

# Texas Disability Integration Newsletter

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## Upcoming Events

### 2015 Aging in Texas Conference

July 29–31, 2015 – DoubleTree by Hilton, Austin

► <http://www.dads.state.tx.us/tcoa/index.html>

### Getting it Right Workshop

August 27 – 28, 2015 – Houston – Registration Opens Soon

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## The Disability Task Force on Emergency Management Seeks New Members

The Disability Task Force on Emergency Management (task force) is continually seeking new members of our group to add expertise and new ideas to our membership. We are interested in organizations who assist individuals with disabilities or in local government representatives who have duties related to people with disabilities. If you are interested in participating in the task force or one of our subcommittees, please contact Russell Cook at [russell.cook@dads.state.tx.us](mailto:russell.cook@dads.state.tx.us) or Dede Powell at [denita.powell@dps.texas.gov](mailto:denita.powell@dps.texas.gov).

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## About this Newsletter

This newsletter is published by the Texas Disability Task Force on Emergency Management (task force), 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](mailto:denita.powell@dps.texas.gov).*

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## Effective Communications Toolkit

**Will O'Neill**

Texas Disability Task Force on Emergency Management Member

The Effective Communications Subcommittee recognized early in their development that there was a need to develop a tool kit that would assist with the development of a sound communications program.

In order to meet American with Disabilities Act requirements and to support the whole community, including people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, all emergency management materials must be developed in accessible formats and integrate the needs of people with disabilities. In addition, state agencies and local jurisdictions must support auxiliary aids and services to provide effective communication to persons with disabilities. The Effective Communications Toolkit is a document that provides a general baseline for Texas state agencies and local governments.

This toolkit applies to emergency management and public information professionals who work for or with local jurisdictions to communicate warnings, notifications, and other messages to news media and the public. The purpose of the toolkit is to help ensure that emergency communications services and equipment address the functional and access needs of people with disabilities as part of a “whole community” approach endorsed by federal, state and local emergency management partners.

The toolkit was developed with the input of Texas state agencies, local jurisdictions and representatives from the disability community to identify inclusive and integrative techniques for communication. The toolkit provides guidance on how to support the development of accessible documents videos and websites; emphasizes multi-media approaches to message dissemination and one on one communication

considerations. The tools in this document are a starting point for developing local effective communication techniques and processes. As with any planning and preparedness efforts we encourage all users of this toolkit to approach their own community to ensure that the unique needs of their citizens' communications needs are supported.

The Effective Communications Toolkit can be found at:

- ▶ [www.preparingtexas.org/preparedness.aspx?page=df9e78fc-3f14-4c6c-aad8-7a2b90c425ef](http://www.preparingtexas.org/preparedness.aspx?page=df9e78fc-3f14-4c6c-aad8-7a2b90c425ef)

## [Outreach and Effective Communications Subcommittee Update](#)

### **Russell Cook**

Texas Disability Task Force on Emergency Management Interim Chair and Sub-Committee Chair

The Outreach and Effective Communications Subcommittee (OEC) is tasked by the Texas Disability Taskforce with implementing a Whole Community approach to emergency management outreach and effective communication efforts. These efforts include developing tools and resources to assist the Disability Task Force in effectively reaching persons with disabilities and/or access and functional needs.

### **Organizational Outreach for Persons with Disabilities and/or Access and Functional Needs**

During numerous discussions, the Outreach and Effective Communications Subcommittee members routinely found themselves asking:

- Where would someone look to find durable medical equipment (DME) during an emergency?
- Where would someone look to find assistive equipment?
- Where could someone go if they had DME or assistive equipment they make available during an emergency?

What we found is most go on a hunt and peck mission visiting multiple sites, calling multiple entities, or at a minimum calling 211 or 911. Some never make it to a resource provider and some resource providers never fully engage with the individuals in need. Most make it to national organizations like the American Red Cross or The Salvation Army but find out little about resources that exist right in their community.

The Outreach and Effective Communication Subcommittee has taken on a major endeavor to close this gap. The subcommittee will focus on identifying one website to be a central repository for all resource providers for large and small, private and public and national organizations as well as local mom and pop suppliers. The primary objective will be to create an internet resource that will connect persons with disabilities with organizations that serve people with disabilities. This initiative is being led by subcommittee member Dr. Laura Stough and a site has already been identified. Dr. Stough is in the process of forming a subgroup to test and configure the site.

If you are interested in being a part of this endeavor or joining the OEC subcommittee, please contact Russell D. Cook at

[Russell.Cook@dads.state.tx.us](mailto:Russell.Cook@dads.state.tx.us) or 512-438-2432

## [Overview of the Whole Community Approach, Disability Rights, and FNSS Integration in Emergency Management Training Package](#)

The Texas Disability Task Force on Emergency Management (task force) Training Subcommittee has developed a training package to assist newly elected public officials, Texas government employees, and contractors or the general public in understanding the whole community approach in emergency management. This 15 minute overview will:

- Provide awareness of the necessary requirements for incorporating the whole community approach in emergency management.
- Review considerations for achieving lawful and equitable program for the delivery of Functional Needs and Support Services (FNSS) for children and adults.
- Provide additional informational resources regarding the integration of the whole community in emergency management.

