

Emergency Planning for Special Populations



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Today's Objectives:

- Gain an understanding of the phrase “Special Populations” and what that means to emergency planners and responders
- Identify specific issues that may impact those special populations in disasters
- Learn about concerns/issues special populations must consider in planning
- Become aware of the benefits of utilizing individuals with disabilities as volunteers

Understanding Barriers and Vulnerabilities

Special populations tend to be especially vulnerable in emergency situations, when existing barriers can have an even greater impact on their ability to participate and respond.

Defining Special Populations

- The phrase “special needs population” is widely used within disaster services and the emergency management field.
- It generally includes an extremely broad group of people:
 - People with disabilities,
 - People with mental illness,
 - Non-English speaking residents,
 - Families with infants
 - People who are elderly
 - Pet owners
 - Prisoners
 - People who are homeless
 - Women who are pregnant
 - People with addictions

Defining Special Populations

What that basically means is that any individual, group or community that has a characteristic that might create a barrier to understanding or acting as you would expect or request could be considered a special needs population.

Special Populations Are Made Up Of....

- Anyone and everyone.
- They are friends, classmates, co-workers, supervisors, employees, and family members.
- Those in this group attend churches and schools, work in businesses, shop in malls, play sports, vote, take vacations, etc.
- Are found in all levels of society – no group is exempt.

Why So Important to West Virginia?

- The U.S. Census 2010 determined that approximately 50 million people in the United States have a disability (almost 20% of the population).
- It is the only minority group that anyone might become part of at any time.
- Some people become part of the group at birth, others in a split second of an accident, others by illness and the aging process.

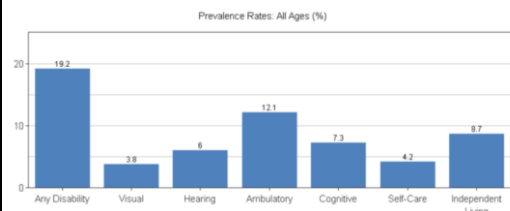
Why So Important to West Virginia?

- West Virginia has the highest per capita rate of disabilities in the United States.
- More than 1 out of every 4 WV'ians have a disability.
 - That's enough people to fill Mountaineer field 9 times!
 - That's 7 times the population of Charleston.


FACT: Non-Institutionalized

Disability Type	Percent	Number	Sample Size
Any Disability	19.2	344,600	17,779
Visual	3.8	68,100	17,779
Hearing	6.0	107,400	17,779
Ambulatory	12.1	204,600	16,885
Cognitive	7.3	122,800	16,885
Self-Care	4.2	71,700	16,885
Independent Living	8.7	128,400	15,035

Prevalence of disability among non-institutionalized people of all ages in West Virginia in 2008*



What is the most common image that comes to your mind when you hear disability or special population?

The background of the second slide features a collage of images. At the top, there is a blue rectangular area. Below it, a person's legs are visible, wearing light-colored pants and dark shoes. At the bottom, a blue wheelchair is shown from a side profile, with a person's legs visible inside. The text is overlaid on a yellow rectangular area in the center.

While it is extremely important to think of physical disabilities and those who use wheelchairs or scooters, a much broader range of impairments must be considered to ensure true inclusion in the community and successful planning and response in all phases of emergency management.

Greater Impact

People with special needs are impacted greater:

- Disrupted continuum of care
- Delay in equipment supply, delivery, repair
- New geography/transportation issues
- Effective communication issues
- Identification of post-disaster needs impacting their special needs

Defining Special Populations

While people with disabilities will compose a major segment of any special needs population, the lists of types of people that make up this category is very long.

Therefore, it may be easier to address issues in your business or agency that consider the functional limitations people may possess.

Functional Limitations

- Communication
- Medical Needs
- Support Needs
- Transportation/Mobility

Communication Needs

- Very large and diverse population who may not be able to:
 - hear verbal announcements,
 - see directional signage to assistance services,
 - or understand how to get food, water and other assistance
- May be because they have a cognitive, intellectual, or other disability
- May not be because of a disability at all, but because they have limited or no ability to speak, read or understand English

Communication Needs

- For special populations, all forms of communication can be complicated or difficult, including written or spoken information, guidance, or directives.
- People who communicate with special populations should, in general, be careful so as not to cause confusion or evoke anxiety.

