

Inclusion of People with Disabilities and Others with Access and Functional Needs in CERT Programs



July 15, 2015

**Individual and Community Preparedness
Division**

Agenda

- Welcome and Introduction
- Dante Randazzo, FEMA Individual and Community Preparedness Division (ICPD)
- Gay Jones, FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination (ODIC)
- Jennifer Fales, Emergency Management Coordinator, Kansas City, MO Office of Emergency Management
- Kathryn Gerk, Emergency Services Manager, Richmond, CA Fire Department
- Facilitated Q&A Session

Previous CERT Webinars

- [CERT Resource Development](#)
- [CERT Competitive Events](#)
- [Teen CERT](#)
- [Citizen Corps and CERT Data Showcase](#)
- [Citizen Partner Program Update](#)



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Providing CERT Training for People with Disabilities and Others with Access and Functional Needs



Dante Randazzo

Individual and Community Preparedness Division

Key Concepts for Inclusion

- Self-Determination
- No “One Size Fits All”
- Equal Opportunity
- Inclusion
- Integration
- Physical Access
- Equal Access
- Effective Communication
- Program Modification
- No Charge

General Guidelines for CERT Training

- Discuss Accommodations with Participants
- Set Up Your Classroom Appropriately
- Help Participants Honor Transportation Schedules
- Focus on Props and Hands-On Practice
- Be Prepared to Adjust Activities and Modify Instructions to Maximize Participation
- Consider Adding Material on Communication
- Encourage Participants to Share Unique Knowledge
- Remind Participants to Know their Limits
- Discuss CERT Roles and Responsibilities
- Encourage Participants to Work Together
- Do Not Make Assumptions About Participant Abilities

Participants Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision

- Provide Materials in Advance
- Prepare Descriptions of All Visuals
- Arrange the Room Appropriately
- Discuss Service Animal Needs
- Allow Participants to Arrive Early
- Explain All Visuals
- Incorporate Props and Hands-On Participation

Participants Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- Work Effectively with Translators
- Set Communication Protocols
- Arrange the Room Appropriately
- Be Sure Interpreters and Instructors are Visible
- Address Participants, Not Interpreters
- Adjust to Silence and a Slower Pace
- Explain, Then Do
- Do Not Expect Participants to be Fluent in English
- Make Information Relevant
- Research Emergency Alert Systems

Participants With a Cognitive or Intellectual Disability

- Allow Extra Time
- Consider Adding Graphics
- Simplify Vocabulary and Provide More Hands-On Practice
- Prioritize Safety



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Participants With a Mobility Disability

- Arrange the Room Appropriately
- Ensure that Participants Who Use Wheelchairs Can Reach Props
- Encourage All Participants to Demonstrate Knowledge



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**Community Emergency Response Training for
Disabilities and Others with Access and Functional Needs**

Provision of Reasonable Accommodations at the Local Level

Gay Jones, Disability Integration Communications Specialist
FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination

ODIC Mission Statement

The Office of Disability Integration and Coordination (ODIC) guides FEMA's commitment to achieving universally accessible, survivor centric, fully inclusive emergency management. This requires integrating the whole community inclusive of people with disabilities, people with access and functional needs, first responders, community partners and across government to achieve program, physical, and effective communication access throughout all FEMA programs, services, activities and functions before, during, and after disasters.



Provision of Accommodations

- ▶ The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects the civil rights of persons with disabilities. It prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by the federal government, federal contractors, and by recipients of federal financial assistance.
- ▶ Any recipient or sub-recipient of federal funds is required to make their programs accessible to individuals with disabilities. Its protections apply to ALL programs and businesses that receive ANY federal funds.
- ▶ This applies to all elements of physical/architectural, programmatic and communication accessibility in all services and activities conducted by or funded by FEMA.

What can Communities do to Provide Accommodations to CERT Participants?

- Budget for accommodations
- If you are going to use “volunteers” (we are not supportive of this), you need to work with reputable sources; do not use family members and friends who not qualified to provide accommodations.
- Work with Regional Disability Integration Specialist in the region to look for partnerships, including:
 - Independent Living Centers
 - School for the Deaf
 - School for the Blind
- Other CERT groups

Work with your Regional Disability Integration Specialist & ODIC

Kate McCarthy Barnett – Region 1 (Boston)

James Flemming – Region 2 (New York)

Phillip Manttiacci – Region 3 (Philadelphia)

John Daly – Region 4 (Atlanta)

Jessica Mitchell – Region 5 (Chicago)

Linda Landers – Region 6 (Denton)

Lisa Bothwell – Region 7 (Kansas City)

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Gay Jones, Disability Integration Communications Specialist
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CERT Training for Individuals with Disabilities and Others with Access and Functional Needs

(A View from the Ground)



