

Texas Disability Integration Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 1

February 2016

Inside This Issue

1 Upcoming Events

1 - 4 Articles

Upcoming Events

March 10, 2016: FEMA Promising Practice Webinar – Establishing Disability Community Preparedness Through State and Local Efforts;

<http://www.adapacific.org/emergency/webinars.php>

April 5 – 8, 2016: Texas Emergency Management Conference – Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, TX;

www.txdps.state.tx.us/dem/conference/txEmerMgmtConf.htm

About this Newsletter

This newsletter is published by the *Texas Disability Task Force (DTF) on Emergency Management*, an advisory group sponsored by the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM). The newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis and will include information, accomplishments, and initiatives related to emergency management preparedness and response activities at the local, regional, state, and organizational levels that are inclusive of people with disabilities.

If you would like to submit a proposed article, please send an e-mail to denita.powell@dps.texas.gov.

The Texas Association of the Deaf (TAD)

Larry Evans and Steve Baldwin

Representatives for the Texas Association of the Deaf

The Texas Association of the Deaf (TAD) is considered to be one of the oldest minority advocacy groups in Texas. Established in 1886, TAD has been the constant watchdog for deaf and hard of hearing citizens in Texas. Through its affiliation with the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), the premier civil rights non-profit organization (est. 1880), TAD has kept its time-honored mission of prioritizing goals in education, employment, technology and communication accessibility, especially in conjunction with the 1990 American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Many legislative bills benefitting deaf and hard of hearing constituencies over the last 50 years became a reality through the endeavors of TAD officers, members and supporters.

The Texas Disability Task Force on Emergency Management and the Effective Communications subcommittee have implemented several crucial emergency preparedness initiatives since TAD first became one of the 22-plus disability organizations on these committees four years ago. TAD intends to continue ensuring our "signs" are heard loud and clear in a positive and constructive manner. It is our hope that this year we can work towards improved speed and effectiveness in the routing of 9-1-1 calls from mobile phones, utilized by the deaf and hard of hearing, to emergency centers statewide. Thus, continuing our goal of obtaining communication equivalency with our hearing counterparts in Texas.



2015-2017 TAD Board at Avonne Log Cabin in Burnet, Texas for their annual retreat
(Front row, from left to right: Wes Singelton (president), Dr. Patti Singelton (secretary), Dana Stoddard (treasurer), Karl Hummel (vice president), (Back row, from left to right: Tyran Lee (4-year director), Paul Rutowski (2-year director), Jose-Ovi Velasquez (6-year director)

Partnerships with Local Mayor's Committees Can Help Plan for Emergency Needs of the Whole Community

Ron Lucey

Executive Director, Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities (GCPD)

Emergency management professionals know before a disaster strikes it is important to include people with functional and access needs in the development of their local emergency management plans. It can be challenging to identify partners that ensure input from this cross-disability perspective. Fortunately, in many Texas communities there are already local government entities that can immediately connect emergency managers to a network of highly qualified disability organizations, professionals, and individuals with disabilities.

The [Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities](#) (GCPD) supports a statewide network of local mayors and county committees (LCs) that serve in an advisory role to their mayor, city council, city departments, and/or county commissioners. The organizations of these committees vary across the state from non-profit organizations with an informal affiliation to city government to formal city boards and commissions with members appointed by their mayor or city council. Examples of committee members include representatives from independent living centers, parents of children with disabilities, accessible public transportation advocates, accessible technology experts, accessible housing advocates, vocational rehabilitation professionals, veterans with disabilities and members of the deaf and hard of hearing community.

The city's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator usually serves as the liaison between the city and the volunteer committee members. Committee members have decades of personal and professional experience in the disability community and are often linked into larger agencies and networks serving people with disabilities in their community.

Does this sound like the type of experience and resources you could use to consult on your local emergency management plans? Would you like to access such a group to recruit volunteers with disabilities to participate in local emergency exercises? Would you like experts from the deaf and hard of hearing community, or information and communications technology accessibility experts, to consult with you on effective communication strategies for alerts and notifications? Would you like to get this group's input to determine if your shelter plan includes the needs of the whole community? Many committee members may not be experts on emergency management but possess a wealth of expertise in all of the areas that affect including people with functional and access needs in emergency planning.

The first local mayor's committee in Texas was reportedly formed by Andy Anderson, a reporter for the Houston Press in response to a presidential committee request asking states to establish Governor's Committees focusing on the employment of people with disabilities.

Anderson, along with Houston business leaders, formed an informal network for veterans with disabilities, eventually becoming the Harris County Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, now called the Houston Mayor's Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities. LCs throughout the State of Texas conduct a wide range of community activities reflecting the needs of the community, including housing, transportation, employment, education and access. They also bring a wide range of entities together including individuals, local public agencies and officials, non-profit organizations, and private businesses. You can access a list of local mayor's committees and county committees on the GCPD website at <http://gov.texas.gov/disabilities/committees/committees>. For more information or to contact the GCPD call 512-463-4739 or email gcpd@gov.texas.gov.

