Regional Catastrophic Planning Grant Program

Functional Needs Integration



Aaron Belisle leads regional engagement with diasability advocates

RCPT MISSION

The Regional Catastrophic Planning Team is focused on building plans for catastrophic events. Catastrophes are different: they are large, complicated emergencies that last long periods of times and involve many different jurisdictions cross state and county lines.
The mission is to:

- Build plans that will work for all jurisdictions and people across the region
- Manage information and resources
- Identify and solve problems

CHALLENGES

In order to do this effectively, we must change the way we plan for and think about emergencies, and involve a diverse group of partners that can share their knowledge and experience within the region. This is essential, because the NY-NJ-CT-PA RCPT project area represents 30 counties and 22 million people, including:

- 2,199,000 people with disabilities in the community
- 2,900,000 older adults/seniors
- 2,442,000 families with children under 18
- 3,296,000 people with limited English proficiency

EFFORTS

We have indentified and included representative agencies, organizations and advocacy groups that work in partnership with our planners to create plans and tools that reflect the communities that we live in and anticipate the supports that people need in emergencies.

We continuously work to expand our planning partner membership to include interested organizations that can dedicate their time and efforts to helping improve this project, fill gaps and represent their community.

WE WANT YOUR HELP!

If your organization can aid our efforts and is not yet volunteering for a regional project, please consider joining our team by contacting:

Aaron Belisle - RCPT Functional Needs Coordinator
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Robert Van Pelt - RCPT Sheltering Plan Lead
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OUR TEAM MEMBERS

- Represent organizations with experience in emergency planning
- Share best practices learned from real-life
- Inform plans with subject matter expertise
- Guide implementation of plans locally
- Help shape plans and policies that affect their agency's mission
- Build operational plans that will influence emergency response nationwide

HOW WE ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY:

- Work with the NJ Association for Homes and Services for the Aging to identify and address the particular housing needs of the aging population
- Convene regular Special Needs Advisory Group meetings with disability advocacy groups and service providers, engaging them in our plans and incorporating their feedback
- Use NYC's Advance Warning System, a communication network of over 900 special needs service providers, to share information about RCPT planning efforts
- Engage businesses working with the functional needs community to identify, plan for, and fill gaps
- Collect accessibility standards of the region's Incident Management Systems for the Virtual Regional Operations Center project

HOW OUR EFFORTS HAVE BENEFITTED:

- Developed Interagency Task Forces for Functional Needs and Children's Needs for the Sheltering Plan incorporating FEMA's Functional Needs guidance & input from the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, Southern Baptist Relief Services, the NYC Administration for Children & Families, Save the Children & Children Disaster Services
- Designed deployable interim housing units to meet strict code standards of accessibly with NYC Department of Buildings & Department of Design and Construction
- Developed the Evacuation Plan with protocols to identify accessible transportation capacity and demand in coordination with ARC
- Incorporated alternate distribution models into the Commodity Point of Distribution Plan for those unable to visit PODs, coordinating with Catholic Charities, NJ Food Bank and USACE
- Created a service model within the Mass Fatality Plan to address functional, cultural, and religious needs with the NJ Department of Human Services
- Developed guidance for multilingual translation and dissemination of public information for the Debris Plan