



CIEP ALERT

A Publication by the
COALITION ON INCLUSIVE EMERGENCY PLANNING
of the Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC)



THE FCC AND EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS

On April 29, 2019 CIEP joined a coalition of Consumer Groups led by Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI) in filing comments to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) highlighting different perspectives and experiences regarding the efficacy of the FCC Wireless Cooperative Framework pertaining to disaster notifications and community engagement with people with disabilities and other access and functional needs. Other organizations that signed on to the comments include Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), National Association of the Deaf (NAD), and the California Coalition of Agencies Serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCASDHH). Several other commenters contributed their experiences on behalf of individuals who are deafblind and deaf plus (mobility disabilities). Below are the Executive Summary and excerpts from CIEP.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Consumer Groups appreciate the Bureau's foresight in seeking out different perspectives and experiences regarding the efficacy of the Wireless Resiliency Cooperative Framework (the "Framework"). Deaf and hard of hearing individuals, deafblind users and users with mobility disabilities have different communications needs and experiences in the context of a disaster which are not sufficiently recognized in the Framework.

The harsh reality is that individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing are too often left out of the emergency alerting process. During times of disasters, the deaf and hard of hearing community face significant problems receiving complete and timely communications warning of emergencies and providing important public safety service updates. The community faces challenges such as wireless network outages that inhibit the efficacy of wireless emergency text alerts and the inability for some consumers in the deaf and hard of hearing community to afford both cellular services and broadband (e.g., Wi-Fi). This community typically must rely on multiple sources to

piece together complete information about the status of a disaster, sheltering and evacuation instructions, service outages and restoration, etc. Some consumers in the deaf and hard of hearing community cannot afford to subscribe to both cellular services and broadband. As a result, emergency and disaster information that is inaccessible, incomplete, delayed, or inaccurate puts the safety of individuals in the deaf and hard of hearing community at risk.

Accordingly, Consumer Groups urge the Bureau to recommend that the Framework include specific provisions that address the needs of this community with respect to wireless services in emergency and disaster situations and provide suggestions for changes or expansion to the Framework as an extension of the CTIA Best Practices regarding Creating Education Awareness Campaigns to improve the distribution of emergency and public safety information to the deaf and hard of hearing community during times of disasters or wireless network outage.

EXCERPTS FROM CIEP RELATED TO WASHINGTON STATE:

On December 27, 2018, the entire 9-1-1 network crashed in Washington State for the second time in 14 years. Emergency Management Division sent out a statewide WEA alert. Places where a person was registered for alerts then sent out messages that contained 10-digit numbers for all call centers within their counties. One person's daily commute traversed three counties with different circumstances:

- A. Thurston County 9-1-1 issued a single ten-digit number for people to call during outages. The 9-1-1 outage put a toll on children and people with disabilities trying to reach 9-1-1 when they attempted to call for emergency assistance because they did not know or did not understand they had to call via a ten-digit number. (The outage was attributed to a carrier breakdown.)*
- B. King County, WA has 12 call centers surrounding the Seattle metro area. Under normal circumstances, a person can call 9-1-1 and be connected to the most appropriate PSAP based on location. During the outage, the 9-1-1 connection was disrupted and people had to call individual PSAPs on its specifically assigned 10-digit number. To obtain the fastest help, individuals had to call the right PSAP for their location. In order to obtain the correct PSAP number, people had to research the number for the most appropriate PSAP based on the individual's mobile coverage and exact location. The process took time and was prone to mistakes and, as a result, put callers in this area at risk.*

The good news was that King County had just launched Text-to-911 a week before, and it remained operational through the 9-1-1 outage. This meant that people who were aware of this



capability were able to text even though the voice network was down. King County is now doing a joint research project with University of Washington on the best way to send out CPR instructions via text.

