



The Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Minute

August 09, 2023

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Message from the Chief

All,

Emergency managers and individuals with access and functional needs (AFN) continue to face challenges associated with developing integrated, accessible evacuation plans. Local jurisdictions and community stakeholders throughout the state, have asked for a resource outlining the AFN-specific considerations necessary to address this important issue.

The Office of Access and Functional Needs is pleased to announce the publication of Cal OES' newly-developed guide, "[Integrated Evacuation Planning for Jurisdictions and Individuals with Access and Functional Needs](#)." The guide is designed to empower local jurisdictions and individuals with access and functional needs with information to develop comprehensive, inclusive emergency evacuation plans that benefit the whole community.

Cal OES developed the guide in partnership with community stakeholders, local jurisdictions, community-based organizations, and subject matter experts. It provides a scaleable, forward-leaning, and comprehensive approach that highlights inclusive practices and procedures jurisdictions and individuals should implement for successful evacuation operations before, during, and after emergencies. This product represents the most inclusive, innovative approach to address this complex issue to date.

The guide is available in [English](#) through the [AFN Library](#) and will be available shortly in the following languages:

- Hmong

- Korean
- Russian
- Simplified Chinese
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Traditional Chinese
- Vietnamese

Please share broadly and use the guide to further your jurisdictional and personal evacuation planning.

Thank you.

L. Vance Taylor

Chief, Office of Access and Functional Needs
California Governor's Office of Emergency Services



L. Vance Taylor conversing with Governor Gavin Newsom in the State Operations Center (SOC)

Summer Heat Watch

During the month of July, California experienced record-breaking high temperatures. In response to the triple-digit temperatures, the State activated Phase II of the Extreme Temperature Plan and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) declared an enhanced watch posture for the State Operations Center (SOC).

To equip whole community partners with key weather-related forecasts, materials, and resources, the Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN) worked with emergency managers and community-based organizations throughout the state to develop, promote, and amplify key messaging throughout the event.

Raising awareness among individuals at highest risk for negative impacts associated with extreme heat enabled the community to prepare for the event by signing up for emergency alerts, creating personal preparedness plans, and developing evacuation and transportation plans to get to, and from, cooling centers as needed.

OAFN also coordinated with the Cal OES Statewide AFN Community Advisory Committee and the Cal OES Crisis Communications team to support consistent, accessible messaging and outreach with the public in multiple languages and formats, including American Sign Language.

During the enhanced watch, the Priority Populations Task Force was activated within the SOC. OAFN embedded itself within the Priority Populations Task Force to identify any unmet needs and coordinate state resources that can be leveraged to assist individuals, such as cost-free, on-demand transportation to/ from cooling centers, wellness checks by local partners, and multi-language messaging to the public.

Extreme weather can strain California's resources, potentially pushing up demand on the electrical grid. In preparation for this, OAFN promoted the development of excessive heat, loss of power, and evacuation planning-related resources among individuals with access and functional needs as a precaution.

Though relief from the weather came after a week, California is known for its high temperatures, particularly in the months of August and September. To maintain a posture of preparedness for upcoming extreme heat events, be sure to visit the following websites:

[HeatReadyCA.com](https://www.heatreadyca.com)
Cal OES [2023 Cooling Centers](#)
Listos California [Summer of Safety](#)



Cal OES Offers Free Digital Document Accessibility Courses

Cal OES is taking significant steps towards promoting equity and inclusion by expanding its free digital document accessibility courses to emergency managers and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) throughout California.



Provided monthly by the Cal OES Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN), the accessibility courses aim to empower participants to create digital documents and forms that are inclusive and comply with Section 508 accessibility standards. Each training session covers essential steps for creating accessible content using tools in Microsoft Office, PDF, and forms.

The following classes are available now:

- [How to Create Accessible Microsoft Office Documents](#)
- [How to Create Accessible PDF Documents](#)
- [How to Create Accessible Forms](#)

For individuals unfamiliar with Section 508 or accessibility requirements for public documents, these classes offer an excellent opportunity to gain essential knowledge and skills in providing content that allows individuals with access and functional needs to utilize crucial information.

To register for the free accessibility classes, visit csti-ca.csod.com, log in or create an account, go to "Browse Training," select "How to Create Accessible Office Documents," click on the dropdown arrow to the right that says "View Details," and choose "Request" to enroll.

For assistance, contact Cal OES's Digital Accessibility Coordinator at OAFN@caloes.ca.gov.

Did You Know... Cal OES and the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS), through the Priority Populations Task Force, developed a [Disaster Assistance Resource Guide \(PDF\)](#). The guide, which outlines many federal, state, and local disaster assistance

programs available for Californians impacted by the Winter storms is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

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