



City of San Antonio  
Developing an Emergency Plan for People with Disabilities  
Monday, February 26, 2018

The third community meeting was held at the Lion's Field Senior Center, 2809 Broadway.

- I. **Introductions:** Deborah Scharven, Accessibility Compliance Manager facilitated meeting. City staff included Olivia Gaitan, Christine Zuniga and Abraham Robles (available for Spanish translations) from the Disability Access Office and James Mendoza and Samantha Haynes from the Office of Emergency Management. Rachel Cywinski and Anne Larne from the City's Disability Access Advisory Committee were present. ASL Interpreters were provided by Deaf Interpreter Services. There were a total of seventeen (17) 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**
    - 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?
- Citizens should have numerous ways to get notifications, neighbors, weather alerts from the National Weather Service, emails, Alert SA, etc.
- Are there any HIPPA restrictions when it comes to agencies marketing Alert SA to their clients? The program is self-registry.

## 2. Evacuations

- Self-preparedness is very important; individuals should have emergency kits ready 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.
- 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.
- Identifying community and personalized needs; utilizing agencies that have lists of citizens with disabilities to identify areas of needs.
- Complications for wheelchair users, many do not drive, wheelchairs may be heavy and hard to load into vehicles, may experience issues with getting medical equipment out of homes in case of evacuations.
- How do people who are bedridden evacuate? What do they need to have and how will they be taken out of homes?

## 3. Shelters

- Shelters should have refrigeration areas for medicines, pharmacists available to help people obtain needed medication.
- Sensitivity training for shelter staff/volunteers is requested.
- Charging stations for cell phones, extra batteries for hearing aids, shower chairs, accessible beds/cots that are sturdy for wheelchair transfers.
- Adults with serious physical disabilities may require changing tables and a private area to perform such tasks.

- Some may require food for special diets/food allergies.

#### 4. Recovery

- Those in shelters need advocates. How are resources found? How do you connect with the available services?
- Help finding new living arrangements, access to home repair, relocating elderly family members, gaining power of attorney.
- Pet relocation, reuniting with pets.
- Access to counseling, spiritual health after the traumatic experience of the natural disaster/emergency.

#### IV. Questions/Answers

- Alert SA is for all citizens, not just people with disabilities, everyone who self-registers will get notifications concerning life threatening events, not just weather updates.
- How do people who are Blind identify a first responder that may come door-to-door? Police/fire could have some form of ID/Badge that incorporates Braille that says they are a first responder. How do people who are Deaf understand verbal instructions that are given by first responders? Police/Fire could have a pre made video on their phones in ASL that explains any actions that need to be taken.

#### V. Next Meeting

- The next community meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 27, 2018, 1:30 PM at the Westfall Library, 6111 Rosedale Ct.