

**NJ OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
NEW JERSEY GROUP FOR ACCESS AND INTEGRATION NEEDS IN
EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS (NJGAINED)**

STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-2014

Updated: April 2013

MISSION STATEMENT:

The New Jersey Group for Access and Integration Needs in Emergencies and Disasters (NJGAINED) will act as an advisory board to the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (NJOEM) and the NJ Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (OHSP) regarding issues affecting people with access and functional needs (AFN) in New Jersey before, during and after an emergency or disaster.

NJGAINED will identify issues likely to affect AFN populations as they prepare to respond to a large-scale emergency or disaster, or emergency management personnel as they attempt to assist persons with AFN before, during and after adverse conditions. The advisory panel may also make recommendations, develop solutions, draft proposed legislation, review policy, formulate memos of understanding, and devise products and programs to address identified issues, if so directed by NJOEM or OHSP.

NJGAINED will meet as a whole committee with established sub-committees when necessary; and will only act as authorized by the NJOEM and the NJ Department of Human Services. An NJOEM representative will act as Co-Chair for the advisory panel, liaison to NJOEM, and liaison member to other various related working groups and governmental jurisdictions.

GUIDING VALUES:

NJGAINED will use the following principles and values to guide its activities and decision-making processes:

1. Persons with access and functional needs range across every demographic sector of society. Emergency planning activities that address access and integration needs should consider functional models which underscore the dignity and right to self-determination of every human being.
2. Social service and health care providers, voluntary organizations active in disaster, community-based organizations and faith-based organizations have unique knowledge, skills and experiences which can inform planning, improve response, and help insure AFN populations have access to emergency facilities, communication and programs. These groups will be considered key stakeholders

in the emergency planning process and assets to disaster management programs.

3. Every life matters. “Emergency planning must embrace the value that everyone should survive, or when adverse conditions occur, they will not.” (adapted from National Council on Disability report 4/05)

DEFINITION OF ACCESS AND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS:

A function-based definition of special needs reflects the capabilities of the individual, not the condition, label or medical diagnosis. This definition is consistent with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Community Preparedness Guide 301: "Interim Emergency Planning Guide for Special Needs Populations," FEMA's Whole Community Planning philosophy, and FEMA's "Guidance on Planning for Integration of Functional Needs Support Services in General Population Shelters."

Access and functional needs populations are those whose members may have disaster-related needs before, during, and after an incident in functional areas, including but not limited to: maintaining independence, communication, transportation, supervision, and medical care. Individuals in need of additional response assistance may include those who have disabilities; who live in institutionalized or independent settings; who are elderly; who are unaccompanied children; who are from diverse cultures; who have limited English proficiency or are non-English speaking; or who are transportation disadvantaged.

Functional Areas:

- **Maintaining independence** - Individuals requiring support to be independent in daily activities may lose this support during an emergency or a disaster. This support may include supplies, durable medical equipment, and attendants or caregivers.
- **Communication** - Individuals who have limitations that interfere with the receipt of and response to information will need that information provided in methods they can understand and use. They may not be able to hear verbal announcements, see directional signs, or understand how to get assistance all because of hearing, vision, speech, cognitive, or intellectual limitations, and/or limited English proficiency.
- **Transportation** - Individuals who cannot drive or who do not have a vehicle may require transportation support for successful evacuation. This support may include accessible vehicles (e.g., lift-equipped or vehicles suitable for transporting individuals who use oxygen) or information about how and where to access mass transportation during an evacuation.
- **Supervision** - Before, during, and after an emergency individuals may lose the support of caregivers, family, or friends or may be unable to cope in a new environment. If separated from their caregivers, young children may be unable to identify themselves; and when in danger, they may lack the cognitive ability to assess the situation and react appropriately.
- **Medical care** - Individuals who are not self-sufficient or who do not have adequate support from caregivers, family, or friends may need assistance with:

managing unstable, terminal or contagious conditions that require observation and ongoing treatment; managing intravenous therapy, tube feeding, and vital signs; receiving dialysis, oxygen, and suction administration; managing wounds; and operating power dependent equipment to sustain life. These individuals require support of trained medical professionals.

OBLIGATIONS OF NJGAINED MEMBERS

The membership of NJGAINED will include emergency management professionals, social services and health care providers, voluntary organizations active in disaster, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations and other stakeholders representing the community of people with access and functional needs. NJGAINED members will uphold the decisions and policies of NJGAINED.

NJ GAINED members are expected to:

- Attend or phone into three NJGAINED meetings per year; or provide information to the NJGAINED leadership team regarding emergency preparedness activities.
- Adhere to the philosophy, policy, guidance and values of NJGAINED regarding disaster preparedness, and only represent NJGAINED as authorized by the NJOEM and the NJDHS.
- Agency members should have completed, or be working on a disaster business continuity plan.
- Take an active approach to problem solving, as evidenced by active participation in meetings, information-sharing regarding resources, and contributing solutions to issues presented during adverse conditions.

