

The Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Minute

December 18, 2024

Welcome!

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Message from the Chief



L. Vance Taylor addressing the California Military Department

As we say goodbye to 2024, I want to thank each of you for the hard work and dedication you put into serving all Californians. Your efforts reflect a remarkable commitment to advancing the mission of inclusive emergency management.

Whether responding to wildfires, severe winter storms, earthquakes, Public Safety Power Shutoffs, or extreme heat events – you improved preparedness, enhanced operations, and furthered

resilience for the whole community.

The Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN) is proud to support you and the jurisdictions you serve. Some of the work we've done in 2024 includes:

- Launching three free online training courses with the California Specialized Training Institute (CSTI) that empower emergency managers to integrate the needs of individuals with access and functional considerations within communication, evacuation and transportation, and sheltering plans.
- Developing a new Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) AFN-specific training module. The new training module outlines the disproportionate impacts disasters have on people with access and functional needs, details specific whole community considerations, and highlights the benefits of inclusion, integration, and representation.
- Updating and revising the Integrating Access & Functional Needs Into Emergency Management (G197) training course. This course provides emergency managers, first responders, and community partners with the skills and knowledge to plan, prepare, respond, and recover in inclusive ways.
- Publishing critical resources, such as:
 - The Jurisdictional Guidance for Development of an AFN Advisory Committee;
 - The Emergency Preparedness Guide/Toolkit for Individuals with Disabilities; and
 - The Integrating Access and Functional Needs within Large Venue Safety & Security Operations Guide.

OAFN is excited to continue building on this work, partnering with you, and magnifying a whole community approach together in 2025 and beyond!

Thank you.

-Vance

L. Vance Taylor

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

New AFN Guidance for Large Venues



Large Venue Guide document cover

Cal OES has released a new guide to support large venues (e.g., stadiums, arenas, amphitheaters, motorsport sites, etc.) as they strive to meet the safety and security considerations of all guests.

The **"Integrating Access and Functional Needs within Large Venue Safety & Security Operations"** guide highlights the inclusive practices and procedures large venues can implement to establish a safe and secure environment for all guests before, during, and after the events they host. This means moving beyond basic compliance with local, state, and federal accessibility mandates by adopting voluntary innovative approaches to inclusive emergency management.

Large venues regularly host sporting events, concerts, festivals, and cultural expositions that bring the community, including individuals with access and functional needs, together. When venues host special events, such as the World Cup and the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the number of guests with access or functional considerations can increase exponentially.

The new Cal OES guide supports large venues as they strive to

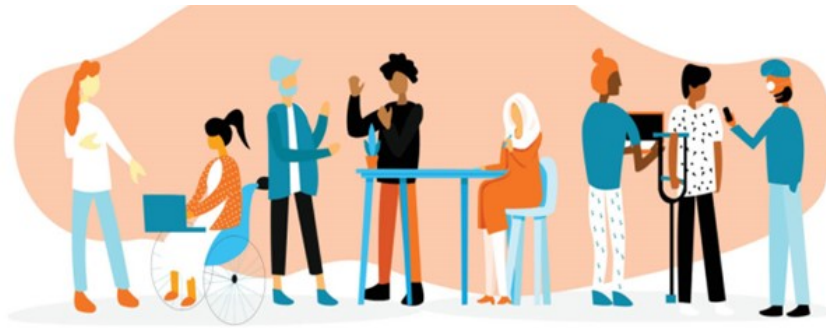
create environments capable of supporting the health, safety, security, and dignity of all guests.

This resource was created in coordination with government and non-government partners, including representatives from the Cal OES Statewide AFN Advisory Committee. It was also developed in partnership with the following large venue security professionals:

- Akmal Ali, J.D. (Founder & CEO, Aluma)
- Brian Sanders (Vice President, Ballpark Operations, Angels Baseball)
- Jenna Matsushita, Lauren Hall, and Ray Daryabigi (San Diego Padres)
- Matt Bettenhausen and Gilbert Marroquin (AEG Worldwide)

Please feel free to **download** this resource today!

New Online Inclusive Communication Training



A diverse group of people interacting in a social setting

Cal OES, through the Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN) and the California Specialized Training Institute (CSTI), has released a new online training course on **Inclusive Communications for Emergency Managers and Community Partners**. This is the last course in a three-part training series on inclusive operations to be released this year.

This new online training course is available now for emergency managers and community partners everywhere. The course is designed to empower local jurisdictions as they seek to address inclusive communication operations. Among other best practices, this course addresses the inclusion and integration of American Sign Language interpreters, world language translation, and assistive technologies within the emergency communication plans, strategies, and operations needed to enhance the accessibility considerations of the whole community.

Course objectives include:

1. How including representatives with access and functional needs throughout the development of emergency communication and public information plans benefits the whole community.
2. Identifying best practices to create standard operating procedures to secure accessible communication services before, during, and after disasters.
3. Recognizing the need to establish contracts with communication providers.
4. The importance of accessible communication and the need to use plain language.
5. Summarizing the role of community-based organizations as partners in evaluating, enhancing, and broadening emergency communication methods, strategies, and approaches.
6. Describing how Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) further effective communication.
7. Highlighting how effective communication reduces the barriers individuals with access and functional needs face when disasters strike.

Inclusive communication is critical during a disaster. Strengthen your knowledge by logging on to enjoy this free online course today!



An image showing individuals with a variety of access and functional needs

Thank you for being part of the **Office of Access and Functional Needs** team! May the upcoming year be filled with fresh opportunities, new partnerships, and increased preparedness, safety, and resilience for all!

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