A Little About Me

- Jennifer Fales, Emergency Management Coordinator, Kansas City, Missouri
- Public Servant of Kansas City for over 26 years
- CERT Coordinator since 2005 / launched the program in our City

A Little About Our Team



- 500 Active Members
- All ages, races, religions, backgrounds, circumstances, access and functional needs, etc.
- All Are Welcome.....Mostly
 - We conduct background checks
 - We limit participation to those that are 18 or over that live or work in our city
- We have been cert in coordination with a local university

I Am Thankful

- For the opportunity to address you today – thanks Dante for inviting me to participate
- For my position coordinating CERT
- For the mentors that have helped me over the years
- For the instructors in our program that are adaptable and dynamic and the cornerstone of our program
- For the members of the Kansas City team that are patient with me and help me learn and grow and correct me – even when I don't want them to 😊

Preparing for Today

- I reflected on our team over the years and how much we have changed and evolved.
- I remember starting the team like it was yesterday
- And I remember the first call I got from someone with an access and functional need who wanted to sign up for CERT

Ring, Ring

“I saw you have a CERT class scheduled and I would like to sign up”

I knew the individual and knew that he was blind.

My Initial Reaction

- My brain generated a million questions such as how it would work, could it work, where could I more guidance
- I think my response was something like.....”uh well uh, I don’t really, I mean, I need to, uh”

The Unknown Can Be

(insert any word that describes how you feel)

- We know we need to be inclusive
 - Federal and State Laws
 - Local Requirements
- We want to be inclusive
 - Because we care
 - Because we know a big disaster requires all hands on deck
- It's the process to be inclusive that can be elusive

“We do not see things as they are. We see things as we are.”

Famous quote attributed to an English translation of Talmudic words

- We view the world from our own window
 - Past experiences
 - Upbringing
 - Religion / Culture
 - Personal Values
 - Current circumstances
 - Etc.



View of Earth from a window on the International Space Station

- As a CERT Coordinator it our job to leave the comfort of our own window and embrace the views and perspectives of others that want to join the team.

But, Wait a Minute...

- Some of the activities are dangerous
 - Lifting people with head/neck injuries
 - Cribbing debris off of people
 - Putting out small fires (hoping volunteers remember the definition of small)
- How can we make those activities safe for the individual and the rest of the team?
- What can we adapt / how can we adapt it?
- What is a reasonable accommodation?
- What if the accommodation costs money and I don't have any?

Lay the Foundation

- Talk to your Law Department or other appropriate party about liability and make sure that your team is covered
- Find out who handles requests for reasonable accommodations in your jurisdiction
 - Public meetings must be accessible so you might check with whoever schedules them such as the City Clerk, City Manager's Office, etc.

Don't Assume Anything

- Nobody has ever gotten mad at me for admitting that I am ignorant
 - Annoyed / sometimes
 - Mad / not so much
- You can't tell a person's needs just by looking at them
- If a particular access and functional need is identified it does not mean that they don't have additional needs
- Just because you have worked with someone with an access and functional need does not mean that every person with that need will want, request, or require the same accommodations

Usually

It's Not that Big of a Deal

- Example: A student approaches right before the cribbing exercise and states they recently had knee surgery and they can't get on the ground or lift heavy objects
- No problem
 - I offer to let them be team lead for the exercise (involves standing back and telling everyone else what to do)
 - Or I let them learn by watching – confident that they will get hands on practice in a future exercise when they feel better

Sometimes It's a Little More Complicated

- Consider including language on all class & meeting flyers for people who might need accommodations
- Here is an example
 - Any person with a disability desiring reasonable accommodation to participate in this (class, meeting, exercise, etc.) may contact the CERT Coordinator at (insert phone number) or by email at (insert email address) prior to the date of the (class, meeting exercise, etc.)

Modify Training as Needed

- If you are unsure ask the individual if they are comfortable and/or capable of performing certain tasks
- Work together to modify the training
 - Coordinator and Student collaborating on solutions
- Be prepared
 - You might not always agree
 - Safety first

Modification Examples

- Low Vision / Blind
 - Allow individuals to come to class 1 hour early to touch items that are shown but not passed around to the rest of the class
 - Remind instructors to describe any pictures included in the power point
 - FEMA provides free Braille CERT manuals – take advantage of it
- Deaf / Hard of Hearing
 - Work with the individual to determine the best means of communication when practicing in dark environments when lip reading and / or being able to see an interpreter might be inhibited
 - Consider whether or not an interpreter will be available in a real incident and plan / train accordingly
- Mobility Impairments
 - Be careful not to place tripping hazards in exercise areas such as debris, etc.
 - During exercises, have some victims seated or laying on tables for individuals that are not comfortable getting on the ground

Developmental Disabilities / Cognitive Disorders

- Highly individualized situation
- Must be able to follow instructions and maintain safety standards
- Must be able to conduct themselves in accordance with local human resource policies including zero tolerance for harassment and violence, etc.

