications. It includes a number of recommendations for policymakers, federal partners, and emergency managers.

Pacific ADA Center

The Pacific ADA Center offers webinars on a variety of subjects under the ADA. They have a number of archived webinars on **emergency management and preparedness-inclusion of people with disabilities**.

One of the recent webinars, *Prepared4ALL: Whole Community Emergency Planning*, highlights the Prepared4ALL campaign, which links disability organizations and people with disabilities to local emergency management and public health preparedness agencies. The webinar shared training materials, the online course, toolkits, a workbook guide, and other information so that the campaign can be replicated. Other archived webinars include many related to the COVID-19 pandemic response.

Select State Departments of Health

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The Alabama Department of Public Health created an [ADA Compliance Tip Sheet](#) intended to help shelters assess common accessibility barriers and find solutions. Although published by the Alabama Department of Public Health, this resource can be helpful to shelters across the country. Topics include inaccessible toilets, issues with signage, and physical barriers.

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The [Montana Shelter 2020 Initiative](#) is a 5-year statewide project to guide local emergency planners and their partners through a series of assessments and planning activities to build the capacity of selected shelters to serve the whole community. [Montana Disability and Health Program Accessibility Ambassadors](#) work with local emergency managers to assess each shelter's accessibility and identify areas for improvement. There are a number of [emergency preparedness tools and resources](#) that have been developed by the Montana Department of Public Health and its partners.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

According to HHS, over 2.6 million Medicare beneficiaries rely on electricity-dependent durable medical and assistive equipment and devices, such as ventilators, to live independently in their homes. For these individuals, severe weather or other emergencies, especially when there are prolonged power outages, can be life-threatening. This [emPOWER Map](#) displays the total number of at-risk electricity-dependent Medicare beneficiaries in a geographic area and near real-time natural hazard data. Map users can select different geographies to identify at-risk populations and download selected data results to inform emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation of public health activities. Users can also

access near real-time natural hazard data layers to anticipate and address the needs of at-risk community members in emergencies.

ADMINISTRATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) published a *Capacity-Building Toolkit for Including Aging and Disability Networks in Emergency Planning*. This resource guides aging and disability networks to increase their ability to plan for and respond to public health emergencies and disasters. It helps programs that support older adults and people with disabilities through the emergency planning process of preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation activities. The toolkit was written by the National Association of County and City Health Officials and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, in partnership with ASPR and ACL.

ACL has also compiled **resources for individuals, service providers, and communities for emergency preparedness**. The page includes links to preparedness checklists for individuals and families, plus hotlines for emergency situations. ACL also released new emergency planning guidance for the Independent Living Network in the form of a **frequently asked questions document about disaster response and emergency relief efforts for people with disabilities**.

ACL published a blog called *Emergency Preparedness Month: “Disasters Don’t Plan Ahead. You Can.”* It included a number of resources across ACL to help prepare for disasters. ACL also has a page on **Emergency Preparedness** that includes resources for emergency preparedness for older adults and people with disabilities.

Another ACL blog, *No One Left Behind: Including Older Adults and People with Disabilities in Emergency Planning*, revisited the impact of Hurricane Katrina and provided resources for inclusive emergency planning.

ACL's Administration on Disabilities hosted a webinar on emergency preparedness. The webinar defined and explained federal, state, and local roles and responsibilities in disasters and public health emergencies; provided a summary of guidance and frameworks used at all levels for planning and coordination; and shared best practices and examples of effective coordination with community-based organizations to address the health and well-being of people with disabilities in disasters. The [transcript](#) and [slides](#) from the webinar are available.

ACL's resource page on [Helping Community-Based Organizations Be Prepared for Emergencies](#) includes resources on developing a continuity of operations plan so that organizations can resume essential functions quickly when emergencies occur.

ACL compiled the document [Strategies for Helping Older Adults and People with Disabilities Access COVID-19 Vaccines](#) to offer examples and promising practices for state, municipalities, community-based partners, and anyone else working to ensure that older adults and people with disabilities can get vaccinated for COVID-19.

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

The CDC has a page dedicated to [Disability and Health Emergency Preparedness](#). It includes resources developed by CDC-funded state disability and health programs that public health professionals, emergency personnel, and community organizations can use to create emergency preparedness and response plans that include people with disabilities.

This [CDC workbook, *To Define, Locate, and Reach Special, Vulnerable, and At-risk Populations in an Emergency*](#), is intended to provide public health and emergency preparedness planners with better ways to communicate health and emergency information to at-risk individuals with access and functional needs for all-hazards events through step-by-step instructions, resources guides, and templates.

