

# The Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Minute

March 15, 2024

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## Message from the Chief



Photo collage of L. Vance Taylor with local, state, and federal partners

All,  
I want to extend my gratitude to you for partnering with us to advance inclusive emergency management practices that serve the whole community.

Upholding our commitment to integrated emergency management will help ensure all Californians, regardless of physical ability, economic standing, or cultural background can access the support and resources they need to plan, prepare, respond, and recover from disasters.

Together, we are building a more resilient whole community!

Your dedication and work is meaningful, impactful, and appreciated.

Thank you.

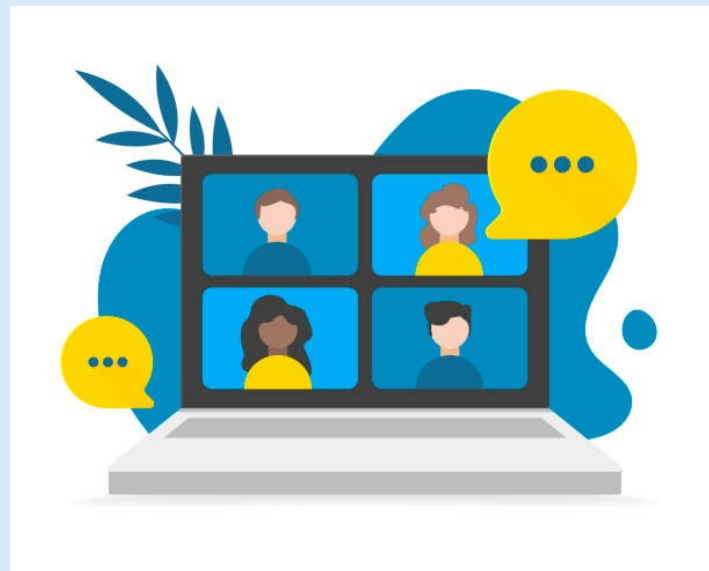
-Vance

**L. Vance Taylor**

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

## Whole Community Recovery Workshop

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A graphic showing an online meeting

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In recent years, California has experienced a high volume of natural disasters. While these events affect everyone, they create unique challenges for individuals with disabilities and people with access or functional needs who, historically, have had a particularly difficult time navigating the complex recovery process.

To address this issue, the Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN), in partnership with FEMA's Office of Disability Integration and Coordination, organized an online Whole Community Recovery

Workshop for individuals with access and functional needs in San Diego County who were impacted by the severe storm and flooding from January 21-23, 2024. The event was specifically designed to empower the whole community to successfully navigate the recovery process.

The Whole Community Recovery Workshop, which took place on March 11, 2024, featured participants from:

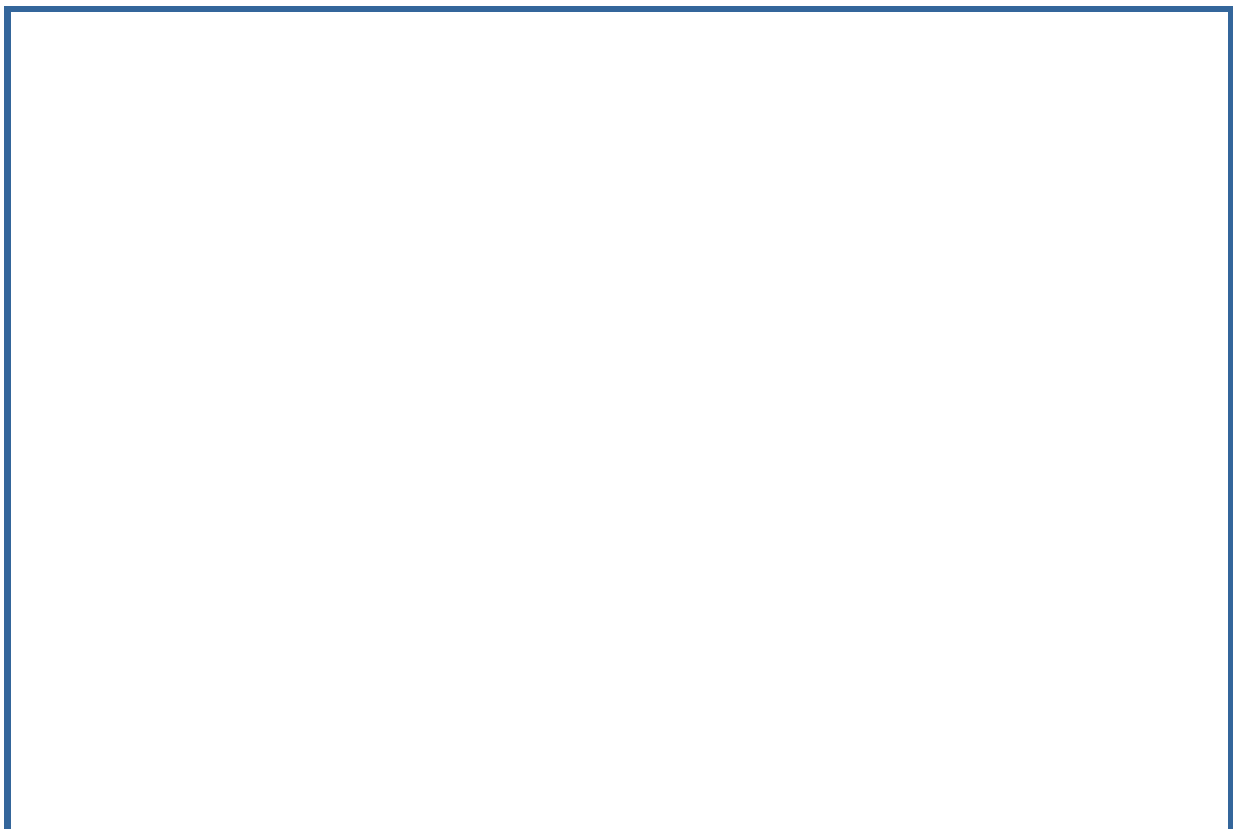
- Cal OES' Office of Access and Functional Needs
- FEMA's Office of Disability Integration and Coordination
- The County of San Diego Office of Emergency Services
- The San Diego Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters
- FEMA and Cal OES' Individual Assistance Teams
- The Small Business Administration; and
- FEMA and Cal OES' Voluntary Agency Liaisons

