



The Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities

# **Accessibility and Disability Policy Webinar Series**

**September 18, 2025**

# **Disability & Disasters:**

## **Proactive and Inclusive Emergency Preparedness**

presented by  
Lisa Treleaven, GCPD Committee Member

For more information: [www.gov.texas.gov/disabilities](http://www.gov.texas.gov/disabilities) • [gcpd@gov.texas.gov](mailto:gcpd@gov.texas.gov) • 512-463-5749

# About GCPD

The Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities (GCPD) has a mission to further opportunities for persons with disabilities to enjoy full and equal access to lives of independence, productivity, and self-determination.

GCPD recommends changes in disability policies and programs in the areas of accessibility, communication, criminal justice, education, emergency preparedness, employment, health, housing, transportation, and veterans. The committee also supports a network of committees on people with disabilities, issues awards to promote greater awareness, and promotes compliance with disability related laws.

# General Information

- Chat is disabled in Zoom Webinar Mode. Please use the Q&A tool if you have questions for our presenters. Most questions will be answered near the end of the webinar.
- After the webinar, you will get an automated email from Zoom with a link to our GCPD page to access the webinar recording and other materials. The email will also include a survey where you can give your feedback.

# Disability & Disasters:

## Proactive and Inclusive Emergency Preparedness

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Lisa Treleaven, EdD, LPC

# Lisa Treleven, EdD, LPC

- Proud mom of three kids; special needs in our family include tracheostomy, medical complexity, autism
- Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities member
- Professionally: Doctor of Education; Master of Arts in psychology; Licensed Professional Counselor, consultant
- AgriSafe Farm Response mental health professional
- Family advisor- Emergency Medical Services for Children, Texas Children's Hospital
- Medical education family faculty- Texas Parent to Parent, Project DOCC, FLAG Rounds
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) member
- Houston Citizen's Police Academy member
- Former Disaster Housing Assistance Program case manager



# Introduction

Research shows that individuals with disabilities in Texas are less prepared for disasters and more concerned about their safety than in previous years.

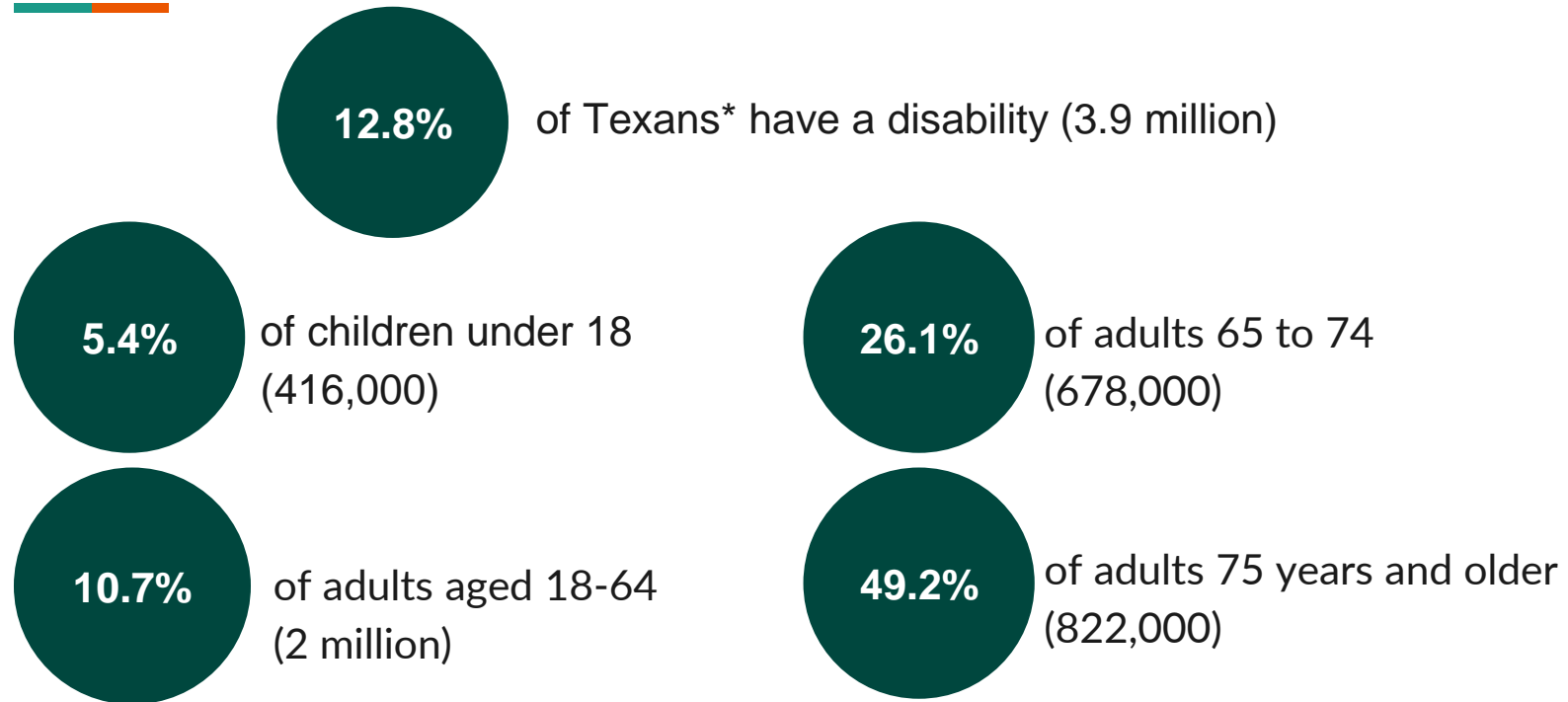
Disaster Resilience Survey (Disability Rights Texas, Dec. 2024)

