

# The Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Minute

November 2022

Welcome!

The Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN) has modernized and miniaturized, our newsletter to create *The AFN Minute*, a new publication aimed at keeping you informed and up-to-date on the initiatives advancing inclusive emergency management.

While we can't cover all the great work being done in partnership with the community in any one single edition, The AFN Minute will highlight our collective efforts to integrate access and functional needs-related considerations throughout the State's emergency management systems.

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Photo of L. Vance Taylor with American Red Cross volunteers at a shelter during the Mosquito Fire 2022

## Message from the Chief

In the past several years, we have seen a significant uptick in the number of disasters occurring throughout the state. In addition, there has been a seemingly exponential increase in the scope, scale, and devastation associated with incidents and events. Due to this dangerous dynamic, each of us must be diligent in the ways we plan to prepare, respond, and recover from emergencies.

At the individual, local, and state levels; our plans must promote the personal, and collective, health, safety, and independence of California's whole community.

OAFN maintains an unwavering commitment to integrating the access and functional needs of all Californians into the way emergency management addresses everything from wildfires, earthquakes, and floods to Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events, mudslides, and air quality issues.

Working together, in close partnership with the community, we are making significant strides to reduce loss of life and human suffering. Success is incremental, but we are absolutely moving forward, making continuous progress on this important mission. It won't all happen overnight, and it's an all-hands-on-deck effort, but we'll continue to press on and push forward.

Read on to better understand how we're achieving great things together.

Thank you.

L. Vance Taylor  
Chief, Office of Access and Functional Needs  
California Governor's Office of Emergency Services

## The Power of Partnerships

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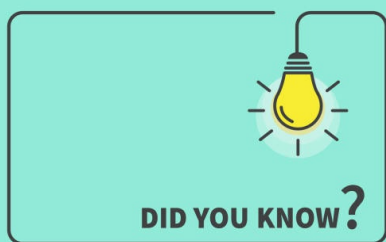
Due to California's diverse risk landscape, OAFN often supports multiple incidents, events, and declared disasters at the same time. For example, while activated in response to last month's extreme heat event, OAFN was also supporting activities associated with wildfires, grid reliability concerns, air quality issues, and a tropical storm impacting Southern California.

Throughout these complex events, OAFN maintains ongoing communications with whole community partners and stakeholders serving older adults, individuals with disabilities, and people with access or functional needs throughout the state. This partnership enables the identification of unmet needs and empowers the facilitation of efforts necessary to address those needs in timely and meaningful ways.

OAFN also utilizes partnerships to support disaster-related initiatives before disasters occur. For example, following the announcement by investor-owned utilities that they would be proactively de-energizing lines to avoid potential wildfire starts caused by damaged infrastructure, OAFN outlined the need for power providers to partner with community-based organizations to better serve electricity-dependent Californians. Among the partnerships that formed was a relationship between Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) and the California Foundation of Independent Living Centers (CFILC) that led to the development of the [Disability Disaster Access & Resources](#) (DDAR) program. Funded by PG&E and administered by CFILC, the DDAR program provides charging capabilities, accessible transportation services, and lodging at no-cost for many Californians with access and functional needs.

Whether before, during, or after disasters – the power of partnership is real.

If you'd like help connecting with whole community stakeholders and community-based organizations in your jurisdiction, OAFN can assist. Please reach out to us at [OAFN@CALOES.CA.GOV](mailto:OAFN@CALOES.CA.GOV) so we can support your efforts.



### [The Access and Functional Needs Resource Library](#)

The Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN) has improved and expanded [the AFN Library](#), a robust and comprehensive list of AFN-specific informational products, guidance documents, videos, and tools available to the public. You can access the AFN Library on the [Cal OES webpage](#) or by using the link at the bottom of this page.

## The National Access and Functional Needs Symposium

The National Access and Functional Needs Symposium was held virtually on July 19 & 20, 2022. Over 2,300 people registered for the first-of-its-kind event.

The National AFN Symposium brought the disability community together with emergency managers, disaster planners, and first responders from across the country in an online forum that fostered an environment of trust and understanding vital to advancing the mission of access and functional needs

throughout the nation.

Led by the Cal OES and organized in partnership with the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM), the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (CDHSEM), and New York University (NYU), the Symposium highlighted forward-leaning, inclusive, innovative practices in emergency management from across the nation. The event was sponsored by Big City Emergency Managers and the American Red Cross.

To view individual sessions of the Symposium, or to see the event in its entirety, use the thumbnail below or the following link:

[2022 National Access and Functional Needs Symposium - YouTube](#)



Click the image above to visit the 2022 National Access and Functional Needs Symposium youtube page.

Be sure to check out the ["Emergency Preparedness Guide/Toolkit for Individuals with Disabilities."](#) This guide describes actions and considerations that individuals with disabilities can use to increase preparedness before, during, and after disasters. You can find this guide in the [OAFN AFN Library](#).

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