Planning for an Emergency: Strategies for Identifying and Engaging At-Risk Groups

is a document designed for emergency managers. The document gives examples of approaches and tools that can be used alone or in combination to identify social vulnerabilities as well as tools to identify, plan for, and assist at-risk groups or socially vulnerable populations.

The CDC developed the ***Access and Functional Needs Toolkit: Integrating a Community Partner Network to Inform Risk Communication Strategies*** to help emergency planners achieve effective communications through the integration of a community outreach information network. The toolkit provides a framework to organize planning for broad groups of people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, recommended action steps, and noteworthy practices from the field.

Nobody Left Behind is the result of a 3-year study to investigate 30 county-level or equivalent emergency management sites across the United States that had experienced a recent disaster. The CDC-funded research aimed to determine the readiness of these sites to assist persons with mobility limitations during disasters. The research findings were published in the ***Nobody Left Behind Final Report***.

The CDC's ***Guidance for Vaccinating Older Adults and People with Disabilities: Ensuring Equitable COVID-19 Vaccine Access*** summarizes what jurisdictions should consider when planning to vaccinate older adults and people with disabilities living in the community. It also provides considerations to help jurisdictions ensure equal opportunities for vaccination of these populations.

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

The HHS Office of Civil Rights published a number of **resources related to COVID-19**. The Office of Civil Rights released guidance and factsheets related to disability and

vaccine programs, including the [Disability Access in Vaccine Distribution Factsheet](#) and [Guidance on Federal Legal Standards Prohibiting Discrimination in COVID-19 Vaccination Programs](#).

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

ASPR created the [Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange \(TRACIE\)](#) to meet the information and technical assistance needs of regional ASPR staff, healthcare coalitions, healthcare entities, healthcare providers, emergency managers, public health practitioners, and others working in disaster medicine, healthcare system preparedness, and public health emergency preparedness. TRACIE offers [technical resources](#), an [assistance center](#), and an [information exchange](#).

ASPR published a [factsheet regarding at-risk individuals with access and functional needs](#). At-risk individuals are people with access and functional needs (temporary or permanent) that may interfere with their ability to access or receive medical care before, during, or after a disaster or public health emergency. This factsheet also outlined the CMIST Framework. CMIST is an acronym for the following five categories: Communication, Maintaining health, Independence, Support and Safety, and Transportation. The CMIST Framework is a recommended approach for integrating the access and functional need of these individuals. The CMIST Framework provides a flexible, crosscutting approach for planning to address a broad set of common access and functional needs without having to define a specific diagnosis, status, or label (ASPR, 2020b).

Since addressing access and functional needs is critical for comprehensive disaster planning, ASPR has an [Access and Functional Needs Web-Based Training](#). The training defines the concept and requirements for addressing the access and functional needs of at-risk individuals and provides tools and resources to help

address these needs in the community during disaster preparedness, response, and recovery activities.

A resource page was developed related to hurricane response that included [resources for children with special health care needs](#). Children with special health care needs are a population that may need additional attention and support during an emergency. Children with special health care needs have or are at increased risk for having chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional conditions. They require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that typically required by children.

The [National Advisory Committee on Individuals with Disabilities and Disasters](#) is a committee within ASPR that evaluates issues and programs and provides findings, advice, and recommendations to support and enhance all-hazards public health and medical preparedness, response activities, and recovery related to meeting the unique needs of individuals with disabilities. The Committee advises the Secretary of HHS on actions that HHS can take before, during, and after disasters and emergencies to meet the unique needs of individuals with disabilities.

ASPR funded a [Toolkit for State and Local Planning and Response](#). The interactive toolkit helps state and local health departments better identify, plan for, and respond to at-risk individuals with access and functional needs. Designed for public health department representatives, the toolkit also links users to information on promising strategies for integrating assistance for special needs populations into public health planning and response.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

The Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration has a page of resources on [Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery](#) where they provide

communities and responders with behavioral health resources that help them prepare, respond, and recover from disasters.

The Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration also published a **Disaster Toolkit** that was written to give disaster recovery workers materials that aid in responding effectively to the general public during and after a disaster and in dealing with workplace stress. The toolkit includes SAFE-T practice guidelines and suicide prevention wallet cards. It also includes guides for parents, caregivers, teachers, and others.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FEMA's mission is to help people before, during, and after disasters, and it has a wide variety of resources and guides.

