

The Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Minute

January 25, 2024

Welcome!

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Message from the Chief

Happy 2024 from the Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN). We hope the year is off to a safe and prosperous start for you and the communities you serve!

Recognizing that inclusive emergency management is bigger than any single individual, agency, or organization – we look forward to partnering with you, and the whole community, to build on all we achieved together in 2023.



A photo collage of L. Vance Taylor with various partners in 2023

Using the successes of 2023 as a springboard to advance partnership development, outreach, training, and the development of innovative new guidance will further integrate access and functional needs into every facet of the State's emergency management systems.

We're in for an incredible journey this year and we couldn't be more grateful to be partnered with you on this life-saving mission.

Thank you!

-Vance

L. Vance Taylor

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

California Community Network



Bubbles connected by lines with figures of people inside to represent networking

To improve our ability to identify and address the needs of individuals with access and functional considerations when disasters strike – the Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN) developed the [California Community Network](#).

OAFN utilizes the California Community Network to communicate with partner organizations during disasters and throughout the recovery cycle. The Network brings partners together to leverage technical information, physical resources, and subject matter expertise on behalf of the whole community.

The California Community Network includes partners, such as Independent Living Centers, California Resource Centers, the California Council of the Blind, agencies that serve individuals who are deaf or

hard of hearing, and many others.

Participating organizations join voluntarily, are direct service providers, make themselves available 24/7, and work in close partnership with OAFN.

If you are interested in joining the California Community Network, please complete the [membership form](#) and email it to OAFN@caloes.ca.gov with the subject 'California Community Network.'

Cal OES Statewide Access and Functional Needs Community Advisory Committee



Pictogram of four disability symbols: wheelchair access, autism, sign language, and an individual who is blind or has low vision

To better support integrated planning throughout the State's emergency management systems, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) established the Cal OES Statewide Access and Functional Needs Community Advisory Committee.

The Committee, which serves as an official mechanism for engagement and collaboration between the agency and the diverse cross-sections of the whole community, is led by the Cal OES Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN).

Members of the Committee serve as key advisers to Cal OES on the development, implementation, and maintenance of the State's programs and activities. The Committee also advises Cal OES regarding emerging issues in the community, lessons learned, and best practices.

The Cal OES Statewide Access and Functional Needs Community Advisory Committee is comprised of members with a broad range of experience and expertise in fields relating to emergency management, community partnership, and the access and functional needs perspective.

Committee members have:

- Specific knowledge of integrated emergency planning and disaster response outcomes for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with access or functional needs.
- An understanding of the disproportionate impacts disasters have on individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with access or functional needs.
- Familiarity with organizations/programs serving individuals with disabilities, older adults, individuals with access or functional needs, or an emergency management organization.
- A proven track record of partnership and collaborative achievement with community and government stakeholders.

By identifying gaps, informing response and recovery, helping to set priorities, and providing ongoing recommendations, the Committee has, and continues, to further California's mission of inclusive emergency management planning.

Winter Weather Preparedness



A yellow sign that says "Cold weather ahead"

In addition to rain and snow, Winter can bring devastatingly strong winds, freezing temperatures, floods, and mudslides.

Use, and share, the tips below to advance whole community preparedness in advance of Winter storm events:

Have an Emergency Plan

- [Develop a comprehensive emergency plan](#) that considers your specific access and functional considerations.

Prepare an Emergency Kit

- Have an emergency kit ready. Include essentials like water, non-perishable food, flashlights, batteries, a radio, a first aid kit, and any necessary medications.

Stay Informed

- Sign up for emergency alerts, warnings, and notifications in your area by visiting [CalAlerts.org](https://www.calalerts.org).
- Sign up for [outage alerts](#) through your local power provider.

Whole community preparedness is key to ensuring safety for all Californians and should be customized as needed, based on individual circumstance and situations.

Check out the [Emergency Preparedness Guide/Toolkit for Individuals with Disabilities](#). This resource, which was developed by Cal OES and the California Department of Rehabilitation, provides practical tools and information individuals with access or functional considerations can use to increase preparedness for disasters and emergencies.

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