

**EMERGENCY PLANNING FOR
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES,
ACCESS, AND FUNCTIONAL NEEDS
2018**

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INTRODUCTION



Photo: Attendees, speakers, and NYC Emergency Management staff sit around a table at the 2018 DAFN Symposium

The purpose of this report is to disseminate information and share resources to improve emergency planning and response for people with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs (DAFN). DAFN includes people with disabilities, along with older adults, children, people with limited or no English proficiency, individuals with health vulnerabilities, and others who may need particular assistance or additional support during an emergency.

The 2018 NYC [Disability and Access and Functional Needs Symposium](#) was held on December 11th at the NYU Kimmel Center, and was attended by over 160 community leaders, service providers, and interested members of the public, including many people with disabilities. This was a major increase in participation from the 2017 DAFN Symposium. The symposium's

panels facilitated discussions about emergency planning for people with disabilities in New York City.

This report includes the resources shared at the 2018 NYC DAFN Symposium and updates about improvements in emergency planning for the DAFN community within New York City. Additionally, each section provides ways that New Yorkers, particularly those with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, can prepare themselves, their families and communities for all types of emergencies.

Improving connections and communication within the community day-to-day can make us all more prepared for an emergency. Please use the strategies in this report to help make yourself, your family, and your community more prepared for emergencies.

Personal Emergency Preparedness

What To Know

NYC Emergency Management offers resources to help people with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs, get themselves, their families and their caregivers prepared for emergencies. The Ready New York Program offers resources and presentations to educate people about how to make a plan, gather supplies, including preparing a Go Bag, and how to get informed.

DAFN Symposium

The DAFN Ready New York Video Panel included actors with disabilities, as well as a NYC Community Emergency Response Team member, who were featured in the new What's Your Plan: Ready New York videos, available on [NYC Emergency Management's YouTube Page](#). The videos "[Caught Off-Guard](#)" and "[Prepared for the Worst](#)" were screened with audio description and subtitles. Afterwards, the panel discussed their experiences with making the videos and the importance for videos like these in helping people with disabilities get prepared.



Photo of members of the DAFN Ready New York Video Panel on stage at the Symposium

Call Out Box

"I think it's important for the people around you to watch [these videos], too. Because, you know, they're going to be the ones to take you places, to grab your Go Bag, to grab whatever equipment you have. So, obviously, you know what to do. But the person tasked with helping you might not."

—Steve Way, Actor

DAFN Preparedness Updates

- During 2018, the **Ready New York Program**, NYC Emergency Management's public education campaign, gave 32 presentations, and attended 17 community fairs, at organizations that represent the disability community. At these events, staff and volunteers distributed emergency preparedness materials to approximately 6,000 people with disabilities. Ready New York presentations inform New Yorkers about accessible evacuation options, emergency sheltering, and making personalized plans.
- **Coastal Storm Preparedness**
 - In 2018, 31 additional coastal storm shelters were fully retrofitted for accessibility for a total of 63 accessible coastal storm shelters.
 - Over 300 City staff and volunteers have been trained to provide people in emergency shelters with proper accommodations.
 - The City's shelter system consists of 60 evacuation centers, 485 shelters and eight special medical needs shelters.

Take Action

- **Request a Ready New York presentation for your organization.** NYC Emergency Management will send knowledgeable staff members to educate your community and can specifically talk about what people with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs, can do to prepare. [Request an Event](#) to get prepared.
- **Make a personal emergency plan** using the [My Emergency Plan](#) that includes information about prescriptions, doctors, and health insurance. Caregivers of people with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs, should be included in their emergency plans.
- **Gather supplies** by making a Go Bag and an emergency supply kit. Everyone in your household should have a Go Bag—a collection of things you would want if you have to leave in a hurry. You should also keep enough supplies in your home to survive on your own, or shelter in place, for up to seven days. Make sure your supplies are specific to your disability. Use the [My Emergency Plan](#) or nyc.gov/emergencymanagement to gather your supplies.