FEMA published the report *Guidance on Planning for Integration of Functional Needs Support Services in General Population Shelters*. This guide provides strategies on, among other things, practical cot and sleeping arrangements for evacuees with disabilities; assistance with personal care, hygiene, and dietary needs; and accommodating service animals alongside disaster survivors in the shelter.

FEMA released the *Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans: Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101 Version 2.0*. It provides information and instructions to help tribal, state, territorial, and local governments develop emergency plans and includes guidance for people with access and functional needs.

FEMA also released the *Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101 Supplement: Household Pet and Service Animal Planning Checklist*, which includes planning

considerations to guide the integration of household pet and service animal issues into existing emergency operations plans. The checklist follows the requirements outlined in the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act of 2006.

FEMA's **Office of Disability Integration and Coordination** helps people with disabilities before, during, and after disasters. They have several resources and tips for inclusive emergency management and disaster preparedness. This includes ensuring that FEMA disaster recovery centers have **accessible communication technology devices** that allow people who are blind or have low vision and people who are deaf or hard of hearing or have other communication access needs to receive first-hand disaster information.

FEMA also released a **National Disaster Housing Strategy** that calls for national and state efforts to plan for accessible housing that can be made available after a disaster.

The We Prepare Every Day videos share practical preparedness tips for everyone and show people with disabilities taking charge to prepare themselves and their families for disasters and emergencies. The video is available with **open captioning**, a **certified deaf interpreter**, and **audio description**.

The **Ready Campaign** was launched in 2003 as a national public service campaign to educate and empower Americans to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate emergencies. Its goal is to promote preparedness through public involvement. Ready.gov has many **resources tailored specifically to people with disabilities** as well as **seniors and older adults**. It includes information from FEMA about creating an emergency preparedness plan that takes into consideration the needs of people with disabilities, including people who are deaf or blind or who have speech or mobility disabilities. It also includes tips on creating a plan, **making an emergency**

kit, setting up Social Security or other benefits electronically, and **preparing your service animal for a disaster**. Other resources found on Ready.gov include creating an **emergency communication plan**, a template to create a **transit commuter emergency communication plan**, and accessible videos on **being informed**, **making a plan**, and **building a kit**.

The American Red Cross and FEMA also published *Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and other Special Needs*. This resource was developed to help people with physical, medical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities develop a plan to prepare for emergencies or disasters.

U.S. Department of Justice

The DOJ published an ADA guide for local governments, *Making Community Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs Accessible to People with Disabilities*, that highlights actionable strategies and steps for local governments to take to ensure their emergency preparedness and response programs are accessible to people with disabilities.

The DOJ Civil Rights Division published a resource, *ADA Best Practices Tool Kit for State and Local Governments*. The toolkit is designed to teach state and local government officials how to identify and fix problems that prevent people with disabilities from gaining equal access to state and local government programs, services, and activities. It was also designed to teach officials how to conduct accessibility surveys of their buildings to identify and remove architectural barriers to access. The seventh installment of the toolkit includes topics like **emergency management under Title II of the ADA**, a **Title II checklist**, and the **ADA and emergency shelter access**.

U.S. Department of Labor

Emergency planning for the workplace is just as important as for the home.

Effective Emergency Preparedness Planning: Addressing the Needs of Employees with Disabilities includes resources related to workplace emergency preparedness and the needs of employees with disabilities. Emergency preparedness plans that do not include or consider the needs of people with disabilities could hinder equal access to employment.

Preparing the Workplace for Everyone is meant to serve as a launching point for federal agencies as they re-evaluate and strengthen their Occupant Emergency Plans. This framework of guidelines reflects the effective practices of nearly 20 federal agencies gathered from direct input, existing reports and articles, and actual emergency plans. Topics are explored considering the four phases of emergency preparedness plans: development, implementation, practice, and maintenance. Since it was first developed, there have been addenda on the topics of **stairwell use during an emergency, aiding individuals with service animals during an emergency, and visitors with disabilities.**

State-Developed Resources by Target Audience

Because much of the emergency preparedness planning oversight happens at the state level, this toolkit includes resources that have been developed across different states. Although they were developed to be state-specific, these can also be used as resources or templates.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR CAREGIVERS

The following states have published materials and tools for people with disabilities and their caregivers. Although some of these materials may be state-specific, they may also contain information relevant to people with disabilities and their caregivers across the country, or be used as templates to develop additional resources. This list can be found under the CDC's [Disability and Health Emergency Preparedness Tools and Resources](#).

