

FEMA RI Disability Integration Newsletter

FALL 2016

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Administrator's Message

Welcome to the Fall edition of the FEMA Region I Disability Integration Newsletter! As the leaves begin to fall and the pumpkins grow, our awareness of Hurricane Season is heightened.

As we continue to face the potential impacts of Hurricane Season, I want to remind you of the importance of preparedness planning. Also, I want to acknowledge the outstanding work of our State and local Emergency Management Agencies for their commitment to ensuring whole community preparedness. We know we can't control the weather, but as a Region we can work together collaboratively to control our responses.

We are here to support you. Please let our Regional Disability Integration Specialist, Kate McCarthy-Barnett, know if you have questions or requests for inclusive emergency management training, guidance, tools or strategies.

Thank you for your dedication to inclusion, accessibility and equity across all phases of emergency management.



FEMA

PAUL F. FORD
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

FEMA'S MISSION

FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capacity to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

National Preparedness Month

September is recognized as [National Preparedness Month](#) which serves as a reminder that we should all take action to prepare now and throughout the year for the types of emergencies that could affect us where we live, work and also where we visit. This year's theme is ***“Don’t Wait, Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today.”*** National Preparedness Month is designed to raise awareness and encourage Americans to take steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, schools, workplace, organizations, businesses, and places of worship.

Thank you for taking time to help make America be more prepared for emergencies.

“Disasters don’t always occur when we are together with our family and friends, and so it is important to take a few minutes now to plan what you will do in the event you are separated,” said FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. “It only takes a few minutes to talk through the greatest risks that can affect where you live, work or go to school. We can have greater peace of mind by knowing we have a plan.”



Take Action: Download FEMA App



-  Receive alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations.
-  Get safety reminders, read tips to survive natural disasters, and customize your emergency checklist.
-  Locate open shelters and where to talk to FEMA in person (or on the phone).
-  Upload and share your disaster photos to help first responders.

Be prepared and [download](#) the FEMA app for free on the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#)

Highlights of information provided:

- Receive weather alerts
- Learn what to do before, during and after emergencies with safety tips
- Prepare ahead of time with an emergency kit checklist
- Get directions to open shelters and Disaster Recovery Centers
- Share disaster damage photos

Hurricanes: Are You Prepared?



It only takes one storm to change your life and community. Each year, we witness the devastating impacts that hurricanes can cause. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center seasonal outlook for 2016, indicates the season will most likely be near-normal but the uncertainty about the formation of Atlantic storms makes predicting this season particularly difficult. The effects of hurricanes can stretch far beyond just coastal areas, impacting communities hundreds of miles inland. When a hurricane hits, it can bring high winds, heavy rainfall, coastal and inland flooding, rip currents, and even tornadoes. Storm surge produced by hurricanes poses the greatest threat to life and property along the coast.

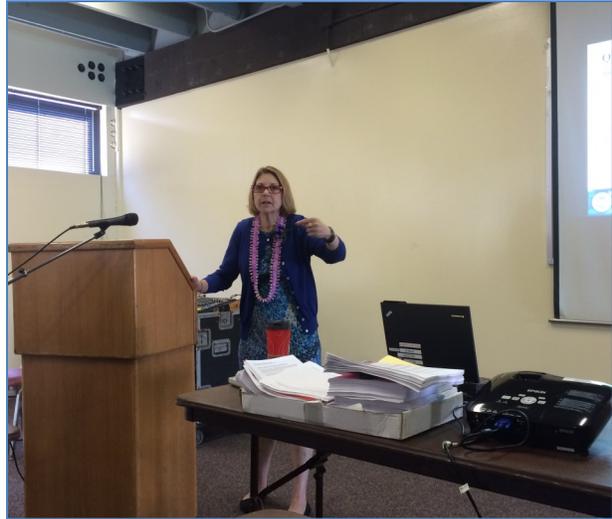
Taking action now, in advance of a storm, can save lives and enables families and communities to recover more quickly should disaster strike.

