

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

**Session Summary Form**

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COB July 7, 2006.**

**Session:**    State Working Group    Regional Working Group

**Date of Session:**    Wednesday, June 28    Thursday, June 29    Friday, June 30

**State:** N/A

**Region:** III

**Facilitator Name:** Hilary Styron

**Submitted by (your name):** Linda Bergofsky

**Agency/Institution:** US Department of Health and Human Services

**Email:** [linda.bergofsky@hhs.gov](mailto:linda.bergofsky@hhs.gov)

**Phone:** 202-690-5741

**1. List and describe in narrative at least the three most important issues that were addressed during the session.**

1. Most states discussed special needs shelters. Who goes into these shelters tends to be governed by American Red Cross abilities, rather than by functional status (as recommended by Florida). States are interested in developing more discrete criteria. VA is still looking at the issue of whether they should have special needs shelters at all and WV is evaluating what standards should exist (ADA compliant or truly accessible). PA's strategy is to supplement county efforts.

2. Regardless of whether special needs individuals have distinct shelters or are co-located, human capital/staffing is a significant concern. For example, DE has 8 shelters statewide but only enough staff to run 2 simultaneously. DC noted that there is limited expertise in shelter management. WV human capital can be overwhelmed.

3. Evacuation is recognized as the other side of the sheltering coin – States must take steps to clarify responsibilities and view the entire spectrum of activities from planning through mitigation.

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

1. States are struggling with definitional issues (who should go into what kind of shelter, inclusive vs. exclusive criteria, medical model vs. functional model).
2. This seems to be a major sticking point for all states. There is recognition that the NGOs can only do so much.
3. All states are starting initiatives in this arena, e.g. statewide coordinating or planning committees tasked with looking at the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities in a comprehensive way.

**2. List and describe in narrative at least the three biggest challenges or barriers discussed. [In select cases may mean that you repeat something you reported under #1]**

1. Most states tend not to be prescriptive in defining what constitutes a special needs person or special needs shelters while some states are still sorting out whether there should be separate shelters at all.
2. Efforts are often seen as delimited by local American Red Cross chapter capabilities and state agency staffing constraints.
3. Most states don't have the information on other resources, risk assessments or where the greatest needs are.

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

1. Participants acknowledged that additional work is needed to convene stakeholders around the specific issue of evacuation for people with disabilities and the elderly. There is strong interest but many competing priorities. It is expected that actual protocols will come from local jurisdictions working in concert with the state and affected external stakeholders.
2. There is no one agency that is tasked with coordinating all transportation resources during an emergency. Most states were not aware of the existence of a comprehensive inventory of transportation resources. If such a list were to become available, there was no specific consensus on the resources needed to keep it up to date.

3. There is no funding to include the disabled in elderly in tests of actual plans or plans that will be developed in the future.

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

1. (PA) Hold discussions with contingent states on ingress, egress and traffic patterns.
2. (WV) Prepare a white paper to the Governor that provides an overview of evacuation and sheltering needs, assesses risks and identifies other issues, with the goal of eventually developing a strategic plan.
3. (VA) Create guidelines for what constitutes a shelter and what services/features a shelter should have, both short-term and long-term.

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

1. Pennsylvania is surrounded by states in 3 FEMA regions. Evacuation coordination is a particular concern.
2. Currently West Virginia does not have a discharge planning capability. The state also needs to better assess demand for shelters and inventory existing assets.
3. Virginia currently blends all individuals in shelters and has not determined if the state should have a special needs shelter designation. The state is currently looking at overall shelter admission criteria, with the goal of forming recommendations to local jurisdictions around security issues.

**4. Report on other important issues that were discussed during Working Group.**

- Security in shelters (mass care as well as special needs)