Integrating Access and Functional Needs

Community Emergency Response Team

Participant Introductions

Introduce yourself to the class by providing your:

- Name

- What would you like to get out of this course?

Administrative Announcements

- Restrooms

- Parking

- Break Rooms

- Access Restrictions and Security Procedures

- Smoking Regulations

- Module Completion

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Safety and Classroom Etiquette

If you have safety-related access and functional needs considerations, please advise the instructor or class as needed.

Evacuations

Fire exit and assembly point

Safety

Severe weather safety, earthquake and shelter in place procedures

Disruptions

Emergency calls, turn cell phones and devices off or place in silent mode

Presenting

Speak loudly when presenting or answering/ asking questions

Module Purpose

- Empower CERT volunteers to better identify and address the needs of the whole community

- Empower CERT volunteers to provide all survivors with informed, respectful, meaningful assistance

- Provide CERT volunteers with an enhanced perspective of the disaster-related considerations of individuals with access and functional needs

What You Will Learn

- Section 1: Disasters have a Disproportionate Impact on Individuals with Access and Functional Needs (AFN)

- Section 2: Definition of AFN

- Section 3: Meaningful ways CERT Volunteers can Address AFN Considerations

Section 1

Disproportionate Impact

Section 1 Objectives

- Define the term "Access and Functional Needs"

- Understand how emergencies and disasters disproportionately impact individuals with access and functional needs

- Recognize how inclusive planning benefits the whole community

Definition of Access and Functional Needs

The term access and functional needs refers to individuals who have:

- Developmental, intellectual, or physical disabilities;
- Chronic health conditions;
- Injuries;
- Limited English proficiency or are non-English speaking.

It also refers to individuals who are:

- Children;
- Living in institutionalized settings;
- Economically depressed;
- Experiencing homelessness;
- Transportation disadvantaged; or
- Pregnant.

Some Perspective on Access and Functional Needs

- Historically, the focus on individuals with access and functional needs has been on the resources they need rather than the value of their perspectives and inclusion

- Individuals with lived experience bring depth, understanding, and insight to the emergency planning table

- CERT volunteers are encouraged to share their lived experience with access and functional needs during training

Disproportionate Impact

- During Hurricane Katrina, 70% of everyone who perished had an access or functional need.

- Regardless of scope, all disasters disproportionately impact individuals with access and functional needs.

- Emergency Managers can address this disproportionate impact by prioritizing inclusive whole community planning

Whole Community Planning Is Inclusive Planning

- Serves the entire community

- Involves the entire community

- Creates community buy-in

- Empowers independence before, during, and after emergencies

Whole Community Planning Addresses

- **Communication**
  - American Sign Language interpreters
  - Multiple languages and formats
  - Plain language, so everyone can understand

- **Evacuation**
  - Setting a consistent process to secure free assistance 24/7
  - Establishing contracts with paratransit and non-medical transportation providers

- **Shelter**
  - Respecting and promoting self-determination and independence
  - Serving the general population, which includes individuals with access and functional needs
  - Ensuring physical and programmatic accessibility

Benefits of Whole Community Planning

- Results in better emergency plans for everyone

- Gives leaders and responders a more accurate picture of community demographics

- Builds relationships and trust within the community

- Creates community buy-in

- Fulfills federal and state legal requirements

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Video

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

Importance of the Cal OES Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN)

Real Life Application – Communication

California Wildfire

- Emergency alerts were not sent

- Accessible streaming was not provided

- ASL interpreters were not included in televised press conference

- Individuals from the deaf and hard of hearing community were disproportionately impacted by the lack of accessible information

Lives are endangered when emergency communication plans do not include the whole community

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Real Life Application – Evacuation

The Oroville Dam

- Dam failure was considered imminent

- Over 180,000 people evacuated

- Not all jurisdictions had contracts with accessible transportation providers

- Operators of accessible evacuation vehicles evacuated, not knowing services were needed

- A fleet of accessible vehicles went unused while individuals relying on accessible transportation struggled to find evacuation resources

Evacuation plans must include memorialized agreements with service providers, available 24/7 at no cost to the evacuee.

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Real Life Application – Shelters

Emergency Shelter

- Following a California wildfire in 2018, a community struggled to establish an accessible shelter

- Some important steps were skipped

- The parking lot was too small and curb access was blocked.

- The sleeping area, restrooms and showers were not accessible by individuals using mobility devices

- Access was improved with simple methods, including handmade signage and rearranged cots

Inclusive planning prevents service gaps

What Do You Think?

- Have you ever needed help during an emergency, or assisted someone who did? If so, what did you take away from that experience?

- What are some ways you can communicate effectively while interacting with people in the communities you serve?

- How can you empower individuals to receive emergency evacuation assistance?

- What are some examples of inclusive methods you can implement to address access and functional needs at an emergency shelter?

