

**Working Conference on Emergency Management and  
Individuals with Disabilities and the Elderly  
June 28-30, 2006**

**Session Summary Form**

**Session:** Regional Working Group

**Date of Session:** Thursday June 29, 2006

**State:** New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands

**Region:** II

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1. List and describe in narrative at least the three most important issues that were addressed during the session:
  1. Standards for sheltering
  2. Tracking at shelters – particularly for those who are medically fragile
  3. Training for first responders

In narrative form report on what was said about each issue identified above, please number (1, 2, 3).

4. NY – What standards are set for shelters? Particularly for the elderly and PWD. Standards with flexibility are needed.
  - a. It is not the Red Cross' job to do that, particularly in light of ADA and other regulations.
  - b. Shouldn't these standards be national standards that will ensure the same level of service during displacement.
5. NY – Scanning/barcode system – Raise the issue of building a barcode system for each person that creates accountability = an organized environment.
  - a. If you are putting money into a new ID system, why not use the opportunity to address the needs of people with disabilities?  
Another question to be raised.
    - i. The issue of whether or not people actually bring their ID in an emergency needs to be addressed.
    - ii. There is much disagreement in the room about the civil liberties implications of having ID that specifically identifies them as a PWD.

6. NY -Training exercises - how many actually use PWD in the drill? Will pursue through Homeland Security.
  - a. Use their abilities and challenges to inform the planning process which will also result in confidence in the disability community that a process is in place to address their needs.
  - b. Honest drills will aid in closing the gaps and strengthening the weaknesses in the emergency management plans.
7. NY - Training for first responders on what is involved in dealing with PWD and special needs. Sensitivity training to their particular issues.
8. VI - Go back to VI and report to the group about the issues that were learned at the conference. They have no association at this time with Homeland Security, etc.
  - a. After informing the group of the ideas and discussions here, will go around the island to identify shelters, volunteers and opportunities to work with the government and communities.
  - b. Should be sensitivity training on helping PWD.
  - c. ID's that include information about the particular disability of the person.
9. PR - There are already several types of disability id's in PR
10. PR - Have also identified nearly 500 shelters, but they are substandard - need to address this issue (need showers).
11. PR - Need to prepare first responders for people with disabilities
  - a. Also need to establish a link to the elderly ombudsman
12. PR - Evacuation is an issue because there are very limited options on where to go. Evacuation is generally to the center of the island - most shelters are inland.

Particular attention to be paid to elderly care homes.

2. List and describe in narrative at least the three biggest challenges or barriers discussed.
  1. Issue
  2. Issue
  3. Issue

In narrative form report on what was said about each of the challenges/barriers identified above (identify 1, 2, or 3).

3. List and describe in narrative at least three "next step" action items identified during the session.

1. NJ – Next six months NJ will meet and discuss how to develop an outreach campaign and training related to evacuation – particular in regards to the elderly and PWD
2. NJ – County reps for both communities will reach out and contact relief coordinators to discover whether they have already included the special needs community
3. NJ – Provide list of long term care association plan templates for evacuation to those facilities that are not part of the association.
4. NJ – look into communication assistive technology needs in the event of an evacuation.
  - i. Meaning those that they would they bring with them and what would be available from the state.

In narrative form report on each of the action items identified above (identify as 1, 2, or 3).

- The question is raised of whether or not the suggestions from the various groups can be applicable to all the groups, or if they are not relevant at all – the general feeling seems to be that many of the issues are relevant to all represented states and territories and thus action items can be utilized by the other states and territories.
  - The question is raised as to whether any of the states/territories feel as if they already have an exceptional plan in place – a national rating of state emergency preparedness has just taken place that seemed to only identify more and more problems and issues that need to be addressed.
    - o Particular to this issue is major metropolitan areas, those that cross state lines in particular, have a serious issue with trying to utilize the same vendors and services in the case of an emergency that effects both/all states.
4. Report on other important issues that were discussed during Working Group.