Thinking Outside the Box

Disabled Access and Functional Needs
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- Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning with Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC)
- Subject Matter Expert on Effective Communications as an Access and Functional Need
- Presented on Access to 9–1–1 services, and Communication Access in Emergency Management
- Developed Community Emergency Preparedness Information Network training (AWR–186) with FEMA
- Co–chair of NENA Accessibility Committee Emergency Notification Work Group

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CIEP is a statewide disability advisory group that provides technical advice based on the Three Pillars of Emergency Planning

- Effective Communication Access
- Programmatic Access
- Physical Access

CIEP Mission:

- Inclusive Planning, Response and Recovery

CIEP Vision:

- Partnerships that Work for a More Effective Quality Planning, Response, and Recovery

CIEP Quarterly meetings open to the public.

- Next meeting in Lacey on Dec. 12, 2018.

CIEP members and stakeholders provide insights and recommendations on Access and Functional Needs.
Statistics on Americans with Disabilities

- US Census: 57M people living with a disability in 2010
  https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/miscellaneous/cb12-134.html
- About 20% of Americans, 48 million, report some degree of hearing disability.
  http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/one_in_five_americans_has_hearing_loss
- More than one million Americans are legally blind and 12 million have low vision.
  https://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/toolstemplates/entertainmented/tips/Blindness.html
- About 1 in 68 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
  https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/data.html
- Approximately 61.6 million individuals, foreign and U.S. born, spoke a language other than English at home ... 41% (25.1 million) were considered Limited English Proficient (LEP).
Dr. Robert Haig “Bob” Weitbrecht was a deaf physicist, and also a ham radio operator “W6NRM”. He used Morse Code and radioteletype to communicate with other ham radio operators, and to connect with others during disasters when traditional telecommunication networks were down. One day, at the request of his friends Dr. James L. Marsters and Andrew Saks, he retrofitted his radioteletype modem for use on phone lines, and made possible telephone access for deaf people. Thousands of TTYs installed worldwide today bear testimony to Weitbrecht’s genius and vision.
Vincent Wood, a deaf NOAA National Severe Storms Laboratory research meteorologist, believes deaf and hard-of-hearing people need access to the same critical audio information from NOAA Weather Radio. After the May 3, 1999, Tulsa tornado outbreak, Wood conducted a 9-month survey which revealed **81% of deaf and hard-of-hearing people experienced fear about being unprepared for weather emergencies** and have limited ways of knowing that severe weather is imminent. This led to the OK–WARN system.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The events of September 11, 2001 and its aftermath exposed many glaring weaknesses in the emergency preparedness infrastructure that compromise the safety and security of 28 million Americans who are deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened and deaf-blind. Experiences with emergencies during the past three years continue to reinforce the urgent need for these weaknesses to be addressed.

Top Priority: An Effective Emergency Communication System

America’s current public warning and emergency communication systems get a failing grade from deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened and deaf-blind individuals. There are too few effective options for communication and the options currently available have largely proved unreliable.
Shelters claimed to have basic accessibility and supplies for people with mobility disabilities. **The most underserved group were those who are deaf or heard of hearing.**

- Less than 30% of shelters had access to ASL interpreters
- 80% did not have TTY’s
- 60% did not have TVs with open caption capability.
- Only 56% of shelters had areas where oral announcements were posted so people who are deaf, hard of hearing or out of hearing range could go to a specified area to get or read the content of announcements.

**This meant that the deaf or hard of hearing had no access to the vital flow of information.**
Disability Policy Timeline

- **1990** – ADA passed – Title II requires equal access to all local and state government services and effective communication
- **1998** – Congress amends Section 508 of the Rehab Act of 1973 to require Federal agencies to make their electronic and information technology (EIT) accessible to people with disabilities.
- **2000** – FCC requires all broadcasters to make TV emergency bulletins accessible visually and aurally
- **2004** – Executive Order 13347 … strengthen emergency preparedness with respect to individuals with disabilities… President G. W. Bush 7/22/2004
- **2006** – Executive Order 13407 … include in [IPAWS] the capability to alert and warn all Americans, including those with disabilities and those without an understanding of the English language… President G. W. Bush 6/26/2006
- **2017** – SB–5046 WA Governor requires all state and local emergency agencies to submit plans on how they will inform people who don’t speak English during emergencies – ASL and captioning are included.