ALASKA

[The Get Ready! Toolkit](#) helps people with disabilities prepare for an emergency by making an emergency plan, which may include family, friends, neighbors, and organizations that support people with disabilities.

[Disaster Preparedness for Families of Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs](#) guides parents through the basic steps of creating an emergency kit and developing a communication plan.

[Emergency Preparedness for All](#) is a video to help people with disabilities and their families prepare for a disaster.

ARKANSAS

Make Your Plan Before a Disaster is a guide that includes information on access and functional needs for use in developing agency or individual preparedness plans and working with local emergency management. It also includes information on the **CMIST** planning guidelines to develop emergency plans for individuals with disabilities.

IOWA

The **Prep Iowans Program** was designed to help people with disabilities plan for survival at home, in a shelter, or elsewhere before an emergency.

The Iowa **Personal Emergency Preparedness Planning Guide for People with Access and Functional Needs** was developed to help people with disabilities and their caregivers develop personal emergency plans.

KANSAS

The Prepared Lifestyle: How to Plan for Seasonal and Pandemic Flu and Other Emergencies was designed to help people with disabilities prepare for public health threats and other natural or man-made disasters.

Individual Disaster Preparedness includes a “do and don’t” checklist to display in shelters, businesses, and any other appropriate areas to indicate what people with disabilities can do to prepare for emergencies.

Community Disaster Preparedness includes a “do and don’t” checklist to display in shelters, businesses, and any other appropriate areas to indicate how people with disabilities can work with their communities to get the support they need during emergencies.

MONTANA

The **Emergency Medical Information Kit** was designed to improve communications about medical needs during a disaster. It promotes awareness of **Smart911**, offers support for people with disabilities, and provides information about available emergency preparedness materials.

Emergency Preparedness: An Inclusive Guide for People with Access and Functional Needs is a resource to improve communications that promote the involvement and safety of persons with functional disabilities during emergency preparedness, action, and recovery.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Emergency Preparedness & You was created to remind people with disabilities that disasters and emergencies can happen without warning. It provides tips on planning and preparedness.

The **C-MIST Personal Planning Tool** was created to assist people with disabilities in considering which specialized items to add to their personalized preparedness kit and guide users through the creation of a personalized plan.

Emergency Kits contains basic items individuals and their family may need if an emergency happens.

NEW YORK

Emergency Preparedness: My Safety, My Responsibility, My Plan was developed in a partnership between the New York Disability and Health Program and the Westchester Institute for Human Development. This is a multi-session program to train adults with intellectual disabilities to understand and be prepared for emergencies.

NORTH DAKOTA

In an Emergency, Will You Be Ready? is a 5-minute emergency preparedness video that illustrates emergency preparation steps that include developing a plan, creating an emergency kit, and discussing specific considerations for people with disabilities.

OREGON

The **Ready Now Toolkit** is a resource for people with disabilities that emphasizes independence, allowing each person to address their specific needs. This guide is also available in Spanish.

EMERGENCY MANAGERS

The following states have developed materials and presentations to train emergency management agencies on developing plans that address the needs of people with disabilities in emergencies and disasters. Although some of these materials may be state-specific, they may also contain information relevant across the country, or be used as templates to develop additional resources. This list can be found under the CDC's **Disability and Health Emergency Preparedness Tools and Resources**.

ARKANSAS

Access and Functional Needs Injects Flip Flops are disability-related materials for use by local emergency planning personnel in emergency exercises and drills. These are based on listening sessions with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, and emergency responders.

IOWA

A Whole Community Approach to Disaster Planning and Management is a training provided to county emergency managers and planners on identifying disability resources to improve communication and transportation for individuals during a disaster.

Emergency Planning for People with Disability is a training to understand the needs of people with disabilities during emergencies and prepare and respond accordingly.

KANSAS

Ready, Willing and Able is a course designed for the public health, hospital, preparedness, emergency response, and disaster relief workforce. Instruction is given in the video by professional educators, including a person with a disability.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Including People with Disabilities in Emergency Planning and Preparedness is a resource for state and local emergency management personnel or others involved with the planning or provisions of emergency operations. The resources were used to create a **catalog of training modules** that local and regional emergency personnel could use for in-person trainings.

OHIO

Disability Training for Emergency Planners: Serving People with Disabilities is a training that includes a video that provides information and best practices that help emergency planners ensure the safety of people with disabilities and their own safety during emergency events.

