

Office of Access and Functional Needs Program Highlights

Outreach and Partnership Development

OAFN does outreach and engages with emergency managers, law enforcement groups, private sector partners, disability groups, and stakeholders representing the access and functional needs community to promote integration within all aspects of emergency management.

The OAFN Resource Library

OAFN has developed a central, online repository/clearinghouse on its website containing AFN-related planning information about effective communication, sheltering or integration. The OAFN library is the one-stop-shop to finding the best available resources in existence.

AFN GIS Web Map

After creating the first-of-its-kind interactive Geographic Information System (GIS) web map to serve as the definitive, comprehensive, statewide resource for AFN-related assets/resources, OAFN (in partnership with the Cal OES GIS Division) created version 2.0, which empowers emergency management jurisdictions to improve their whole community planning efforts in advance of emergencies.

Disaster Response

OAFN has responded to every major incident to support local efforts and assist as needed:

- Worked with the American Red Cross and local jurisdictions to ensure shelters are accessible;
- Assisted in securing accessible showers, porta-potties and hand washing stations for use at shelters;
- Helped utilize American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters at town halls, press events, and Recovery Centers; and
- Collaborated with local agencies to provide accessible transportation to shelters and Local Assistance Centers.

Disaster Planning

The core mission of OAFN is to identify the needs of people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs before, during, and after a disaster and to integrate them into the State's emergency management systems. OAFN works collaboratively with emergency managers and planners to develop state and local emergency plans.

Integrated Sheltering

OAFN works with partners, such as the American Red Cross, Independent Living Centers (ILC), state partners, local emergency managers, community workgroups, and stakeholders throughout California to leverage specialized resources for accessible sheltering and recovery plans.

Evacuation Integration

OAFN has developed tools for implementation and integration of access and functional needs-related support systems in evacuation and transportation guidelines, including updated lists of accessible transportation providers.

Integrating Access and Functional Needs Within Large Venue Emergency Operations Plans (EOP)

OAFN has recently finalized a whitepaper to empower emergency managers at large venues with the lessons learned and best practices necessary to integrate access and functional needs within their EOP.

Active Shooter Awareness Guidance

OAFN led the effort to update California's Active Shooter Awareness Guidance to include AFN considerations through collaborative efforts with law enforcement, the California Specialized Training Institute, the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, independent living centers, emergency managers and other disability stakeholders.

Training: G197 Integrating Access and Functional Needs into Emergency Planning training course

The G197 training course brings together local emergency managers, members of the disability community, and AFN-related stakeholders to discuss integration of emergency management plans.

Disaster Response Interpreter (DRI)

OAFN's Disaster Response Interpreter (DRI) program certifies ASL interpreters to provide services at shelters, town halls, press conferences and community events during emergencies and to standardize the practice of having on-screen interpreting at all statewide press forums.

Document Accessibility

OAFN plays a central role in the development and delivery of the agency's in-house training on the laws and techniques that enable effective communication of electronic information. OAFN facilitates monthly courses on website accessibility, document conversion, and 508 compliance.

Interpreter and Translation Services

OAFN contracts and coordinates services for foreign language interpreters, translators, and transcriptions throughout California before, during, and after an emergency or disaster response in order to minimize or eliminate language barriers in emergencies.

California Community Network

OAFN has developed the California Community Network for the purpose of enhancing communication in order to identify needs and locate resources for individuals with disabilities and persons with access or functional needs impacted by disasters. OAFN provides information regarding specialized resources and works with partners to leverage specialized and typically limited resources.

Great California Shakeout

The ShakeOut is an annual opportunity to practice how to be safer during earthquakes by dropping, covering, and holding on. OAFN has worked with stakeholders to incorporate access and functional needs into the event and has developed a series of informative videos (available on the Cal OES website) to assist individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs in planning for and reacting to earthquakes.