Some Equipment

- We have found it beneficial to have a few items on hand:
 - Full page reader
 - We have Window Eyes installed on some computers



Some Equipment

- Personal voice amplification



Some Equipment

- Arthritic Grips



Some Equipment

- Extra Canes
- Wheel chair



Some Equipment

- Bariatric chairs



The Money Issue



- Be Like an Old Buzzard
 - Look for leftovers and swoop in to grab them
 - Ask your public health department if they have any supplies expiring (N95 masks, medical gloves, etc.) these are good enough for training – the money you save there could pay for accommodations
 - Make friends with grant managers, sometimes there are funds at the end of a grant that need to be spent quickly

Some Don'ts

- Unless someone asks you to speak up – don't yell at people just because they have an access and functional need
- Don't broadcast other people's issues – it is not our place to tell their personal business
- Don't take it easy on them (aside from reasonable accommodations) – they are part of the team and should be treated like everyone else

Some Do's

- Allow individuals to challenge themselves to find out what their abilities are (within safe guidelines)
- Treat people like adults and speak to them accordingly
- Plan ahead - how you could modify training, where to get interpreters, adaptive equipment needs, etc.
- Make all your volunteers feel welcome and appreciated
- Try to use acceptable verbiage – but don't get freaked out about it
- Consider providing working with access and functional needs training to your team – not only to help with team member relations but the community at large

You Set The Tone

- Are you focused on the challenges
 - Class might take a little longer
 - There might be added costs for interpreters, etc.
 - Other students may be outside their comforter zone
 - Etc.
- Or are you focused on the positives
 - The skills and talents of the individual
 - The Contributions they can make to the team
 - What can you learn from them

Some Advice

- Get a mentor – you don't have to figure everything out by yourself / reach out to other coordinators
- Don't beat yourself up (plenty of other people will do that for you) no one expects you to be perfect / if you make a mistake; admit it, fix it, and forget it
- Have fun – every chance you get

So What Happened With That First Call I Took Requesting Inclusion In CERT?

- I saw him just a couple days ago at a joint RACES/CERT meeting - he is a very active member of both teams
- He was instrumental in developing and instructing the Working with Access and Functional Needs module of the CERT Rodeo in a Box that can be found here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mS-phIODw3M>
- We ask many things of him both great and small and he has never let us down

My Contact Information

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CERT People With Disabilities and Others with Access Functional Needs (PWD/AFN) Awareness Training



FEMA Webinar July 15, 2015
CERT Training on Individuals with Disabilities
and Others with Access and Functional Needs
(PWD AFN)

What we will cover today:

- Basic ADA Issues
- CERT Teams and PWD/E collaboration
- Tips and Best Practices
 - CCC CERT PWD/E Outreach Packet



Lessons Learned from Hurricane Katrina

- 73% of Hurricane Katrina-related deaths in New Orleans
 - Persons age 60+
 - Comprised only 15 percent of population



AARP, We Can Do Better: Lessons Learned for Protecting Older Persons in Disasters, 2006

Goal and Purpose of Training

- Raise awareness of and for PWD and others w/ AFN & CERT Teams
- Improve Community Resilience
- Foster Collaboration with & for ALL --- CERT Teams & PWD AFN



Basic ADA Issues

- Always treat everyone with respect
- PWD and others with AFN = over 30% population and growing
- Include in ALL planning
 - “Nothing about us without us”



Basic ADA Issues and CERT

- Be Prepared - If you are not sure – ASK
- SAFETY FIRST
 - Accessibility
 - Mobility issues
 - Lighting
 - Audio



What roles do PWD AFN fulfill in CERT Teams?

- Incident Commander
- Team Leader
- Documentation
- Communications
- Logistics
- Safety Officer
- And more



EVERYONE Needs to be Involved

- CERT Teams are in a unique position to help prepare
- Planning *before* an emergency can save lives, reduce illness and injury
- Doing something NOW is better than hoping for assistance after emergency

CERT Buddy System at its Best!

- Identify strategies empower everyone to prepare to survive next major disaster
- Speeds up recovery efforts



Preparedness for Everyone

- Think ahead...develop an emergency plan
 - Communication during emergency
- Make an emergency kit
 - Does not need to be complicated or expensive
- Stay informed
 - Local emergency plans and services
- Get involved
 - Join CERT Team



ADDITIONAL Personal Preparedness for PWD AFN

- Create an emergency support network
- Work with providers and social support networks to develop contingency plans for an emergency
 - Complete and make copies of Vial of Life and carry a medications list in your wallet
 - Develop a transportation plan

Tips for Communicating with PWD AFN

- Speak directly to the person (not to a companion, interpreter, etc.)
- Always identify yourself to a person who is blind or has a vision loss
- If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted, then ask for instructions