Image of the cover of the Ready New York: My Emergency Plan guide

- **Get informed** about emergencies by signing up for the alerts below:
 - **NYC Advance Warning System (AWS) App:** NYC Emergency Management has launched the new AWS mobile app for [iOS](#) and [Android](#) phones. AWS distributes emergency information to agencies and organizations that serve people with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs, about hazards in New York City. Organizations are encouraged to register multiple contacts to enhance their readiness. Sign up today at advancewarningsystem.org.
 - **Sign up for Notify NYC**, the City's official source for emergency information, nyc.gov/notifynyc. Anyone can sign up to receive alerts by email, phone calls, text messages in up to five zip codes or receive all messages via Twitter (@NotifyNYC). Messages are available in 12 languages in addition to English and American Sign Language videos with subtitles and voiceover. The Notify NYC App is available for [iOS](#) and [Android](#) phones.

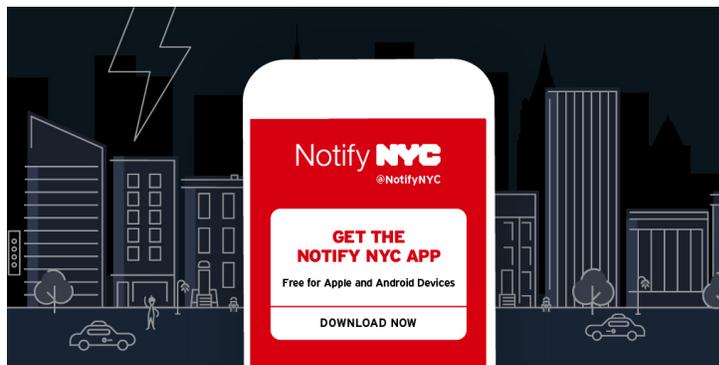


Photo of an advertisement for the Notify NYC app.

- **Register with your electricity service provider** as a Life Sustaining Equipment Customer, if you rely on electric-powered medical equipment at home (e.g., respirators, dialysis machines, apnea monitors), allowing the providers to contact you in the event of an outage. You can learn more about this program at the [NYC Emergency Management Utility Disruption Page](#).
- **Follow NYC Emergency Management** on the following platforms for emergency alerts and preparedness information:
 - » [Facebook](#)
 - » [Twitter](#)
 - » [Instagram](#)
 - » [LinkedIn](#)
 - » [Community Preparedness Newsletter](#)
- **Get [prescription preparedness tips](#)** from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.
- **Service Animals and Pets:** Pets and service animals in shelters: Pets are allowed in all coastal storm evacuation centers and all emergency shelters. Service animals can stay with their owners, and documentation is not needed for them. Shelters have dedicated rooms for pets and their supplies. It is important to make a plan for your pet or service animal, including making them a go bag that includes supplies, by using the [My Pet's Emergency Plan](#).

- **Coastal Storm Preparedness:**

- o During a coastal storm or hurricane, the Mayor may issue an evacuation order for those living in hurricane evacuation zones. Find out if you live in a hurricane evacuation zone by visiting the Hurricane Evacuation Zone Finder at [NYC.gov/knowyourzone](https://www.nyc.gov/knowyourzone) or calling 311 (212-639-9675 for Video Relay Service, or TTY: 212-504-4115). If you are not in an evacuation zone that has been ordered to evacuate, it is best to shelter in place during a coastal storm.

- o **Watch the [shelter orientation guide](#)** for information about staying in evacuation centers (presented in American Sign Language).

- o **See the frequently asked questions about shelters** available on NYC Emergency Management's website [here](#).