- What are some of the benefits of integrating individuals with lived experience throughout the emergency planning process?

Group Quiz

- **True or False:** A good example of whole community planning is giving a presentation to a meeting of disability advocates after the plan has been drafted and then asking for feedback.

- **True or False:** Everyone, regardless of circumstances, has the right to emergency information in a format that can be received, understood, and acted upon.

- **True or False:** Individuals who do not speak English should be left on their own to seek out emergency information in a language they can understand.

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Group Quiz (cont.)

- **True or False:** Individuals should develop personal preparedness plans.

- **True or False:** People should create a list of individuals who can assist them with evacuation support before, during, and after disasters.

- **True or False:** As a rule, shelters cannot accommodate individuals with disabilities or access and functional needs.

- **True or False:** Individuals with access and functional needs should automatically be sent to shelter at Skilled Nursing Facilities.

Section 2

Understanding Access and Functional Needs

Section 2 Objectives

- Review the definition of "Access and Functional Needs"

- Recognize the risks of making biased assumptions

- Understand the medical and social models of disability

- Explain disability-related regulations

- Understand the importance of people-first language

Definition of Access and Functional Needs

The term access and functional needs refers to individuals who have:

- Developmental, intellectual, or physical disabilities;

- Chronic health conditions;

- Injuries;

- Limited English proficiency or are non-English speaking.

It also refers to individuals who are:

- Children;

- Living in institutionalized settings;

- Economically depressed;

- Experiencing homelessness;

- Transportation disadvantaged; or

- Pregnant.

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Avoid Making Assumptions

- Not all access and functional needs are obvious

- Not all individuals with access or functional needs will require assistance

- Engage people in meaningful ways to determine actual needs

- California supports inclusive sheltering that enables all survivors to thrive

Ask questions and listen for ways to support the rights, safety, and independence of all survivors

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Medical vs. Social Model of Disability

The Medical and Social Models are two main schools of thought regarding disability. Understanding the difference between them is important.

- The medical model of disability says people are disabled by their "impairments" or "differences"

- The social model of disability says that disability is caused by the way society is organized

The Medical Model of Disability

The Medical Model states:

- There is a problem with the individual

- Disabilities and chronic conditions are "impairments"

- The "problem" with disability lies with the individual, not with the inaccessible environment, systems, and infrastructure surrounding the person

> *The Medical Model is inaccurate, antiquated, and harmful to individuals with disabilities*

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

# The Social Model of Disability

The Social Model states:

- Limitations associated with disability are grounded in the lack of universal design, failures in infrastructure, and benign social systems

- Outdated social attitudes create barriers to inclusion

- Inadequate use of universal design prevents access to public spaces

- Focus should be on an individual's ability, not their disability

> *Many people identify strongly with their disability and see the richness it brings to their life experiences*

Video

National Disability Arts Collection & Archive

[Social Model of Disability](#)
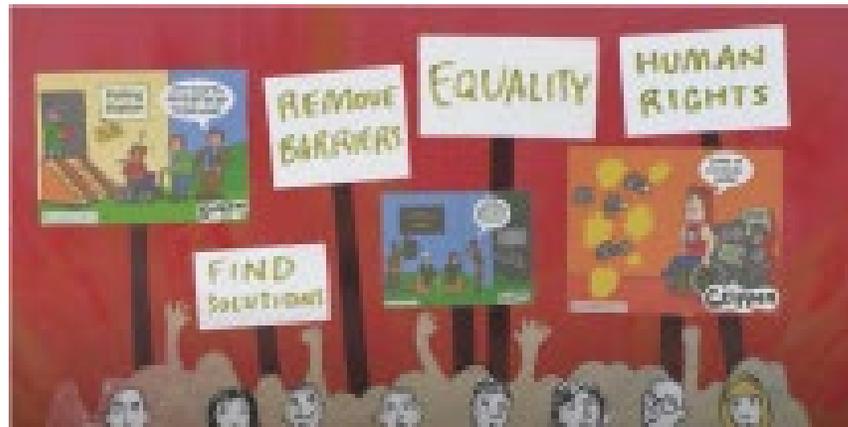
The Path Forward

CERT volunteers should embrace the social model and use it as their guide to supporting individuals before, during, and after disasters

Volunteers apply the Social Model by:

- Removing communication barriers

- Avoiding assumptions about an individual's needs

- Respecting self-determination

- Following the lead of individuals as they express their needs

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Federal Regulations Support Disability Rights

The federal government has enacted legislation that specifically provides for the protection and inclusion of individuals with disabilities

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Bars discrimination against people with disabilities
- Applies to all federal government and federal aid recipients
- Has gradually become more robust

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990
- Prohibits discrimination in employment, government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications

- Requires that state and local governments give equal benefits from all their programs, services, and activities

State Regulations Go Further

California legislation specifically provides for inclusion of access and functional needs within emergency management

Assembly Bill 2311 (Enacted 2017)
- Requires jurisdictions to integrate access and functional needs in emergency communications, evacuations, and sheltering.

