

DELAWARE
January 2007 Quarterly Report

I. General Information

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State: Delaware

FEMA Region: Region III

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II. State Delegation Meetings/Teleconferences

Date: November 3, 2006

Outcome: The focus of this meeting was notification and warning. Two subcommittees were established to discuss in more detail various ideas presented at the meeting. The subcommittees were titled as “Public Outreach Sub-Committee” and “Technology Sub-Committee.”

Public Outreach Sub-Committee

Outcome: The group was able to reach out to the Amish and Mennonite communities to determine if each has a disaster plan. The Mennonite community has already established disaster plans, however, the Amish need disaster plans. There are about 10 individuals with disabilities in their community. In addition, the Amish frequently foster children with disabilities through the state foster system. DSAAPD will continue to work with this community and will report regularly. CERT offered funding for outreach materials related to individuals with non-typical functional needs. The group discussed the use of existing databases, such as DHSS’ client database, to connect disaster survivors with their services in the event of a disaster. The idea of a registry was discussed as well, with the group needing additional information on how a statewide registry campaign can be implemented.

Technology Sub-Committee

Outcome: Group did not meet

III. Emergency Planning Highlights

Activity:

- The group decided that developing an annex for “special needs” populations was not the best way to address the problem. Instead the state will review the planning areas of notification/warning, transportation/evacuation, and sheltering to make sure that individuals with non-typical functional needs are included. Delaware’s emergency plans should include all populations in all hazards.
- The group was given the opportunity to review ESF 23, Notification and Warning, of the Delaware Emergency Operations Plan (DEOP) for necessary changes to improve the inclusion of individuals with non-typical functional needs.

Outcome/Product:

- “Special needs” and “individuals with disabilities” was redefined for policy and planning purposes as “individuals with non-typical functional needs.” This definition will capture those populations that do not define themselves as having a special need or a disability but do have a functional need if an emergency were to occur.
- The above definition has been incorporated into the Delaware Emergency Operations Plan, ESF 23, Section 4.6.1. Terminology has been addressed throughout ESF 23. Additions to the plan are currently being collected by Marilyn Kowalchuk, DEMA, to be later considered and implemented for the next plan printing.
- “A Guide for Emergency Planners: Considerations for Individuals with Non-Typical Functional Needs” has been finalized by PHPS. The document is currently being printed and posted on PHPS’ website. The guide will be distributed nationally.

IV. Emergency Preparedness Highlights

Activity:

- PHPS will be hosting a call center drill in March 2007 and will assist 911 centers in registering individuals. *The number of registered individuals will be reported in the next quarterly report.*
- DSAAPD met with a spokesperson for Amish community and discovered there are approx 250-300 families in 9 districts and some individuals with non-typical functional needs. In discussing how this community would be notified, the group found out that they have phones in each farm area (district) and utilize the 911 system in case of emergencies. Messaging each farm area is usually the preferred method in that the phones are located between houses, not in houses. They have no disaster plans and no specific person to contact in an emergency. In 1956, they had hurricane Hazel and a lot of damage was done to their property; so they set up an aid system. The fund is based in Lancaster, Pa, and if there is a fire, wind storm, or massive damage the fund is given to rebuild. The community comes together to

help. They normally have enough food and water without leaving their homes for 3-4 months. DSAAPD suggested they come up with a contact person and provided information on how to plan for a disaster. *Once the spokesperson meets with his greater community in Lancaster to discuss emergency preparedness, he will contact DSAAPD in early March.*

Outcome/Product: Outcomes of the above activities will be reported at a later date.

V. Emergency Response Highlights

Activity:

- Public Health Preparedness met with the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services' (DHSS) Disaster Coordinators to determine the best way to coordinate individual information already in the DHSS system through various programs to be used in an emergency. This process will help PHPS to identify and locate individuals with non-typical functional needs in an emergency. *Outcome will be reported at a later date.*

Outcome/Product:

- A "Tips for First Responders for Seniors, People with Service Animals, People with Mobility Impairments, People who are Mentally Ill, People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, People who are Blind or Visually Impaired, and People with Cognitive Disabilities" guide was developed and printed for distribution to first responders. This Tips Guide gives first responders techniques for addressing these groups' needs in an emergency.
- PHPS distributed the Tips Guides to 60 emergency medical services, advanced life support, basic life support, fire, and state police stations within the State of Delaware.

VI. Emergency Recovery Highlights

Activity: None

- The meeting with the DHSS disaster coordinators (as noted under Emergency Response Highlights) will allow recovery services to be more easily administered because response personnel will have access to the DHSS programs that are associated with the individual, therefore, the specific information related to the individual's needs will be readily available. *Outcome will be reported at a later date.*

Outcome/Product: Outcomes of the above activities will be reported at a later date once feasibility is determined.

VII. Next Steps

Significant Planned Activities: Research will be conducted on the implementation of the early notification system as utilized by the State of Connecticut to include the creation of a database to house the information, personnel to take the information, and marketing the program to encourage more registered individuals. While Delaware uses the Delaware Emergency Notification System (DENS), the system does not support all technologies. For example, cell phones, internet phones, videophones, and sidekicks (videophones and sidekicks are commonly used by individuals with hearing impairments) are not supported by 911 and/or DENS. There are challenges and solutions that need to be furthered researched.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 9, 2007, which will discuss transportation and evacuation. ESF 1 was distributed to the group prior to the meeting for review and comment.

The Outreach Sub-Committee will meet again on January 22, 2007.

Products under Development: A functional communication systems or group of systems that work to pre-warn individuals about the risk of a disaster. The communications system should support all current technologies. However, if pre-warning is not possible, individuals need to be identified in other ways (i.e. databases, census data, etc.) so that individuals can be linked to their needed resources.

VIII. Other

Points of Interest:

Challenges:

NOTHING TO REPORT AT THIS TIME.