- o The City will provide the following accommodations in its accessible evacuation centers and shelters:

- » Accessible signage
- » Medical equipment
- » Charging stations for electrical equipment
- » Interpretation services upon request
- » Assistive communication devices
- » Durable medical equipment such as wheelchairs, canes, or crutches
- » Refrigeration for medications
- » Quiet rooms
- » Communications boards
- » DAFN staff trained to assist people with disabilities with any needed accommodations
- » Special Medical Needs Shelters: There is at least one special medical needs shelter in each borough offering additional medical support for people with medical conditions that do not require hospitalization but do require care not available at general shelters. Special medical needs shelters provide the same level of accessibility as regular shelters.
- » Identification and legal status: Evacuation centers and shelters are available to everyone affected by an emergency regardless of immigration status or ability to provide identification.

Community Preparedness

What To Know

How quickly a community recovers from an emergency is determined by the connections between residents and community organizations before an emergency happens. Communities that are more prepared can help people with disabilities before, during and after an emergency. Increasing the connectedness of our neighborhoods makes us all more prepared for emergencies.

DAFN Symposium

The Community Preparedness Panel included representatives from Brooklyn Community Services, NYC Emergency Management (NYCEM), Parent-to-Parent of Staten Island, and Union Settlement. Panel members discussed their efforts to increase connectedness at the community level, including new initiatives to encourage networks to include people with disabilities in community emergency planning.

DAFN Preparedness Updates

- **The Community Preparedness Boot Camp** was developed by NYCEM Community Preparedness to assist local organizations with emergency planning and connects them with NYC Emergency Management's resources. The training has been conducted in Harlem, Bensonhurst and East New York, and you can [request one for your community](#).
- **The Community Preparedness Council** is a forum for community organizations who have participated in the Boot Camp or are interested in emergency planning as well as government partners involved in community preparedness. Council members share best practices, challenges and their progress around community preparedness in New York City. Those interested in joining the next council can email communityprep@oem.nyc.gov.
- **The DAFN Tips for Organizations** provide guidance for community emergency networks to include the needs of people with disabilities, and others with access and functional needs, in community planning and response efforts. Find these on the [Plan Inclusively page](#).
- **The Be a Buddy Program** is an interagency partnership that promotes community resiliency to extreme heat and other weather emergencies in the South Bronx, Central Brooklyn and East Harlem by increasing social cohesion. Local community-based organizations use a buddy system to check on individuals who are vulnerable with volunteers. You can learn more about Be a Buddy in the [Cool Neighborhoods NYC report](#).

Take Action:

- **Make a Community Emergency Plan:** The Community Emergency Planning toolkit is a step-by-step guide for communities to map their community and create a plan. It is crucial to include people with disabilities on planning teams to assure that plans are inclusive. Learn more about the NYC Community Emergency Planning Toolkit here and request a presentation about it [here](#).

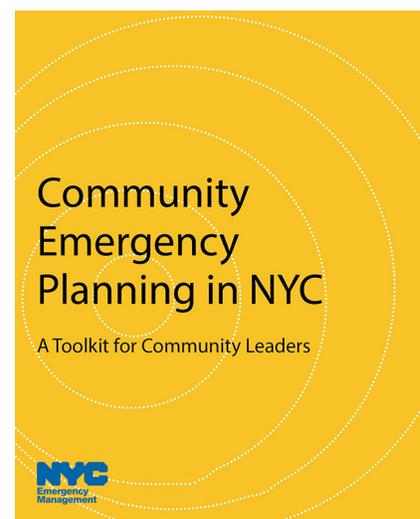


Image of the cover of the Community Emergency Planning Toolkit

- **Sign up for the [Community Preparedness Newsletter](#)** to receive information about preparedness initiatives, resources and local events. During emergencies, the newsletter provides important alerts and updates. When you create an account, you can also list your organization on the map and see what organizations are working on preparedness in your community.