Assembly Bill 477 (Enacted 2019)
- Requires jurisdictions to work with access and functional needs partners as Emergency Operations Plans (EOP) are updated.

Video

District of Columbia Office of Disability Rights

[Don't Be Awkward](#)

Language and Etiquette

Inclusive language is a powerful ingredient for successful whole community outcomes

Examples of person-first language

- Person who uses a wheelchair
- Person who is deaf or hard of hearing
- Person with a disability
- Person who is blind or has low vision

Key people-first principles

- Always be respectful and straightforward
- Refer to a person's disability only if relevant
- Avoid terms that lead to exclusion

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

What Do You Think?

- Do you, or anyone in your family, have an access or functional need that may require additional support in an emergency?

- Have you ever made, or seen someone else make, an inaccurate assumption about whether somebody had an access or functional need?

- How can you determine what types of needs an individual with access and functional considerations may have without making assumptions?

- What are negative stereotypes perpetuated by the medical model?

- Why is person-first language so important?

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Group Quiz

- **True or False**: All individuals with access and functional needs have a disability

- **True or False**: All individuals with a disability have an access or functional need

- **True or False**: You can tell if somebody has an access or functional need just by looking at them

- **True or False**: The medical model perpetuates negative stereotypes

- **True or False:** California law requires access and functional considerations to be integrated into local Emergency Operations Plans

- **True or False:** You should only refer to an individual's disability when relevant

- **True or False:** Language is not a powerful ingredient for inclusive outcomes

Section 3

The Role of CERT Volunteers

Section 3 Objectives

- Review the definition of "Access and Functional Needs"

- Understand roles CERT volunteers may fulfill to advance preparedness and response

- Learn how to engage with individuals across the disability spectrum

- Identify resources to assist individuals with access and functional needs.

Definition of Access and Functional Needs

The term access and functional needs refers to individuals who have:

- Developmental, intellectual, or physical disabilities;

- Chronic health conditions;

- Injuries;

- Limited English proficiency or are non-English speaking.

It also refers to individuals who are:

- Children;

- Living in institutionalized settings;

- Economically depressed;

- Experiencing homelessness;

- Transportation disadvantaged; or

- Pregnant.

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Roles of CERT Volunteers are Dynamic

- CERT-related activities change based on the needs of the event. There is no definitive set list of all CERT volunteer roles.

- Whatever the activity, CERT volunteers are likely to engage with a wide variety of individuals with access and functional needs

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

CERT Roles Before an Emergency

Preparedness

- Understand neighborhood needs
- Support all individuals in making personal preparedness and evacuation plans

- Encourage friends and family to participate in CERT activities
- Build relationships with supported settings
- Help install earthquake mitigation kits

CERT Roles During Activation

Response

- Perform door-to-door wellness checks and notifications

- Help at a donation center

- Help reunify individuals with lost durable assistive/medical devices

- Deliver water, food, or personal protective equipment (PPE)

![Cal OES logo - Governor's Office of Emergency Services]

AFN-related Etiquette

- Each individual will have unique considerations before, during, and after an emergency.

- Everyone should be engaged in accordance with what is appropriate based on their needs

- CERT volunteers will likely interact with individuals from across the access and functional needs spectrum.

- There are generally accepted disability-related etiquette principles

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

AFN-related Considerations

Individuals with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities

- May have difficulty communicating physical state (pain, hunger, etc.)
- Stress or pain may be manifested through:
  - Repetitive body movements or vocalizations.
  - Self-injurious behaviors (slapping, head banging, biting, hair pulling)
  - Running away or trying to hide

Ways to help:

- Be patient and allow time and space to respond
- Provide clear instructions one step at a time
- Maintain eye contact and use plain language

AFN-related Considerations (cont.)

Individuals who are Blind or have Low Vision

- Individuals may become separated from their service animal or assistive devices

- If information is not available in accessible formats, individuals may not know how to prepare for or respond to the situation.

Ways to help:

- Introduce yourself and your role and ask if assistance is needed

- Do not assume assistance is needed.

- Avoid grabbing or touching without permission

- Identify physical features such as stairs, doorways, restrooms, etc.

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

AFN-related Considerations (cont.)

Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- Individuals may use American Sign Language or be able to read lips
- If individuals are separated from assistive devices, support may be needed.

Ways to help:

- Carry an image-based tool like pictograms
- Keep pen and paper handy
- Learn how to access remote American Sign Language services such as video interpreting
- Maintain eye contact with the individual, not interpreter

AFN-related Considerations (cont.)

Individuals with Chronic Conditions or Injuries

- Individuals may become separated from medications or equipment during evacuation

- Treatment facilities such as dialysis centers may be temporarily unavailable.

