



ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA  
MAYOR

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE NO. 23

Issue Date: May 23, 2012

**To: Heads of All Departments of City Government**

**Subject: Individuals with Disabilities and Access and Functional Needs\***

---

---

### Introduction

According to the United States Census Bureau, 56.4 million Americans or one in every five persons has some form of disability. It is estimated that globally there are 650 million people with disabilities. Recognizing this, the City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Department (EMD), in coordination with the Department on Disability (DOD), has undertaken efforts to better prepare for and respond to the community—individuals, elected officials, City Departments, organizations, and emergency responders—to take appropriate and informed actions to prepare and respond in an emergency, as well as to empower individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs in response and recovery efforts. These efforts are important because history demonstrates that disasters can disproportionately impact individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs.

Disasters frequently create new physical and communication barriers and eliminate and/or lessen services available to everyone. For individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs, this creates the potential that their ability to perform certain functions that were previously possible, and/or their capacity to maintain independence, and/or navigate the available response and recovery systems will be impaired. Information before, during, and after an emergency can make a difference. Ensuring that preparedness and emergency information is accessible and available in multiple formats and provides content that addresses individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs is critical. Further, plans for sheltering, evacuation, transportation, and recovery, among other areas, must carefully integrate disability access and functional needs issues to ensure that they are considered and addressed

\*For the purposes of this document, "Individuals with Disabilities and Access and Functional Needs" will refer to "Children and Adults with Disabilities and Others with Access and Functional Needs."

200 NORTH SPRING STREET • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012

PHONE: (213) 978-0600 • FAX: (213) 978-0750

EMAIL: MAYOR@LACITY.ORG



before a disaster occurs and can be responded to appropriately during and after the event.

Public agencies cannot wait until disaster strikes to start planning and training their staff to address individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs. Planning ahead will foster collaboration among government, non-governmental organizations, and community before, during, and after disasters.

### **Addressing the Whole Community**

The United States Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines the term "Whole Community" as:

As a concept, Whole Community is a means by which residents, emergency management practitioners, organizational and community leaders, and government officials can collectively understand and assess the needs of their respective communities and determine the best ways to organize and strengthen their assets, capacities, and interests. By doing so, a more effective path to societal security and resilience is built. In a sense, Whole Community is a philosophical approach on how to think about conducting emergency management.

There are many different kinds of communities, including communities of place, interest, belief, and circumstance, which can exist both geographically and virtually (e.g., online forums). A Whole Community approach attempts to engage the full capacity of the private and nonprofit sectors, including businesses, faith-based and disability organizations, and the general public, in conjunction with the participation of local, tribal, state, territorial, and Federal governmental partners. This engagement means different things to different groups. In an all-hazards environment, individuals and institutions will make different decisions on how to prepare for and respond to threats and hazards; therefore, a community's level of preparedness will vary. The challenge for those engaged in emergency management is to understand how to work with the diversity of groups and organizations and the policies and practices that emerge from them in an effort to improve the ability of local residents to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from any type of threat or hazard effectively.

The United States Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Response Framework (NRF) defines the term "specials needs populations" as:

Populations whose members may have additional needs before, during, and after an incident in functional areas, including but not limited to: maintaining independence, communication, transportation, supervision, and medical care. Individuals in need of additional response assistance may include those who have disabilities; who live in institutionalized settings; who are elderly; who are

children; who are from diverse cultures; who have limited English proficiency or are non-English speaking; or who are transportation disadvantaged.

The United States Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines the term "Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS)" as:

Services that enable individuals to maintain their independence in a general population shelter, and include:

- Reasonable modification to policies, practices, and procedures
- Durable medical equipment
- Consumable medical supplies
- Personal assistance services
- Other goods and services as needed

Children and adults requiring FNSS may have physical, sensory, mental health, and cognitive and/or intellectual disabilities affecting their ability to function independently without assistance. Others that may benefit from FNSS include women in late stages of pregnancy, elders, and people needing bariatric equipment.

