

CDS Unit
Emergency Preparedness for Individuals with Disabilities (EPID)
Collaboration for Inclusive Emergency Preparedness and Response

General Project Description

The Emergency Preparedness for Individuals with Disabilities (EPID) initiative focuses on expanding family-centered and inclusive emergency planning and preparedness in Delaware. Planning focuses on family involvement, preparedness of individuals with disabilities (IWDD) and training for emergency planners and responders. This grant is centered around enabling individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to prepare for emergency situations and promoting the seamless integration of emergency planning for individuals with developmental disabilities into existing emergency operational plans in Delaware.

How does the program/project work?

EPID helps people with disabilities prepare for a disaster. For example, in August 2010, EPID hosted the Delaware Emergency Preparedness Forum for IWDD, family members, and professionals at four separate locations throughout Delaware. The purpose of the forum was to provide emergency preparedness information; give participants an opportunity to address individual concerns; and have participants take away information to assist them in developing individualized emergency plans. The forum presented information that is valuable for everyone during a disaster, but its primary focus was on the people who are most vulnerable – those with special conditions that put them at risk if they have not prepared an individualized plan and “Go Kit” that addresses their specific needs.

The EPID initiative will use a multifaceted approach to identify and address gaps in emergency planning for IWDD and their families, to advocate for and create systems change, to prepare IWDD and their families for emergency and disaster situations, and to sustain these efforts. This approach includes: 1) a consumer-driven, diverse Advisory Council that will review existing emergency plans, laws, and policies, identify gaps, and recommend strategies to integrate and improve emergency planning where necessary; 2) a regional collaborative network that will enable neighboring states to share information, best practices, and resources to better address the needs of IWDD related to emergency preparedness; 3) training opportunities offered in collaboration with disability-focused and emergency management organizations to enable planners and responders to effectively address the needs of IWDD in an emergency; 4) a “one-stop” Emergency Preparedness Center to personally assist and train IWDD and their families to prepare for and be self-sufficient in an emergency; 5) a web-portal that will support family restoration after a catastrophic emergency or disaster; and, 6) an ongoing evaluation of this initiative to ensure that its goals and objectives will be achieved.

Program Quick Facts

The program will address emergency preparation for IWDD by:

- Offering personal assistance to IWDD in the preparation of individualized emergency preparedness plans and “go kits;”

- Collaborating with Citizen Corps to offer workshops on emergency preparedness to IWDD and their families;
- Preparing emergency planners and responders to address the unique needs of IWDD and their families during an emergency;
- Developing an online web tutorial for use by IWDD and the public in preparation of individualized emergency preparedness plans;
- Conducting a regional conference to explore opportunities for interstate collaboration in inclusive preparedness;
- Utilizing technology to address portability of information during an emergency and family restoration following an evacuation;
- Examining emergency operational plans and existing laws and policies in regard to inclusive emergency preparedness and offering recommendations on how such plans and policies could be improved;
- Collaborating with the Disaster Resource Center at the University of Delaware to examine emergency preparedness for people with disabilities during the course of a disaster; and,
- Promoting a new state-wide voluntary 9-1-1/emergency preparedness registry for vulnerable populations with non-typical functional needs.

Funding Sources

EPID is a four year grant (the 1-year planning grant was carried out in 2009-2010 and the implementation grant for 2010-2013 is under way) and is funded by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD). EPID is using funds from the new grant (\$150,000 per year for three years) to implement recommendations and address issues that were identified during the planning year.

Partnerships

CDS works with several organizations and agencies on its emergency preparedness effort and many of these organizations serve on EPID's Advisory Board. These include IPC, Citizen Corps of Delaware, the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council, Delaware Emergency Management Agency, the Division of Aging and Adults with Disabilities, and others. These partners help communities learn the important steps required to prepare for a disaster.

Materials/Publications

Because planning is the key to being prepared for a disaster, IPC has published a [Disaster Readiness Planning Guide and a Disaster Readiness Planner](#). The Planning Guide explains how to use the Disaster Readiness Planner to prepare for a disaster by evacuating or sheltering in place.

Research

In the event of a disaster in North America during the course of the grant, the Disaster Resource Center at the University of Delaware will travel to the disaster site and investigate emergency response and services to IWDD and their families.

Additional Resources

Healthy Delawareans with Disabilities (HDWD) – Resources to assist people with disabilities in preparing for emergencies: <http://www.gohdwd.org/providers/emergency-service-providers>

Inclusive Preparedness Center (IPC) – Information about emergency preparedness for people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations: <http://www.inclusivepreparedness.org>

Prepare Delaware – Resources to help Delaware’s citizens develop an emergency preparedness plan and build a kit: <http://www.preparedde.org>

Disaster Resource Center, University of Delaware – Research and education about disasters throughout the world: <http://www.udel.edu/DRC>

Ready – Additional resources, available in different languages, about emergency preparedness, developing a personal plan and putting together a kit: <http://www.preparedde.org>

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