## Learning Objectives

- Understanding common emergency preparedness needs that people with disabilities face
- Identify resources for ongoing preparation
- Discuss ways that people with disabilities can get involved in community preparedness



# Data on Texans with Disabilities



\*Of civilian noninstitutionalized population





# Disasters in Texas 2025



**JANUARY WINTER WEATHER**



**FEBRUARY WINTER WEATHER**

February 2025



**JULY FLOODING**

July 2025



**JANUARY 2025 WINTER STORM**

January 2025



**MARCH SEVERE STORMS AND  
FLOODS**

March 2025



**2025 MARCH WILDFIRES**

March 2025





# Disproportionate impact of disasters on people with disabilities

- **Access and Functional Needs:** Challenges with evacuation, transportation, communication, medical needs, accessible shelters, etc.
- **Increased Vulnerability:** Loss of essential services (power, water), disruption of routines, limited access to medication/equipment.
- **Mental and Emotional Toll:** Increased anxiety and stress surrounding disaster events.

# 2024 Disaster Resilience Survey



Compared to 2023, Texans with disabilities are now:

## Less prepared

74%

Don't have an evacuation and shelter plan (2023: 66%)

89%

Don't know how to get emergency prescriptions filled (2023: 71%)

76%

Don't have copies of important documents in their emergency kit (2023: 65%)

## More worried

68%

Worried about drought (2023: 61%)

52%

Worried about wildfires (2023: 41%)

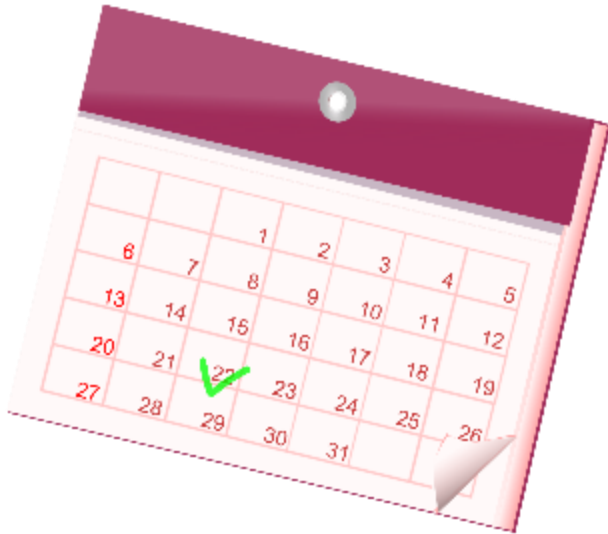
85%

Worried about extreme heat (2023: 76%)



# Disaster Prep Resources for Texans with Disabilities

# Tips for implementation




- Assess your needs before reviewing resources
- Partner with others for accountability and sharing tasks
- Put 1-2 tasks on your calendar
- Make disaster prep a recurring routine
- Tip: pair new routine with existing routine (paying bills, aide visits, staff meetings)

One action today  
is worth more than  
a hundred saved ideas  
for tomorrow

# FEMA: Preparedness Starts at Home







## Resource spotlight:

# Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities

### Emergency Management Webinar page

- Inclusive Emergency Planning and Personal Preparedness
- Emergency Solutions for Powering Durable Medical Equipment and Assistive Technology
- Hurricane Preparedness for the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing





## Resource spotlight: Disability Rights Texas

### Disaster Resilience Page

- Disaster Resilience email list
- How do you prepare for a disaster? video
- Hurricane Preparedness for Texans with Disabilities publication
- Medications in Disasters handout
- Emergency Ready Sheet








## Resource spotlight: Navigate Life Texas

### Emergency Preparedness for Families of Children with Disabilities page

- Emergency Preparedness videos
- Emergency information form
- Working with Emergency Responders article
- “Go Kit” list
- Navigate Life Texas blog





## Resource spotlight:

# Texas Department of Emergency Management

- STEAR (State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry)
- Power outages, backup power
- About > Preparedness Resources
  - Alerts
  - Evacuation routes, road conditions
  - Texas Hurricane Center



# STEAR: State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry

## STEAR is:

A free registry that provides local emergency management with additional information on the needs in their community.

## STEAR is not:

A guarantee that you will receive a specific service in an emergency

## Who should register?

People with disabilities

People who are medically fragile

People with access and functional needs



## Note that:

Available services will vary by community. For more information on how your community will use information in the STEAR registry, contact your local emergency management office.

