Minnesota Responses

I am finally sending this to you Martha! We do quite a bit in emergency preparedness. Very large presence better Minnesota State fair in the education building and we give out emergency preparedness bags. On the front of the bag they list all the items that you should put in the bag to be prepared in case of an emergency. And of course our famous whistles as well!

Joan Wilshire (MN)

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 tool

Minnesota has an Access & Functional Needs Committee which is comprised of representation from several state agencies that focus on disability and the Homeland Security Emergency Management Division of the Department of Public Safety.  This committee is responsible for the development of the Functional Needs Planning Toolkit for Emergency Planners and for extensive disability awareness training for emergency planners and first responders.

 2.   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?

Minnesota has experienced flooding in varies areas of the state where some individuals with disabilities had to be evacuated with their non-disabled neighbors.  In most instances, adequate notification was provided so that individuals could secure an alternative safe location with family, friends or at an accessible hotel.

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

The Minnesota Council on Disability, along with the DHS Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services Office, State Services for the Blind, the Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities and STAR develops disability training material for individuals with disabilities and provides training on an ongoing basis.  The Minnesota Council on Disability conducts several outreach activities a year and has its greatest success with a booth at the State Fair where thousands of pieces of emergency preparedness material are distributed.

 4. What does your state do to ensure emergency alerts and notifications reach everyone.

 We work closely with the DPS Homeland Security Emergency Management Division and local units of government to make sure that notifications and emergency alerts are reaching the whole community.

 5. 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?

 I am not sure of anything specific to individuals with disabilities.

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?

 No

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

 The state emergency management office had a good disability integration advisor for many years and unfortunately this person retired.  Her current replacement doesn’t have the same level of knowledge or the same focus on our issues.