

GEORGIA
April 2007 Quarterly Report

I. General Information

Report Period: Feb-April

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State: Georgia

FEMA Region: IV

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II. State Delegation Meetings/Teleconferences

***Date:* February 8, 2007**

Outcome:

- The group determined that it was necessary to combine the ADA Subcommittee and the Shelter Subcommittee, forming the ADA/Shelter Subcommittee, and Cynthia Grant was designated Co-chair with Mike Galifianakis
- The Public Education, Training and Communications Subcommittees were combined to form one subcommittee, and Nancy Duncan was designated Co-chair with Jonna West
- The Transportation Subcommittee was formed, and Tim Albritton was designated Chair
- Mike Galifianakis gave an update on the activities of the ADA subcommittee meetings and work
- Nancy Duncan gave a briefing on the activities of the Disability Resource Group and provided literature to the Working Group members
- Betsy Kagey gave a briefing on a CDC grant opportunity

***Date:* February 19, 2007 – ADA/Shelter Subcommittee Meeting**

Outcome:

The subcommittee reviewed the updated draft overview for the ADA action plan. The subcommittee approved the action plan with the qualification that the timelines for specified action items might need to be reset. The subcommittee discussed an approach to addressing ADA-related shelter issues utilizing the ADA action plan. The focus was on the preparedness phase in an emergency plan: Incorporating accessibility considerations when identifying shelters. The subcommittee discussed the Red Cross protocol for identifying and establishing shelters in Georgia to include collaborative partners, including District Public Health, DFACS and County EMAs. The Red Cross representative discussed the difference between “general” shelters identified by Red Cross and its partners based on an existing memorandum of understanding, and “special needs” shelters identified by DHR –

Environmental Health, and briefly reviewed the criteria for staying at the shelters. The DHR form for Special Needs Shelter Facility Survey was circulated for the subcommittee's information.

The discussion focused on conducting a self evaluation on current accessibility of shelters statewide. GEMA will be updating information on shelter features in its database, and the subcommittee could support this effort by identifying the proper tool for measuring disability access at shelters. The subcommittee discussed several potential actions, including: (a) accumulating existing accessibility surveys for the purpose of using a consistent survey statewide; (b) identifying potential training/technical support needs to assist surveyors; and (c) identifying resources for entities to use to create temporary accessibility features at shelters.

The subcommittee identified specific action steps for the next subcommittee meeting: (1) Accumulate existing shelter accessibility surveys; (2) Develop a draft shelter accessibility checklist (based on the acquired shelter accessibility surveys) for subcommittee members to review; and, (3) Contact and invite DHR-Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) representative, to join the subcommittee.

Date: April 19th, 2007

Outcome

- A guest from the Emory Center for Public Health Preparedness attended the meeting
- Jonna West reported that DHR had submitted a grant application package to the CDC, which included a module for our Working Group. If the grant is awarded and this module is approved, funding will be made available for our work, to include developing public information literature, hosting meetings, and other outreach/educational type initiatives that will enhance preparedness efforts.
- Jonna announced that a workshop focused on disability emergency preparedness awareness and first responders would be offered at the Annual Governor's Emergency Management Conference. Mike Galifianakis has agreed to be the presenter of this 1.5 hour workshop.
- Mike updated the group on his efforts to identify current resources and develop checklists and guidelines for shelters. Mike and Jonna have been in contact with the US Department of Justice for the purpose of identifying resources they may have to assist.
- We have not heard anything back yet on the status of the CDC grant application that was submitted.

III. Emergency Planning Highlights

Activity:

A member of the Working Group, Tim Albritton, conducted a presentation on emergency planning on April 17 at the quarterly meeting of the National Council on Disability, an independent federal agency that makes recommendations to the president and Congress to enhance the quality of life for all Americans with disabilities and their families.

IV. Emergency Preparedness Highlights

Activity:

The Disability Resource Group's Emergency Preparedness for All conducted various activities in April. They held two luncheons, one in Brunswick and the other in Savannah for people with disabilities, their families, and professionals working with them. They had two panel presentations at each luncheon, one panel of planners and first responders, and one panel which also included a cross section of people with disabilities. They distributed materials on the project, lists of local and national resources on emergency preparedness, and a new document that is based on our ten months of discussions and research. This new document is entitled, "Ten Things People with Disabilities Should Know and Do to Stay Safe in a Disaster." Over one hundred people attended the luncheons. The Disability Resource Group will be compiling the materials into a single pamphlet and distributing them throughout the coastal area, and will be compiling a final report for DHR/DD Council, which will also be of help to other geographic areas in carrying out the same type of project.

Outcome/Product:

Over one hundred individuals benefited from attending the Emergency Preparedness for All luncheons by increasing their levels of awareness and preparedness. Documents were developed that can be provided to populations throughout the state to further increase preparedness.

Activity:

The Georgia Crisis Consortium, the State-lead planning group for the establishment of a Disaster Mental Health plan for Georgia, is developing emergency/disaster planning kits. These planning kits will serve as a resource for MHDDAD state-owned and contracted facilities, including State Hospitals and other residential facilities who serve people with mental health, developmental disabilities and addictive diseases, to use in disaster preparedness.

Outcome/Product:

These planning kits will increase preparedness among service providers and individuals with disabilities.

V. Emergency Response Highlights

Activity:

Developing 1.5 hour workshop that will be presented twice at the Governor's Emergency Management Conference in June. This conference is attended by over 800 people, to include first responders, elected officials and others from state, local, federal, volunteer and private agencies. This workshop will provide information for first responders and public safety personnel that will assist them in emergency preparedness for individuals with disabilities and other special needs.

Outcome/Product:
Increased Awareness

Activity:

Developing a customized version of “TIPS for First Responders” booklet to distribute to first responders and public safety agencies in Georgia. We have received permission from the University of New Mexico to customize their TIPS booklet for Georgia and reproduce ourselves in a different format and at a cost lower than it would take to purchase the booklets. We are working with agency public affairs representatives to develop and reproduce this booklet.

Outcome/Product:
Increased Awareness

VI. Emergency Recovery Highlights

(For example, promoting the: a) access of individuals with disabilities and the elderly to benefit programs; b) use of case managers trained in serving individuals with disabilities and the elderly; and c) efficient operation of recovery activities such as transportation, community integration, long-term housing, rehabilitation, and employment tailored to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities and the elderly)

Activity: None

Outcome/Product:
None yet

VII. Next Steps

Significant Planned Activities:

- Workshop delivery at Governor’s Emergency Management Conference

Products under Development:

- Georgia “TIPS” booklet

Meeting Scheduled

- Meeting scheduled for May 17th, 2007 – will include full Working Group and ADA/Shelter Subcommittee

VIII. Other

Points of Interest (e.g., lessons learned, innovative approaches): None

Challenges (e.g., areas for which State delegation is requesting suggestions from others):
None