

Update on Implementation of the Recommendations from the Disabilities, Access and Functional Needs Assessment

In 2016, the RDPO hired a contracting consortium to assess the emergency management programs of four counties and the City of Portland in incorporating the needs of people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs (PWD/AFN) into their planning activities and planning documents.



The project, funded jointly by a UASI FY'15 grant and Metro contributed dollars, aligns with one of the RDPO's strategic priorities: supporting and advancing equity and inclusion efforts in the region to ensure whole community disaster preparedness and to lower risk of adverse impacts to under-served populations post-disaster.

The 81-page report, [Disabilities, Access and Functional Needs Inclusive Planning: Summary of Findings for the City of Portland and Clackamas, Washington, Multnomah, and Clark Counties, December 2016](#), provides valuable findings and recommendations for each of the five jurisdictions, and even some for the region itself, to integrate across a host of planning activities and documents, specifically:

- Client Identification and Outreach
- Evacuation and Transportation
- Alert and Warning and Public Information
- Sheltering and Mass Care
- Regional Collaboration and Coordination

One year after that report was issued, we asked the five participating jurisdictions to take a brief survey to help the RDPO present a snapshot of work completed in 2017 and what's planned for the year ahead. Here is what we Learned:

1. Which of the PWD/AFN Assessment Report recommendations did you work on in 2017 (or What was your PWD/AFN work)?

Clackamas County:

- Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP), which the report said, "ensures that whole community members, including PWD/AFN, will be able to receive the essential services they need to maintain their quality of life." Clackamas completed work on COOP procedures and plans at the county level and encouraged the cities in the county to prepare, train on and exercise COOP plans. Clackamas also promoted personal preparedness for county employees, with the understanding that staff won't come to work unless their families are taken care of. Furthermore, Clackamas is making sure that all county employees are clear about their roles and responsibilities in disaster response.
- In addition, Clackamas County invested more in the use of social media for whole community engagement, responding to the recommendation to use it to develop relationships before a disaster to ensure message delivery is more effective during post-disaster response and recovery. Clackamas

also updated Joint Information Coordination (JIC) Plan-associated job action sheets to address the needs of PWD/AFN and assessed reception and shelter locations for ADA accessibility (prioritizing those based on their ability to meet ADA requirements).

Clark County: Expanded programs that engage county employees on personal preparedness and held workshops with county leadership to explain needs and gaps related to PWD/AFN.

Multnomah County: Instead of taking the survey, Multnomah County’s point of contact shared their extensive action plan in response to the PWD/AFN Report recommendations. Some highlights of what Multnomah County Emergency Management (MCEM), together with the Multnomah County Human Services, Health and Planning Departments, and Joint Office of Homeless Services, accomplished in 2017:

- MCEM hired a Community Capacity Specialist: Justin Ross, co-founder with Washington County Emergency Management Director Scott Porter of the PWD/AFN assessment project: Justin has a disability program background and is forging new community partnerships to address PWD/AFN gaps;
- Completed Mass Shelter Standard Operating Guidelines, and mass shelter manager training is underway (all incorporate PWD/AFN Report recommendations); also worked on shelter ADA accessibility;
- Enhanced coordination with Red Cross and interdepartmentally (i.e., Eagle Creek response coordination was excellent);



- Enhanced personal preparedness among county staff and continuity of operations for the county and its service providers (no designated COOP planner; department by department);
- Datamart project: PWD/AFN database supporting better client identification and case management;
- Engaged in Portland’s Transportation Recovery and RDPO Recovery Framework projects, which have PWD/AFN elements;
- Ensuring that website is Section 508 and WCAG 2.0 compliant; and
- Translation and interpretation services; increasing the awareness of PIOs how to best utilize interpreters during press conferences and media events.

Washington County: Reported not having yet implemented any of the recommendations in the report but have developed a corrective action plan. Although not tied to the corrective action plan, the County incorporated a translation widget on all its web pages to ensure the pages are accessible to most of the non-English-speaking residents of the County.