FACT:

United States:

- 28 million Americans have hearing loss;
- 500,000 are completely deaf

(National Assoc. of the Deaf)

West Virginia:

- 106,508 (7.69%) have hearing loss;
- 8983 (0.50%) are completely deaf

(US Census Bureau)

FACT:

- More than eight million Americans have limited vision; 130,000 are totally blind (American Foundation for the Blind).

- West Virginia - 2008 Prevalence Rates of Visual Loss

Total	<u>68,074</u>	
Gender	Male: <u>31,499</u>	Female: <u>36,575</u>
Age	Under 5: <u>886</u>	5-17: <u>2,104</u>
	18-64: <u>37,391</u>	65-74: <u>9,200</u>
	<u>75 and older: 18,493</u>	

Data source: 2008 American Community Survey.
www.census.gov/acs/www/SBasics/SQuest/QbyQfact/disability.pdf

FACT:

- More than seven million people have and intellectual disability (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).
- One out of every 10 families in WV has a member with an intellectual or cognitive disability.
- Approximately 39,250 people in WV have a developmental disability

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Functional Limitations

- Communication
- Medical Needs
- Support Needs
- Transportation/Mobility

Medical Needs

- What about those who have needs that fall into a medical category?
 - chronic, terminal or contagious health conditions that require observation, and ongoing treatment;
 - Diabetes?Asthma?
 - Dialysis?
 - Severe Food Allergies/Celiac Disease/etc.?
 - Oxygen?
 - Those requiring power-dependent equipment to sustain life?
- Security Issues?

Functional Limitations

- Communication
- Medical Needs
- Support Needs
- Transportation/Mobility

Support Needs

- *People who depend on community support services or others to function or perform daily activities:*
 - Assistance with bathing, feeding, going to the toilet, dressing, and grooming;
 - conditions such as dementia, Alzheimer's and psychiatric conditions such as depression, schizophrenia, and intense anxiety;
 - babies and or unaccompanied children

FACT:

- Nearly four million people require the assistance of another person for daily life activities such as getting dressed, eating and bathing (Source: U.S. Census)
- Approximately 79,000 people, or 4.7% of WV's population, experience difficulties with activities of daily living, to include bathing, dressing, or moving around inside of their homes.

Support Needs

- *People with limited resources or support*
 - People lacking money, education, jobs, or other resources have fewer coping mechanisms with which to prepare for and recover from disasters.
 - People who lack resources, knowledge, or ability to access traditional systems may not have adequate support systems pre- or post-disaster.

FACT:

Prevalence of Poverty

People without disabilities

WV 910,996 115,789 12.7

People with disabilities

WV 248,754 76,026 30.6

U.S. 169,147,820 16,957,094 10.0

Kaiser Family Foundation Study

Interviewed evacuees from New Orleans evacuated to the Astrodome and other large facilities in Houston

“Which of these was the biggest reason you did not leave?”

- 37%: “I just didn’t want to leave.”
- 22%: “I was physically unable to leave.”
- 23%: “I had to care for someone who was unable to leave.”

FACT:

Special Education (2008 American Community Survey)

	Estimated Pop 6-18 yrs	Special Ed Recipients	% of Population	Rank
US:	49,057,975	5,575,244	11.36	

Functional Limitations

- Communication
- Medical Needs
- Support Needs
- Transportation/Mobility

Transportation/Mobility

- Some mobility challenges are obvious, such as those who use wheelchairs or canes.
- Other challenges are not as obvious, such as those with artificial limbs, knee or hip replacement, spinal conditions, or severe arthritis.
- Distances, stairs, slick floors surfaces may constitute barriers.



FACT:

- There are 1.5 million wheelchair users.
 - Two top health conditions leading to use of wheelchair:
 - Cerebrovascular disease (likely to be reported as "stroke")
 - Osteoarthritis
 - Although above conditions are commonly associated with aging, other highly prevalent conditions are not:
 - multiple sclerosis, absence or loss of lower extremity, paraplegia, and orthopedic impairments of lower extremity
 - An additional four million people require mobility aids such as canes and walkers (U.S. Census).

Transportation/Mobility

- The barriers to getting to a particular site, for some special populations, are significant.
- Many individuals will be overwhelmed with the anxiety of the situation, will not travel alone, or might need assistance.
- Some may not have money for public transportation or the transportation may not be accessible for their disabilities.

FACT:

Many individuals have more than one functional limitation.

