



Functional Assessment Service Team (FAST) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

FAQs for potential FAST Members

Question: What is a FAST and what is their purpose?

Answer: FAST is a team of 2-8 trained members that will deploy to general population shelters to conduct functional assessments of People with Access and Functional Needs (PAFN) as they arrive at the shelters. FAST members would also determine what resources are needed to accommodate the PAFN so they can remain at the shelter. FASTs will be deployed as requested to shelters and remain at the shelters until it is determined that they are no longer needed. FASTs may transfer to other shelters and will return to shelters as needed or requested.

Question: What qualifications do you need to become a FAST member?

Answer: FAST members will possess the knowledge, skills, and ability to work in their area of expertise, as well as a minimum of two years experience working with and assessing the needs of these populations.

FAST consist of members with experience in the following areas:

- Aging (services/supports, including dietary needs)
- Chronic health conditions
- Developmental/cognitive/intellectual disabilities
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Mental health disabilities
- Physical disabilities
- Substance abuse
- Blind/Vision loss

Question: What and/or who make up a FAST?

Answer: A FAST consists of trained government employees and community based organization (CBO) personnel ready to respond and deploy to disaster areas to work in shelters.

Question: What are the responsibilities of a FAST?

Answer: FASTs will work side by side with shelter personnel and other emergency response workers to assist in identifying and meeting essential functional needs so that PAFN can maintain their health, safety and independence during disasters. FASTs will act to get durable medical equipment (DME), consumable medical supplies (CMS), prescribed medications, or a personal assistant to assist with essential activities of daily living.

Question: How do I become a FAST member?

Answer: You will fill out an application for the training which you want to attend. After your application is approved you will be notified. You will attend one of sessions that will be offered throughout California. Locations for the 2011-2012 year are still being determined. You may refer to the CDSS website at: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/dis/PG1909.htm> for information about the training. If you complete and pass the training, you will go through a background check, and they you will be given a FAST vest and badge.

Question: How will I be trained for FAST duties?

Answer: FAST training will be held at several locations in the state, normally held between January and June. Refer to the training bulletin and the CDSS website at: <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/dis/PG1909.htm> for details about the training.

Question: Will I be on a county FAST in the county that I work in or where I took the training at?

Answer: The intention of holding training in counties is to develop county teams. The selection of who attends training for sessions will be done by the county personnel in those counties that are sponsoring the training. The expectation is that by being selected for the training you will be on a county FAST from the county that you work in. If you are from a private non-profit and you work for a county that does not have FAST, you may be requested to be deployed as part of a FAST from a neighboring county or from a FAST that is being deployed by the state.

Question: Do I get paid while deployed on FAST assignment?

Answer: Yes you will be paid, unless you are serving purely as a volunteer. If you are a government employee, you will be paid by your department/agency based on your labor agreement. If you are an employee of a CBO, specific conditions must be met before you and your organization will be paid/reimbursed for the costs related to

your deployment. CDSS is working with Cal EMA to develop processes related to the passage of Assembly Bill 903. This law signed into law in 2008, allows CBOs and PNPs to be reimbursed for costs related to responding to a declared disaster. How much you get paid and how much your CBO will be reimbursed is still being determined. The Stafford Act and the California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) already allows government entities to be reimbursed at a 75/25 cost share for federal or state declaration of emergency response costs

Question: Can I be sued as a FAST member?

Answer: CDSS has received a legal ruling regarding liability for FAST members who are performing FAST-related duties. The legal issues related to performing FAST duties would be the same as the legal issues related to you performing normal duties at your normal work place. Your employer could be incurring liabilities when you are deployed as a FAST member.

Question: Am I covered under workers compensation insurance while I am deployed as a FAST member.

Answer: If you are a government employee, workers compensation insurance is a benefit that your employing department offers as a condition of your employment. You should establish with your employer that you are still covered under the workers compensation policy when you are deployed as a FAST member. The same is true if you are an employee of a CBO. Since the duties that FAST members perform are different from the normal duties that are performed as part of your employment, you should check to make sure that you are covered under your department's or organization's workers compensation policy.

If you are purely a volunteer you should contact the FAST coordinator for your county and apply/be sworn into the position of Disaster Service Worker Volunteer Program. In this way you will be covered under workers compensation and be protected from liability.

Question: How long and where will I work if I get assigned to FAST?

Answer: FAST deployments for county teams will normally be within the county and not last more than a few days. During a catastrophic disaster, FAST members may be deployed up to 15 days. If you are a member of a state FAST, you could be deployed anywhere in the state.

Question: Do I have to sign an agreement to be on FAST?

Answer: At this time there are no agreements that FAST members have to sign with CDSS or Cal EMA. If a member's employer requires an agreement, it will be at their discretion. You and your supervisor will sign the application stating that you understand the commitment to the program and for the training.

Question: Are there any prerequisites for the FAST training?

Answer: Completion of IS 700 and IS 800 is highly recommended before taking the FAST training class so that participants have some familiarity with emergency management language and acronyms. The classes are free and available to take on-line at: <http://training.fema.gov/IS/NIMS.asp>

Question: Are there any costs related to the training?

Answer: The training is free. If overnight travel or other travel-related expenses are incurred, those costs are the responsibility of the participant or his or her department/organization.

Question: What clearance or permission do I need to have in order to take the training or to respond to a disaster as a FAST member?

Answer: The application to take the training requires that the supervisor sign the application as an approval to take the training and understand what is involved in committing to be a FAST member.

Question: Do I have to have a background check done to become a FAST member?

Answer: To receive certification and be credentialed as a FAST member on a state FAST, FAST members will have a background check done on them. Having committed a felony or any sexual offenses will disqualify FAST members. County FAST members may have different requirements.

Question: Do I have to wear a uniform?

Answer: Upon completion of the certification process, FAST members will receive a vest and a badge that they will be expected to wear while working as a FAST member for easy identification within the shelter.