



IAEM-NEMA Joint Task Force

Quick Reference Glossary of Terminology for Emergency Management Whole Community Planning Efforts

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Overview Statement:

Recent events have served to highlight the importance of planning for and with people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs (PWD/AFN) to better prepare for, respond to, and recover from, disasters.

This Reference Glossary of Terminology is the product of a joint initiative between representatives of state and local emergency management to provide a road map for inclusive emergency planning to be used by emergency management practitioners. The goal of this Glossary is to provide in one easy to use document the appropriate and current terminology as plans, procedures, and protocols are drafted to include language pertaining to people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.

The Glossary is a chart with the following column headings: acronym, terminology, definition, and source. This provides the user the ability to understand the meaning and, therefore, how best to use any given term in full or by its acronym in writing. And the source listing enables the user to further explore appropriate and related materials from a vetted authoritative location.

This Glossary resides on both the IAEM and NEMA websites where this document and other resources and information is housed.

Recognizing the significance of disability and access and functional needs planning, the National Emergency Management Association and International Association of Emergency Managers identified this work as a joint priority.

Executive Summary:

Planning for and with people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs (PWD/AFN) is an important component in the development and execution of emergency management plans, policies and procedures. To do so accurately includes using the currently accepted terminology and appropriate definitions in written format as well as spoken communication.

This Glossary will assist emergency manager practitioners to easily and quickly select and use with confidence the appropriate terms and understand the definitions as sourced by vetted authorities. This will ensure consistency and accuracy. This Glossary is intended to be used as a

guidance document and is not mandatory; while comprehensive it is not all inclusive and will continue to evolve overtime; not all items will be applicable to all jurisdictions and some items will not be in depth enough for others. Each jurisdiction should add to this Glossary locally used terms in consultation with your many stakeholders to truly reflect your community.

This document was developed by the IAEM Special Needs Caucus with review by the Joint IAEM-NEMA Disability, Access & Functional Needs Task Force.

Special thanks to all IAEM Special Needs Caucus Members who participated in the development of this guidance document.

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Emergency Management Whole Community Planning Efforts**

ACRONYM /TERM	TERMINOLOGY	DEFINITION	SOURCE
1. Access	Access	The term "access" means those actions, services, accommodations, and programmatic, architectural, and communication modifications that a covered entity must undertake or provide to afford individuals with disabilities a full and equal opportunity to use and enjoy programs, services, activities, goods, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations in the most integrated setting, in light of the exigent circumstances of the emergency and the legal obligation to undertake advance planning and prepare to meet the disability-related needs of individuals who have disabilities as defined by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, P.L. 110-325, and those associated with them	DOJ
2. AD/AT	Assistive Device/Assistive Technology	Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities	DOJ
3. ADA Act of 1990	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990	The ADA is one of America's most comprehensive pieces of civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination and guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in the mainstream of American life -- to enjoy employment opportunities, to purchase goods and services, and to participate in State and local government programs and services. Modeled after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin – and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, ADA is an "equal opportunity" law for people with disabilities	DOJ
4. ADL	Activity of Daily Life/Living	Basic personal activities of daily living (bathing, eating, dressing, mobility, toileting, etc.)	DHHS
5. AFN/PAFN/DAFN	Access and Functional Needs/Person with Access and Functional Needs, Disability	Refers to a person's needs before, during and after an incident in functional areas, including but not limited to: maintaining independence, communication, transportation, supervision, and medical care, may also refer to modifications to programs, facilities, procedures and services. Acronym should not be used to describe people	FEMA CAL OES
6. AL	Assisted Living	Residential care services that includes some assistance with ADL's (Activities of Daily Living) but does not include nursing services such as administration of medication	DHHS