The training package, which includes an Instructors Guide and a slide presentation, can be found at:

- ▶ <https://www.preparingtexas.org/preparedness.aspx?page=32137bc8-eed7-42bb-ad7e-2765fd8abdb9>

Please feel free to download this training information and add it to your local or organization training plans.

## **Disability and Public Shelters in Emergencies Research Article**

**Twigg, J., Kett, M., Bottomley, H., Tan, L., & Nasreddin, H. (2011)**

Disability and public shelter in emergencies. *Environmental Hazards-Human And Policy Dimensions*, 10(3-4), 248-261.

### **About the researchers**

The first author of this journal article, John Twigg, is a Senior Research Associate in the Department of Civil, Environmental and Geomatic Engineering at University College London. He published this article with other researchers at The Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre, which is an academic research centre also based at University College London. The Centre is dedicated to generating research that helps to improve the lives of people with disabilities, and those of their families and their communities, around the world.

### **Why this research was conducted**

The authors of this article maintain that the issue of public emergency shelters is neglected within the literature on disability and disasters. The discussion of emergency shelters historically has been made from the standpoint of medical and charity models of disability. However, there is a need for adoption of a social model which is based on human rights. Social models argue that the inequalities faced by people with disabilities can be overcome if society becomes less discriminatory and more inclusive. Thus, in this journal article, the authors put an emphasis on practical solutions to the problem of sheltering from the perspective of social model of disability.

**A copy of this article can be found on the Project REDD website at [redd.tamu.edu](http://redd.tamu.edu)**

### **Summary:**

This research article reviewed current practices regarding people with disabilities in public emergency shelter management. It concluded that sheltering generally fails to meet the needs of people with disabilities. The primary problems stem from management and staff failings as well as from underlying weaknesses in disaster management structures as a whole. Several systemic problems included outdated attitudes towards disability, the invisibility of people with disabilities to emergency officials

and relief workers, and misguided assumptions about the capacities of people with disabilities and disability-related organizations to manage and respond to disasters. Below we summarize several of the paper's suggestions about how these challenges might be overcome.

### **Operational Practice Suggestions:**

- (1) Guidance on public emergency shelter design should mention various forms of provision for people with disabilities within shelters.
- (2) Partnership with local hospitals and medical supply companies is needed to ensure that special needs are fully stocked prior to disasters.
- (3) Better registry systems tailored to the special needs of people with disabilities are needed.
- (4) Geographical information systems technology, detailed surveys, and mapping that helps identify where people with disabilities may be living in hazard-prone locations.

### **Institutional and Systemic Suggestions:**

- (1) Sensitize emergency management organizations and their staff through training and guidelines (i.e. pre-requisite for career progression in emergency management).
- (2) Require providers of public goods and services to ensure that these goods and services are accessible to people with disabilities.
- (3) Disability standards in emergencies ought not to be separated from the application of disability standards in society at large (i.e. design and daily use of public or private buildings should already have inclusive access and signage).
- (4) Provide for participation of people with disabilities in emergency planning: Individuals with disabilities have the right to be active stakeholders in emergency planning and action, including how their needs might be met in public shelters.
- (5) Creating networks and partnerships with disability organizations should occur in advance of emergency events.
- (6) Needs assessments should be conducted with people with disabilities and their organizations (i.e. going into shelters to assess unidentified or unmet needs).

(7) Disability organizations should be invited to participate and provide leadership in emergency planning.

*Article summary provided by Donghyun Kang and Laura M. Stough, PhD at the Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University.*

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### **Disability Task Force on Emergency Management to Elect New Chair**

Katie Sanches from the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities, who has chaired the task force for approximately 2 years, has accepted a new position and has resigned as our chair. Katie has led the group to make great strides during her tenure and we wish her luck with her new position.

The Task Force will elect a new chair at our next scheduled meeting.

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### **Disability Task Force on Emergency Management Members Brief Firefighters on Disability Awareness**

Dr. Laura Stough (Texas A&M University), Danielle Hesse (Texas Department of State Health Services) and Katie Sanches (Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities) gave a presentation about disability awareness and etiquette at the State Fire Marshalls' and Firefighters Association Conference in Galveston on June 15<sup>th</sup>. The presentation covered topics such as disability etiquette and interaction skills, tips to communicate effectively and interact in a respectful manner with people with disabilities, information on how the Americans with Disabilities Act applies to public safety situations, and behaviors and signs that indicate a person may have a disability or need an accommodation. The presentation was well received with lively discussion regarding rescuing service animals, people first language, and how to evacuate people who use wheelchairs. The Training Subcommittee is exploring ways to continue to provide disability awareness and etiquette presentations to first responders across Texas.

For more information contact Danielle Hesse at [danielle.hesse@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:danielle.hesse@dshs.state.tx.us).

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

Russell Cook, Interim Chair  
Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services

Vacant, Vice Chair

### **Subcommittee Chairs**

#### **Disability Outreach and Effective Communications**

Russell Cook – [russell.cook@dads.state.tx.us](mailto:russell.cook@dads.state.tx.us)

#### **Planning**

Dan Price – [dan.price@dps.texas.gov](mailto:dan.price@dps.texas.gov)

#### **Training**

Danielle Hesse – [danielle.hesse@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:danielle.hesse@dshs.state.tx.us)

#### **FNSS**

Denita Powell – [denita.powell@dps.texas.gov](mailto:denita.powell@dps.texas.gov)

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