Photo: Houston Astrodome after Hurricane Katrina © 2005 FEMA
Ensure that the person with a disability can communicate and exchange information.

Covered entities must provide auxiliary aids and services as needed to communicate effectively.

Consider the nature, complexity, and context as well as the person’s preferences.

The rules also apply to that person’s parent, spouse, or companion in certain circumstances.

This includes providing a qualified interpreter, alternative formats (e.g. captioning, graphics) or assistive listening systems (e.g. loops)

People who benefit from captions:

- In addition to 48M with a hearing disability
- 30M learning English as a second language (LEP)
- 27M learning to read
- 10M improving literacy skills
- 115M TOTAL and more...

Like electronic curb cuts that help viewers who favor reading over listening due to circumstances
  - Auditory Processing Disorder or other conditions
  - Environment – noisy or quiet places, workplaces, etc.

Search engine users can find videos by tracking key words in caption data
Real-Time Text (RTT)

- FCC allows support for TTY or RTT
- RTT roll out in phases over next four years
- RTT works on computers and mobile devices
- RTT allows you to read messages letter by letter in real-time like a TTY
- Both parties can type messages and respond simultaneously without hitting “SEND”
- RTT will be integrated with 9–1–1 and with 7–1–1 (relay services).
- You can mix voice and text on the same call

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnmAblNvr8E
Next Generation 911

- An interim solution, Text-to-911 is being implemented around the country to restore direct access to 9-1-1 services by text.
- NG-911 is an Internet Protocol (IP)-based system that allows digital information (e.g., voice, photos, videos, text messages) to flow seamlessly from the public, through the 911 network, and on to emergency responders before they arrive on the scene.
- A deaf or hard of hearing person will be able to call NG-911 from a computer or mobile device using RTT or video. If a sign language interpreter is needed, the PSAP can summon one from a multi-language service provider.

https://mil.wa.gov/emergency-management-division/e911/texting911
https://www.911.gov/911-issues/standards.html
Which is more accessible?

- Traffic Advisory: Tune 530 AM when flashing
- Winter Weather Alert: Snow/sleet today. Use extreme caution
- Crews working in road
- When flashing, traffic info tune radio to 1630 AM

That's the upgraded version!
What’s wrong with these photos?

Top: WJLA during first nationwide EAS Test on 11/9/11
Bottom: KONG during monthly EAS Test on 6/26/18
Irma’s Tale of Two Interpreters

Two interpreters in separate press conferences during the same hurricane
In order to provide effective communications to people that use ASL, we need to include video clips of emergency information in sign language and captions.

Be sure your interpreters have been vetted/and or credentialed.

https://ein.az.gov/emergency-preparedness-asl-videos
Best Practices

- **Before an emergency**
  - Recruit & engage local subject matter experts with disabilities in CERT training, planning, development, etc.
  - Require or encourage local businesses that have public TV sets to display captioning during business hours.
  - Upgrade alerting technology to take advantage of new and emerging accessibility features.

- **During or after an emergency**
  - Create generic videos with disaster tips to show right away, then show videos that have specific information.
  - Remember to consider readability and comprehension when composing text and graphics.
  - Frame qualified deaf interpreters with officials in the video during televised press conferences.
Show Me... I will remember...

UbiDuo from sComm

Roger Pen/ EasyPen transmitter
Show Me... There's an app...
If there is only one thing you need to remember...

Do not ask “Can you read my lips?”

It is better to ask

“What is the best way for us to communicate?”
Questions?