

# The Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Minute

July 7, 2025

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## Message from the Chief



L. Vance Taylor in front of a Cal OES backdrop

All,  
We all know how powerful social media can be in a disaster. It helps us get the word out quickly—before, during, and after an emergency. But if the content we share isn't accessible, we risk leaving people behind.

That's why I'm excited to share a new resource from Cal OES: *Integrating Accessible Social Media Content within Emergency Communications*.

This guide was created to help emergency managers, especially Public Information Officers, make sure their posts meet accessibility standards. It walks you through how to craft content that's clear

and usable for everyone—including people who use screen readers, captions, and other assistive technologies.

In short: If you're using social media to communicate during emergencies—and let's face it, who isn't?—this tool can help you reach the whole community.

I encourage you to download the guide, put it to use, and share it with your colleagues. It's a simple step that can make a big difference in ensuring no one is left out during an emergency.

You can download the guide here: <https://tinyurl.com/3x39jfjw>

Stay safe and stay connected!

Thank you.

-Vance

L. Vance Taylor

Chief, Office of Access and Functional Needs

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services

## CalHeatScore Helps Protect Californians During Extreme Heat



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CalHeat Score logo with the text "Stay informed, Stay safe,  
Protecting Communities From Extreme Heat"

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As jurisdictions across the state brace for record-breaking

temperatures this summer, a new, first-in-the-nation tool that forecasts and ranks extreme heat severity by ZIP code has been launched to help the whole community prepare and respond to extreme heat.

Developed by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), [CalHeatScore](#) provides locally tailored guidance, identifies populations at greatest risk for negative outcomes associated with extreme heat—including older adults, young children, and people with disabilities—and connects users with critical resources like cooling centers and safety tips.

[CalHeatScore](#) supports inclusive emergency planning by offering actionable, location-specific information that emergency managers and community partners can use to guide outreach and operations.

The launch coincides with a \$32.4 million investment through California's *Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Program*, supporting heat mitigation efforts in communities across the state.

With extreme heat as the leading cause of weather-related deaths in California, [CalHeatScore](#) is vital for ensuring readiness throughout the whole community—particularly for individuals with access and functional needs

## Bring the Community Together with a Listos California Block Party Kit



Graphic with the text "Neighborhood Block Party – Let's get disaster ready together!" featuring icons of emergency supplies like a backpack, flashlight, radio, and first aid kit.

Listos California is making it easier than ever for neighbors to connect, build community, and get prepared. Their new Neighborhood Block Party Kits are designed to help anyone—regardless of event planning experience—host a fun, informative event for at least 20 people focused on disaster readiness and resilience.

Each free kit includes everything you need to organize a successful gathering, including:

- 20 doorhanger invites
- 1 welcome lawn sign
- 1 tablecloth and tabletop signage
- 2 Go-Bags for game prizes
- Disaster pocket cards, document holders, and preparedness guides
- Interactive games, including scavenger hunts, “Two Truths and a Lie,” and more
- An instructional brochure and access to free virtual training

These kits make it simple to create meaningful moments that promote preparedness and strengthen community ties, especially for neighbors with access and functional needs.

Strong communities start with prepared neighbors. Hosting a block party is a powerful first step, and Listos California provides the tools to make it happen.

Sign-ups are open for a limited time. Don't wait— [click here to request your kit today!](#)



**Cal OES**  
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE  
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES



**COLORADO**  
Division of Homeland Security  
& Emergency Management  
Department of Public Safety

Logos for Cal OES, IAEM, CDHSEM, and NYU

Don't forget to [register for this week's 4th Annual National AFN](#)

**Symposium**, which will take place virtually on July 9 & 10 from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM (PDT) each day. This year's Symposium will showcase forward-leaning practices in inclusive emergency management and highlight innovative work from across the country.

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