Emergency Preparation Massachusetts – responses provided by Moss Lynch

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.

Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) offers training to bring together persons with disabilities and their local first responders to discuss local efforts and how to better personally prepare for emergencies. At those meetings we distribute [workbooks](https://www.mass.gov/doc/personal-emergency-preparedness-planning-workbook/download) that can assist people in making a plan, a [resource book](https://www.mass.gov/doc/personal-emergency-preparedness-supplemental-information-packet/download) for people with disabilities, we distribute “[Tips for First Responders on How to Interact with People with Disabilities in Times of Emergency](http://cdd.unm.edu/dhpd/tips/tipsenglish.html)” – (from the University of New Mexico), and we also distribute back packs to persons with disabilities that are full of supplies that someone might need during an emergency, such as water, flashlight, radio, first aid kits, and other items.

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?

The most recent emergency was the gas explosions in Merrimack Valley. MOD was part of the discussion related to the response that Massachusetts Emergency Management Administration (MEMA) and FEMA were implementing. The relocation and temporary housing of persons with access and functional needs, along with all the other residents that were displaced, was a huge topic. MOD is not in possession of any “after action reports” at this time.

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

**See question 1 above. MOD has also assisted MEMA in regionalized shelter reviews, specifically for accessibility.**

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

The messages that are shared are from local municipalities, MEMA and other emergency agencies. Each unique in their messaging. The state alerts are sent in multiple formats ensuring people will be able to get them (text/email/phone calls).

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?

MOD is unaware of these actions. MEMA would be the most appropriate responder to this question.

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?

I believe this is a local effort, not a state level effort. It is on the local community to implement something like this. Any registry must be an opt-in, voluntary system. Some communities have a call list through a COA or other local entity; however, not all communities do this.

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

MEMA has people assigned to the Access and Functional Planning