FIRST RESPONDERS

The following states have developed resources for first responders to address the specific needs of people with disabilities. Although some of these materials may be state-specific, they may also contain information relevant across the country, or be used as templates to develop additional resources. This list can be found under the CDC's [Disability and Health Emergency Preparedness Tools and Resources](#).

ALABAMA

[Tips for Providing Services for Individuals Living with Functional and Access Needs](#) is a brochure with tips for providing services to individuals with functional and access needs.

ALASKA

[Hidden Disabilities: Communication Tips for First Responders](#) is a training video created by a group of community partners to teach first responders how to communicate with people with disabilities.

NEW MEXICO

[Tips for First Responders](#) is a tip sheet with information for assisting people with a wide range of disabilities. It was developed by the University of New Mexico's Center for Development and Disability and is distributed across the country by state and disability and health programs.

OHIO

[Disability Training for First Responders Serving People with Disabilities](#) includes a video that provides information and best practices to help first responders ensure the safety of people with disabilities and their own safety during emergencies.

Serving Service Animal Teams is a video that teaches first responders how to handle service animals in emergency situations.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

The following states created resources for their community-based organizations and entities that provide services to people with disabilities to help them prepare for emergencies and disasters. Although some of these materials may be state-specific, they may also contain information relevant across the country, or be used as templates to develop additional resources. This list can be found under the CDC's **Disability and Health Emergency Preparedness Tools and Resources**.

ARKANSAS

The **Overview of Emergency Management for Disability Programs** is a training curriculum developed for community members, including service providers, Centers for Independent Living staff, and emergency managers.

MONTANA

Whole Community Approach: Emergency and Disaster Preparedness was developed to help community-based organizations fulfill their role to ensure people with disabilities are informed and have the resources they need to stay safe during emergencies.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Creating Emergency Kits and Plans with People with Disabilities is an interactive training curriculum to teach staff from disability organizations, family members, and people with disabilities to be prepared for emergencies.

Data Resources to Monitor Disability and Emergency Preparedness

Data Sets

A number of **national surveys include a standard set of disability questions** that help to develop profiles of people with disabilities living within a state. The following is a list of some of the population surveys that contain the standard disability questions that can be used to monitor disability and emergency preparedness:

The **American Community Survey** is an ongoing, national survey of households in the U.S. It provides demographic, socioeconomic, and housing information about communities in between each 10-year Census.

The **Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System** is a state-level telephone survey. Some states also include emergency preparedness questions.

The **Medical Expenditure Panel Survey** is an ongoing large-scale national survey of families and individuals, their medical providers, and employers to assess the costs and use of health care and health insurance coverage across the United States.

The **National Health and Aging Trends Study** is a survey of Medicare beneficiaries aged 65 years or older about functioning and underlying capacity, living arrangements and social support, economic status and well-being, environmental factors, and quality of life.

The **National Health Interview Survey** is a household survey of children and adults. It collects information on a broad range of health topics, such as health insurance, doctor's office visits, physical activity, and other health behaviors.

The **National Survey of Children's Health** is a survey that examines the physical and emotional health of children aged 0 to 17 years. Special emphasis is placed on factors that may relate to the well-being of children, such as parental health, positive family interactions, positive school and after-school experiences, and safe neighborhoods. These data are essential to understanding the health status and health services needs of children across the nation.

State-Level Data

There are several states that conduct surveys or use state-specific data sources to determine the needs of their population or people with disabilities and caregivers.

ALASKA

The Alaska Health and Disability Program published *Emergency Preparedness for Alaskans Experiencing Disabilities*. Adult Alaskans with disabilities or their caregivers were asked to participate in this anonymous survey to establish a baseline measure for emergency preparedness state-wide and to gather data for developing and providing resources. A **follow-up needs assessment** was conducted to measure progress.

MONTANA

The Montana Disability and Health Program brought together data from a number of national surveys and local programs to provide a comprehensive picture of disability for each county in the state in their *Montana State, County, and Reservation Report*.

OREGON

Oregon has specific reports on people with disabilities and emergency preparedness. *Emergency Preparedness among Oregonians with Disabilities* assesses the status of emergency preparedness for people with disabilities in the state. In addition, the Oregon Disability and Health Program used data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System to create *Disability in Oregon: 2016 Annual Report on the Health of Oregonians with Disabilities*.

RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island developed a registry to identify individuals who may require additional assistance during emergencies, including people with disabilities or special health care needs, called *Rhode Island Special Needs Emergency Registry*. The information is shared with local and state first responders and emergency management officials.

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