For purposes of this Executive Directive, City Departments are to adopt the above definitions and are to take a "Whole Community" approach to preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies, and for anticipating the emergency management needs of special needs communities and in providing functional needs support services.

Pursuant to this Executive Directive, the following instructions shall be implemented by Department Heads, including all Board and Commission members, General Managers, Directors and Administrators of Departments, Offices, Bureaus and Agencies.

### **Responsibilities of All City Departments**

In accordance with federal law and the parameters set forth by the City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Department, all City Departments at all levels are directed to develop their respective emergency preparedness, response and recovery plans for the Whole Community for individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. The Emergency Management Department and Department on Disability are directed to assist other City Departments, as requested, in implementing the instructions in this Directive by providing expertise, guidance, and technical assistance as needed to accomplish these goals.

All City Departments are directed to focus on the following areas, among others, when updating Emergency Plans and when conducting community outreach.

Communication:

There are many factors that must be considered to ensure effective communication to individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs prior to and during disasters and recovery. The following are areas to be considered in addressing communication access:

1. Early Warning Notification Systems
2. Emergency Alert Systems
3. Evacuations
4. Press Conferences
5. Websites
6. Press Releases

In developing communications systems or procedures for the City, it is essential that individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs are reached within the systems that are developed. Toward that goal, all Departments are to work toward developing and maintaining systems that will ensure effective communication to individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs in an emergency. Such systems can include:

- Obtaining and maintaining telecommunications devices for the deaf (TDD), text telephones (TTY) and/or equivalent software for communication with people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or who have a speech disability.
- Obtaining and maintaining videophone remote interpreting services (VRI).
- Ensuring that web-based activities and training are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") and with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- Ensuring that existing public service announcements, brochures, preparedness booklets are available in alternative formats, and are being made available to as many communities as practical.
- Annual training and education of Public Information Officers to ensure that the information that people with disabilities will need are addressed in all public information documents and comments.
- Conducting outreach to agencies and caregiver organizations:
  - Partnering with these community-based organizations and agencies servicing individuals with disabilities, older adults and individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind and hard of hearing to ensure effective communication.
  - Partnering with medical provider organizations to include emergency preparedness materials in their waiting rooms and mailers.
- Conducting community outreach presentations.
- Developing a resource list of agencies and contacts.
- Developing an outreach protocol to access and functional needs populations.

- Identifying routinely distributed materials regarding emergency management and emergency planning, and make them available in alternative formats.

### Evacuation/Transportation

The need to move people with physical and mobility disabilities in a disaster can be complex. Complications can be caused by a variety of factors including locating people that need to be transported, the medical condition of the individual, vehicle accessibility, pet and service animal needs, forced transport and liability issues. Evacuation planning and ensuring that the response is accessible for individuals with disabilities access and functional needs are inseparable.

In planning for transportation systems or procedures for the City to use in an emergency, it is essential that the needs of individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs are considered. Toward that goal, all Departments are to work toward developing and maintaining transportation systems that will ensure effective movement of individuals with access and functional needs populations. Such systems can include:

- Developing MOUs with transportation providers (private medical transport providers).
- Ensuring that all modes of transportation used in emergencies are properly equipped to address the potential needs of individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs.

### Sheltering

Individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs have the right to access services in general population shelters just as any other individual. Emergency managers and shelter planners have the responsibility to plan accordingly to ensure that sheltering services and facilities are physically and programmatically accessible.

In order to effectively coordinate services for individuals with access and functional needs in general population shelters, a liaison between shelter management and the individuals should be identified and announced. It is imperative that plans integrate the resources necessary to allow for individuals with access and functional needs to maintain their independence and dignity during a time of disaster. The areas that plans need to address are:

1. Facilities
2. Assessments/Services
3. Equipment/Resources

In developing effective sheltering systems, it is essential that individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs are accommodated. Toward that goal, all Departments are to work toward developing and maintaining sheltering systems that will

ensure access and protection of individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs. Such systems can include:

- Surveying primary and alternative emergency shelters to determine ADA accessibility.
- Establishing protocols for coordination with mass care partners.
- Developing MOUs with mass care shelters.

