

Consensus Building Workshop

**2007 DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND
RESPONSE FOR PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES SUMMARY REPORT**

October 2007

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INTRODUCTION

In October 2007, local service providers, consumers, and advocates representing the disability community gathered to review disaster preparedness and recovery activities within Broward County. The goal of this endeavor was to identify strengths, gaps and actions needed to develop a local action plan to enhance the unified response to disasters as they impact persons with disabilities.

During this event attendees received brief presentations on the Emergency Operations Center's role and functions, Emergency Support Function (ESF) 6 - Mass Care, ESF 8 - Health and Medical, ESF 18 - Special Needs, and the Vulnerable Populations Database. Following these presentations, a facilitated discussion was held to identify the strengths, the potential gaps, and the strategies needed to make improvements to the disaster/recovery plans in an effort to achieve the goal.

This summary documents the responses from the attendees of the workshop, identifies the next steps, and provides the list of participants.

The following table represents the results of the facilitation brainstorming activity:

DISCUSSION AREA	PARTICIPANT COMMENTS
What's working?	The Vulnerable Population Database
	The current multi-agency coordination and collaboration (Emergency Management, Health Care, Community Partners, sheltering operations) is a good start
	Delivery of food, water, and case management to those that become homebound post disaster through the "Zones" system
	Assistance for Persons with Disabilities in completing forms
	The transportation coordination with Children's Medical Services
	Support received by The United Way for Training and Disaster Kits, as well as from other local agencies
	Paratransit being dispatched from the EOC as calls come in
	A Special Needs Taskforce forum being held monthly
	Community Associations and municipalities are better prepared for emergency response
	City of Tamarac's outreach efforts to the disabled community
	Florida Association for the Deaf's outreach efforts to the disabled community
	County staff have been introduced at Mass Care and Special Needs Shelters, showing dedication to the community
	Report from the State's Broward Regional Health Planning Council provides valuable information on Persons with Disabilities needs assessment
	Keeping families together in evacuation shelters
Evacuation transportation for Persons with Disabilities is made available to Mass Care and Special Needs Shelters	
Current outreach to hotels and visitors	
Where are the gaps?	Outreach for the Vulnerable Population Database
	Resource information may not be provided at local hospitals upon discharge for patients newly disabled
	Preparation and response for Persons with Spinal Cord Injuries
	Coordination between counties for the Special Needs Shelter registration
	Time frame to registering for Special Needs Shelter
	Effective communications for the blind and deaf population (altering population of emergencies) pre, during, and post events
	Sheltering and support for the cognitive and behavioral impaired populations
	American Sign Language Interpreters are not available in evacuation shelters upon arrival of evacuees

Where are the gaps?	Temporary housing for evacuees post disaster (Recovery Phase)
	For those whose only mode of transportation is an electric wheelchair, a manner in which the wheelchairs can be recharged and/or have manual wheelchairs available or education of keeping a manual on hand for such a situation
	Privacy curtains for those who do not have the ability to use the public restrooms
	Outreach for vulnerable population in evacuation areas
	Resting opportunities for wheelchair bound clients when transfer assistance is not available
	A "Zones" model for sheltering activities
	Public knowledge of the Special Needs Shelter locations
	Service animal policy training to staff working with evacuees
	Radios that are programmable to be County specific and make available to communities / households
	Links on Vulnerable Population Database that provide agency/partner contacts (i.e., FPL)
	Coordination with FEMA to provide services to Persons with Disabilities in a "one stop center modality"
	Utilization of reports to track the numbers registered into Vulnerable Population Database and identify prevalence of disabilities
	Coordination of post disaster activities with municipalities and agencies such as Code Enforcement
	Participation of partnering agencies in provide services to community
	Use of standardized "postcard" system for Vulnerable Population Database Registrants to confirm registry
	Lack of cots, transfer assistance, and lifts available in Mass Care evacuation shelters
Linkage between Special Needs Shelter registry and Vulnerable Population Database	
Disability information onto the Mass Care website (not just the Special Needs website)	
What are needed Community action plan strategies?	Establish year-round disaster preparedness outreach and incorporate disability related information into outreach efforts and trainings
	Encourage agencies, such as FPL, to use a variety of formats to get Vulnerable Population Database information out to populations (Talking book library for vision impaired)
	Identify and share what municipalities will do with data collected from the Vulnerable Population Database
	Prepare informational packet for hospitals to provide to Persons with Disabilities
	Make the Vulnerable Population Database application available statewide

