

# The Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Minute

April 15, 2025

Welcome!

If this was emailed directly to you, great news, you are already on our distribution list! If not, please [subscribe here](#) or use the button at the bottom of this email to be added to our mailing list.

## Message from the Chief



*A pictogram demonstrating how individuals using different mobility devices can drop (or lock), cover, and hold during earthquakes.*

All,

April is Earthquake Preparedness Month in California, a reminder that earthquakes can occur without warning. It's important for everyone, especially individuals with access and functional needs, to be prepared.

Individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with other access or functional considerations may face extra challenges during and after an earthquake. Taking time to prepare now can make a big difference in staying safe when earthquakes occur.

Here are a few key earthquake preparedness tips:

- **[Make a Plan](#):** Know how you will evacuate, where you will go, and how you will communicate with others. Share your plan with your support network.
- **[Build a Kit](#):** Include medications, medical equipment, backup power for devices, and copies of important documents. Be sure to add extra food, water, and comfort items.
- **Secure Your Space:** Anchor heavy furniture, secure medical devices, and make sure pathways will remain clear for mobility.
- **Practice Safety:** If you use a wheelchair or mobility device, practice "Lock, Cover, and Hold On" during drills and know the safe spots in your home to shelter from falling objects.
- **Stay Informed:** [Sign up for emergency alerts](#) in your area and make sure your devices are charged and accessible.

Preparedness is personal, so plan for your specific needs. The more you plan, the better you can increase personal safety for you and your loved ones.

Dedicate time this month to become earthquake-ready and encourage others to do the same.

Remember, planning today leads to safety tomorrow!

-Vance

**L. Vance Taylor**

Chief, Office of Access and Functional Needs

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services

The "Secure Your Space" Earthquake Mitigation Program



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*Two figures securing items for earthquake safety. One person is using a drill to strap a bookshelf to the wall and the other is bracing a water heater with metal straps.*

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Last year, the Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN), in partnership with the Cal OES Seismic Hazards Branch, the California Foundation for Independent Living Centers (CFILC), and the Earthquake Country Alliance (ECA), launched the Secure Your Space program – an innovative pilot project to support earthquake preparedness for people with disabilities across California.

Through the program, free earthquake mitigation kits, including items such as bookshelf and appliance straps, cabinet latches, QuakeHold putty, and emergency gas shut-off wrenches were distributed throughout the state to harden Independent Living Center offices and consumer homes.

This year, OAFN is excited to join with partners to offer the Secure Your Space program again – this time with a goal to reach even more Centers and consumers with disabilities.

Together, we are working to help ensure more partners and individuals within the access and functional needs community are better prepared to be safe during future earthquakes!

For more information about the Secure Your Space program, please email: [Bobbie.Ray@CalOES.ca.gov](mailto:Bobbie.Ray@CalOES.ca.gov)

## The California Earthquake Strengthening Program



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*Two hands shaking to signify partnership*

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The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and Disaster Resistant Business have partnered to launch the California Earthquake Strengthening program - a mitigation project designed to help Independent Living Centers secure grant funding to further earthquake safety and resilience.

Many Independent Living Centers want to enhance the physical safety of their buildings to better withstand the impacts of earthquakes, but struggle to do so because of high costs and limited financial resources. This project aims to remove those barriers by giving Centers the support needed to secure grant funds to protect their facilities and the consumers they serve. Through the program, Cal OES is helping Centers protect the safety of their employees and increasing the likelihood offices can remain open following earthquakes to continue serving the community.

#### **Independent Living Centers Can Receive:**

- Training on earthquake safety and building improvements
- Free non-structural risk assessments
- Detailed structural reviews
- Technical support applying for hazard mitigation grants
- Ongoing guidance through the safety upgrade process

#### **How to Get Involved**

Independent Living Centers that want to participate in the program should call Stacey Stanford at (877) 563-5628 or send an email to: [Stacey@DRBToolkit.org](mailto:Stacey@DRBToolkit.org) for more information.



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### *MyShake Logo*

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The MyShake app sends early earthquake warnings, giving people precious seconds to act before the shaking begins. It's especially helpful for individuals with access and functional needs who may require extra time to drop (or lock), cover, and hold on. Download this free, lifesaving tool today for free directly from the [MyShake](#) website or via the [Apple](#) or [Android](#) sites.

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