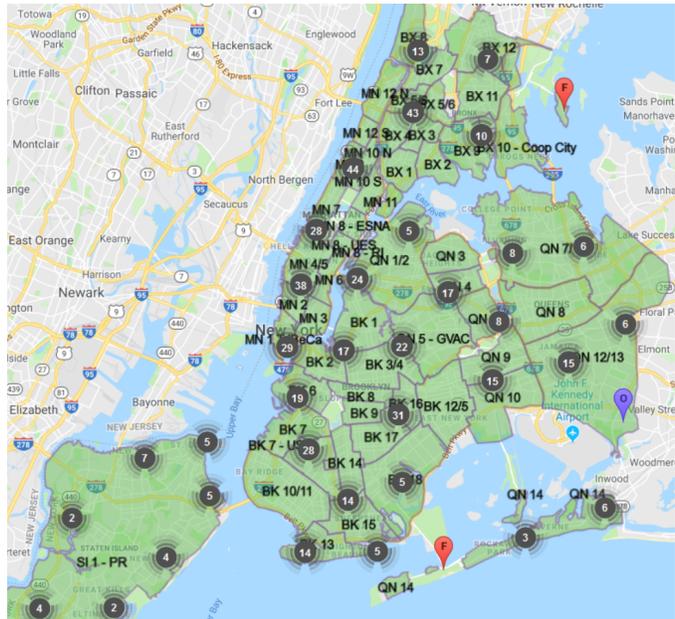


Image of map showing New York City community boards

- **Apply for the NYC Community Emergency Response Team Program (CERT):** CERTs are groups of dedicated volunteers who help to prepare their neighbors and communities for disasters. You can apply to volunteer with the NYC CERT program [here](#).



Photo of CERT volunteers on the move

Residential Building Emergency Planning

What To Know

Personal and community emergency networks should include neighbors and people in charge of residential buildings. It is good to be in touch with building management about specific needs and to learn more about your building. Across the city, there are examples of residents promoting preparedness in their buildings and resources available to help residents prepare.

DAFN Symposium

The Residential Building Emergency Planning Panel discussed how residents get their buildings prepared and what resources there are to help. Representatives of NYC Fire Department (FDNY), Selis Manor Tenant Association, and LES Ready explained how to work with other residents, building management and City government.

Call Out Box

The American Red Cross Home Fire Campaign provides free installation of smoke alarms with batteries that work for 10 years. To request an alarm, or volunteer to install them, see the Red Cross [website](#).

For people who are Deaf or have hearing loss, FDNY can install a fire alarm that vibrates. For more information about requesting a vibrating smoke alarm from FDNY, email ReadyNY@oem.nyc.gov.

DAFN Preparedness Updates in 2017

- **The FDNY is now mandating that residential building owners distribute the new [NYC Residential Building Guide](#)** for distribution to apartment building residents and staff. It is designed to educate you about your building and what you and the members of your household and do to prepare for emergencies and prevent fires.



Photo of High-rise buildings in Long Island City

- [The ABC's of Housing](#) is the Department of Housing Preservation and Development's Guide to housing rules and regulations for owners and tenants, including information about safety.
- There are now [Considerations for Purchasing an Evacuation Device for Use in Your Building](#) on the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities website.
- **A new Evacuation Planning Checklist** is being finalized and will then be distributed to residential apartment buildings based on recently enacted Local Law 114. This checklist will address evacuation planning for all residents including concerns specific to persons with disabilities. The New York City Fire Department will implement the checklist through the City's rule making process.

Take Action:

- **Learn what you can do to prepare for fires** and whether you should evacuate or shelter-in-place during a fire. Visit FDNYsmart.org to learn more. You can also request a presentation from the [Fire Safety Education Program](#).
- **Encourage your neighbors to make a plan**, gather supplies, and be informed for evacuating or sheltering in place by using the Ready New York resources available at nyc.gov/readyny.
- **Encourage neighbors to register with your electricity service provider** as Life Sustaining Equipment Customers if they rely on electric-powered medical equipment at home (e.g., respirators, dialysis machines, apnea monitors), allowing the providers to contact you in the event of an outage. You can learn more about this program at the [NYC Emergency Management Utility Disruption Page](#).
- **Communicate with your buildings owners and/or managers.** It is important to determine what the emergency plans are for your building and whether your building is fireproof. If your building has a board or tenants association, you can involve them in emergency preparedness by [requesting a presentation for your building](#). The NYC Emergency Management Community Preparedness team can visit your building to speak with you and your neighbors about individual and community preparedness.

