



Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Rolling Perspective

News from the Office of Access and Functional Needs

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Issue 1

Introduction

Welcome to *Rolling Perspective*, the Office of Access and Functional Needs quarterly newsletter! We'll be publishing a new edition every three months to help keep you informed and up to date on the great things we're doing. *Rolling Perspective* highlights our work to fulfill our mission in the office and on the ground. Included in this newsletter are articles about the recent wildfire disaster response, a spotlight of one of our community partners – Ability Tools, personal preparedness, trainings, and upcoming events.

Join us for the ride as we share our work with you!



Vance Taylor, Chief Office of Access and Functional Needs

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Disaster Response: Butte and Valley Fires

No two disasters are ever the same. Even incidents of the same type vary by landscape, geography, climate and countless other factors. Yet, virtually all incidents parallel one another in at least one sobering way: they disproportionately affect individuals with disabilities and access/functional needs.

It was true in the Loma Prieta earthquake. It was true in Hurricane Katrina. It was true in Superstorm Sandy. We knew it would be true in the Butte and Valley fires in Northern California. Unfortunately, we were right.

Of the first five reported fatalities, four were either individuals who had a disability or who had an access or functional need. Of the tens of thousands of people who evacuated the affected areas, an overwhelmingly high percentage of those who remained were people who were older or had a disability.

And so it is, that, once again, this underrepresented population was impacted greater than people who do not have a disability. If this were any other state, that would be the end of the story. However, this is not any other state; it is California.

Understanding the harsh reality of how unfairly disasters affect our communities, California did something unprecedented in 2008; it leaned forward and established the [Office of Access and Functional Needs](#) (OAFN) within the Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

The purpose of OAFN is to identify the needs of people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs before, during, and after a disaster and to integrate disability needs and resources into emergency management systems.

In short, that means we plan for the realities associated with disasters by integrating access and functional needs within everything we do.

For the [Butte and Valley fires](#), this has translated into:

- Working with the [American Red Cross](#) to ensure accessible shelters;
- Securing accessible showers, porta-potties and hand washing stations;
- Utilizing interpreters at town halls, press events and Recovery Centers; and
- Coordinating with local agencies to provide [accessible transportation](#) to shelters, Local Assistance Centers and Disaster Recovery Centers.



Butte and Valley Fires' Disaster Response Efforts

It has also meant developing and leveraging a vibrant, dynamic partnership of resource providers made up of independent living centers, disability advocacy groups and numerous other stakeholders to deliver the following to disaster survivors:

- Power chairs;
- Manual wheelchairs;
- Walkers, canes, rollators; and
- Other assistive technologies.

The OAFN is not a magic wand that mitigates the impacts of disasters; but for individuals with access and functional needs, it is a formalized mechanism to yield a safer, more resilient whole community. Without the whole community, we cannot fulfill our mission. Inclusion of all members of the community in preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation strengthens California's overall emergency management program.



Vance Taylor with Functional Assessment Service Team members and volunteers from American Red Cross

In Memoriam: Richard Devylder



Mark Ghilarducci, Director California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
and Richard Devylder

Richard Devylder was a champion, a crusader, an advocate, an activist, an example, and a defender. His causes were civil rights, the hope of the disadvantaged and overlooked, and improving life for people with disabilities. Born without arms or legs, the world looked at Richard Devylder and said "no". No, you cannot be integrated within the mainstream education system. No, you cannot live independently. No, you cannot attain professional success. No. No. No. With every no, the world tried to box him in and placed barrier after barrier in front of him.

That's when Richard did something none of his doubters expected him to do: He defied them.

He defied them by graduating high school and earning his Bachelors of Arts in Speech Communication from California State University, Long Beach. He defied them by living on his own, swimming on his own and cheering for the Lakers in a home he earned on his own.

He defied them by succeeding at every turn, overcoming every hurdle and busting through every barrier, silo and wall placed before him. Then he turned back, looked at me, you and the many people with disabilities behind him, smiled and said: "Nothing about us without us."

He leaned forward, put his wheelchair in overdrive and continued to blaze an accessible trail for all to follow. And we did follow!

We followed as he was appointed by three different governors and the President of the United States to identify the needs of people with disabilities and others with access and functional

needs before, during, and after disasters and to integrate disability needs and resources into emergency management systems.

We followed as he orchestrated the establishment of the Office of Access and Functional Needs. We followed as he told us to develop a personal preparedness plan, to plan as though no one was coming to save us and to evacuate when called upon by law enforcement to do so.

