

The Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Minute

September 21, 2026

Welcome!

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Message from the Chief



L. Vance Taylor, Chief addressing a room of emergency management during training.

All,

In emergency management, getting the right information to the right people at the right time is essential. But that information only works if people can access, understand, and use it.

That's why I'm excited to announce the Cal OES Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN) has a new free training course: **Creating Accessible Social Media Content**. Our first class will be held October 20, 2026, followed by monthly training opportunities designed to give

emergency managers and our partners practical tools for making social media content accessible.

Register for an upcoming class [here](#).

For individuals with access and functional needs, inaccessible digital content can create significant barriers, especially during an emergency. An image without alt text, a video without captions, or content that is difficult to navigate with assistive technology can prevent someone from receiving critical information.

Accessibility should be part of how we communicate, not something we add after the fact.

Building on our [How to Make Accessible Documents training series](#), this new free course will focus specifically on social media and digital content, with practical guidance that participants can immediately put into action.

I encourage you to register for an upcoming class. When we make our information more accessible, we strengthen our ability to reach and serve all Californians.

Because in emergency management, communication only works when everyone can access it.

Thank you for your continued commitment to inclusive emergency management.

-Vance

L. Vance Taylor

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

September is National Preparedness Month



September is National Preparedness Month, a time to recognize the importance of preparing for emergencies and ensuring everyone has the resources and support they need to stay safe. For Cal OES and the Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN), preparedness means making sure people with access and functional needs are included in every stage of emergency planning.

Emergencies can affect individuals in different ways. People may need assistance with communication, transportation, maintaining health, accessing services, or navigating emergency information. By identifying these needs before a disaster occurs, emergency managers, planners, and community partners can help reduce barriers and improve outcomes for everyone.

Preparedness is a shared responsibility. Individuals, families, caregivers, service providers, and emergency management professionals all have an important role in building resilient communities. Planning for accessible communication, transportation, medications, assistive technology, and other essential supports can make a meaningful difference when emergencies occur.

This National Preparedness Month, OAFN encourages emergency managers and community partners to consider access and functional needs in their preparedness efforts. By planning inclusively today, we can help ensure that all Californians are better prepared for tomorrow's emergencies.

New Resource from CalOES: Key Elements of an Integrated Emergency Operations Plan



Cal OES has released a new emergency management guide, [Key Elements of an Integrated Emergency Operations Plan](#), designed to help jurisdictions strengthen the integration of access and functional needs (AFN) throughout their emergency planning.

Informed by OAFN's review of 49 county Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs), the guide provides practical recommendations to strengthen the integration of AFN across planning, emergency communications, evacuation, and sheltering. It also includes a practical checklist jurisdictions can use as they develop and update their EOPs.

The guide emphasizes that AFN considerations should be integrated throughout an EOP rather than addressed as a separate or stand-alone planning effort. It provides jurisdictions with practical considerations for engaging the community, developing accessible emergency communications, planning for accessible evacuation and transportation, and ensuring sheltering operations can support the whole community.

The accompanying checklist can also serve as a practical tool for emergency managers and their partners to identify strengths, recognize potential gaps, and guide conversations as EOPs are developed, reviewed, exercised, and updated.

We encourage emergency managers, AFN coordinators, planners, community partners, and others involved in inclusive emergency management to review the guide and utilize it as part of their planning efforts.



Cal OES shield logo

Stay tuned! OAFN is getting ready to post an upcoming opportunity to join our Incident Support Team as an AFN Coordinator. If you're passionate about emergency management, inclusion, and making a difference when it matters most, keep an eye on the [CalCareers website](#) for the official posting and application details.

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