

# Specialty Care Populations

Implementation of Sec 982.054

State of Texas

July 2020

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## Executive Summary

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After Hurricane Harvey, not all shelters were equipped to properly care for certain specialty care populations, such as those that are technology-dependent. For example, a number of dialysis centers closed due to Harvey and shelters were not equipped to handle the influx of dialysis patients; thus the patients were transferred to hospital ERs that were already beyond their care capacity. These populations would later be identified as following under those with access and functional needs. Those with access and functional needs may include, but are not limited to, individuals with disabilities, seniors, and populations having limited English proficiency, limited access to transportation, and/or limited access to financial resources to prepare for, respond to and recover from an emergency.

During the 86<sup>th</sup> Legislature Senate Bill 982 was enrolled that added Sec 418.05 to the Texas Government code. This section called upon the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) to assist entities that have established emergency management plans to develop additional plans and guidance to increase the capabilities of local emergency shelters in the provision of shelter and care for specialty care populations during a disaster.

TDEM and DSHS, through internal assessments, found that guidance and training is available through both TDEM and DSHS training modules, online toolkits and outreach programs currently being incorporated for both cities and counties. These trainings use the term those with access and functional needs to encompass those that are described as “medically needy.” It was decided that while the training and guidance was current and adequate, methods of distribution and publication of the material can be improved on.

The TDEM Preparedness Division to include the Training and Planning Units, members of the Disaster Recovery Task Force and members of the State of Texas Disability Task Force (DTF) are working together to ensure that current and future information continues to be disseminated to our emergency management partners and council agencies. TDEM requested the Task Force because it which serves as a resource to TDEM to provide input to the Texas emergency management community in enhancing state and local emergency management planning and response and to promote preparedness efforts for Texans with disabilities.

TDEM plans to incorporate these recommendations in trainings, workshops and exercises required by the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) Program which provides Federal funds to assist local, territorial and tribal governments in preparing for all hazards. The EMPG Program plays an important role in the implementation of the National Preparedness System by supporting the building, sustainment and delivery of core capabilities essential to achieving the National Preparedness Goal of a secure and resilient nation. The incorporation of functional needs support services related materials into the EMPG Program will increase the likelihood of local and regional jurisdictions awareness and understanding of the whole community approach in their jurisdictions.

## Overview

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### Goal

Education and training of local jurisdictions of current guidance, trainings and workshops that are available, teaching best practices in recognizing, communicating with, and working with people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs to enable individuals to maintain their health, safety and independence in general population shelters.

### Objectives

- Identification of training and education materials for local jurisdictions.
- Develop training and education materials to supplement existing materials.
- Implementation of materials into existing trainings tied to Emergency Management Performance Grant and creation of workshops for future conference presentations.
- Implementation of guidance to existing trainings and workshops for local jurisdictions.

# Authority

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Include authority for project (legislation or pieces of legislation or other authorities)

Authors: [Senator Lois Kolkhorst](#) (District 18)

Coauthor: [Senator Eddie Lucio](#) (District 27)

Sponsor: Former Representative John Zerwas (District 28)

## **For more information:**

Texas Legislature Online

<https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=86R&Bill=SB982>

# Stakeholders

Members are identified in the chart below.

Agency	Summary
<a href="#">Texas Division of Emergency Management</a> (TDEM)	The Texas Division of Emergency Management is charged with carrying out a comprehensive all-hazard emergency management program for the state and for assisting cities, counties, and state agencies in planning and implementing their emergency management programs.
<a href="#">Department of State Health Services</a> (DSHS)	The Texas Department of State Health Services job is to promote and protect the health of people, and the communities where they live, learn, work, worship, and play.
<a href="#">Disability Task Force</a> (DTF)	This task force serves as a resource to TDEM to provide input to the Texas emergency management community that will enhance state and local emergency management planning and response and promote preparedness efforts for Texans with disabilities.
<a href="#">Disaster Recovery Task Force</a> (DRTF)	The Texas Disaster Recovery Task Force was developed to assist jurisdictions that have been impacted by an emergency or disaster to recover more efficiently by starting the process early in the response phase. Task Force Members will assist with training, development of procedures, dissemination of the most current recovery information and can respond to support local jurisdictions during and event.
<a href="#">TDEM Preparedness Division</a>	To support and enhance Texas preparedness for any emergency by managing a comprehensive planning, training and exercise program and by developing products and communication that support the emergency management community.
<a href="#">TDEM Unit Chief- Mass Care</a>	Manage the planning, training and coordination with state, federal, voluntary disaster relief organizations and private sector partners for comprehensive mass care operations (sheltering and/or feeding) to address the needs of all populations during disaster or emergency event response operations.
<a href="#">Texas Voluntary Agencies Active in Disasters</a> (TxVOAD)	Texas VOAD serves as a forum for member and partner organizations to share knowledge and resources throughout the disaster cycle- preparation, response, recovery and mitigation. It seeks to eliminate duplication and achieve resource coordination through Cooperation, Communication, Coordination and Collaboration.

