

CCD Emergency Management Task Force Recommendations for the 117th Congress

Failure to consider those with access and functional needs in disaster planning, response and recovery has contributed to countless unnecessary injuries, deaths and institutionalization of people with disabilities over the last 25 years. Too often, emergency managers do not understand or forget their obligations as recipients of federal funding to comply with the Rehabilitation Act (Rehab Act) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in carrying out their duties. The CCD Emergency Management Task Force urges the 117th Congress to support the legislation outlined below to ensure that the consequences of future natural disasters and public health emergencies do not fall disproportionately on those with disabilities.

The Emergency Management Task Force makes the following recommendations for the 117th Congress:

- Passage of provisions in the Real Emergency Access for Aging and Disability Inclusion (READI) for Disasters Act. This legislation creates a comprehensive set of steps to ensure that disability inclusive training and technical assistance are incorporated into disaster planning and response; that reviews are undertaken by appropriate federal agencies to examine compliance with disability rights laws in past disasters; and that people with disabilities are afforded a seat at the table when federal policies and programs are undertaken with regard to public health emergencies and natural disasters.
- Passage of provisions in the Disaster Relief Medicaid Act (DRMA). This legislation aims to prevent unnecessary institutionalization of people with disabilities using home and community based services must evacuate out of their home state in the face of a natural disaster.

JOINT RECOMMENDATIONS

- With the CCD Rights Task Force, support measures to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are not violated when local and state governments adopt policies and procedures to respond to disasters and public health emergencies.
- With the CCD Health Task Force, support measures to ensure that vaccine protocols and other responses to COVID-19 and future pandemics treat people with disabilities equitably in their implementation.
- With the CCD Long Term Services and Supports Task Force, support measures to ensure that people with disabilities have access to home and community based services in natural disasters and public health emergencies.
- With the CCD Housing Task Force and National Low Income Housing Coalition's Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition, support measures to protect people with disabilities at risk of homelessness, displacement and forced institutionalization resulting from natural disasters and pandemics.