- C. *The middle part of the commute is Pierce County (Tacoma, WA) where emergency management officials really interact with the deaf community in various community events, and has followed up with its own Text-to-911 service. Their marketing consultants worked with deaf leaders in the community and came up with a banner showing a screenshot of a conversation. After the initial exchange of information, the 9-1-1 dispatcher asks **ARE YOU SAFELY ABLE TO MAKE A VOICE CALL?** to which the caller replied **NO, I AM DEAF***



[Also listed as a best practice,] Pierce County, WA has a collection of generic disaster education videos in ASL and captions. Those videos go out on social media and email and illustrate steps that people can take if they are able. Then the county produces a quick video with details about the current disaster. We suggest the Framework should encourage carriers and other municipalities to undertake similar outreach and education on emergency preparedness.

To see the complete text of the Consumer Group Comments on the Wireless Resiliency Framework, go to <https://ecfsapi.fcc.gov/file/10430247040772/Consumer%20Groups%20Comments%20-%20Wireless%20Resiliency%20Framework.pdf>

CIEP is a statewide advisory group that brings expertise and perspectives into disaster planning based on access and functional needs (AFN) faced by people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations in these areas: 1. Effective communications, 2. Programmatic Access, and 3. Physical Access. We welcome your suggestions for future issues.

Contact CIEP:

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NOTICE: STATE PLAN PUBLIC COMMENT



The Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) and Centers for Independent Living (CILs) are requesting comments on the proposed 2020-2021 State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL).

Our SPIL can be viewed in: [PDF \(www.wasilc.org/documents/SPIL_2020-21_Draft_WASILC_for_Public_Comment_05.2019.pdf\)](http://www.wasilc.org/documents/SPIL_2020-21_Draft_WASILC_for_Public_Comment_05.2019.pdf) and [Word \(www.wasilc.org/documents/SPIL_2020-21_Draft_WASILC_for_Public_Comment_05.2019.docx\)](http://www.wasilc.org/documents/SPIL_2020-21_Draft_WASILC_for_Public_Comment_05.2019.docx).

The proposed State Plan draft was developed jointly by the WASILC and Centers for Independent Living, based on input from consumers, disability advocates, and community partners who participated in statewide public forums from September 2018 through December 2018. The proposed SPIL, once approved, will be in effect October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020.

On page 12 in the SPIL, “**Objective 2.1**”: pertains to emergency preparedness: State and local emergency management departments and community partners include individuals with disabilities in all aspects of planning, responses, and recovery of emergency preparedness.

The comment period is open until **5 p.m. on Friday, May 31, 2019**. Comments may be provided by:

- **Online Survey:** [HERE https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YBXKWWH](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YBXKWWH) (English and Spanish)
- **Email:** Kloepnd@dshs.wa.gov Please write (SPIL COMMENTS) in the subject heading.
- **Mail:** WASILC Office / P.O. Box 45343 / Olympia, WA 98504

Contact us at **(800) 624-4105** if you need assistance or an alternative format.

Coming Events:

CIEP Quarterly Meetings Note: All meetings begin at 10:00am and end at 11:30am.

WHEN: 6/19/2019: [REMOTE CALL-IN ONLY] Join this meeting online at <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/665468381>. Or dial in at [872-240-3412](tel:872-240-3412) - Access Code: 665-468-381

Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) Quarterly Meetings

Two-day meeting: Day #1: 9:00am - 4:00pm Day #2: 9:00am - 2:00pm

WHEN: 7/11-12/2019—Vancouver 10/3-4/2019—Wenatchee

During each WASILC Quarterly Meeting, a panel discussion and public forum will be held to gather information and advice from the local disability community, consumers, service providers, and the public to identify what is working in their area, as well as identify gaps and barriers. Call Nichole at 360.725.3693 for more information.

All CIEP and WASILC Quarterly Meetings are open to everyone. ASL interpreters and CART are provided. For all other reasonable accommodation requests, please contact Jim House at HouseJ@dshs.wa.gov at least two weeks prior to the meeting to ensure availability.