



City of San Antonio
Emergency Planning for People with Disabilities
Wednesday, September 26, 2018

The first community meeting was held at the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind (310 Eads).

- I. **Introductions:** Deborah Scharven, Accessibility Compliance Manager facilitated meeting. City staff included Olivia Gaitan and Abraham Robles (available for Spanish translations) from the Disability Access Office (DAO) and James Mendoza and Samantha Haynes from the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). ASL Interpreters were provided by Vital Signs. There were a total of two (2) citizens who participated in the community meeting.
- II. **Presentation:** Deborah Scharven explained the purpose of the community meetings, to brief the attendees of the critical issues found in the first round of meetings and to obtain feedback and solutions about the issues. An update was given on what the DAO and OEM have been working on and plans to complete a 'whole community plan' rather than an emergency plan that focuses primarily on people with disabilities. A tentative timeline 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 21, 2018
- III. **Critical Issues:** The critical issues that were found during the original set of community meetings earlier in the year included:
 - Transportation
 - Effective Communication
 - Education and Preparedness
 - Disability Awareness Training
 - Access to Resources
- IV. **Whole Community Planning:** James Mendoza discussed that after the findings from the first set of community meetings and the survey results, the DAO and OEM found that it would be best beneficial to not create a separate emergency plan for people with disabilities, but a 'Whole Community' Plan, which incorporates the needs of people with disabilities into all aspects of emergency planning. The updated emergency plan is scheduled to be released the end of December.

V. **Group Discussions:** The following are key points of feedback/discussion among the participants and staff.

Transportation

- It is important to build partnerships with local transportation systems- focus on many companies/agencies besides VIA
 - During an emergency the transportation companies could be assigned to different zip codes to assure that people who need assistance will have transportation
- Bridge the gaps between private organizations and the City to create more resources

Education and Preparedness

- Provide information to senior centers/ YMCA/community centers
- The isolated population, those who do not attend centers or community facilities? Send print materials; provide information to home health care workers, Meals on Wheels, etc.
- Educate community advocates: nurses, social workers, counselors, mental health workers, etc.
- Register people with disabilities on AlertSA during intake forms for other organizations.
- Finding and connecting with smaller advocacy groups- example: Rolling Inspirations, Parkinson's Group, etc.
- Educating neighbors, utilizing the Next Door app. To help identify neighbors who may need assistance.
- Door hangers/print material

Access to Resources

- More marketing of 211 United Way/ Alamo Service Connection- what can they offer, how can they connect people with disabilities to resources?
- Connect with Christian Senior Services/ Haven for Hope- how can they provide information to the community?

Engaging the Community

- Few participants in community meetings actually had disabilities (mostly professionals in the field).
- Engage students in the disability services programs at local colleges.

- How can the Disability Access Advisory Committee (DAAC) help to encourage the community to participate?
- Citizens should be in contact with their Council representative, become members of city committees and utilize 311 for information.

VI. City Updates

- The AlertSA emergency notification system is improving the accessibility and usability for all citizens.
- The City of San Antonio now has contracts with two local interpreting companies who provide American Sign Language (ASL) on demand and will provide ASL video notifications.
- OEM staff attended the ‘Get It Right’ conference in Washington DC hosted by FEMA’s Accessibility staff concerning people with disabilities and emergencies.
- DAO has been contacting with other cities to learn about their emergency planning.
- The OEM has created over 10 accessible PSAs (with ASL and captioning) that provide information on personal planning, safety, sheltering, and emergency recovery.

VII. Next Meeting

- The next community meeting will be held on Friday, October 5, at the Willie Cortez Senior Center, 5512 W. Military Dr.