



City of San Antonio
Developing an Emergency Plan for People with Disabilities
Saturday, March 10, 2018

The eight community meeting was held at the Phil Hardberger Park Urban Ecology Center, 8400 NW Military HWY.

- I. Introductions: Deborah Scharven, Accessibility Compliance Manager facilitated meeting. City staff included Olivia Gaitan, Christine Zuniga (available for Spanish translations) from the Disability Access Office and James Mendoza from the Office of Emergency Management. ASL Interpreters were provided by Deaf Interpreter Services. There were a total of fifteen (15) citizens who participated in the community meeting.
- II. Presentation: Deborah Scharven explained that the purpose of the community meetings is to obtain community feedback to help develop the City's Emergency Plan for People with Disabilities. A tentative time line for the plan development was provided:
 - Phase 1- Community Engagement: February-April
 - Phase 2- Draft and Community Input: May-Aug.
 - Phase 3- Second Draft and Community Review: September-October
 - Phase 4- Final Draft and Community Review: November
 - Phase 5- Emergency Plan Released: December 15, 2018
- III. Discussion Topics: The attendees were broken up into small groups to discuss each topic then share their findings with the larger group. Issues/concerns/questions and recommendations are listed with the individual topics.
 1. Notifications and Alerts
 - Marketing of Alert SA, attendees either did not know about the program or did not know how to use the technology to follow through on self-registry. The program covers a tri-county area, Bexar, Comal and Guadalupe.

- Questions arose about technology and loss of power- how will you get notifications/alerts/information on smartphones or computers if electricity is out?
- Access to information about what procedures/precautions should be taken during emergencies, how do you shelter in place? Where in the home is most safe, tips for evacuation. Where can this information be found?
- Various language requests- provide alerts in Spanish, ASL, etc. Mexican Sign Language was discussed, but there are virtually no requests for MSL interpreters.
- You can register facilities (such as group homes, health care centers, etc.) on AlertSA; the registration system is not just for individuals.

2. Evacuations

- Self-preparedness is very important; individuals should have emergency kits ready in case of an evacuation. Vital items should be identified including medication, medical supplies (including any needed chargers or batteries) pet supplies, etc.
- Transportation- what do you do if you have no transportation? You should also be aware of multiple routes out of neighborhood in case of evacuation.
- The attendees want a list of pre-determined shelter locations in case of evacuations; shelters locations are not determined before an emergency/natural disaster occurs. Because the location of the emergency is not known until it occurs, shelters are set up in areas far from the emergency zone.
- How to reach people who do not have access to technology? Fliers, mail outs may still be beneficial to some populations.
- How to build networks with neighbors to help each other during emergencies- can the city assist with bringing people together?

3. Shelters

- Shelters should have refrigeration areas for medicines, pharmacists available to help people obtain needed medication.
- It is important to know the names of the medications you take, have a picture on your phone or keep the prescription information sheet in your emergency kit in case of evacuations/shelter stays.
- Sensitivity training for shelter staff/volunteers is requested.

- Do shelters have Wi-Fi? Shelters will provide Wi-Fi, but in most cases it can take about 24 hours before the systems are set up.
- Charging stations for cell phones, extra batteries for hearing aids, shower chairs, accessible beds/cots that are sturdy for wheelchair transfers.
- Federal guidelines say that shelters are not to be segregated; all shelters are to be accessible.
- Shelters are for immediate help; providing dry clothes, food water, they are not for long term housing (usually not open for more than 30 days) or resources.

4. Recovery

- Those in shelters need advocates. How are resources found? How do you connect with the available services?
- Access to counseling, spiritual health after the traumatic experience of the natural disaster/emergency.
- Family reunification- how to find family that has been separated?
- City will provide interpreters when individuals are working with city programs, once individuals leave a shelter, the agency/organization that are assisting would provide the interpreter, not the city.

IV. Next Meeting

- The next community meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 13 at the Tobin Library at Oakwell, 4134 Harry Wurzbach.