

Maryland Library For The Blind

Presented by:

Ed McDonough
Maryland Emergency Management Agency

Cecilia Warren
Maryland Department of Disabilities

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Maryland Emergency Management Agency

- More than 100 emergency management professionals
- Led by Executive Director Russ Strickland
- On 600-acre Camp Fretterd Military Reservation in Reisterstown
- Facility opened in 1999, partially renovated in 2014, addition planned to start in 2020

Maryland Emergency Management Agency

- Started as Maryland Civil Defense Agency in 1949
- Became Maryland Emergency Management Agency in 1989
- Focus on all natural and man-made hazards
- Primary role is coordination, collaboration resource management in support of local emergency managers



Maryland

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
AGENCY

The Mission of the Maryland Emergency Management Agency is to proactively reduce disaster risks and reliably manage consequences through collaborative work with Maryland's communities and partners.

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- Maryland has made much progress in emergency preparedness, response, and disaster recovery
- Tonight I will share some of the highlights and some of the issues we are continuing to address.

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- Disasters do not impact all communities equally
- Maryland has invested considerable resources in disaster planning for people with disabilities, who have additional risks during a disaster

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- Access to information is crucial
- Assistive technology should be interoperable with critical messages
- Announcements about evacuation shelters should not be in an image only PDF

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- Subscribe to the local jurisdiction alert system for local notifications
- Battery or crank-operated National Weather Service radio is a reliable way to receive rapid notification of impending weather emergencies

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- Key messages also posted on MEMA and local EM social media pages
- MEMA creates social media posts with accessibility in mind
- Images are described, and we are working towards adding captions to our videos

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- People with disabilities need equal access to shelters, not segregated special needs shelters
- Maintains access to family, community, and support network
- State policy is to provide mass care in an integrated setting.

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- State provides mass care services under 1 roof
- Maryland is a leader in the delivery of mass care and shelter services
- Work with partners to provide feeding, health care, pet sheltering, and support of other unmet needs of evacuees

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- In times of catastrophic emergency, 9-1-1 system is often overloaded
- The Geographic Information System (GIS) can't always locate crises quickly and accurately
- Text-to-911 only available in a few jurisdictions

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- 9-1-1 service in Maryland transitioning to Next Generation 9-1-1 or NG911
- Will allow for phone, text, photos, and videos to be sent to Maryland's 24 911 centers.
- Will be transformative for state residents, visitors and emergency response community when fully implemented

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- NG911 systems rely on geospatial data to find callers, more accurate than current system
- Will result in more accurate 911 caller location, with fewer calls misrouted
- NG911 systems will be IP based, so centers will be interconnected, share data and seamlessly transfer calls for service

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- The NG911 Commission recommends call centers to adopt systems allowing 911 technologies to be interoperable with assistive technologies and non-traditional communication devices

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- MEMA, MDOD created toolkits for emergency managers to plan for people with disabilities
- In its third printing, this toolkit has been widely distributed and other states continue to request copies
- The toolkit addresses unmet needs to help people remain as independent as possible

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- People with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by disasters
- Those living independently are often put in nursing homes, institutions post-disaster, as their residence may be no longer habitable
- This is a practice we do not accept

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- We have some initiatives to ensure evacuees with disabilities are properly supported in a mass care environment
- A disaster or evacuation shelter provides life-saving mass care to survivors in their community so they can begin the recovery process

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- Equal access to mass care, disaster assistance, and emergency repatriation services
- Equal access to buildings, programs, and in the way we communicate with survivors
- MEMA, MDOD and partner agencies provide survivor services like shelter, evacuation, mass feeding, public health, emergency care

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- Agencies also provide services for emergency repatriation when needed
- Response and recovery services must be compliant with the Americans With Disabilities Act

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- State-operated mass care shelters are fully accessible
- They are inspected annually to ensure they remain suitable for the whole community
- MDOD and Maryland Human Services (MHS) provide accessibility kits to provide communication access for any survivor

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- 19 Assistive Technology kits are positioned throughout Maryland for rapid deployment
- The kits have equipment such as listening devices, Ubiduos, video magnifiers, noise cancelling headphones, communication boards, charging stations, and other devices

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- MDOD has purchased 2 large portable electronic monitors to provide messages in large print, in any language, and on a loop to help keep shelter occupants informed
- This helps those who are deaf or hard of hearing and those with low vision

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- Survivors may borrow assistive technology when discharged from a shelter with a temporary loan
- This ensures full access to the same assistive technology likely to be used in a shelter and disaster recovery center

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- Maryland has implemented a documentation process for disaster survivors to request reasonable accommodation
- Disaster recovery centers and survivor services must always be accessible
- Ask to speak with the shelter supervisor if you feel your needs are not being met

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- During disasters, MDOD will stand up a constituent services hotline should a survivor need assistance

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- The Maryland State Disabilities Plan is coordinated by MDOD to help ensure consistency in disability policy across State government
- The plan includes goals for emergency preparedness for the disability community and State government in Maryland

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- The plan also covers housing, transportation, employment, health care, accessible technology, education, and family supports for Marylanders with disabilities
- This plan is the roadmap that MDOD uses to help develop positive outcomes for people with disabilities

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- Specific outcomes, strategies, and proposed actions are the underpinnings of the State Disabilities Plan
- This plan leads to meaningful improvements for the disability community as it is driven by consumer input, performance measurement, concrete deliverables and timelines.

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- A proactive response to Maryland residents with disabilities has improved our planning, response, and recovery.
- Emergency management agencies across the state have identified objectives to create inclusivity in emergency planning and operations

Disaster Planning for People with Disabilities

- With subject matter experts, efforts to increase awareness of the importance of inclusive emergency planning, ongoing disability training and participation in exercises, and through emergency operations, Maryland continues to proactively address the needs of people with disabilities

Questions? Comments?

Cecilia Warren

cecilia.warren@Maryland.gov

410.767.7553

Ed McDonough

ed.mcdonough@maryand.gov

410.517.3632