City of Portland: Updated its Evacuation and Alert and Warning Plans to reflect the PWD/AFN recommendations.

- For the Evacuation Plan: developed better information about accessible transportation options through TriMet and accessible reception areas. Greater consideration of powering medical devices and accommodating service animals. Also added consideration for how incidents may affect mental well-being of people who may not otherwise have mental health challenges.

- For Alert and Warning Plan: added much broader discussion of hard-to-reach populations, such as homeless and homebound people, and emphasized need to employ multiple methods and ask neighbors to check in on one another.

2. Which recommendations do you plan to implement in 2018 (or, what will be the focus of your PWD/AFN work next year)?

Clackamas County: Evacuation and Transportation planning needs for PWD/AFN; additional social media development; and build out alert and notification and public information strategies that ensures messages can be received, understood, and acted upon by the whole community including PWD/AFN.

Clark County: Continue county employee personal preparedness and identify employees who have a primary response role (LE, Fire, EMS, PW) and primary support role (EM, PH) and those who have a secondary support role and can assist in disaster specific human services support. This includes ensuring PWD/AFN continue to receive vital services.

Multnomah County: Advocate for more funding of activities that advance PWD/AFN work and

- Work collaboratively with partners (service providers/contractors) on expanding the methods for emergency information dissemination through them;
- Potentially develop of a PIO training on accessibility issues;
- Continue mass shelter manager training; develop just-in-time training with RDPO-UASI funds (equity and elements of trauma informed care integrated into all modules);
- Enter into MOUs with shelter locations; and
- Work on transportation planning to align with shelter locations and guidelines.



Washington County: Already has a project underway to develop evergreen messages and to translate them into the many languages spoken in the county. In process of contracting assistance to help update the County’s existing shelter plan to address community sheltering, which will incorporate PWD/AFN considerations.

City of Portland: Work on new recovery framework and update earthquake plan – both include considerations for PWD/AFN.

3. What are some of the challenges you are facing in advancing PWD/AFN work?

Clackamas County: Need for more time and other resources to make greater strides.

Clark County:

- No department of human services in Clark Co.;

- As majority of PWD/AFN services in the County are provided by NGOs, it's hard for the County to ask them to implement the recommendations; and
- CRESA is a multi-jurisdictional agency and as such, does not have a central decision-maker who can initiate most of the actions.

Multnomah County:

- No SME in accessible transportation from the County at the table due to limited bandwidth;
- ESF 8 (health and medical services): the health department has more than 1,500 contract organizations that would greatly enhance outreach to PWD/AFN on disaster preparedness, but no direct tie in to disaster resilience efforts (i.e., direct service but not disaster resilience);
- Need an accessibility advisory committee: to ensure alert and notification and public information strategies and tools are effective for PWD/AFN; and
- With more than 40 COOP plans in the county, need for a full-time staff to shepherd efforts (like the City of Portland is doing with a dedicated COOP planner at PBEM).

Washington County:

- Obtaining enough interest and support from government agencies and non-profits who directly interface with PWD/AFN communities on a regular basis
- Need longer timeframe: many changes need to take place over time as part of plan updates, technology enhancements (no easy fixes, but must make sure PWD/AFN addressed in enhancements)

City of Portland: Limited resources to do the work.

4. Would you support the RDPO establishing a PWD/AFN work group (when)? And, if so, would your jurisdiction be willing to chair the group?

Clackamas County: Yes, but wait until at least 2019. Would be willing to lead.

Clark County: Yes, but wait until at least 2019. Not interested in leading.

Multnomah County: Yes, 2019. Justin Ross could lead it.

Washington County: Not sure. Not interested in leading it.

City of Portland: Yes, but wait until at least 2019. Maybe to lead.

Next steps under the RDPO: A more in-depth discussion among jurisdictional points of contact is needed to decide if a regional PWD/AFN work group will be launched under the RDPO in 2019.

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