Defining Special Populations

While you don't have to know everything there is to know about every special needs category, it is very important to consider what impacts they may or may not have on your business or organization.

Western Migration or Urban to Rural Migration

**Do You Know What It Is?
Why Should It Important To You?**

Western Migration

Keeping in mind that the estimation will be 1.3 million people pass through WV and up to 700,000 will stay at least one night, consider this:

What That Means to You?

- If 20% of the entire population has a disability:
 - 260,000 will pass through – 140,000 staying at least overnight
- If 60% of the population owns a pet:
 - 780,000 pets passing through – 420,000 staying
- What is going to happen when individuals with addictions don't have their support systems close by?
Does your business have access to security services?
- 4.2% of the population are birth to 2 years old:
 - 54,600 infants/toddlers will pass through – 29,400 will stay

What That Means to You?

- Do you have resources to use in your business or agency if a customer does not speak English?

Subject	District of Columbia		Maryland		West Virginia	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME						
Population 5 years and over	539,658	100.0	4,945,043	100.0	1,706,931	100.0
English only	449,241	83.2	4,322,329	87.4	1,661,036	97.3
Language other than English	90,417	16.8	622,714	12.6	45,895	2.7

What Do I Need To Know?

Are You Ready?

Seniors

- Always ask the person how you can best assist them.
- Some elderly persons may respond more slowly to a crisis and may not fully understand the extent of the emergency.
- Repeat questions and answers if necessary. Be patient! Taking time to listen carefully or to explain again may take less time than dealing with a confused person who may be less willing to cooperate.

Seniors

- Older people may fear being removed from their homes be sympathetic and understanding and explain that this is temporary.
- Reassure the person that they will receive medical assistance without fear of being placed in a nursing home

Seniors

- If the person has dementia, turn off emergency lights and sirens if possible.
- Identify yourself and explain why you are there. Speak slowly, using short words in a calming voice.
- Ask yes or no questions: repeat them if necessary.
- Maintain eye contact.

People with Service Animals

- Traditionally, the term “service animal” referred to seeing-eye dogs. However, today there are many other types of service animals.
- Remember – a service animal is not a pet. Do not touch or give the animal food or treats without the permission of the owner.
- When a dog is wearing its harness, it is on duty. In the event you are asked to take the dog while assisting the individual, hold the leash and not the harness.

People with Service Animals

- Service animals are not registered and there is no proof that the animal is a service animal.
- If the person tells you it is a service animal, treat it as such. However, if the animal is out of control or presents a threat to the individual or others, remove it from the site.
- A person is not required to give you proof of a disability that requires a service animal. You must accept that he/she has a disability.
- A service animal must be in a harness or on a leash, but need not be muzzled.

People with Autism

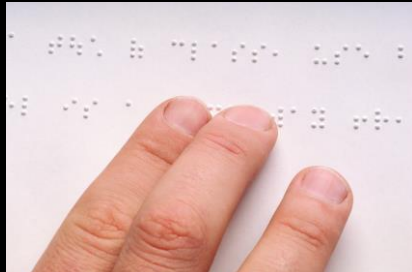
- Communication
 - Speak calmly - use direct, concrete phrases with no more than one or two steps, or write brief instructions on a pad if the person can read.
 - The person may repeat what you have said, repeat the same phrase over and over, talk about topics unrelated to the situation, or have an unusual or monotone voice.
 - Allow extra time for the person to respond.
 - Some people with autism don't show indications of pain - check for injuries.

People with Autism

- Social
 - Approach the person in a calm manner. Try not to appear threatening.
 - The person may not understand typical social rules, invade your space, prefer to be farther away from you than typical, or not make eye contact.

People who are Blind or Have A Visual Impairment

- There is a difference between visual impairment and blindness. Some people who are “legally blind” have some sight, while others are totally blind.
- Announce your presence, speak out, and then enter the area.
- Speak naturally and directly to the individual.



People who are Blind or Have A Visual Impairment

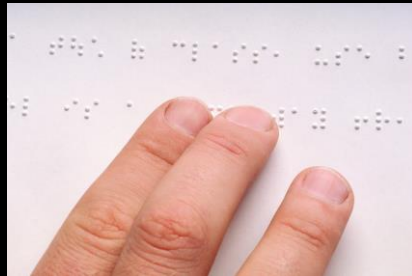
- Do not shout.
- State the nature of the emergency and offer them your arm. As you walk, advise them of any obstacles.
- Offer assistance but let the person explain what help is needed.
 - Do not grab or attempt to guide them without first asking them.
- Let the person grasp your arm or shoulder lightly for guidance.