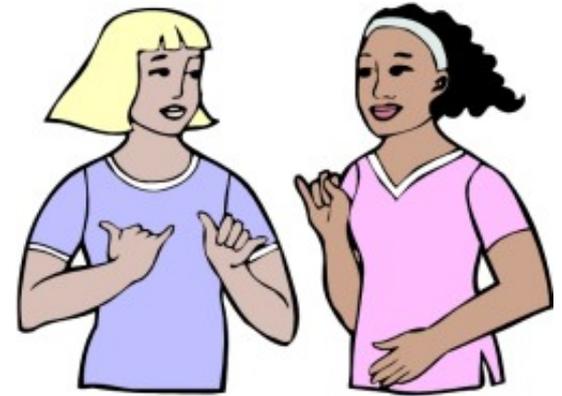
Tips for Communicating with PWD AFN

- Do not lean against or hang on someone's wheelchair or walker
- Never distract a guide dog while working without the owners permission
- Respect – treat adults as adults



Tips for Communicating with a Person who is Deaf/Hard of Hearing

- Speak directly to them - look at them face to face
- Ask them their preference in communicating with you
 - ASL
 - Pen and Paper, etc.



Contra Costa County C8 and Richmond CERT Efforts

PWD/E/C AFN Workgroup with:

- CCC CERT PWD/E Committee
- CCC Health Services
- CCC Animal Services
- AMR



CERT Neighborhood Outreach Packets

- Developed by C8 CERT PWD/E Subcommittee
 - Grant from SUASI
- Community guide, resources, Vial of Life, Window signs



Conclusion – How to be Inclusive and Collaborative?

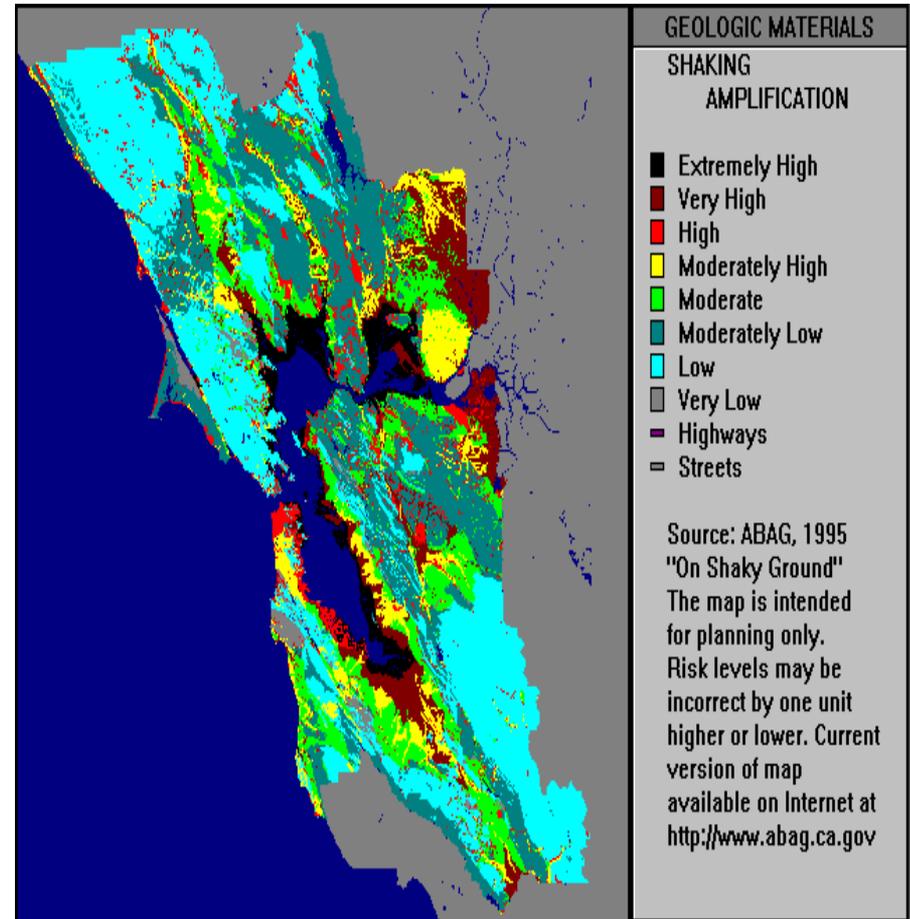


MUST HAVE TOP LEVEL SUPPORT

- Continue to outreach and question
- Continue to collaborate – individuals- CERT teams- city – business & industry
- Continue to do the right thing for ALL

We are ALL in this together

- Right thing to do
- Right time
- Right reason –
 - For the Good of the whole community



Finally

Working together increases
everyone's chances for survival

Questions?

Thank You

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Facilitated Q&A