	ACRONYM	TERMINOLOGY	DEFINITION	SOURCE
7.	ASL	American Sign Language/ Sign Language	American Sign Language (ASL) is a visual language. With signing, the brain processes linguistic information through the eyes. The shape, placement, and movement of the hands, as well as facial expressions and body movements, all play important parts in conveying information. Sign language is not a universal language -- each country has its own sign language, and regions have dialects, much like the many languages spoken all over the world. Like any spoken language, ASL is a language with its own unique rules of grammar and syntax. Like all languages, ASL is a living language that grows and changes over time	NAD
8.	Blind	Blind	A person with vision loss, person with low or no functional vision	FEMA
9.	Braille	Braille	Braille is a series of raised dots that can be read with the fingers by people who are blind or whose eyesight is not sufficient for reading printed material. Braille is not a language. Rather, it is a code by which languages may be written and read	American Foundation Blind (AFB)
10.	CC	Closed Captioning	A service for persons with hearing disabilities that translates television program dialog into written words on the television screen	FCC
11.	CERT	CERT	The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates individuals in disaster preparedness at the community level to support professional emergency responders	FEMA
12.	CILs	Centers for Independent Living	Community based, non-residential organizations that help create opportunities for, and eliminate discrimination against people with disabilities	FEMA
13.	CMIST	5 functional planning areas	Five functional areas to address in planning (from FAST Training); Communication, Maintaining Health, Independence, Safety, support and self-determination and Transportation	FAST, FEMA E/L0197
14.	CMS/ DME	Consumable Medical Supplies or Durable Medical Equipment	Medical supplies that are necessary for the person with a disability, CMS refers to those items that are a onetime use (medication, diapers, bandages, etc.)	FEMA
16.	Cognitive Disability	Cognitive disability	Deterioration or loss of intellectual capacity which may require support, assistance, may require limited to full supervision, may impact short or long term memory, orientation or reasoning	DHHS
17.	DD	Developmental Disability	A severe, chronic disability attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments; is manifested before the age of 22, is likely to continue indefinitely, results in substantial functional limitations in three or more major life activities Acronym should not be used to describe people.	DHHS

	ACRONYM	TERMINOLOGY	DEFINITION	SOURCE
18.	Dementia	Dementia	Term which describes a group of diseases (including Alzheimer's) which are characterized by memory loss and other deficits in mental functioning	DHHS
19.	DME	Durable Medical Equipment	Equipment such as hospital beds, wheel chairs, ventilator, oxygen system, home dialysis, prosthetics used at home. Also called home medical equipment	DHHS
20.	Disabled/ Disability	Disabled, Disability (Individual with)	A physical or mental impairment substantially limiting one or more major life activities. See ADA Amendment Act www.ada.gov/pubs/ada.htm	ADA FEMA
21.	Emergency	Emergency	As identified by the Stafford Act "any occasion or instance for which, in the determination of the President, Federal Assistance is needed to supplement State and local efforts and capabilities to save lives and to protect property and public health and safety, or to lessen or avert the threat of a catastrophe in any part of United States."	FEMA
22.	EOP	Emergency Operations Plan	An all hazards Plan which defines the scope of preparedness, response and recovery efforts for a given jurisdiction to include roles and responsibilities, establishing lines of authority for responding to a wide variety of potential hazards	FEMA
23.	Emergency Shelter	Emergency Shelter	Facilities used solely for out-of-home placement on a short-term basis during periods or sudden emergency, pending formulation or long-term solutions. Often referred to as Mass Care Shelter or General Population Shelter	DHHS
24.	ESF & ESF6	Emergency Support Functions and ESF 6	A grouping of government and certain private sector capabilities into an organizational structure to provide support, resources and services. There are 15 ESF's	FEMA NRP
25.	FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency	The Federal Agency that is committed to preparing individuals and strengthening communities before, during and after disasters happen	FEMA
26.	FEMA ODIC	FEMA ODIC	FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination, an office that provides guidance and technical assistance to achieve equal access to physical, program and effective communication and reasonable modifications inclusive of the whole community during the planning, response, recovery, and mitigation phases of emergencies	FEMA ODIC
27.	FMLA	Family Medical Leave Act	A 1993 federal law requiring employers with more than 50 employees to provide eligible workers up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for birth, adoptions, foster care, and illnesses of employees and their families	DHHS
28.	FN/AFN	Functional Needs/Access and Functional Needs	A person who may require physical, program or effective communication access and may have additional needs before, during or after an incident in functional areas, including but not limited to: independence, communication, transportation and health maintenance. Acronym should not be used to describe people	FEMA
29.	FNSS	Functional Needs Support Services	Services enabling persons with disabilities to maintain their usual level of independence in a general emergency shelter	FEMA