People who are Blind or Have A Visual Impairment

- They may choose to walk slightly behind you to gauge your body's reactions to obstacles.
- Be sure to mention stairs, doorways, narrow passages, ramps, etc.
- When guiding someone to a seat, place the person's hand on the back of the chair.
- Remember that you'll need to communicate any written information orally.

- **Accommodations**

- Provide information in alternate formats whenever possible, such as Braille, large font text, and color contrasts.



- **Emergency Planning**

- Discuss building emergency evacuation plans and codes and areas of refuge for people with disabilities.
- Be specific with disability distinctions.
 - There is no reason that a person who is blind or deaf cannot use the stairs to make an independent escape as long as he/she can effectively be notified of the need to evacuate and can find the stairway.

People Who are Deaf or Have A Hearing Impairment

- People who have hearing impairments vary in the extent of hearing loss they experience.
- Hearing aids do not guarantee that the person can hear and understand speech. They increase volume, not increase clarity.
- If possible, flick the lights when entering an area or room to get their attention.
- Establish eye contact with the individual, not with the interpreter, if one is present.
- Use facial expressions and hand gestures as visual cues.

People Who are Deaf or Have A Hearing Impairment

- Check to see if you have been understood and repeat if necessary.
- Offer pencil and paper. Write slowly and let the individual read as you write.
- Provide the person with a flashlight to signal their location in the event they are separated from the rescue team. This will facilitate lip-reading or signing in the dark.



Accommodations

- Sign language interpreters are typically placed next to the speaker and across from the person using the interpreter.
- Install both audible alarms and visual smoke alarms. At least one should be battery operated.
- The TTY (TeleTYpewriter) and TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf) are specially made telephones for people with hearing impairments.
 - Make sure someone is trained!
- Relay
 - Know the number and how to access!



People Who Have A Mental Illness

- You may not be able to tell if a person has a mental illness by looking at them.
- If a person begins to exhibit unusual behavior, ask if they have any mental health issues you need to be aware of.
- However, be aware that they may or may not tell you. If you suspect someone has a mental health issue, use the following tips to help you through the situation.

People Who Have A Mental Illness

- In an emergency, the person may become confused. Speak slowly and in a normal speaking tone.
- If the person becomes agitated, help them find a quiet corner away from the confusion.
- Keep your communication simple, clear and brief.
- If they are confused, don't give multiple commands – ask or state one thing at a time.

People Who Have A Mental Illness

- Be empathetic – show that you have heard them and care about what they have told you. Be reassuring.
- If the person is delusional, don't argue with them or try to "talk them out of it". Just let them know you are there to help them.
- Ask if there is any medication they have brought with them.

People With Mobility Impairments

- Some people may need assistance getting out of bed or out of a chair, but CAN then proceed without assistance. Ask!
- Here are some other questions you may find helpful.
 - "Are you able to stand or walk without the help of a mobility device like a cane, walker or a wheelchair?"
 - "You might have to [stand] [walk] for quite awhile on your own. Will this be ok? Please be sure and tell someone if you think you need assistance."
 - "Do you have full use of your arms?"

People With Mobility Impairments

- When carrying the person, avoid putting pressure on his or her arms, legs or chest. This may result in spasms, pain, and may even interfere with their ability to breathe.
- Avoid the “fireman’s carry.” Use the one or two person carry techniques.



Accommodations

- A person using a mobility device may be able to negotiate stairs independently. If the stairs are crowded, you can act as a buffer and run interference.
- Clear pathways, doorways, etc. to make the 36" wide for a wheelchair to pass or crutches to be used.
- Provisions of adaptive equipment like reachers, evacuation chairs, etc.
- Alternative battery supplies for motorized wheelchairs and scooters.
- Tire patch kits.



People with Cognitive Disabilities

- Show:
 - Your picture identification badge (as you say your name).
 - That you are calm and competent.
- Use:
 - Short sentences.
 - Simple, concrete words.
 - Accurate, honest information.
 - Pictures and objects to illustrate your words. Point to your ID picture as you say who you are, point to any protective equipment as you speak about it.



