



City of San Antonio
Developing an Emergency Plan for People with Disabilities
Tuesday, March 6, 2018

The sixth community meeting was held at the Carver Library, 3350 E. Commerce

- 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 from the City's Disability Access Advisory Committee was present. ASL Interpreters were provided by Deaf Interpreter Services. There were a total of ten (10) 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. What ways to market the program? Commercials, door hangtags, more social media?

- 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.
- It was suggested that the City look at different companies such as Sorenson and Purple to send ASL alerts through video phones.
- Those in the Deaf community have historically felt that they are not given the same services as other people with disabilities. These individuals feel they have to provide advocacy for themselves, would like to be more included. Much of this could be addressed with a system of alerts that will provide important information in ASL in real time.
- Is there a way to help people who are Deaf receive video phones? The FCC will only pay for emergency phone calls; they will not pay for video relay systems, leaving individuals cities to pay these costs.
- Individuals present at the meeting expressed that they would like smoke alarms that that use lights and vibrations to help warn them in emergencies.
- Red Cross has a notification application for emergency notifications; text emergency to 90999.

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.
- Because it is not common for first responders to know ASL, they could possibly have a premade video on their smart phone/iPad in ASL that explains they are a first responder, you need to evacuate/shelter in place, 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.

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.
- Shelters need multiple Certified Interpreters if there is a group of people who use ASL; it is too difficult for one interpreter to speak for many people.

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.
- Assistance with automated calls to pay bills, those who are Deaf are not able to use these types of systems.

IV. Questions and Answers/ Additional Information

- The Office of Emergency Management is available to speak to local groups about Alert SA.
- The online Community Survey will be coming soon, find it at www.sanantonio.gov/dao/emergencyplan
- Engaging with people with disabilities; putting them in the role of subject matter expert can help city offices more clearly understand the needs of effective communication.

V. Next Meeting

- The next community meeting will be held on Thursday, March 8, 1:30 PM at the McCreless Library, 1023 Ada.