Presenters briefed the community on what to expect throughout the recovery process, including how to apply for local, state, and federal assistance, how to access reimbursements, relevant timelines, and additional key details.

The information, expertise, and commitment to inclusion demonstrated and shared throughout the Workshop received positive feedback from the community and will help improve the experience individuals with access and functional needs have during the recovery process.

This inclusive event included American Sign Language interpreters, Spanish translation services, and live captioning in English and Spanish.

## FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers





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Photo collage from Disaster Recovery Centers in San Diego County

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FEMA has opened two Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) in San Diego County to help flood survivors from the January 2024 Winter Storm. With support from Cal OES, the County of San Diego, and local partners, each DRC is a one-stop-shop to access vital recovery services. As such, the DRCs provide individuals with direct, in-person support to help them apply for federal disaster assistance and tap into local and state resources.

Each DRC is physically and programmatically accessible for people with disabilities. Assistive devices and language services (e.g. Video Remote Interpreting and access to in-person ASL interpreters) are available onsite. Assistance with reading and writing, in English and Spanish, is also available. Each DRC has accessible parking, ramps, and restrooms. Reasonable accommodations can, and should, be requested as needed.

The Centers, which operate from 10:00am to 7:00pm seven days a week, will remain open through April 19, 2024 at the following locations:

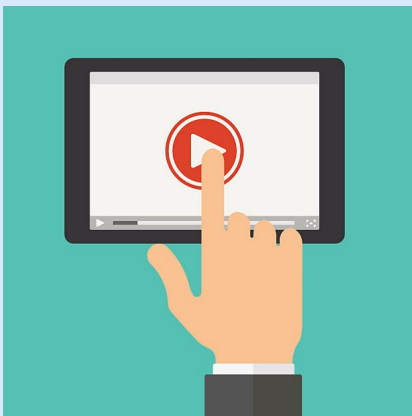
**Spring Valley County Library**  
836 Kempton Street  
Spring Valley, CA 91977

**Mountain View Community Center**  
641 South Boundary Street  
San Diego, CA 92113

If you need in-person American Sign Language (ASL) support at a DRC, please contact Aaron Kubey at [aaron.kubey@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:aaron.kubey@fema.dhs.gov) in advance to schedule a date and time for an ASL interpreter to meet you there.

Survivors can also register for assistance by visiting [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://DisasterAssistance.gov), using the [FEMA mobile app](#), or calling the FEMA Helpline at 800-621-3362. Helpline operators are available from 7:00am to 10:00pm (Pacific) daily. Help is available in most languages.

Individuals using a relay service, such as Video Relay Service (VRS), captioned telephone, or other service, can give FEMA the number for that service to begin applying for assistance or to answer questions.



For additional accessible information on how to apply for recovery services through FEMA, be sure to check out these videos in American Sign Language:

- [FEMA Accessible: Reasons to Apply for an SBA Loan](#)
- [Three Ways to Register for FEMA Disaster Assistance](#)

A graphic of a hand clicking on the play icon of a smart tablet

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