Because we followed, we are better prepared for disasters. We have been safer and many of our brothers and sisters have lived through manmade and natural catastrophes.

As we move forward, we will continue Richard's legacy.

We will continue to benefit from Richard's work. He blessed our lives and it is our honor to acknowledge and celebrate him. We will not forget you, Richard. We will not lose sight of the mission. We will continue to blaze a trail for all to follow.

Ability Tools Responds to the Needs of Fire Survivors in Northern California



Clint Vigen, Department of Rehabilitation and Teresa Favuzzi, California Foundation for Independent Living Centers

Recently, [Ability Tools](#), a program of [California Foundation for Independent Living Centers \(CFILC\)](#), assisted with the disaster relief efforts related to the Northern Valley Fires. Deployed to the Napa county shelter as part of the state's [Functional Assessment Service Team](#), Ability Tools collaborated with state partners to quickly assess the needs of fire survivors with disabilities.

Teresa Favuzzi, Executive Director of CFILC, participated in the collaboration efforts at the shelter and noted that fire survivors were in need of a variety of assistive technologies that were abandoned in their unexpected and harrowing evacuation. Teresa recently shared her experience providing assistive technology (AT) with the OAFN. “This is AWESOME work! There really is nothing more gratifying than getting AT to people who need it after they have lost everything!”

Along with the Independent Living Centers [Disability Resource Agency for Independent Living](#), [Independent Living Resources](#) and [Disability Services and Legal Center](#), Ability Tools was able to locate and provide survivors with approximately \$14,200 worth of new and reused Assistive Technology including power wheelchairs and scooters, walkers, canes and bathroom equipment so that survivors with disabilities could get back to living as independently as possible.

Ability Tools connects individuals with disabilities to Assistive Technology tools and services in California. Find more information about them by visiting their website at www.abilitytools.org.

OAFN Staff Spotlight: “Meet our Chief”



Vance, his wife Casey, and 2 daughters

Luis “Vance” Taylor is the Chief of the Office of Access and Functional Needs at the Governor's Office of Emergency Services. Vance is responsible for ensuring the needs of individuals with disabilities and persons with access and functional needs are identified before, during and after a disaster and to integrate disability needs and resources into emergency management systems.

Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, Vance was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy as a child and uses a power chair. He has worked in Washington, D.C. as an advisor for two different members of Congress, directed security policy at a national water association and been a principal at a top-ranked homeland security and emergency management consulting firm, Catalyst Partners, LLC. Vance is a nationally recognized public speaker and advocate for individuals with disabilities.

Vance has a Master's degree in homeland security from the University of Connecticut and an undergraduate degree from Brigham Young University in communications. He is married to his sweetheart, Casey, and they have two beautiful daughters, Isabelle and Sammy.

Vance and his family live in Rancho Cordova.

OAFN Tours Accessible Housing Unit

OAFN staff recently toured one of the manufactured housing units (MHUs) Cal OES and FEMA are installing in Calaveras and Lake counties to provide temporary housing for eligible survivors of the Butte and Valley wildfires. As part of the Whole Community planning process, OAFN viewed accessibility features of the housing unit and provided first-hand [feedback](#) on the features to FEMA. The purpose for participating in the tour was to make sure these MHUs meet the needs of the access and functional needs community.



Vance Taylor at accessible sink within MHU



FEMA staff and community partners discussing accessibility features

Personal Preparedness

Disasters can strike anywhere and anytime. Given recent events in our state and nationwide, we have moved away from ‘if’ disasters will happen to ‘when’ they will happen. As such, personal preparedness is important to ensure you are ready when a disaster strikes. For individuals with a disability or access/functional need, developing a personal plan is especially critical.

Vance Taylor recently spoke to this issue in an [interview](#). In it he noted the need to develop a plan that “goes four people deep.” Meaning that, during an emergency there is more than one person you can rely on for assistance. For Vance, this means his wife, nearby family, neighbors and people from his local church. “You can’t count on any one person being available so you have to have layers of support.”

In addition to Vance's advice, you can take the following three steps to prepare yourself, your family, and your support network:

1. [Be Informed](#): It is important to know what types of emergencies and disasters are likely to affect your community.
2. [Make a Communications Plan](#): It is important to know how you will reach and communicate with your family, friends, and support network.
3. [Build an Emergency Kit](#): These are basic household/medical items and supplies you may need during an emergency or disaster.

