



How to use HEART

2. Get Connected: Strategies for Inclusive Planning



Make the Connections

Schedule an introductory meeting between emergency services and the Continuum of Care or homelessness response jurisdictional leadership. Determine if there is an Access and Functional Needs Coordinator. Host introductory meetings between local public safety agencies and the Continuum of Care or homelessness response leadership.



Attend Local Planning Meetings

Attend local Access and Functional Needs planning meetings or other disaster and emergency planning meetings to exchange information and identify service provision gaps.



Connect with the Access and Functional Needs Advisory Committee

Connect with local stakeholder workgroups to foster inclusive and integrated emergency planning. These workgroups, often organized and facilitated by a jurisdictional Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Coordinator, can consist of various representatives such as Area Agencies on Aging, the local Independent Living Center, regional centers, disability advocacy groups, community-based organizations, and other resource providers in addition to designated response agencies and emergency managers.



Include People Experiencing Homelessness in Planning

Establish a supportive atmosphere, invite participation, and allow for input when making decisions. It is important that decisions are made in collaboration with people experiencing homelessness rather than on their behalf. This will improve the efficacy of the local emergency plan by incorporating the perspectives of those with firsthand experiences.



Identify Strengths

Assess collaborating agencies' unique strengths and benefits to the partnership, allowing for a more strategic and effective collaboration. Conduct community asset mapping to identify resources, needs, gaps, and potential partners.



Share Data

Share and analyze data on homelessness trends and service utilization to identify areas requiring support during disasters and emergencies.