- ◇ **Know Your Risk:** Find out today what types of impacts could happen where you live. Hurricanes are not just a coastal problem. To search for general information about risks in your area, visit www.ready.gov and search for your state
- ◇ **Get Prepared:** As the storm approaches, it is often too late to get ready. Make sure you have family evacuation and [communications plans](#), update your emergency supply kit, download the [FEMA App](#) and evaluate your [flood insurance needs](#). Many communities have designated evacuation zones and routes to get citizens to safety.
- ◇ **Stay Informed:** Know where to go for trusted sources of information during a hurricane event. Sign up for alerts and notifications, monitor local news and follow directions of officials and make sure you have a battery-operated or hand-crank radio available should the power go out.

Hurricanes are one of nature's most powerful and destructive events that the nation faces, and they have caused eight of the 10 costliest disasters in U.S. history. Hurricane season ends November 30th.

State Planning Highlights

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency offered the Emergency Management Institute *Integrating Access and Functional Needs into Emergency Planning* course. This two day training included participants who are responsible for providing or participating in Emergency Management planning. The training provided information and resources on how to utilize disability inclusive practices. Marcie Roth, Director of FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination was one of the course trainers.



Susan Earley, Disaster Behavioral Health Coordinator at Rhode Island (RI) Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals conducted a workshop at the RI Annual Preparedness Conference focused on *Human Factor Challenges in Complex Emergencies* including an overview of response and recovery for people with mental health disabilities during a disaster.

The New Hampshire Emergency Preparedness Conference included a workshop *Creating Emergency Kits and Plans with People with Disabilities*. The training demonstrated personal planning tools to create customized Go-Bag Starter emergency preparedness kits, discussions on case studies and provided communication, medical needs, independence, supervision and transportation planning strategies for people with disabilities.



Information & Resources

Automated Vehicle

In July, Clyde Terry, Chief Executive Officer of Granite State Independent Living in Vermont became the first blind driver to co-pilot “Jack” Audi’s prototype automated vehicle when it made its public debut in the nation’s capital. The drive originated at Dirksen Senate Office Building, went across the 14th Street Bridge and over the Potomac and then went hands free in automated mode past the Pentagon before looping back. Guidance on the use and development of autonomous vehicles is expected to be issued by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration this year.



Parental Rights

It’s normal for parents to want to do everything they can to keep their children safe and make sure they are healthy. But for many of the 4.1 million parents with disabilities in the United States, courts have decided that having a disability can impact parenting skills. In 2016, 35 states could still review if a disability impacted parental rights. The National Council on Disability and the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation released the [Parents with Disabilities Toolkit](#) to provide information on rights of parents with disabilities.



One Stop for Resources

[Abilities Expo](#), the Nation’s largest free event for disability resources is coming to Boston on September 16-18 at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center. The Boston Abilities Expo will feature exhibits of latest products and services, workshops, sports, dancing and activities.

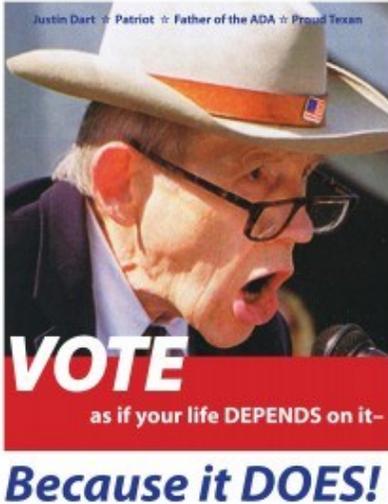
Summer Internship Deadline

The application deadline for the 2017 American Association of People with Disabilities summer internship program for college, graduate, law students and recent graduates with disabilities is November 7, 2016 [Apply online](#).

Mark Your Calendars: Pacific ADA Center Emergency Preparedness Free Webinar

The [National Fire Protection Association's Emergency Evacuation Planning for People with Disabilities](#) webinar will be held on October 13 , 2016. This free webinar will review evacuation strategies and provide strategies on how to build a successful plan for people with disabilities.

