



# Functional Assessment Service Teams (FAST)



People with access and functional needs can (and must) be accommodated in general population emergency shelters when given the proper support. Meeting the needs of people with access and functional needs requires proper planning pre-incident and proper coordination during the incident. Support for this needs to come from government, non-governmental organizations, faith and community based organizations, and private sources. **Functional Assessment Service Teams (FASTs) will help assess people with access and functional needs and assist them by getting what they need to stay in a shelter.**

## Overview of FAST

Developed in California in 2006, Functional Assessment Service Teams (FASTs) are teams of trained social service professionals ready to respond to work in emergency shelters. FASTs work with emergency shelter personnel to conduct assessments for people with access and functional needs in community and American Red Cross emergency shelters. FASTs are deployed as the shelters open and work until no longer needed, or they may support several shelters. FASTs support the process of acquiring potential resources for people with access and functional needs. These resources may include durable medical equipment (DME), consumable medical supplies (CMS), essential medications, communication access and personal assistants. FAST members must possess the knowledge, skills and abilities to work in their area of specialty, and have an in-depth knowledge of populations they serve, their cultures, and service networks.

A fully staffed FAST has members with experience in the following areas:

- Aging (services/supports)
- Chronic health needs
- Vision loss
- Mental health disabilities
- Developmental and other cognitive disabilities (i.e. traumatic brain injury)
- Hearing loss
- Physical disabilities
- People Experiencing Homelessness
- Substance abuse issues

Pierce County Department of Emergency Management developed a FAST program in September 2011 to expand the California model to meet the needs of people with access and functional needs of the Washington area during disasters. This has moved Washington one step closer to FEMA's concept of Whole Community by integrating people with access and functional needs into general emergency shelters. To date, Pierce County Department of Emergency Management has trained over 30 people as FAST members.

## Trainings

**New member training:** Two-day new member trainings are held twice a year in May and October at the Pierce County Emergency Operations Center.

**Monthly Meetings:** FAST members attend monthly meetings, which focus on a different discipline. The purpose is to give an overview of the discipline and some quick pointers to FAST members who are not familiar with the issues surrounding the discipline. These meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. at the Pierce County Emergency Operations Center. Those interested in becoming FAST members are invited to participate in monthly meetings prior to attending training.

**FAST Unit Leader Training:** This training is for FAST members who wish to serve as unit leaders during deployment. This 6 hour training will cover Unit Leader roles and responsibilities, resource prioritization, effective leadership and conflict resolution. The first Unit Leader training will be held in August 2014 at the Pierce County Emergency Operations Center.

For more information visit our website at [www.piercecountywa.org/FAST](http://www.piercecountywa.org/FAST)

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