



ENSURING EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH ACCESS AND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS A CHECKLIST FOR EMERGENCY MANAGERS



Today, our experience tells us that effective emergency preparedness requires consideration of the whole community. An important segment of the whole community is individuals with access and functional needs. This includes individuals with disabilities, children, older adults, and populations having limited

English proficiency, limited access to transportation, and/or limited access to financial resources to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the emergency. Many of these people are protected from discrimination under Federal and State civil rights laws. Attention to the inclusion of these individuals in your emergency preparedness efforts will help ensure that you are in compliance with these laws and that your emergency and disaster management is successful. You can use this tool as a quick and easy reminder of the essentials for integrating this critical population into your emergency activities.

Included below are some action steps that all of us in the emergency management community can take to address the needs of the whole community, along with links to obtain more information.

ACTION STEPS	YES	NO
Planning		
Have you developed your emergency plans in partnership with an array of diverse community groups, including faith-based organizations and groups that serve and advocate for people from different cultures, races and ethnicities, limited English proficient individuals, and individuals with disabilities?		
Have you located the populations of individuals with access and functional needs in your area, and identified their specific needs?		
Have you trained emergency responders, including shelter staff, on their obligations under civil rights laws and on how to meet the needs of individuals with access and functional needs, including individuals with disabilities?		
Are emergency responders - fire and police, health care providers, and shelter staff - prepared to welcome all who need their care, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, immigrants and migrants, individuals with psychiatric or developmental disabilities or dementia, homeless and institutionalized individuals, and persons of all faiths?		
Have you engaged in drills and exercises that include people with a range of access and functional needs?		
Have you ensured that women and others who are victims of		

ACTION STEPS	YES	NO
domestic violence are safe from potential abuse during a disaster response and recovery?		
Communication		
Have you prepared emergency messaging that is short and simple, culturally appropriate, in languages prevalent in your area and in multiple formats, such as audio, large print, captioning?		
Is your website accessible to people with disabilities? Does it have taglines for people whose primary language is not English, directing them to information in a language they can understand?		
Have you established methods of communication that include addressing the needs for messaging in multiple formats to account for the access and functional needs of individuals with disabilities, with limited English proficiency, from diverse cultural backgrounds, with cognitive limitations, and who do not use traditional media?		
Do emergency responders have ready access to interpreters for persons with limited English proficiency and for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing?		
Accessibility		
Have you indentified accessible sheltering facilities that include accessible features, such as bathing, toileting, and eating facilities and bedding?		
Do you have accessible, lift-equipped transportation available to evacuate individuals who have mobility impairments? Are staff trained in their use?		
Integration and Independence		
Do emergency responders know that they should not separate people from their sources of support, such as service animals, durable medical equipment, caregivers, medication and supplies?		
Are general population shelters stocked with items that will help people to maintain their independence, such as hearing aid batteries, common medications, canes and walkers?		
Return to the Community		
Will accessible transportation and housing be available for people when they are able to return to their neighborhoods or have to relocate?		
Are steps in place to ensure that social services and public benefits continue without interruption for people who rely on these services normally?		

By attending to these essential action steps, you can promote effective and efficient emergency management that protects people and property and ensures your community survives a disaster and thrives in its aftermath.

For more information about:

- Civil rights laws that protect individuals with access and functional needs: [Regulations Enforced by OCR](#);
- Providing access to limited English proficient (LEP) persons: [LEP access](#);
- Principles of community engagement: [Community engagement](#);



- Defining, locating and reaching at-risk populations in an emergency: [Locating at-risk populations](#);
- Identifying, planning for, and protecting older adults: [Older adults](#);
- Integration of functional needs support services in a general population shelter: [Functional needs support](#);
- Integration of culturally diverse communities: [Culturally diverse communities](#);
- Cultural competence curriculum for preparedness and response: [Cultural competence](#);
- Meeting the needs of Latino communities: [Latino communities](#);
- Assisting individuals with disabilities at state/local levels: [Individuals with disabilities](#);
- Guidance on Integrating People with Access and Functional Needs into Disaster Preparedness Planning for States and Local Governments: [Access and Functional Needs](#);
- The National Resource Center on Advancing Emergency Preparedness for Culturally Diverse Communities: [Diversity preparedness by Drexel University](#); and
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline: [online training curriculum](#) (developed for disaster response and preparedness personnel on addressing domestic violence in disaster response situations and making linkages to appropriate services).