People with Cognitive Disabilities

- Give:
 - Extra time for the person to process what you are saying and to respond.
 - Respect for the dignity of the person as an equal and as an adult (example: speak directly to the person).
 - An arm to the person to hold as they walk. If needed, offer your elbow for balance.
 - If possible, quiet time to rest (as possible, to lower stress/fatigue).

People with Cognitive Disabilities

- Explain:
 - What will happen (simply and concretely).
 - When events will happen (tie to common events in addition to numbers and time, for example, “By lunch time...” “By the time the sun goes down...”).
 - How long this will last – when things will return to normal (if you know).
 - When the person can contact/rejoin loved ones (for example: calls to family, re-uniting pets).
 - Any written material (including signs) in everyday words.

People with Cognitive Disabilities

- Ask for/Look for:
 - An identification bracelet with special health information.
 - Essential equipment and supplies (for example: wheelchair, walker, oxygen, batteries, communication devices [head pointers, alphabet boards, speech synthesizers, etc.]).
 - Medication
 - Mobility aids (for example, assistance or service animal)

People with Cognitive Disabilities

- Have paper and writing materials, copies of a word/letter board, pre-printed messages and key phrases specific to an anticipated emergency, in emergency kits or suggested for the individual's wallet or purse.
- Acquire an alternate power source (i.e. power converter, batteries) if a computer or laptop is used as a means of frequent communication.



People with Cognitive Disabilities

- **Practice, Practice, Practice!**
 - Practice what to do during and after an emergency with people with developmental or cognitive disabilities.
 - Practice leaving places where he or she spends time (job, home, school, etc.) until he or she feels comfortable and feels confident that he or she will know what to do during and after an emergency evacuation.

A nationwide survey by Harris Interactive, commissioned by the National Organization on Disability, and funded by a grant by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, of emergency managers in states, and large, mid-size and small cities throughout the nation, has found that:

Why Are These Important?

- 69% said they had incorporated the needs of people with disabilities into their emergency plans.**
- 22% said they have a plan under development.**
- among those who currently have a preparedness plan in existence or under development, only 54% had plans for dealing with schools for students with disabilities;**

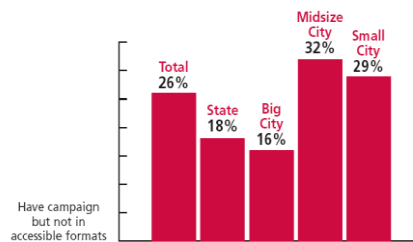
Why Are These Important?

- 50% did not have a special needs registry that includes people with disabilities;
- 59% did not have plans for pediatric populations; and
- 76% did not have an expert to deal with emergency preparedness for people with disabilities.

Why Are These Important?

- Only 42% said they had a public awareness campaign directed at providing emergency information to people with disabilities
- Only 16% of those with a campaign made the plan available in accessible formats (i.e. Braille, cassette, large type, etc.)

Have Public Awareness Campaign Directed at People with Disabilities, but not in Accessible Formats



Why Are These Important?

- Among all respondents, 39% had not purchased specialized equipment
- 36% said no special training had been offered, and
- 73% said no funding had been received to address emergency planning for people with disabilities.

Emergency Preparedness Key Objective:

- 1 Ensure that the needs of people in special population categories are adequately addressed prior to an emergency in order to minimize the adverse impact on people with disabilities, other vulnerable populations, and their communities.
 - enables emergency responders to make informed decisions for the best use of available resources during emergencies.

Disability-Specific Community Based Organizations

- Are able to assist in preparedness planning and disaster assistance because they know and can protect best the specific interests and needs of groups that they assist on a daily basis.
- Nothing About Us...Without Us!
- Know best how to reach out to the populations they assist.
- Have the most current records
 - Should be used to identify those with special needs

Communication Review

- Clear communication is the cornerstone of all successful planning and response. It should be simple, direct, realistic and accurate.
- Imperative they receive information immediately in accessible formats to respond properly and minimize false expectations.
 - Access to emergency public warnings, as well as to preparedness and mitigation information and materials, must include those for people who receive their information orally and visually, and people who use alternative formats to access print materials.

Communication Review

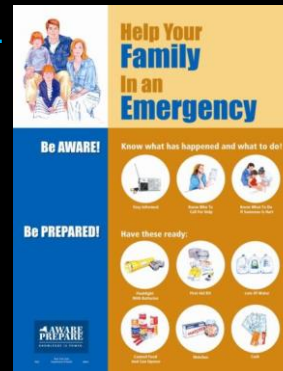
- The best strategy to assure most accessible communication to the widest range of persons is to present information in the most direct and straightforward manner possible, to present it auditorially, visually, and multiple times.
- Will allow persons with visual, hearing, cognitive, and physical disabilities to have the greatest opportunity to access the information.
- Multi-media approaches will work well for other groups of persons who are elderly, non-English speaking, and those whose concentration is affected by the great stress of the disaster situation.

