

Fall 2020



CIEP ALERT



A Publication by the

COALITION ON INCLUSIVE EMERGENCY PLANNING

a program of the Washington State Independent Living Council



THE PARTNERSHIP FOR INCLUSIVE DISASTER STRATEGIES

“PLANNING TODAY FOR A SAFER TOMORROW”

The Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) hosted a virtual conference with the Partner for Inclusive Disaster Strategies (PIDS), themed, “Planning Today for a Safer Tomorrow”. After an inspiring keynote speech on the intersectionality of race and disability by Justine Shorter, a prominent civil rights advocate, there were five workshops over the next one and a half days. Each succeeding workshop built on previous workshops to build a case for having a full-time Access and Functional Needs person overseeing inclusive emergency planning at the state level. Approximately 300 disability advocates and emergency planners had registered for the PIDS conference.

On Tuesday, November 17, the day began bright and early with a keynote speech **“Racial Inequity in Emergency and Disaster Response”** by Justice Shorter. Ms. Shorter is a national expert on disability inclusive emergency management where she shares her views on the intersectionality between disability and race. Historically, both communities of people with disabilities and people of color have been disproportionately impacted during disasters and its aftermath. She urges us to take a holistic look beyond traditional disability rights to create a path from systemic ableism toward disability justice, based on several principles such as wholeness, solidarity, and sustainability, among others. When we are excluded from the planning process, our interactions with emergency management suffers, sometimes with fatal results.



Conference Keynote Speaker
Justine “Justice” Shorter

After the keynote speech and a short Zoom break, the participants logged back on to watch the first panel workshop. **“Individual Preparedness: It Starts with You”**. Two

renowned experts, Todd Holloway from Center for Independence in Lakewood, and Robert Blumenfeld from the Alliance of People with disabilities in Seattle, discussed individual preparedness and the role of Centers for Independent Living during the COVID pandemic and concurrent disasters. Todd and Robert pointed out that even with all the planning done by state and local emergency management, we are all ultimately responsible for our safety. This includes assembling an emergency kit, staying informed, and making plans. Mother Nature will not wait for us. Also we discussed working with our consumers to help them develop their own personalized emergency plans as the next disaster may create new disabilities or temporary barriers to independence.

After lunch, we gathered again for the next panel workshop, **“It Takes a Village: Who Are Your Partners?”** On this panel, Joshua Hackney from the Central Washington Disability Resources in Ellensburg, Lisa Kraft, a Disability Integration lead for Washington from the American Red Cross, with Sandy Duffy from the Grant County Emergency Management and Casey Knutson from the Grant County Public Health Department. All four panelists drew from their collaborative experiences during the 2020 wildfire season. Requests for assistance were coming into the Red Cross, and Lisa alerted CIEP that someone needed a wheelchair, and another person who lost his home needed a place to live with some independent living training. Each of the panelists had come with different pieces of information, but by working together they were able identify gaps and work together to develop plans and maintain their ability to live in their community.

After the break, we gather again for the third and final workshop of the day. In this session, **“A Force Multiplier: Disability Advocacy Groups”** we examine the relationships between community groups composed of people with disabilities and local emergency planners. The panelists were Jim House, Disability Integration Manager for CIEP; Ivan Tudela, Access and Functional Needs Coordinator for Pierce County Emergency Management; and Deborah Witmer, Vulnerable Populations Planning Coordinator for the City of Seattle. Also known as DAGs, these community-led groups come in different configurations but the common thread among them is the relationship building and commitment to ensuring that emergency plans are all-inclusive and serve the whole community. One positive outcome from the pandemic is that instead of meeting in person, CIEP stakeholders across the state can still exchange ideas virtually with other participants on Zoom with full accessibility support such as ASL interpreters and real-time captioning.

On the second day, we met again for the next two workshops. The first was a panel discussion **“More Awareness, Bigger Change”**. The first two panelists came from the WA State Department of Health (DOH), Christymarie Jackson who leads in community engagement promoting accessibility and inclusivity within the agency, and Tara Bostock, who creates communication materials about COVID-19 for different audiences. They have worked closely with WASILC and CIEP in identifying systemic gaps in their COVID-19 pandemic response and appreciated our guidance over the past year in developing ASL videos and adopting best practices in community outreach efforts in conveying the rapid changes in messaging surrounding testing and vaccinations. There were challenges in coordinating with local health jurisdictions to develop a centralized list of testing sites, and how to let the community know which sites were accessible.