If you have a [disability or access & functional need](#), there are additional measures you can take to prepare for emergencies. To increase your likelihood of recovering from a disaster tomorrow, [prepare today!](#)

Great California Shakeout

On October 15, 2015, OAFN participated in the largest earthquake preparedness event: [The Great California ShakeOut](#). The ShakeOut is an annual opportunity to practice how to be safer during earthquakes by dropping, covering, and holding on. The ShakeOut encourages you, your community, your school, or your organization to review and update emergency preparedness plans and supplies, and to secure your space in order to prevent damage and injuries.

Participating is a great way for your family or organization to be prepared to survive and recover quickly from big earthquakes. OAFN has developed a series of informative [videos](#) to assist individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs in planning for and reacting to earthquakes.



Great ShakeOut 2015 in Oakland, CA

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

October was [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#) (NDEAM). NDEAM is a national campaign to raise awareness about disability employment issues and celebrate the contributions of workers with disabilities. The theme for this year, which marked 70 years since the first observance was: "My Disability is One Part of Who I Am." Cal OES' [Disability Advisory Committee](#) held an event to observe NDEAM earlier this month. The purpose of the event was to promote awareness and acknowledge the contributions of our partners with disabilities in the workforce. Vance Taylor, Chief of OAFN and Jake Johnson from the [Department of Rehabilitation](#) shared personal stories of growing up with expectations, first jobs, and the individuals and accommodations that support their success. Jake also presented the *Ralph Black Public Service* award to Richard Devylder from the [Association of California State Employees with Disabilities](#). Grace Koch, Cal OES Deputy Director of Finance & Administration accepted the award on behalf of Richard and commended him on his contributions to public service and advancing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.



Ralph Black Public Service Award for Richard



Grace Koch giving remarks

Trainings and Upcoming Events

Disaster Response Interpreter Training



Training Presenter and Sign Language Interpreter

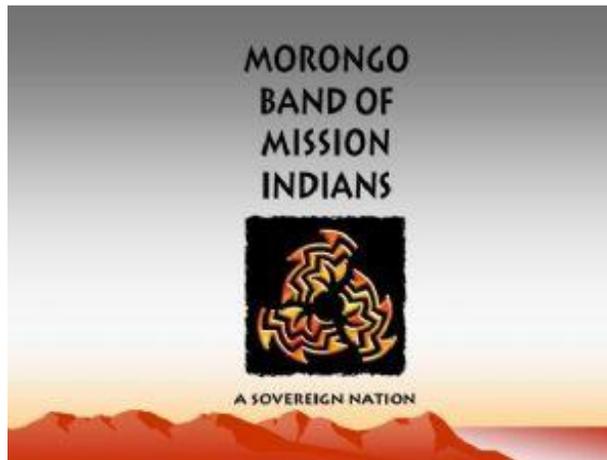
On August 22, 2015, the OAFN held Disaster Response Interpreter (DRI) training at the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service Center in Fresno, California. Twenty-nine sign language interpreters from the surrounding Fresno area attended the training. The training resulted in the OAFN adding 17 sign language interpreters to its DRI network of credentialed interpreters.

The DRI program's goal is to provide interpreting services at shelters, town halls, press conferences and community events during emergencies and to standardize the practice of having on screen interpreting at all statewide press forums. The DRI course consists of several modules designed to give interpreters an idea of what to expect in a high stress shelter situation, as well as what to expect during a statewide press conference. In the past, DRI interpreters were deployed to shelters during multiple emergencies. DRI interpreters have also appeared on screen during statewide press conferences.



Vance Taylor presenting at Interpreter Training

G-197 Integrating Access and Functional Needs into Emergency Planning



On December 8 – 9, 2015, OAFN will host a G-197 course in Cabazon, CA with the [Morongo Band of Mission Indians](#) in partnership with California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES’) [Office of Tribal Coordination](#) and [California Specialized Training Institute](#).

The purpose of this 16-hour course is to provide Tribal emergency managers and planners with the information necessary to use disability access and functional needs inclusive practices, and to provide updated skills and knowledge needed to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies. Participation in this training includes a commitment to integrate access and functional needs into emergency planning.

The OAFN plans to offer more DRI and G-197 trainings in 2016 as we continue to expand our network.

Contact Us

To be added to our interested parties list to receive future OAFN newsletters or express interest in training, please send us an [email](#).