Communication Review

- Important considerations to keep in mind when directing communication in partnership with the media:
 - Television stations should not run a text message “crawl” across a television screen in any area reserved for closed captioning
 - Sign language interpreters should be in the picture if one is interpreting next to the official spokesperson presenting emergency information.
- Those setting up emergency hotlines during an event should include TTY/TDD (text telephone, also known as telecommunication device for the deaf) numbers when available, or the instruction “TTY callers use relay.”

Communication Review

- Make sure the same information is provided by the official spokesperson and is used on television and radio.
- Frequently repeat the most essential emergency information in a simple message format those with cognitive disabilities can follow.
- Use the reading level function key available on most word processing systems and pictures when possible.
- The median reading grade in the USA is 4th grade.



Communication Review

- Print text with the highest possible contrast, such as light letters on a dark background, or the traditional black on white. The colors used in these slides are examples.
- Use 18 point size or larger.
- Leading, or spacing between lines of text, should be at least 25 to 30% of point size.
- Times New Roman typeface is easier to read than decorative, cursive and condensed fonts.
- Use extra-wide margins, at least 1-inch.
- Use non-glossy papers, since glossy finishes can lesson legibility.

"Making Text Legible: Designing for People with Partial Sight," Lighthouse International

Collaborations & Planning

- **Develop Memos of Understanding**
 - Disability Service
 - Local Health Department
 - LEPC (Local Emergency Planning Committee)
 - American Red Cross
 - County Commissions
- **Boards & Committees**
 - If you haven't been contacted.... You contact them!

Emergency Preparedness Key Objective: Special Needs Pop.

- ② Ensure that people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations are included in the emergency planning process at all levels of government and the private sector so they can offer their insights, knowledge, and resourcefulness.
 - People with disabilities can contribute greatly to the effectiveness of local emergency management planning.

Emergency Managers, Planners & Responders

- Customize awareness and preparedness messages and materials for specific groups of people
- Put them in alternative and accessible formats thereby increasing the ability of these individuals to plan and survive in the event of an emergency
 - Allows appropriate allocation of critical personnel, equipment and assets during the response period, and reduces 911 call volume.

Emergency Managers, Planners & Responders

- Identify those in the community who might have special needs before, during and after a disaster or emergency.
 - Doing so ahead of time results in an improved emergency plan, a better determination of resource needs, and more informed actions and decisions.

Emergency Managers, Planners & Responders

- People with disabilities, including those with sensory, physical, mental, and cognitive disabilities, should be fully included throughout the policymaking and implementation processes regarding emergency preparedness at all levels.
- Federal, state and local authorities, including non-governmental relief organizations, must consult with and utilize the expertise of people with disabilities, their advocates, and community-based organizations (CBOs).

Recruit Volunteers to Participate in Drills



Collaborations & Planning

- **Develop Local Advisory Boards**
 - Individuals with Disabilities
 - Advocacy Organizations
 - Service –Provider Organizations
 - Direct-Care Providers
 - Rehabilitation Programs

Select a range of people in terms of both affiliation and disability. Involving people with all major types of disabilities, including sensory, physical, mental and cognitive disabilities, helps to ensure the most complete picture possible of the effect of disasters on people with disabilities.

First Responders & Relief Volunteers

- **Must be trained to deliver services and supports that are not only competent, but culturally sensitive. First responders must know:**
 - What to do and how to interact with people with various special needs (e.g. what do they do if the person has a mental illness or can not communicate without technology)
 - How to make shelters and relief operations accessible to people with physical or cognitive disabilities
 - How to comply with and enforce civil rights laws and ordinances, including fair housing laws
 - How to access public and private entities, including nonprofit organizations, that provide services and supports to people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations

“Include disability experts in every planning meeting that you have. You don’t have to learn everything there is to know about disability issues if you reserve a seat at the table for those who know the issues.”

Sandee Winchell

Louisiana Council on
Developmental Disabilities

Belleville, WV Tornado – Who Would Have Ever Expected It?



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