Transportation Safety

What To Know

New York City and State has an extensive and aging transportation system. The accessibility of the transportation system is related to the safety of that system day-to-day and during emergencies. Although a lot of work has been done to make these systems more accessible and safe, there is still more to be done. The new resources available and steps you can take are below.

Call Out Box: Travel Training

Travel training is way for people with disabilities, including those with developmental and vision disabilities, to receive training to use public transportation and navigate different environments independently.

The skill you need is awareness of yourself and the environment. The ability to make decisions, to initiate actions, to solve problems that occur during traveling.” –Peggy Groce, NYC Department of Education Travel Training

“Review everything before you actually leave the home because the best way to prepare for an emergency is to be prepared all the time.” –Carol Moog, Lighthouse Guild Travel Training

Coastal Storm Evacuation

If the City issues an evacuation order, those residents in affected evacuation zones should evacuate as directed. Allow additional travel time, and consider what help you may need to evacuate. People with disabilities, and others with access or functional needs, who have no other options to evacuate safely can request transportation assistance by calling 311 (212-639-9675 for Video Relay Service, or TTY: 212-504-4115). Depending on your need, you will either be taken to:

- » An accessible evacuation center in an accessible vehicle
- » A hospital outside of the evacuation zone via ambulance

You will not be able to request transportation to a specific address. Evacuate early if you rely on elevators to get out of your building. Elevators may be out of service and may not be available at all times.

DAFN Symposium

The Transportation Safety Panel provided updates about the work being done to increase the accessibility and safety of the transportation system for the DAFN community. Representatives from New York City Transit and the Taxi and Limousine Commission provided examples of how their systems prepare for emergencies. Representatives of the Department Of Education Travel Training and Lighthouse Guild discussed how people with disabilities plan to use public transportation independently.

DAFN Preparedness Updates:

- **The Accessible Dispatch Program is now available in all boroughs.** This program gives residents and visitors with disabilities greater access to green and yellow wheelchair accessible taxis. Trips can be booked by calling (646)-599-9999 or 311, downloading the app, or booking online. Learn more by visiting accessibledispatch.org.
- **New Requirement to provide accessible vehicles:** The Taxi & Limousine Commission is the first regulator in the country to impose accessibility requirements on the for-hire vehicle industry. Currently, the Taxi & Limousine Commission is issuing for-hire vehicle licenses only to wheelchair accessible vehicles.
- **New MTA [Guide to Accessible Transit on Buses and Subways](#)** was created to help you better understand and navigate the accessibility features of the public transportation system. The guide includes information about reduced-fare MetroCards, subways, buses and paratransit.

Take Action:

- **Plan your evacuation routes in advance.** You can learn which coastal storm evacuation zone you live in by visiting nyc.gov/knowyourzone. If you are unable to evacuate, you can request evacuation assistance by calling 311.
- **MYmta App and website redesign:** You can be informed by getting real-time information about public transportation at the [updated MYmta page](#). You can now download the beta version of the MYmta app on [iOS](#) and [Android](#), or visit new.mta.info.
- All New York City agencies are required to appoint a disability service facilitator to serve as a liaison between City government and New Yorkers with disabilities. For a full list of disability service facilitators, please visit the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities' [website](#).

Acknowledgements

NYC Emergency Management would like to thank everyone who attended the NYC Disability, Access, and Functional Needs Symposium, particularly the Symposium Planning Committee, for ensuring its success.



Logo of New York City Emergency Management