# Background, Discussion and Recommendations

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## Overview

After Hurricane Harvey, not all shelters were equipped to properly care for certain medically needy populations or those with access and functional needs. For example, a number of dialysis centers closed due to Harvey and shelters were not equipped to handle the influx of dialysis patients; thus the patients were transferred to hospital ERs that were already beyond their care capacity.

## Concept of Operations

Since the publication of FEMA's Guidance on Planning for Integration of Functional Needs Support Services in General Populations, TDEM has worked ensure that local jurisdictions incorporate the whole community approach in their planning process. Whole community is defined by FEMA as a means by which residents, emergency management practitioners, organizational and community leaders, and government officials can collectively understand and assess the needs of their respective communities and determine the best ways to organize and strengthen their assets, capacities, and interests.

In the spring of 2011, TDEM in coordination other state agencies, local emergency management and disability advocacy groups formed the [Functional Needs Support Services Committee](#) to assist local jurisdictions in the changing of plans to reflect the new guidance passed down by FEMA. The committee was charged with reviewing and revising already existing planning documents, trainings, and workshops to incorporate necessary changes. As revisions were made the committee created the State of Texas Functional and Access Needs Support Services Toolkit as a guide to local jurisdictions in the enhancement of their current local emergency management plans.

The committee has evolved into what is now called the [Texas Disability Task Force](#). The Texas Disability Task Force on Emergency Management (Task Force) serves as a resource to TDEM to provide input to the Texas emergency management community that would assist in enhancing state and local emergency management planning and response and to promote preparedness efforts for Texans with disabilities.

In response to a need to socialize the Task Force, its products and changes to local emergency management partners, TDEM developed an awareness campaign which would target the areas of the state that continue to need assistance in plan development and updates to new and changing policies.

The awareness campaign is made up of three components:

- Planning documents
- Training Products
- Workshops and roadshows

## **Planning Documents**

TDEM in coordination with the Task Force continues to offer updates in language and guidance into future revisions of the Local and Regional Jurisdiction Plan Template, state planning documents and council documents when requested.

Each year the templates are reviewed, items deemed no longer viable are removed, and best practices or guidance changes are added in. As jurisdictions are required by Chapter 418 of the Texas Government Code to submit updated plans every 5 years to TDEM for review, this will allow information regarding planning for those with access and functional needs to be viewed and if applicable for their program integrated by local city and county officials for future plan updates.

## **Training Products**

TDEM will develop a suite of training products to be used for awareness, recruitment, and just in time training. These products will involve members of local emergency management and those with access and functional needs and will highlight best practices for the planning process. They will end up with a call-to-action informing local jurisdictions where to go to get support for best practices on involving those from the community. TDEM have already begun discussions and project collaboration with subject matter experts in the field for creation of the training materials.

Select training courses, already being taught by TDEM and offered through PreparingTexas.org, will have supplemental information added to include the need for whole community planning in the training and point of contacts for program guidance from the Task Force. G-235 Advanced Planning and G-108 Community Mass Care are examples of courses this awareness training will be added to.

## **Workshops and Road Shows**

To disseminate information to a wide audience of emergency management professionals, TDEM will hold a series of virtual road shows where presenters will discuss a variety of sheltering and planning processes and ideas. These road shows will be open to all emergency management personnel, agency partners, and volunteer organizations active in disaster.



**For More Information**

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