What are needed Community action plan strategies?	Patterning self-sufficient adult community models and bring those models to other communities in need of establishing plans for recovery
	Establish a "Zone" model of sheltering
	Establish evacuation sheltering for specific populations with their families; cognitive, behavioral, Alzheimer's
	Establish a means to educate the public on all shelters, providing an opportunity for the public to see the setting and know what they may need to bring so that they may better prepare for an event
	Educate the public of Special Needs Shelters; what is available and how it is set up
	Develop grievance process for sheltering activities and make this process available to all
	Make sign-language interpreters available at all shelters prior to arrival of evacuees
	Identify the number of TTY phones that are available at each Mass Care evacuation shelter
	Liaison with ESF 19 to standardize hotel process for Persons with Disabilities
	Review Hurricane Plan for the homeless population

Following the facilitated discussion, two main themes were identified within the listed responses. The first main theme was the need for increase in communication and second was the need to increase collaboration between service providers and persons with disabilities. Moving forward, these themes should be reflected in action steps that will assist the group in achieving the goal of establishing a unified response to recovery.

In the follow-up meeting that will be held to review this summary, participants will be requested to partake in the development of the action plan. This meeting is anticipated to take place mid-January 2008. During this meeting, the following actions will be explored:

- Identify all community agencies that provide disaster/recovery services
- Encourage those agencies to include persons with disabilities, in the planning and development phases of their emergency plans
- Establish regularly scheduled meetings, among service providers and community members, to review disaster/recovery plans and provide a forum for receiving feedback
- Encourage persons with disabilities to become actively involved in improving processes and services available during all stages of disaster response within our community.

Appendix: Attendance Record

Representative	Agency
Rochelle Ayala	Memorial Health Care System
Lynette Beal	Center for Independent Living of Broward County
Lavern Campbell-Shaw	Broward County Elderly & Veterans Services Division
Paige Cauthron	American Red Cross Broward Chapter
Patrick Cavanaugh	Broward County Para Transit Services
George Danz	Broward County Medical Examiners and Trauma Services Division
Kim Davis	Memorial Health Care System
Luis Diaz	Children's Medical Services – Department of Health
Karen Dickerhoof	Center for Independent Living of Broward County/ Broward County Disability Advisory Board
Scott DiMarzo	Broward Health
Marc Dubin	Center for Independent Living of Broward County
Elly du Pre'	Lighthouse of Broward
Bill Epps	American Red Cross Broward Chapter
Stephen Ferrante	Broward County Elderly & Veterans Services Division
Laura George	Spinal Cord Resource Network
Eliza Gomez	Broward County Human Services Department
Jerry Graziose	School Board of Broward County
Paul Jaquith	Broward Addiction Rehabilitation Centers
Paulette Kandel	Broward County Emergency Management Agency
Theresa Lowe	Aging and Disability Resource Center
Carlos Pillot	Broward County Office of Equal Opportunity
Julie Price	ARC Broward
Cheryl Rashkin	Broward County Medical Examiners and Trauma Services Division
Michelle Riegler	Broward County Family Success Administration Division
Janet Riley	Legal Aid of Broward
Ivy Romero	Division of Blind Services
Tom Ryan	Broward County Disability Advisory Board and National Federation of the Blind of Greater Broward
Judy Sarver	Broward County Public Communications Department
Jasmin Shirley	Broward Health
Donald Sinclair	Broward County Human Services Department
Diane Smith	Broward Homebound
Marlene Wilson	Broward County Human Services Department