	ACRONYM	TERMINOLOGY	DEFINITION	SOURCE
30.	FAST	Functional Assessment Service Team	Trained government employees, nonprofit organizations and volunteers who will assist people with disabilities in an emergency shelter	FEMA
31.	Handicapped	Handicapped	Old and offensive terminology – Preferred terminology either Person with a disability or Access and Functional Needs	DHHS
32.	Hearing impairments	Hearing Loss	Complete or partial loss of ability to hear caused by a variety of conditions acquired before birth or at any time throughout one’s life hearing loss may partially or completely prevents the receipt of sounds through the ear. If the loss is mild, the person has difficulty hearing faint or distant speech. A person with this degree of hearing loss may use a hearing aid to amplify sounds. If the hearing loss is severe, the person may not be able to distinguish any sounds	DO-IT
33.	Hospice	Hospice	Program that provides palliative & supportive care for terminally ill patients and their families.	DHHS
34.	ILC/CIL	Independent Living Center, Center for Independent Living	Centers for Independent Living are community-based, cross-disability, non-profit organizations that are designed and operated by people with disabilities. CILs are unique in that they operate according to a strict philosophy of consumer control, wherein people with all types of disabilities directly govern and staff the organization	NCIL
35.	ILF	Independent Living Facility	A program in which services are not included as part of the rent, although services may be available on site and may be purchased by residents.	DHHS
36.	Impairment	Impairment	A physiological disorder or condition, affecting one or more body systems	ADA
37.	Intellectual Disability	Intellectual Disability	Replaces the offensive term “mental retardation”. The terms “mental retardation” and “mentally retarded” were legally stripped from federal health, education, and labor policy in 2010. Intellectual Disability is characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18	AAIDD
38.	IPAWS	Integrated Public Alert & Warning System	An alert system designed to give the President ability to deliver messages to the American people. Alerts are delivered directly from cell tower to cell phone through a one way broadcast	FEMA
39.	LTCF	Long Term Care Facility	Institutional Care facility providing a range of medical and social services designed to care for people who have disabilities or chronic care needs.	DHHS
40.	Learning Disability	Learning Disability	A learning disability is a neurological condition that interferes with an individual’s ability to store, process, or produce information. Learning disabilities can affect one’s ability to read, write, speak, spell, compute math, reason and also affect an individual’s attention, memory, coordination, social skills and emotional maturity	LDA Learning Disabilities Association

	ACRONYM	TERMINOLOGY	DEFINITION	SOURCE
41.	MLA	Major Life Activities	Major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, working	ADA
42.	Major Disaster	Major Disaster	Any natural catastrophe (including hurricane, tornado, storm, high water, wind driven water, tidal wave, tsunami, earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, mudslide, snowstorm, drought), or, regardless of cause, fire, flood, explosion, in any part of the United States, which in the determination of the President causes damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant major disaster assistance under this chapter to supplement the efforts and available resources of States, local governments, and disaster relief organizations in alleviating the damage, loss, hardship, or suffering caused thereby	Stafford Act
43	Mental Illness	Mental Illness	A mental illness is a medical condition that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning. Just as diabetes is a disorder of the pancreas, mental illnesses are medical conditions that often result in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life	NAMI, Nat'l Alliance on Mental Illness
44.	NRF	National Response Framework	The National Response Framework (NRF), updated in 2013, provides context for how the whole community works together and how response efforts relate to other parts of national preparedness. It is one of the five documents in a suite of National Planning Frameworks. Each Framework covers one preparedness mission area: Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response or Recovery. The Response Framework covers the capabilities necessary to save lives protect property and the environment and meet basic human needs after an incident has occurred. Response activities take place immediately before, during or the first few days after a major or catastrophic disaster	FEMA
45.	Olmstead Decision	Olmstead Decision	1999 Supreme Court Decision that requires states to administer services, programs, and activities "in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities	DOJ
46.	PA/PAS/PCA	Personal Assistance Services	A person and or service to assist a person with disability with ADL (activities of daily life) (bathing, toileting, eating, etc.), Personal Assistant also known as a caregiver or custodial care	FEMA DHHS
47.	PWD	Person With a Disability Individual with a disability	A person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of such individual or a record of such impairment or is regarded as having such impairment. FEMA Says "Use person first then the disability "(i.e.: Person who is deaf or hard of hearing) Avoid old terminology such as special needs,	ADA FEMA

