

Emergency Preparedness for Youth and Emerging Leaders

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The Center for Disability and Special Needs Preparedness (DPC) works to ensure that all individuals are included in the development and implementation of emergency and disaster plans. In many cases, emergency planning for evacuations, sheltering during natural disasters, terrorist attacks and industrial accidents have not considered the unique transportation, communication and medical needs of persons with disabilities. This session at the Youth Information, Training and Resource Center 2008 Technical Assistance Institute will address issues related to emergency preparedness planning, and provide a hands-on planning activity.

This is a 60-minute interactive session on emergency preparedness planning for youth and emerging leaders with developmental disabilities and their families. This workshop will focus on providing practical information on how to include youth and emerging leaders in emergency preparedness planning so that effective emergency plans are developed for a range of disaster situations. Each participant will have the opportunity to use the *Disaster Readiness Planner* (Center for Disability and Special Needs Preparedness, 2008), and will be guided through the planning activities. This should result in a completed or partially completed individual plan at the end of the session.

In addition, a *Planning Guide* (Center for Disability and Special Needs Preparedness, 2008) will be provided for individuals who will be able to act as assistants in completing the plan. Assistants may be family, friends, service providers, or others.

In the event of a disaster, residents in the United States have been warned by Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff that it is likely that each individual should be prepared to shelter or evacuate on their own for at least 3 days. For individuals who need additional support to shelter or evacuate, the planning process becomes critical. In addition to the Federal and state officials providing support, the individuals with disabilities and their support networks should also be prepared to act in order to protect their own health and safety.

DPC has developed a planning template for service providers to ensure their organizations are prepared to support individuals with disabilities, and this *Disaster Readiness Planner* for persons with disabilities that conveys key planning activities to readers in clear simple language. DPC staff will also demonstrate how to build a sample emergency kit designed for a person with developmental disabilities. The session will address the following issues related to emergency preparedness for persons with developmental disabilities and their families:

- 1) Communications during an emergency situation or disaster and how to help individuals with disabilities determine the supports that they might need.
- 2) Locating emergency resources and planning for emergency supports in your community.
- 3) Accessing and planning for the support needs of persons with disabilities. Issues to address when “sheltering in place” or evacuating including factors to consider when planning emergency drills.
- 4) Creating a support team for an emergency situation.
- 5) Preparing a disaster kit in case help does not arrive for seventy-two hours.