



## Meeting minutes- San Patricio Health Equity Task Force Meeting #16

**Date/Time:** February 11, 2025, 10:30 am – 11:30 pm central time

### **Attendees:**

Seferina Cortez  
Laura Flores  
Vada McGlothlin  
Janna Shoe  
Katy Hernandez  
Sylvia Balli  
Viola Monrreal

Sierra  
Amy Villarreal  
Jes R  
Victoria Pena  
Alexandria  
Judy Telge  
Denzel Otokunri

### **Meeting Facilitators:**

- Dee Grimm
- Kimberly Watson
- Christina Alfaro

### **Executive Summary:**

- Continuing the virtual whiteboard process, identifying major challenges in emergency management for people with disabilities, including transportation issues, provider competency concerns, and accessible communication problems.
- Key issues discussed included inaccessible websites, lack of multilingual emergency information, insufficient training for long-term care facilities, and inadequate public education on emergency planning.
- The group prepared to identify strategies for resolving these gaps in the next meeting, scheduled for March 11th, with Dee Grimm tasked to review survey responses for additional communication issues.

### **Meeting Notes:**

#### **Meeting Overview and Introductions**

- Dee Grimm opened the meeting, mentioning technical issues with their camera
- Kimberly (Kimberly) welcomed everyone and thanked them for participating
- The agenda was shared in the chat room
- The meeting continued the virtual whiteboard process from previous sessions

#### **Review of Previous Discussions**

##### **Transportation Issues**

- Two major problem areas identified:
  - Lack of resources
    - Lack of understanding of the process for getting and using resources
    - Lack of existing agreements for local assets

- Not knowing the source of resources
- Insufficient funding
- Staffing issues (drivers)
- Decision-making challenges
  - Conflicts between local and state-level processes, especially for evacuations
  - Local jurisdictions not understanding the evacuation process
  - Hesitation to loan assets due to liability concerns

### **Provider Competency Concerns**

- Two main themes identified:
  - Lack of awareness or knowledge
    - Lack of experience or exposure to people with disabilities
    - Implicit bias about people with disabilities
    - Lack of support from agency leadership for staff education
    - Insufficient understanding of community demographics
    - Lack of knowledge from caregivers or persons with disabilities themselves
    - People with disabilities not being at decision-making tables
  - Lack of training
    - Insufficient funding for training
    - Lack of support from leadership for training
    - Assumptions about existing knowledge
    - Lack of training about processes for helping people with disabilities

### **Accessible Communication Challenges**

#### **Website Accessibility**

- Many websites don't meet ADA guidelines
- Inaccessible websites were identified as a significant issue
- Janna Shoe noted that many websites have small font sizes, making them difficult to read
- Minimum font size should be 12 point, with 14 or 16 point being preferable
- City and county websites often have outdated information, with updates being 2-3 years old

#### **Multiple Communication Modalities**

- Need for information in different languages and formats
- Importance of large print materials
- Consideration for Spanish speakers who may not be able to read Spanish
- Need for captioning and ASL interpreters in public communications
- Janna Shoe mentioned that some agencies, like Steer, provide applications in both English and Spanish
- Lack of multilingual information on many city and county websites

#### **Internet Access and Technology Issues**

- Disparity in information sources between age groups (under 40 vs. over 40)
- Younger generations relying more on apps and streaming services for information

- Potential lack of access to traditional news sources for some demographics
- Viola mentioned a pilot project addressing internet access issues in rural areas, particularly for older populations
- The project aimed to combat social isolation and improve communication during emergencies
- A waiting list exists for people wanting to participate in the internet access program

## **Public Information Dissemination Problems**

### **Social Media and Online Presence**

- Inconsistent use of social media platforms for emergency information
- Need for bilingual (English and Spanish) press conferences
- Importance of having ASL interpreters visible during press conferences
- Positive example: City of Ingleside using Facebook Live with closed captioning for emergency updates
- Janna Shoe noted that Facebook is often the most up-to-date source for community information during disasters
- Many cities and counties lack staff to maintain updated social media presence

### **Lack of Public Information Officers and Scripts**

- Kimberly highlighted the lack of Public Information Officers (PIOs) and prepared scripts in San Patricio County
- Need for PIO training in jurisdictions
- Importance of having prepared scripts for various emergency scenarios
- Only one PIO for the entire county, potentially lacking necessary qualifications
- Absence of pre-written scripts for emergency situations

## **Emergency Planning and Training Gaps**

### **Long-Term Care Facilities**

- Lack of understanding of emergency management processes in long-term care facilities
- Janna Shoe reported that nursing homes and assisted living facilities don't receive training on NIMS (National Incident Management System) or ICS (Incident Command System)
- Facilities often don't understand local processes for evacuations or resource requests
- Long-term care facilities frequently call emergency operations centers for generators during emergencies

### **General Public Emergency Planning**

- Challenges in educating and preparing the general public for emergencies
- Judy Telge noted that many people don't understand what emergency planning encompasses
- Common response from the public: "Tell me what my options are, then I'll tell you what my plan is"
- Need for more guidance on what to consider in emergency planning (e.g., evacuation locations, transportation)
- Suggestion to improve the public information process regarding emergency planning

### **Next Steps and Action Items**

- Participants encouraged to think about additional gaps in accessible communication for the next session
- Dee Grimm to review survey responses for additional communication issues to discuss
- Updated whiteboard to be shared on the resource website
- Next session aims to wrap up the discussion on communication issues
- Next meeting scheduled for March 11th
- Participants asked to review the four focus areas and identify any remaining gaps
- Group to begin identifying strategies for resolution in the next meeting

End of Meeting Minutes