

Disability Task Force on Emergency Management Sub-Committees

1. FNSS Integration Sub-Committee

The FNSS Integration Committee was convened in January 2011 to develop a tool kit for local governments to use to assist them with complying with ADA laws and statutes in general population shelters. In addition, this committee provides state, regional, and local governments, and emergency management professionals with information on how to meet the emergency management needs of people with disabilities.

Current Goals:

- Meet quarterly to review and update the FNSS Tool Kit.
- Liaison with local governments on statewide FNSS development to include information on the work that the other sub-committees are completing. Work with the Training Sub-Committee to determine the best method to disseminate the training courses that are being developed.
- Continue to develop statewide solutions to support local government's ability to provide functional needs support during disasters.
- Create an agenda and planning guide on how other jurisdictions can put together an effective regional coordination planning conference or training event.
- Provide guidance for local governments to use to educate first responders on functional and access needs support.
- Develop an in depth planning tool on how to get started in the integration process.

2. Grant Sub-Committee

This committee will work with the State Administrative Agency and TDEM to incorporate inclusive emergency management, such as functional and access needs coordination into all phases of emergency management with an emphasis on preparedness, planning, exercises, and training as part of grant requirements. In addition, they will research grants available to local governments and organizations to assist with preparedness activities related to people with disabilities.

Current Initiatives:

- The Grants Subcommittee exists to ensure a resilient and competitive Texas by incorporating whole community doctrine into grant guidance language.

- Ensure individuals with functional and access needs are planned for and included in any state and federal grant requirements.

3. Planning Sub-Committee

This group will advise TDEM on the update the State Emergency Management Plan and the local plans templates that are provided by TDEM to local governments to ensure that we have planned for people with disabilities. This will be a long term sub-committee that will work closely with TDEMs Preparedness Section.

Current Initiatives: Currently reviewing annexes of the State Emergency Management Plan for inclusion of the needs of people with disabilities. They are reviewing Annex C – Mass Care, Annex I – Public Information, Annex J – Recovery, and the State Hurricane Plan.

4. Training Sub-Committee

This sub-committee will address training and conferences. This group will assist TDEM in the development of training courses that instructs local and state government students how to incorporate planning for people with functional and access needs into their emergency management programs.

Current Initiatives:

- FNSS Overview. This is a 10 slide high level overview or introduction to Functional Needs Support Services guidance and ADA Compliance as it relates to emergency management. This would be provided to local elected officials or new Emergency Management Coordinators for a general understanding of these requirements.
- FNSS Short Module. This is a one-hour training module on functional needs support services. This course can be used by jurisdictions, state agencies, or other organizations as a standalone training module or as part of another training course.
- G197 – Emergency Planning for People with Functional and Access Needs. This is a FEMA course that became outdated and included inappropriate language. FEMA continues to work on their course, but Texas decided to rewrite this course and incorporate Texas specific information. It is a work in progress. The course is intended to provide individuals with responsibilities for providing emergency planning or care of seniors, people with disabilities, and/or groups and associations who work with people with disabilities, the skills and knowledge they will need to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergency situations.

5. Effective Communications Sub-Committee

One of the most widespread problems in emergency management is how to communicate effectively. This sub-committee will look at the problem as a whole and provide recommendations to TDEM and through TDEM to local governments on communicating effectively to people with disabilities during all phases of emergency management, but especially during a disaster event.

Current Initiatives:

- Preparedness Web Site. The committee is working on a recommendation that the State assign a specific web site that will hold public preparedness information.
- Preparedness Documentation Review. The committee is beginning to review materials from other organizations and states to determine if the information can be placed onto the Preparedness Web Site. The review will include ensuring the information is correct, accessible, and presented in a clear and logical manner.

6. Disability Stakeholder Preparedness and Outreach Sub-Committee

This group will assess the current state of community preparedness, identify best practices for outreach and preparedness, identify innovative ways to communicate before, during, and after a disaster with people with disabilities, and implement a program that citizens can use at the local level to prepare for an all hazards response.

Current Initiatives:

- Preparedness Survey. The committee is working on conducting a survey to assess preparedness levels of people with disabilities in Texas. They are teaming up with the Department of State Health Services to take advantage of a CDC Survey that is conducted every year. Once the survey is conducted, the committee will analyze the information to determine the best use of the information provided.
- Focus Groups. They are considering obtaining information through focus groups that would provide qualitative information. These groups would provide more in depth and detailed information about preparedness activities. This would require some funds and some collaboration with organizations to develop the questions and meet with the focus groups. Additional planning will be conducted on these types of groups before implementing.
- Promising Practices. The committee has reviewed several best practice documents obtained from the sponsors of the FEMA Getting Real Conference in 2012. After review the committee will categorize and publish on a number of web sites.