Ways to help:

- Avoid assumptions about what the individual might appear to need.

- Help gather items to maintain health and independence.

- Support the facilitation of transportation.

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

AFN-related Considerations (cont.)

Individuals who are Pregnant

- The individual's health provider may be unavailable.

- The individual may be disproportionately impacted by extreme temperature, poor air quality, and physical exertion.

Ways to help:
- Provide emotional reassurance.

- Ask what type of assistance is needed.

- Help connect the individual to medical providers, as needed.

- Provide fluids and an accessible place to rest.

AFN-related Considerations (cont.)

Children

- Children may need support to reunify with parents/guardians.
- Children may be traumatized, especially when separated from family and friends
- Unaccompanied teenagers may resist supervision or assistance.

Ways to help:

- Provide emotional support by playing, talking, and reading with the child.
- Be aware of adults who watch or approach a child.
- Emulate positive behavior by remaining calm.
- Assist with reunification efforts as possible.

AFN-related Considerations (cont.)

Individuals with Limited English Proficiency

- Individuals may have incomplete information if it is not provided in multilingual formats.

- There may be an overall lack of trust in government.

- Information may not be accurate if a child is acting as an interpreter for the family.

Ways to help:

- Find an appropriate interpreter.

- Partner with trusted community-based organizations to support needs.

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

AFN-related Considerations (cont.)

Individuals with Low Income, Experiencing Homelessness, or who are Transportation Disadvantaged

- Individuals may lack the resources to self-evacuate.
- Individuals experiencing homelessness have less protection from dangerous conditions such as extreme temperatures. poor air quality, and flooding.

Ways to help:

- Introduce yourself as a volunteer and keep questions focused on immediate needs.
- Support social service workers to provide aid.
- Partner with community-based organizations to support needs.

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

CERT Toolbox

- Serving the community often means connecting people with information so they can make their own plans and decisions.

- CERT volunteers should become familiar with the following resources and offer them freely when interacting with the whole community.

CERT Toolbox (cont.)

- **Cal OES Access and Functional Needs Library (website)**
Located on the Cal OES website, the AFN Library contains a wealth of guidance on effective communication, evacuation, and sheltering for the whole community.

- **California 2-1-1 (phone)**
Dial 2-1-1 to get local information on a wide range of social services, such as food, healthcare, housing, transportation, and legal assistance. 2-1-1 is available to 96% of individuals within California and 85% of all U.S. households.

CERT Toolbox (cont.)

- **Emergency Preparedness Guide/Toolkit for Individuals with Disabilities (online document)**
Available in multiple languages, the guide provides information on signing up for alerts, developing a personal evacuation plan and Go Bag, and much more.

- **First Responder Access and Functional Needs Training Series (video)**
The County of San Diego Office of Emergency Services developed a series of training videos for first responders when evacuating individuals with physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities. The videos enhance understanding of disability-specific considerations.

CERT Toolbox (cont.)

- **Listos California (grant program)**
  Listos is a Cal OES-based initiative to promote disaster readiness to all Californians, regardless of age, ability, income, or language. Listos is an excellent source of emergency preparedness outreach materials in multiple languages and formats.

- **Show Me for Emergencies (smartphone app)**
  Show Me is a free suite of downloadable communication tools. CERT members can download this app, which includes resources such as pictograms, communication icons, and language help aides, on their mobile devices for use during activations.

What Do You Think?

- Are there individuals in your life, maybe even yourself, you did not realize are part of the whole community until now?

- When assisting individuals with access and functional needs to develop their personal emergency preparedness plan, what types of items should you encourage them to include in an evacuation Go Bag?

- What considerations would you encourage individuals with access and functional needs to address within their personal evacuation plan?

- List some key disability etiquette-related principles CERT volunteers should keep in mind when interacting with individuals before, during, and after disasters?

- What are some informational materials or programs CERT volunteers can use to support or connect individuals with helpful emergency-related resources?

Group Quiz

- **True or False**: All individuals with access and functional needs will require additional support and resources throughout the disaster cycle.

- **True or False**: CERT volunteers should not support sandbagging operations.

- **True or False**: An important role CERT volunteers can fulfill prior to disasters is to help individuals develop personal preparedness and evacuation plans.

- **True or False**: When attempting to assist individuals who are blind, you should always ask before grabbing or trying to lead them somewhere.

Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Group Quiz (Cont.)

- **True or False**: When conducting wellness checks, CERT volunteers should carry a pen and paper to aid in communication.

- **True or False**: During pregnancy, there are disproportional physical or emotional impacts associated with the stress of disasters.

- **True or False**: CERT volunteers should not concern themselves with gaining an awareness regarding programs and resources that can be used to help individuals throughout the community make better emergency-related decisions.

FEEDBACK