### Training

In order for City Staff to provide the best services available to individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs, Staff must be trained appropriately. Toward that goal, all Departments are to work toward developing and maintaining training programs that will ensure individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs receive appropriate services. Such training programs can include:

- An annual training, education and technical assistance program for all Public Information Officers in the City to ensure that the information that people with disabilities will need is addressed in all public information documents and comments.
- Training City personnel and volunteers in survey and shelter assessments.
- Training all Fire Battalions and Police Divisions on identifying and communicating with, and evacuation and transportation of individuals with disabilities.
- Integrating disabilities and access and functional needs issues into emergency exercises, drills and training, such as:
  - Exercising plans that include components tasking participants, at all levels, with addressing disabilities and access and functional needs issues.
  - Exercising evaluation criteria to address and assess the response to, and the management of, disabilities and access and functional needs specific exercise goals and objectives.
  - Exercising drills that include members of the disabilities and access and functional needs community.

### Planning

In order to ensure the City is capable of providing services for individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs, appropriate planning must take place. Toward that goal, all Departments are to work toward developing and maintaining emergency plans that will ensure individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs receive appropriate services. Departments should consider the following in developing such plans:

- Integrate disability and access and functional needs and older adult elements into all plans.

- Develop MOUs with appropriate providers whose services may be needed in an emergency.
- Establish protocols and training exercises to ensure individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs will be provided all appropriate services in an emergency.
- Ensure that employees with disabilities are addressed in Departmental emergency plans.

### **The Emergency Management Department and Department on Disability**

The Emergency Management Department (EMD) is the lead City agency responsible for directing and supervising the City's emergency management program to include: planning, preparedness, response, and recovery activities to mitigate the impact of natural, manmade and accidental incidents of high consequence. EMD is responsible for providing coordination, compliance, assistance, oversight and implementation of all emergency management activities, including but not limited to emergency plans, exercises, training, community outreach, Emergency Operations Center (EOC) readiness and response, and City recovery operations.

Through contemporary and effective coordination, management, and leadership, EMD will optimize the City's capability to ensure an effective and efficient City response and recovery operation to any natural, manmade, or accidental incident of high consequence.

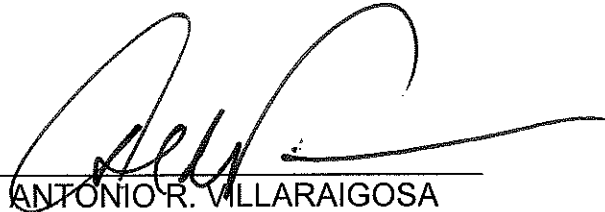
The Department on Disability (DOD) is the lead City agency responsible for proposing, developing, and implementing policies, programs, services, and activities that will improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities; development and implementation of the City's federally mandated ADA Transition Plan, which is designed to guide the City into full ADA Compliance; and providing ADA Compliance training for City Departments and private entities.

The Department on Disability works closely with the City Commission on Disability to respond to the needs and concerns of citizens in the City of Los Angeles. The Commission on Disability advocates for people with disabilities and serves in an advisory capacity to the Department. The Commission holds public hearings on critical issues, identifies priority issues to be addressed, and makes recommendations to the Mayor and City Council to assure that persons with disabilities may participate without any hindrance in the community.

In accordance with Executive Directive No. 15, signed March 17, 2011, all City Departments were directed to prepare, implement, and maintain a departmental emergency plan and be familiar with and have a working knowledge of the City's Emergency Operations Master Plan and Procedures (Master Plan). All departmental emergency plans shall follow a Department Emergency Plan Template as determined by EMD, and shall comply with the City's Guidelines for Department Emergency Plans.

In support of the City Departments and the goals of this Directive, EMD shall update the Department Emergency Plan Template to reflect the Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) guidelines for addressing individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs during a disaster. All City Departments should seek the advice and expertise of EMD and DOD in updating their plans, and complying with the goals of this directive.

Executed this 23 day of May, 2012

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Antonio R. Villaraigosa', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA  
Mayor