# Power outages and backup power

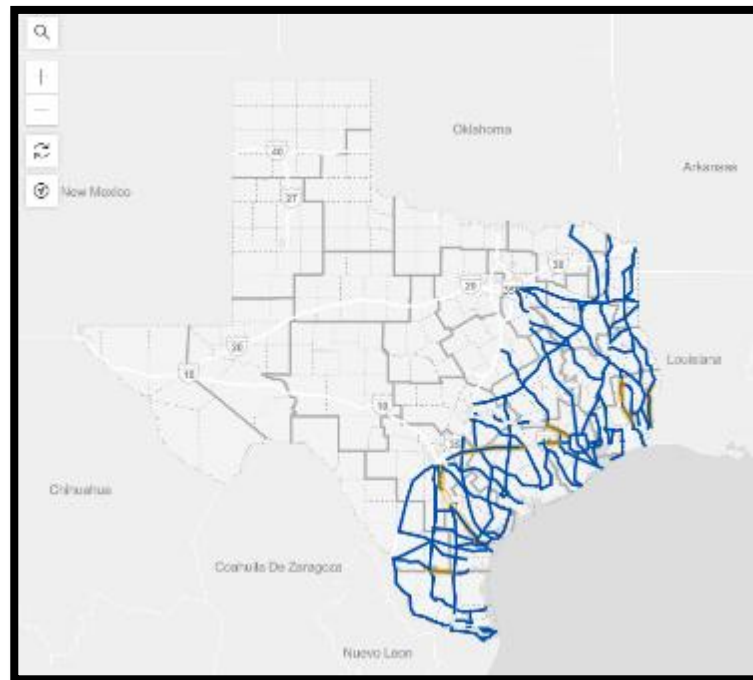


- See power outages tips at <https://www.ready.gov/power-outages>
- Medical conditions requiring electric-powered devices
  - Apply for Critical Care or Chronic Condition Status with electricity provider (see Public Utility Commission or electric provider website)
  - Seek backup power sources; maintain and use safely (generator, solar, batteries)- check whether health or homeowner's insurance, Medicaid waiver, FEMA, or other programs offer any assistance
  - Notify local Office of Emergency Management of power dependency, seek appropriate shelters or other resources



# Hurricane evacuation routes

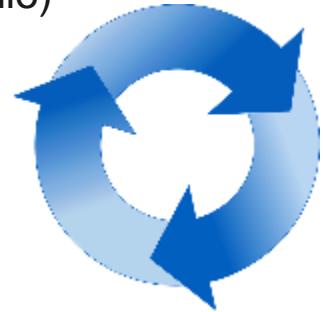
- Check current evacuation route for your area
- Understand contraflow (reversal of normal traffic direction)
- When planning route, destination, consider access, medical, and functional needs
  - Proximity, availability of hospitals
  - Emergency response times
  - Electricity: availability, reliability, backup
  - Accessible shelters
- Share household needs in STEAR
- Call 2-1-1 for help finding resources



# **Accessible emergency alerts and notifications:**

## **Signing up for available alerts**

- Wireless Emergency Alerts (cell) Emergency Alert System (TV/radio)
- STEAR registry
- National weather service
- FEMA mobile app
- 911 integrated services: Smart911
- Department of Transportation
- Local alerts:
  - Office of Emergency Management; city, county websites; local police, sheriff, constable;
  - Regional/local alerts: WarnCentralTexas.org, Alert MCTX (Montgomery Co.); AlertHouston; Reverse Alert- Corpus Christi;
- Social media: local agencies and leaders, trusted crowdsourced information
- Additional alerts- sea levels, air quality, agricultural, livestock, road closures



# **Accessible emergency alerts and notifications:**

## **Accessibility of alerts**

- Provide alerts in variety of:
  - Formats: written, audio, video, visual
  - Languages in your community including English, ASL, Spanish; accessibility practices aid in translation and use of auxiliary aids;
  - Delivery methods: high, low, no tech; text alerts, social media; local news broadcast; digital message boards on roads; lights/siren
- Accessibility guidelines
  - Section508: <https://www.section508.gov/>
  - ADA: <https://www.ada.gov/resources/effective-communication/>
  - WCAG: Web Content Accessibility guidelines <https://www.w3.org/>
- Feedback loop
  - Individuals with disabilities: get involved in your community
  - Emergency management: embed diverse community feedback throughout your process in a meaningful, accessible way





# Get involved in your community

- Become a trained volunteer: Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Red Cross, Medical Reserve Corp, Search and Rescue, Citizens Police/Sherriff/EMS Academy, volunteer firefighter, reserve medic, junior EMT
  - Valuable training
  - Opportunities for involvement
  - Additional information source
- Volunteer advisory roles
  - Hospitals, schools
  - Emergency Medical Services for Children
- Community Health Worker (training on <https://dshs.Texas.gov>)
- Participate in government: city council, school board, legislature, public comment opportunities, voting
- Network with other advocates: organizations and grassroots, trusted social media groups and pages



# Thank you for listening

## Let's talk

You are all experts in your own experience and area.

Let's talk about what we need to improve preparedness.



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