

The Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Minute

August 12, 2025

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Message from the Chief



L. Vance Taylor and others at the 2025 Disability Rights California Gala

We recently marked the [35th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#), a landmark civil rights law that promised equality, inclusion, and access for millions of Americans. It changed how our country thinks about disability and opened doors, both literally and figuratively, for full participation in everyday life.

But the ADA was never just about ramps and curb cuts. It's about making sure everyone can take part—especially when it comes to preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters. Inclusive emergency management isn't a “nice to have.” It's the

difference between safety and catastrophe for millions of people with access and functional needs.

That's why we have to keep disability integration front and center. The resources, training, and tools that help us serve the whole community must remain strong, relevant, and easy to access. And that's something we can only achieve together.

So as we mark this anniversary, let's use it as a reminder that the work isn't finished. Let's move forward in partnership, united in the mission of ensuring that emergency management works for everyone.

Thank you for your leadership, your dedication, and the heart you bring to this work.

-Vance

L. Vance Taylor

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

Inclusive Planning in Action: AFN Consultations



Illustration of people reviewing and checking off items on a large clipboard checklist.

The Cal OES Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN) works with counties across California to strengthen their Emergency

Operations Plans (EOPs) so they more fully serve all Californians—especially individuals with access and functional needs. Because every community is different, each consultation is tailored to the unique risks, demographics, and resources of the jurisdiction.

When requested, OAFN provides an AFN Consultation—a one-on-one session offering technical assistance, collaboration, and practical guidance. These consultations help jurisdictions ensure their EOPs reflect best practices, comply with laws, and clearly outline how to address the planning, communication, evacuation, and sheltering needs of the whole community.

Counties that participate consistently describe the consultations as collaborative, constructive, and impactful—often leading to meaningful updates that improve preparedness, response, and recovery. To date, OAFN has completed 37 EOP reviews and conducted 26 consultations statewide. While consultations aren't required, they're a proven way to strengthen plans.

If your jurisdiction is ready to take its emergency planning to the next level, reach out to OAFN@caloes.ca.gov. Together, we can make sure California's emergency plans work better for everyone.

2025 Regional Disaster Ready Summits



Listos California logo with the text "Ready Together, 2025 Regional Disaster Ready Summits"

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services and Listos California have announced the return of [the Regional Disaster Ready Summits](#)—a powerful one-day workshop series coming to cities across the state throughout the year.

First launched in 2023, the Summits were created as intentional spaces for local leaders to collaborate, connect, and take

meaningful action toward whole community resilience. Unlike traditional preparedness trainings, these gatherings focus on building the most critical tool for navigating disasters: trust.

This year's all-day sessions combine dynamic keynote presentations with hands-on small group activities—giving participants not only valuable insights but also practical tools, interactive exercises, and strong regional relationships they can take home to strengthen local disaster readiness.

Whether your work involves preparing communities for wildfires, earthquakes, floods, or other emergencies, the Summits offer the education, collaboration, and networking needed to support California's at greatest risk for negative impacts following disasters.

Listos California encourages attendees to choose the Summit nearest the region they serve to ensure the most relevant, region-specific experience.

Let's build the connections today that will make us stronger tomorrow. Register now: bit.ly/2025DisasterReadySummits



A YouTube thumbnail for day 1 of the 2025 National AFN Symposium

More than 1,700 participants from across the nation joined the 2025 National Access and Functional Needs Symposium to exchange tools, best practices, and strategies for advancing inclusive emergency management.

Catch up on the conversations by watching the recordings:

- [2025 National Access and Functional Needs Symposium-Day 1](#)

- (English) (Spanish)
- [2025 National Access and Functional Needs Symposium-Day 2 \(English\) \(Spanish\)](#)

To request transcripts, email OAFN@caloes.ca.gov. Explore the [post-event resources](#) and let's continue working together to build equity and resilience nationwide.

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