LOCAL GOVERNMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(As of July 3, 2019)

1. Can 2-1-1 provide information on individuals registered in my city?

No, 2-1-1 cannot provide you information from the registry. The call specialists at 2-1-1 do not have access to the database in order to retrieve information, only the forms to input the information. To obtain information from the registry, you will need to assign a data custodian and then you will be provided a UserID and Password to access the system. This requirement is for security purposes so that unauthorized individuals cannot obtain personal information on the registrants. A Data Custodian appointment form is located on the TDEM web site at: https://tdem.texas.gov/stear/

2. Who should be the data custodian?

The data custodian can be any individual the local government decides will be appropriate. Some examples are: EMCs, fire department or law enforcement staff members, health department, and volunteers. A data custodian can be assigned for a single city, several cities, a county or several counties. Some local governments who don't have enough staff members to participate in this program are pooling resources. This is especially helpful for those local governments who have only a few individuals registered.

3. Can there be more than one data custodian?

Local governments can assign as many data custodians they decide they need. Some data custodians are covering the entire county, other jurisdictions have assigned several. We do require that each data custodian be formally assigned so that they receive their own UserID and Password for the system. This is due to security reasons.

4. Who selects and appoints the Data Custodian?

The local government leadership should make the decision as to who they will assign as data custodians. The registry contains personal information on registrants and local governments should use caution when assigning a data custodian since they will have access to this information. Appointment must be made by the Judge, Mayor, County Commissioner, City Manager, or an appointed Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) for the city or county they are being appointed for.

5. What training is available for the selected data custodian?

TDEM periodically schedules a Data Custodian Training webinars. The training lasts for 1 ½ hours and are posted on PreparingTexas.org. Additionally, the training information is distributed to assigned data custodians as well as your TDEM District Coordinator. New custodians should review the official handbook and PowerPoint presentations for more information on STEAR.

6. How do I register as the data custodian?

An appointment form is available on the TDEM web site at:
https://tdem.texas.gov/stear/ *. The completed form can be mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to TDEM to the address on the form. Once assigned, the data custodian will receive an e-mail from with their UserID and Password and instructions on how to access the registry.*

7. Can 2-1-1 be the Data Custodian?

No, 2-1-1 cannot act as a local government data custodian.

8. Can we use a volunteer organization to assist with Data Custodian duties?

Yes. Many jurisdictions utilize volunteers to assist with data custodian duties and some have assigned a volunteer as the data custodian. The registry contains personal information on registrants and local governments should use caution when assigning a data custodian since they will have access to this information.

9. Can the state geocode registrants for cities and counties?

While the capability is not currently available, TDEM continues to look at solutions to assist with geo-coding STEAR data.

10.   Can cities and counties correct registrations directly into the system?

Yes, STEAR custodians can make corrections, deactivate, and remove old entries.

11.   Has anyone on the STEAR Committee used the STEAR data for a disaster response?

Yes, several local jurisdictions have user STEAR data in preparation for disaster events and in response to them. Here are just a few examples on

how STEAR data has been used; Harris County and the City of Corpus Christi used their STEAR data in response to Hurricane Harvey. In addition, TDEM used STEAR data for search and rescue operations for both Hurricane Ike and Hurricane Harvey, and the 2016 Floods. TDEM also provided STEAR data to the communities of Franklin in Robertson Count and Alto in Cherokee County after being impacted by tornado events to assist with identifying STEAR registrants during search and rescue operations. Grayson County used their STEAR data to determine who in their county affected by the power outages were power dependent and conducted welfare checks.

12. What information from STEAR can we share with volunteer fire departments and others who might provide transportation for those registered?

That depends upon the local government's decision on how they plan to use the information. If your volunteer fire departments assist with evacuation or provide assistance to individuals with needs during a response, then yes, you can provide the information to them. Some local governments provide the information to fire departments, emergency medical services, law enforcement agencies and others, and geocode the information so that first responders can use the information for response.

13. Is there a template available to incorporate STEAR into our emergency management plan?

No, there is not currently a template that can be used to incorporate the use of STEAR data into your emergency management plan. Please feel free to speak to your Regional Planner in the TDEM Plans Unit about working with you on incorporating this into your planning documents. As part of the preparedness activities for your city/county, STEAR data custodians should practice accessing their registry information for all hazards.

14. Is there a web site where the STEAR information is available?

Yes, STEAR information can be found on the TDEM web site at:
https://tdem.texas.gov/stear/

15. If a jurisdiction chooses not to participate, are residents informed of that decision?

The STEAR Committee is in the process of developing a method in which local governments who do not participate in the STEAR Program are informed if they have registrants registered in STEAR. This is to ensure they have visibility on possible interest in the program by their residents.

Participation in the STEAR Program is voluntary for local governments. All forms used for registration, flyers, and 2-1-1 provide disclaimers that inform the registrant that that local governments use information in STEAR in different ways and that they should check with the local emergency management office to determine how their information is used.

16.   What is the level of expectations created by a resident who registers?

As mentioned above, registrants are provided disclaimers when registering it DOES NOT guarantee specific services during an emergency and registrants must have an emergency plan of their own as well.

17.   Can the database be broken down by jurisdictional area and if not, at what level can the information be separated?

Database information is provided primarily by Zip Code within cities and counties. The information can be exported from the registry database in MS Excel or comma separated value (.csv) format. The MS Excel spreadsheet can be filtered by any column in the document. CSV format is used for importing into databases. Data custodians should review registrants to determine if they fall into their jurisdiction. Once determined, notify STEAR@tdem.texas.gov with the information. They will associate those individuals within your jurisdiction and disassociate those that don't belong to you.

Additional questions please contact **STEAR** or

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