

Emergency Preparedness Position Statement

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities supports the position that people with disabilities deserve respectful, prompt and efficient assistance during “shelter in place,” evacuation, and relocation resulting from a natural disaster or emergency event. Individuals must have access to appropriate and accessible transportation, shelter, medical and mental health care, and information on temporary support services. To achieve this, people with disabilities and their families, state agencies, first responders, relief workers, and local and state government must work together to create emergency preparedness systems and plans that are responsive to people with disabilities’ needs and stated preferences. There also must be a priority on people with disabilities and their families creating individual emergency preparedness plans.

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities supports the position that people with disabilities and their families must be involved in planning and implementing first responder and relief worker trainings that address the needs of people with disabilities in an emergency event, including accessible transportation, adherence to an individual’s existing emergency preparedness plan, and the importance of keeping families and other support networks, including service animals, together throughout the evacuation and relocation processes.

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities supports the following principles as integral to the health and safety of people with developmental disabilities during an emergency event:

- Individuals and families create, review and revise as necessary (at least annually) individual emergency preparedness plans, to include “shelter in place” plans, with support from long-term services and supports programs when appropriate;
- Confidentiality of personal and medical information included in an individual’s emergency preparedness plan or provided to any registry system or service provider;
- Participation of people with disabilities and families in developing local, regional, and state emergency preparedness plans, to include “shelter in place” plans, that are responsive to the needs and preferences of people with disabilities;
- Participation of people with disabilities and their families in developing trainings for first responders and relief workers on the needs of people with all disabilities during and after an emergency event, including information on invisible disabilities, self-determination, and preserving support networks; and

- Information on emergency preparedness and preparedness planning activities and resources must be available to everyone in plain language in a format that meets established accessibility standards for people with disabilities.

Approved February 5, 2016