Kansas Responses

1. What unique tools and resources does your state have to address the emergency management needs of your residents with disabilities? For example, Texas has an Effective Communications Toolkit, Functional Needs Support Services Toolkit and a Disability Taskforce on Emergency Management. We would love to hear from other states on their best practices and tools.

Kansas Department on Emergency Management (KDEM) approaches preparedness for all citizens primarily through social media and print resources and has information available in braille, large print, and Spanish regarding topics including information on general preparedness and information for specific populations. We do not have any specific programs but work to be inclusive in material that we do offer to citizens including large print, braille, etc. materials.

1. Following your state's most recent major disaster what were the after-action report findings and recommendations related to how people with disabilities were impacted or served through local and state emergency management?

KDEM created the after action report (AAR) for the northeastern Kansas flooding. KDEM/State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC)/state agencies were not made aware of any issues regarding individuals with disabilities. The State Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator, Anthony Fadale made KDEM aware of one question regarding whether or not service animals were allowed in shelters. This question was handled locally and did not become an issue. No other questions, issues, or concerns arose.

1. What innovative, effective, and comprehensive strategies does your state employ to help ALL of your residents with disabilities prepare for disasters?

KDEM approaches preparedness for all citizens primarily through social media and print resources and has information available in braille, large print, and Spanish regarding topics including information on general preparedness and information for specific populations. KDEM utilizes general preparedness messaging in addition to creative messaging such as Zombie Preparedness designed to intrigue and educate additional audiences. As with question 1, KDEM works to be inclusive with our general preparedness outreach. If an event is hosted, it is generally an outreach table including items mentioned in the above questions.

1. What does your state do to ensure emergency alerts and notifications reach every one.

Emergency notifications/alerts vary county by county and are a local responsibility. When a ribbon of text is displayed on a television screen, it has also been distributed as an Emergency Alert System (EAS) message. Kansas is a home rule state with local jurisdictions responsible to plan and enact their plans throughout the phases of emergency management. With this being said, during planning discussions counties should discuss and look for solutions to these challenges. KDEM also educates citizens on multiple ways to receive alert and warning messages throughout the year.

1. What state agency rules or regulations does your governor relax or suspend following an emergency declaration that makes it easier for individuals with disabilities to recover from a disaster?

There are some fee suspensions such as vital record replacement fees, that may be waived for all citizens. No other suspensions specifically for individuals with disabilities are known at this time.

1. Does your state maintain a disability emergency assistance registry? If so, what has been your states experience at the state and local level either positive or negative. If the past experience with your state's registry has been poor, what changes have you recommended or implemented?

KDEM does not maintain a registry any longer. A registry was implemented and utilized at one point, however, usage was very low despite extensive promotion, and KDEM was not able to store this type of protected information within any of our websites. Although KDEM does not have a fulltime disability integration specialist position in title, staff within our office provides information on what local emergency management programs need to do to plan for communicating or dealing with people with disabilities before, during, and after an emergency or disaster. This is illustrated across multiple branches in KDEM through the planning standards for emergency operations plans and educational materials available for conducting public outreach. In addition, KDEM consults with Anthony Fadale with questions during all phases of emergency management as needed. Additionally, Anthony has been wonderful to speak at conferences, etc on the topic.

1. Does your state's office of emergency management have a state-level disability integration advisor (that does not work for FEMA)?

No one person is designated as such.