			handicapped, impaired, challenged Acronym should not be used to describe people	
	ACRONYM	TERMINOLOGY	DEFINITION	SOURCE
48.	Reasonable Accommodation	Reasonable Accommodation	Reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a job or the work environment that will enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions. Reasonable accommodation also includes adjustments to assure that a qualified individual with a disability has rights and privileges in employment equal to those of employees without disabilities	ADA
49.	Reasonable Modifications	Reasonable Modifications	A public accommodation shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures, when the modifications are necessary to afford goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations to individuals with disabilities, unless the public accommodation can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations	ADA
50.	Registry	Registry	A database containing personally identifying and medical information about individuals who may require assistance in the event of a disaster, some jurisdictions have to varying degrees	FEMA
51.	Rehabilitation Act Sections	Section 501 503, 504, 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	The Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs conducted by Federal agencies, in programs receiving Federal financial assistance, in Federal employment, and in the employment practices of Federal contractors. The standards for determining employment discrimination under the Rehabilitation Act are the same as those used in title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Section 501 requires affirmative action and non-discrimination in employment by Federal agencies of the executive branch. Section 503 requires affirmative action and prohibits employment discrimination by Federal government contractors and subcontractors with contracts of more than \$10,000. Section 504 states that "no qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under" any program or activity that either receives Federal financial assistance or is conducted by any Executive agency or the United States Postal Service. Each Federal agency has its own set of section 504 regulations that apply to its own programs. Section 508 establishes requirements for electronic and information technology developed, maintained, procured, or used by the Federal government. Section 508 requires Federal electronic and information technology to be accessible to people with	DOJ

			disabilities, including employees and members of the public	
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ACRONYM	TERMINOLOGY	DEFINITION	SOURCE
52. Respite Care	Respite Care	Service in which trained professionals or volunteers come into the home or invite individuals into their home to provide short term care for an older person or a child or adult with a disability to allow caregivers time away from their caregiving role	DHHS
53. Screen Reader	Screen Reader	A screen reader is a software application that attempts to identify and interpret what is being displayed on a screen. This interpretation is then re-presented to the user with text-to-speech, sound icons, or a Braille output device. often used by people who are blind, with low vision or with learning disabilities	AT ACT
54. Sensory Disability	Sensory Disability	Sensory disabilities can involve any of the five senses, but generally refers to a disability related to hearing, vision, or both hearing and vision	DO-IT
55. Service Animals	Service Animals	ADA Defines Service Animals as “dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities.” This definition does not affect or limit the broader definition of “assistance animal” under the Fair Housing Act or the broader definition of “service animal” under the Air Carrier Access Act. Some State and local laws also define service animal more broadly than the ADA does. http://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm and US Department of Transportation at http://adainformation.org/blog/no-change-us-dot-ada-regulations-service-animals-and-mobility-devices	ADA US DOT HUD
56. SLI/CDI	Sign Language Interpreter, Certified Deaf Interpreter	A person who has been trained to use a system of conventional symbols or gestures made with the hands and body to facilitate communication between people who are deaf or are hard-of-hearing and people who are hearing and not conversant in sign language. Sign language interpreters either interpret, which means working between English and American Sign Language or they transliterate, which is working between spoken English and a form of a signed language that uses a more English-based word order. Some interpreters specialize in oral interpreting for deaf or hard of hearing persons who lip-read instead of sign. Other specialties include tactile signing, which is interpreting for persons who are blind as well as deaf by conveying signs into a person’s hands; cued speech; and signing exact English. A Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) is an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing and has been certified by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf as an interpreter. The CDI may have specialized training and/or experience knowledge and understanding of	RID