GENERAL PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS:

- Consistent and coordinated plans among jurisdictions allows for continuity of operations that benefit both the jurisdictions and the State.
- Considerations made for AFN populations are integral to every aspect of emergency planning. However, NJGAINED will primarily focus on those issues that are most complex and historically most common to communities of individuals with AFN and emergency managers during emergency/disaster planning, response and recovery.
- Some agencies/organizations that are part of NJGAINED, or local coalitions with a similar mission, may be unfamiliar with developing emergency plans and additional emergency management training may be necessary.
- There is a great deal of diversity within AFN populations. There is no “one quick fix” that will meet all the needs of people with AFN, but plans should include a variety of viable options. Some individuals have novel or uncommon access and functional needs which are not well understood. NJGAINED members can help increase stakeholder awareness and understanding regarding a wide range of access and functional needs.
- Individuals in need of response assistance have typically exhausted all other resources (family, neighbors, public transportation, etc.) and still need assistance with evacuation and/or sheltering before, during, and possibly after a disaster or emergency. These individuals typically reside in single homes or multiple family dwellings in the State and are not residents of hospitals, residential health care facilities, or any State or Federally-funded community-based residences or services that are already subject to emergency planning requirements.
- The recovery phase of a disaster is enhanced by recovery planning. Recovery planning should incorporate people with AFN and the agencies that serve them. NJGAINED members can serve as force multipliers regarding the deployment of disaster recovery programs.

GOALS/OBJECTIVES:

The **goals and objectives** of NJ SNAP are to:

1. Improve overall preparedness and response to people with access and functional needs during emergencies and disasters at the state, county and local levels.

Work will focus on three key areas:

Planning

- a. Continue to integrate AFN populations into the State Emergency Operations Plan. Continue to integrate accessible and inclusive sheltering capability into the NJ Statewide Mass Care Plan.
- b. Improve existing business contingency planning guidance for social service providers and other organizations serving individuals with access and functional needs.
- c. Develop planning template specific to accessible transportation and evacuation.
- d. Explore technology applications which will enhance the integration of access and functional needs populations into the emergency management process.
- e. Expand opportunities for and coordination of grant-funded projects in order to insure efficient use of federal and state resources.
- f. Develop strategies for integrating assistive technology resource providers into disaster resource management plans.
- g. Develop a disaster resource hotline for the community of professionals serving individuals with access and functional needs.
- h. Identify ways to outreach to individuals with AFN who are not receiving services from agencies, or who are not connected with the formal provision of services.

Training

- a. Continue field delivery of emergency management training courses to organizations which serve people with access and functional needs.
- b. Delivery of personal preparedness workshops to persons with access and functional needs via a “peer-to-peer,” or cohort model.

- c. Deliver Continuity of Operations Planning Courses for organizations which serve individuals with access and functional needs.
- d. Seek US Department of Homeland Security approval for the NJOEM “Community Emergency Response Teams – Working with the Access and Functional Needs Community” Awareness Level Course.
- e. Develop a “Community Emergency Response Teams – Working with the Access and Functional Needs Community” Operations Course.
- f. Support AFN training for Medical Reserve Corps volunteers.

Response

- a. Improve integration, inclusive, accessible and medical needs shelter readiness in all 21 counties.
- b. Promote the use of “Register Ready – New Jersey’s Special Needs Registry for Disasters” in all 21 counties.
- c. Explore ADA accessible and other transportation resources which may be available to aid transit dependent populations.
- d. Incorporate AFN resources into the NJOEM Resource Directory Database.
- e. Explore the potential to engage NJ 211/Find-a-Ride as a disaster transportation disaster resource.

2. Coordinate disaster recovery and business continuity capabilities at the local, regional and state levels.

- a. Increase social service providers’ level of disaster resilience through business continuity planning and mitigation activities.
- b. Continue to provide recommendations to the NJOEM, the OHSP and FEMA regarding (1) emergency planning for access and functional needs populations and (2) ways to enhance accessibility of disaster assistance programs during the recovery process.

3. Raise awareness of the NJGAINED as a unique information resource; advocate for access and functional needs emergency preparedness among all stakeholders.

- a. Explore opportunities for strategic partnerships with organizations who can aid in achieving the NJ GAINED's goals.
- b. Continue to update the NJGAINED page on the NJOEM Website.
- c. Continue to use mass media and social media to promote NJGAINED goals and objectives.
- d. Develop talking points and maintain consistent messaging regarding goals and activities related to NJGAINED.

4. Continue to develop the internal capabilities of NJGAINED as a critical asset to the New Jersey's emergency management infrastructure.

- a. Conduct NIMS and ICS-related training for NJGAINED members.
- b. Conduct periodic scenario-based emergency management training for the NJGAINED members.
- c. Provide presentations to NJGAINED members which will enhance their knowledge, skills and understanding of what is required to manage the disaster-related needs of access and functional needs populations.