

## Niagara University Emergency Management Disability Awareness Training Inclusive Planning and Active Participation Specialist

Niagara University (NU), through funding from the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC), is addressing the on-going challenges emergency management (EM) faces regarding accurate and appropriate response to individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs as it relates to planning, preparedness, response, and recovery. This can only take place with the involvement of individuals in all aspects of the process.

NU has developed the role of Inclusive Planning and Active Participation (IPAP) Specialist. The individual will go through a 1.5-day training course, of which they will be compensated at the rate of \$150.00, that will provide them the tools and resources to engage the disability community while working in conjunction with the EM personnel of the region. They're primary responsibility will be to recruit individuals to be active (active participants), assist in their role within the EM process, ensure recording of activities, and provide guidance and direction as needed. Independent Living Centers (ILCs) will be encouraged to have at least one IPAP.

The program will work as follows;

1. NU DAT has developed a working manual of which IPAPs and select EM personnel will be trained on its content and how to use it.
2. The training will consist of 1.5-day, with the afternoon of the second day being a training for individuals who are interested in being an active participant (AP). This training will allow for the connection to be made with the IPAP, EM, and AP. AP is defined as a presence on committees/councils/boards that address the needs of individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs as it relates to planning, preparedness, response, and recovery. Other forms of active participation and inclusive planning include accessibility reviews, contact for EM on all topics specific or in general, disability-specific information to include outreach and networking, and direct advisement and consult.

3. All presence, participation, and activities carried out by IPAPs and APs must be recorded through NU google docs. This ensures a record of individuals' roles as well as holding EM accountable. Gaps in presence and planning will be noted and followed up by NU and its partners.
4. The content is broken down into four modules
  - a. Disability Awareness Training; providing base education as to how disabilities may play out and the needs specific to each.
  - b. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as it relates to EM. The United States Department of Justice (DOJ) has clear guidance on EM within the ADA. This guidance will be utilized to educate EM.
  - c. Inclusive Planning and Active Participation is more than a concept. It is an expectation as identified through the FEMA Office of Disability Integration and Coordination (ODIC) and indicated in the Memorandum of Understanding with the Brooklyn Center for Independence, et al and the City of New York. It is recognized that without AP emergency planning is non-functional and detrimental to the lives of individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs.
  - d. The emergency plan and its content needs to have within it how to respond to individuals. Assumption that EMs should do this without guidance and direction is erroneous. Conversely, EMs are asking for assistance in how to ensure a comprehensive plan.

It is understood that some EMs will be very open to the input and concept of IPAP, while others will be hesitant or even defiant. Follow-up to non-compliance will be a matter addressed as the grant progresses.

#### Role of the IPAP Specialist

- I. Establish relationship with the County EM office and its main personnel.
- II. Identify the core advisory group (CAG), committee or council that has its primary role the topic of emergency planning.
  - A. Become a member of that CAG
  - B. Identify key representatives from across the disability community who may also be members
  - C. Infuse a presence that represents individuals with disabilities and access and functional needs
    1. This would include an eventual training on disability awareness

2. Provision of tools and resources to the CAG (manual will contain all necessary components)
- III. Through recognition of the emergency manager, utilization of IPAP and APs in the review of all aspects related to planning, preparedness, response, and recovery
  - A. Accessibility reviews
    1. Shelters
    2. Disaster Recovery centers
  - B. Presence at Emergency Operation Center
  - C. Outreach
    1. Disability community
    2. Disability specific
  - D. Education
    1. In general, or specific to
      - a. Disabilities
      - b. Resources and what they provide
      - c. General Effective Communication
      - d. Other
    2. Anyone with a role in EM
- IV. Reporting procedures
  - A. Input into the NU EM DAT Participation tracking sheet
    1. All activities
  - B. Active Participant oversight
    1. Input received, reviewed