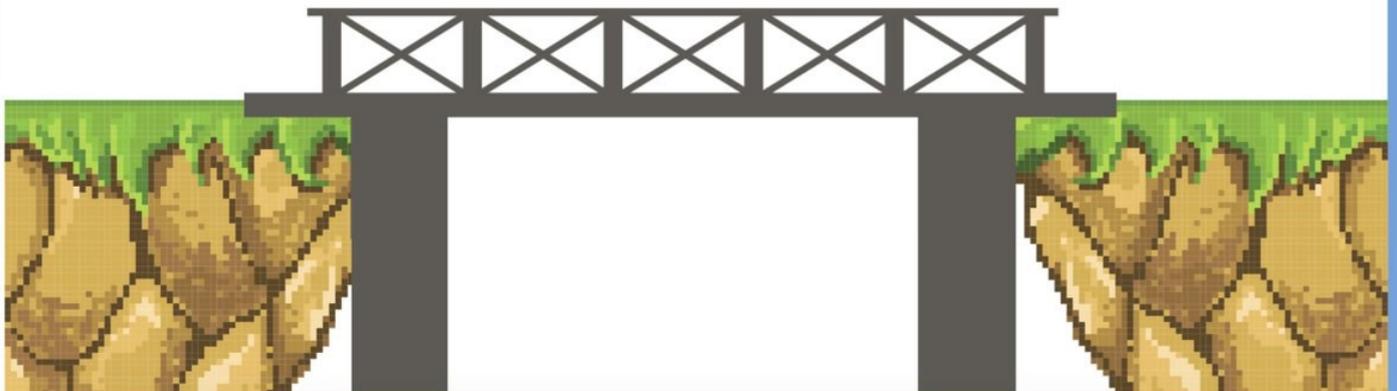
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Based on community feedback, DOH will apply lessons learned on cultural competency and accessibility going forward. The last two panelists from the WA State Emergency Management Division (EMD) were Lewis Lujan, Limited English Proficiency Coordinator, and Quinn Butler, manager for the Project Restoration Framework, which will guide the state as we recover from the coronavirus pandemic. They shared their plans on developing a workshop where interpreters and translators can learn about emergency management that was suspended by the governor's work-from-home order, and also their vision of communicating emergency messaging using the "whole community approach" plus the development of a recovery plan for the state as the pandemic winds down. There were questions from the audience about the capability of 9-1-1 call centers in responding to large-scale disaster, including Text-to-911.

In the final workshop "**Access and Functional Needs Coordinators: Mapping Today for a Safer Tomorrow**", the panelists were Patricia Yeager, CEO of the Independence Center in Colorado Springs. June Issacson Kailes, a disability advocate specializing in inclusive emergency planning, Sadie Martinez, an Access and Functional Needs Coordinator with the Colorado Department of Homeland Security, and Sheri Badger, a former Disability Integration Specialist from North Carolina Emergency Management. Yeager shared how wildfires propelled her center for independent living into a major role within emergency planning. From Kailes, we learned how the C-MIST acronym (Communication, Medical, Independence, Safety/Sustainability, and Transportation) came about to encapsulate access and functional needs (AFN) guidance in emergency planning. Martinez and Badger explained how their work impacted emergency management within their states.

To learn more about our conference partner, the Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies, please visit www.disasterstrategies.org.

The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies
is a disability-led organization that builds bridges between
emergency planners and people with disabilities.



WASILC Solidarity Statement

The Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) stands in solidarity with the Black Community and all Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities. We fully support the Black Lives Matter movement and condemn systemic racism, oppression, and injustice. Achieving our mission requires us to educate and advocate for systemic changes for all people with disabilities, which includes the intersectionality of race and disability. We recommit to this vital work and will hold ourselves accountable to become better allies. We know we cannot elevate the disability community without elevating the BIPOC communities we serve.

About CIEP

CIEP is a statewide advisory group that brings expertise into disaster planning based on access and functional needs (AFN) faced by people with disabilities in three areas: 1) Effective communications, 2) Programmatic Access, and 3) Physical Access. We welcome any suggestions for future issues of the quarterly **CIEP ALERT** newsletter. Past issues since 2018 are available at <https://www.wasilc.org/newsletter>.

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COMING EVENTS

[CIEP Standup Calls \(Response to COVID-19 and other Disasters\)](#)

WHEN: Every other Wednesday at 10:00 am until further notice.

WHERE: Zoom —Email Jim.House@dshs.wa.gov for login info

Note: Until further notice, all CIEP standup calls will be biweekly every other Wednesdays beginning at 10am and ending at 11am.



[Washington State Independent Living Council \(WASILC\) Quarterly Meetings](#)

WHEN: Thursday 1/21/2021: 9:00am - 3:00pm

WHERE: Zoom —Email Jolie.Ramsey@dshs.wa.gov or call 360.725.3693 for more info.

Note: Due to the status of WASILC's COVID-19 response, the next Quarterly Meeting will be held virtually. The finalized meeting agenda will be announced soon.

All CIEP Standup Calls and WASILC Quarterly Meetings are open to everyone and fragrance-free. ASL interpreters and CART will be provided. For other reasonable accommodation requests, please contact us through either email as early as possible prior to the meeting to ensure availability.