



City of San Antonio
Developing an Emergency Plan for People with Disabilities
Thursday, February 22, 2018

The second community meeting was held at the Thousand Oaks Library, 4618 Thousand Oaks

- I. Introductions: Deborah Scharven, Accessibility Compliance Manager facilitated meeting. City staff included Olivia Gaitan and Christine Zuniga (available for Spanish translations) from the Disability Access Office and James Mendoza and Samantha Haynes from the Office of Emergency Management. Rachel Cywinski from the City's Disability Access Advisory Committee was also present. ASL Interpreters were provided by Deaf Link/Vital Signs. There were a total of twenty-three (23) citizens who participated in the community meeting.
- II. Presentation: Deborah Scharven explained that the purpose of the community meetings is to obtain community feedback to help develop the City's Emergency Plan for People with Disabilities. A tentative time line for the plan development was provided:
 - Phase 1- Community Engagement: February-April
 - Phase 2- Draft and Community Input: May-Aug.
 - Phase 3- Second Draft and Community Review: September-October
 - Phase 4- Final Draft and Community Review: November
 - Phase 5- Emergency Plan Released: December 15, 2018
- III. Discussion Topics: The attendees were broken up into small groups to discuss each topic then share their findings with the larger group. Issues/concerns/questions and recommendations are listed with the individual topics.
 1. Notifications and Alerts
 - People who are Deaf need notifications in real time, same as the rest of the population. The example was given about the most recent ice storm; the alerts concerning staying in place were not received by Deaf people until sometime later.

- Media needs training concerning accessibility. Either there are no interpreters present at press conferences/ briefings or they are not in view of the cameras.
- Marketing of Alert SA, attendees either did not know about the program or did not know how to use the technology to follow through on self-registry.
- Questions arose about technology and loss of power- how will you get notifications/alerts/information on smartphones or computers if electricity is out?
- Individuals in the Deaf community would like specialized fire alarms that use flashing lights and vibrations in their homes to help with alerts.
- Citizens should have numerous ways to get notifications, neighbors, weather alerts from the National Weather Service, emails, Alert SA, etc.

2. Evacuations

- Self-preparedness is very important; individuals should have emergency kits read in case of an evacuation. Vital items should be identified including medication, medical supplies (including any needed chargers or batteries) pet supplies, etc.
- Transportation- what do you do if you have no transportation? You should also be aware of multiple routes out of neighborhood in case of evacuation.
- If first responders make door-to-door checks to inform occupants they must leave, those who are Deaf may not hear them at the door, what alternatives can be made?
- Plain language is important for people who are Deaf or not fluent in English, information should be given in the simplest language possible.
- The attendees want a list of pre-determined shelter locations in case of evacuations; shelters locations are not determined before an emergency/natural disaster occurs. Because the location of the emergency is not known until it occurs, shelters are set up in areas far from the emergency zone.

3. Shelters

- Shelters should have refrigeration areas for medicines, pharmacists available to help people obtain needed medication.

- Needed communication technologies at shelters include Video Relay Interpreting, video/captioning phone, and WiFi and CART services?
- Information/orientation that is provided once in a shelter needs to also be in ASL, everyone needs to know the same information (where to get food, where to place your pets, where restroom facilities are, etc.) at the same time. Mexican Sign Language interpreters were also requested.
- Is it possible to have a shelter specifically for Deaf people? The Federal Government says that people with disabilities should not be segregated from the rest of the population. Shelters are to be accessible and provided effective communication. Possibly set up a Deaf communications section of the shelter with interpreters to ensure everyone gets current information.
- Sensitivity training for shelter staff/volunteers is requested.

4. Recovery

- Those in shelters need advocates. How are resources found? How do you connect with the available services?
- Most phone automated systems (insurance, utility payments, etc.) are not useable for people who are Deaf. An advocate can help them make arrangements.
- People in the Deaf community feel they must all stay together in a large group because they do not feel they can do many things on their own without access to effective communication and notification of available services and resources.

IV. Questions/Answers

- Suggestions by attendees: City of San Antonio Offices could have public video phone available for citizens to use.
- Fire and Police should receive more sensitivity training concerning working and interacting with people with disabilities, especially those people who are Deaf.

V. Next Meeting

- The next community meeting will be held on Monday, February 26, 2018, 3:00 PM at the Lion's Field Senior Center, 2809 Broadway.