



CCD 2024 Emergency Task Force Annual Report

1. Brief Task Force Description or Mission Statement

The Emergency Management Task Force (TF) advocates for the rights of persons with disabilities as it relates to policies and services before, during, and after disasters to ensure everyone has access to needed supports and services. This might include reaching out to applicable federal agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), and the White House Domestic Policy Council. The TF also educates and advocates to Congress for necessary legislation to provide important services during disasters, and to ensure that people with disabilities are not left out of relevant policies. The TF also monitors active disaster impacts on people with disabilities and disability discrimination.

2. Issues the Task Force Worked on in 2024

- a. The TF continued to advocate for the Real Emergency Access for Aging and Disability Inclusion for Disasters Act (READI), S. 1049 / H.R. 2371.
- b. The TF continued to advocate for the Disaster Relief Medicaid Act (DRMA), S. 3120 / H.R. 6029.
- c. The TF also advocated and supported proposed Congressional funding such as certain budget appropriations that included disaster funding for disability and aging organizations responding to disasters.
- d. The TF also continued to monitor the reauthorization of the The Pandemic and all Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA), where one section of READI made it into PAHPA, Section 8: Crisis Standards of Care and Civil Rights Laws.

3. Three Issues the Task Force Anticipates Working on in 2025

- a. Enact the Real Emergency Access for Aging and Disability Inclusion (READI) for Disasters Act:

Support the passage of the READI for Disasters Act to ensure that emergency management policies and practices are inclusive and responsive to the needs of disabled people and older adults. This act would create a diverse advisory committee, mandate research, and provide funding for training and technical assistance that prioritize the needs of disabled people throughout disasters. We call for the expansion of disability-led, community-based disaster planning and response initiatives to ensure equal access and reduce harm to marginalized communities.

- b. Pass the Disaster Relief Medicaid Act (DRMA)

Advocate for the Disaster Relief Medicaid Act to guarantee that Medicaid recipients are not at risk of losing critical healthcare coverage and long term services and supports during and after disasters. This act would establish nationwide continuity of care for Medicaid beneficiaries, ensuring uninterrupted access to home- and community-based services (HCBS) across state lines during disasters and emergencies thus preventing unnecessary institutionalization and ensuring that disabled people receive the care and services they need wherever they are displaced.

- c. Address the Impact of Extreme Heat on Disabled People

Promote federal policies and legislation that mandates emergency management and public health systems to create comprehensive plans addressing the specific challenges extreme heat poses to disabled people. This includes investing in cooling centers, accessible transportation to safe cooling centers/resiliency hubs, and providing life-saving communication in formats accessible to everyone, including people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, and visually disabled. Legislative measures should prioritize climate resilience, centering on the needs of multiply-marginalized disabled people who are disproportionately affected by heat waves.

- d. Advocate for Full Accessibility and Equal Access

Ensure that federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Department of Justice (DOJ), fully comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act. Advocate for a systematic review and accountability measures to remove accessibility barriers, from communication and sheltering to transportation and recovery assistance.

4. Task Force Meeting Day of the Month and Meeting Time (Eastern)

Last Wednesday of the month, 2:00pm ET

5. 2024 Task Force Co-Chairs

Germán Parodi, The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies
Shaylin Sluzalis, The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies
Marcie Roth, World Institute on Disability