

GEORGIA
January 2007 Quarterly Report

I. General Information

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State: Georgia

FEMA Region: IV

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II. State Delegation Meetings/Teleconferences

Date: October 25th, 2006

Outcome: Development of list of potential partners, discussion of how to proceed with planning group function

During the time between the October 25 and December 8 meeting, much discussion was held regarding the inclusion of multiple agencies, organizations, associations, etc. on our planning group. We had developed a very extensive list with over 60 potential partner agencies. We were planning to invite all of the agencies to a planning meeting on Jan. 4th. However, we quickly began to realize that this may be overly ambitious, since we did not have clear goals and expectations developed for the direction of our efforts. So, with much discussion and debate, we determined that it would be more beneficial to develop goals, establish smaller working sub-groups, and invite partner agencies in to the planning as we determined their fit. The group was much more comfortable with this direction. So, that is where we began heading.

Date: December 8th, 2006

Outcome: Development of Goals for the GA Delegation's Efforts. The goals are below:

1. Educate the general public/citizens about emergency preparedness
2. Open and maintain an active dialogue with organizations/associations that represent individuals with disabilities and the elderly.
3. Encourage and support local preparedness efforts.
4. Collect and disseminate best practices.
5. Involve stakeholders in evaluating shelter viability and accessibility.
6. Determine ADA and other legal requirements for emergency preparedness, and communicate those requirements.
7. Determine current training levels, efforts and needs for first responders.
8. Develop training and/or educational materials for first responders regarding preparedness for individuals with disabilities, the elderly and others.
9. Assist with the development of transportation plans for individuals with disabilities, the elderly and others.

Date: January 4, 2007

Outcome: Addition of three new members to the state delegation. The new members are Nancy Duncan, Executive Director of the Disability Resource Group; Mike Galifianakis,

State ADA Coordinator; and, Eric Jacobson, Executive Director of the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities.

At this meeting, we went over our goals and offered suggestions for how to proceed with achieving those goals, as well as identifying additional partners that should be invited to the next meeting. Additional members will be invited to the planning group meetings as we identify specific areas that their organization/agency/company has a role in our overall goals, can add value to our work, or is working on efforts that we can assist with.

We also formed two sub-groups and identified an additional four sub-groups that we will form at our next meeting. We formed the ADA sub-group with Mike Galifianakis as the Chair, and the Public Education sub-group with Jonna West as the Chair.

The ADA subcommittee will begin by identifying ways to strengthen the statewide ADA coordinating link for emergency preparedness/evacuation. Potential steps include:

- 1) Review/update (as necessary) of State's ADA action plan for emergency planning, notification; evacuation, emergency transportation, sheltering, and access to information.
- 2) Identify collaborative partners. For each collaborative partner:
 - a) Identify roles and responsibilities of respective entities for emergency preparedness/evacuation;
 - b) provide ADA-related technical support and co-develop training for each entity applicable to their public responsibility for emergency preparedness/evacuation, including:
 - i) establishing coordination of compliance activities within and between entities;
 - ii) developing communication capacity and access to information (e.g., auxiliary aids and services, accessible electronic and information technology, etc.);
 - iii) creating/ensuring program and shelter/facility accessibility;
 - iv) addressing transportation needs; and
 - v) involving people with disabilities in planning processes.

The Public Education sub-group will begin by identifying ways that our group can strengthen public education efforts and increase awareness of the general public and first responders regarding emergency preparedness for individuals with disabilities, the elderly and other populations. We will be looking at everything from the development of guidebooks, brochures, public service announcements, and other methods to educate citizens and first responders.

Additional sub-groups including Transportation, Training, Communications and Sheltering will be formed at our next meeting. We also decided to hold our delegation planning meetings once a month, with sub-group meetings scheduled as often as needed.

During the meeting we also took a preliminary look at the possibility of partnering with Chronic Disease/Health Promotion in DHR on a CDC grant with a module that involves emergency preparedness for individuals with disabilities. After reading the initial information on the grant, the group decided that the specifications were well within the parameters of our goals and objectives, and they decided to pursue inclusion.

III. Emergency Planning Highlights

Activity: We are working with the coordinators of the Georgia Governor's Emergency Management Conference and instructors to produce and deliver a two to three day course for first responders at this conference. While this course is currently entitled "Planning for Individuals with Special Needs", a term that many people want to get away from – we feel it is a good start to build awareness within the public safety community. Many responders and first responders have not been exposed to this knowledge and information, and we feel strongly that this course will be valuable, even if the terminology is not 100% applicable to our planning efforts. Development of Public Education sub-group.

Outcome/Product: Will increase capacity and influence planning efforts statewide

IV. Emergency Preparedness Highlights

Activity: Contract Revisions

Outcome/Product:

The Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases will be adding emergency preparedness and response language into all service provider contracts for FY 2008. This language will require all providers to have a plan ensuring that all enrolled consumers are safe and receiving needed services and supports during an emergency or disaster and that all providers of Residential Services have a definitive plan that ensures the safety of their residents during an emergency or disaster.

V. Emergency Response Highlights

Activity: Establish of ADA sub-group

Outcome/Product: Will increase capacity, will educate individuals on shelter requirements and/or needs as it relates to self-assessments

VI. Emergency Recovery Highlights

Activity :

Outcome/Product:

None yet

VII. Next Steps

Significant Planned Activities:

Sub-group meetings, Next full planning group meeting scheduled for February 8th, 2007

Products under Development:

Development of course for public safety/first responders and Governor's Emergency Management Conference in June; Development of Georgia version of a guide book to provide to first responders that includes tips for how to assist individuals with disabilities in an emergency situation.

Meeting Scheduled for January 17, 2007 to follow-up on the CDC grant requirements. Letter of intent is due by mid February.

VIII. Other

Points of Interest: None

Challenges:

None – we have a great working group and eager partners. Our progress has taken some time to get started, but we are moving forward in the right direction with the support of all our agencies.