



City of San Antonio
Developing an Emergency Plan for People with Disabilities
Tuesday, February 27, 2018

The fourth community meeting was held at the Westfall Library, 6111 Rosedale Ct.

- I. Introductions: Deborah Scharven, Accessibility Compliance Manager facilitated meeting. City staff included Olivia Gaitan, 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 present. ASL Interpreters were provided by Vital Signs. There were a total of thirty-one (31) 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.
- Many people don't have access to or do not know how to use social media to get alerts/information.
- Alerts should be in multiple languages, especially Spanish and Tagalog, Hindi and Farsi which are all seeing a rise in San Antonio. ASL also needs to be included.
- Concerning individuals with Intellectual disabilities, short, simple language and graphics are the most helpful and easy to understand.

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.
- Many in this community live on a fixed income and worry that they will not have the funds to get transportation or housing in case of emergencies.
- 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.

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.
- Availability of adult diapers and adult changing stations. Having a private area for adults with these types of needs in a shelter is important.
- Adults with Intellectual disabilities may have behavioral issues, be very loud, wonder into areas that may be a danger to them, etc. Staff/volunteers need to have a basic understanding of these behaviors and know when to intervene.

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.
- Checklists provided to individuals would be very helpful; what steps do you need to take in order to start the recovery process, resources lists of where to find services.

IV. Questions/Answers

- What areas does Alert SA cover? The self –registry program is in the San Antonio Tri-County area which includes Guadalupe, Comal and Bexar.
- Where can more information about the community meetings be found? www.sanantonio.gov/dao/emergencyplan
- How can business/ workplaces develop their own emergency plan? Stract Southwest TX Regional Organization works to help others develop their own emergency/evacuation plans. Contact the agency at info@stract.org.

V. Next Meeting

- The next community meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 28, 2018, 2:00 PM at the Henry Guerra Library, 7978 W Military Dr.