



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

**FISCAL YEAR 2014**

**HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM**

**SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCE:**

**PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN DISASTERS GUIDANCE**



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**

## PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN DISASTERS GUIDANCE

Homeland Security Grant Program awards may be used by states and local jurisdictions to provide equal access to emergency programs and services for individuals with disabilities. Consistent with the development and sustainment of the core capabilities and capability targets identified in the National Preparedness Goal, this supplement provides guidance for grantees to incorporate the needs of individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs into their planning and purchase of equipment and supplies; provide training to a broad range of individuals, disability services providers, agencies, and entities; and exercise capabilities that include the access and functional needs of individuals with disabilities, such as alerts, evacuation, sheltering and emergency medical care.

### A. Background

People with disabilities comprise a significant portion of the total American population. Across the country, there are approximately 59 million Americans with disabilities, making up 20% of the total population. 11 million people over the age of 6 need personal assistance with everyday activities and 21% of the disability population over the age of 16 lives below the poverty level.

In certain parts of the country, the ratio of disability can be significantly higher than the national figures. For example, in the New Madrid Seismic Zone, many counties have significantly higher rates of disability, ranging up to almost 33%. Across the country, many other counties also have significantly higher percentages of people with disabilities. The Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) require planners and emergency managers at all levels to plan for the whole community by integrating and coordinating emergency preparedness, response, and recovery inclusive of the access and functional needs of children and adults with or without disabilities.

### B. Building Capabilities: Allowable costs and available resources

The Grant Programs Directorate partners with the FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination (ODIC) in this area. As you develop your grant applications for FY 2014, we strongly encourage grantees to address how your Investments will provide equal access and increased effectiveness of emergency preparedness planning and response and to increase the involvement of disability inclusion experts as partners across all aspects of emergency management.

FEMA expects that integration occurs at all levels from planning, to purchasing of equipment and supplies and exercises/drills. In order to assist state, local and tribal governments, FEMA has updated allowable grant expenditures for planning and purchases under the State Homeland Security Program (SHSP), Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI), Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS), Citizen Corps Program (CCP), Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program (THSGP), and the Emergency Management Performance Grant Program (EMPG).

Efforts to develop plans, and making decisions to purchase equipment and supplies should be done by including the whole community through meaningful dialogue and inclusion on planning committees. The following are examples that demonstrate the integration of disability access and functional needs efforts to emergency planning and response:

- Inclusive meeting practices may require providing Sign Language Interpreters, Computer Aided Real time Translation (CART), materials in alternate formats, facilitators with expertise in supporting inclusive discussions, accessible transportation or other assistance for community members with disabilities to participate on planning teams.
- Engaging disability groups in preparedness and evacuation planning may require supporting the work of local NGOs to produce materials and tools that are user friendly for a broader audience.
- General population shelter planning may require investments in training, equipment and supplies to provide equal access and meet access and functional needs.
- General population shelter planning may also benefit from practices that engage a broader planning team and may require the development of tools and resources by experts in disability inclusive practices.
- Tools may be needed for community mapping, gap analysis and tracking the resources available to integrate access and functional needs, rather than relying on voluntary registries of people. (e.g.: accessible transportation, durable medical equipment, personal assistance services providers, sign language interpreters, accessible and affordable housing resources, etc.).
- Cross-training for disability and other community groups, planners and emergency managers may be required to improve capacity for integrating access and functional needs throughout emergency preparedness and response.
- It may be necessary to conduct an analysis and evaluation of potential shelter locations for access compliance and to establish priority for utilization based on concluding results.
- Support may be needed for a planner to assist with achieving equal access through integrating access and functional needs.
- Support of the full spectrum of accessible Emergency Alert, Warning and Notification systems for individuals with access and functional needs, such as but not limited to: Closed Captioning (CC), visual and audible notification and motion/vibration alerts may be needed.
- It may be necessary to engage disability organizations in leading inclusive community emergency preparedness programs to increase preparedness.
- Support may be needed for inclusive neighborhood programs to increase skills and abilities of residents with disabilities as neighborhood leaders.