			deafness, the deaf community, and/or Deaf culture .	
	ACRONYM	TERMINOLOGY	DEFINITION	SOURCE
57.	SN/SNP	Special Needs/Special Needs Populations	Old and offensive terminology relating to people who have special needs or disabilities. <i>-Preferred terminology is People with Disabilities and others with access and functional needs</i>	FEMA
58.	SNC	Skilled Nursing Care	Daily nursing and rehabilitative care performed only, by or under the supervision of, skilled medical personnel	DHHS
59.	SNF	Skilled Nursing Facility	Facility that is usually certified by Medicare to provide 24 hour nursing care and rehabilitation services in addition to other medical services. Also called nursing home	
60.	TDD, TTY, TRS	Telecommunications Devices and Relay Service	A free service that enables persons with TTYs, individuals who use sign language and people who have speech disabilities to use telephone services by having a third party transmit and translate the call	FCC
61.	Title 1	Title 1 of the ADA	One of five titles of the ADA which pertains to Employment	ADA
62.	Title II	Title II of the ADA	One of five titles of the ADA which pertains to State and Local Government	ADA
63.	Title III	Title III of the ADA	One of five titles of the ADA which pertains to Public Accommodations (private entities)	ADA
64.	Title III Services	Title III Services (this is Title III of the Older Americans Act, not ADA)	Services provided to individuals age 60 and older, funded under Title III Older Americans Act including meals delivered, supportive services, transportation, legal advice and more	DHHS
65.	Title IV	Title IV of the ADA	One of five titles of the ADA which pertains to Telecommunications	ADA
66.	Title V	Title V of the ADA	One of five titles of the ADA which pertains to miscellaneous provisions	ADA
67.	Title XIX, XVIII & XX Services	Title XIX, XVIII & XX Services	XIX =Federal/State funded program medical assistance to low-income individuals, now called Medicaid XVIII – Health insurance program for persons over 65 and persons with disabilities, now called Medicare XX= grants to States for social services , now called Social Services Block Grants	DHHS
68.	Qualifying Condition	Qualifying Condition	The specific conditions for which the individual qualifies as chronically ill. This could include dependency in the required number of ADL's, cognitive impairment or both	DHHS
69.	Undue Burden	Undue Burden	Undue burden means significant difficulty or expense. In determining whether an action would result in an undue burden, factors considered include, nature and cost, overall financial resources and more, see www.ada.gov/reachingout/12factors.html	ADA
70.	Undue Hardship	Undue Hardship	Defined as an "action requiring significant difficulty or expense" when considered in light of a number of factors. These factors include the nature and cost of the accommodation in relation to the size, resources, nature, and structure of the employer's operation, see https://adata.org/faq/what-considered-undue-hardship-	ADA

	ACRONYM	TERMINOLOGY	DEFINITION	SOURCE
71.	VRS	Video Relay Service	Form of Telecommunications Relay Services that enables people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and who may or may not use ASL (American Sign Language) to communicate with voice telephone users through video equipment, rather than through typed text	FEMA
72.	Whole Community	Whole Community Planning	<p>A focus on enabling the participation in national preparedness activities of a wider range of players from the private and nonprofit sectors, including nongovernmental organizations and the general public, in conjunction with the participation of federal, state, tribal and local government partners in order to foster better coordination and working relationships. Whole community may be used interchangeably with “all-of-Nation.” ”</p> <p>Participation of the whole community requires equal access to preparedness activities and programs without discrimination and consistent and active engagement and involvement in all aspects of planning. Individual and community preparedness is fundamental to success. By providing the necessary accommodations for participation, the whole community can to contribute to and benefit from national preparedness</p>	FEMA

[reasonable-accommodation](#)