[The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Disability](#)

Dr. Laura Stough

Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at Texas A & M University, Director of Project REDD

Donghyun Kang

Graduate Research Assistant at Project REDD

In March 2015, the third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) was held in Sendai City, Japan, just four years after the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011. This was the third conference in which countries from across the globe have come together to examine international solutions for preventing and responding to disasters. As an outcome of the World Conference, UN Member States adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR). The Sendai Framework is a successor framework to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), which was written in 2005. The most significant alteration found in the Sendai Framework is its strong emphasis on disaster risk management as opposed to disaster management. The SFDRR will be used as a guide for 2015-2030 to enhance international efforts in disaster risk management. 187 nations were officially represented and over 6,500 delegates attended intergovernmental and multi-

stakeholder events. From the United States, FEMA delegates included members of The Office of Disability Integration and Coordination (ODIC) as well as Marcie Roth, the Director of ODIC.

Four Priorities are part of the Sendai Framework; 1) understanding disaster risk, 2) strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk, 3) investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience, 4) enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. The Sendai Framework marks the first time an international framework on disaster risk reduction has mentioned the needs of people with disabilities. Disability-related terms such as inclusion and accessibility are clearly reflected throughout the document and people with disabilities are described as active participants in disaster prevention. References to persons with disabilities in the context of design and implementation of policies, plans, and standards are a significant recognition. The experiences and knowledge of people with disabilities are considered valuable by the international community and are viewed as important participant in seeking effective methods for disaster risk reduction. In addition, people with disabilities and their organizations were acknowledged as legitimate stakeholders with respect to disaster planning and mitigation for the first time.

More than 200 persons with disabilities participated in the conference proceedings as either delegates or speakers. Thirty four of the conference events directly addressed issues of disability. In addition, the World Conference itself was accessible to people with disabilities: Sign language interpretation, a machine that displayed documents in Braille, transportation accommodating wheel chairs were provided on demand for various sessions. These changes drew our attention as the previous two World Conferences and Frameworks did not include people with disabilities.

For more information and reading refer to:
Stough, L. M., & Kang, D. (2015). The Sendai framework for disaster risk reduction and persons with disabilities. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Science*, 6(2), 140-149. doi: 10.1007/s13753-015-0051-8

- This article is available in Project REDD (Research and Evaluation on Disability and Disaster) website under the Research tab.
<http://redd.tamu.edu/research/research-produced-through-project-redd>

About the authors:

Dr. Laura Stough is an Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at Texas A&M University and Director of Project REDD. She serves as the Assistant Director at the Center on Disability and Development and is a Faculty Fellow at the Natural Hazards Reduction and Recovery Center at Texas A&M University. Donghyun Kang is a Graduate Research Assistant at Project REDD and a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Psychology.

[Texas Disability Task Force Presents as Part of the Ongoing FEMA Promising Practice Webinar Series: Establishing Disability Community Preparedness through State and Local Efforts](#)

On March 10, 2016, members of the Texas Disability Task Force will present on the development of a statewide task force on emergency management, disability, and functional needs support services (FNSS) issues, including an FNSS toolkit. This presentation will provide a model for including individuals with disabilities and their organizations in advising and shaping emergency management practices and policy at the state level. Representatives and subcommittee chairs will describe how the group serves people with disabilities and major initiatives it has undertaken, as well as continuity of such a state level task force.

**Texas Disability Task Force on
Emergency Management
Membership**

Russell Cook, Chair
Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services

Danielle Hesse, Vice Chair
Texas Department of State Health Services

Subcommittee Chairs

Disability Outreach and Effective Communications

Keri Cain – keri.cain@dshs.state.tx.us

Planning

Dan Price – dan.price@dps.texas.gov

Training

Danielle Hesse – danielle.hesse@dshs.state.tx.us

Texas Centers for Independent Living
Texas Mayor’s Committees for People with Disabilities
Texas Governor’s Committee on People with Disabilities
Texas Association of the Deaf
Texas Council on Developmental Disabilities
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
Texas Council of Community Centers
Texas Council on Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorders
Texas Chapter for the American Foundation for the Blind
American Council of the Blind
National Federation of the Blind of Texas
Texas Paralyzed Veterans of America
Texas Deaf Blind Multi-Handicapped Association
Texas Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America
Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services
Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services
Texas Department of State Health Services
Texas Department of Public Safety Division of Emergency Management
Dr. Lex Frieden, Texas Health Science Center at Houston
Texas Association of Regional Council
FEMA Disability Integration Coordinator Region VI
City of Corpus Christi Office of Emergency Management
City of San Antonio Office of Emergency Management
City of Austin Health Department