Resources on Voting Accessibility



As we get closer to Election Day, it is critical to remember that under the Americans with Disabilities Act, people with disabilities must have full and equal opportunities to vote. The Department of Justice offers several guides on the subject. These include the [“ADA Checklist for Polling Places,”](#) a resource that explains what makes a polling place accessible from entry onto the site to voting areas. It also recommends design remedies and provides a survey checklist for evaluating polling place accessibility. Other resources include solutions to common access problems at polling places and a [guide](#) to federal laws that protect the rights of voters with disabilities. To get more people with disabilities and supporters registered and voting, the American Association of People with Disabilities initiated the **REV UP Campaign:**

Register! Educate! Vote! Use your Power!

Region I State Voting Information

A few highlights of resources:

- ◇ **Connecticut:** The Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities provides information on the voting process, laws that protect voting rights and common questions and answers for voters with disabilities.
- ◇ **Rhode Island:** The Disability Law Center promotes full participation in the electoral process including registering to vote, casting a ballot and operating a Voting Rights Hotline while the polls are open.
- ◇ **Massachusetts:** The Disability Law Center sponsors the *Voting Access Task Force* with representatives from several disability agencies focused on encouraging people with disabilities to register to vote and become educated on the candidates.
- ◇ **New Hampshire:** The Disability Rights Center has surveyed polling places for accessibility, provides training and assistance to individuals with disabilities to promote their participation in elections and helps individuals file a complaint if voting rights are violated.
- ◇ **Vermont:** Disability Rights identifies strategies to provide full participation and equal access for individuals with disabilities including ensuring polling places are accessible.
- ◇ **Maine:** Disability Rights Protection and Advocacy *Voting Access Program* was developed to ensure every qualified individual has the right to vote by removing barriers to voting and educating people with disabilities on voting rights.



Spotlight on Leadership

Region I, is comprised of outstanding disability advocates and leaders. In this edition, we would like to recognize **Sue Wolf-Fordham, J.D.**, Director, Emergency Preparedness Initiative, University of Massachusetts Medical School Eunice Kennedy Shriver Center.



Sue Wolf-Fordham is a nationally known subject matter expert on inclusive emergency preparedness. Since 2009, the [E.K. Shriver Center](#) has developed inclusive emergency planning solutions aimed at increasing equal access to emergency services, enhancing regulatory compliance, promoting efficient emergency response, and health equity and resilience for the whole community. The Center provides education and awareness programs for people with disabilities, chronic health conditions, others with access and functional needs, service providers and support networks as well as local governments, emergency responders, health care and public health organizations. **Sue exemplifies the qualities of a leader in emergency management whole community planning!**



Region I, also consists of innovative emergency management professionals who are committed to developing and implementing inclusive emergency management programs and services. In this edition, we would like to recognize the **Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA)**.

Under the leadership of Director Peter Gaynor, RIEMA has implemented a unique approach to incorporating disability integration throughout programs and services. RIEMA addresses the needs of people with disabilities and other individuals with access and functional needs into state-wide planning documents and provides preparedness information on their website including accessible communications board. In addition, RIEMA served on the Special Needs Workgroup and collaborates with the Department of Health on the Special Needs Emergency Registry for people who may need assistance during an emergency. Approximately 12,000 individuals are enrolled in the Registry and their information is shared with local and state first responders and emergency management officials. These are just a few examples of how RIEMA exemplifies accessible emergency management for the whole community. **Congratulations RIEMA on your commitment to inclusive and integrated emergency management!**



How Can FEMA Region I Disability Integration Support You?



- ◇ Provide guidance, strategies and tools for accessible Emergency Alert & Notification, Evacuation & Transportation, Shelter Accessibility, Communications and Community Outreach
- ◇ Assist with the development and implementation of integrated and accessible planning, programs, policies and services
- ◇ Provide technical assistance for physical, communication and programmatic accessibility and provide options for meeting obligations
- ◇ Provide guidance to enhance agencies understanding of legal requirements, roles and responsibilities to achieving equitable and accessible preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation initiatives
- ◇ Collaborate on strategies for integrating function-based needs into planning, training and exercising and support disability and emergency management workgroups and committees and other requests for inclusive emergency management planning and response assistance

For questions or requests for inclusive emergency management guidance, tools, resources or newsletter alternative formats please contact:

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*Please send any suggestions or items of interest
to share in our next newsletter.*