

The Real Emergency Access for Aging and Disability Inclusion (REAADI) in Disasters Act

Why do we need the REAADI in Disasters Act?

Disasters across the nation are increasing in both intensity and frequency. Their threat to communities, especially communities with older individuals and those with disabilities, continues to grow. The complex planning surrounding the preparation and response to disasters requires a coordinated effort among federal, tribal, territorial, state, local and non-governmental agencies. Disaster management succeeds when all levels of public and private life come together to address the diverse needs of all. However, without dedicated training and resources for agencies and a place at the table for disability and aging leaders, 61 million individuals with disabilities and 48 million older adults often are forgotten. Coordinated planning and responses are necessary to address the needs of people with disabilities, older adults and others with access and functional needs as the nation prepares for, responds to, recovers from, and mitigates disasters.

What will the REAADI in Disasters Act do?

REAADI is written to ensure there is a strong disability and older adult voice in the preparation, response, recovery and mitigation of disasters. It will:

- establish a National Commission on Disability Rights and Disasters to study the needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults and others with access and functional needs and make recommendations for best practices at the local, state, and federal levels for ensuring older adults and people with disabilities are included in all aspects of disaster preparedness, including in the areas of:
 - accessible communication,
 - protection of civil rights,
 - accessible transportation and evacuation, and
 - accessible health and medical services;
- create a network of centers focused on training and technical assistance, as well as research, to assist states and localities to better involve and support people with disabilities and older adults during times of disasters;
- direct the Department of Justice to review the spending of disaster funds by federal agencies and states to ensure funds have been spent in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and its amendments, including the use of emergencies shelters and services that are accessible and reconstructed buildings that meet ADA requirements;
- create a competitive grant program to pilot strategies for greater inclusion of people with disabilities and older adults in disaster preparation, response, recover, and mitigation; and
- require the Department of Justice to examine how the civil rights of people with disabilities and older adults are or are not upheld during and following disasters.

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