



Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES



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

5th National Access & Functional Needs (AFN) Symposium 2026 Post-Event Resource Package

All,

Thank you for being part of the 2026 National Access and Functional Needs Symposium! Your participation helped make this year's 5th anniversary event a tremendous success.

This year, we brought together emergency managers, disability and aging leaders, public health professionals, community-based organizations, advocates, and private-sector partners from across the country to exchange ideas, share promising practices, and strengthen our collective commitment to inclusive emergency management.

On behalf of our outstanding organizing team, Sadie Martinez (Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management), Anne-Marie McLaughlin (New York University), Valerie Haven (IAEM Accessibility and Whole Community Inclusion Caucus), and myself, thank you for your engagement, collaboration, and commitment to advancing access and functional needs before, during, and after disasters.

As promised, we've assembled a post-event package to help you continue the conversation and put the ideas shared during the Symposium into practice.

Below are a few key post-event items:

Resources

This post-event resource provides access to the tools, documents, best practices, and information referenced by speakers and panelists throughout the Symposium.

Video Recordings

The 2026 National Access and Functional Needs Symposium was recorded and is available for viewing on the YouTube channel via the links below:

1. [2026 National Access and Functional Needs Symposium-Day 1 \(English\) \(Spanish\)](#)

Transcripts

Transcripts are available by emailing a request to:

OAFN@caloes.ca.gov

We hope these resources continue to support your efforts to strengthen inclusive emergency management within your organizations and communities. Every partnership built, lesson shared, and improvement made helps ensure that people with disabilities, older adults, and anyone with an access or functional need are fully integrated into all aspects of emergency management.

Thank you again for helping make the 2026 National Access and Functional Needs Symposium such a meaningful event. We appreciate everything you do to advance a true whole community approach.

Together we can achieve great things!

-Vance

L. Vance Taylor

Chief, Office of Access and Functional Needs

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services



Day 1 Wednesday, July 7, 2026

Opening/Welcome:

- **Sadie Martinez** ([Access and Functional Needs Program Supervisor, Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management](#))

Email: sadie.martinez@state.co.us

Introduction of Keynote Speakers:

- [L. Vance Taylor](#) (Chief, [Office of Access & Functional Needs, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Cal OES](#))

Email: Vance.Taylor@caloes.ca.gov or OAFN@caloes.ca.gov

Keynote Address:

- [Caroline Thomas Jacobs](#) ([Director, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services](#))

Keynote Address:

- [Dr. Erroll G. Southers](#) ([Associate Senior Vice President of Safety and Risk Assurance, University of Southern California](#) and author of [Inside the Castle Walls](#))

*Names in order of participant appearance

Panel I: Training the Field: Practical AFN Resources for Today's Emergency Managers

Summary: As federal AFN-specific training resources continue to shrink, states are stepping up to ensure emergency managers have the tools to support the whole community. Panelists will highlight training offerings that help emergency managers identify, understand, and implement integrated practices. They will explain how agencies nationwide can access resources and share lessons learned in building sustainable training capacity.

Moderator/Panel Organizer:

[Anne-Marie McLaughlin](#) (Director, Emergency Management and Continuity, [New York University](#))

Email: am9371@nyu.edu

Panelists Participants:

[Sadie Martinez](#) ([Access and Functional Needs Program](#) Supervisor, [Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management](#))

Email: sadie.martinez@state.co.us

[Dawn Brantley](#) (Director, [Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency \(MEMA\)](#))

[L. Vance Taylor](#) (Chief, [Office of Access & Functional Needs, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services \(Cal OES\)](#))

Email: Vance.Taylor@caloes.ca.gov or OAFN@caloes.ca.gov

Resources from the Chat (Day 1):

- [Access and Functional Needs \(AFN\) Resource Framework](#)
- [Cal OES Volunteer Disaster Registry Planning Guidance](#)

- [California Department of Social Services \(CDSS\) Functional Assessment Service Teams \(FAST\) Brochure / FAST Description](#)
- [Defining Functional Needs – Updating CMIST By June Isaacson Kailes, Disability Policy Consultant – The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies](#)
- [State of California Guide to Disaster Assistance Services \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Priority Population Task Force - The AFN Minute \(June 2, 2023\)](#)
- [National Council on Independent Living: List of Centers](#)
- [Presidential Policy Directive/ PPD-8: National Preparedness](#)
- [ADA Best Practices Toolkit for State and Local Governments](#)
- [Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools \(REMS\)](#)
- [Integrating Access & Functional Needs Into Emergency Management \(California G197\)](#)
- [Integrating Access & Functional Needs Into Emergency Management \(New York State G197\)](#)

The G-197 course is intended to provide Emergency Managers/Responders with the skills and knowledge to plan, prepare, respond, and recover for those who have Disabilities and Access and Functional Needs during a disaster.

Digital Accessibility

The California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN) offers **free monthly training** courses on creating accessible documents. The courses are available for emergency managers and community-based organizations throughout the nation. The courses, which focus on the essential steps to create accessible content in Word, Excel, and Adobe Acrobat, are:

- [How to Create Accessible Microsoft Office Documents](#)
- [How to Create Accessible PDF Documents](#)
- [How to Create Accessible Forms](#)

Day 2
Thursday, July 8, 2026

Opening/Welcome:

[Anne-Marie McLaughlin](#) (Director, Emergency Management and Continuity, [New York University](#))
Email: am9371@nyu.edu

Keynote Address:

[Linda Mastandrea](#) (Accessibility and Safeguarding Lead, [FIFA World Cup 2026](#))

Panel I: Training the Field: Practical AFN Resources for Today's Emergency Managers

Summary: Integrating access and functional needs into emergency operations plans is more than a legal obligation. It is a strategy for stronger response and faster recovery. Panelists will highlight how inclusive planning strengthens operational outcomes.

Moderator/Panel Organizer:

[Ron Prater](#) (Executive Director, [Big City Emergency Managers](#))

Email: rprater@bigcityem.org

Panelists Participants:

[Jennifer Maradiaga-Contreras](#) (Senior Emergency Planning Coordinator, [Office of Emergency Management, County of Santa Clara](#))

Email: jennifer.maradiaga@oem.sccgov.org

[Dr. Jeannette Sutton](#) ([Subject Matter Expert](#), Associate Professor, [SUNY Albany](#) and Founder of [the Warn Room](#))

Email: jsutton@albany.edu

[Jonathan Reeves](#) (Resilience Specialist, [Arcadis](#))

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[Jason Ferguson](#) (Director of [Emergency Management, UC Berkeley](#))

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Resources from the Chat (Day 2):

- [Jurisdictional Guidance for the Development of an Access and Functional Needs Advisory Committee](#)
- [Cal OES Integrating AFN Within Large Venue Safety and Security Operations](#)
- [Cal OES Integrated Evacuation Planning for Jurisdictions and Individuals with Access and Functional Needs](#)



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