



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

The fourteenth community meeting was held at the Pan American Library, 1122 W. Pyron Ave.

- I. **Introductions:** Deborah Scharven, Accessibility Compliance Manager facilitated meeting. City staff included Olivia Gaitan, Abraham Robles (available for Spanish translations) from the Disability Access Office 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 three (3) 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. The program covers a tri-county area, Bexar, Comal and Guadalupe.

- Questions arose about technology and loss of power- how will you get notifications/alerts/information on smartphones or computers if electricity is out?
- Using simplified language and/or more visual graphics could be helpful for people who are Deaf or have Intellectual Disabilities.
- More education provided to media outlets, have interpreters for all news briefings; make sure they are in frame, slow down scrolling captioning during news alerts.
- Fliers/ information sheets should include phone numbers not only email/website address as many people do not have access to much technology.
- The city should be aware of the 'digital divide'; during an emergency many people may not have the time to check a website for update, they need fast notifications.
- Current COSA website is not very user-friendly, so many departments will share information on social media (Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube) but this may not be accessible to much of the population.
- Engaging the traditionally non-engaged, how should the city better get information to these populations?

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.
- What to do if a child is home alone during an evacuation? How will they be reunified with their parents/family?
- How to build networks with neighbors to help each other during emergencies- can the city assist with bringing people together?
- Subdivisions in many cases only have one route out of neighborhood.

- Many cases of workplaces not having a set emergency evacuation plan, or employees who do not follow the guidelines, can be dangerous to others.

3. Shelters

- Shelters should have refrigeration areas for medicines, pharmacists available to help people obtain needed medication.
- It is important to know the names of the medications you take, have a picture on your phone or keep the prescription information sheet in your emergency kit in case of evacuations/shelter stays.
- Sensitivity training for shelter staff/volunteers is requested.
- Do shelters have Wi-Fi? Shelters will provide Wi-Fi, but in most cases it can take about 24 hours before the systems are set up.
- Charging stations for cell phones, extra batteries for hearing aids, shower chairs, accessible beds/cots that are sturdy for wheelchair transfers.
- Ensure that interpreters will be provided at shelters if requested, or have access to video phone systems for communications.
- Federal guidelines say that shelters are not to be segregated; all shelters are to be accessible.
- Shelters are for immediate help; providing dry clothes, food water, they are not for long term housing (usually not open for more than 30 days) or resources.

4. Recovery

- Those in shelters need advocates. How are resources found? How do you connect with the available services?
- Access to video phones if personal ones have been damaged.
- Access to counseling, spiritual health after the traumatic experience of the natural disaster/emergency.
- Family reunification- how to find family that has been separated?
- Access to important personal documents that may be damaged/lost in an emergency- where can they be obtained?
- City will provide interpreters when individuals are working with city programs, once individuals leave a shelter, the agency/organization that are assisting would provide the interpreter, not the city.

IV. Additional Comments

- Does COSA have a Language Access Plan? How do those who do not read/write/speak English get information? Where are alternative forms of language found?

V. Next Meeting

- The final community meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 29 at the Memorial Library, 3222 Culebra Rd.

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